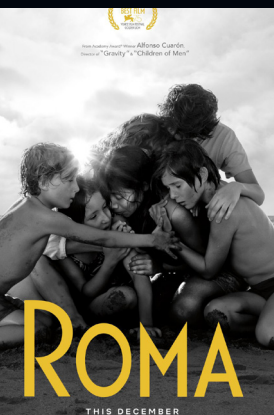


WOMEN'S MEDIA CENTER



WMC INVESTIGATION 2019: GENDER AND NON-ACTING OSCAR NOMINATIONS



womensmediacenter.com



PROGRESSIVE WOMEN'S VOICES

THE WOMEN'S MEDIA CENTER WORKS TO MAKE WOMEN VISIBLE AND POWERFUL IN THE MEDIA

Founded in 2005 by Jane Fonda, Robin Morgan, and Gloria Steinem, the WMC is an inclusive and feminist organization that works to ensure women's realities are covered and women's voices are heard.

WMC works to make women visible and powerful in the media. We do so by promoting women as decision makers and as subjects in media; training women to be media ready and media savvy; researching and exposing sexism and racism in media; and creating original online and on-air journalism.

Our media programs that address the problems of unequal representation and misrepresentation of women in media include interconnected strategies that:

- Recruit and place diverse women experts in the media — print, broadcast, radio, Internet, social media, and media leadership through WMC SheSource.
- Train diverse women experts to be effective in media, and increase their thought leadership through WMC Progressive Women's Voices and other customized training and leadership programs.
- Investigate, report, create, and publish original media to expand diverse women's voices and representation through *WMC Features*, *WMC Women Under Siege*, *WMC FBomb*, *WMC Speech Project*, and our syndicated radio program and podcast, *WMC Live with Robin Morgan*.
- Research, document, and produce reports that highlight the status of women in U.S. media, equip activists with evidence, and create benchmarks to hold media accountable for sexist and racist coverage.
- Advocate before government officials and agencies on policies affecting women's access to media and technology, ownership of media and technology, and safe and free speech in media and technology.

WMC Investigation 2019: Gender and Non-Acting Oscar Nominations

The 2019 Oscar nominations were disappointing for women behind the camera, with no women nominated in Directing, Cinematography, Editing, Original Score, and Visual Effects, and only one woman nominated in Animated Feature film and in each of the two writing categories. Industry-wide efforts to improve gender parity have had some impact, but not as much as anticipated, according to a Women's Media Center analysis.

The 91st Academy Award nominations were unveiled on January 22. Winners will be announced during the telecast on Sunday, February 24, on ABC.

The overall percentage of female nominees in non-acting categories ticked slightly upward since last year, from 23 to 25 percent, with nominations for women increasing in the categories of Documentary Feature, Costume Design, Makeup and Hairstyling, Live Action Short, and Animated Short.

Women nominees were down from last year for Best Picture, Best Director, Original Screenplay, Editing, Cinematography, Production Design, and Animated Feature. There was no change from last year in the categories of Adapted Screenplay, Documentary Short, Original Score, and Original Song.

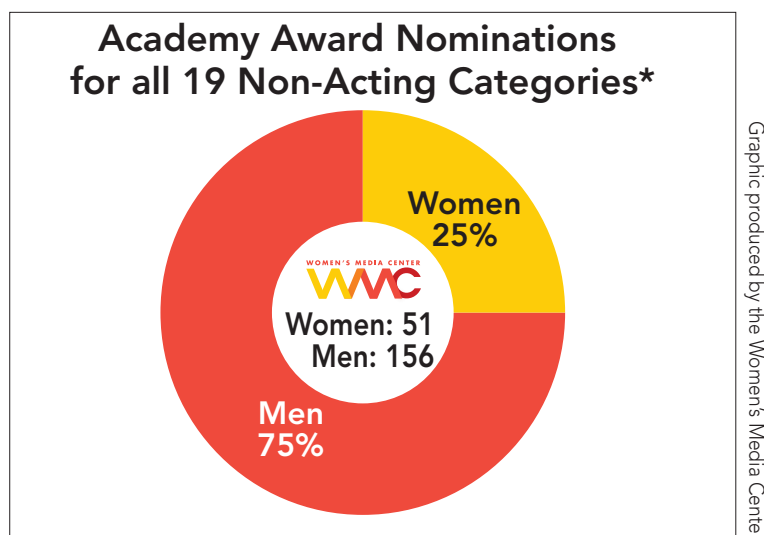
One female co-writer was nominated in each of the writing categories (Original Screenplay and Adapted Screenplay), compared to 18 men. Thanks to Universal's *First Man*, both Sound and Editing have female nominees. Women were among producing nominees on four of the films nominated for Best Picture: Dede Gardner for *Vice*, Lynette Howell Taylor for *A Star Is Born*, Gabriela Rodriguez for *Roma*, and Lee Magiday for *The Favourite*. With the exception of *Vice*, all of these films revolve around a central female character, and all have Best Actress nominees.

