

Emmy award winner Hannah Einbinder denounces ICE and proclaims “Free Palestine”

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The 77th Primetime Emmy Awards ceremony, honoring achievements in television programming, was held Sunday evening in Los Angeles. Awards were handed out in 26 categories in an event hosted by comic Nate Bargatze. The Primetime Creative Arts Emmys, presenting awards for technical and artistic achievements in categories such as animation, guest performances and reality or documentary work, was held a week earlier, on September 6 and 7.

The major awards ceremony September 14 took place a few days after the assassination of fascist political operative Charlie Kirk and in the midst of a Trump administration-led propaganda barrage against the “left” aimed at legitimizing police-state rule in America.

The aim of the producers of the Emmy broadcast was to prevent any commentary on the explosive events in the US or mass murder in the Middle East. Bargatze, a “clean,” Christian comedian, adhered to his earlier promise not to include any political references “at all,” while telling the media that the Kirk shooting was the “saddest thing in the world.”

The Emmy awards were intended, in other words, to take place in an air of utter unreality.

Fortunately, despite the efforts of the producers and Bargatze to chloroform the audience on hand and at home, supporting actress award winner Hannah Einbinder (for the comedy series *Hacks*) bravely exclaimed, upon receiving her honor, “F— ICE and free Palestine!” The roar of applause from the audience was an indicator of the real state of public opinion in Hollywood and around the US.

Einbinder told *Variety* later she wanted to talk about the Gaza war because it’s “an issue very dear to my heart.”

In a subsequent comment at a press conference, standing next to fellow award winner (lead actress) for *Hacks*, Jean Smart, Einbinder explained,

I feel like it is my obligation as a Jewish person to distinguish Jews from the state of Israel. Our religion and our culture is such an important and long-standing institution, that is really separate from this sort of ethnonationalist state.

Spanish actor and Emmy nominee Javier Bardem appeared at the ceremony conspicuously wearing a keffiyeh, and declared his support for a boycott of Israeli cultural institutions. On the red carpet, speaking to a CNN reporter, Bardem indicted Israel for its massive crimes:

Here I am denouncing the genocide in Gaza, and talking about the IAGS, which is the International Association of Genocide

Scholars, who study thoroughly genocide and have declared that it is a genocide. That’s why we ask for a commercial and diplomatic blockade, and also sanctions on Israel to stop the genocide and free Palestine.

Bardem is a signatory of the open letter from more than 4,000 actors, writers, directors and others, organized by Film Workers for Palestine earlier in September, which pledges

not to screen films, appear at or otherwise work with Israeli film institutions—including festivals, cinemas, broadcasters and production companies—that are implicated in genocide and apartheid against the Palestinian people.

Responding to a smear attack from Paramount, now controlled by the Ellison family of super-oligarchs, which denounced the anti-Israel boycott, Bardem clarified to *Variety*:

“Film Workers for Palestine do not target any individuals based on identity. The targets are those film companies and institutions that are complicit and are white-washing or justifying the genocide and its apartheid regime. We do stand with those who are helping and being supportive of the oppressed people.”

He added, “I cannot work with someone that justifies or supports the genocide. That’s as simple as that. We shouldn’t be able to do that, in this industry or any other industry.”

Putting the Einbinder-Bardem comments even more sharply into focus, one day earlier Israeli soldiers carried out an attack on the West Bank home of Basel Adra, one of the co-directors of the Academy Award-winning documentary film *No Other Land*, about Zionist violence on the West Bank.

Yuval Abraham, one of Adra’s fellow co-directors, posted on X

happening now: Israeli army raiding the house of Oscar winner Basel Adra after Israeli settlers attacked his village earlier and beat up his family member. Soldiers could try to abduct Basel into one of Israel’s prisons, which are effectively torture sites.

According to the Associated Press,

Adra said soldiers had asked his wife, Suha, for his whereabouts and proceeded to search through her phone, adding that their nine-month-old daughter was home at the time of the raid.

Earlier on Saturday, Israeli settlers attacked his village, injuring two of Adra's brothers and one cousin, the director told press agency The Associated Press (AP). Adra had accompanied his family members to the hospital, where he found out Israeli soldiers had stormed his home.

These tumultuous events form the background against which the television awards ceremonies were held.

The biggest winner over the week of Emmy awards was the comedy series *The Studio*, a relatively innocuous effort. It collected awards as the best comedy series, and its creator, Seth Rogen, received honors for best leading actor, best director (along with Evan Goldberg) and best writing (along with a number of others). Overall, the Apple TV+ series garnered 13 awards, a record, and Rogen tied the record for the most Emmys won in a single night.

