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AWARDS

The Envy Awards: Honoring those offbeat, off-kilter and off-putting screen moments



Some film moments from last year were so over-the-top, they deserve recognition. (Illustration by Agnès Ricart / For the Los Angeles Times)

BY RANDEE DAWN

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The 96th Academy Awards, to be held March 10 at the Dolby Theater in Hollywood, promises prizes to worthy recipients in nearly two dozen categories. But as we've

noticed here at The Envelope over the years, not every award-worthy performance, notable trend or jaw-dropping sequence gets its proper due. That's why we make a point of noting some of the greatest, the grossest, and the most gobsmackingly awesome movies, scenes and performers who absolutely deserve a very special statuette of their own (even if it is only virtual). Here, we present the 2024 Envy Awards!

We have no words award

Kaitlyn Dever, "No One Will Save You"

In two excellent films from the past year, critical — if not main — characters were given virtually no lines. And one never even gets to show his face! In "Air," Damian Delano Young portrays Michael Jordan, the up-and-coming basketball wunderkind, but it's his parents who do the talking for him. He's never seen full-on and gets just a few words to say. But that's nothing compared to the isolated lead from "No One Will Save You," played by Kaitlyn Dever. Shunned by her town and living alone, she's the only one who can battle an onslaught of aliens and their mind probes. Another nearly wordless performance, Dever carries us through terrifying nights and days on the strength of her body language alone.

Most hilarious use of a historical figure

"Napoleon"

As noted by a commenter on Reddit, Ridley Scott's historical epic "Napoleon" is actually "a romantic comedy that keeps getting interrupted by the rise of an empire." Now, bear in mind that its marketing did *not* suggest this at all — but it's hard to imagine it wasn't intentionally meant to be periodically hilarious. After all, we get some really classic lines from the future emperor: One, where he cranes toward a British naval officer and whines, "You think you're so *great* because you have *boats*!" Later on, over dinner with guests and his wife Josephine, he declares, "Destiny has brought me this lamb chop!" Indeed it has.

You think I'm funny special prize

“The Killer”

In general, “comedy” isn’t the word that comes to mind when David Fincher makes a movie. But embedded within “The Killer,” he pays homage to a generous handful of classic sitcom characters. Michael Fassbender’s hired assassin character needs a lot of aliases as he slinks around the world — and, apparently, a lot of service people who don’t even blink when he presents ID with names from TV shows past — Felix Unger, Oscar Madison, Archibald Bunker, Howard Cunningham, Reuben Kincaid, Lou Grant, Sam Malone, George Jefferson and Robert Hartley. For that last one, someone should at least have said, “Hi, Bob!”

Best ambulance chasing

“Cocaine Bear”

Was there any greater vehicle chase in the movies in 2023 than a bear racing after an ambulance — and overtaking it? Apparently frightened paramedics putting the pedal to the metal are no match for a ticked-off, flying high ursine with blood on its mind. Add on a Depeche Mode tune to provide the soundtrack and truly this was one of the more over-the-top moments of the year.

Most memorable tidying-up scene

“Saltburn”

So there are a lot of scenes in “Saltburn” that might get your skin to crawling, but it’s hard to top the moment when house guest Oliver takes it upon himself to clean a bathtub that was just used by his obsession, Felix. See, Felix has been having a *very good time* in his bathtub, observed by Oliver surreptitiously, and after Felix vacates the room Oliver slips in to give the tub a special cleaning. With his tongue.

Outstanding use of nakedness

Jennifer Lawrence, “No Hard Feelings”

Nudity and sex scenes have also made a comeback in film, and much was made of Christopher Nolan’s use of both in “Oppenheimer.” Sure, there was a traditional in-bed love scene with Communist Party member Jean. But who can forget the moment when the titular scientist is being questioned about his affair by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission — and suddenly he’s naked and having sex on a chair in that very room? Fantasy? Metaphor? Of course to both. But definitely ... unexpected. Still, it’s hard to beat the moment in “No Hard Feelings” when Jennifer Lawrence’s character emerges from a skinny dip to find her clothes stolen — and kicks the butts of the young thieves *while still naked*. J. Law, you have been missed.

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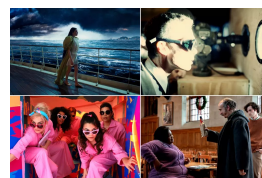
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