Oct 15, 2020 12:23am PT

Oscars Predictions: Best Director – Will Paul Greengrass and Chloe Zhao Carry the Torch for the Studios?

By Clayton Davis

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Photo courtesy of Universal Pictures

Variety's Awards Circuit is home to the official predictions for the upcoming Oscars from Film Awards Editor Clayton Davis. Following Academy Awards history, buzz, news, reviews and sources, the Oscar predictions are updated regularly with the current year's contenders in all categories. Variety's Awards Circuit Prediction schedule consists of four phases, running all year long: Draft, Pre-Season, Regular Season and Post Season. Eligibility calendar and dates of awards will determine how long each phase lasts and will be displayed next to revision date.

*To see all the latest predictions, of all the categories, in one place, visit **THE COLLECTIVE**.*

BEST DIRECTOR

UPDATED: Oct. 15, 2020 (PRE-SEASON)

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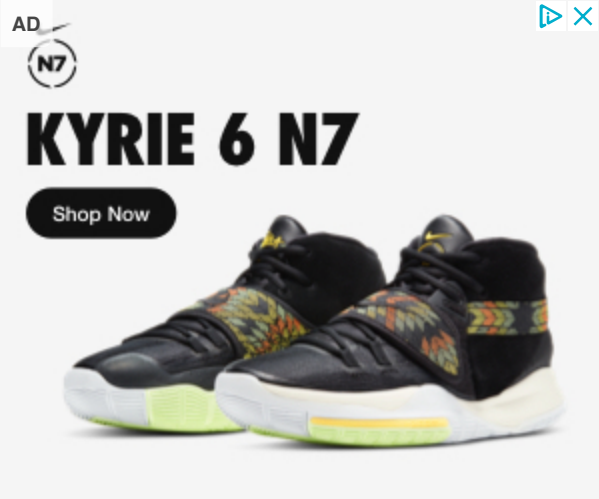

New additions include John Patrick Shanley (“Wild Mountain Thyme”), Fisher Stevens (“Palmer”), Robin Wright (“Land”), Harry Macqueen (“Supernova”), Edson Oda (“Nine Days”) and Josephine Decker (“Shirley”).

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† = *no release date scheduled / could be delayed / may not be eligible*
†† = *could be campaigned in lead or supporting categories / original or adapted screenplay categories*





Netflix

AND THE PREDICTED NOMINEES ARE:

1. **Chloé Zhao**

   "Nomadland" (Searchlight Pictures)

2. **Aaron Sorkin**

   "The Trial of the Chicago 7" (Netflix)

3. **Regina King**

   "One Night in Miami" (Amazon Studios)

4. **David Fincher**

   "Mank" (Netflix)

5. **Paul Greengrass**

   "News of the World" (Universal Pictures)





Photo courtesy of YouTube / Sony Pictures Classics

NEXT IN LINE CONTENDERS:

6. **George C. Wolfe**

   "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" (Netflix)

7. **Florian Zeller**

   "The Father" (Sony Pictures Classics)

8. **Spike Lee**

   "Da 5 Bloods" (Netflix)

9. **Lee Isaac Chung†**

   "Minari" (A24)

10. **Sofia Coppola**

    "On the Rocks" (A24/Apple TV Plus)

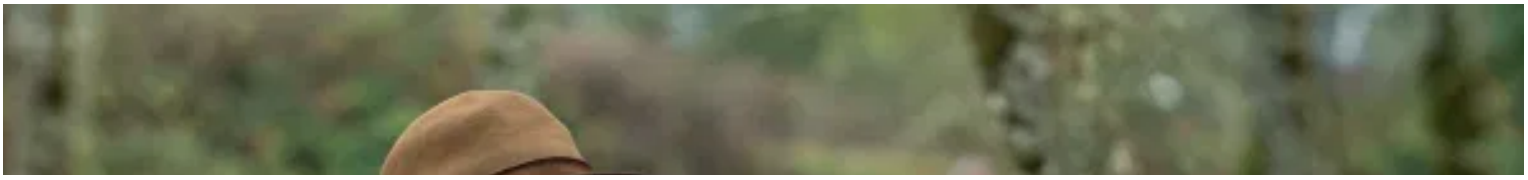




Photo Courtesy of A24

TOP-TIER AWARDS CONTENDERS:

11. **Lee Daniels**

    "The United States vs. Billie Holiday" (Paramount Pictures)

12. **Shaka King†**

    "Judas and the Black Messiah" (Warner Bros.)