Of the eight Best Picture nominees, not one was directed by a woman, and no women were nominated in the Best Director category. In a year with so many films made by women, it is a blow for an industry that seemed to be heading in a different direction after last year's nomination of Greta Gerwig for *Lady Bird* and mobilization around the Time's Up and Me Too movements. Instead, no woman director was nominated, and no film directed by a woman was nominated.

"Again this year, women's talent has not been recognized in many of the most powerful behind-the-scenes categories such as Directing, Cinematography, and Editing," said Julie Burton, president of the Women's Media Center. "Since the Women's Media Center started counting the number of women nominated for non-acting Academy Awards as of 2006, the overall percentage of women nominees has increased from 18 to 25 percent. By that calculation, it will take another 50 years for women to be equally represented by the Academy. We need industry leaders to get on board and hire more women, especially women of color, in front of and behind the camera."

Only one writer, Nicole Holofcener for *Can You Ever Forgive Me?*, was nominated for a film that was directed by a woman, Marielle Heller. Heller did not receive a Directing nomination, nor was *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* nominated for Best Picture.

Can You Ever Forgive Me?, which premiered at the Telluride Film Festival last September, seemed on track to be a major player in the Oscar race, but it never got support from critics' groups that inform the industry voters. The women filmmakers who were noticeably shut out include Chloe Zhao, who wrote and directed



Source: Oscars.org; Analysis: Women's Media Center

The Rider, Debra Granik, who co-wrote and directed *Leave No Trace*, and Lynne Ramsay, who directed *You Were Never Really Here*.

It wasn't just the Academy that shut out these women filmmakers — it was also the Golden Globe Awards, the British Academy of Film and Television, the Directors Guild of America, and the Screen Actors Guild. Often a contender ends up getting nominated if momentum can be built, but there wasn't one woman who got the same attention that Gerwig did last year.

"A nomination for an Academy Award can open doors," said Jane Fonda, co-founder of the Women's Media Center. "With three out of every four non-acting nominations going to men, women, again, are missing that stamp of approval."

Although last year Rachel Morrison became the first woman to be nominated for Cinematography (for *Mudbound*), this year she was not nominated for the highly acclaimed *Black Panther*, which overall earned seven nominations.

