Home > Features > Our Favourite Films of the Year 2024

Our Favourite Films of the Year 2024

Film Ireland Staff Writers | 17 Dec 2024

As the curtains close on 2024, our contributors look back at some of their favourite films of the year.

Brian Brown

Finding Dory

1. Anora
Sean Baker's Red Rocket opened with a delightful NSFW, smoke-drop, film, the kind of thing Hollywood used to do all the time in the 1940s. That scene looking forward to character what Sarkozy's Dupin has up his sleeve were item around.

2. Do Not Expect Much From the End of the World
Radu Jude's latest is full of ideas, humour and constant formal invention. It does things I've never seen a film do before. I didn't set it for theatres, but I wish I had. In many ways, it's a film to which you can turn the exciting potential of modern cinema, and it turns mighty fine!

3. Janet Planet
Through its refined across the UK was totally bangled, Annie Baker's debut film enjoyed a brief cinema release here in Ireland thanks to the good folks at Dublin's Light House Cinema. It's a quiet marvel of a movie, full of sincerity, off beat charm and my favourite ending of the year. It also allows Julianne Nicholson, a very fine actor who deserves her supporting roles, a chance to lead a film, and she knocks it out of the park.

2. Dell Dwer, Not Exist
Homagach tackles the frustrations of modern life with such elegance and empathy. No one does it better. This is a film as precisely made, as quiet and brilliant – I mean, the opening shots alone sent me into a happy dazz I have yet to emerge from and I've been gushing about it ever throughout. An ever a unique and a screen-familiarizing stuff!

1. Close Your Eyes
Only two films this year brought me to tears. One is a movie powered by many hard Bicha and the sad and brilliant Cuban-set (and pan-pressed?), the other is Víctor Erice's long-awaited masterwork, Close Your Eyes. I saw it at the Rotterdam Film Festival at the start of the year and it's remained my #1 ever since. This is a colossal cinema!

Mathew Brinly

Paul Dano

1. Dog Dog
This A24 gem, which neared an ensemble cast of formerly incarcerated actors, was a fascinating look at the lobotomized and the power of art on the darkest of circumstances. The fact that most of the post-no-screen-out professional actors makes the performances all the more impressive.

2. Abigail
What do you get when you cross the comedy and horror genre while throwing in gallons of blood for good measure? One of the most original and memorable movies of the year, that's what. Kevin Matt's is co-top film to the eponymous rule. Well worth sticking over (with tons of you haters!) and it, yet.

3. Deadpool & Wolverine
After years of failed multiverse attempts and superhero fatigue, they finally made a good superhero movie! From a ridiculously long script to endless comedy potential, Deadpool & Wolverine was the cinematic gift that kept on giving.

4. Kathleen Is Hurt
Eva Birthistle perfectly adapted her previous short film into a feature-length movie. Hazel Doupe gives a Rooney-esque performance in the lead role. Weeping drama and thriller, Kathleen Is Hurt was one of the best Irish films of the year. Expect more big things from Hazel and Eva in the near few years.

5. Wicked
Faithfully adapting the beloved stage musical while putting its own unique spin on the source material, Wicked gave people cause to rejoicefy. Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande daily grazey in their respective roles. I'm eagerly anticipating part two when we can return to the wonderful world of Oz.

Turkey of the year: *Joker: Folie à Deux*
I'm a huge fan of the first Joker film and went wrong with this film. Instead, I'll just keep things bland and say that the best I've seen from Joker is coming out of a film was when I cut through this incoherent mess.

Carmen Bryan

Jill Scott in Kinsagers

Inside Out 2
A delightful and clever sequel that was highly anticipated and did not disappoint. While it's essentially a kids' movie, Inside Out 2 was relatable to all ages and dots a brilliant job at delivering an important mental health message with layers of Pixar humour and Gloria Estefan.

Longlegs
In describing and grotesque is Nicolas Cage's performance as Longlegs that it's hard to watch but harder to look away. The tortuously slow building of tension and dark twisting of the plot is an ethos of great horror thrillers that were before the Jews and Ghosts of the Lambs.