13. **Christopher Nolan**

    "Tenet" (Warner Bros.)

14. **Emerald Fennell†**

    "Promising Young Woman" (Focus Features)

15. **Francis Lee**

    "Ammonite" (Neon)

16. **Kelly Reichardt**

    "First Cow" (A24)

"The Personal History of David Copperfield" (Searchlight Pictures)

18. **Ramin Bahrani**†

"The White Tiger" (Netflix)

19. **Harry Macqueen**†

"Supernova" (Bleecker Street)

20. **Liesl Tommy**

"Respect" (United Artists Releasing)



Photo courtesy of Netflix

ALSO IN CONTENTION:

"Mulan" (Netflix)

22. **Anthony Russo & Joe Russo**

"Cherry" (Apple TV Plus)

23. **Darius Marder**

"Sound of Metal" (Amazon Studios)

24. **Charlie Kaufman**

"I'm Thinking of Ending Things" (Netflix)

25. **Max Barbakow**

"Palm Springs" (Hulu/Neon)

26. **George Clooney**†

"The Midnight Sky" (Netflix)

27. **Julia Hart**

"I'm Your Woman" (Amazon Studios)

28. **Niki Caro**

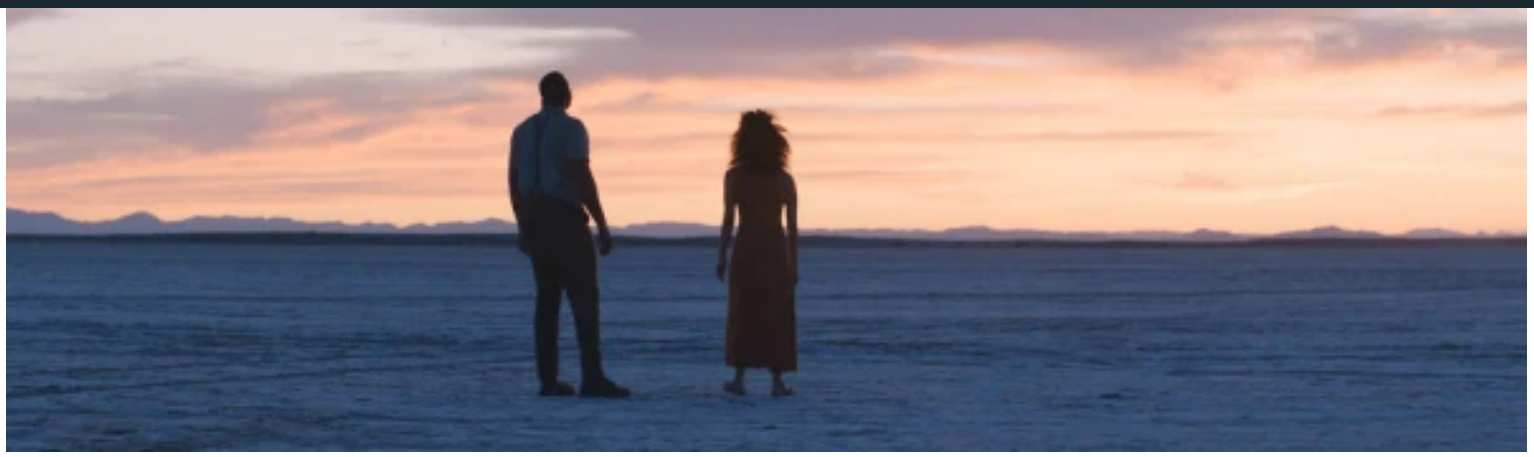
"Mulan" (Walt Disney Pictures/Disney Plus)

29. **Channing Godfrey Peoples**

"Miss Juneteenth" (Vertical Entertainment)

30. **Eliza Hittman**

"Never Rarely Sometimes Always" (Focus Features)



Nine Days
Courtesy of Sundance Institute

MORE AWARDS CONTENDERS:

31. **Azazel Jacobs**

"French Exit" (Sony Pictures Classics)

32. **John Patrick Shanley**

"Wild Mountain Thyme" (Bleecker Street)

