

# CUT TO CINEMA



FESTIVAL DE CANNES



ISSUE # 02  
MAY 2025

**BANGLADESHI SHORT FILM  
ALI COMPETES AT CANNES**

**TOM CRUISE RETURNS TO  
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IMPOSSIBLE FINALE**

**ROBERT DE NIRO TO  
RECEIVE  
HONORARY PALME  
D'OR AT CANNES  
2025**

**AND MANY MORE...**



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# CUT TO CINEMA

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

MAY 2025

## EDITORIAL

The biggest event in the film world is just days away — the 78th edition of the Cannes Film Festival, taking place from May 13 to 24.

All eyes are on this iconic celebration of cinema, especially after *Anora* (2024) made waves last year. The film not only won the prestigious Palme d'Or at the 77th Cannes but also went on to win five awards at the 97th Academy Awards (Oscars), including Best Picture.

So, which film will steal the spotlight this year? Let's take a look at the contenders ready to shine across the cinematic sky.

This is the second issue of C2C — we hope you enjoyed the first one as well. Stay with us as we carve a path for Bengali films to be represented with the depth and dignity they deserve. Last but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Ahmed Himu for his supportive role in our endeavour.

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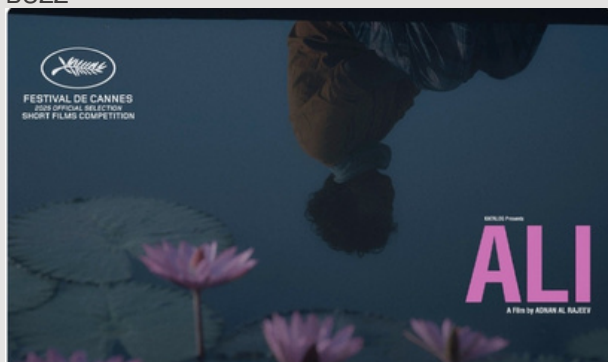
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## BANGLADESHI SHORT FILM **ALI** COMPETES AT **CANNES**

**B**angladeshi short film *Ali* has secured a spot in the Short Film category at the 78th Cannes International Film Festival. Directed by Adnan Al Rajeev, the 15-minute film will compete alongside other global entries in

this prestigious category. Earlier today, the Cannes authorities released the list of nominated short films, following which the filmmaker himself confirmed *Ali*'s nomination in a press release.

Produced by Tanvir Hossain from Bangladesh and Christine D. Leon from the Philippines, the film's line production was managed by Runout Films. Tanvir Hossain expressed his excitement, stating that such recognition is not only a moment of pride for the film industry in Bangladesh but will also inspire many young filmmakers. "We often don't give short films the importance they deserve," he said. "But it is through works like these that young talents grow and evolve. Securing a place in Cannes' main competition is an encouraging milestone. It shows that we, too, are capable of producing world-class cinema."

Due to festival regulations, director Adnan Al Rajeev couldn't share much about the film, but he mentioned that it was shot in Sylhet in November 2024. Offering a brief hint about the story, he said, "Through the lens of personal experience, we tried to explore an inevitable truth — keeping the narrative simple, sincere, and beautiful."

Adnan and Tanvir's Cannes journey doesn't end with *Ali*. The film was produced under the banner of Catalogue, a collaborative production company founded by Adnan Al Rajeev, Tanvir Hossain, Christine D. Leon, and Arvin Belarmino.

Catalogue was established to connect filmmakers across South and Southeast Asia. As part of this initiative, *Ali* was directed by Adnan from Bangladesh, while *Agapito* — directed jointly by Arvin and Kyler from the Philippines — was also produced. Adnan and Tanvir served as co-producers for both films, and remarkably, *Ali* and *Agapito* have both been selected for Cannes' main competition, contending for the prestigious Palme d'Or. 🏆



## **TOM CRUISE** RETURNS TO CANNES WITH **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE FINALE**

**T**om Cruise is set to make a high-octane return to the Croisette as *Mission: Impossible — The Final Reckoning* will have its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival on May 14.

The much-anticipated eighth installment of the legendary spy franchise will screen out of competition, with Cruise and director/co-writer Christopher McQuarrie in attendance. This marks Cruise's third Cannes appearance, following his 1992 debut for *Far and Away* and his celebrated return in 2022 with *Top Gun: Maverick*, where he was honored with a surprise Palme d'Or and led a widely praised masterclass.