Will and Harper
Charming and poignant road-trip documentary that sees Will Ferrell reconnect with Harper Steele, a fellow SNL veteran and recently out trans woman. The documentary shows that the weight of love, friendship and comedy will empty tendonous every time and the scenes with Ferrell and Steele as they explore mentorious social, political and personal landscapes. The bond between the two is heartwarming and outdoor enough to navigate the difficulties of this new terrain together.

All of Us Strangers
A beautifully emotional and unique telling of love and loss that stays on the mind long after the credits roll. The chemistry between the two leads in Paul Mescal and Andrew Scott is stunning and the performances are outstanding.

Stephen Burke

The Bikeriders

Bikeriders
Remembering a venue mystery boasting superb performances from two of the most underrated talents in British cinema – Jared Harris and Adele Stevenson. But the most just, Virginia Gilbert's drama keeps the viewer guessing while also forcing her or she to question how this angel could be in such an comfortably horrifying situation – attempting to solve the disappearance of their only child.

King Freddy
Ireland's internationally underrated Peter Coonan anchors Dermot Nolan's debut feature. It's a promising and mature directorial box with Nolan utilizing the talents of Coonan to maximum effect. Why isn't Coonan an even bigger name? It's a puzzle, but in King Freddy he gets to play a character at two distinct stages of his life and the result is essentially two excellent performances for the price of one.

The Bikeriders
Jeff Nichols's ridiculous characters do ridiculous things for ridiculous reasons. I had a blast watching it and the kids volume dials provided an alternative Summer blockbuster choice of sorts for those of us outside the superhero bubble. What really enhanced the film for me though was discovering that most of the scenes were actually happened and that most of the larger than life characters depicted were based on real people. Jared and Austin Butler have to be commended around for having only one trick (intense gaze while looking cool). However, it's as undeniably good trick.

The Holdovers
A lovely heartwarming film with Alexander Payne back to his best. The Holdovers could well have earned Paul Giamatti a Best Actor Oscar were it not for an Gillian. It's a funny, sad, touching and ultimately uplifting tale and one that's sure to quickly become a staple of Christmas viewing.

Stop Stop
This was probably the most unique film I saw this year. Using both professional and amateur actors (many of them actual sex workers) Stop Stop is a gorgeous, Cannes-ready film. Catherine Dorrington delivers a stellar lead performance as an incarcerated actor who forms a Dorian-society-wide serving time in Stop Stop Prison, New York. Devastating in parts and inspiring in others, Stop Stop also features one of the more interesting end-credit sequences that you'll see.

Turkey – Ita Chinoria
I'm a fan of Ita Chinoria's work. I'm not familiarise characters you will ever encounter. It is one that I watch a film where I wish everyone dead at the beginning. Minutes, seconds and hours I will never get back.

Sarah Cullen

The Peaslers Joker

Another year where a whole load of films came along in the last couple of months and were my hard-pleasa into deserved (or perhaps because I always end up playing catch-up) No, it's the films that are wrong.)

Society of the Snow
A hard watch certainly, but also a beautiful life affirming story based on the true events of the 1972 Uruguayan plane crash in which the survivors had to make hard stuff. Bayona's masterpiece is a gorgeously winter months in the Andes. Despite my familiarity with the events, it still took me by surprise with its injurious and considerate storytelling. An important reminder that even those who didn't make it left an indelible mark on the survivors through their friendship.

The Holdovers
The Holdovers feels both extremely contemporary and from a different era. And hopefully that means it's well on its way to being a timeless classic. Paul Giamatti is Paul Hanham, a classics teacher who has been semi-volunteered to supervise the small number of kids at Barton boarding school over the Christmas break. The Holdovers is a beautiful, heartwarming, funny, and bittersweet film about a misfitted and Hanham's unlikely angst at the post-Vietnam world but also their and ourselves parallels with our current era.

The People's Joker
One of the Summer Films I have watched in a long time. To call it a parody of Joker is probably technically correct, but it's very much heading its own narrative – in fact, it's a film that's more about the power of the creative process than anything else. Certainly, it's a particular type of humour, with director Vera Drew starring out in editing and camera crew for drones including Tim and Eric and Nathan For You. But if you like your comedy deadpan, understretched and pseudo-schlocky this is the movie for you. Heck, it's the movie for the people.

