

ROMA WINS SIGHT & SOUND 2018 CRITICS POLL



Tuesday 11 December 2018 – **Sight & Sound**, the BFI’s international film magazine, today announces Alfonso Cuarón’s *Roma* as the winner in the most anticipated and respected critics’ opinion poll: Sight & Sound’s Films of the Year. Paul Thomas Anderson’s Oscar®-winning *Phantom Thread* is in second place, followed by Lee Chang-dong’s *Burning* in third. Over 160 critics, programmers and academics from around the world voted for their top five film, TV and artists’ moving image releases from the year. The resulting poll has four of the top ten films directed by women, two of the top five films in black and white and three of the top ten films are UK productions or co-productions. The full results are available online today at <https://www.bfi.org.uk/best-films-2018> and published with critics’ comments in Sight & Sound’s January/February 2019 special double issue available digitally today and in print on 13 December. The top 20 films are as follows:

Title	Director
1 Roma	Alfonso Cuarón
2 Phantom Thread	Paul Thomas Anderson
3 Burning	Lee Chang-dong
4 Cold War	Paweł Pawlikowski
5 First Reformed	Paul Schrader
6 Leave No Trace	Debra Granik
7 The Favourite	Yorgos Lanthimos
= You Were Never Really Here	Lynne Ramsay
9 Happy as Lazzaro	Alice Rohrwacher
= Zama	Lucrecia Martel
11 The Image Book	Jean-Luc Godard
12 If Beale Street Could Talk	Barry Jenkins
13 BlacKkKlansman	Spike Lee
14 The Other Side of the Wind	Orson Welles
= Shirkers	Sandi Tan
= Shoplifters	Hirokazu Kore-eda
17 Sorry to Bother You	Boots Riley
18 Faces Places	Agnès Varda, J.R.
= The Rider	Chloe Zhao
= Western	Valeska Grisebach

21	La Flor	Mariano Llinás
=	Hereditary	Ari Aster
=	High Life	Claire Denis
=	Isle of Dogs	Wes Anderson
=	Madeline's Madeline	Josephine Decker
=	120 BPM	Robin Campillo
=	Transit	Christian Petzold

After directing English language award-winners *Gravity* and *Children of Men*, **Roma** is a return to poll winner Alfonso Cuarón's native Spanish. A sumptuous black-and-white ode to the woman who shaped his early life, *Roma* is already being tipped as an awards season favourite, after wins at the New York Critics Circle Awards and the BIFAs (Best International Independent Film). Prior to its theatrical release on 30 November and its Netflix debut this Friday 14 December, the film had its UK premiere at the 2018 BFI London Film Festival as the Journey Gala and won the Golden Lion after its World Premiere at the Venice International Film Festival.

Sight & Sound's Editor, Nick James, said "*I could not be more delighted to see Alfonso Cuarón's Roma top our Best Films of 2018 poll. Its very success as an instant classic of substance, a film praised beyond all others for wowing audiences of all kinds, is thrilling when you consider it's a subtitled, black and white tale of a Mixteco maid and the family she serves in the 1970s. Roma has reaffirmed cinema's capacity to make great popular art as well as great entertainment.*"

Roma is not the only black and white film to be placed in the top five; BFI-backed **Cold War** was voted fourth. Paweł Pawlikowski's tale of an ill-fated love affair also played well to festival audiences, including at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival where Pawlikowski won Best Director and the film was in competition for the Palme d'Or. Both films have been put forward by their respective countries for the upcoming Best Foreign Language Film at 2019's Oscars®.

Another film supported by the BFI that is also in the top ten is Lynne Ramsay's **You Were Never Really Here**, which received critical acclaim at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival with Ramsay winning Best Screenplay and lead actor Joaquin Phoenix receiving Best Actor Award. The film came joint seventh in the poll with Yorgos Lanthimos' **The Favourite** – which first received development funding from the UK Film Council in 2003, making it the longest-ever National Lottery supported project. *The Favourite* is hotly tipped for the awards season and has already won a record high of 10 awards at this year's BIFAs, including Best Independent Film, Best Director and Best Screenplay.

Ramsay's psychological thriller, **You Were Never Really Here**, is one of the four films in the top ten with a female director; others are Debra Granik's **Leave No Trace** in sixth and Alice Rohrwacher's **Happy as Lazzaro** and Lucrecia Martel's **Zama** in joint ninth place. Another four female directors are acknowledged in the top 20, with Sandi Tan's **Shirkers** in joint 14th (with Hirokazu Kore-eda's hotly anticipated **Shoplifters** and Orson Welles' **The Other Side of the Wind** – a lost film, now found and available on Netflix). Chloe Zhao is joint 18th with **The Rider**, alongside Valeska Grisebach's **Western** and **Faces Places** directed by Agnès Varda and J.R.

Paul Thomas Anderson's **Phantom Thread**, set in the heart of London's 1950s couture industry, was filmed on locations spanning the UK, from Fitzroy Square in London to the Cotswolds and coastal locations in Staithes. This is not the only film to be made on location in the UK; the majority of principle photography for *The Favourite* was filmed in Hertfordshire at Hatfield House.

Placed third, Lee Chang-dong's critically acclaimed **Burning** was this year's BFI London Film Festival's Thrill Gala in association with Sight & Sound and is not the only BFI LFF Sight & Sound Gala film in this year's poll – the magazine's 2017 Gala, Lucrecia Martel's *Zama*, placed ninth. *Burning* is one of

three Asian films in the top 20; the others are Singapore's first road movie, *Shirkers*, directed by Sandi Tan and Hirokazu Kore-eda's *Shoplifters*.

Sight & Sound's January/February 2019 issue is available digitally to subscribers here:

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/january-february-2019-issue>

James Bell from Sight & Sound is available for interview upon request.

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