# British artists’ films traverse global histories and urban struggles in 2025 Jarman Award shortlist



Whether speeding through the bustling streets of Lagos on a motorcycle taxi or drifting down serene Jamaican waterways, the nominees for this year’s Film London Jarman Award invite audiences on evocative journeys that traverse continents and histories. The shortlist, announced for the 2025 prize, includes six British artists whose work with moving images captures an extraordinary breadth of experience and geography, from the rugged Algerian Hoggar mountains to the Falmouth lagoon in Jamaica and the urban landscape of east London's M11 link road. Each film offers a unique lens on place, memory, and identity, contributing to a diverse and dynamic portrait of contemporary British art.

Among the nominees is Onyeka Igwe, a British-Nigerian artist whose 2022 film *The Miracle on George Green* channels the spirit of protest. The film takes its inspiration from the 1993 demonstrations in Wanstead that sought to prevent the felling of a 250-year-old sweet chestnut tree during the controversial construction of the M11 link road. This protest, one of the most publicised road protests in London during the 1990s, saw local residents and wider activists rally against what they saw as environmental destruction and loss of community heritage. Igwe’s work expands this narrative, beginning with letters written by schoolchildren to the tree, and weaving a broader exploration of radical protests reaching back to the 17th century. This intertwining of personal and political histories reveals the enduring power of place and collective memory.

Another film on the shortlist, *Machine Boys* (2024) by Karimah Ashadu, zooms in on the energetic and hazardous subculture of motorcycle taxi riders in Lagos, Nigeria. Through candid interviews and intimate portrayals, the film delves into the riders’ perspectives on death, rebellion, and the vibrant street life that surrounds them, immersing viewers in a world of revving engines and swirling dust. Meanwhile, Morgan Quaintance's *Available Light* (2024) juxtaposes the experiences of renters in two global cities, Tokyo and London, using interviews to probe what "home" means amid the shifting landscapes of urban living. This theme of home and belonging resonates deeply in an age marked by migration and housing crises.

The Scottish filmmaker George Finlay Ramsay offers a strikingly different but equally intense experience in *Flesh, Wax and Glass II: The Age of the Son* (2024). Set in Calabria, southern Italy, the film follows a grieving lorry driver as he performs a raw and bloody ritual during Holy Week. This work blends grief, tradition, and spectacle, providing a visceral meditation on loss and cultural memory. Across the shortlist, these films combine personal narratives with broader social and political contexts, highlighting the extraordinary capacity of moving image art to convey complex human experiences.

Hope Strickland’s *a river holds a perfect memory* (2024) transports audiences along waterways from Jamaica’s Martha Brae River to the Falmouth lagoon, inviting reflection on ancestral memory and identity through intimate conversations. The artist duo Arwa Aburawa and Turab Shah’s *And still, it remains* (2023) visits the Algerian village of Mertoutek, confronting the lingering consequences of French nuclear tests during the final years of the Algerian war in the 1960s. This exploration of historical trauma in a remote setting underscores how legacies of violence persist long after conflicts are formally ended.

The Film London Jarman Award, now in its 18th year, remains a significant platform for recognising innovation and experimentation among British artists working with moving images. Named after influential filmmaker Derek Jarman, the award has a history of highlighting emerging talent that often goes on to achieve wider acclaim, including past nominees and winners who later featured in or won the Turner Prize. Maryam Tafakory, the 2024 award winner, returns this year as a jury member. She praised the 2025 shortlist as "a powerful reflection of the richness and diversity of moving image practice in the UK today," applauding the nominees' distinct voices and their ability to push boundaries in form and storytelling.

