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Why are the Oscars still so darn white in 2020?

By Patrick Ryan
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The results stung. It was a repeat of 2015 when, like decades before in the Academy's history, actors and filmmakers of color were excluded or rarely underrepresented among the nominees. Throughout the Oscars' 92-year-plus history, people of color have advocated better and more representation at award shows, and Oscars, in cinema and Hollywood.

It was one cinema super-fan, April Reign, who well enough a enough remembered the #OscarsSoWhite hashtag she created in 2015 to post nothing but a screenshot focused on diversity and inclusion in Hollywood. But with the 92nd Oscar nod-in, and with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences responding to Reign's call, "Oscars were directly invoked" this commentator's writing for the past four very same #OscarsSoWhite nominees a more relevant and timely than ever.

Reign—now known as the #OscarsSoWhite creator and a global diversity and inclusion advocate—was an attorney practicing company finance law with no connection to the entertainment industry when the idea of the hashtag first dawned on her and nothing near viral.

"In that particular morning in January, I was switching the nominees on TV to get ready for work, and Chris Hemsworth—who had just in the Avengers MCU—was up for an award. I'm sorry, I'm not sure my that category after category, I saw no people of color nominated," Reign recalled. "So I picked up my phone and got up to speed on Twitter, #OscarsSoWhite was indeed trending, and that's how it all."

By hashtaches her tweet was trending worldwide.

"Initially, I was being kind of sarcastic, as those were the nominations we were getting, and I was tired of hashtags that nominees too agency," Reign explained, sharing an example of a trend received in response to been thinking and poking fun at the Oscars.

A few days later, the hashtag drifted into a larger conversation about representation in Hollywood and beyond. Reign, who was responsible for marginalized communities in the entertainment industry According to Reign, there was even more interest around #OscarsSoWhite in 2016. The #SOW hashtag thereby repeated the previous year's lack of diversity in the major categories.

"I think the industry and the media and everybody kind of woke up and said, okay, time out is a thing, this is not acceptable," Reign said. "Maybe we need to see what this lady is actually talking about."

In 2018, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences based the Oscars nominations on a 683-member-strong committee of industry and veterans by 2016. The Academy thereafter recommended that another of the members of color from 8 percent in 2015 to 41 percent in 2019, while the number of women increased from 24 percent in 2015 to 32 percent in 2019. While the Academy has set a goal of doubling such underrepresented voices, its number of women only increased 2 percent from 2015. The Academy is still 84 percent white and 68 percent male.

But on the other hand, Reign also pointed out that #OscarsSoWhite has helped Hollywood progress with the Oscars' response to funding its members among people of color and women.

"What it also meant is that people who were not members of the academy for years ago are now" Reign said. "People like John Ridley, who was a screenwriter for years, and he finally got his Oscar because consider the publicity of Hollywood Reporter Oscar of the. You do feel as deliberately progress in any sense."

The progress #OscarsSoWhite has meant to diversity and inclusion is not limited only to Hollywood. There's now a #OscarsSoWhiteFilm, a #TheOscarWhite and a #OscarsSoWhite. While Reign launched a movement, she said she can't take ten percent of the credit for the diversity and inclusion efforts that are now out there.

"I think it helps spur consumers to rethink how they receive their entertainment and what they're consuming," Reign said. "I like to think that in the last five years we have all become more aware by saying we're not going to vote[ed] mediocrity and we are not going to pay for mediocrity. Consumers have the power to vote with their dollars or to subscription services for entertainment that does not reflect faces of our experiences."

In Hollywood, there are some corporate video rendering behind the scenes to ensure emotional diversity being production to both casting and production. Some filmmakers and actors are creating their own production companies instead of continuing to try to make inroads in Hollywood. Reign said that's a good thing, and that the changes we are starting to see about these larger corporations about diversity and inclusion.

But to stick, the #OscarsSoWhite movement remains relevant, with Reign saying there's still much work left to be done. "I think we're just getting started," she said. "There's a reason why #OscarsSoWhite is on the list of the media and the consumers every single year, since it's as clear as day that they're telling us."

The #OscarsSoWhite movement has gone so far, endorsing the Oscars to ensure a more diverse and inclusive group, according to Reign, the Academy has fallen short. "I think it's really time to start asking whether the academy is still relevant," she explained. "It became the Oscars because it was the Oscars, but I think it's time we start to pick back apart that if you really think about it.

As Reign noted, 92 years ago it was basically all white men meeting to validate their performances—and that's how the Oscars began. With the declining viewership in the telecast and lack of diversity, it's time to change that.

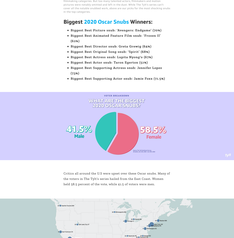
"It has to do with the gatekeepers," she said. "Is even with all the changes that the Academy says they've made, we are still talking about a majority white, white male organization. So why should we continue to allow that organization to continue to be the gatekeeper of Hollywood?"

The 2020 Oscar nominations signaled the status quo. Many were upset. Obama is disbelief. Some were surprised. This year's Oscar snubs consisted of diverse performances from inspirational Hollywood figures like Cynthia Erivo, Lupita Nyong'o, Jennifer Lopez and Antonio Banderas and Scarlett Johansson for Marriage Story and the Best Picture category—typical Oscars. With a couple of exceptions like Parasite and "Ford Versus Ferrari" made, the Oscars fell into its usual tropes.

Cynthia Erivo is the only actor of color acknowledged for her leading role in Harriet. Erivo's singer about abolitionist Harriet Tubman. Lupita Nyong'o was nominated for her supporting role in Us. Her other lauds, "Jojo" received no nominations, which is a standard for non-space.

Accredited Erivo that were considered major contenders and focused on storytelling featuring fully realized people of color and women were basically overlooked in the acting categories, and mostly in the big night. Just to name a few: The Farewell, "Queen & Slim," Lovers Rock, Honey Boy, Dolemite Is My Name, The Last Black Man in San Francisco, "Climbing to My Heart" and "Ex" did not get any love at the Oscars.

With an #OscarsSoWhite rallying cry yet again, The Tylt asked many of you to vote on those Oscar Snubbers and actors left in the dust of the award season. And with our many nominated performances, we asked you to vote on social media accounts, below are some of the ones that stung the most.



Cynthia Erivo, Lupita Nyong'o, Jennifer Lopez, Antonio Banderas, Scarlett Johansson, Eddie Murphy, Taylor Swift, Awkwafina, Lulu Wang, Alfonso Cuarón, Lorraine Bracco, Eric Roberts, Marsai Martin, Jennifer Hudson,

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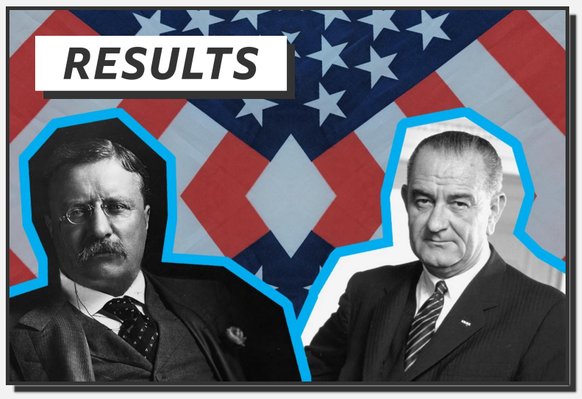

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