

THE
100
BEST MOVIES
OF THE
21st CENTURY

More than 500 influential directors, actors and other notable names in Hollywood and around the world voted on the best films released since Jan. 1, 2000. Here is how their ballots stacked up.

Leer en español 阅读简体中文版

Between streaming services and superhero blockbusters, the way we watch and think about movies has changed dramatically over the past 25 years. But through that period of upheaval, which films have truly stood the test of time?

To find out, we embarked on an ambitious new project, polling more than 500 filmmakers, stars and influential film fans to vote for the 10 best movies (however they chose to define that) released since Jan. 1, 2000. In collaboration with The Upshot, we compiled their responses to create a list of the 100 best movies of the 21st century.

Voters included Oscar-winning directors like Pedro Almodóvar, Sofia Coppola, Barry Jenkins and Guillermo del Toro, as well as acclaimed actors like Chiwetel Ejiofor and Mikey Madison, John Turturro and Julianne Moore. Now you can finally see the full list. Enjoy!

The 100 Best Movies of the 21st Century

- See the reader top 100
- See how your favorite stars and directors voted
- Play our game: Choose the best genre movie of the century
- Find your next great watch

- See all the movies you've saved on your watch list



100

SUPERBAD

GREG MOTTOLA, 2007



Every generation gets its defining teen comedy. For the 21st century, that's "Superbad." The script by Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg — about pals named Seth (Jonah Hill) and Evan (Michael Cera) trying to get laid before they graduate high school — is both hilariously profane and surreptitiously sweet. The director Greg Mottola took the antics and elevated them with retro opening titles and an uproarious sequence involving phallic cartoons. But "Superbad" is also a feat of casting, introducing moviegoers to the talents of Hill, Cera and Emma Stone.

VOTED FOR BY JULIANNE MOORE

See her full ballot [here](#).



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try Booksmart, Bottoms or Good Boys.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



99

MEMORIES OF MURDER

BONG JOON HO, 2005



The first clue that this Korean police procedural isn't bound by Hollywood genre conventions comes in the opening moments: A detective (played by Song Kang Ho) summoned to investigate a dead body in a rural outpost arrives by hitching a ride on a plodding tractor. The grim laughs continue when other hapless investigators fall quite literally into the crime scene. The director Bong Joon Ho has strong ideas about the limits of men facing unfathomable evil, and he explores them with his hallmark mix of unexpected humor and sharply observed drama.

"I've seen that movie at least 20 times and it hits me differently every single time. I remember being frightened, laughing, crying and holding my breath. And

it may have the greatest ending, in my opinion, of any film.”

CHARLES MELTON, ACTOR

See his ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try [Decision to Leave](#), [Blood Simple](#) or [Burning](#).

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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98

GRIZZLY MAN

WERNER HERZOG, 2005



It would be easy to assume that this Werner Herzog documentary about Timothy Treadwell, who spent many summers cohabitating with Alaska's brown bears, would skew educational. But Treadwell wasn't an expert in the traditional sense, and this film is more about a man grappling with his place in the world. Treadwell left behind hours of self-recorded videos, and his camera's microphone was on when he and his girlfriend were mauled to death in 2003. We watch Herzog listen to those moments, making it the most haunting audio you'll never hear.



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try Cave of Forgotten Dreams, Into the Wild or Free Solo.

☐ I want to watch it

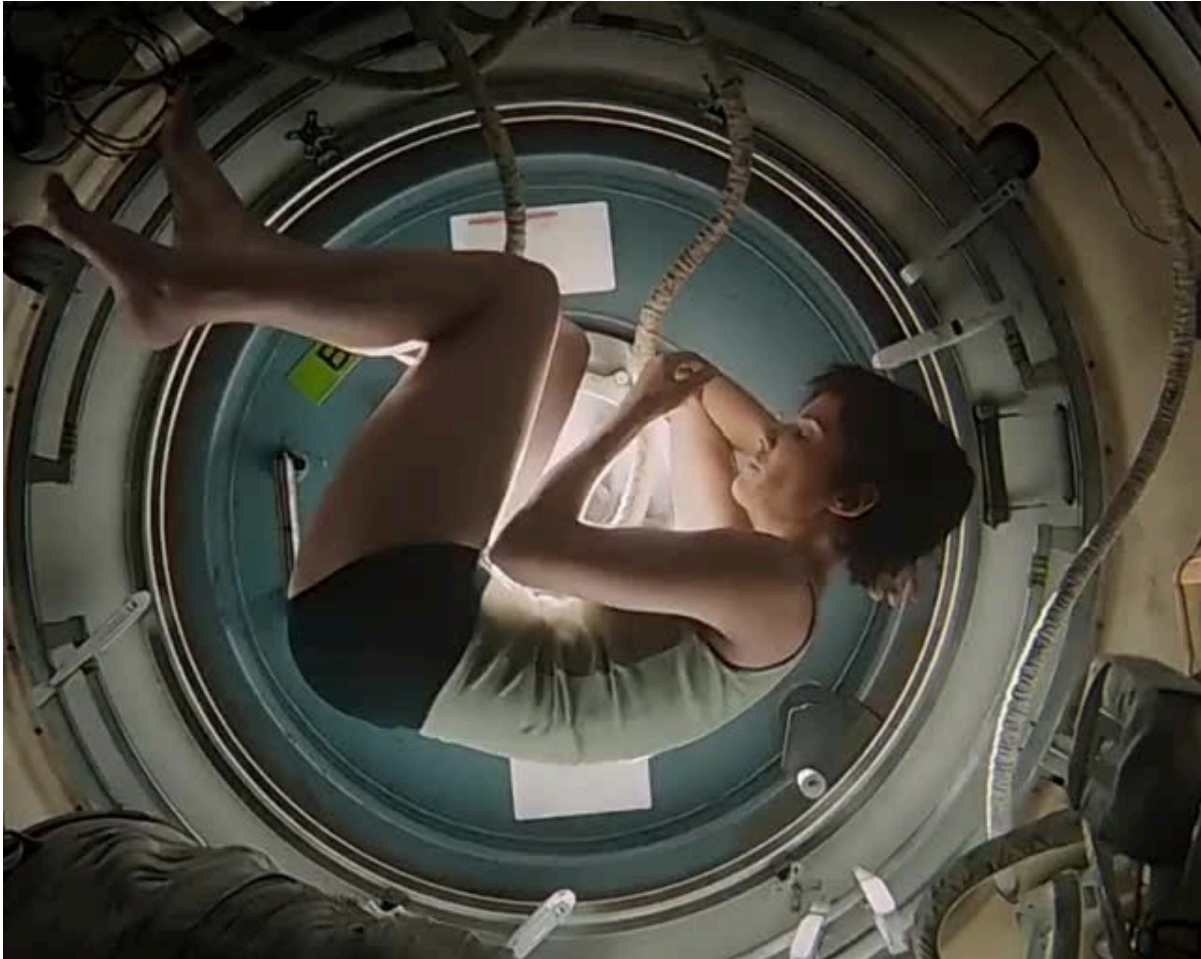
Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



97

GRAVITY

ALFONSO CUARÓN, 2013



Alfonso Cuarón's action film is one of the 21st century's greatest thrill rides, a real-time survival story about an abandoned astronaut (Sandra Bullock) who must find her way back to Earth while confronting the trauma she has long suppressed. With groundbreaking special effects that outshine most recent releases,

Cuarón crafts a suspenseful story that suggests the true terror of being lost in space isn't the prospect of certain death — it's being alone with your thoughts.

VOTED FOR BY EDGAR WRIGHT

See his full ballot [here](#).



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try [Sunshine](#), [Moon](#) or [High Life](#).

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



96

BLACK PANTHER

RYAN COOGLER, 2018



There's so much to love. It's a superhero spectacle that actually has something important to say, about how identity, history and responsibility intersect. Wakanda, the Afrofuturistic world where the story takes place, is a visual wonder. The women (played by Angela Bassett, Danai Gurira, Lupita Nyong'o and Letitia Wright — all excellent) aren't just sidekicks or love interests. Michael B. Jordan, as the tragically villainous Killmonger, has never been more swoon worthy. And, of course, Chadwick Boseman shines in the title role, sadly one of his last before dying of cancer.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Sinners, Neptune Frost or An Oversimplification of Her Beauty.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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95

THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD

JOACHIM TRIER, 2021



At first, Julie (Renate Reinsve) may strike you as a dilettante. An Oslo college student, she changes majors like outfits; later, in her 20s, she dates tetchy Aksel (Anders Danielsen Lie) while fantasizing about a life spent with the simpler Eivind (Herbert Nordrum). But this empathetic dramedy from Joachim Trier never judges Julie for her indecision, since a life lived robustly is bound to include some detours. How are you supposed to find yourself without looking everywhere first?



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Oslo, August 31st, Together or Sick of Myself.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



94

MINORITY REPORT

STEVEN SPIELBERG, 2002



The image of a nearly bald Samantha Morton shouting “Run!” is just one reason Steven Spielberg’s Philip K. Dick adaptation is still haunting. In this dystopia, crime is stopped before it happens thanks to the foresight of human “precogs” like Morton’s character. Tom Cruise is appropriately on edge as a falsely accused police officer, infusing a deep sadness into his actions as he draws closer

to the center of a huge conspiracy. A gnawing agony powers Spielberg's noir in which color has almost been drained from the world.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Edge of Tomorrow*, *Blade Runner* or *Gattaca*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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93

MICHAEL CLAYTON

TONY GILROY, 2007



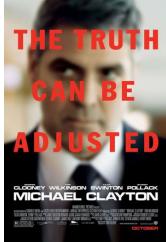
“I’m not a miracle worker, I’m a janitor,” Michael Clayton tells a disgruntled client of the law firm he works for. George Clooney, in his finest performance, delivers the line with a mixture of seen-it-all bitterness and intelligence. His character is nominally an attorney, but really he’s a fixer trying to undo the damage after a colleague (Tom Wilkinson, at his absolute best) goes off his meds and finds his moral compass. What that does to Clayton’s conscience is the crux of the writer-director Tony Gilroy’s gripping thriller.

“Michael Clayton’ is the perfect David vs. Goliath story. All the plot points are given to you in the very beginning, but you as an audience member have to put the puzzle

pieces together. And that is a really exciting way of making things tangible and entertaining.”

ARIAN MOAYED, ACTOR

See his ballot [here](#).



 I've seen it

Liked it? Try [The Insider](#), [Prince of the City](#) or [L.A. Confidential](#).

 I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



92

GLADIATOR

RIDLEY SCOTT, 2000



Sword-and-sandal epics were long out of fashion when Ridley Scott charged in with this exciting drama full of intrigue and action. It helped that he had Russell Crowe, as the honorable soldier out for vengeance, working at the height of his artistry and a fresh, unaffected Joaquin Phoenix as the emperor longing to be beloved. The film set off a mini-resurgence in the genre, but none of the imitators understood that spectacle needs heart to match. That's what made "Gladiator" so gripping.

VOTED FOR BY NICHOLAS SPARKS

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Spartacus, The Last Duel or The King.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



91

FISH TANK

ANDREA ARNOLD, 2010



Few movies about adolescent girls are quite this raw or daring. Andrea Arnold's story concerns a girl (Katie Jarvis) who desperately wants to be a hip-hop dancer, a pursuit her mother's new boyfriend (Michael Fassbender) encourages. But really the film is about her awakening passions, sexual and familial and more, and the ways in which this seemingly tough girl is achingly vulnerable. It's fearless and electric, one of Arnold's finest.

VOTED FOR BY LENA DUNHAM

See her full ballot [here](#).



☒ I've seen it

Liked it? Try [The Diary of a Teenage Girl](#), [It Felt Like Love](#) or [Thirteen](#).

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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90

FRANCES HA

NOAH BAUMBACH, 2013



Before Greta Gerwig struck out on her own to make “Lady Bird,” the first sign of her ascension was “Frances Ha,” which she co-wrote with the director Noah Baumbach. Gerwig also stars as Frances, a woman in her late 20s who is holding onto her youth in a way that is both irrepressibly joyful and deeply immature. Shot in nostalgic black and white, “Frances Ha” is a character study that captures the moment adulthood takes hold.