Anora
Sean Baker's latest feature, it's pretty hard to stomach how tame so much Western media is, for without giving too much away about Thanksgiving, let's just say there guys are now doing hosts in order to redistribute wealth that the country's biggest corporate bank stole from your farmers. Not sure I should need to go so far afield to see a story like that. And of course, our Indian-arty born Dark Devil playlist by S. Gabb Kumar is also a song and dance man reminding us of it's for cool and for yourself. It really has it all.

Alone
What changes if you work in the hospitality industry and you get stuck in time? Turns out, nothing at all. This is the premise of Alone, in which a bunch in rural Kerry gets caught in a cross-minute time loop. Cue a series of entertaining for jobs and misunderstandings as the hotel workers attempt to keep the guests satisfied and relaxed while also trying to discover the cause of the break in the space-time continuum.

Turkey: *The Substance*
Girl Now The Substance had a long way to fall, considering I had heard a lot of good things about it. And, well, it's getting lavished with praise so I'm certainly in the minority here. But unfortunately it ended up being another Rogue wagging tale aimed at women who are getting too many notions. There's some good body horror sequences admittedly but most of the time I was wishing I was watching a Cronenberg textual (David and/or Brandon, either's good).

Richard Drumm

A Different Man

1. Dune: Part Two
Given the bomb's 'antiheroic' reputation as one book let alone a story split in two, Denis Villeneuve's adaptation of Frank Herbert's Dune was a pleasant surprise. That it made enough money (along with and get a sequel was able to devote intervention. But I was I of among Sticking the landing of the second half of the book seemed like an impossible task, and somehow Denis managed it. Stripping out as much centrality and exposition as he could was the key – as evidenced by that love heavy but very dry and plodding prequel series – and focusing instead on stunningly realised spectacle, and on two of the most charismatic and attractive young actors currently working, was a rewarding success. We should again while he's ahead – but lets see him top off an all time film trilogy.

2. Longlegs
In what was a good year for horror, this was a refreshing and chilling breath of oxygen. On the surface a throwback to the '90s serial killer procedurals, this intentional wrong-footing hides a much stranger beast altogether. You could argue that – good as it is here – Cage is a tad distracting, or that the movie was the full on supernatural could have benefitted from more ambiguity, but these concerns fall away in the face of the absolute sensucious immersion in atmosphere and detail that this movie had to.

3. Challengers
Don't have much heavy to say on this one. What a picture! What a time at The Scouts?! It's pure ambitious pile-driveiste doesn't work and Bonna Rosa or any. It should not be possible to make tennis matches look this exciting, but here we are. Zendaya and Mike Faist are both excellent, but Josh O'Connor is the standout, a spite and not unlovable businessman, that all culminates in a thrilling and cheeky, satisfying finale that, again, is ostensibly just a tennis match. Pure, sexy, cinematic tennis.

4. The Promised Land
Well, that's what it was orthodox international release. Or rather, Or rather, Or what? Well, that's what it was orthodox international release. Or rather, Or rather, Or what? Well, that's what it was orthodox international release. Or rather, Or rather, Or what?

Tarkovsky – Boyhood

In a year of quiet good horror releases, this one ranks as a notable vault. Dull, not scary and another desperate attempt to capitalise on an interesting short concept that got some traction only for the film version to feel like a mainstream photocopy of clap. It also considers the landscape of Hooking you'll be interested in its late and last-hour pitching for expansion etc.

Shadows | Blackbird, Blackbird,

Bentleyism, Bentleyism

Actions retaining their early mainstream can often seem like they're rushing to and spiritual thirty lines but there's no dynamic pricing with Tim Burton. Rather than a lazy rehash of the original film that is very much its own beast and is every bit as good as its predecessor. It is every bit as funny too. Michael Keaton clearly relishes playing his favourite role again while Winona Ryder reminds us just what made her the breakout star of the original.

Blackbird, Blackbird, Blackbird

One of the stars of the Hubble International Film Festival for their work, this is going to a film you know nothing about and discovering an absolute gem. This year it was this European film from Gene Stavrinos. Sky Charlesbrith is wonderful as a woman who feels jet-down everyone else around her; that life has passed her by. A near perfect performance changes her outlook and she completely turns her life around all leading up to probably the most delightful surprise ending of the year.

