



Director James Cameron poses with the trophy for best motion picture drama, awarded for his film *Avatar*, during the 67th Golden Globe Awards on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

# Cameron's 'Avatar' basks in Golden Globe glory

Coming less than one week before the balloting for Oscars nominations closes, win gives the animated 3D movie a big boost

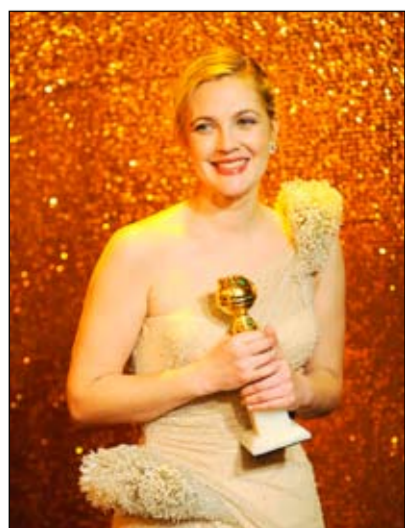
BY LYNN ELBER  
AP, BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA

The Golden Globes gave top honors to James Cameron's *Avatar* and took its cue from the film's celebration of humanity, with winners ranging from the gritty child-abuse drama *Precious* to freewheeling comedy *The Hangover*.

Sunday's awards ceremony also opened wide to embrace the long-admired Jeff Bridges, who took best dramatic-acting honors for the country-music film *Crazy Heart*, and a sitcom actress, Mo'Nique, who emerged as a fierce screen presence in *Precious*.

Fox's spunky new TV musical comedy series *Glee* was honored, while the best TV drama award went to AMC's 1960s Madison Avenue saga *Mad Men* for the third year in a row. Cameron was the big winner on the movie side, claiming best drama and best director for his science-fiction blockbuster and setting him for a possible awards sequel to 1997's *Titanic*. Cameron's epic about the doomed oceanliner won the same prizes and went on to dominate the Academy Awards.

This time, though, instead of being "king of the world," as Cameron declared at the Oscar ceremony, he has become king of a computer-generated distant moon that made critics gush and sent box-office receipts soaring. The film has grossed US\$1.6 billion worldwide, second only to *Titanic* with US\$1.8 billion.



Above: Drew Barrymore won a Golden Globe for her work in *Grey Gardens*. Right: Jason Reitman poses with his award for best screenplay. PHOTOS: REUTERS AND AFP

"*Avatar* asks us to see that everything is connected, all human beings to each other, and us to the Earth. And if you have to go four and a half light years to another, made-up planet to appreciate this miracle of the world that we have right here, well, you know what, that's the wonder of cinema right there, that's the magic," Cameron said.

Other film acting prizes went to Sandra Bullock for the football tale *The Blind Side*, Meryl Streep for the Julia Child story *Julie & Julia*, Robert Downey Jr for the crime romp *Sherlock Holmes* and Austrian actor Christoph Waltz as a gleefully bloodthirsty Nazi in *Inglourious Basterds*.

Sunday's winners could get a last-minute boost for the Oscars, whose nominations balloting closes on Saturday. Last year's big Globe winner, *Slumdog Millionaire*, went on to garner Oscar glory.

Michael C. Hall won for best actor in a TV drama for Showtime's *Dexter*, in which he plays a serial killer with a code of ethics, targeting only other murderers. Publicists said last week that Hall is being treated for Hodgkin's lymphoma and that the cancer is in remission.

*Dexter* also won the supporting-actor TV honor for John Lithgow. Other TV winners included Juliana Margulies as best actress in a drama for CBS' *The Good Wife* and Toni Collette as best comedy actress for Showtime's *The United States of Tara*.

Bridges, a beloved veteran generally overlooked for key Hollywood honors, got a standing ovation at the ceremony hosted by Ricky Gervais.



"You're really screwing up my underappreciated status here," Bridges said.

The son of late actor Lloyd Bridges, Bridges thanked his father for encouraging him to go into show business.

"So glad I listened to you, dad," he said.

Bullock cited Michael Oher, the Baltimore Ravens rookie lineman whose life is the subject of *The Blind Side*. She plays a wealthy Memphis woman whose family took the teenage Oher and gave him shelter after discovering he was homeless.

"If I may steal from Michael Oher, I may not be the most talented, but I've been given opportunity," Bullock said.

The Vegas bachelor bash *The Hangover* won for best musical or comedy, bringing uncharacteristic awards attention for broad comedy, a genre that often gets overlooked at Hollywood honors.

The Globes marked a dramatic turning point for Mo'Nique, who was mainly known for lowbrow comedy but startled audiences with her brutal performance in *Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire*, directed by Lee Daniels and starring newcomer Gabourey Sidibe, who was a Globe nominee.

Streep's competition for best actress in a musical or comedy included herself. She also was nominated for the romance *It's Complicated*.