VOTED FOR BY MIKE BIRBIGLIA

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Mistress America*, *Computer Chess* or *20th Century Women*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



89

INTERSTELLAR

CHRISTOPHER NOLAN, 2014



The plot of Christopher Nolan's dazzling, ambitious space epic is a puzzle that even today remains mind-bending, mirroring how little we understand about where we are in the universe and why we exist. At its center is Matthew McConaughey as a widower who leaves behind his children, father-in-law and an Earth ravaged by climate change to join a NASA team trying to find a new planet. For all the far-off horizons, the movie is at its best exploring the precarious yet seductive concept of home.

VOTED FOR BY SIMU LIU

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Contact*, *Arrival* or *Solaris*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



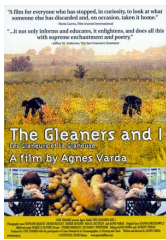
88

THE GLEANERS & I

AGNÈS VARDA, 2001



The “I” is Agnès Varda, the pioneering filmmaker who helped kick-start the French new wave. With an intimate voice-over and hand-held digital camera, Varda travels throughout France to consider the personal and political identity of gleaners, people who traditionally collected grain left in fields after harvest. The result is a profound, uncommonly tender and searchingly philosophical dream of what it could mean to live in the world — take only what you need, share everything you have — that is itself a tour de force of cinematic gleaning.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Faces Places, Kedi or The Truffle Hunters.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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87

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

PETER JACKSON, 2001



With the first installment of his “Lord of the Rings” trilogy, Peter Jackson did the almost impossible: He brought J.R.R. Tolkien’s Middle-earth to life in the hills of New Zealand, appealing to longtime fans and newcomers who might be wary of the jargon about elves and orcs. The film set a new bar for fantasy blockbusters with makeup and effects that still hold up, and set pieces that are immersive and occasionally terrifying. As soon as Howard Shore’s score kicks in, it’s hard not to feel transported.

VOTED FOR BY TONY HALE

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Dune*, *The Fall* or *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



86

PAST LIVES

CELINE SONG, 2023



The opening scene of Celine Song's debut feature beguiles you: Late at night in a New York bar, a woman (played by Greta Lee) is seated between two men (Teo Yoo and John Magaro) and it's unclear who they are to one another. The closing scene with the same three people, filmed in one take on a sidewalk, may well shatter your heart. In between, Song's story unfolds in New York City and Seoul and is filled with exquisite reflections on time, love, fate and reinvention.



 I've seen it

Liked it? Try *The Souvenir*, *Persuasion* or *All We Imagine as Light*.

 I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



85

ANCHORMAN: THE LEGEND OF RON BURGUNDY

ADAM MCKAY, 2004



The endless one-liners, the absurd set pieces, the big dumb sexist lunk of an anchorman played with just the right amount of lunacy by Will Ferrell, at arguably his best — this comedy is the perfect antidote to whatever ails you. Does the story make sense? Not really. Does that matter? No. You're there for the jokes, the rumble between rival news teams and the sense that cast members had the time of their lives making this movie. Plus now we all know “San Diego” means “a whale’s vagina” in German.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Step Brothers, Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga or Talladega Nights.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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84

MELANCHOLIA

LARS VON TRIER, 2011



Lars von Trier's "Melancholia" is here to bum you out in ways both breathtaking and contemplative. Kirsten Dunst stars as a bride who is falling apart, all the better to match the state of the world, which just might be about to collide with a rogue planet. When it comes to bleak and brutal, von Trier does it best, yet the Danish auteur somehow manages to make total annihilation a thing of beauty in the process.



 I've seen it

Liked it? Try [Lamb](#), [Breaking the Waves](#) or [Time to Leave](#).

 I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



83

INSIDE LLEWYN DAVIS

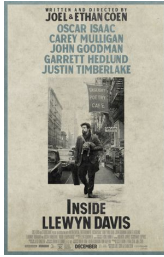
ETHAN COEN AND JOEL COEN, 2013



The Coen brothers dug into the 1960s folk scene by focusing on one of its losers. The title character, played by a breakout Oscar Isaac, is a sad sack, mourning the loss of his musical partner, and a jerk, prone to taking advantage of supposed friends. Llewyn's music is good, but not Bob Dylan good. This makes the movie one of the quintessential works of art about being an artist on the outside of greatness. The irony that the film itself is great is just the kind of karma Llewyn deserves.

VOTED FOR BY RACHEL ZEGLER

See her full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try No Direction Home, Crazy Heart or Once.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



82

THE ACT OF KILLING

JOSHUA OPPENHEIMER AND ANONYMOUS, 2013

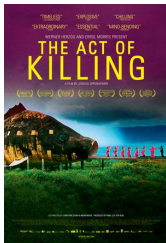


Joshua Oppenheimer's documentary masterpiece concerns the perpetrators of the Indonesian mass killings of 1965-66. Really, though, the subject is the incredible capacity of the human mind to compartmentalize and rationalize monstrous acts of cruelty toward other people. The way Oppenheimer goes about it makes for a movie that plays like psychological horror — all the more petrifying because it is nonfiction.

“What Joshua Oppenheimer achieves is a completely profound meditation on guilt. The human cost on the people themselves who did these killings is so fascinating.”

CHIWETEL EJIOFOR, ACTOR

[See his ballot here.](#)



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try *The Look of Silence*, *Beasts of No Nation* or *Waltz With Bashir*.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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81

BLACK SWAN

DARREN ARONOFSKY, 2010



Where is the line between the drive for perfection and unhealthy obsession? Natalie Portman took home the best actress Oscar for her role as Nina, a ballerina whose competition with a rival (Mila Kunis) for the lead role in “Swan Lake” pushes her into madness. The director Darren Aronofsky ratchets up the tension and disorientation in this psychological thriller until our heads are

spinning along with the dancers. The scenes depicting Nina's hallucinations infuse body horror with an unforgettable dark grandeur.



 I've seen it

Liked it? Try [The Red Shoes](#), [The Neon Demon](#) or [Saint Maud](#).

 I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



80

VOLVER

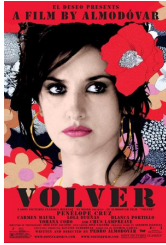
PEDRO ALMODÓVAR, 2006



Death, resurrection, family bonds and an electrifying performance by Penélope Cruz make up this gem of a drama from Pedro Almodóvar. Multiple generations of women show resolve as they navigate obstacle after obstacle. It's an empowering work, dripping with beauty and passion (as so many of Almodóvar's films are), and sprinkled with a dash of magical realism that opens up its narrative to new realms.

VOTED FOR BY PAMELA ANDERSON

See her full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Parallel Mothers*, *A Prophet* or *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



79

THE TREE OF LIFE

TERRENCE MALICK, 2011



There's ambitious subject matter and then there's Terrence Malick's Palme d'Or-winning "The Tree of Life," which tries to wrap its arms around all of creation. A meditation on memory and loss, this impressionistic film loosely follows a suburban family in 1950s Texas and a troubled son (Sean Penn) decades later. But in its audacious "history of the universe" sequence, the movie searches for the meaning of one human life by examining the violent, beautiful, mysterious origins of life itself.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Bardo*, *Nine Days* or *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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78

AFTERSUN

CHARLOTTE WELLS, 2022



Watching this quietly devastating feature debut from Charlotte Wells, it feels as if you're seeing someone's home movies — even in the scenes that aren't shot to look like camcorder footage of a father and daughter's Turkish vacation. The perfectly tuned performances by the young newcomer Frankie Corio and a breakout Paul Mescal (who was nominated for a best actor Oscar) add to the intimate realism. When hints of darkness seep into their sun-dappled trip, and it becomes clear their time together is in the past tense, it's heartbreaking.

“One of the really powerful things to me, as a producer on this, is how much Charlotte believed in this story and these performances to communicate this really deep feeling that she had from her childhood with her father. And the ending is killer.”

BARRY JENKINS, DIRECTOR

See his ballot here.



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try All of Us Strangers, Leave No Trace or Good One.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



77

EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE

DANIEL KWAN AND DANIEL SCHEINERT, 2022



How do you type when you have hot dogs for fingers? Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert's wildly inventive movie might have you asking this, and so many other questions you never thought you would contemplate. Raining down ideas by the bucketful, this movie should not work as well as it does, but the sure-footed filmmakers distill their multiverse-themed, genre-hopping narrative into truths about love and family. Turns out those hot dog fingers can hug easily.

VOTED FOR BY JUSTICE SMITH

See his full ballot here.



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Swiss Army Man*, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* or *Kung Fu Hustle*.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



76

O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?

ETHAN COEN AND JOEL COEN, 2000



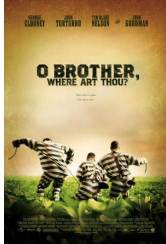
This sepia-toned Coen brothers adventure is presented as an adaptation of Homer's "Odyssey," and while that thread is loose at best, it delivers a hearty stew of folklore, tall tales and even fantasy. In dusty Depression-era Mississippi, three dimwitted escaped convicts take off on a treasure hunt. A whimsical, rollicking ride ensues, but it's the filmmakers' use of Americana music including gospel, Delta blues and bluegrass that elevates this quest into an allegory about freedom, forgiveness, hope and the many ways we are inherently flawed.

"It's gotta be George Clooney — his elasticity, his voice, his optimism, just everything about that performance. Tim Blake Nelson's amazing in it, too. There's something

about the friendship and the journey and the humor, everything all mixed together. And the music! It's profound, but it's also an adventure."

BENNY SAFDIE, ACTOR-DIRECTOR

See his ballot here.



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try *The Hudsucker Proxy*, *A Mighty Wind* or *The Great Escape*.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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75

AMOUR

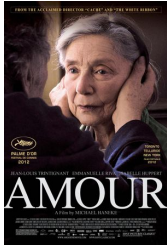
MICHAEL HANEKE, 2012



Michael Haneke, the provocateur director of “Funny Games,” brought a surprisingly tender touch to this wrenching portrait of spousal devotion. Drawing on the audience’s memories of his octogenarian stars, Jean-Louis Trintignant (“The Conformist”) and Emmanuelle Riva (“Hiroshima Mon Amour”), Haneke cast them as Georges and Anne, married former music teachers. Georges tends to Anne as her health deteriorates; he recognizes that there is nothing much to be done, and that he is gradually closing off his own life.

VOTED FOR BY PEDRO ALMODÓVAR

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try 45 Years, Vortex or The Father.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



74

THE FLORIDA PROJECT

SEAN BAKER, 2017



A heart-rending portrait of childhood imagination and innocence amid poverty and marginalization in America. Moonee, age 6 (Brooklyn Prince), runs riot at a tawdry motel near Disney World. You alternately want to squeeze her with joy and put her in a long timeout, and that's the point: She's a kid, effervescently so. The film draws power from an unspoken tension (this existence is unlikely to end well) and the way a magical fantasy world — manufactured and marketed by Disney — sits just out of her reach.

VOTED FOR BY MIKEY MADISON

See her full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Tangerine*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild* or *Hale County This Morning, This Evening*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



73

RATATOUILLE

BRAD BIRD, 2007



A cartoon rodent, a Paris backdrop, an underdog (OK, under-rat) story: It's the setup for many animated tales. But there's a difference between rehashing the same-old and elevating a classic, much like the trajectory of this movie's titular dish. Remy, a country rat with a sophisticated palate and a belief in himself, heads to the city to make his culinary dreams come true — setting off an enchanting, witty and touching adventure. Its lessons about reigniting our passions, even when they have long turned to drudgery, linger well after the feast.



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try *The Taste of Things*, *Babette's Feast* or *A Bug's Life*.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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72

CAROL

TODD HAYNES, 2015



You could call it the lesbian “Brokeback Mountain” — a moving same-sex love story with big stars (Cate Blanchett, Rooney Mara), unpolitical except that it exists, set in a time (in this case, the 1950s) when gay people survived through self-imprisonment (notice how the motel blinds in “Carol” cast prison-bar shadows). “Carol,” however, ends on a slightly happier note. Blanchett’s high-society mother must relinquish custody of her beloved daughter, but she’s at least no longer fearful of her sexuality. Mara’s young photographer says it aloud at the end: “I’m not afraid.”