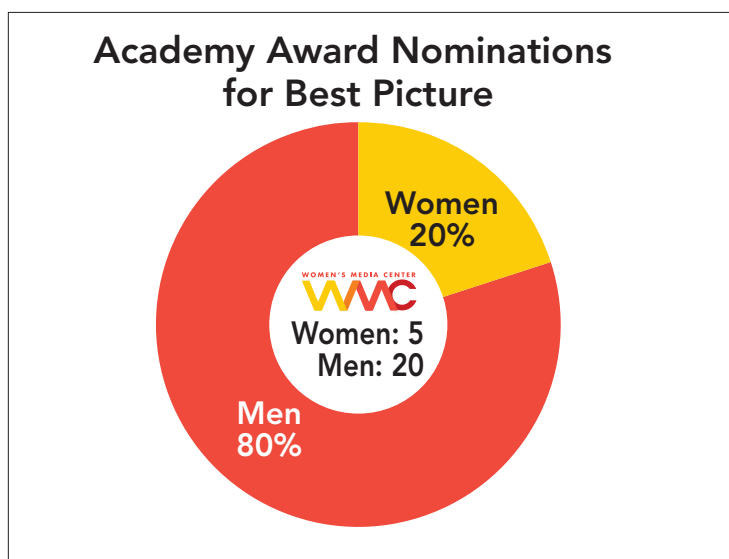
As a rule, when a production is a strong contender in the Oscar race, it will get nominations in multiple categories. Women's inclusion in the production of these films therefore results in more nominations for women. Fox Searchlight's *The Favourite* saw nominations for women in Best Picture (Lee Magiday), Production Design (Fiona Crombie and Alice Felton), and Costume Design (Sandy Powell) along with Screenplay (Deborah Davis). Netflix's *Roma* had female nominees for Best Picture (Gabriela Rodriguez) and Production Design (Barbara Enriquez). Universal's *First Man*, which did not receive nominations in the top eight categories, nonetheless had several female nominees in other categories: Production Design (Kathy Lucas) as well as both sound categories — Sound Mixing (Ai-Ling Lee and Mary H. Ellis) and Sound Editing (Ai-Ling Lee and Mildred Latrou Morgan).

What seems clear is that when productions have made an effort to hire women on films, and those films then are considered for Best Picture, that increases the overall number of female nominees. Fox Searchlight's *The Favourite*, Disney's *Black Panther*, Netflix's *Roma*, Warner Bros.' *A Star Is Born*, Annapurna's *Vice*, and Fox's *Bohemian Rhapsody* are all films that featured women in key positions with likely influence over hiring.

Some studios have made strides in how they're handling gender parity. Disney, in particular, has taken dramatic steps to break up the boys' club at Pixar, its acclaimed animation studio, with "Dream Big Princess" a [program](#) that selected 21 girls and women from 13 countries to develop shorts.

For the first time ever, a female-directed Pixar short has been nominated. *Bao* is the first of 35 short films made by a woman at Pixar.

Best Picture



Source: Oscars.org; Analysis: Women's Media Center

Of the eight films that were nominated for Best Picture, four had at least one woman producer. Of the 25 total producers nominated, five, or 20 percent, are women, compared to 27 percent last year and 30 percent the year before. In each of those years, there were nine nominees, as opposed to eight. (Under Academy rules that have been in effect since 2011, there is not a set number of films nominated for Best Picture, but usually it is between five and 10.) With more nominees for Best Picture, the chances of women being nominated does increase, although it depends entirely on what kinds of films are made and what kinds of films are liked.

Men continue to dominate the Best Picture category, representing 80 percent of the

producers nominated, or 20 men compared with 5 women. While last year, five of the nine films nominated for Best Picture starred or co-starred a female lead, and four had Best Actress nominations, this year, only three of the eight films had female-driven stories. That signals a dramatic decline, perhaps because the industry was trying to honor more popular films: The Academy had announced last year that there would be a separate category for them, and though public outcry forced the Academy to withdraw that threat, this year the Oscar race for Best Picture includes films like *Black Panther*, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and *A Star Is Born*.

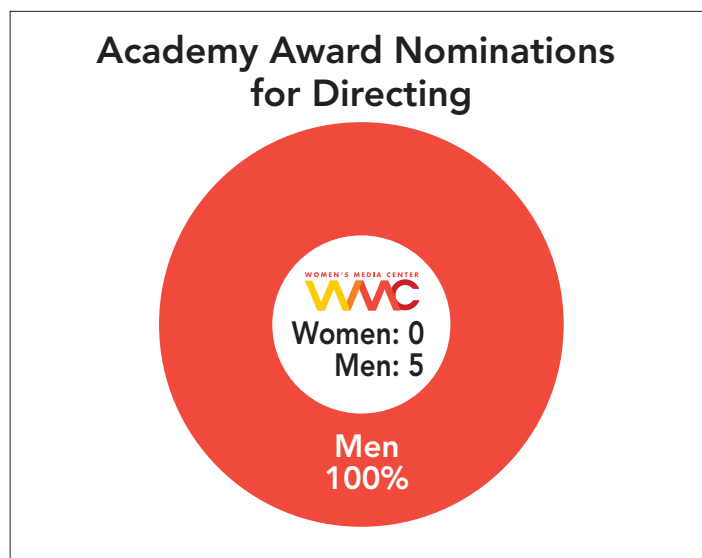
Dede Gardner continues to be a major producing force in the Oscar race: She has been nominated for Best Picture six out of the last seven years and has won twice, for *Moonlight* and *12 Years a Slave*. She was nominated this year for *Vice*.

