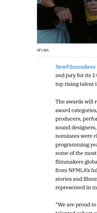

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NewFilmmakers LA Announces Nominees and Jury for 13th Annual Awards (EXCLUSIVE)

By Jazz Tangcay

NFLMA

NewFilmmakers Los Angeles has released the nominees and jury for its 14th annual awards that recognize the top rising talent in independent film globally.

The awards will recognize 130 nominees spanning 16 award categories, encompassing directors, writers, producers, performers, cinematographers, editors, sound designers, and composers. These outstanding nominees were chosen from NFMLA's most recent programming year, which took place in 2024 and reflect some of the most promising emerging independent filmmakers globally. The selection includes projects from NFMLA's InFocus initiative, which highlights stories and filmmakers who are often not adequately represented in mainstream media.

"We are proud to support and uplift the work of such a talented cohort of filmmakers whose work deserves to be widely seen and acknowledged and to be part of their journey," says NFMLA programming director Bojana Sandic.

The jury for the 2025 Best of NFMLA Awards is composed of industry professionals, including Alvie Hurtado at Will Packer Productions, Amanda Lebow at CAA, Andrea Alarcon at Sundance Institute, Anna Klein at HBO, Arif Zaman at Boardwalk Pictures, Collin Litts at Anonymous Content, Dan Fisher at VMI Worldwide, Danny Rose at Danny Rose Productions, David Baggelaar at Good Fear Content, Eliot Goldberg at 101 Studios, Elissa Friedman at Zero Gravity Management, Emma Ho at Aggregate Films, Fernando Rodriguez-Vila at Exile Content Studio, Gesumino Rulli at Legendary Entertainment, James Swoope at M88, Jared Corwin at Silver Lake Shorts, Julia Iglesias at Focus Features, Jungyoon Kim at Blumhouse, Kacie Fagan at Constantin Films, Kyle Whited at Fuse Media, Leonardo Zimbron at 3Pas Studios, Lexie Chu at Skydance, Loreli Alanís at Point Grey Pictures, Maggie Gilbride at DreamCrew, Marggy Griffin at CBS Studios, Marilyn Minton at Velvet Hammer Media, Missy Laney at Adult Swim, Prerna Obhan at Amazon Prime Video, Rachel Kiner-Lucas at Amazon Studios, Reena Singh at MACRO, Shannon Barrett Prynoski at Titmouse, Shelby Goldberg at UTA, Sophia Gholdoian at Left Handed Films, Tham Singpatanakul at Circle Management + Production, Vanessa Miranda at Warner Bros. Discovery, and Yira Vilaro at Mediapro.

NFMLA executive director and co-founder Larry Laboe said, "Witnessing the remarkable talent and stories that NFMLA has the privilege of showcasing each year is truly exhilarating. When artists commit to producing an independent film, they embark on an impressive and commendable journey, and for that, they deserve the opportunity to connect with audiences and individuals who can support their growth as emerging storytellers. I congratulate all the films that were part of NFMLA's 2024 lineup and wholeheartedly celebrate our 2025 nominees, all of whom are exceptionally deserving."

NFMLA is an arts and culture non-profit organization that works year-round to highlight the important contributions of talented independent artists. It hosts the NFMLA Monthly Film Festival for the public and industry professionals, showcasing the innovative cinematic works of rising filmmakers.

Full list of nominees are below.

Best Short Film, Drama
"[subtext]" – Erin Brown Thomas & Olivia Haller
Backlog – Jacqueline Elyse Rosenthal, Robin Wang, Marian Cook & Josh Powell
Bajo La Tierra – Pablo Guillen, Mon Castro & Daniel Radzinsky
Castles in the Sky – Pearl Gluck & Daniel Finkelman
Choices – Kameishia D Wooten, Janae Greene, Meagann Pallares & Victoria Brown
"Last First Kiss" – Kacy Boccumini & Paola Piccioli
"Lovely" – Naomi Shroff-Mehta, Dorothy Jackson, Nimmi Mohan & Milagros Montalvo
"Sunflower Nicky" – Clifton J. Adams, Victoria Villarreal, Alvin E. Ford, Jr., Caleb Miller White, Charmee Taylor & Andrew C. Carson
"Superman Doesn't Steal" – Tamika Lamison, Chris Beal, Dominique DeLeon, Carol Shine & Ben Ephraim
"When Big People Lie" – Gianfranco Fernández-Ruiz, Gus Murray & Kouxiao Amy Zhang