I’ve seen it

Liked it? Try *Far From Heaven*, *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* or *A Single Man*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



71

OCEAN’S ELEVEN

STEVEN SODERBERGH, 2001



Star power has never been more glittery than in Steven Soderbergh's remake of the 1960 Rat Pack heist picture. This version pairs George Clooney at his most suave with an impish, spiky-haired Brad Pitt for a romp that keeps tension high while remaining impeccably sleek and stylish. Each member of Danny Ocean's team is an utter delight, including Elliott Gould in oversize glasses and Don Cheadle with a British accent. And Soderbergh gives Las Vegas a dreamy aura that matches the celebrities onscreen.

VOTED FOR BY JOEL KIM BOOSTER

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *The Italian Job*, *Snatch* or *Out of Sight*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



70

LET THE RIGHT ONE IN

TOMAS ALFREDSON, 2008



This one is for the outcasts. Unfolding for the most part with a chilly sense of calm, Tomas Alfredson's drama follows a friendship between a detached boy, Oskar (Kare Hedebrant), and his offbeat neighbor, Eli (Lina Leandersson), who just might be a vampire. The film is tempered, bloody when it needs to be, but sympathetic to the challenges of its lead characters and generous in how it portrays their connection as it pushes the vampire movie in fresh directions.

VOTED FOR BY JEMAIN CLEMENT

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*, *Hereditary* or *Donnie Darko*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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69

UNDER THE SKIN

JONATHAN GLAZER, 2014



What a haunting head trip Jonathan Glazer delivers in this electrifying thriller. Scarlett Johansson plays an alien with a come-hither stare that makes men shed their clothes and follow her into a liquid void. The imagery is hypnotizing and disturbing at once. It's a lyrical slow burn, with a score by Mica Levi that ratchets up the dread. And Johansson's commanding presence just might make you follow her into that void as well.

“It’s just a genuine vision. It’s a vivid, strange, dislocating film that feels genuinely alien.”

ARI ASTER, DIRECTOR

“This hypnotic sci-fi horror show is a miracle of economy. Johansson’s performance is a testament to the idea that less is more. There’s no shoe leather, no extraneous sound or image. You simply can’t escape the spell Glazer casts. Like all good art, it scalds you.”

TODD FIELD, DIRECTOR



☐ **I’ve seen it**

Liked it? Try *Sexy Beast*, *The Man Who Fell to Earth* or *Liquid Sky*.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



68

THE HURT LOCKER

KATHRYN BIGELOW, 2009



“How many bombs have you disarmed?” an officer asks Staff Sgt. James (Jeremy Renner), who has just extinguished a flaming car and neutralized its trunkful of explosives. “Eight hundred seventy-three, sir,” he answers. Kathryn Bigelow became the first woman to win the best director Oscar for this nerve-shredding film about a U.S. ordnance team in Iraq. In capturing the 21st-century warfare of insurgents and roadside I.E.D.s, “The Hurt Locker” also looks at the psyche of an adrenaline junkie more at home in a blast suit than in the cereal aisle.

“It’s ‘competence porn’ at its best — an electrifying portrait of men who are very good at their jobs, by a filmmaker who is really [expletive] good at hers.”

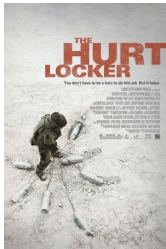
SAMARA WEAIVING, ACTRESS

See her ballot [here](#).

“I’ve never forgotten that scene where he’s staring at the immense, mind-boggling array of cereals in a supermarket, and the next shot is him stepping back off that big huge transport thing into Iraq again. He’s gone back to war. He can’t handle this.”

DENNIS LEHANE, AUTHOR

[See his ballot here.](#)



☐ **I’ve seen it**

Liked it? Try Warfare, Zero Dark Thirty or Jarhead.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



67
TÁR

TODD FIELD, 2022



After a 16-year absence, Todd Field returned to directing with what is perhaps the defining movie of the cancel culture era. Cate Blanchett plays Lydia Tár, a virtuosic conductor with perfectly tailored shirts and a hubristic streak that is both her greatest asset and her ultimate downfall. The trick of “Tár” is that Field and Blanchett so meticulously craft Lydia that it’s occasionally hard to remember she’s not a real person. And considering that it makes for a weighty dissection of power, it’s also often hilarious.

VOTED FOR BY MATTHEW WEINER

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try [The Brutalist](#), [Phantom Thread](#) or [Black Swan](#).

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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66

SPOTLIGHT

TOM MCCARTHY, 2015



A detective story about journalists uncovering the Boston archdiocese's efforts to hide a huge child sexual abuse scandal, “Spotlight” is an understated procedural about heroes in dogged pursuit of the truth. This best picture Oscar winner was beloved precisely because it lacked the big speeches and exploitative flashbacks that often accompany newspaper dramas and instead committed itself to the unglamorous details of an often unglamorous job.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *The Report*, *All the President's Men* or *Good Night, and Good Luck*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



65

OPPENHEIMER

CHRISTOPHER NOLAN, 2023



The father of the atomic bomb, and thus of our apocalyptic age, provides the director Christopher Nolan an ideal subject for his magnum opus. Nolan is obsessed with the collision of science and humanism; in structuring the film explicitly around the ways power is created — fission and fusion, each potentially generative and destructive — he has made an operatic epic that is history, thriller and warning, all in one.

VOTED FOR BY STEPHEN KING

See his full ballot here.



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try Lincoln, A Beautiful Mind or The Aviator.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



64

GONE GIRL

DAVID FINCHER, 2014



A perfect example of the unreliable narrator, “Gone Girl” takes the he said/she said tale to new heights. Written by Gillian Flynn, author of the best-selling novel on which it’s based, the movie gives contradictory accounts of the marriage between urbane Amy and Midwestern Nick, played with pitch-perfect precision by Rosamund Pike and Ben Affleck, and keeps us guessing over who is the hero and who is the villain. In the end, are there any winners in the land of toxic domesticity?



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *I Care a Lot*, *Unfaithful* or *The Wife*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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63

LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE

JONATHAN DAYTON AND VALERIE FARIS, 2006



If only every dysfunctional family could be this supportive of one another's dreams. Perhaps that's the takeaway from "Little Miss Sunshine," which centers on the downtrodden, eclectic Hoovers, including a suicidal uncle, a heroin-ingesting grandpa and a father always looking for the next get-rich-quick scheme. They all pile into a VW bus to give 7-year-old Olive (Abigail Breslin) the chance to win a child beauty pageant. Part comedic road trip, part commentary on contemporary America, "Little Miss Sunshine" delights for both its heart and stunning performances.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try [The Daytrippers](#), [Captain Fantastic](#) or [Sing Street](#).

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



62

MEMENTO

CHRISTOPHER NOLAN, 2001



This Christopher Nolan thriller stands out for its ingenious structure: starting at the story's end and backtracking scene by scene. The disjointed narrative gives us a taste of what life is like for Leonard (Guy Pearce), who can't store short-term memories and who tattoos his body with clues about his wife's murder. It's a clever puzzle, but what makes "Memento" unforgettable is what it says about identity and the stories we tell ourselves *about* ourselves, right up to its rug-pull of an ending — er, beginning.



☒ I've seen it

Liked it? Try *The Usual Suspects*, *Enter the Void* or *The Machinist*.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



61

KILL BILL: VOL. 1

QUENTIN TARANTINO, 2003



Never before have shootings, stabbings, beatings, beheadings, disembowelings, amputations, mutilations, gougings, slicings, choppings and bitings been so much campy fun. Uma Thurman's character, the Bride, awakens from a coma and vows revenge on her code-named assailants; they include the kimono-wearing, katana-wielding Cottonmouth (Lucy Liu) and the seemingly ordinary Copperhead (Vivica A. Fox), who keeps a gun in her

daughter's cereal box. Quentin Tarantino lovingly uses B-movie styles — spaghetti western, kung fu, anime, grindhouse — to tell his dark story.

VOTED FOR BY ARIAN MOAYED

See his full ballot [here](#).



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Game of Death*, *Revenge* or *Lady Vengeance*.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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60

WHIPLASH

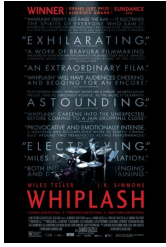
DAMIEN CHAZELLE, 2014



A music teacher from hell (J.K. Simmons) and his arrogant disciple (Miles Teller) engage in a spellbinding battle of wills. The director Damien Chazelle has said that he drew inspiration from Stanley Kubrick's "Full Metal Jacket" as he explored the idea that excellence, like combat, demands total discipline and surrender of self. The ultra-intense "Whiplash" — the final drum solo will make you work up a sweat — won three Oscars, including one for Simmons, and established Chazelle, then just 29, as one of the most promising filmmakers of his generation.

VOTED FOR BY TRAMELL TILLMAN

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Sound of Metal, The Devil Wears Prada or Foxcatcher.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



59

TONI ERDMANN

MAREN ADE, 2016



Nearly a decade before her celebrated turns in “Anatomy of a Fall” and “The Zone of Interest,” the German actress Sandra Hüller co-starred in this dual character study of a tightly wound careerist and her aging prankster father (Peter Simonischek). When Pops makes a sudden unannounced visit to his semi-estranged daughter in Bucharest, what follows is a Dada-esque parade of forced karaoke, spontaneous nudity and borrowed Bulgarian folklore in which not one of the film’s shaggy, surreal and somehow deeply human 162 minutes feels wasted.

“When the father gets his daughter to sing ‘The Greatest Love of All’ at the party, she hits all these bad notes, and Sandra Hüller is a really good singer. It’s not only incredibly revealing but it’s hilarious and one of the great acting moments I’ve seen in the last 25 years.”

JOHN TURTURRO, ACTOR

[See his ballot here.](#)

“The intersection of comedy and drama is where I live in my own work, and this film has that. I’ve also always been really obsessed with sad clowns, and that’s the father — this sad clown who’s just trying to connect with his daughter. It’s really poignant.”

LULU WANG, DIRECTOR

[See her ballot here.](#)



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *The Royal Tenenbaums*, *Nebraska* or *Flirting With Disaster*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



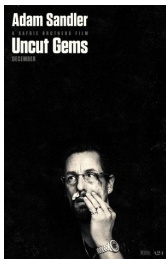
58

UNCUT GEMS

BENNY SAFDIE AND JOSH SAFDIE, 2019



Arguably one of the most anxiety-inducing movies of the century so far, “Uncut Gems” is the Safdie brothers’ darkly hilarious character study of Howard Ratner (Adam Sandler), a Jewish diamond district dealer with a gambling problem. The movie is just as abrasive as Howard, who is constantly in a crisis of his own making as he tries to avoid the ire of his wife (Idina Menzel), a loan shark’s lackeys, and the basketball superstar Kevin Garnett, who has become entranced with an opal Howard imported from Ethiopia.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Dog Day Afternoon, Emily the Criminal or Good Time.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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57

BEST IN SHOW

CHRISTOPHER GUEST, 2000



By the time this was released, Christopher Guest had already mastered the mockumentary with “Waiting for Guffman.” But he found the perfect subject matter in the wacky world of elite dog shows. His trusty group of improvisers created indelible characters out of canine obsessives, like Parker Posey’s catalog-loving yuppie with braces and a Weimaraner, and Eugene Levy’s singing terrier-owner who quite literally has two left feet. For as mad as it all is, there’s a sweetness directed at these goofballs and their pooches.

VOTED FOR BY JULIANNE NICHOLSON

See her full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Waiting for Guffman*, *Drop Dead Gorgeous* or *Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



56

PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE

PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON, 2002



This Paul Thomas Anderson film incorporates the zaniness of a screwball comedy and the earnestness of a romantic drama, anchored by a career-best performance from Adam Sandler. He reveals layer after surprising layer as a socially awkward salesman who falls for a timid woman (Emily Watson). The two are a match made in quirk heaven in a film that celebrates the eccentric in all of us.

“There’s a scene where Sandler calls Philip Seymour Hoffman, the Mattress King, and he gets so angry — it’s unbelievable, he’s able to take his volcanic rage and really ground it. The movie feels like a complete world that you believe exists, and when it’s over they’re still going about their lives.”

BENNY SAFDIE, ACTOR-DIRECTOR

See his ballot here.