One of the producers of *Roma*, Gabriela Rodriguez, is the first Hispanic woman nominated in this category. Rodriguez worked on *Children of Men* with director Alfonso Cuarón, and the two have teamed up for the first Spanish-language Best Picture nominee.

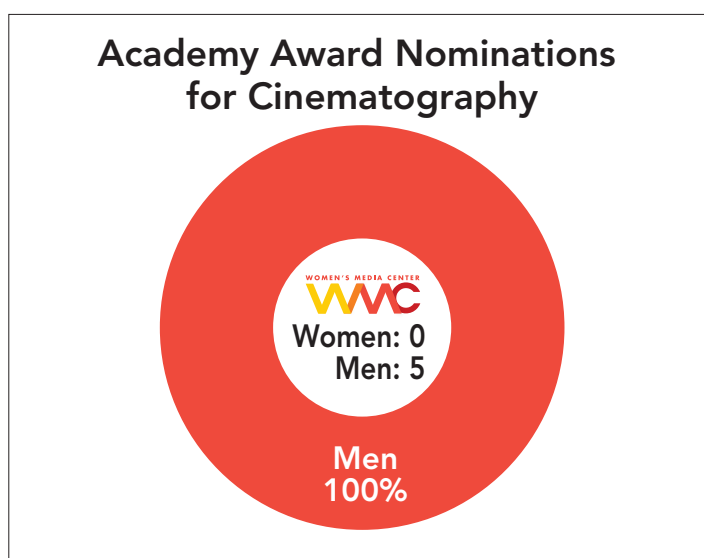
Directing

This year's shutout of female nominees in the directing category, despite the abundance of films directed by women this year, illustrates just how much mobilization it takes to get one woman recognized. Last year Greta Gerwig made the cover of *Time* magazine, suggesting that things had really begun to change for women. This year's nominations indicate clearly that they have not. Perhaps the inability of critics' groups to decide on one woman to coalesce around, with so many to choose from, thwarted efforts to push even one through. Either way, you can still count the number of women who have ever been nominated in the Best Director category on one hand: Lena Wertmuller, Jane Campion, Sofia Coppola, Kathryn Bigelow, and Greta Gerwig. Since 2006, there have been 66 men nominated in the Best Director category and just two women.

All five of the Best Director nominees in 2019 are men.



Source: Oscars.org; Analysis: Women's Media Center



Source: Oscars.org; Analysis: Women's Media Center

Cinematography

Rachel Morrison made history last year for her work on Netflix's *Mudbound* by becoming the first-ever female nominee. This year, her work as cinematographer on *Black Panther* was expected to earn her a second nomination. Instead, all five Cinematography nominees are male.

Editing

Both last year and the year prior saw one female editing nominee. (Five men were nominated both years.) This year, female editors took a hit. There were no female editors and five male editors nominated in the category. Like Cinematography, as one of the major categories, Editing is often strongly linked to directing and often considered as important to bringing the full vision of a film to fruition. Women have been prominent in this profession for years, including Dede Allen, Verna Fields, Martin Scorsese's longtime editor Thelma Schoonmaker, and Quentin Tarantino's editor Sally Menke. Women's influence in the field is not reflected in the number of women nominated in a given year. This year the only Best Picture nominee that had a female co-editor was Debbie Berman, for Disney's *Black Panther*.