Billed as the final chapter in Ethan Hunt's saga, the film promises an "unforgettable cinematic experience," as Cruise once again dives into action with his IMF team. Joining him on screen are Hayley Atwell, Simon Pegg, Ving Rhames, Esai Morales, Pom Klementieff, and more.

The film releases in theaters shortly after its Cannes debut — May 21 in France and May 23 in the U.S., distributed by Paramount Pictures. 🏆



# CANNES 2025 UNVEILS DAZZLING FILM LINE-UP

**T**he Cannes Film Festival has officially revealed its much-awaited 2025 line-up, hot on the heels of an impressive 2024 edition that firmly re-established Cannes as a central awards-season launchpad.

After a triumphant previous year—where Anora claimed the Palme d’Or and later took home five Oscars including Best Picture—the 78th edition of Cannes is poised to shape the cinematic narrative of the coming months. Other 2024 highlights, such as *The Substance*, *Emilia Pérez*, *The Apprentice*, and *The Seed of the Sacred Fig*, also went on to earn global accolades, reinforcing the festival’s position as a cultural trendsetter.

Festival President Iris Knobloch and General Delegate Thierry Frémaux unveiled this year’s Official Selection with a strong emphasis on artistic openness and inclusivity. Knobloch described Cannes as a platform that maintains a “dialogue with the world, embodying a France that is brave, curious and open.” This year, a record 2,909 feature films were submitted for pre-selection, and just 19 made it into the prestigious Official Competition.

The 2025 competition slate boasts an exciting mix of revered auteurs and bold newcomers. Highlights include:

- Ari Aster’s *Eddington* starring Joaquin Phoenix, Emma Stone, and Pedro Pascal
- Julia Ducournau’s *Alpha* – her return to Cannes after the Palme d’Or-winning *Titane*
- Kelly Reichardt’s *The Mastermind* – an art-heist drama
- Joachim Trier’s *Sentimental Value* – reuniting with *The Worst Person in the World* star Renate Reinsve
- Richard Linklater’s *Nouvelle Vague* – a biopic on Jean-Luc Godard during the making of *Breathless*
- Oliver Hermanus’ *The History of Sound* – a gay musical romance with Josh O’Connor and Paul Mescal



*Cannes film festival president Iris Knobloch, right, and Cannes film festival delegate general Thierry Frémaux*

Wes Anderson will once again grace the Croisette with *The Phoenician Scheme*, while Cannes staples the Dardenne brothers return with *Young Mothers*. Notably, this year’s Opening Film is a debut feature—*Partir Un Jour* by Amélie Bonnin—marking a historic first for the festival. Six women directors are also competing: Reichardt, Ducournau, Carla Simón, Mascha Schilinski, Chie Hayakawa, and Hafsia Herzi.

Beyond the main competition, the *Un Certain Regard* section will spotlight actor-directors making their filmmaking debuts, such as Scarlett Johansson with *Eleanor The Great* and Harris Dickinson with *Urchin*. Also featured is *Pillion*, Harry Lighton’s A24-acquired exploration of the UK’s gay biker scene.

Out of Competition, the buzz continues with:

- Rebecca Zlotowski’s *Vie Privée* starring Jodie Foster
- The music documentary *Bono: Stories of Surrender*
- The long-anticipated *Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning* – the eighth and potentially final installment in the franchise

In Cannes Premiere, expect powerful entries like Sebastián Lelio’s Spanish-language feminist musical *The Wave*, Raoul Peck’s thought-provoking documentary *Orwell*, and *The Disappearance of Joseph Mengele* by Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov.

While some anticipated titles—like Lynne Ramsay’s *Die My Love*, Jim Jarmusch’s *Father Mother Sister Brother*, and Kogonada’s *A Big Bold Beautiful Journey*—are missing from the initial line-up, more announcements are expected. In fact, just an hour after the press conference, Spike Lee confirmed via Instagram that his new film *Highest 2 Lowest* will indeed screen at Cannes.

