

2025 Academy Award nominations: What's happening in Hollywood, what's happening in the world

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The nominations for the 97th Academy Awards were announced Thursday morning from the Samuel Goldwyn Theater, located in the headquarters of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) in Beverly Hills.

The award ceremony will be held Sunday, March 2, hosted by comic and talk show host Conan O'Brien.

The nominations were largely weak and uninspiring, more so than in recent years, reflective of a film industry in economic and artistic crisis. *Emilia Pérez*, about a Mexican drug kingpin who changes gender, received more nominations than any other, 13. Both *The Brutalist* (to be reviewed soon on the WSWS) and *Wicked*, the musical fantasy loosely based on the Oz books, collected 10 nominations. *A Complete Unknown* and *Conclave* were next with eight mentions each.

According to a recent report, film, television and commercial production was down 35 percent in the US in the third quarter of last year as compared to the same period in 2022. Wall Street is demanding its blood money from the studios and streaming platforms, resulting in cuts in production and even more limited subject matter, as the conglomerates compete with one another in a desperate pursuit of the next billion-dollar global success.

Signs of outright, outspoken opposition to the Gaza genocide, the Ukraine-Russia war, the harsh conditions for wide layers of the population and the threats of dictatorship are few and far between.

Serious films and performers nominated for major awards can be counted on the fingers of one hand:

Sebastian Stan, *The Apprentice* (Actor in a Leading Role)
Jeremy Strong, *The Apprentice* (Actor in a Supporting Role)
No Other Land (Basel Adra, Rachel Szor, Hamdan Ballal and Yuval Abraham) (Documentary Feature Film)
Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat (Johan Grimont, Daan Milius and Rémi Grellety) (Documentary Feature Film)

It is difficult to point to important films that were slighted

or ignored, because there were so few of those this year. *No Other Land* received a deserved nomination, but pro-Zionist forces allied with the outgoing Biden administration have so far managed to prevent the American population from *actually seeing* the documentary about Israeli barbarism in the occupied West Bank.

The conditions under which the Academy Award nominations were made public are themselves significant.

In the first place, they were set to be unveiled January 17, but the announcement had to be delayed twice, as the *Hollywood Reporter* observed,

amid the Los Angeles wildfires, which have left at least 28 people dead with more than 14,000 structures destroyed and nearly 40,000 acres burned.

As the fires raged across Los Angeles on Jan. 8, the day voting for this year's nominees opened, the Film Academy extended the voting window through Jan. 14 with a plan to announce this year's nominees on Jan. 19. But as the devastation caused by the fires continued to unfold the following week, on Jan. 13, the Academy again extended the nominations voting window until Jan. 17 and set Jan. 23 as the date for this year's announcement.

The fires have devastating economic consequences. The *Los Angeles Times* noted that

As if Hollywood didn't have enough trouble getting back on its feet, the Los Angeles wildfires suspended filming, destroyed homes of stars and crews alike and even threatened the landmark Hollywood sign that towers over the city.

The *Times* add that the devastation hit

as local film and TV industry workers were already struggling to adjust to vast technological, financial and global changes that have severely reduced local production activity and eliminated thousands of jobs that may never come back.

Moreover, of course, the nominations take place a few days into the return to power of Donald Trump, who has placed a brutal, illegal war on immigrants at the center of his administration's priorities.

According to the latest State of Immigrants in Los Angeles County (SOILA) report,

- At 3.5 million, immigrants make up 34% of L.A. County.
- There are over 800,000 undocumented immigrants in the region.
- Over 1 million L.A. residents live with someone who is undocumented.
- Around 36% of L.A.'s undocumented immigrants do not have health insurance.
- More than half of immigrant renters (60%) are rent-burdened, meaning they spend 30% or more of their income on housing.

This year's nominations need to be viewed with this general context in mind. To what extent do the most pressing questions in American life, the questions confronting tens of millions of people—war, the threat of fascism, attacks on democratic rights and immigrants, poverty—find expression in Hollywood films?

Very poorly, if the 2025 Academy Award nominations are anything to go by. For the most part, they reflect the interests and concerns of a sliver of the population, the upper-middle class circles obsessed with gender and race.

This is what Brooks Barnes of the *New York Times* means when he writes that

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences showered little-seen movies rooted in progressive politics with nominations for the 97th Oscars on Thursday.

Barnes adds:

The academy expanded the best picture field to 10

in 2022; it previously had a sliding number with as few as five slots. The academy positioned the changes as part of an expanded focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. ...

A majority of the acting nominees — 13 out of 20 — were first-time academy honorees, perhaps underscoring the organization's effort over the past decade to make its voting ranks less dominated by older white men. The academy now has roughly 10,000 voting members, up from about 6,700 in 2017.

As for the incoming Trump regime, portions at least of the Hollywood establishment are predictably holding out an olive branch to the fascist demagogue.

Variety headlined a recent article, "Hollywood Is Now Ready to Work With Trump: 'You Didn't Hear Biden Talking About How to Help Us'":

Many in show business are wondering just *how close* Hollywood will cozy up to Trump in this new era.

Variety continued,

To numerous power players *Variety* spoke with, just as staggering as the town's silence over the encroaching Trump effect is the procession of media moguls — from Amazon executive chairman Bezos to Disney CEO Bob Iger — making the pilgrimage to Mar-a-Lago or donating to Trump's inaugural fund. ...

"Hollywood's lost its nerve," said one chief executive at a media conglomerate

As though its upper echelons ever had any.



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