

**Only 265 of 321 Oscar-qualifying films eligible for best picture**



There are 321 films that have qualified for the 2023 Academy Awards, with 265 of those films also eligible in the Best Picture category, the Academy announced.

The discrepancy between films that have qualified for the top category and films that are eligible in other categories comes because of new eligibility rules that require Best Picture candidates to meet additional benchmarks for diversity and inclusion. This is the first year that those Representation and Inclusion Standards (RAISE) have been enforced, though they did not appear to disqualify any serious contenders in the category, *The Wrap* reported.

Films that qualified for the Oscars but are not eligible for Best Picture include 'Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania,' 'The Creator,' 'Dumb Money,' and 'The Marvels.' Absence from the Best Picture list does not necessarily mean that a film failed to meet the RAISE standards, because that application is voluntary and films can opt out of Best Picture consideration.

Other films that aren't on the qualifying list for Best Picture include a handful of documentaries ('20 Days in Mariupol,' 'Common Ground,' 'Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project'), animated features ('Ernest & Celestine: A Trip to Gibberitia,' 'Monkey King,' 'They Shot the Piano Player') and international films ('Concrete Utopia,' 'Godland').

The 321 eligible films are the most since the 2020 Oscars, when 366 films qualified under COVID-era rules that relaxed the theatrical requirement and made it easier to qualify. Since then, 276 films qualified in 2021 and 301 in 2022.

In order to be eligible for consideration, Academy rules state, "feature films must open in a commercial motion picture theater in at least one of six US metropolitan areas: Los Angeles County; the City of New York; the Bay Area; Chicago, Illinois; Miami, Florida; and Atlanta, Georgia, between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023, and complete a minimum qualifying run of seven consecutive days in the same venue. Feature films must have a running time of more than 40 minutes." Nominations voting begins on Thursday and concludes on Jan. 16. The nominations will be announced on Jan. 23. The 96th Oscars will be held on March 24 at the Dolby Theatre at Ovation Hollywood and will be televised live on ABC and in more than 200 territories worldwide.

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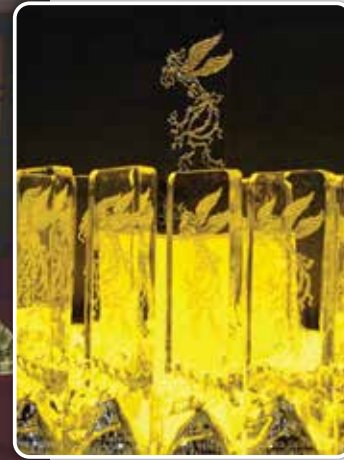
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# 42nd Fajr International Film Festival unveils official lineup



**Arts & Culture Desk**

The 42nd edition of the Fajr International Film Festival, Iran's most important film event, announced its lineup for three sections: Sodaye-Simorgh (the festival's main competition section), New Perspective (first-time filmmakers) and Animations. The announcement was

made live on state TV by Mojtaba Amini, the event's secretary, who said that the festival is set to showcase a diverse selection of films, IRNA reported. 'Breakfast with Giraffes' directed by Soroush Sehhat, 'Parviz Khan' by Ali Saqafi, and 'Ahmad' by Amir-Abbas Rabiei are among the films of the main competition section.

The selection committee, comprised of seven members, including prominent figures such as Daryoush Arjmand and Hossein Zandbaf, spent a month reviewing 106 submissions before finalizing the final lineup. The list includes 12 cinematic productions from the Farabi Cinema Foundation, produced collaboratively with various organizations, marking a shift in strategy towards supportive filmmaking in Iran. These films will be part of the 'Sodaye-Simorgh' and 'New Perspective' sections of the festival.

Amini emphasized that all productions this year resulted from partnerships with public or private sectors. The 42nd Fajr International Film Festival is slated to be held in Tehran from February 1 to 11, promising cinephiles a rich cinematic experience and a platform for emerging talents in the Iranian film industry.

## Iran urges trust-building for return of expats: Judiciary chief



**Social Desk**

Iranian Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseini Ejei stressed the need to instill trust for the return of Iranians residing abroad. He emphasized that face-to-face trust-building is essential, warning that without it, the complexities surrounding the return of Iranians might not be addressed even with numerous laws and regulations, *iribnews.ir* reported. Ejei pointed out scenarios where specialists, having left the country during sensitive periods like war, aim to return to contribute their expertise. However, the lack of mutual trust between the individuals and the authorities may prevent their successful return. Many Iranians abroad express the desire to return but are hesitant due to a lack of confidence. Ejei called for the implementation of mechanisms to foster mutual trust. Speaking about legal and judicial matters for Iranians abroad, Ejei suggested solutions that could resolve issues without requiring their physical presence in the country. He stressed the importance of informing and educating individuals about the procedures, emphasizing the important role of the responsible authorities in ensuring a smooth process. Ejei highlighted the difference between verbal assurances and tangible actions, asserting that actions by the judiciary would be more impactful in reassuring Iranians abroad about their return. He also emphasized the significance of positive interactions at key points such as airports, consulates, and embassies to counteract negative perceptions and false propaganda.

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## Colorful mummies discovered in unique 1,300-year-old graves

While exploring an ancient cemetery in Egypt, a team of archaeologists from Spain discovered a peculiar set of tombs carved into rock. Inside, they found a trove of treasures dating back more than 1,300 years. The graves — dating to between about 332 B.C. and 641 A.D. — were carved into the ground, similar to a stone well, according to a Jan. 8 Facebook post from Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, *mi-amiherald.com* reported. The well-like holes end with a door closed by mud bricks. Archaeologists said

they found empty coffins within the graves and at least 23 mummies. Among the human remains, many were wrapped in colorful garments, experts said. Some of the mummies wore gilded and colorful funerary masks. Two of the burials had a gold tongue in their mouths, which is a burial ritual to preserve the dead dating to the Roman era, according to archaeologists. Photos show mummies in their graves as well as a mask worn by one of the deceased. The team also found a unique terracotta statue depicting

Aphrodite, officials said. The goddess is wearing a floral wreath topped by a crown. It's the first time such a statue has been discovered in the region. In addition to mummies and statue, a collection of stone bricks belonging to a demolished building were excavated, experts said. Many of the bricks depict drawings of plants, fruit or animals. Archaeologists said they will continue exploring the area. The tombs and artifacts were found in Al-Bahnasa, which is about 130 miles south of Cairo.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