With bold debuts, auteur-driven dramas, and a refreshingly diverse selection, Cannes 2025 promises to be nothing short of a cinematic spectacle. 🍷

# THE FILMS OF CANNES

## THE OFFICIAL SELECTION 2025

### OPENING FILM

- Leave One Day (Amélie Bonnin)

### COMPETITION

- Alpha (Julia Ducournau)
- Dossier 137 (Dominik Moll)
- The Eagles Of The Republic (Tarik Saleh)
- Eddington (Ari Aster)
- Fuori (Mario Martone)
- The History Of Sound (Oliver Hermanus)
- A Simple Accident (Jafar Panahi)
- La Petite Dernière (Hafsia Herzi)
- The Mastermind (Kelly Reichardt)
- Nouvelle Vague (Richard Linklater)
- The Phoenician Scheme (Wes Anderson)
- Renoir (Chie Hayakawa)
- Romeria (Carla Simon)
- The Secret Agent (Kleber Mendonça Filho)
- Sentimental Value (Joachim Trier)
- Sirat (Oliver Laxe)
- Sound Of Falling (Mascha Schilinski)
- Two Prosecutors (Sergei Loznitsa)
- Young Mothers (Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne)

### UN CERTAIN REGARD

- Aisha Can't Fly Away Anymore (Morad Mostafa)
- Eleanor The Great (Scarlett Johansson)
- L'inconnue de la Grande Arche (Stephane Demoustier)
- Meteors (Hubert Charuel)
- My Father's Shadow (Akinola Davies Jr)
- The Mysterious Gaze Of The Flamingo (Diego Céspedes)
- Once Upon A Time In Gaza (Arab Nasser, Tarzan Nasser)
- A Pale View Of Hills (Kei Ishikawa)
- Pillion (Harry Lighton)
- The Plague (Charlie Polinger)
- Urchin (Harris Dickinson)

### OUT OF COMPETITION

- The Coming Of The Future (Cedric Klapisch)
- Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning (Christopher McQuarrie)
- The Richest Woman In The World (Thierry Klifa)
- Vie Privée (Rebecca Zlotowski)

### SPECIAL SCREENINGS

- Bono: Stories Of Surrender (Andrew Dominik)
- The Magnificent Life Of Marcel Pagnol (Sylvain Chomet)
- Tell Her That I Love Her (Claude Miller)

### CANNES PREMIERE

- Amrum (Fatih Akin)
- Connemara (Alex Lutz)
- The Disappearance Of Josef Mengele (Kirill Serebrennikov)
- Orwell (Raoul Peck)
- Splitsville (Michael Angelo Covino)
- The Wave (Sebastián Lelio)

This year's Cannes Film Festival takes place from 13 - 25 May. 🇪🇸



Cannes has unveiled its official dual posters, marking the first time in the festival's history, paying tribute to Claude Lelouch's 1966 classic *A Man and a Woman*, which won the Palme d'Or.



## ROBERT DE NIRO TO RECEIVE HONORARY PALME D'OR AT CANNES 2025

**R**enowned actor and two-time Oscar winner Robert De Niro is set to be honored at the 78th Cannes Film Festival with the prestigious Honorary Palme d'Or. The award will be presented to him during the festival's grand opening ceremony on May 13, 2025.

De Niro, a longstanding friend of the festival, was last seen on the Croisette in 2023 for the premiere of Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon*. The day after the award ceremony, De Niro will participate in a special masterclass held on the stage of the Debussy Theater. This session is expected to provide fans, film students, and fellow filmmakers a rare opportunity to hear insights from one of Hollywood's most iconic performers.