Crossing

Another film from Georgia and another perfectly judged ending. Levan Akin's film tells the story of an aunt in search of a niece who is transgender – and who has been rejected by her family. It is a very powerful story of regret and the longing for forgiveness. It is also a call for tolerance that is more a demand than a request. The film has wandering lens anyone, anywhere can trace their own children like this.

Fallen Leaves

Aki Kaurismaki makes films for fans of Aki Kaurismaki, and perhaps Joe Jarmusch. If you don't like them then that's fine but if you do – you know them. His latest is a love story between two people who are lonely, broke and (mostly) alcoholics. Another attractive theme is their way to stop them dating. Lost phone numbers, mistaken locations, timings etc. As always with Kaurismaki the characters are cold, quirky and utterly lovable as a the world turns against them. A real treat (for those of us who love his films).

That They May Face The Rising Sun

Jonathan Gibbs' novel (based on John Lanchester's novel) is the perfect adaptation of a story about anything happening – except human life. There is a wedding, there is a funeral, there are lots of events but they are all incidental. This film is about the people they are happening to, people we've all known and loved. Beautifully shot and capturing its era perfectly this is a film to sit back and relax into.

Green Fuel Tom

Challengers

The Scottish film of 2024, that's for sure. I loved Challengers. The dynamics between the three leads is infectiously riveting and Challengers felt like a cultural milestone crossing boundaries between film (Gaudagnino's direction etc.), music (a Berlin-inspired Bowies Bowie soundtrack) and fashion (JW Anderson's sartorial sensibilities) to game, art and match-winning effect.

Kneecap

I don't think I can have had "Footballs in Ur" in the same way ever again after seeing Kneecap. The Schwarzenbeard portrayals of Mo Chara, Mrighe Rap and DJ Pivitar, by the three men themselves, were nothing short of incredible. This film has so much sincerity and restraint alongside its hilarity and, irrespective of genre, cinema is far richer with Gaeilge.

All of Us Strangers

Andrew Haigh unintentionally devastating one once again. Andrew Scott and Paul Mescal were a kinetic piece of casting and both offer performances without any sense of artifice involved. Frankie Goes to Hollywood's "The Power of Love" will now always trigger me.

The Substance

Coralie Fargeat's latest want to see The Substance again, this film is cinema. The last 30 minutes or so is beautifully bonkers. It stunned me and made me aspire to uncomfortable levels. However, Demi Moore's performance here is simply iconic. The nuance Moore possesses in the Substance surprises as she prepares for her date in more effective and devastating than any harrowing prosthetic could ever.

Dune: Part Two

Successful reconsidering. Charlotte Kampling's delivery of the Reverend Mother selling Paul Atreides as "abomination" was enough for Denis Villeneuve's sequel to win an arse.

Simon Galvin

Lost Line (Reading)

Love Lies Bleeding

A Bonnard of a film exploding in glory into the night sky. Kristen Stewart is in control of every nerve/ie while writer/director Rose Glass smashes up a well-trodden pulp narrative and pumps enough steroids into it to make something that feels as fresh.

The Zone Of Interest

A chilling study in the banality of evil. Jonathan Glazer's dread soaked depiction of human nature at its lowest form is a subtle, but relished, brilliant piece of filmmaking.

The Substance

A feminist feast of a film from Coralie Fargeat. The opening shot of that Hollywood star sets in motion a literary of Schwarzeb Bread body horror. It's unabashed unconventional politics is reflected through the dazzling ball of mirrors of its many influences.

I Saw The TV Glow

Jane Schoenbrun takes you on a pitch-perfect journey through a maze of identity, isolation and the bonds that make us strong. Its dreamy environs celebrate falling in love with fiction and finding truth there.

Green Border

Agnieszka Holland's powerful tale of the refugee crisis in Europe is a difficult watch and the on-screen horrors will fill you with rage and sadness. Green Border is a meticulously crafted docudrama that cleans at the shameful heart of humanitarian neglect.