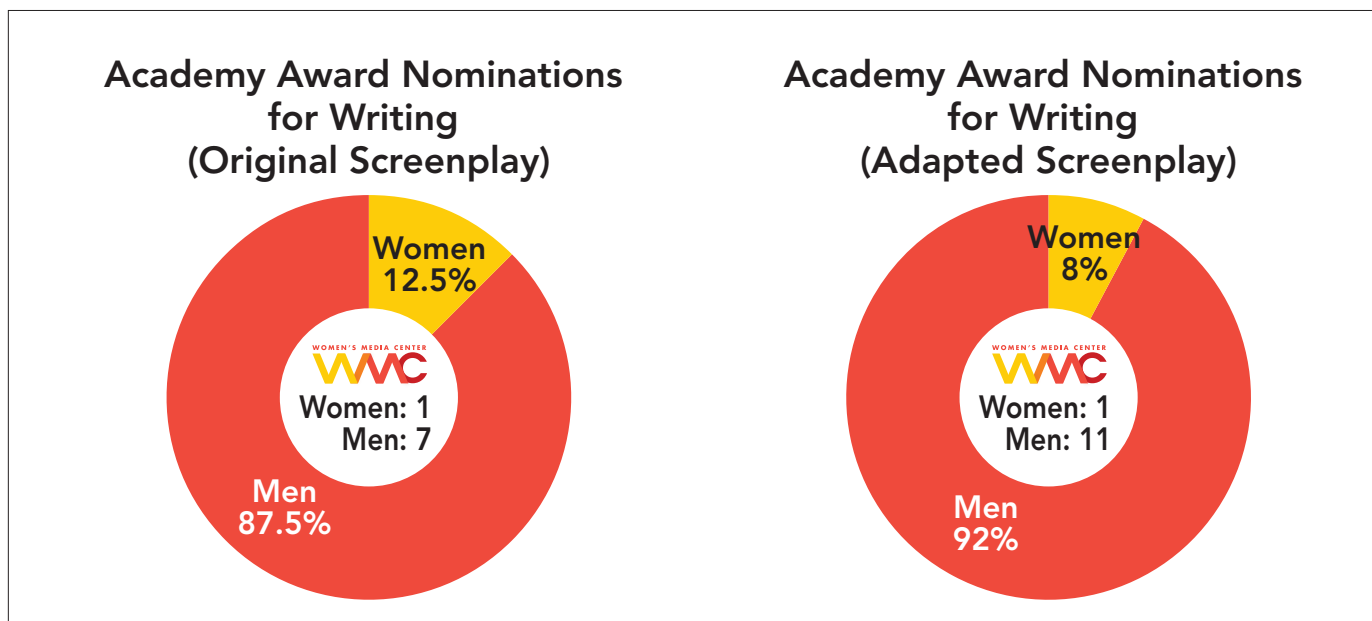


Source: Oscars.org; Analysis: Women's Media Center

Graphic produced by the Women's Media Center

Writing

With ten nominated screenplays in both writing categories, there was only one female co-writer nominated in each, compared to 18 men nominated. In the Original Screenplay category, seven men were nominated, or 87.5 percent, compared to just one female nominee, or 12.5 percent: Deborah Davis, who co-wrote Fox Searchlight's *The Favourite* with Tony McNamara. Last year, with three female writers nominated, women represented 43 percent of nominees. In the Adapted Screenplay category, 11 men were nominated, or 92 percent, compared to just one woman, or 8 percent. Last year also saw just one female nominee, but the percentage was higher, 11 percent, because there were fewer overall nominees. This year, prolific writer/director Nicole Holofcener has earned the first nomination of her already established career with Fox Searchlight's *Can You Ever Forgive Me?*, co-written with Jeff Whitty.

