

How Short Films are Selected for the Academy Nomination and Voting Process

Summary

Avoiding the hype and promotion that surrounds the Oscar-nominated feature films, a separate branch of the Academy reviews and nominates short films.

Submissions for nomination can run into the hundreds, combining films publicly exhibited for paid admission at a commercial theater in Los Angeles, 118 award-winners from 65 prestigious national/international festivals, and 4 award winners from the Student Academy Awards.

A reviewing committee comprised of volunteer active and life members of the Academy's Short Films and Feature Animation Branch, review all film entries with excellence judged on the basis of originality, entertainment and production quality without regard to cost of production or subject matter. A shortlist of 10 nominees in each category is selected.

To obtain the five Oscar nominees for each category, the entire body of the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch votes after watching all shortlisted films.

Final voting in the Animated Short Film and Live-Action Short Film categories is conducted within the entire Academy membership, who can vote for only one film from each category after watching all five nominees in each category.

Highlights, Academy Rule Nineteen, Short Films

◆ Definitions

A short film is defined as an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits.

This excludes from consideration such works as: previews and advertising films; sequences from feature-length films such as credit sequences; unaired episodes of established TV series; and unsold TV series pilots.

◆ Categories

An award shall be given for the best achievement in each of two categories.

Animated Short Film ... Created by using a frame-by-frame technique, typically character or abstract. Some animation techniques include cel animation, computer animation, stop-motion, clay animation, pixilation, cutouts, pins, camera multiple pass imagery, kaleidoscopic effects, and drawing on the film frame itself.

Documentary short subjects that are animated may be submitted in either the animated short film category or the documentary short subject category, but not both.

Live Action Short Film ... A live action film uses live action techniques as the basic medium of entertainment. Documentary short subjects will not be accepted in the live action category.

◆ Eligibility

To be eligible for award consideration for the 2010 Awards year, **a short film must fulfill one of the following qualifying criteria** between October 1, 2009, and September 30, 2010. This qualification must take place within two years **of the film's** completion date:

1. The picture must have been publicly exhibited for **paid admission** in a commercial motion picture theater in Los Angeles County for a run of at least three consecutive days with at least two screenings a day, subject to certain technical constraints. Student films cannot qualify in this manner.
2. The film must have won a best-in-category award at a competitive film festival, as specified in the Academy Festival List.
3. A student film may also **qualify by winning a Gold Medal award in the Academy's 2010 Student Academy Awards** competition in the Animation, Narrative, Alternative, or Honorary Foreign Film award category. Winners in the Documentary category are not eligible.

◆ Voting

Excellence of the entries shall be judged on the basis of originality, entertainment and production quality without regard to cost of production or subject matter. A reviewing committee, consisting of volunteer active and life members of the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch, will view all motion pictures entered and mark all entries 10, 9, 8, 7, or 6 with the guidelines of 10 (excellent), 8 (good), 7 (fair) or 6 (poor). In each category not more than ten pictures receiving the highest average numerical scores above 7.5 shall be considered further.

Final voting for the Animated Short Film and Live Action Short Film awards shall be restricted to Academy members who may vote for only one film in each of the two categories. Members must have attended official Academy screenings of the nominated achievements. However, those members of the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch who served on the Branch Nominating Committee, and who viewed all the nominated pictures, will receive mail ballots.

Reference

Rule Nineteen, complete:

<http://www.oscars.org/awards/academyawards/rules/rule19.html>

List of qualifying film festivals:

<http://www.oscars.org/awards/academyawards/rules/shortsfestivals.html>

The short film entry form:

http://www.oscars.org/awards/academyawards/rules/83aa_shorts_entry_form.pdf