**I've seen it**

Liked it? Try Uncut Gems, 500 Days of Summer or Cutie and the Boxer.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



55

INCEPTION

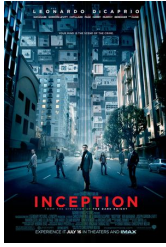
CHRISTOPHER NOLAN, 2010



The success of “The Dark Knight” bought Christopher Nolan the freedom to push the limits of his imagination and the boundaries of commercial moviemaking. Leonardo DiCaprio plays the head of a team of dream invaders charged with planting an idea deep in the subconscious of a business scion (Cillian Murphy, Nolan’s future J. Robert Oppenheimer). The writer-director continually toys with narrative structure, visual design and cinema’s capacity to manipulate time. The finale does for spinning tops what “Blade Runner” did for origami unicorns.

VOTED FOR BY UZO ADUBA

See her full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try [The Science of Sleep](#), [Another Earth](#) or [Shutter Island](#).

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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54

PAN'S LABYRINTH

GUILLERMO DEL TORO, 2006



A dark fairy tale set in Franco-era Spain, this was the film that propelled Guillermo del Toro from horror movies and comic-book adaptations into the world of prestige filmmaking, albeit with his signature humanism, magical realism and superb creature creations intact. Young Ofelia escapes her bleak circumstances — particularly life under her fascist new stepfather — by entering an imaginary space where a mystical faun sets her on a quest to prove her worth. The visually dazzling allegory affirmed del Toro as one of our finest filmmakers today.

VOTED FOR BY BRETT GOLDSTEIN

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *A Monster Calls*, *Crimson Peak* or *The Green Knight*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



53

BORAT: CULTURAL LEARNINGS OF AMERICA FOR MAKE BENEFIT GLORIOUS NATION OF KAZAKHSTAN

LARRY CHARLES, 2006



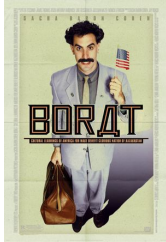
Sacha Baron Cohen gave the United States a thorough, uproarious pranking when he brought Borat Sagdiyev, the Kazakh TV reporter he had played on “Da Ali G Show,” to movie screens. As Borat travels the country hoping to meet Pamela Anderson, he has alarmingly little trouble getting strangers to slip their masks: At a rodeo, spectators seem less disturbed about Borat’s call for George W. Bush to “drink the blood of every single man, woman and child of Iraq” than about his singing of Kazakhstan’s supposed national anthem.

“I was one of many writers on it, then had to go back to work on ‘The King of Queens’ when they brought in the new director, Larry Charles. It’s just a great example of a

lot of your favorite movies that started as disasters. Not only did they rescue that movie, but they took it to this other level.”

PATTON OSWALT, COMEDIAN

See his ballot here.



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try Idiocracy, Jackass: The Movie or Entertainment.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



52

THE FAVOURITE

YORGOS LANTHIMOS, 2018



The Greek auteur Yorgos Lanthimos looks at British history through his own fish-eye lens in this cheekily perverted take on the life of Queen Anne, played here as a desperate, ailing ruler by Olivia Colman in an Oscar-winning performance. The two women competing for Anne's fickle affections are the domineering Sarah (Rachel Weisz) and the conniving Abigail (Emma Stone), each on her own quest for power. In a movie full of delectable zingers, Lanthimos leans into nastiness, both corporeal and otherwise.

VOTED FOR BY NAOMIE HARRIS

See her full ballot here.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Marie Antoinette, Conclave or Barry Lyndon.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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51

12 YEARS A SLAVE

STEVE MCQUEEN, 2013



Steve McQueen's film broke every rule — a profoundly American story from a British director and star (Chiwetel Ejiofor); a Black-led period drama that grossed more than \$130 million internationally; a clear-eyed reckoning with slavery that won best picture. Working from the astonishing autobiography of Solomon Northup, a free Black man kidnapped into slavery in the mid-19th century, McQueen crafted a blazingly ambitious, improbably poetic version of the “Odyssey” that reveals more about humanity, power, bigotry and grace than much of the previous 100 years of American political cinema combined.

“It’s hard to put into words how important the film was for me. It had this impact that stretched far beyond America. Just traveling through airports, people would stop me to talk about their own experience, their own

life, sometimes their own racism. We didn't realize at the time, but it was quite an open era. People were very receptive to hearing the story and really trying to understand history."

CHIWETEL EJIOFOR ON STARRING IN "12 YEARS A SLAVE"

See his ballot here.



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try 13TH, The Color Purple or Belle.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



50
UP

PETE DOCTER, 2009



Pixar at its risk-taking height. A cranky, 78-year-old widower clings to the past as he struggles to process grief that's preventing new connections. Some early scenes are in black-and-white; others have no dialogue. In certain sections, the director Pete Docter is interested in a feeling more than linear storytelling. The film's second half — after the house floats away — becomes more overtly commercial, with a young chatterbox, a dog with a magic collar, a mythical bird and an unexpected antagonist providing adventure and comedic relief.

VOTED FOR BY MIKE BIRBIGLIA

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Thelma*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* or *Marcel the Shell With Shoes On*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



49

BEFORE SUNSET

RICHARD LINKLATER, 2004



You're not supposed to make a sequel to a love story. Certainly, it's hard to imagine improving on "Before Sunrise," Richard Linklater's 1995 gem about 20-somethings Jesse and Celine (Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy), who fall for each other on a train from Budapest. But the passage of time adds poignancy, and when "Before Sunset" reunites those star-crossed lovers in their 30s, the emotional baggage they've accrued in the meantime makes their second stab at love even more involving.

"I think about the ending all the time. Celine is dancing. He's watching her, but he's got his family at home, and we just know all the layers of what they're both feeling, yet they're in this beautiful moment together. It's just perfect."

LULU WANG, DIRECTOR

See her ballot [here](#).

 **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try [Two Days in New York](#), [Past Lives](#) or [Lovely and Amazing](#).

 I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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48

THE LIVES OF OTHERS

FLORIAN HENCKEL VON DONNERSMARCK, 2007



Whom can you trust in circa-1984 East Berlin? The lives of others — friends, neighbors, wayward co-workers — are anyone's concern in Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's taut, disquieting drama about a dashing playwright, his stage-actress lover and the Stasi agent assigned to monitor their loyalties. The stakes couldn't be higher, but the movie's emotional base line is both muted and devastating, a high-wire act of revelation and compliance.

VOTED FOR BY MATTHEW WEINER

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Cold War, 4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days or Barbara.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



47

ALMOST FAMOUS

CAMERON CROWE, 2000



Cameron Crowe's semi-autobiographical dramedy about a rock 'n' roll-obsessed high school journalist who goes on the road with a rising band has become almost totemic, with aphorisms like "You cannot make friends with the rock stars." Over a soundtrack of Cat Stevens, Yes and Elton John, Crowe brings to life the intoxicating milieu of 1970s rock, featuring an enigmatic guitarist (Billy Crudup) and an alluring don't-call-her-a-groupie (Kate Hudson). But the movie is also bracingly clear-eyed about the perils of chasing fame.

VOTED FOR BY MIKEY MADISON

See her full ballot [here](#).



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try [High Fidelity](#), [Dig!](#) or [Juliet, Naked](#).

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



46

ROMA

ALFONSO CUARÓN, 2018



This is Alfonso Cuarón's film for himself. After spending his 40s and early 50s mostly on big-budget fantasies, the Mexican virtuoso turned to this dazzlingly mundane black-and-white memory piece. Yalitza Aparicio plays Cleo, a maid for a middle-class family in Mexico City in the 1970s. Problems arise, ordinary and otherwise. Her quiet selflessness gets them through. Cuarón won Oscars for his direction and cinematography.

VOTED FOR BY JOHN LITHGOW

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Japón*, *Tótem* or *Atlantics*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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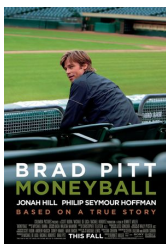
45

MONEYBALL

BENNETT MILLER, 2011



“Moneyball” doesn’t just depict the real-life success of the underdog Oakland Athletics in 2002. It describes a strategy to win — in business and baseball. Based on Michael Lewis’s book, this Bennett Miller drama stars Brad Pitt as Billy Beane, the G.M. who, together with an aide (Jonah Hill), uses data to assemble a team of undervalued players. With Philip Seymour Hoffman fully inhabiting his role as the skeptical A’s manager, “Moneyball” captures the ruthlessness and romance of baseball at a time when unpopular ideas proved to be literally game-changing.



☐ I’ve seen it

Liked it? Try Hustle, Sugar or Bang the Drum Slowly.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



44

ONCE UPON A TIME ... IN HOLLYWOOD

QUENTIN TARANTINO, 2019



Like Martin Scorsese's New York or Federico Fellini's Rome, Quentin Tarantino's Los Angeles is a thing to behold: The director's fevered love letter to his hometown circa 1969 is a gonzo-maximalist dream, encompassing a fictional fading TV star (Leonardo DiCaprio), his laconic stuntman-sidekick (Brad Pitt), a passel of Manson family freaks and the very real starlet Sharon

Tate (played as pure blond sunshine by Margot Robbie). From there, the script breaks with established history, building to one of the most bravura and far-out finales in film history.

VOTED FOR BY EDGAR WRIGHT

See his full ballot [here](#).



☒ I've seen it

Liked it? Try [Tropic Thunder](#), [The Player](#) or [Boogie Nights](#).

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



43

OLDBOY

PARK CHAN-WOOK, 2005



The middle entry in the South Korean director Park Chan-wook's Vengeance Trilogy hits like a hammer — to the head, leg, arm and anywhere else its protagonist can strike as he fights his way out of a hallway full of thugs. That celebrated action sequence is emblematic of this twisty (and twisted) thriller's operatic levels of violence, but its emotions are dialed to extremes, too: “Oldboy” provokes and unsettles, right up to its disturbingly ambiguous final frame.

“It’s romantic, it’s disgusting, it’s fun. It just grabs you. I think [the star, Choi Min-sik] is incredible. His head of hair — I just want to run my hands through his hair.”

JOHN TURTURRO, ACTOR

See his ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try John Wick, Memento or The Handmaiden.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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42

THE MASTER

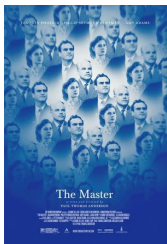
PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON, 2012



Fans are still unraveling Paul Thomas Anderson's sixth and most elliptical feature, about the relationship between a drifting, emotionally regressive World War II veteran (Joaquin Phoenix) and a cult leader (Philip Seymour Hoffman) who is his physical and temperamental opposite. The production design's extraordinary evocation of the period, the shimmery detail of the imagery (Anderson revived the nearly obsolete 65-millimeter format to shoot it) and the intensity of the performances — including Amy Adams's turn as the cult leader's wife — all contribute to the film's durability and mystery.

VOTED FOR BY WILL SHARPE

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Martha Marcy May Marlene, Synecdoche, New York or The Brutalist.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



41

AMÉLIE

JEAN-PIERRE JEUNET, 2001



“Times are hard for dreamers,” a character says in this surprise smash hit that’s mainly remembered as a mash-up of rom-com and magical effects. But set aside moments like a heartbroken woman dissolving into a puddle. The director Jean-Pierre Jeunet takes a clear-eyed, very funny view of both people and love. That line, for instance, is uttered by a porn emporium clerk. And when a would-be suitor tells the object of his affection, “You’re beautiful when you blush,” she replies, “It’s my dyspepsia.”



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Delicatessen*, *La La Land* or *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



40 YI YI

EDWARD YANG, 2000



This multigenerational family epic, written and directed by Edward Yang, balances sublime poetry with explosive drama. Beautifully shot in Taiwan and Japan, the film follows three members of the Jian family after their matriarch falls into a coma. As they confront the banalities of their lives, they try to find meaning through music, memories and especially photographs, including the ones a

preternaturally wise 8-year-old takes of the backs of people's heads, to show them what they can't see for themselves — something Yang achieves with this singular film.

VOTED FOR BY BRIT MARLING

See her full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try [The Farewell](#), [Still Walking](#) or [Columbus](#).

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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39

LADY BIRD

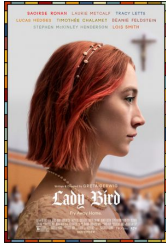
GRETA GERWIG, 2017



“Don’t you think maybe they are the same thing — love and attention?” This question, posed to the high schooler Christine “Lady Bird” McPherson, is the central tenet of Greta Gerwig’s breakthrough directorial effort. Lady Bird (Saoirse Ronan) is so used to cataloging the things that frustrate her — from her overbearing mother (Laurie Metcalf) to the provincial indignities of her Sacramento hometown — that she hardly notices her attention and affection are interlinked. As a teenager, Lady Bird wears her defensiveness like a suit of armor, but Gerwig finds the vulnerable heart beating underneath.

