VFX breakdowns for BAFTA & Oscar 2018 nominees – including The Shape of Water, Blade Runner 2049 & Star Wars: The Last Jedi

Every year the world of film is celebrated and scrutinised with the coveted British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA) and Academy Awards (The Oscars). From best actor and actress, to best animated film and documentary, each facet of the film industry has a chance to have global recognition. The 2018 nominees list for both awards have been announced, and here we take a look at the films in the running for the best visual effects (VFX) awards – and there aren't too many surprises.

Blade Runner 2049, *Dunkirk*, *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* and *The Shape of Water* are nominated for the VFX BAFTA award and in the running for The Oscars nominees. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced the 10 remaining films in the running for the VFX category for the 90th Academy Awards. The shortlist will be released on January 23.

The Academy Awards is held on March 4, and the BAFTA awards on February 18.

Here, we feature the trailer, VFX breakdown reels of each film (that are currently available), and which VFX studios were behind the stunning visuals.

Alien: Covenant

VFX Oscar nominee

Trailer:

[embedded content]

Ridley Scott's *Alien: Covenant* is about members of the colony ship Covenant, who discover what they think to be an uncharted paradise. While there, they meet the synthetic survivor of the doomed Prometheus expedition. Suddenly the world turns dark and dangerous when a hostile alien life-form forces the crew into a fight for life.

VFX by: MPC, Framestore, Animal Logic, Luma Pictures, Rising Sun Pictures, Atomic Fiction.

VFX breakdown reel:

[embedded content]

Blade Runner 2049

BAFTA Special Visual Effects nominee
VFX Oscar nominee

Trailer:

[embedded content]

Blade Runner 2049 was the highly anticipated sequel to the original 1982 Blade Runner film directed by Ridley Scott. In the new Denis Villeneuve film, Officer K (Ryan Gosling), a new blade runner working for the LAPD, finds himself on a journey to find Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford), a former blade runner who's been missing for 30 years. The film's VFX were widely praised, but the presence of overt sexism frowned upon.

The VFX for the film involved extravagant environments, such as Deckard's penthouse and a dystopian LA, 'tangible' technology and recreating Rachael.

VFX by: Framestore, Moving Picture Company (MPC), Rode VX, Territory Studio, Weta Workshop, Double Negative.

VFX breakdown reel:

[embedded content]

Dunkirk

BAFTA Special Visual Effects nominee
VFX Oscar nominee

Trailer:

[embedded content]

Christopher Nolan’s Dunkirk retells Germany’s advancement into France, trapping Allied troops on the beaches of Dunkirk in May 1940. Troops were methodically evacuated from the beach using every naval and civilian vessel that could be found. 330,000 French, British, Belgian and Dutch soldiers were safely evacuated.

Dunkirk was never meant to be ‘VFX-intensive’, yet painted a much more realistic picture. The idea was to combine visual and special effects to make it look gritty. VFX work included the sinking of ships, crowd scenes on land and diving into the aerial dogfights.

VFX by: Double Negative.

Double Negative hasn’t released a VFX breakdown reel for Dunkirk, but you can read the interview with Double Negative overall VFX Supervisor Andrew Jackson on Art of VFX.

Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2.

VFX Oscar nominee

Trailer:

[embedded content]

Peter Quill and his fellow Guardians are hired by an alien race to protect their precious batteries from invaders. When it is discovered that Rocket has stolen the items they were sent to guard, the Sovereign dispatch their armada to search for vengeance. As the Guardians try to escape, the mystery of Peter’s parentage is revealed.

VFX by: Weta Digital, Framestore, Method Studios, Trixter Film, ScanlineVFX.

VFX breakdown reel:

[embedded content]

Kong: Skull Island

VFX Oscar nominee

Trailer:

[embedded content]

Scientists, soldiers and adventurous explore a mythical island in the Pacific Island. They run into the mighty Kong and ignite a battle between man and nature.

VFX by: Framestore, MPC, ILM, Rodeo FX, Hybride Technologies, fx3x, Scanline VFX, Halon Entertainment.

VFX breakdown reel:

[embedded content]

Okja

VFX Oscar nominee

Trailer:

[embedded content]

For 10 years, young Miji has been caretaker and friend to Okja at her home in the mountains of South Korea. But when a massive conglomerate Mirando Corporation takes Okja away and transports her to New York City, Mija sets out on a rescue mission.

VFX by: Method Studios, 4th Creative Party.

VFX breakdown reel:

[embedded content]

The Shape of Water

BAFTA Special Visual Effects nominee
VFX Oscar nominee

Trailer:

[embedded content]

The Shape of Water, released in the UK on February 16, tells the tale of Elisa – a mute, isolated woman who works as a cleaning lady in a hidden, high security government laboratory in 1962 Baltimore. She discovers the lab's classified secret – a scaly underwater creature from South America, and falls in love, but she must save it from the hands of the government and a marine biologist.

VFX for the film involve creating the creature itself and environments. The film mixes digital with a live-action costume for the creature, and Dennis Berardi, VFX supervisor on the film, says every shot was a hybrid of the two.

VFX by: Mr. X.

VFX breakdown reel:

[embedded content]

Star Wars: The Last Jedi

BAFTA Special Visual Effects nominee
VFX Oscar nominee

Trailer:

[embedded content]

This Star Wars film, although somewhat controversial, steps away from tradition and into the new, and even has Carrie Fisher, even if in a slightly drawn out and cheesy way. It follows Rey's journey to learn from Luke Skywalker as she learns the ways of the Jedi forces, meanwhile the First Order lead an all-out assault against Leia and the Resistance for supremacy of the galaxy.

VFX is always heavy in Star Wars films, everything from the new porg creatures to Snoke. VFX work also includes epic space battles and enhanced environments.

VFX by: Rodeo FX, Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), Jellyfish Pictures, One of Us.

None of the VFX houses have yet released a breakdown reel for The Last Jedi, but there's an interview with Dan Gregan from ILM.

Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets

VFX Oscar nominee

Trailer:

[embedded content]

In the late 28th century, special operatives Valerian and Laureline, under assignment from the minister of defense, take

a mission to Alpha, a metropolis where diverse species gather together. When a dark forces threatens the peaceful city, the pair must find the menace that could jeopardise the future of the universe.

VFX by: Digital Factory, Rodeo FX, Weta Digital, ILM.

[embedded content]

War for the Planet of the Apes

BAFTA Special Visual Effects nominee
VFX Oscar nominee

Trailer:

[embedded content]

Caesar and his apes are forced into a deadly conflict with an army of humans led by a ruthless Colonel. After the apes suffer huge losses, Caesar begins a quest to avenge his kind. The Caesar and the Colonel are pitted against each other in an epic battle that determines the fate of both their species.

VFX for the film includes creating the monkeys themselves from motion capture, and all

VFX by: Weta Digital, Stereo D and Exceptional Minds (additional VFX).

See how motion capture was used in the film:

[embedded content]

https://www.digitalartsonline.co.uk/news/motion-graphics/vfx-breakdowns-for-bafta-oscar-2018-nominees-including-shape-of-water-blade-runner-2049-star-wars-last-jedi/