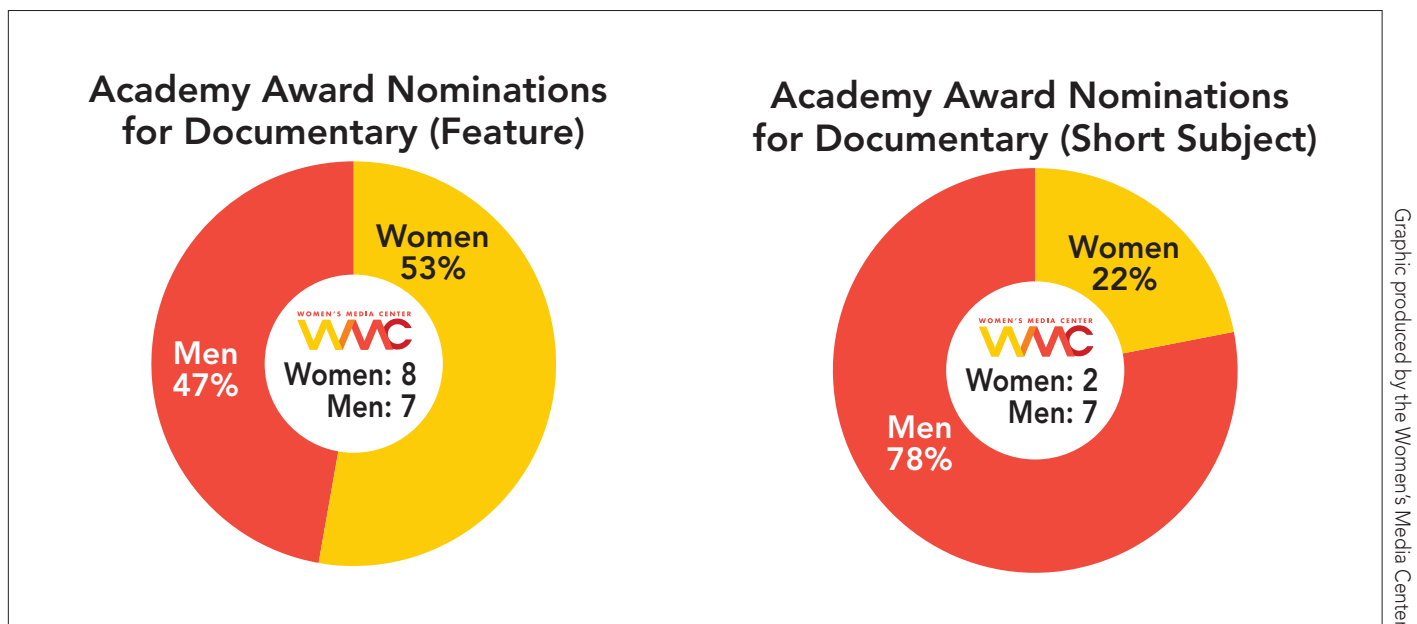


Source: Oscars.org; Analysis: Women's Media Center

Graphic produced by the Women's Media Center

Documentary Feature

Female nominees in this category (in which producers and directors are nominated) saw a significant boost, going from four women last year, or 31 percent, to eight women this year, or 53 percent. Male nominees made up the minority, with 47 percent. This was due to all of the five films nominated having a female producer on board. The most notable nominee is *RBG*, about the life of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The film was produced and directed by two women, Betsy West and Julie Cohen. Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi was nominated for co-directing, and Shannon Dill was nominated for producing *Free Solo*; Joslyn Barnes and Su Kim were nominated for producing *Hale County This Morning, This Evening*; Diane Quon was nominated for producing *Minding the Gap*; and Eva Kemme was nominated for producing *Of Fathers and Sons*.



Source: Oscars.org; Analysis: Women's Media Center

Documentary Short

Female nominees dropped from three women nominated last year, or 37.5 percent, to two women nominated this year, at 22 percent, while male nominees increased from five last year, or 62.5 percent, to seven this year, at 78 percent. It is worth noting that the one documentary short produced and directed by women is the film *Period. End of Sentence.*, directed by Rayka Zehtabchi and produced by Melissa Berton, about the stigma of menstruation in Delhi, India, and how a group of doctors and activists enable women to get the protection they need so that they can attend school.