VOTED FOR BY AMY PASCAL

See her full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Booksmart, Eighth Grade or My Old Ass.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



38

PORTRAIT OF A LADY ON FIRE

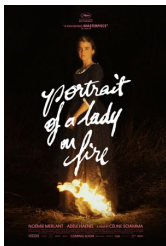
CÉLINE SCIAMMA, 2019



In Céline Sciamma's quietly piercing historical drama, two 18th-century women, the aristocrat Héloïse (Adèle Haenel) and the artist Marianne (Noémie Merlant), fall secretly and blisteringly in love along the coast of France. But this isn't a typical saga of forbidden desire, and these women suffer no illusions, though with a deadline hanging over them like a noose, they certainly do suffer: Héloïse is promised to a Milanese nobleman. And the closing scene, long after they've parted, is an unshakable, eviscerating display of the aftershocks of social subordination and self-abandonment.

VOTED FOR BY MIKEY MADISON

See her full ballot [here](#).



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Disobedience*, *Blue Is the Warmest Color* or *The Age of Innocence*.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



37

CALL ME BY YOUR NAME

LUCA GUADAGNINO, 2017



Are the best love stories really about heartbreak? In Luca Guadagnino's masterpiece, Elio (Timothée Chalamet in his breakout role) and Oliver (Armie Hammer) share a tender, teasing summer romance in northern Italy. But it's the aftermath of their affair that gives the film its depth — Elio's tearful call to his mother, his father's gentle wisdom and the unforgettable final scene in which Elio matures before our eyes. Even when love is fleeting, it can transform us in ways that last forever.

VOTED FOR BY MOLLY RINGWALD

See her full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *My Summer of Love*, *Pariah* or *Beach Rats*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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36

A SERIOUS MAN

ETHAN COEN AND JOEL COEN, 2009



The Coen brothers spin memories of their childhood in late-1960s Minnesota into a dark comedy as knotty as a Talmudic passage. Michael Stuhlbarg plays Larry Gopnik, a physics professor simultaneously beset by a disgruntled student, a wayward brother, a tenure committee, a son's bar mitzvah and a separation spurred by a guy named Sy Ableman. Is God testing him? Does a rabbi's story about a "goy's teeth" hold the answer? It's the Coens' most Jewish film — and, "The Big Lebowski" aside, a good candidate for their most quotable.

"This has nothing to do with my liking of the movie, but I was up for the Richard Kind part in that movie. That's one of the few times that my film buff muscle overtook my actor muscle. I remember telling Joel and Ethan,

‘Look, I really want to work. I want to be in a Coen brothers film so badly, but you really should cast Richard Kind in this role. He’s so perfect.’”

PATTON OSWALT, COMEDIAN

See his ballot here.



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try American Splendor, Barton Fink or Shiva Baby.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



35

A PROPHET

JACQUES AUDIARD, 2010



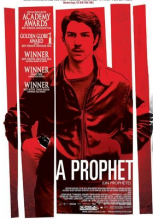
Sadly, the outlines of this story — a teenager is sent to prison and emerges a hardened criminal — aren't surprising. But Jacques Audiard is all about specifics, even deploying iris shots to direct our attention as Malik, an illiterate French teenager of Arab descent, uses his smarts not just to get by but to get ahead. Malik (a terrifically subtle Tahar Rahim) is also a stand-in for young Muslims dealing with prejudice and a lack of opportunity in France's banlieues. In the years since this drama's release, it has only grown more relevant.

“The realism of it was so shocking to me. There was just nothing held back. It gave me a view into a world that I had no idea about, and I felt like it was telling me the

truth. It felt dangerous, almost like, ‘How am I allowed to see this?’”

BENNY SAFDIE, ACTOR-DIRECTOR

See his ballot here.



 I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Les Misérables*, *Tell No One* or *Starred Up*.

 I want to watch it

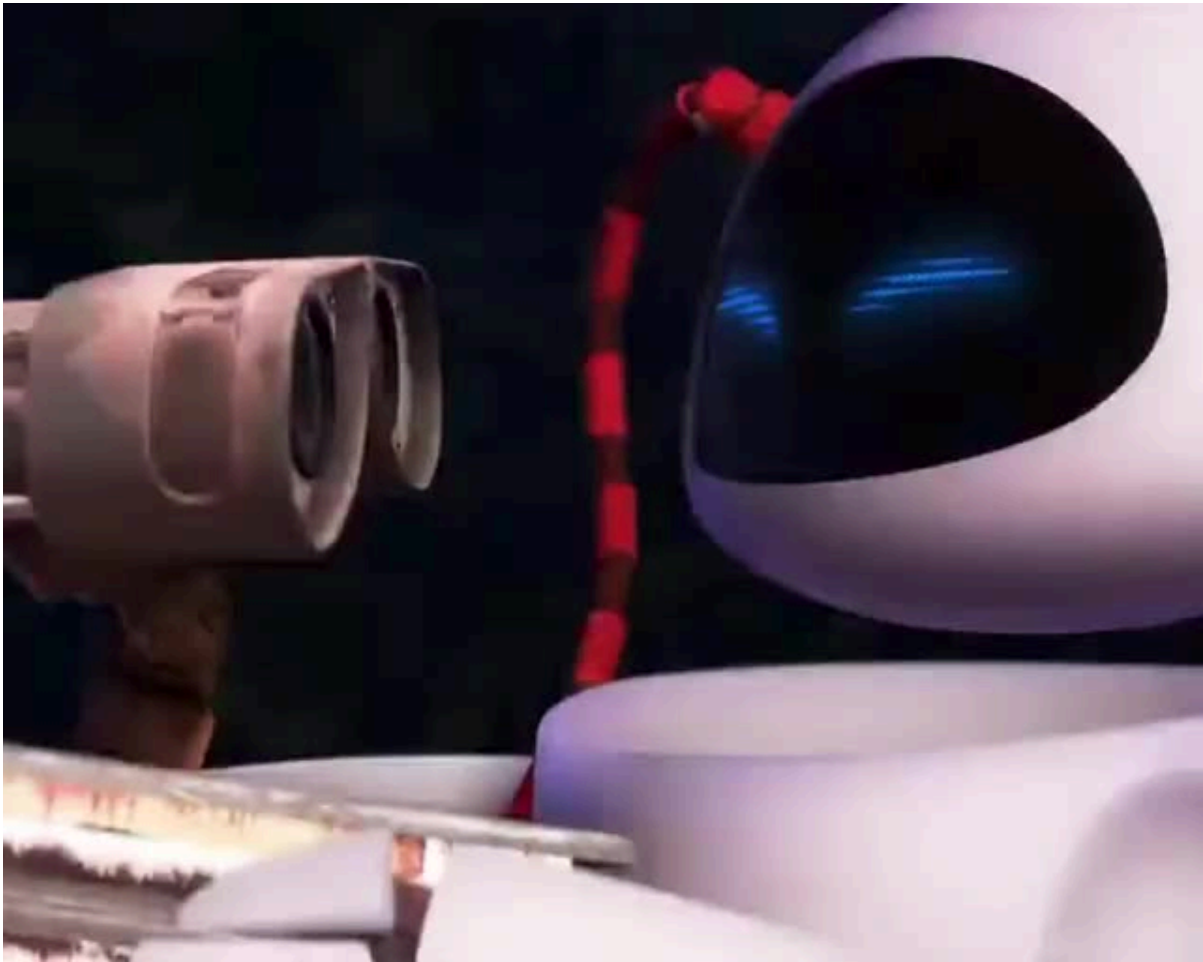
Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



34

WALL-E

ANDREW STANTON, 2008



Pixar's most formally inventive movie is basically wordless for the first act, in which the last robot on earth is faithfully cleaning up after absent humans. Once it pivots to the sky, though, "Wall-E" is a fable about overconsumption and the climate that's only gotten more real-feeling. The ending, seemingly cheery on the surface, also serves up a bleak warning that we've yet to heed.

VOTED FOR BY NATHAN LANE

See his full ballot [here](#).



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try [Inside Out](#), [The Wild Robot](#) or [Iron Giant](#).

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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33

A SEPARATION

ASGHAR FARHADI, 2011



In Asghar Farhadi's drama, set in Tehran, a couple is mid-breakup but stuck: A judge has denied the divorce application. While the wife, Simin, takes refuge with her mother, a series of twists and turns lands the husband, Nader, in court facing a murder charge after he hires a woman to care for his ailing father. Full of suspense and moral ambiguity, this legal thriller went on to become the first Iranian movie to win the Oscar for best foreign language film.

"It's a damning look at the Iranian legal system in such a minute and micro way that it actually tells more about the macro. It's also a perfect drama."

ARIAN MOAYED, ACTOR

See his ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *The Seed of the Sacred Fig*, *A Hero* or *Marriage Story*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



32

BRIDESMAIDS

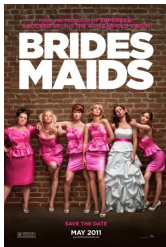
PAUL FEIG, 2011



In 2011, the story of down-on-her-luck Annie (Kristen Wiig), her newly engaged bestie, Lillian (Maya Rudolph), and Lillian's wealthy pal (Rose Byrne) inspired discussions of women, gross-out comedy and box-office power. Today, the script by Wiig and Annie Mumolo remains laugh-out-loud funny, with impressively complex side characters (Melissa McCarthy's bananas future sister-in-law; Jill Clayburgh's daffy mom). What surprises is how deeply felt this Paul Feig film is: Annie is sad and jealous, unable to get out of her own way. We've all been there, though perhaps not with explosive diarrhea.

VOTED FOR BY PHOEBE ROBINSON

See her full ballot [here](#).



☒ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try [Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar](#), [Bachelorette](#) or [Spy](#).

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



31

THE DEPARTED

MARTIN SCORSESE, 2006



The cat-and-rat gangster picture that finally won Martin Scorsese his Oscar happens to be one of the most downright entertaining of the century. Scorsese takes the Hong Kong flick “Infernal Affairs” and plops it in Boston, Dropkick Murphys soundtrack and all. On one side of the law there’s Leonardo DiCaprio’s rough-around-the-edges cop posing as a criminal. On the other there’s Matt Damon’s golden-boy police officer working for the Mafia. In the middle there’s Jack Nicholson’s Irish mob boss, smiling like the Cheshire Cat. Let the games begin.

“It’s a film so deeply packed with ideas that there is no way your mind can drift anywhere but inside the film. Oh, and it’s got a polarizing ending that might also be one of the best of all time.”

JOSH SAFDIE, DIRECTOR

See his ballot here.

**I've seen it**

Liked it? Try *The Town*, *Infernal Affairs* or *Before the Devil Knows You're Dead*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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**30****LOST IN TRANSLATION**

SOFIA COPPOLA, 2003



Sofia Coppola's sophomore feature is a cinematic miracle — effortlessly inventive, endlessly quoted, impossible to replicate. Shot at the Park Hyatt Tokyo (where Coppola had stayed while contemplating the end of her first marriage), it follows the enigmatic duo of Bob and Charlotte (Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson), a fading movie star and a floundering philosophy grad whose paths intersect for just as long as it takes to recognize a soul mate. “Lost in Translation” won Coppola an Oscar and cemented her status as an essential new voice in American film.

“Easy-breezy French film vibes but in Tokyo. I love Scarlett Johansson in everything she does. She is graceful, elegant, talented, the real deal.”

PAMELA ANDERSON, ACTRESS

See her ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Janet Planet, Somewhere or Return to Seoul.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



29

ARRIVAL

DENIS VILLENEUVE, 2016



Denis Villeneuve's lyrical alien film, based on a short story by Ted Chiang, is sci-fi at its most emotionally devastating. When a mysterious, looming extraterrestrial craft lands on Earth, a linguist played by Amy Adams, in a career-best role, is recruited to try to speak to the tentacled beings known as heptapods. Less a saga about invasion than it is about communication, "Arrival" is intoxicatingly mysterious until it wallops you with its time-turning gut punch of an ending.