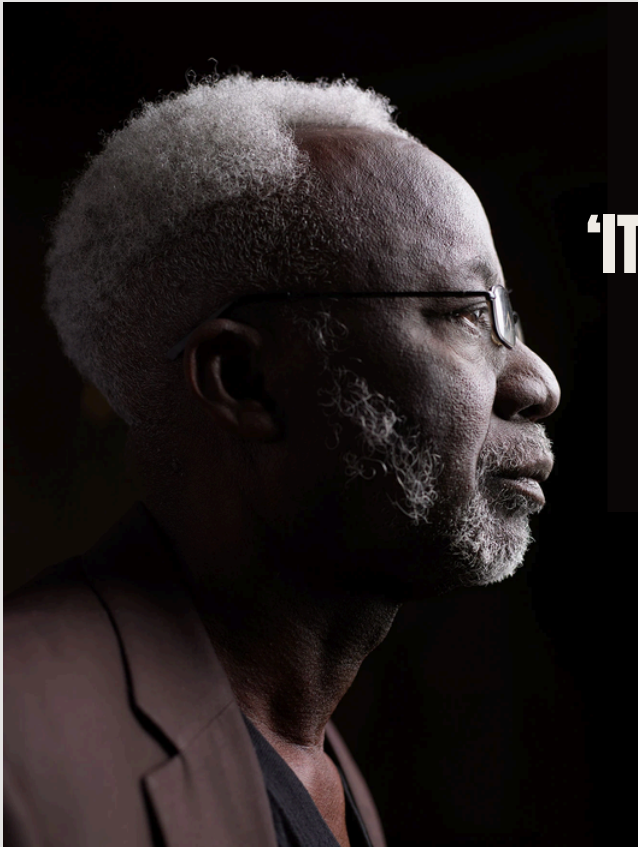
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In a statement shared by the festival, De Niro expressed his deep affection for Cannes, saying, "I have such close feelings for Festival de Cannes. Especially now, when there's so much in the world pulling us apart, Cannes brings us together — storytellers, filmmakers, fans, and friends. It's like coming home."

De Niro's relationship with Cannes spans decades. He served as the jury president in 2011 and has had numerous films showcased at the festival. Notably, in 1976, he starred in both *1900* by Bernardo Bertolucci and *Taxi Driver* by Martin Scorsese — the latter winning the Palme d'Or that year. He also opened the festival in 1982 with Scorsese's *The King of Comedy* and returned the following year with Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America*. In 1986, he was back again with Roland Joffé's *The Mission*, which went on to win the Palme d'Or.

The 2025 Cannes Film Festival will take place from May 13 to May 24. This year, French actress Juliette Binoche will preside over the jury, taking the reins from last year's president, Greta Gerwig. This marks a historic moment, as it will be only the second time in Cannes history that women have led the jury in back-to-back years, a precedent set in 1966 when Sophia Loren succeeded Olivia de Havilland. 





## SOULEYMANE CISSÉ

**'IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO JUST  
MAKE FILMS...'**

Axel Timo Purr

Souleymane Cissé (1940 - 2025)

Souleymane Cissé, Cannes winner and one of the great 'African' filmmakers of the first generation, has died in Bamako at the age of 84. On his deathbed, he appealed to the government of his home country to support Mali's cinema.

It is not easy to receive the recognition you deserve as a filmmaker in one of Africa's most diverse cultural regions. When the great Nigerian director and producer Eddie Ugbomah, without whom contemporary Nigerian cinema would be unthinkable, fell

seriously ill in 2019 and died shortly afterwards, not even a desperate appeal for donations to pay for his medical expenses had any effect.

In the case of Souleymane Cissé, who many consider to be the greatest African filmmaker of all time not only because of his successes in Cannes, it was the 'Carrosse d'Or' awarded to Cissé in Cannes in 2023 for his innovative life's work, which disappeared from his house in Bamako in 2024 and had to be reported stolen, causing great consternation among the Malian public, even though the prize has remained missing to this day.

But at least Cissé still has a monument in Bamako commemorating his work and a career in film spanning over 50 years, which actually lasted much longer, because Cissé, who was born in Bamako and grew up in a Muslim family, was a passionate cinema lover from childhood and attended cinemas in Bamako and also Dakar, where he attended secondary school, from which he only returned to Mali in 1960, the year his homeland gained independence.

His 'adult' film career began when, as an assistant projectionist on a documentary about the arrest of Patrice Lumumba, he was so enthusiastic about the material shown and the social realism that all the enthusiasm awakened in him the desire to make his own films. He was awarded a scholarship at the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography, the Moscow School of Cinema and Television, and returned to Mali in 1970 to work as a cameraman at the Ministry of Information, producing documentaries and short films.

Two years later, Cissé made his first medium-length film, *Cinq jours d'une vie* (Five Days in a Life), which tells the story of a young man who drops out of a Koranic school to live on the streets as a petty thug.

