

A Bittersweet List of Nominees: Many Women, Few Latinos at the 2021 Oscars

Seventy-six nominations. That is how many nominations women received for the 2021 Oscars. Although it shouldn't be, this number is still a surprise; it is the highest total ever tallied for women nominees in the Academy Award's history, bridging the gap in gender equality just a little closer to nonexistent.

In total, there are 235 nominees for the 23 categories. Approximately 32.3% of the nominees are women, topping 2020's 31.1%, when, of the 209 of the individual nominees, 65 of them were women in the 24 categories. Since 2017, the number of women nominees has increased by almost ten percent. [...]

In a statement by Dr. Stacy Smith, a member of the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, said about the 2021 Oscars, "The nominations today are a step in the right direction and reflect progress toward greater inclusion. There is still room for growth if people like Regina King have not been nominated, and while we celebrate the 'firsts' this year, we hope these are not the 'only.' Often, there is a 'one and done' mentality when it comes to inclusion, so it is imperative to see sustained effort in the future to ensure continued recognition of talent from all backgrounds."

Women of color are making strides in the ever so tricky industry. Viola Davis is for the first time, a historic moment, the most nominated Black actress with her lead role in 'Ma Rainey's Black Bottom,' Steven Yeun is the first Asian American lead actor nominee for his role in 'Minari,' Riz Ahmed is the first Muslim to be nominated for lead actor in 'Sound of Metal,' and Chloe Zhao is the first woman of color nominated for a directing Oscar.

This is all excellent news. However, it seems the Latinx¹ actors and directors were left out of the spectrum once again.

Nominees for the documentary feature is Chilean director Maite Alberdi and producer Marcela Santibanez that created 'Crip Camp,' 'My Octopus Teacher,' 'Time,' and 'The Mole Agent,' the first Chilean film nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the Academy Awards.

Aside from this, not one Latino Actor, Actress, Director, or Writer was nominated for the 2021 Oscars. Shaka King, the director of 'Judas and The Black Messiah,' was the only nominated person of Latino descent, being Panamanian-American.

Somehow, despite being the largest ethnic demographic in the United States, we are still the least represented when it comes to award ceremonies and recognizing Latino talent. It would seem then that the effort for true diversity and inclusion can only be carried out on one side of the spectrum at a time.

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1. gender-neutral neologism for "Latinos" and "Latinas"