Severance, the psychological science fiction thriller primarily directed by Ben Stiller, won eight awards, while *The Pitt*, about a hospital emergency department, earned four major awards, including best drama series, best lead actor (Noah Wyle) and best supporting actress (Katherine LaNasa).

The WSWS review suggested that the first season of *Severance* "examines the relationship between corporations and their workers ... with mixed results." The story centers around the employees of a shadowy, multi-national technology and pharmaceutical corporation, Lumen Industries, as they begin to investigate its many secrets. We suggested:

Overall, the show is characterized by an unfortunate dichotomy. It raises a number of relevant social and political issues with some degree of seriousness. Clearly the creators want to make a statement. But they do so with enough ambiguity to indicate they are unable or unwilling to commit to a determined critique.

The WSWS strongly praised *The Pitt*, which follows a senior attending physician (Wyle) and his team at the Pittsburgh Trauma Medical Hospital's emergency room. Each episode chronicles one hour of a 15-hour shift in the understaffed and underfunded ER.

In addition to highlighting the self-sacrifice of healthcare workers and affirming the value of human life, *The Pitt* includes moments where the showrunners seek to educate viewers and challenge fear-mongering and disinformation ...

The series clearly reveals the explosive social climate in the US. Hospital staff are regularly assaulted and the final episodes revolve around a mass shooting at a music festival.

The strongest and most subversive television series this year, *Andor*, won five prizes over the two weekends, but only one major award—outstanding writing for a drama series—for Dan Gilroy. The science fiction-political thriller set in the *Star Wars* universe, as the WSWS wrote, encourages and reflects "anti-establishment, anti-authoritarian sentiment."

It is a serious effort

dealing with repression, totalitarianism and revolt. As a piece of popular entertainment, it emerges undeniably out of the same moods that have burst to the surface in the gigantic protests against Donald Trump and the recent New York City Democratic primary.

What makes *Andor* remarkable is not its visual effects or action sequences, but the extent to which it portrays the ravages of imperialist violence and encroachment. The scenes and characters in *Andor* are not allegorical, they speak to contemporary conditions and processes.

The *Guardian* noted that on "an otherwise quiet night for *Andor*, Dan Gilroy's writing win marked perhaps the most political moment of the entire ceremony [aside from Einbinder's comments!]. Gilroy, after all, managed to take goofy old *Star Wars* and transform it into the most stinging indictment of our times imaginable. Not for nothing was it the only show nominated to explicitly invoke genocide."

Unhappily, *The Studio* is one of those convenient compromise choices in which Hollywood voters all too often indulge themselves. It takes a satirical look at recently named, but already beleaguered Continental Studios chief Matt Remick (Rogen), and his efforts to keep the studio afloat and somehow make decent films and maintain his integrity.

The series' 10-part first season is "edgy" and "knowing" enough to be termed iconoclastic, but sufficiently conventional and soft, in the end, not to offend the corporate hierarchy or the Trump administration. In effect, it is something of a lowest common denominator.

Rogen, Catherine O'Hara, Kathryn Hahn, Bryan Cranston, Dave Franco and others make up a talented comic ensemble. But the targets—studio politics, corporate backstabbing, commercial shortsightedness, executive greed, ambition and stupidity—are relatively easy ones and hardly novel or earth-shaking. Episode 7, "Casting," which takes on the issue of "diversity" casting and its absurdities, is probably the most hard-hitting. The production team weighs the various possibilities in hiring lead performers and the pitfalls of racist "tropes," and at one point considers recasting their film with a half-Asian daughter or a lesbian couple with an Asian child, etc. In a fairly pointed conclusion, at a public gathering, Remick and the director are denounced not for their casting decisions, but for eliminating animators with artificial intelligence.

Oddly enough, the series is ultimately too cynical for its own good. If one were to employ *The Studio* as a measuring stick, the possibility of anything valuable or truthful emerging from the American film and television industry would be a pipedream. That world is portrayed here as filled by nothing but narcissists, egomaniacs, hypocrites and talentless hacks. There is no shortage of such types, but serious work nonetheless emerges, *Oppenheimer*, *Succession*, *The Dropout*, *Dopesick*, *Tár*, *Andor*, *The Pitt* and more. There is also immense talent in Hollywood, which lacks, above all, a social and historical perspective.

Objective social reality and political-social opposition contradictorily push their way to the surface in an artistic manner in film and television despite the immense obstacles created by a philistine, cut-throat, profit-driven industry. Rogen lets the cat out of the bag when he offers early on in the season directors Martin Scorsese and Sarah Polley as the epitome of art cinema, which they are not. In the final analysis, the joke is on Rogen and his colleagues. They have not much more of an idea what filmmaking can or needs to be in our day and age than their befuddled, embattled fictional creations.



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