The winner of this year’s £10,000 prize will be announced in late November at a ceremony in London. Leading up to that, the shortlisted films will tour cultural venues across the UK and be showcased in an exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery from 18 November to 14 December 2025, offering audiences nationwide the chance to engage with some of the most compelling and innovative contemporary art in moving images.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/17/film-london-jarman-award-nominees-range-from-algerian-mountains-to-jamaican-rivers-and-east-london-roads), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/17/film-london-jarman-award-nominees-range-from-algerian-mountains-to-jamaican-rivers-and-east-london-roads)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/17/film-london-jarman-award-nominees-range-from-algerian-mountains-to-jamaican-rivers-and-east-london-roads), [[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M11_link_road_protest)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/17/film-london-jarman-award-nominees-range-from-algerian-mountains-to-jamaican-rivers-and-east-london-roads)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/17/film-london-jarman-award-nominees-range-from-algerian-mountains-to-jamaican-rivers-and-east-london-roads)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/17/film-london-jarman-award-nominees-range-from-algerian-mountains-to-jamaican-rivers-and-east-london-roads)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/17/film-london-jarman-award-nominees-range-from-algerian-mountains-to-jamaican-rivers-and-east-london-roads), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2024/nov/25/iranian-artist-maryam-tafakory-wins-the-2024-film-london-jarman-award), [[6]](https://www.whitechapelgallery.org/jarman-award/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/17/film-london-jarman-award-nominees-range-from-algerian-mountains-to-jamaican-rivers-and-east-london-roads> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/jun/17/film-london-jarman-award-nominees-range-from-algerian-mountains-to-jamaican-rivers-and-east-london-roads> - The article discusses the six nominees for the 2025 Film London Jarman Award, highlighting their diverse works that span locations from Algeria's Hoggar mountains to Jamaica's waterways and east London's M11 link road. The nominees include Onyeka Igwe, Karimah Ashadu, Morgan Quaintance, George Finlay Ramsay, Hope Strickland, and the duo Arwa Aburawa and Turab Shah. Each artist's work is briefly described, showcasing the range and depth of contemporary British moving image art. The winner will be announced in late November, with exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery from 18 November to 14 December 2025.
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M11_link_road_protest> - The M11 link road protest was a campaign against the construction of a road in east London during the early to mid-1990s. Officially called the 'A12 Hackney to M11 link road', it aimed to connect the East Cross Route in Hackney Wick to the M11 via Leyton, Leytonstone, Wanstead, and the Redbridge Roundabout. The protests gained prominence in 1993, particularly over the removal of a 250-year-old sweet chestnut tree on George Green in Wanstead. The campaign involved local residents and outside protesters, leading to significant public attention. Despite the opposition, the road was completed and opened in 1999.
4. <https://filmlondon.org.uk/latest/2024-shortlist-announced-for-the-film-london-jarman-award> - This announcement details the six artists shortlisted for the 2024 Film London Jarman Award: Larry Achiampong, Maeve Brennan, Melanie Manchot, Rosalind Nashashibi, Sin Wai Kin, and Maryam Tafakory. Their works are described as diverse, exploring themes from migration and censorship to family relationships. The award, now in its 17th year, recognises and supports British artists working with moving images. The winner was announced in late November 2024, with screenings and exhibitions of the shortlisted works held at various cultural venues across the UK.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2024/nov/25/iranian-artist-maryam-tafakory-wins-the-2024-film-london-jarman-award> - The article reports on Iranian artist Maryam Tafakory winning the 2024 Film London Jarman Award. Tafakory's work, which blends found footage with the cinematic traditions of post-revolutionary Iran, was praised for its compelling exploration of displacement, memory, and resistance. The award, presented by actor Rupert Everett, includes a £10,000 prize. Tafakory's films have been showcased at venues like New York's Museum of Modern Art and the Toronto International Film Festival. The article also mentions other nominees, including Larry Achiampong, Maeve Brennan, Melanie Manchot, Rosalind Nashashibi, and Sin Wai Kin.
6. <https://www.whitechapelgallery.org/jarman-award/> - The Whitechapel Gallery's page on the Jarman Award provides an overview of the annual award that recognises and supports artists working with moving images. Named after filmmaker Derek Jarman, the award celebrates experimentation, imagination, and innovation in the work of emerging artist filmmakers. The winner receives £10,000, and the page lists past winners and shortlisted artists, including Heather Phillipson, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Monster Chetwynd, Luke Fowler, Imran Perretta, Charlotte Prodger, Laure Prouvost, Sin Wai Kin, and Project Art Works.
7. <https://filmlondon.org.uk/flamin/the-jarman-award/jarman-award-2024> - Film London's page on the 2024 Jarman Award provides details about the six shortlisted artists: Larry Achiampong, Maeve Brennan, Melanie Manchot, Rosalind Nashashibi, Sin Wai Kin, and Maryam Tafakory. The page includes brief descriptions of each artist's work and mentions that the winner was announced in late November 2024. It also notes that the award is presented in partnership with the Whitechapel Gallery and that the shortlisted artists' works were shown as part of a nationwide touring programme across various cultural venues in the UK.