33. **Kitty Green**

"The Assistant" (Bleecker Street)

34. **Phyllida Lloyd†**

"Herself" (Amazon Studios)

35. **Rod Lurie**

"The Outpost" (Screen Media Films)

36. **Ron Howard**

"Hillbilly Elegy" (Netflix)

38. **Ryan Murphy**

"The Prom" (Netflix)

39. **Josephine Decker**

"Shirley" (Neon)

40. **Pete Docter & Kemp Powers**

"Soul" (Pixar)



Scott Everett White/NETFLIX

UNRANKED AWARDS CONTENDERS:

- **Radha Blank,** "The Forty-Year-Old-Version" (Netflix)
- **Kenneth Branagh,** "Death on the Nile" (20th Century Studios)
- **Jonathan Butterell,** "Everybody's Talking About Jamie" (20th Century Studios)
- **Scott Cooper,** "Antlers" (Searchlight Pictures)
- **Michael Angelo Covino,** "The Climb" (Sony Pictures Classics)
- **Autumn de Wilde,** "Emma." (Focus Features)
- **Sean Durkin,** "The Nest" (IFC Films)
- **Clea DuVall,** "Happiest Season" (Sony Pictures)
- **Heidi Ewing,** "I Carry You With Me" (Sony Pictures Classics)
- **Mona Fastvold,** "The World to Come" (Bleecker Street)†
- **Coky Giedroyc,** "How to Build a Girl" (IFC Films)
- **Reinaldo Marcus Green,** "Good Joe Bell" (Solstice Studios)
- **John Lee Hancock,** "The Little Things" (Warner Bros.)
- **Chad Hartigan,** "Little Fish" (IFC Films)
- **Patty Jenkins,** "Wonder Woman 1984" (Warner Bros.)†
- **Miranda July,** "Kajillionaire" (Focus Features)
- **Glen Keane,** "Over the Moon" (Netflix)
- **Joe Mantello,** "The Boys in the Band" (Netflix)
- **Pietro Marcello,** "Martin Eden" (Kino Lorber)
- **Tara Miele,** "Wander Darkly" (Lionsgate)
- **Carla Mirabella-Davis,** "Swallow" (IFC Films)
- **Ekwa Msangi,** "Farewell Amor" (Wavelength Productions)
- **Gavin O'Connor,** "The Way Back" (Warner Bros.)
- **Gina Prince-Bythewood,** "The Old Guard" (Netflix)
- **Marjane Satrapi,** "Radioactive" (Amazon Studios)
- **Dan Scanlon,** "Onward" (Pixar)
- **Aaron Schneider,** "Greyhound" (Apple TV Plus)
- **Steven Soderbergh,** "Let Them All Talk" (HBO Max)†
- **Fisher Stevens,** "Palmer" (Apple TV Plus)†
- **Ricky Straub,** "Concrete Cowboy" (No U.S. Distribution)†
- **Julie Taymor,** "The Glorias" (Roadside Attractions)
- **Leigh Whannell,** "The Invisible Man" (Universal Pictures)
- **Robin Wright,** "Land" (Focus Features)†
- **Benh Zeitlin,** "Wendy" (Searchlight Pictures)
- **Robert Zemeckis,** "The Witches" (HBO Max)

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industry. The best director category has honored cinema's most prolific filmmakers: John Ford is the most awarded director in history with four Oscars while Frank Capra and William Wyler garnered three each. Wyler is the most nominated director in Academy history with 12 while Martin Scorsese and Billy Wilder currently place behind him with 9 and 8 mentions respectively. The late Clarence Brown is the most nominated filmmaker to not win an Academy Award with six (his last was for 1947's "The Yearling").

Academy Awards Predictions (All Categories)

- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Picture
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Director
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Actor
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Actress
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Supporting Actor
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Supporting Actress
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Original Screenplay
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Adapted Screenplay
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Animated Feature
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Production Design
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Cinematography
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Costume Design
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Film Editing
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Makeup and Hairstyling
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Sound
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Visual Effects
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Original Score
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Original Song
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Documentary Feature
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best International Feature *[coming soon]*
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Animated Short *[coming soon]*
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Documentary Short *[coming soon]*
- 2021 Oscar Predictions: Best Live-Action Short *[coming soon]*

6 COMMENTS