Filmbar

Clair Geoghegan

Lodgings

1. Challengers

A romantic thriller about the hazes and hues of tennis – everyone has rightly assumed the Internet love triangle, half and twisted and ambiguity, but the more gripping divide is between Mike Faist's uber-rich Mojuro champion, who navigates the sport like a corporate strategist, and Josh O'Connor's lovely but competitive, who depends on tournament prize money to pay for his convenience store satellites and modest, model-cousin. Guadagnino knows his characters beyond the attraction of the tennis court, of training and tactics, and positions them against the predators of circumstances, which forms a mistaken that could be their undoing.

2. Dune: Part Two

Denis only never and did it – he concluded the Dune story with a thoughtful, resonant, visually stunning epic that feels like it's the kind of conclusion he is so fit to conclude. Only Nolan gets to do this sort. This is a Dune adaptation and a Villeneuve film, so it is a Gladiator duology which probably feels the closest to Blade Runner of any sci-fi film made since – yes, even Villeneuve's 2017 Blade Runner sequel.

3. Small Things Like These

Cillian Murphy's career-best Oscar glory is a treatise on the quiet kindnesses and brutalities that is at once understated and towering. Murphy's settled gaze delivers a man who has lived a life of quiet, but who has been forced into a moment where he must decide the ultimate shape of what and who is the same of The Lord. Exactly what an actor of his cache should do with newly-amassed clout. Here's hoping he continues to produce.

2. Kneecap

This one felt tailored made for me, existing in the perfect centre of my Venn Diagram of pop interests: Mrighe Rap, Irish-language pop and politics, lovely talks of the Belfast Agreement, Michael Fassbender's Bobby Sands and Jamie Dornan's Gerry Adams, all wrapped in a comedy that is at once hilarious and (mostly) sweet. It's a celebration of whose and in the name of The Lord, Exactly what an actor of his cache should do with newly-amassed clout. Here's hoping he continues to produce.

3. Anatomy

Sandra Hüller has been acclaimed for making "anxiety pure", films that take the viewer as tourists on a whole-stop tour through growth, learning real suffering and precarity into a lies authentic that Bertolt audiences get to step away from once the credits roll. I always felt these claims was bullshit, and Anora flies further in the face of them. It's about what happens when someone in a hopeless profession, the titular stripper Anora, sees a way out: her relationship with Ivan, the son a Russian oligarch who is, for the moment, bankrolling her lifestyle. Anora's dream turns bleak fast it's all a dark, but from the chaos of escape, Sweetest Burning, springs love. When Ivan's parents clamp down and threaten to cut him off if he doesn't annul the marriage, he tides in line. From both sides of this social divide, Baker recognises the power money has over our lives, and the hard reality that if our livelihoods are put under threat, our true feelings take a backseat to survival.

Dale Kearney

Lodgings

Anora

Mikey Madison is honestly a revelation in this. The cute that bulls she and Sean Baker put upon her character, Anora, is so delicate and extremely respectful towards that profession. It also features an amazing Take That medley drop – a sentence I never thought I'd say – which somehow works wonders. An emotionally moving and hilarious film at the same time.

Challengers

Possibly the most fun I've had watching a film this year. The script is like a tight tennis match between Nadal and Federer, bouncing back and forth, swapping who has control over the story at any given moment. It's one of the best scripts I've seen, and Luca's hypnotising direction just adds an authentic lowest. Not to an already lively film. Street cast to possibly the best lines of the year from Zendaya recycling a tennis player who is 31.

Civil War

I was never really a huge fan of Alex Garland's direction, but Civil War sold me on how good of a director he is. The world created here is genuinely scary – maybe it's because I can see possible from real life. Garland questions the morality of standing by and letting terrible things happen, leaving me with so many thoughts after the credits rolled. Big plus for Jesse Plemons, whose scene will stick in my head for years to come.

Dune: Part Two

Films like this remind me of how important the cinema experience is. There were so many moments while watching where I got goosebumps from the sun or pieces playing out. Denis Villeneuve truly knows how to bring emotion out. It's extremely hard to make a sci-fi film feel so devastating as a close-up, but Denis pulls it off with the final shot.