In 1974, Cissé produced his first feature-length film in Bambara, the lingua franca of Mali. *Den Muso* (The Girl) is the story of a young mute girl who is raped. The girl becomes pregnant and is rejected by both her family and the child's father. *Den Muso* was banned by the Malian Minister of Culture and Cissé was arrested and interned on corruption charges - he had allegedly accepted French funding. But Cissé was undeterred: during his time in prison, he wrote the screenplay for his next film *Baara* (Work), which he completed four years later in 1979 and which became his first major success and won numerous awards.

With the tailwind of success, Cissé set about making his next film *Finyé* (Wind), which tells the story of disaffected Malian youth rebelling against the establishment. For this film, he received his second Yenenga's Talon at Fespaco in 1983 after *Baara* in 1979.

Between 1984 and 1987, Cissé worked on *Yeelen* (Light or Brightness), a coming-of-age film and probably his best-known film in the West, which won the Jury Prize at the 1987 Cannes Film Festival, making it the first African film in the festival's history to win an award. In an interview for *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Cissé emphasised that *Yeelen* was also a statement against European ethnographic film and its Eurocentrism. In 1995, Cissé returned to the Cannes Film Festival with *Waati* (Time), where his film was in competition for the Palme d'Or.

In 2009, Cissé made the comedy *Tell Me Who You Are*, in which he thematises polygamy and tells a story that Cissé himself experienced when he, his eight brothers and his sister were forced to leave their home in 1988 under pressure from their own father. His last film *O Ka* (Our House) was also inspired by his own family dramas; it recalled his sisters' legal battle when they were evicted from their home in Bamako.

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Souleymane Cissé, the grand old man of West African cinema, died on 19 February 2025 at the age of 84 in a clinic in Bamako. He was supposed to chair the feature film jury at the 29th edition of Fespaco on 22 February in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, but it wasn't enough for that. But on the day of his death, he still had the strength to remind the Malian military leadership, which had surprisingly declared 2025 to be the year of culture, to support the Malian film industry so that it can keep up with the competition on the continent as it used to:

'It is not enough to make cinema; the works must also be visible. May the authorities help us to build cinemas. That's the appeal I'll make to them before I die, if God wills it.' 🕌

BUZZ

## Mastul Earns Special Mention at Moscow Film Festival

**T**he Bangladeshi film *Mastul* has been honored with a Special Mention Award (Jury) by the Federation of Film Societies at the 47th Moscow International Film Festival for its "humanistic approach to everyday life."

The recognition was announced just before the festival's closing ceremony, held on Thursday in Moscow.

Earlier in the day, at the "First Prize" event, *Mastul*'s director Mohammad Nuruzzaman was presented with a certificate of appreciation by the Federation.

Speaking from Moscow, Nuruzzaman shared his excitement, saying the film premiere received enthusiastic responses from international audiences, critics, and journalists. He noted that the curiosity and engagement from viewers felt like a major accomplishment, and receiving the Special Mention further affirmed the film's impact.

*Mastul* had its world premiere on Tuesday at the festival, drawing a mixed crowd of global film critics and general attendees. Present at the screening were the director, cinematographer Arifuzzaman, and lead actors Fazlur Rahman Babu and Deepak Suman.



*Team Mastul in Moscow*

Following the screening, the team was warmly congratulated by the audience, with many staying back to engage in thoughtful discussions about the film's themes and execution.

Set against the backdrop of sailors adrift at sea, the film also features performances by Aminur Rahman Mukul, Arif Hasan, and Sifat Bonya. Its digital distribution and promotional efforts are managed by Tonghor Taklies. 🕌



## The Gaze of the Siren

# THE CINEMATIC CARTOGRAPHY OF SORRENTINO'S PARTHENOPE

Naseef Faruque Amin

L

ove, to try and help us survive, is a failure. Not a line spoken but confessed—offered to the audience in a moment of cinematic undressing, not with the body but with the soul. Stefania Sandrelli, the aging Parthenope in Paolo Sorrentino's film *Parthenope*, looks at us through the camera and says, "L'amore per provare a sopravvivere è stato un fallimento".

Her words, reverberating with Riccardo Cocciante's aching melody, cut through the film's glossy sensuality and leave behind a wound, visible only when looked at directly. In this final act, Sorrentino shows his cards—revealing not a trick but a tragedy. It had all been predicted. The promise of youth, like an unopened letter, was always destined to fade, unread, into regret.