"I just want to say that in my long career, I've played so many extraordinary woman that I'm getting mistaken for one," Streep said. "I'm very clear that I'm the vessel for other people's stories and other people's lives."



The blockbuster *Up* came away with the award for animated film. Pixar Animation, the Disney outfit that made *Up*, has won all four prizes for animated movies since the Globes introduced the category in 2006. Past Pixar winners are *WALL-E*, *Ratatouille* and *Cars*.

*Up* features the voice of Ed Asner in a tale of a lonely, bitter widower who renews his zest for adventure by flying his house off under helium balloons to South America, where he encounters his childhood hero and a hilarious gang of talking canines.

Jason Reitman and Sheldon Turner won the screenplay honor for *Up in the Air*, which Reitman also directed. The foreign-language honor went to *The White Ribbon*, a stark drama of guilt and suspicion set in a German town on the eve of World War I.

The rain-drenched red carpet was a rare sight for an awards show in sunny southern California, stars in their finery getting damp under umbrellas as storms swept the region.

Although the Globes are one of Hollywood's biggest parties, the ceremony included somber reminders of tragedy in the real world. Many stars wore ribbons in support of earthquake victims in Haiti.

The Globes, which aired on NBC, are presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, a group of about 90 reporters covering show business for overseas outlets.

On the Net: [www.goldenglobes.org](http://www.goldenglobes.org)



Above: Chloe Sevigny won a Golden Globe for her role in *Big Love*. Left: Kevin Bacon holds his award for best actor in a mini-series or TV movie. PHOTOS: AFP AND REUTERS

ENVIRONMENT

## Asia's lust for ivory threatens African elephant

Poachers' slaughter is rising as governments seek more legal sales of tusks

BY ROBIN MCKIE  
THE OBSERVER, LONDON

There has been a massive surge in illegal ivory trading, researchers have warned. They have found that more than 14,000 products made from the tusks and other body parts of elephants were seized last year, an increase of more than 2,000 on their previous analysis in 2007.

Details of this disturbing rise have been revealed on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the world ivory trading ban. Implemented on Jan. 18, 1990, it was at first credited with halting the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of elephants.

But the recent growth in the Far East's appetite for ivory — a status symbol for the middle classes of the region's newly industrialized economies — has sent ivory prices soaring from US\$245 a kilogram in 2004 to more than US\$6,500.

At the same time, scientists estimate that between 8 percent and 10 percent of Africa's elephants are now being killed each year to meet the demand. The world's largest land animal is again threatened with widespread slaughter.

"It is a really worrying situation," said Richard Thomas, director of Traffic, the group that monitors trade in wildlife. "However, it is not absolutely clear what should be done." Indeed, the issue is so confused that conflict over the ivory trade is expected at March's meeting of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

A key source of contention will be the future of legitimate stockpile sales of ivory that have been permitted by international agreement. Killing elephants for their tusks is illegal, but selling ivory from animals that have died of natural causes has been permitted on occasions. In 2008, a stockpile of tusks — from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe — was bought by dealers from China and Japan. The sale of 105 tonnes of ivory raised more than US\$24.5 million.

But now countries including Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo are to call for a ban of these stockpile sales at the CITES meeting. They say such trade — albeit sporadic — only increases demand for ivory goods and is responsible for triggering the recent rise in illegal trade and the killing of thousands of elephants across Africa.

But countries such as Tanzania and Zambia, which have some of the worst poaching records in Africa, want a relaxation of ivory trade regulations at CITES so they can hold their own stockpile sales. They say the tens of millions of US dollars that could be raised would help them fund rangers who can protect their elephants.

"Unfortunately the evidence is not clear whether stockpile sales increase demand for ivory or help to control it," said Heather Sohl of the WWF. "We have had recent stockpile sales of ivory — and poaching has increased dramatically. But other factors may be involved. Many African countries are suffering terrible drought and local people are desperate. Killing elephants brings money, alas."

Killing for tusks is a particularly gruesome trade. Elephants are intelligent animals whose sophisticated social ties are exploited by poachers. They will often shoot young elephants to draw in a grieving parent, which is then killed for its ivory. Estimates suggest more than 38,000 elephants were killed this way in 2006: the death rate is higher today.



A shop owner displays carved ivory items at his antique shop in Hanoi, Vietnam, on Feb. 24, 2009. The carvings, usually hidden in a locked closet, were being sold for approximately US\$100 a piece, with his customers coming mainly from China, Thailand, Japan and Europe, the shop owner said. PHOTO: EPA



The tusks of 61 elephants, confiscated at Jomo Kenyatta International airport in Nairobi, Kenya, are shown in this photo released by the Kenya Wildlife Service on Oct. 1, 2009. The unaccompanied luggage was to be air-freighted to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on the way to Bangkok, Thailand. PHOTO: EPA