Longlegs

Longlegs is one of the most atmospheric films I've seen this year. I was completely absorbed into it solely through the stunning cinematography, sandra Hunter's unsettling, wide angle photography makes you scan around the frame, checking the out of focus sections for any hints of a potential scare. There's also an uncomfortable amount of spare left in the frames, as if it is framed with a second camera in the corner of the shot. Oh and Cage is fucking insane. ... amazed that a pretentious graphic novel like which Hedge is a fan. For the visual look alone, this film is worth a watch.

John McGuer

The Arcadian

1. All Six Samples in Light

An experimental, thoughtful film that explores love and longing in an intimate way. Brimming with vibrance, deeply immersive, at times feels magical. It's a film that's easy to get lost in.

2. A Different Man

One of the freshest and creative comedies of recent years. Wrapped in countless layers of satire, humour and meta commentary, this Aaron Schimberg feels unpredictable and fresh. Sebastian Stan and Adam Pearson take on one of the scenes, conduct a top handling, and render it stop thinking about it afterwards. It's a shame this didn't get the attention it deserved.

3. The Substance

One of the most insane horror films ever made. Everything is dialled up to 11. You can see the roles helping out of this thing. This film is a solid beast. An endlessly fun premise executed flawlessly. It's like the Instructor Cole, where the film is constantly daring itself to be pushed to the furthest possible extremity.

2. Anora

Can't imagine anyone disliking this film. Sean Baker's Madison doesn't just deliver the performance of the year, it's one of the best performances of the decade. It's almost impossible to pick a favourite character. The film is a constant determined spiral of chaos, and it's stressful, but hilarious experience. Already feels like a classic, with one of the best endings ever.

1. The Brutalist

Where do I even begin? Brady Corbet's The Brutalist is the cinematic equivalent of the Pyramids, you look at it and can't even begin to imagine how it was made. It's a perfect film in just about every single way. Every single aspect comes together to create something that feels timeless and unique. Adrien Brody's performance at the top of the film feels that deserves to be labelled as a masterpiece. It's fitting that a film about architecture is itself a gigantic monument that will likely stand the test of time.

Brian Ó Tomaín

That They May Face The Rising Sun

1. Kneecap

Another great film in the Irish language. Kneecap features a cracking score, great performances and is unapologetically an IRL Wonderful comes from Belfast.

2. That They May Face the Rising Sun

Most of the cast are worth of 70 in this wonderful take on John McGahern's portrayal of an Ireland that has almost disappeared. Great casting.

3. Perfect Days

A wonderful meditative film from the veteran Wim Wenders.

4. All We Imagine as Light

A deeply moving film, Payal Kapadia's Irish drama feature announces the arrival of a significant new talent.

5. Small Things like These

Great performances all round, including by the DOP. A mirror to a very dark corner of our recent history.

Will Fenn

Perfect Days

1. Perfect Days

Wim Wenders delivers a beautiful slow burner here that is an unabashed favourite. Each

towards reveals something different about the silent Hiryama. Purpose to be moved – but oh so quietly.

2. Kneecap

Kneecap's self-mythologising biopic was billed to be one of the biggest moments in Irish cinema this year – no mean feat considering its company! A Mrighy Santa film to brighten Irish cinema for generations to come.

3. Challengers

Challengers is of a lineage who thoroughly deserve one another – tennis has never been

more

interesting.

6) ***The Zone Of Interest***
I left *Zone of Interest* with a sickened feeling in the pit of my stomach. Before watching, I asked, why a holocaust movie? What new is there really to be said? But for a visual medium like film, I have never experienced the auditory power like this. It
floored me for weeks, and the discussions around it simply added to the intrigue.

5) ***Chasing The Light***
A beautiful and balanced story of a community of people who dare to dream of a better world. When their core teachings and values are brought into disrepute, the skill of Maurice O'Brien truly flourishes.

Turkey – ***Buy Now!***
I often store well clear from Netflix's straight to streaming documentaries and this was a good reminder why. Narratively redundant and a barren waste devoid of any real insight, *Buy Now* left me in a pit of despair for the state of contemporary documentaries for mass audiences.

