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Diverse content has to be made for it to be rewarded

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Our industry isn't giving diverse talent the chance to be recognised, says Fraser Ayres

Awards season is rolling out, and the US' reaction to under-representation, including A-listers boycotts of the Oscars, has got some in our industry nervous.

Awards are beautiful and horrible beasts, but they are the highlight reel of our output as an industry.

Historically, UK awards haven't been brilliant at supporting diversity. However, with so much attention on the issue over the past 18 months, will we see something different this time?

Not yet, perhaps. It could be seen as unfair to place too much stock on this year's results; we know how long things take and that the shows we're awarding were commissioned in the 'before times'.

But the upcoming awards and nominations in the UK should at least show us the shoots of progress – the beginnings of the change.

Awards can be a useful indicator of where we're at: if our output hasn't moved on, perhaps the 'machine' hasn't either? I don't foresee under-represented groups being totally absent from our own awards this year, but I don't think it's going to be pretty.

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The Triforce Creative Network has seen some remarkable engagement from the 'gate-keepers' over the past two years in a genuine bid to address the core issues about not only how we access new talent, but how that talent has access to us as an industry.

Unfortunately, many are still having the same, cyclical conversation that focuses on the problem rather than the solutions, with large sums of money supporting schemes with very few tangible outcomes, and a reluctance to give people real jobs and commissions on a wider scale.

We, as an industry, have put out the call for 'experts' in their given fields, but many still find themselves jumping through hoops that others haven't had to navigate. We don't trust them to know about their own worlds better than we do. Their experience and their work aren't being recognised because it's different, and we have fear and call it 'risk'. But if we don't make the work in the first place, then how can audiences vote for it?

More importantly: as an industry, how can we receive the awards and acclaim for it?

» **Fraser Ayres is an actor and co-founder of the Triforce Creative Network**