

## **This Barbie didn't receive an Oscar nomination. But why?**

By Walker Payne

MONTEVALLO, Ala. -- Two weeks ago, the world witnessed an Oscar nomination announcement ceremony that will surely be remembered forever.

On January 23, 2024, the [nominees for the 96th annual Academy Awards](#) were announced, and now, weeks later, creatives everywhere are still scratching their heads over Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie's omissions from their respective Best Director and Best Actress categories.

The Associated Press reacted to the news of Gerwig's Oscar snub by saying that it was "one of the biggest shocks in recent memory." However, for Professor Kaley Martin at the University of Montevallo, it was not as shocking of an announcement.

"I was not surprised when [they] were not prominent in the nominations," she said, "I was surprised more by how much they were [nominated] in some other categories."

Professor Martin, who has spent nearly a decade working in videography and filmmaking, said that women and women-centric films are too often forgotten or disregarded by the Academy and in Hollywood as a whole.

However, she says the Academy's failure to recognize Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie is part of a much bigger issue.

Both women creatives and creatives of color have long been underrepresented in the Academy; as of 2023, around 33% of the Academy's members were made up of women, and only 19% were made up of people of color.

Further, only eight women in the entire history of the Oscars have been nominated for Best Director.

The first woman nominated for Best Director was Lina Wertmüller for "Seven Beauties" in 1975, and it took 47 years to reach that achievement.

Sixteen years later, Wertmüller was followed by Jane Campion for “The Piano” (1993), then Sofia Coppola for “Lost In Translation” (2003), Kathryn Bigelow for “The Hurt Locker” (2009), Greta Gerwig for “Lady Bird” (2017), Emerald Fennell for “Promising Young Woman” (2021), Chloé Zhao for “Nomadland” (2021), Jane Campion for “The Power of the Dog” (2022), and, most recently, Justine Triet for “Anatomy of a Fall” (2024).

Bigelow, Zhao, and Campion are the only three women who have won under the Best Director category, and Zhao still remains the only woman of color to ever be nominated.

The lack of nominations stretches further than the Best Director category.

As for Best Actress, only 29 women of color have ever been nominated in the category, with Lily Gladstone becoming the 30th this year for her performance in “Killers of the Flower Moon.”

Out of the 29 women nominated, only two, Halle Berry and Michelle Yeoh, have won the category.

Professor Martin also noted the “disheartening” lack of representation of women creatives in the Best Cinematography category; only three women have ever been nominated, none of whom have won the award.

There has also never been a woman of color nominated in the category.

This begs the question: why?

Well, Professor Martin is currently working on her dissertation which highlights that very question.

Martin said: “I think a lot of the awarding goes back to [the fact that] the Academy has been predominantly male since its founding. A lot of the board members are male, a lot of the [committee members] are male. So they’re going to nominate who they know, and they’re going to stick with what they know.”

Professor Martin said that it is very evident that men and women creatives are being held to different standards, harkening back to the entire meaning of Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie's "Barbie."

While Variety shared a statement made by an Academy member saying, "At the end of the day, it's just a Barbie movie," professor Martin says that sort of statement has no basis.

"It wasn't about Barbie. It was about unrealistic expectations placed on women, and they used Barbie as a case," she said. "Barbie has, for the longest time, been this kind of model of the 'ideal' woman; she's thin, she's tall, and she can do it all with fashion and a smile."

Martin said, "I think when they say... 'At the end of the day, it's just a Barbie movie,'... at the end of the day, you just don't get it."

Professor Martin is one of many people who have shared their disappointment in the Academy's disregard for Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie.

Hillary Clinton and John Stamos were among the industry support for the two women; [Stamos shared a statement on Instagram](#) saying, "In a twist of irony, both women were snubbed by the Academy."

Ryan Gosling, who played Ken in Gerwig's Barbie and was nominated for both Best Supporting Actor and Best Original Song, also shared a statement expressing his disappointment:

"There is no Ken without Barbie, and there is no 'Barbie' movie without Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie, the two people most responsible for this history-making, globally-celebrated film."

America Ferrera, who also received a Best Supporting Actress nomination for her role as Gloria in Gerwig's "Barbie", released a statement saying, "Greta has done just about everything that a director could do to deserve it."

According to Variety, “Barbie” set a record for the highest-grossing movie ever directed by a woman, yet that woman was not recognized by the Academy beyond the film’s nomination for Best Picture.

However, while the “Barbie” movie and some of the women who were integral in its creation were not entirely recognized, its meaning has made shock waves across Hollywood.

People.com reported that, this year, about one-third of the Oscar nominees list was made up of women.

Professor Martin stated that she was happy to see Lily Gladstone and America Ferrera receive their respective Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress nominations.

“I’m very glad America Ferrera was nominated for Best Supporting Actress,” she said. “She was the main caveat that kind of drilled home the central point of the movie... And the fact that she is a Hispanic Latina woman means even more so that some underrepresented groups are getting some nominations.”

Martin said, “I love that they're being nominated. I would love it more if they were winning.”

While some believe the Academy is on the right track to properly recognizing and appreciating female talent both in front of and behind the cameras, Professor Martin said that it’s a complicated situation.

“The symptoms and the sickness go all the way down, so we need to figure out a way to cure the disease, not the symptoms... The Oscars is a symptom of a bigger problem, and we need to address the bigger problem,” Martin said.