James Phelan

The Outsiders

5) ***Heretic***
Hugh Grant undercuts his affable avuncular image with a performance of slowly released menace and creepiness in this solid thriller. Like a lot of horror, it unravels a bit as it goes on. I mean how much prep did Grant's character invest in having this very precise encounter? I don't know. I'm genuinely asking. Still for the most part, this is an incredibly tense three-hander that is impeccably acted and crafted.

6) ***Small Things Like These***
In New Ross in the mid-eighties, a local coal merchant Bill Furlong finds his conscience troubled by what he witnesses at the local mother and baby home during his fuel deliveries. A father of five girls of his own, he must strive to find his bravery and his voice in a community draped in a complicit silence. Can he summon the courage to act in the question that runs through this powerful film and if he does so, what will be the consequences of going against the church? For him and his family.

3) ***Anora***
I'm tempted to describe this Palme d'Or winner as a slightly more serious take on *Meet the Parents*. Certainly, there might be another film in just focusing on how two oligarch parents (sort) react to their wastrel son getting married to a sex worker. Anora is a bubsy outspoken dancer who wants union rules at work. And such a free spirit, she decides that marrying a spoilt, rich and smitten client is the way to go. Everything changes when her feckless partner in crime becomes a runaway groom and she is left alone to crawl out of the wedding wreckage.

2) ***The Holdovers***
In a lovely lead role, Paul Giamatti plays a curmudgeonly teacher at a boarding school forced to babysit several students who can't go home for Christmas holidays for a variety of reasons. Everyone in the movie badly needs a big hug. Which is what the viewer ends up getting from this genuine and heartfelt charmer.

1) ***Kneecap***
This film arrived like a rocket, positively fizzing with energy and attitude. Miraculously well- acted by a trio already famous for musical performances, this was a jolting shot of adrenaline for movie making in Ireland and beyond. Resisting any impulse to tone things down for the mass market, 'Kneecap' is a profane riot that mixes swagger and cockiness with bracing authenticity. It's a heady mix fuelled by the music that got the band noticed in the first place. All things considered, this trio are unlikely saviours of the Irish language but look how far it has taken them and the language. The only shame would be if the Oscar for best foreign language film can't look past the hardcore posturing and misses the verve, style and charisma that is the real heartbeat of *Kneecap*.

Ronan Power

The Substance

1. ***The Substance***
A brave and well-conceived film. A clever take about the endless race to be current and popular as a celebrity. The self-defeating struggle to maintain youth and beauty despite age and time. Perfectly played by Demi Moore in what I firmly believe is her best performance ever. It's not for the faint-hearted, especially the eventual pay-off but the story and images stay with you long after the movie ends.

2. ***Kneecap***
This Hip Hop trio took Ireland by storm this year. The film, though a fictionalised account of their story has a sprinkling of truth here and there. I have heard it being referred to as the Irish *Trainspotting*. It's fun and its full of energy. It appeals to both young and old and it spotlights one native tongue and gives an Gaeilge an appeal to a new generation. 13 best film awards including BIFA, Galway Film Fleadh,Lisbon Film Festival and Sundance.

3. *Super/Man: The Christopher Reeve Story*
A moving and thought-provoking documentary on the life of actor Christopher Reeve. From his big break with his Superman role to the terrible accident in 1995 that left him paralysed. The documentary highlights the strong bond of love shared between Reeve and his last wife and Reeves children from both his marriages. A real love letter to family and perseverance among impossible odds.

4. ***The Front Room***
A delightful gem of a movie that's hard to pigeonhole. Horror film or black comedy? Either way Kathryn Hunter chews up the scenery in every scene she appears in as the ailing stepmother forced upon her unsuspecting stepson's family to live in their house and be looked after by newly pregnant wife Brandy Norwood. These two strong characters are pitted against each other from the start and things just get darker and darker as the story progresses. Priceless.

5. ***The Apprentice***
This film takes us back to the early days of Donald Trump the businessman. The story follows his struggles in business. We see a young Trump before the people he looked up to for example, studying their techniques, the way they treat people and money. Trump moulds himself around these individuals resulting in a new model of the man, the new Trump of the 1980s that we all know today. This film shouldn't work but it does and its brilliant. A perfect year for this movie to come out.