Production Design

Female nominees were up in the Production Design category, with five, or 50 percent, up from three, or 33 percent, last year. It's possible that the uptick can be explained by the activism in Hollywood, including the push for inclusion riders, which may have motivated filmmakers to make an effort to hire more women. While this hasn't paid off in the top eight categories, it certainly appears to be paying off in the crafts. The women nominated in this category include the first Black woman ever nominated for Production Design, Hannah Beachler for *Black Panther*, along with Fiona Crombie and Alice Felton for *The Favourite*, Kathy Lucas for *First Man*, and Barbara Enriquez for *Roma*.

Costume Design

The Costume Design category proved once again that women dominate the field. This year, the costumes in all five nominated films were designed by women. Sandy Powell was nominated twice for the second straight year, this time for *The Favourite* and *Mary Poppins Returns*. Powell has earned a whopping 14 nominations and won three Oscars. Mary Zophres earned her third nomination, for her work on *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*. Ruth Carter also earned her third nomination, for *Black Panther*. Carter was last nominated in 1998, over 20 years ago. Alexandra Byrne earned her fifth nomination, for her work on *Mary Queen of Scots*.

Makeup and Hairstyling

Five women were nominated in the Makeup and Hairstyling category, raising the percentage from 33 percent last year to 62.5 percent this year, while the male nominees comprised 37.5 percent. The percentage of female nominees is higher than it has been in ten years, thanks in large part to the productions of *Vice* and *Mary Queen of Scots* each hiring two women: Kate Biscoe and Patricia deHaney for *Vice* and Jenny Shircore and Jessica Brooks for *Mary Queen of Scots*. Pamela Goldammer rounds out the fifth nominee for her work on *Border*.

Original Score

Female composers were shut out of the Original Score category for the second straight year. Five men were nominated, representing 100 percent of nominees. Throughout Oscar history, only five women have been nominated for Original Score, and only one in the last 11 years.

Original Song

While the number of female songwriters nominated remained the same as it was last year, four female nominees, the percentage dropped from 40 percent last year to 31 percent this year because the number of male nominees increased from six to nine. "I'll Fight," from the documentary feature *RBG*, became Diane Warren's 10th nomination (she has yet to win).

Sound Mixing

Men still dominate the Sound Mixing category with 15 nominations, though there are two female nominees, up from just one last year and the year prior. That brings women's percentage up to 12 percent from six percent last year. Both of the female nominees, Ai-Ling Lee and Mary H. Ellis, are nominated for their work on Universal's *First Man*.

Sound Editing

There were three women nominated for Sound Editing, up from zero last year, bringing their representation to 30 percent, compared to 70 percent for the male nominees. Universal's *First Man* again can take credit for hiring two female sound editors, Ai-Ling Lee, nominated in both categories, and Mildred Latrou Morgan. The third female nominee is Nina Hartstone for *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

Visual Effects

For the third straight year, no women were nominated in the Visual Effects category. The shutout is particularly glaring in light of recent efforts to **highlight** more women. All 20 nominees in the category, or 100 percent, are male.

Animated Feature

Just one woman was nominated in the Animated Feature category, down from five last year. With 16 men nominated, women represent just 6 percent of the total nominees in the category. Nicole Paradis Grindle is one of three nominees on Pixar's *The Incredibles 2*. The films nominated all feature male characters as their central protagonists, with female characters mostly in supporting roles, except *The Incredibles 2*.

Live Action Short

Five women were nominated in the Live Action Short category, up from two last year and just one the year before. This is one of the rare categories that has 50 percent female and 50 percent male nominees. Last year, men represented 75 percent to women's 25 percent. Marianne Farley wrote and directed the short film *Marguerite*, making her the sole female director nominated. The others are all producers, nominated alongside male directors: Maria de Puy Alvarado for *Mother*, Jamie Ray Newman for *Skin*, and Maria Gracia Turgeon for *Fauve*.

Animated Short

Women had the edge in the Animated Short category, with five nominees, representing the majority with 56 percent to the 44 percent male nominees. Last year, only two of the nominees, or 20 percent, were women compared to 80 percent men. Disney's *Bao* has two female nominees, Domee Shi and Becky Neiman-Cobb, while *Late Afternoon* was made by Louise Bagnall and Nuria Gonzalez Blanco. The last female nominee is Alison Snowden for *Animal Behavior*. Three out of five of the animated shorts are directed by female nominees, which perhaps is the result of the result of efforts by studios like Disney, but also of a voting branch with its eye on inclusion.

