



Visual Effects Society Awards Go Bananas for 'Apes,' Big Night For 'Big Hero 6'



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"Dawn of the Planet of the Apes" (<http://variety.com/t/dawn-of-the-planet-of-the-apes/>), "Big Hero 6" (<http://variety.com/t/big-hero-6/>) and "Game of Thrones" (<http://variety.com/t/game-of-thrones/>) were the big winners at the 13th annual Visual Effects (<http://variety.com/t/visual-effects/>) Society Awards Wednesday night.

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"Dawn of the Planet of the Apes" won three awards including the VES's top

award, Visual Effects in a Visual Effects-Driven Photoreal/Live Action Feature Motion Picture. It also won for Performance of an Animated Character in a Photoreal/Live Action Feature Motion Picture (for Caesar, the ape leader played by Andy Serkis); for Compositing in a Photoreal/Live Action Feature.

But Disney's "Big Hero 6" won the most trophies. It scored five awards, including the Animation in an Animated Feature (VES's equivalent of best animated feature); Models in any Motion Media Project; Created Environment in an Animated Feature Motion Picture; Effects Simulations in an Animated Feature Motion Picture; Performance of an Animated Character in an Animated Feature Motion Picture.

"X-Men: Days of Future Past" scored two awards for its stunning Pentagon Kitchen scene: Virtual Cinematography and Effects Simulations. "Birdman" won for Supporting VFX.

In television, "Game of Thrones" conquered the field with three awards, including top TV honors (Visual Effects in a Visual Effects-Driven Photoreal/Live Action Broadcast Program); Compositing in a Photoreal/Live Action Broadcast Program; and Created Environment in a Commercial, Broadcast Program, or Video Game.

In commercials, SSE dominated: "SSE: Maya" won two awards, and SSE also took home honors for compositing.

Visual effects fans based in Los Angeles may find themselves traveling long distances to attend future Visual Effects Society (<http://variety.com/t/visual-effects-society/>) Awards presentations. Before this year's event, VES executive director Eric Roth told Variety the org expects that eventually the show will be held elsewhere.

"The day will come when the VES Awards (<http://variety.com/t/ves-awards/>) will be more international than they are now, and probably have the main awards show in another city," said Roth. "At this point in time, it still makes great financial sense to have the awards show here in Los Angeles, but to reflect the global nature of the industry, at some point we will want to move the show."

Roth said there are some events scheduled in New York, and mentioned Gotham, Vancouver and London as possible future venues for the VES Awards.

When the VES Awards were founded, the “big four” visual effects studios were all based in California. Now most of the work is performed elsewhere and the industry is spread around the globe.

Kicking off the event at the podium, Roth said “It’s time for all decision-makers everywhere, and the public at large, to have a greater appreciation for these artists... who are responsible for putting butts in \$12 movie seats around the world.”

Roth called for both better working conditions and more acclaim for the visual effects industry, citing such vfx masters as Richard Edlund and Dennis Muren. “It’s time they finally get the public acclaim they rightly deserve for the magic at the heart of today’s entertainment industry,” he said, adding: “Very clearly, the true stars in Hollywood today are in visual effects and we feel it’s time the world got that message.”

J.J. Abrams accepted the Visionary Award, thanking the org “for this absolutely undeserved but deeply appreciated recognition.” He recalled that in 1978, when he was 11, his father brought him home an autograph and note from f/x legend [Doug Trumbull \(http://variety.com/t/doug-trumbull/\)](http://variety.com/t/doug-trumbull/), who wrote “Life can be fun making movies.”

“It was a note from God,” said Abrams. He said he met Trumbull for the first time some 36 years later, and told him of the note. Trumbull’s response was “Huh.”

“It was a disappointing reaction,” said Abrams. “But he was right: Life can be fun making movies.”

For the second year in a row, there were technical issues with the clip packages while presenter Alyssa Sutherland from “Vikings,” was at the podium. Host Patton Oswalt quipped “She’s tall and gorgeous. The operator went “Pretty!” and hit the wrong button. I stay short and pasty and there’s never any trouble with my clip packages.”

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