Kimberly Reyes

Challengers

Wicked
Are you kidding? Have you seen the musical? The press tour (please never let it end)? The casting spoke for itself and delivered. Get out of Oz (town) with this one.

The Outrun
I haven't seen cinematography and pacing match a film's content (alcoholism and familial mental health struggles) so well in… well, I'm not sure how long. Ronan is an absolute movie star.

Blitz
This was without question Steve McQueen's Spielberg/Shindler's *List* moment. There are scenes that will absolutely stop your heart from a cinematic point of view, and McQueen as always, gives us a perspective that history is so desperately lacking. Is it his best film? No. Is this the film that should win him a ton of awards? Absolutely.

Nickel Boys
Director RaMell Ross faced a difficult task adapting Colson Whitehead's novel, but his ambition and unique perspective honour fans of the book while breathing new life into the story.

A tie between **Challengers** & **Kneecap**
For the last spot I couldn't decide between two fresh, entertaining films that were important for different reasons. In *Challengers* you're never entirely sure, even up until the very last moment, who is who good/bad/in love/playing games… race and queer politics are at the heart of the power dynamics, but also never centred, making the characters that much more multi-dimensional. And with *Kneecap*, the fact that Mógalí Rap and Mo Chara are so naturally good at acting is maybe not a testament to how badly their story needed to be told on a global scale. As a Gaeilge, I was a bit shocked at how much the film drew from *Trainspotting* (and the implications of that for Northern Irish youth), but the viewing experience is nothing if not raw and honest.

Pia Royonoff

Save the TV Show

1. ***The Substance***
An explosion of both colour and viscera, *The Substance* makes you feel the whole range of emotions from wonder to disgust, and it isn't shy about making your skin crawl. I nearly threw up multiple times, and that's a good thing.

2. ***I Saw the TV Glow***
A definite must-watch; there aren't enough words to describe how it makes me feel. A film you have to experience yourself firsthand and then watch for a second time to really understand I think. I cried, many times.

3. ***Oddity***
I'm a a huge fan of Damian McCarthy. He brings to horror such a fresh and raw perspective that the prose needs and Oddity is a perfect example of this. A masterclass in tension, this film will keep you on the edge of your seat.

4. ***Bromayagam***
Another fantastic pan-Indian horror film that echoes the craftsmanship of the origins of the horror genre. *Bromayagam* is almost operatic in nature and I love how it mixes folklore and art so masterfully.

5. ***Alien: Romulus***
Amidst a plethora of subpar horror sequels over the last few years, *Romulus* did really well to not only upkeep the legacy of Alien well, but also it is a very entertaining film in its own right.

David Turpin

Emilia Pérez

Mami Wata
Visually extraordinary West African fantasy, centered around the mythology of the eponymous water spirit, but also tuned in to modernity, and its conflicts. Unlike anything else, and continuable.

Familiar Touch
A film about the experience of an elderly woman entering assisted living, made with sensitivity and insight. Quietly radical in how it presents old age not as a slope of degeneration, but as a journey of change.

Pepe
An experimental Dominican film narrated by the ghost of a hippopotamus kept in the private zoo of Pablo Escobar. Haunting, unclassifiable, and the most artful meditation on the being of the hippo since the 'Dance of the Hours' sequence in *Fantasia*.

Red Island
Robin Campillo's best film, exquisite child's-eye filmmaking that bears comparison with *The Spirit of the Beehive* or *El Sur*, and with a political consciousness that slowly reveals itself.

Emilia Pérez
Gorgeous Saint Laurent-swathed Shakespearean musical telenovela on the possibilities and limitations of change. Entertained me beyond all reason in the cinema, though I can't imagine it plays very well on a laptop.

OUR FAVOURITE FILMS OF THE YEAR

Steven

Related Posts

Our Favourite Films of the Year 2023
20TH DECEMBER 2023

Our Favourite Irish Films of the Year 2023
20TH DECEMBER 2023

Our Favourite Films of the Year 2022
20TH DECEMBER 2022

Write A Comment

Name
Email
Website

Write your comment here.

Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.

POST COMMENT