Best Short Film, Comedy
"Chuck and Fern "- Henry Alexander Kelly, Gabe Figueroa, Eduardo Ayres Soares & Kat Croft
"Development" – Chloe Caudillo & Via Bia
"Fern" – Katherine Bourne Taylor, Mary Tilden, Ben Mortou & Connor "Texas" Smith
"Floater" – D.M. Harring, Liana Montemayor, Stephen Mastrocola & Rafi Jacobs
"Golden Child" – Hannah Levin & Gracie Catanzarite
"In Tow" – Sharon Arteaga, Chelsea Hernandez & Sommer Garcia Saqr
"Peanut Butter Shot" – Paige Compton, Kate Compton, Brielle Yuke Li & Roxanne Griffith
"Sorry Grandpa Hsaio" – Candace Ho, Selena Leoni & Mireia Vilanova
"The Burden" – Tish Arana & Brandi Nicole
"The Man in the Blue Suit "- Evan Patrick Adams & Tyler Kirkpatrick

Best International Short Film, Drama
"A Roadside Banquet "- Peiqi Peng & Ziqi Gao
"Boi De Conchas" (The Shell Covered Ox) – Daniel Barosa, Nikolas Maciel & Bruno Alfano
"Eid Mubarak" – Mahnoor Euceph, Ben O'Keefe, Kamil Chima & Selena Leoni
"Hair Care" – Fatima Wardy, Karl-Mary Akre & Mary-Elizabeth Esquibel
"Hair or No Hair" – Janessa St. Pierre, Geoff Manton & Graysen Sangster
" Lea E Il Fenicottero" – Antonio De Palo & Vincenzo De Marco
"Lea Tupu'anga" (Mother Tongue) – Vea Mafile'o,Luciane Buchanan, Alex Lovell & Eldon Booth
"Límite "- George Nicholas & Eliza Bonev
"The Steak" – Kiarash Dadgar & Ali Narimani
"They Don't Leave" – Caz McGovern, Nancy Ann Bevins & Harrison Score

Best International Short Film, Comedy
"A Beautiful Excuse for a Deadly Sin" – Hashim Sharaf & Nehal Eissa
"À toi les oreilles" – Alexandre Isabelle
"Buddy Love" – Kiefer O'Reilly & Sean Patrick O'Reilly
"Head Over Wheels" – Genevieve Clay Smith & Dianna La Grassa
"Ick" – India Opzoomer, Lindsay Howard, Sinead Keirans, Joie Parma & James Opzoomer
"Lumen" – Stéphanie Bélanger, Rocio B. Fuentes & Giacomo Nudi
"Nea" – Alex Ulises, Nelson G. Navarrete & Jesus Peña
"Remote Paradise" – Sheronna Osbourne, Tazia Harris & Troy Crossfield
"San Vitu Rock "- Fausto Romano, Francesco Lopez & Rosemary Chimirri
"TaiL" – Yichien Lee, Wen Ou & Alex Bilodeau

Best New Media & Experimental
"Back to the Garden" – Steven Wilson
"Diana's Electric Tongue" – Haroula Rose & Julian West
"Gelato" – Iga Lis, Karolina Vavra & Anna Rybus
"Harlem Fragments" – Cameron Tyler Carr, Wes Andre Goodrich, Danielle Therese Dougé, Flor Tejada, Collin Meath, Ben Thompson & Salma Qarnain
"How to Fill the Unfillable Hole Inside You" – Dave Canning, Collin Meath, Benjamin Thompson & Lianne Becker
"Open to It" (Episode 8: Open to Body Language) – Frank Arthur Smith, Matt Hartman, Kristy Thomas, Afrika Jonée, Sarah Whitaker, Josslyn Glenn & Troy Barboza
"Passion of X" – Camille Ora-Nicole Elston, Grey Rain Valdez, Samata Allen, Figgy Baby, Mik Berry, Ren L[i]u & Soleil Burgess
"Things I've Made My Roommate Do" – Mylissa Fitzsimmons
"This Body Is a Shell "- Ashley Eakin, Shawn Lovering, Matt Sakatani Roe & Hannah Harper
"We Are Not Alone" – Adebukola Bodunrin, Ezra C. Daniels & Mariel Neto