Conclusion

Overall, this year, while there aren't the high-profile nominations for women that often make news, such as Best Director or Cinematography, some of the individual crafts categories do show an uptick for women. This is especially true in the short film categories, a fertile ground for future filmmakers.

For the future, there is hope that movements for representation and equality, such as those represented by #OscarsSoWhite and #OscarsSoMale, and the efforts of powerful actors to have "inclusion riders" written into their contracts, will shift these numbers for diverse women going forward. But the Oscar nominations in 2019 do not yet reflect the gender parity or racial inclusivity activists are aiming for.



WMC BOARD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Women's Media Center thanks our co-founders, Jane Fonda, Robin Morgan, and Gloria Steinem, for their vision and leadership. Our research on the representation of women in media is made possible through the generous support of The Novo Foundation, Pinpoint Foundation, The Streisand Foundation, Jane Fonda, The Libra Foundation, and The Starry Night Fund. We are grateful to them for standing with us in our fight for equality, inclusion, and culture change.

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Report Producers

This report was written by Sasha Stone with research conducted by Tiffany Nguyen. The Oscar analysis was drawn using information from Oscars.org.

Kate McCarthy managed the production of the report, Barbara Findlen edited and Krista Hojnowski fact-checked the report. It was designed by Diahann Hill and Pamelyn Burke.

Women's Media Center Oscar Resources:

This is WMC's fifth report analyzing gender and Oscar non-acting nominations. Here is a list of previous reports:

[Women's Media Center Investigation: 2018 Analysis of Gender & Oscar Non-Acting Nominations](#)

[Women's Media Center Investigation: 2017 Analysis of Gender & Oscar Nominations](#)

[2016 WMC 10-Year Review of Oscar Nominations & Gender](#)

[2015 WMC Oscar Nominations: The Gender Gap](#)

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WMC Divided: The Media Gender Gap ([2019](#), [2017](#), [2015](#), [2014](#), [2012](#))

Women's Media Center Status of Women of Color in the U.S. News Media ([2018](#))

WMC Media Watch: Women & Elections — Where Voters Saw the Most Sexist Treatment of Women Candidates in Media ([2016](#))

WMC Media Watch: Women & Elections — #WhoTalks — U.S. Presidential Election Tracking of Cable/TV News Show Analysts by Gender and Race ([2016](#)) (Partnership project with the Rutgers Center for American Women and Politics and GenderAvenger)

WMC Investigation: Analysis of Gender & Non-Acting Oscar Nominations ([2018](#), [2017](#), [2015](#), [2014](#), [2013](#), [2012](#), [2010](#))

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WMC Media Watch: Writing Rape — How U.S. Media Cover Campus Rape and Sexual Assault ([2015](#))

The Women's Media Center Guide to Covering Reproductive Issues

Name It Change It: The Women's Media Center Guide to Gender Neutral Coverage of Candidates

10 Do's and Don'ts on How to Interview Sexualized Violence Survivors ([2017](#))

Name It Change It: An Examination of the Impact of Media Coverage of Women Candidates' Appearance

Name It Change It — WMC Infographic — Stick Figures Explain Negative Impact of Appearance Coverage on Women Candidates ([2013](#))

Bias, Punditry, and the Press — Where Do We Go From Here? ([2008](#)) (Report from the Women's Media Center, the White House Project, and the Maynard Institute for Journalism Education)

Unspinning the Spin: The Women's Media Center Guide to Fair and Accurate Language (2014)

WMC Women Under Siege Syria Crowdmap

WMC Women Under Siege Reports: Sexualized Violence in Columbia, Liberia, Burma, Mexico, Nanking, North Korea, Sierra Leone, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Darfur-Sudan, Rwanda, Bosnia, Holocaust

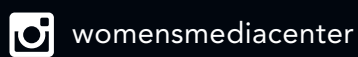
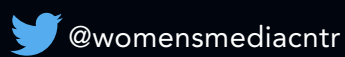
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