Sorrentino's *Parthenope* unfolds like an archaeological dig through layers of myth, emotion, and aesthetic conceit. It is a film about Naples, yes, but Naples filtered through a lens coated in mythological dust and Fellini's cigarette smoke. The city is not backdrop but essence—a liquid architecture of memory and melancholy, radiant beauty and baroque ruin. From its first frames, the film is slippery, elusive. A pastiche of forms: erotic drama, comedic coming-of-age, hallucinatory essay-film.

At the center stands *Parthenope*, played in youth by Celeste Dalla Porta—a woman who is too beautiful for her own narrative to breathe. Men orbit her, desiring not her soul but their own reflected longing in her eyes. She is admired but never mirrored. Like the siren whose name she bears, she enchants without being enchanted. And she drifts through Naples, becoming a living palimpsest of the city's myth: at once founded by and entrapped within her identity.

There are flings—romantic, spiritual, existential. There's John Cheever (Gary Oldman), an alcoholic writer with a gaze so internalized it might liquify. Cheever drinks to forget his sexuality, to scrub the mirror of his mind clean. But when *Parthenope* steps into his world, he retreats—not out of fear of her, but fear of what he might see in her eyes: innocence unmarred, the youth he cannot reclaim. “I don't want to steal one minute of your youth,” he tells her. And in that refusal, he commits the only act of love he can muster: withdrawal.

The story sprawls. Scenes stack like frescoes in a collapsing chapel. *Parthenope* meets her anthropology professor, Devoto Marotta (Silvio Orlando), a man of academic rigor but concealed tenderness. She studies anthropology, a field that mirrors the film's deeper obsession: what does it mean to be human amid the ruins of beauty? Like Claude Lévi-Strauss peeling apart the structures of kinship, *Parthenope* searches for the grammar behind her experiences—the syntax of emotion, the morphology of regret.

*Parthenope*'s journey is not linear but rhizomatic, to use Deleuze's term. There are no firm plotlines, only root systems of longing and philosophical digression. Sorrentino replaces Aristotelian structure with Heideggerian drift. What emerges is a portrait not of life, but of being—a woman caught in the ecstatic stasis between the image and the gaze.

Her anthropological studies with Marotta mirror her own existential excavation. The professor, a man whose life is shaped by the unfathomable relationship with his own son (a narrative swerve so surreal it edges into Lynchian territory), becomes a prism through which *Parthenope* reconsiders kinship. Here, Lévi-Strauss haunts the film: family is not just a unit of relation but a ritual structure—one that defines and confines.

Her relationship with her brother also reflects this. Their bond is never overtly stated, but suggested through shared glances, elliptical conversations, and emotional proximities that shimmer with Freud's concept of the “uncanny.” The familiar becomes strange. The brother, like Naples itself, is both home and exile.

Meanwhile, Heidegger's theory of beauty—*das Schöne*—reverberates throughout. Beauty is not adornment but truth unconcealed, an *aletheia* that is also trauma. *Parthenope*'s face is her truth and her trap. “You're beautiful and unforgettable,” a faded actress tells her, “But your eyes are dull.” In other words: you are surface without soul. The camera doesn't lie, and neither does it forgive.

The film explored the idea of academic nihilism—how knowledge, when disconnected from life, becomes an echo chamber of abstraction. *Parthenope*'s anthropology is not the pursuit of understanding others but a failed attempt to understand herself. The lecture halls are mausoleums of thought. Her professors, including the enigmatic Marotta, are tragic jesters—brilliant minds unable to translate theory into love, presence, or connection.

Academic nihilism becomes a motif: the gap between the symbolic and the real, the Lacanian crack that no lecture can bridge. Sorrentino stages scenes of cerebral discourse like operas of intellectual impotence. Language falters. Gesture and silence become more meaningful. We return to Wittgenstein: “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.” *Parthenope*'s silence is not emptiness but surplus—too much to say, nothing precise to utter.

In the Lacanian schema, desire is not for the object but for the lack. The *objet petit a*, the impossible object of desire, is the illusion that sustains us. *Parthenope* is everyone's object of desire, but she herself is adrift — caught in a sea of gazes that never meet her interior. She becomes the lack in others. A woman desired but desiring only to be seen as something beyond the image.