Best Short Film, Animated
"Dona Beatriz Ñsîmba Vita" – Leonardo Cata Preta Souza
"Edith and the Tall Child" – Kohana Wilson
"Escape Artist" – Kieran Barker & Kimberly Joseph
"I Know Him So Well" – Chance Calloway
"In the Shadows" – Nico Isaque Barrett
"Joie" – Hing Ang, Veronica Wain & Dianna La Grassa
"Osun "- Michael Rhima, Diana Chu, Morakinyo Araoye, Sailaja Bandyopadhyay, John Helgeland, Jeffrey Njoku, Mabs Okusaga & Diare Oseragbaje
"The Grand Book" – Arjan Brentjes & Richard Valk
"The Old Young Crow" – Liam LoPinto
"Welcome to 8th Street" – Yoo Lee, Amanda Miller & Xin Li

Best Short Film, Documentary
"A Body Called Life" – Spencer MacDonald & Pascal Duschletta
"I Am Gustavo" – Melissa Phillips
"Krush The Wrestler" – Alex Megaro & Ian Bell
"Marungka Tjalatjunu" (Dipped in Black) – Matthew Thorne, Derik Lynch & Patrick Graham
"No Se Ve Desde Acá" – Enrique Pedráza-Botero & Faye Tsakas
"Pardon Me "- Shuja Moore
"Sewing Machine" – Ülo Pikkov
"The Afro Mexpats" – Ebony Marie Bailey & Andalusia K. Soloff
"The Canary" – Camilo Silva & Rawad Kansoun
"Woyane" – Jonny Stern & Adam Fried

Best Documentary Feature Film
"Hunting Jack" – Hidde de Vries & Karim Hamad
"Impossible Town" – Meg Griffiths, Scott Faris, Brandon Hill & Alia Mansoori
"Pack is Here "- Vivian Denny Veidt & Sosha Belle
"The Anarchist Lunch" – Rachel Epstein
"The Walk" – Tamara Kotevska, Harri Grace, Orlando von Einseidel, David Lan & Tracey Seaward

Best Feature Film
"A Great Divide" – Jean Shim, Jeff Yang & Brian Yang
"African Giants" – Omar S Kamara, Leo Blumberg-Woll & Jordan Tyner
"No More Time "- Dalila Droege, Elric Kane, Laura Klein & Alexandra Clayton
"Riley" – Benjamin Howard, Tommy Anderson & Laura Scarano
"Why Dig When You Can Pluck" – Cambria Matlow & Fran Bittakis

Best Screenplay
" [subtext]" – Olivia Haller
"A Great Divide" – Jeff Yang
"Albertine" – Maria Guidone
"Boi De Conchas" (The Shell Covered Ox) – Daniel Barosa
"Lovely" – Naomi Shroff-Mehta
"Navel Gazer" – Shirin Mori
"The Burden" – Tish Arana
"The Middle" – Sylvia Ray
"The Old Young Crow" – Liam LoPinto
"They Don't Leave" – Caz McGovern

Best Cinematography
"[subtext]" – Beth Napoli
"Albertine" – Corrado Serri
"How to Fill the Unfillable Hole Inside You" – Dan McBride
"Why Dig When You Can Pluck" – Ben Bach
"Woyane" – Jonathan Stern

Best Film Editing
"A Roadside Banquet" – Christine Ho
"À toi les oreilles"- Myriam Magassouba
"Hair Care" – Fatima Wardy
"Np Se Ve Desde Acá" – Enrique Pedráza-Botero
"The Walk" – Martin Ivanov

Best Sound Design
"Marungka Tjalatjunu" (Dipped in Black) – Marlon Beatt
"Nea" – Juan Cammarano
"No More Time" – Mary Ellen Porto
"TaiL" – Abigail Hendrix
"The Steak" – Abdolreza Heydari

Best Score
"A Body Called Life" – Dan Deacon
"Castles in the Sky" – Frank London
"I Know Him So Well"- Gabriel Basco
"The Grand Book" – Arjan Brentjes
"The Old Young Crow" – David Sahar, Karen Tanaka & Nobuko Fukatsu

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