



Jarman award

From the Algerian mountains to a clogged east London road: 'Exceptional' Jarman award nominees announced

Letters to a chestnut tree, daredevil motorcyclists, Italian bloodletting rituals ... just some of the subjects covered by the experimental filmmakers on the shortlist for this year's prestigious Film London Jarman award

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Whether it's roaring through Lagos on the back of a motorcycle taxi or gently rafting down Jamaica's waterways, this year's nominees for the prestigious Film London Jarman award promise to take you on quite a trip.

The six-strong shortlist for the £10,000 prize, which recognises British artists who work with moving images, also features work made in southern Italy and Algeria's

Hoggar mountains, as well as the (arguably less glamorous) M11 link road in Hackney, east London.

The latter work is by Onyeka Igwe, a British-Nigerian artist whose 2022 film [The Miracle on George Green](#) is inspired by the 1993 protests in Wanstead that attempted to save a 250-year-old sweet chestnut tree from being cut down. During the resistance, schoolchildren wrote letters addressed to the tree, and Igwe uses these as a starting point to explore radical protests dating back to the 17th century.



📷 What home means ... Morgan Quaintance's [Available Light](#) (2024)

Also firmly on the road is [Machine Boys](#), a 2024 film by the Hamburg-based Karimah Ashadu that delves into the macho world of motorcycle taxi drivers in Nigeria's largest city. We hear the riders discuss their philosophy around death and rebellion amid the noise of revving engines and thick clouds of dust.

Elsewhere on the shortlist are artist, writer and musician Morgan Quaintance, whose 2024 film [Available Light](#) uses interviews with people renting in both Tokyo and London in order to explore what the idea of home means in a big city, and George Finlay Ramsay, the Scottish film-maker behind 2024's [Flesh, Wax and Glass II: The Age of the Son](#), which focuses on a grieving Calabrian lorry driver performing a bloody ritual during Holy Week.

Named after pioneering film-maker [Derek Jarman](#), the prize is known for spotting talent in the UK art scene. Now in its 18th year, previously shortlisted artists include Heather Phillipson, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Monster Chetwynd, Luke Fowler, Imran Perretta, Charlotte Prodger, Laure Prouvost, Sin Wai Kin and Project Art Works - all of whom went on to be shortlisted for, or to win, the Turner prize.

Making up this year's shortlist are Manchester film-maker and researcher Hope Strickland and the artist duo Arwa Aburawa and Turab Shah. The former's 2024 film, a river holds a perfect memory, traverses water from the Martha Brae River to Falmouth lagoon in Jamaica while subjects discuss concepts such as ancestral memory; the latter artists' And still, it remains (2023) takes us to the remote Algerian village of Mertoutek to study the lasting impact of the Reggane series of nuclear testing carried out by the French during the final stages of the Algerian war in the early 1960s.



📷 'Voice and vision' ... Hope Strickland's a river holds a perfect memory (2024)

Last year, [Maryam Tafakory](#) was awarded the prize for works that had been inspired by her watching 417 films made in post-revolution Iran. She will be a member of this year's jury, who said in a statement that this year's shortlist "is a powerful reflection of the richness and diversity of moving image practice in the UK today. The nominees each bring a distinct voice and vision, pushing the boundaries of form, storytelling, and experimentation. From intimate explorations of identity to bold political commentary, the works demonstrate an exceptional standard of creativity and innovation, reaffirming the vital role of artists' film in contemporary culture."

The winner of the [Jarman award](#) will be announced in late November at a ceremony in London. In the lead-up to that announcement, work of the shortlisted artists will be going on tour across cultural venues in the UK. They will also be presented as an exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery, London, from 18 November until 14 December 2025.