VOTED FOR BY MIN JIN LEE

See her full ballot [here](#).



 I've seen it

Liked it? Try [The Void of Night](#), [Ad Astra](#) or [I, Origins](#).

 I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



28

THE DARK KNIGHT

CHRISTOPHER NOLAN, 2008



Indifference to superheroes isn't a prerequisite for making a great film about them. But Christopher Nolan's allergy to comic-book logic and his infatuation with the grown-up crime movie canon (especially "Heat" and "The Godfather") revitalized a character still laboring to emerge from the miasma of "Batman & Robin." The second entry and high-water mark of Nolan's "Dark Knight" trilogy poses fruitful questions about the naïveté of its protagonist's moral code. But the film's greatest asset is Heath Ledger, whose staggering performance as the Joker set the bar for subsequent supervillains forever.



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try *The Prestige*, *V for Vendetta* or *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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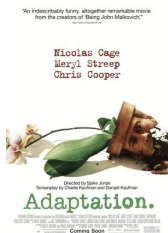
27

ADAPTATION

SPIKE JONZE, 2002



There's a virtuosic hall-of-mirrors quality to "Adaptation," directed by Spike Jonze and ostensibly written by Charlie Kaufman and his twin brother, Donald, who does not in fact exist. It's an adaptation of a book that's actually about how impossible it is to adapt a book; it's a study of neuroses and courage and obsessive passion; and above all it is an incredibly funny movie, with a delicious, dual Nicolas Cage performance as both Kaufmans.



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try Dream Scenario, Being John Malkovich or Sorry to Bother You.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



26

ANATOMY OF A FALL

JUSTINE TRIET, 2023



Not quite a he-said she-said — the defenestrated husband in question is, several minutes in, already dead — Justine Triet's taut, stylish dissection of a tumultuous marriage is both forensic and thrillingly ambiguous. As the wife who may or may not have pushed her better half out of a chalet window, Sandra Hüller, who

earned an Oscar nomination for the role, offers a master class in contained fury, indignation and ugly truths she (and Triet) will never tell.

VOTED FOR BY TRAMELL TILLMAN

See his full ballot [here](#).



☒ I've seen it

Liked it? Try [Saint Omer](#), [The Teachers' Lounge](#) or [Primal Fear](#).

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



25

PHANTOM THREAD

PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON, 2017



Don't you dare call Paul Thomas Anderson's delectable 1950s fashion drama "chic." The couturier Reynolds Woodcock, played by Daniel Day-Lewis, would have your head. This film is sumptuous and subversive, recounting the love story between the exacting Reynolds and his unruly muse, Alma (Vicky Krieps). He is prickly and easily perturbed; she delights in getting under his skin. It may seem that Anderson is investigating power imbalances in relationships; instead it's the tale of a man meeting his match. Eat up, you hungry boys.

VOTED FOR BY PEDRO ALMODÓVAR

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Tár*, *Marriage Story* or *Damage*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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24

HER

SPIKE JONZE, 2013



Eschewing the hard, gleaming surfaces of most speculative sci-fi for something more off-kilter and bittersweet, Spike Jonze's digital romance follows a lonely, mustachioed introvert (Joaquin Phoenix) in near-future Los Angeles as he falls head-over-code for an adaptive operating system voiced by Scarlett Johansson. Is it real machine love or just a grown man's pathological avoidance of intimacy? "Her" refuses easy answers, though the many questions it raises, alas, feel a lot less theoretical today than they did in 2013.

VOTED FOR BY TONY HALE

See his full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try I'm Your Man, Ex Machina or A.I. Artificial Intelligence.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



23

BOYHOOD

RICHARD LINKLATER, 2014



An audacious concept — the movie was shot, in start-and-stop fashion, over more than a decade — meets a winningly low-key execution in Richard Linklater’s acute, unhurried portrait of a small-town Texas kid (Ellar Coltrane) navigating his parents’ divorce, first crushes and other travails and triumphs of adolescence. The result is a coming-of-age drama of uncommon loveliness, both piercing and sweet.

“I thought Linklater had the audacity and just a human approach. We saw it when my son was younger. Then I went to see it again when he was going to go to college, and that almost killed me. I was in tears.”

JOHN TURTURRO, ACTOR

[See his ballot here.](#)

“The primary job of movies is to hold me in a place where I emotionally believe in everything that’s happening even though none of it really happened. Every time ‘Boyhood’ cuts forward in time and you see these parents and, most crucially, this child get older, it’s almost like a new cinematic magic spell is cast on us.”

JASON BLUM, PRODUCER

[See his ballot here.](#)



☒ I've seen it

Liked it? Try [Close](#), [Minari](#) or [35 Up](#).

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



22

THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL

WES ANDERSON, 2014



Wes Anderson's candy-colored visions can be deceptive. The magnificent inn of the title is a glorious pink confection, but there are real stakes at play: Fascism is fast approaching and refugees have good reason to fear the authorities at the borders of a fictional European country. This between-the-wars tale of a beloved

conciERGE (a terrific Ralph Fiennes) who calls men and women alike “darling” and sleeps with all his friends is in the end deeply moving.

“Wes Anderson is king! (I love Ralph Fiennes also.) This movie in particular reminds me of a beautiful Cocteau-style creation — an artist could only dream up the world we witness here.”

PAMELA ANDERSON, ACTRESS

[See her ballot here.](#)

“It’s either the saddest comedy I’ve ever seen, or the most hilarious tragedy I’ve ever seen. It’s such a lament for civility and civil discourse. I feel like it’s a warning for what we’re living through right now.”

DENNIS LEHANE, AUTHOR

[See his ballot here.](#)



I’ve seen it

Liked it? Try [Grand Hotel](#), [Hail, Caesar!](#) or [Gosford Park](#).

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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21

THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS

WES ANDERSON, 2001



Before his name became a byword for a distinctive and much-imitated aesthetic, Wes Anderson was also just a really good storyteller. His exploration of one eccentric New York family contains no shortage of Wes-lian signatures: deadpan line deliveries, dreamy Pantone palettes, first-rate needle drops. But it's also a deeply felt and often very funny portrait of an

emotionally distant patriarch (Gene Hackman) and his messy, overachieving offspring, played with exquisite agony by Ben Stiller, Luke Wilson and Gwyneth Paltrow.

“It might’ve been my first introduction to Gene Hackman. Now he’s one of my favorites. But as Royal Tenenbaum, his whole relationship with Anjelica Houston’s character and the way he delivers his lines, it’s just on another level — ‘I’m dying. I’m not dying. Yes, I’m dying!’”

BENNY SAFDIE, ACTOR-DIRECTOR



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Harold and Maude, I Heart Huckabees or The Squid and the Whale.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



20

THE WOLF OF WALL STREET

MARTIN SCORSESE, 2013

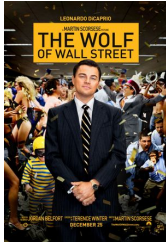


More than a century after the days of “Gangs of New York,” Martin Scorsese finds more Lower Manhattan bros behaving badly. Playing the notorious stock trader Jordan Belfort (whose memoir the movie is based on), Leonardo DiCaprio has rarely been funnier onscreen, whether it’s chucking lobsters at pesky F.B.I. agents or going rubber-legged from one too many quaaludes. There’s inevitably a downfall, but if it seems as if Belfort gets off pretty easy — well, doesn’t that sound like Wall Street?

“It’s a very long movie, but it doesn’t feel long. There’s something about the speed of it, the energy. I’m like, ‘How the hell did Scorsese do that at his age?’ Just tap

into this manic madness. And it was ahead of its time, too — now Jordan Belfort is all over Instagram with his selling tactics.”

BENNY SAFDIE, ACTOR-DIRECTOR



 I've seen it

Liked it? Try Boiler Room, Glengarry Glen Ross or American Hustle.

 I want to watch it

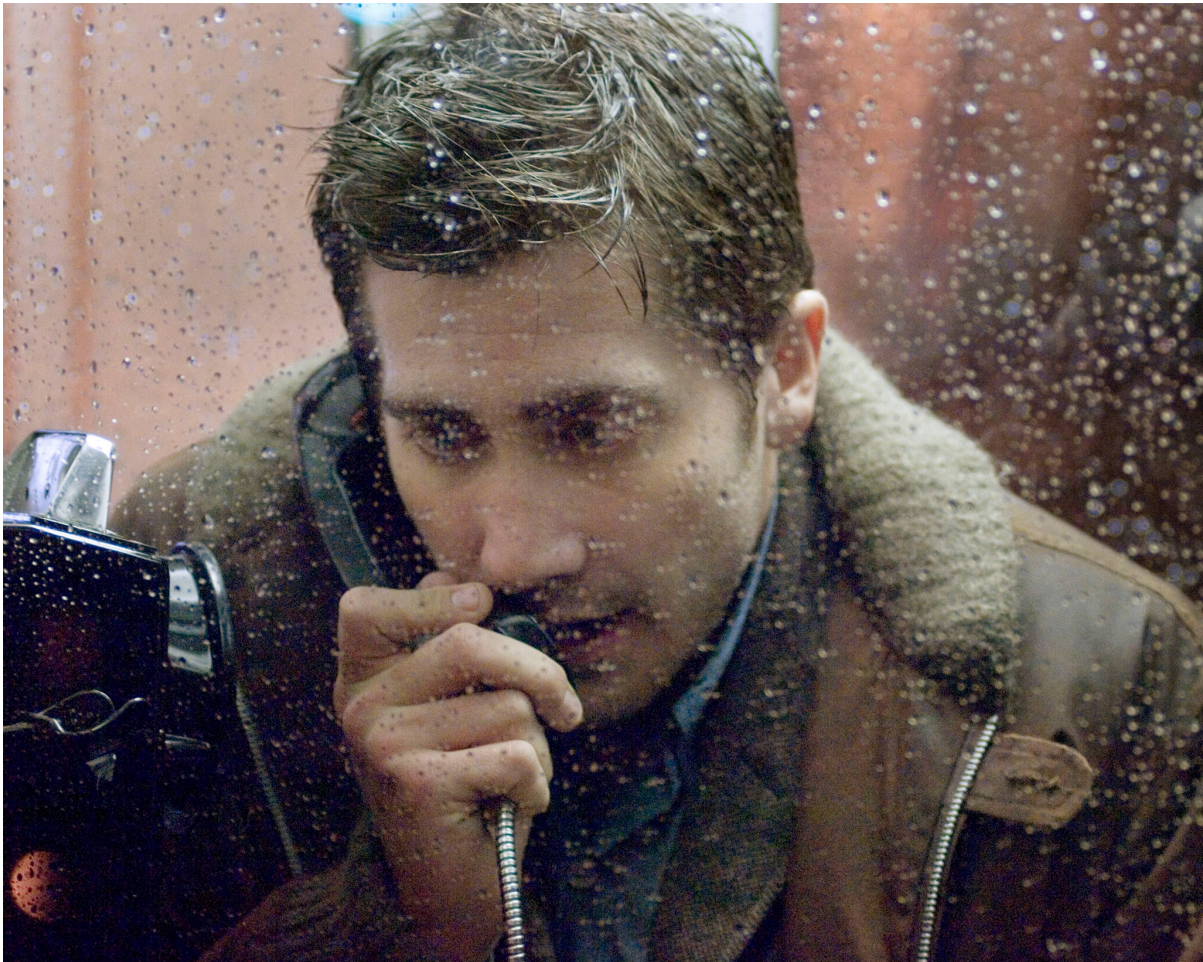
Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



19

ZODIAC

DAVID FINCHER, 2007



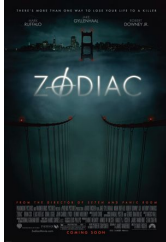
This drama, which sputtered at the box office, functions as an examination of obsession. The titular serial killer is obsessive in the creation of a persona. The bureaucracy-hindered cops (Mark Ruffalo and Anthony Edwards) obsessively chase leads, while newspaper journalists, including Robert Downey Jr.'s boozy beat reporter, do the same. That you feel satisfied by the time the credits roll — even though the Zodiac's identity remains a mystery — speaks to David Fincher's obsessive attention to detail and technique.

“People sometimes describe David Fincher’s work as being cold or austere, but I find ‘Zodiac’ incredibly warm and personal because I see so much of him and how he

approaches making art in it. To me, it's the shortest three hours in the world."

