

Consultative Vote by WSFS Members of Glasgow 2024: A Worldcon For Our Futures

The following proposed amendment to the WSFS Constitution, to create two new Hugo categories, was passed at the 2023 WSFS Business Meeting in Chengdu. The WSFS Business Meeting at Glasgow 2024 has sole authority to ratify or reject it.

Excitingly, we are also putting the proposal to a consultative ballot of all WSFS Members of Glasgow 2024, to inform not only the debate on this proposal but also the ongoing debate about WSFS' decision-making processes. We thank you for your participation!

Below is the full text of the proposal, and short statements in favour and against.

Proposal:

Moved, to amend the WSFS Constitution by adding the following two clauses:

"3.3.X: Best Independent Short Film Award. Awarded to science fiction or fantasy productions presented in the short film format (under 45 minutes) for the first time in the previous calendar year. The films should NOT be funded by a Major studio or distribution label/platform/Streamer. Films can be funded by national film/arts grants like the BFI or TeleCanada. The award should not include broadcast or streaming television series episodes."

"3.3.X+1: Best Independent Feature Film Award. Awarded to science fiction or fantasy productions presented in the long film format (over 61 minutes) for the first time in the previous calendar year. The films should NOT be funded by a Major studio or distribution label/platform/Streamer. Films can be funded by national film/arts grants like the BFI or TeleCanada."

Provided that unless the above section is re-ratified by the 2027 Business Meeting, this Section shall be repealed; and

Provided further that the question of re-ratification shall automatically be placed on the agenda of the 2027 Business Meeting.

Statement in Favour

In the spirit of the fan community, we believe the respected Hugo Awards should ratify the two new dramatic presentation categories. While the literary awards cover a broad range of works from independent and self-published creators, the Dramatic Presentation awards (film and TV) primarily recognize major studios. This overlooks fan creations and smaller independent films that contribute significantly to the genre.

Recognising independent films is crucial, as myriad high-quality productions have emerged thanks in part, to new technology and film education, bringing diversity and energy to science fiction moving image. These creators deserve visibility alongside independent fan-based writers, podcasts, and magazines and so on.

Highlighting independent works would introduce both the voting community and a wider audience to material they might not otherwise encounter. Additionally, this recognition could foster greater engagement, with filmmakers likely embracing the Hugo Awards and promoting them within their community. Independent filmmakers are also more likely to respond enthusiastically to nominations and attend WorldCons, unlike the often-detached approach of major studios.

Adopting these categories will not only honour the innovation of independent creators but also broaden the Hugo Awards' legacy, ensuring a vibrant, inclusive future for science fiction film.

(Louis Savy and Tony Xia)

Statement Against

There are three main reasons to reject this proposal: lack of clarity, lack of availability, and lack of necessity.

Firstly, what counts as 'Independent Cinema'? The proposal states: "The films should not be funded by a major studio or distribution label/platform/streamer," but fails to state what this means. Do A24 or Lionsgate count as major studios? This lack of clarity about what "major" means would be a significant challenge for Hugo administrators and nominators.

Secondly, are these movies available to nominators? Many independent movies are only available at festivals, or in a handful of cinemas. They are unavailable to most Hugo voters until it's too late to nominate them.

Finally, is this category actually necessary? Last year's winner *Everything Everywhere All At Once* was produced by the independent IAC Films, and won the Independent Spirit Award for Best Independent Film. If these types of movies are already being shortlisted and winning Hugo awards, a new category is not necessary. If anything, adding the categories might serve to ghettoize instead of celebrate this important area of film-making.

In summary, this proposal's administration would be problematic, features works that would be unavailable to Hugo voters, and for which there is fundamentally no need.

(Olav Rokne and Amanda Wakaruk)

Consultative Vote Mail-in Ballot Instructions

To vote in the consultative vote by surface mail, please fill out and return only this page of the document, following the instructions below. The ballot must be complete in its entirety to be valid.

Please return ballot to:
Glasgow 2024 Hugo Administration
C / O Cassidy R
P.O. Box 1284
Carmel, IN 46082
USA

THIS BALLOT MUST BE RECEIVED by: **Monday 5 August 2024 at 23:59 GMT**

VOTER ELIGIBILITY:

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE CLEARLY. THIS SECTION IS MANDATORY AND MUST BE LEGIBLE.

Name: _____
Address: _____

City: _____
State/Province: _____
Postal /Zip Code: _____
Country: _____
Email: _____

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER (IF KNOWN): _____

SIGNATURE (MANDATORY):

To cast your vote please check either Yes or No:

_____ **Yes**, you are in favor of approving the proposal as written to adopt the two new Hugo Award categories.

_____ **No**, you are against the approval of the proposal as written to adopt the two new Hugo Award categories.

**For the sake of the environment, only this page needs to be printed and mailed.*