BARRY JENKINS, DIRECTOR

See his ballot here.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Holy Spider, Nightcrawler or Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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18

Y TU MAMÁ TAMBIÉN

ALFONSO CUARÓN, 2002



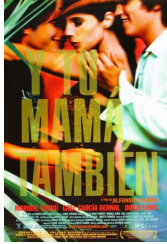
Alfonso Cuarón's bildungsroman has much on its mind — lust, class, male friendship, mortality, but mainly lust. Sex is all that high schoolers Tenoch (Diego Luna) and Julio (Gael García Bernal) seem to live for — with their girlfriends, with each other's girlfriends, with an alluring in-law who inspires a road trip to a beach. Cuarón shoots sex the way his characters feel it: hot, all-consuming, the weight of the world just off-camera. Like youth itself, we stumble out of the film blinking, disoriented, sifting through memories like sand strewn with gold.

"I can't even count the number of times I've seen this film. Initially, I think I connected with the boys and this sense of freedom and escapism. As I've gotten older, it's

more about connecting with [the in-law's] journey and what she's seeking."

LULU WANG, DIRECTOR

See her ballot [here](#).



 I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Sex and Lucia*, *The Hand of God* or *American Honey*.

 I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



17

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

ANG LEE, 2005



“The gay cowboy movie” did more than start water-cooler conversations and win several Oscars (its best picture loss to “Crash” remains a notorious bugaboo of Oscar lore). Ang Lee’s austere, gently paced western turned a clandestine romance between two Wyoming ranch hands (Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal) into one of cinema’s great tragic love stories, as aesthetically beautiful as it was emotionally shattering.

VOTED FOR BY AVA DUVERNAY

See her full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try All of Us Strangers, My Own Private Idaho or God's Own Country.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



16

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

ANG LEE, 2000



When Ang Lee debuted this wuxia masterpiece starring Michelle Yeoh, Chow Yun-fat and Zhang Ziyi, the film appealed to Western and Eastern audiences alike, a rarity at the time, and demolished box-office records. This action drama marries acrobatic, aerodynamic martial arts with repressed love and forbidden futures. Seared in memory: the showdown between Yeoh's swordswoman and the thief played by Zhang using a multitude of weapons, and the balletic sword fight between Chow's warrior and Zhang in a bamboo forest.



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try *Hero*, *Enter the Dragon* or *The Raid: Redemption*.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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15

CITY OF GOD

FERNANDO MEIRELLES, 2003



A teenager forces a younger teenager to kill an even younger child. The victim cowers inside a fenced patio that resembles a playpen. Nearby sobs another child, who looks about 5; he's been shot in the foot — to send a message, but also for fun. That a film can contain this scene and somehow make you feel anything but sick is a testament to its narrative complexity, dazzling visual style and charismatic cast. It's a harrowing yet poetic meditation on survival in Rio de Janeiro's Cidade de Deus slum.

“The first time watching, you felt the heat, you felt that sweat on your back, you felt the pressure, you felt the streets. There are so few films that drop you right into the middle of an environment with such precision.”

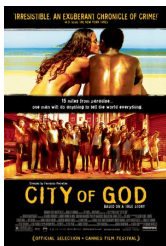
CHIWETEL EJIOFOR, ACTOR

[See his ballot here.](#)

“There's a scene in the middle of ‘City of God’ where they're having a kind of impromptu dance, and then they put on ‘Kung Fu Fighting’ and it just makes the whole crowd pumped up. But it's also tragic and tense. It's just extraordinary.”

PATTON OSWALT, COMEDIAN

[See his ballot here.](#)



I've seen it

Liked it? Try Amores Perros, Neighboring Sounds or William Shakespeare's Romeo+Juliet.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



14

INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS

QUENTIN TARANTINO, 2009



Quentin Tarantino's World War II revenge tale is epic but intimate: Life and death turn on a hand gesture, a dessert topping, a bad accent (not whatever Tennessee accent Brad Pitt is using — that one's hilarious). Christoph Waltz stands out in a stacked ensemble cast, and won the best supporting actor Oscar. But after a

conflagration of revisionist history has burned this movie to the ground, Pitt gets the last word, and it's hard not to hear it in Tarantino's voice: "I think this just might be my masterpiece."

VOTED FOR BY MEL BROOKS

See his full ballot [here](#).



☒ I've seen it

Liked it? Try [Jojo Rabbit](#), [The Great Escape](#) or [Reservoir Dogs](#).

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



13

CHILDREN OF MEN

ALFONSO CUARÓN, 2006



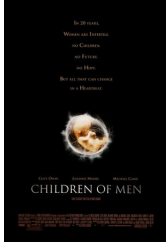
While the near future is bleak in Alfonso Cuarón's sci-fi drama, almost every scene is a stunner. Women have become infertile, and hope for the human race is all but gone, but in a locked-down Britain hostile to refugees, a bureaucrat (Clive Owen) finds himself in a position to protect a newcomer (Clare-Hope Ashitey), the only pregnant woman in the world. The performances are lived-in, the narrative is prescient and Emmanuel Lubezki's camerawork dazzles. A one-shot ambush sequence filmed from inside a moving vehicle will leave you agape.

"The scariest part about the end of the world is not the bombs going off. It's not the weird attacks on people and the breakdown of civility and even basic kindness. It's

the people desperately trying to go on with their lives no matter what.”

PATTON OSWALT, COMEDIAN

See his ballot here.



 I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Minority Report*, *Snowpiercer* or *Take Shelter*.

 I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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12

THE ZONE OF INTEREST

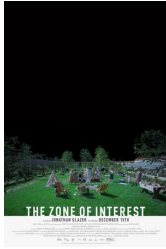
JONATHAN GLAZER, 2023



Jonathan Glazer's Holocaust narrative defies convention. Using the bones of Martin Amis's novel of the same name, Glazer focuses on the day-to-day life of the commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Höss (Christian Friedel), and his wife, Hedwig (Sandra Hüller), who reside next door. They garden to the soundtrack of mass murder as the ash of human bodies falls from the sky. It's a disorienting watch that shows just how easy it is to live with monstrosity, every so often jolting you out of your skin with Mica Levi's unnerving score.

VOTED FOR BY ZIWE FUMUDOH

See her full ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Son of Saul*, *The White Ribbon* or *Dogville*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



11

MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

GEORGE MILLER, 2015



The fourth installment in George Miller's postapocalyptic series finds the world still thirsting for water and Max (Tom Hardy) riding shotgun with Furiosa (Charlize Theron), a one-armed, truck-driving revolutionary. Churning with bodies — human, machined, deathly pale, shinily chromed — Miller's kinetic, lunatic hallucination leaves you slack-jawed because of both its outrageous visuals and depth of feeling. Come for the guy playing a flame-throwing guitar while tied to a moving semi, stay for the requiem for a world that looks eerily, devastatingly like our own.

"It's got the greatest action sequences ever committed to film. And those two stars — I mean, you have a film that has almost no dialogue, so they had to cast two people who you can never take your eyes off of. And they did."

DENNIS LEHANE, AUTHOR



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try [The Road Warrior](#), [The Northman](#) or [The Road](#).

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



10

THE SOCIAL NETWORK

DAVID FINCHER, 2010



Less a biography than an evisceration, David Fincher's hypnotically unflattering, often brutally funny origin story about Mark Zuckerberg (Jesse Eisenberg) and the creation of Facebook opens with a man and woman breaking up. By movie's end, the man is the world's loneliest billionaire, compulsively clicking refresh on his Facebook page. When "The Social Network" debuted, it seemed like a borderline cruel take on a classic American success story. Given how social media has radically reshaped the world, the film now seems almost quaint — and not nearly cruel enough.

"I'd say watch 'The Social Network' if you want to see what a perfect film looks like."

SIMU LIU, ACTOR

See his ballot here.



I've seen it

Liked it? Try BlackBerry, The Big Short or Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

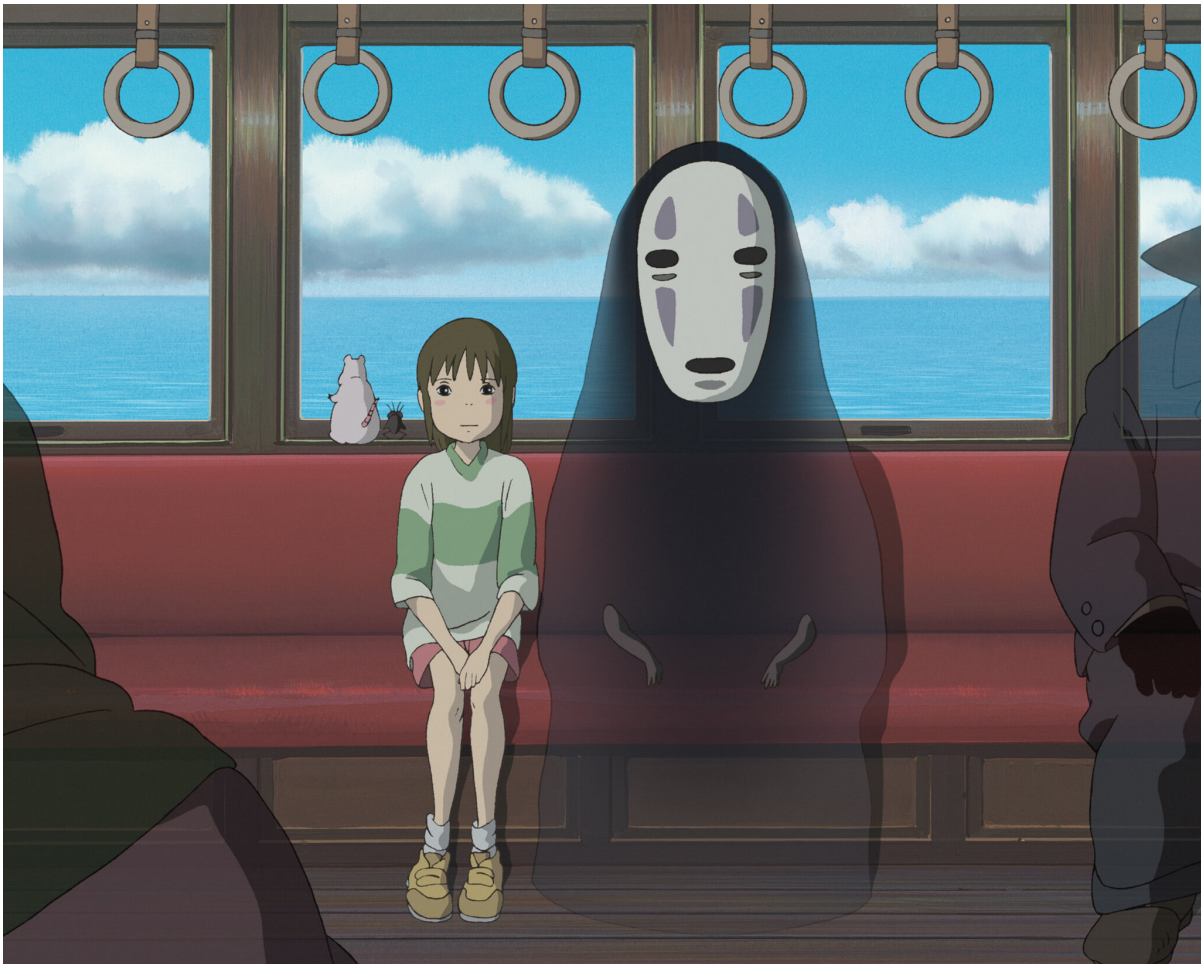
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9

SPIRITED AWAY

HAYAO MIYAZAKI, 2002



Hayao Miyazaki's hand-drawn fairy tale of adolescence is the "Alice in Wonderland" of our age. Unforgettable characters keep spilling out of an abandoned magical bathhouse — the boilerman and his soot sprites, the masked spirit No-Face, Haku the boy-dragon and, navigating it all, brave Chihiro, whose clueless parents have been turned into pigs by a witch. Beautifully uniting the master animator's preoccupations — man's corruption of nature, the loss of innocence, intimidating creatures who aren't what they seem — "Spirited Away" is a spellbinding adventure with few peers in animation or elsewhere.

"It's a film for any child who's lost their parents in a department store or large crowd. It's that pit in your stomach. It's one of my daughter's favorite films. There's

a lot of things you have to watch when you're a parent, and it's really interesting to discover something with them at the same time."

JOHN TURTURRO, ACTOR

See his ballot here.



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try Flow, My Neighbor Totoro or Robot Dreams.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



8

GET OUT

JORDAN PEELE, 2017



When Chris (Daniel Kaluuya), the hero of Jordan Peele's *freakout*, visits his white girlfriend's parents, it's obvious that something is off. Her mother is weirdly watchful, her father embarrassingly obsequious. Chris soon discovers that the family and their friends are modern-day slavers transplanting white brains into Black bodies. With mordant wit, great timing and superb control, Peele — making a terrific directorial debut — marshals genre conventions for a movie that's at once an electrifying thriller about the horrors of white supremacy and an unsparing sendup of a post-racial America.

VOTED FOR BY DANIELLE BROOKS

See her full ballot [here](#).



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try Night of the Living Dead, Rosemary's Baby or The Babadook.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.



7

ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND

MICHEL GONDRY, 2004



Sometimes a movie comes along that is so wildly inventive and wonderfully strange, you wonder if you dreamed it. Directed by Michel Gondry from a screenplay by Charlie Kaufman, this dream ventures far beyond its rom-com center. Kate Winslet and Jim Carrey play a broken-up couple who opt to get memories of their relationship erased. The movie — equal parts playful and gutting — emphasizes how strongly such memories, even terrible ones, shape us.

“It’s really smart. It’s deeply moving. And it’s funny. You can get all those three, which is rare. It’s very much about how love finds a way. And I don’t mean that in the sunny Hallmark way. I mean that in the messy, sometimes destructive, sometimes self-destructive way.”

DENNIS LEHANE, AUTHOR

See his ballot here.

**I've seen it**

Liked it? Try *The Worst Person in the World*, *Me and You and Everyone We Know* or *Past Lives*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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**6****NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN**

ETHAN COEN AND JOEL COEN, 2007



“What’s the most you ever lost on a coin toss?” the menacing hit man Anton Chigurh (Javier Bardem) asks a gas station owner, who didn’t realize he was going to gamble with death that day. Chigurh verges on superhuman as he stalks through this neo-western crime thriller that the Coen brothers adapted from Cormac McCarthy’s blood-soaked novel about violence and fate. Long stretches have no music or dialogue — it’s just men working hard not to die. But as one character puts it, “You can’t stop what’s comin’.”

“It’s the Coen brothers at their best. They’re sort of daring and they’re pushing the envelope all the time with the amazing character played by Javier Bardem.”

BRIAN COX, ACTOR

See his ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Hell or High Water*, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* or *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*.

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



5

MOONLIGHT

BARRY JENKINS, 2016



The weight of this delicate drama doesn't hit until the end, but when the finale arrives, it is staggering. Barry Jenkins expertly takes us through the life of one Black gay man, played at different ages by Alex Hibbert, Ashton Sanders and Trevante Rhodes. "Moonlight" is about everything it takes to make you who you are. It's about the beauty and love that come your way, what you embrace and what you don't. And ultimately it's about feeling like an outcast, but patiently, quietly finding your way home.

"I just think the tenderness of Black boyhood and Black manhood was really beautiful to convey. Barry captured the quietude, solitude even, when in an intimate setting. Blue is such a warm color; he captured that visually as well as in the heart space."

DANIELLE DEADWYLER, ACTRESS

“To realize that the movie has been like a portal to people in their adolescence to have a better understanding of themselves or how the world does or does not understand them — it didn’t occur to me the movie would have the life it’s had. I thought we were just making this really cool piece of art.”

BARRY JENKINS, DIRECTOR

See his ballot [here](#).

 **I’ve seen it**

Liked it? Try [Tropical Malady](#), [Weekend](#) or [Nickel Boys](#).

 I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



4

IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE

WONG KAR-WAI, 2001



Soon after a journalist (Tony Leung) and a secretary (Maggie Cheung), both married to other people, move into the same crowded Hong Kong building in 1962, they brush past each other in mesmerizing slow motion. Sparks don't fly; they smolder. They keep on burning in Wong Kar-wai's rapturously beautiful, elegiac romance, in which he inscribes desire in every glance and unspoken word. Here, the sensuous curve of a woman's back becomes an emblem of longing while the tendrils of smoke from a man's cigarette express the ache of life's impermanence.

"It really blew my mind that you could make films in that way, as a poetic medium that doesn't have to spell everything out. It felt like something I hadn't seen before"

and it was really inspiring to make things that were more impressionistic.”

SOFIA COPPOLA, DIRECTOR

See her ballot [here](#).



I've seen it

Liked it? Try [I Am Love](#), [Drive My Car](#) or [Medicine for Melancholy](#).

I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).

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3

THERE WILL BE BLOOD

PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON, 2007



Paul Thomas Anderson's masterpiece about blood and oil, men and their gods, opens in the late 19th century with an American prospector, Daniel Plainview (a towering Daniel Day-Lewis), alone in a deep pit hacking at the earth. He continues gouging and pummeling (the earth, other people) to become an oil baron who ravages everything and everyone. Anderson's filmmaking can make you gasp — the soaring camerawork speaks to the ambitions of protagonist and director alike — and so can the environmental and spiritual devastations that haunt this deeply American tragedy.

“The word ‘iconic’ is overused. But ‘I drink your milkshake’ is iconic because in four strange, ill-fitting words (weirdly, in the present tense) it really does sum

up Daniel. I love this movie even though I think on some level the movie hates me.”

JASON BLUM, PRODUCER

See his ballot [here](#).



☐ **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, *The Master* or *The Power of the Dog*.

☐ **I want to watch it**

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it [here](#).



2

MULHOLLAND DRIVE

DAVID LYNCH, 2001



David Lynch's perverse fairy tale tracks the downward spiral of a bright-eyed young actress, Betty — a revelatory Naomi Watts in a career-defining performance — who stumbles into a dangerous, labyrinthine mystery shortly after arriving in Los Angeles. Filled with doubles, this is one of Lynch's bleakest and most terrifying films, and among his most emotionally devastating. It's also one of the great movies about Hollywood, a dark mirror world where dreams turn into nightmares, which means that it's one of Lynch's most autobiographical works, too.

“It’s a very glossy film, but it hides all this real uncertainty. And it’s a kind of ruthless film as well, because David Lynch has that view of humanity, which is a little critical, shall we say.”

BRIAN COX, ACTOR

See his ballot here.

 **I've seen it**

Liked it? Try *Lost Highway*, *Holy Motors* or *I'm Not There*.

 I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

**1****PARASITE**

BONG JOON HO, 2019

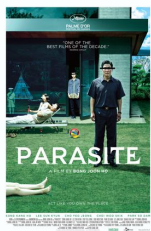


A tale of haves and have-nots, and a ferocious rebuke to the devastations of neoliberalism, Bong Joon Ho's pleasurably kinked and unsettling shocker follows a destitute family as it insinuates itself into a wealthy household. Bong, a master of genre unbound by convention, fluidly shifts between broad comedy and blistering social satire throughout, then lights it all on fire with a paroxysm of tragic violence that's as stunning as it is inevitable.

When the movie opened in the United States, Bong was a favorite on the art-house circuit; by the time it closed, he had a fistful of Oscars, including best picture, and the world had a new superstar.

VOTED FOR BY JULIANNE MOORE

See her full ballot [here](#).



☐ I've seen it

Liked it? Try *Memories of Murder*, *Shoplifters* or *The Celebration*.

☐ I want to watch it

Interested? Read our review. Find out where to watch it here.

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... but I'm sure there's something for me.

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Methodology: In collaboration with The Upshot — a department at The Times focused on data and analytical journalism — we sent ballots to hundreds of directors, actors, cinematographers and others in and around the film industry, asking them to submit their picks for the best films of the 21st century. (We allowed respondents to submit up to 10; some submitted fewer.) The only rules: They had to be feature-length movies released in the United States on or after Jan. 1, 2000.

After casting their ballots, voters were given the option to pick which of two randomly selected films was better in a series of matchups. We combined data from these prompts with the vote tallies to create the list of top 100 movies.

Photos and videos: Columbia Pictures (“Superbad,” “Punch-Drunk Love,” “Moneyball,” “Adaptation” and “The Social Network”); Palm Pictures/BAMcinémathèque (“Memories of Murder”); Lionsgate (“Grizzly Man”); Warner Bros. (“Gravity,” “Michael Clayton,” “Ocean’s Eleven,” “Inception,” “The Departed,” “The Dark Knight,” “Her” and “Mad Max: Fury Road”); Marvel Studios (“Black Panther”); Neon (“The Worst Person in the World,” “Portrait of a Lady on Fire,” “Anatomy of a Fall” and “Parasite”); 20th Century Fox/DreamWorks (“Minority Report”); DreamWorks and Universal Pictures (“Gladiator” and “Oppenheimer”); IFC Films (“Fish Tank,” “Frances Ha,” “Boyhood” and “Y tu mamá también”); Paramount Pictures (“Interstellar,” “Arrival,” “The Wolf of Wall Street” and “Zodiac”); Cine-Tamaris/Zeitgeist Films (“The Gleaners & I”); New Line Cinema (“The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring”); A24 (“Past Lives,” “Aftersun,” “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” “The Florida Project,” “Under the Skin,” “Uncut Gems,” “Lady Bird,” “The Zone of Interest” and “Moonlight”); Dreamworks (“Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy” and “Almost Famous”); Magnolia Pictures (“Melancholia”); CBS Films (“Inside Llewyn Davis”); DraftHouse Films (“The Act of Killing”); Fox Searchlight Pictures (“Black Swan,” “The Tree of Life,” “Little Miss Sunshine,” “12 Years a Slave” and “The Grand Budapest Hotel”); Sony Pictures Classics (“Volver,” “Amour,” “Whiplash,” “Toni

Erdmann,” “The Lives of Others,” “A Separation” and “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon”); Touchstone Pictures (“O Brother, Where Art Thou?” and “The Royal Tenenbaums”); Disney/Pixar (“Ratatouille,” “Up” and “Wall-E”); The Weinstein Company (“Carol,” “The Master” and “Inglourious Basterds”); EFTI (“Let the Right One In”); Summit Entertainment (“The Hurt Locker”); Focus Features (“Tár,” “Lost in Translation,” “Phantom Thread,” “Brokeback Mountain” and “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind”); Open Road Films (“Spotlight”); 20th Century Fox (“Gone Girl,” “Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan” and “The Favourite”); Newmarket Group (“Memento”); Miramax (“Kill Bill: Vol. 1,” “Amélie” and “City of God”); Castle Rock Entertainment (“Best in Show”); Picturehouse (“Pan’s Labrynth”); Warner Independent Pictures (“Before Sunset”); Netflix (“Roma”); Sony Pictures (“Once Upon a Time...in Hollywood”); Tartan Films (“Oldboy”); Criterion Collection (“Yi Yi”); Why Not Productions (“A Prophet”); Universal Pictures (“Bridesmaids,” “Children of Men,” “Get Out” and “Mulholland Drive”); Studio Ghibli (“Spirited Away”); Miramax Films and Paramount Vantage (“No Country for Old Men”); USA Films (“In the Mood for Love”); Paramount Vantage (“There Will Be Blood”)

Produced by Aliza Aufrichtig, Alicia DeSantis and Josh Katz. Edited by Stephanie Goodman, Leah Greenblatt and Sia Michel. Design by Aliza Aufrichtig, Gabriel Gianordoli and Tala Safie. Photo editing by Jolie Ruben and Amanda Webster. Written and reported by Kyle Buchanan, Manohla Dargis, Alissa Wilkinson, Stephanie Goodman, Leah Greenblatt, Mekado Murphy, Esther Zuckerman, Brooks Barnes, David Renard, Barbara Chai, Ben Kenigsberg, Maya Salam, Kathryn Shattuck, Nicole Sperling, Reggie Ugwu and Melena Ryzik. Additional production by Patrick Hays.

Correction: June 23, 2025

An earlier version of this article misstated who is left behind by Matthew McConaughey’s widower in “Interstellar.” It is his father-in-law, not his father.

Correction: June 25, 2025

An earlier version of this article misstated the year Cord Jefferson won an Oscar. It was in 2024, not 2025.