Paolo Sorrentino

Lacan tells us the mirror stage is where the subject first sees themselves as other. Parthenope lives her life in this stage. Her selfhood is always mediated through the gaze of others—photographers, lovers, mentors. Her beauty is a reflection, a projection, never a truth. She is the siren who drowns in the song she sings.

Sorrentino, ever the philosopher of images, uses language as both tool and torment. The Oscar Wilde quote—“Silence in the beautiful is a mystery, in the ugly, a failure”—is a cipher. Parthenope’s silence is dense with meaning. Her stillness, her refusal to perform, becomes a protest against interpretation. She doesn’t need to speak; she is the speech.

But silence, too, is a trap. In one scene, a man tells her, “You don’t speak enough.” And yet, her silence is a scream—an admission of the impossibility of expressing what she feels. The miracle of Saint Januarius—“Is it a mystery or a scam?”—becomes the film’s metaphysical question. Parthenope herself is that miracle: a blend of faith and fraudulence. Her beauty is a cathedral and a con. Her life, a prayer and a performance.

Naples is not just a setting but a second protagonist. Like Parthenope, it is layered, contradictory, untamed. It breathes through ruin and rhythm, opera and decay. Sorrentino paints the city not in realist terms but in surrealist flourishes.

Daria D’Antonio’s cinematography transforms the mundane into myth—each shot a postcard from a dream that was never sent.

Parthenope is Naples. Beautiful. Inexplicable. Trapped in history. Longing for the future. Like the city, she is untranslatable. A signifier without a signified.

In the final montage, as Sandrelli’s Parthenope confesses her regrets, we feel the full weight of the film’s architecture: the dazzling façades, the erotic vignettes, the philosophical fragments—all crashing into a single image. A woman looking into the mirror and finding only distance. A life rendered not as narrative, but as reflection.

Parthenope is not a character; she is a concept. A meditation on beauty, on desire, on the silence that speaks louder than words. Her story resists cohesion because life resists interpretation. Sorrentino, like Cheever, like Marotta, refuses to resolve her. Instead, he lets her drift—across time, across gazes, across meaning itself.

What remains is image and absence. A city. A siren. A girl on the shore of language, waiting for something unsayable to arrive. 🌊



*A scene from Parthenope*

## BUZZ

In a long-overdue move, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has announced that a new category—Achievement in Stunt Design—will be introduced at the 100th Oscars ceremony in 2028, honoring stunt work in films released in 2027.

For decades, stunt performers and designers have played a vital role in cinema, from the daredevil antics of Buster Keaton to Tom Cruise's gravity-defying *Mission: Impossible* stunts. Yet the Oscars remained silent on recognizing their contributions—until now.



# OSCARS 2028 STUNT DESIGN FINALLY GETS ITS SPOTLIGHT

Academy CEO Bill Kramer and President Janet Yang celebrated the historic inclusion, calling stunt work “an integral part of filmmaking.” The announcement follows years of advocacy by industry professionals, notably director and former stuntman David Leitch (*John Wick*, *The Fall Guy*) and veteran stunt coordinator Chris O'Hara, who campaigned tirelessly for the category's inclusion.

Leitch hailed the decision as a long-awaited victory, saying, “We’re standing on the shoulders of the stunt professionals who’ve fought tirelessly for recognition.” His sentiments were echoed by Chad Stahelski (*John Wick*), who praised the move but raised concerns over how credit will be shared in such a collaborative field.

Though other awards like the Emmys and SAGs have long honored stunt work, the Oscars have finally caught up—just in time for their centennial. Here's hoping the recognition goes to the unsung heroes behind cinema's most breathtaking action. 🎬

## Do you know?

The very first Oscars ceremony was held in 1929 at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel and lasted just 15 minutes!

The Oscar statuette is made of gold-plated bronze, stands 13.5 inches tall, and weighs about 8.5 pounds.

Only three non-English-language films have ever won Best Picture: *Parasite* (South Korea), *The Artist* (France - silent film), and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Germany, remake).



# Borbad

## A Spectacle of the Superficial Elite

Papri Rahman

**L**ike a coiled anaconda, the queue stood still midway. Surrounded by a sea of blonde heads jostling around, I was momentarily lost in a daze—where have I landed, some foreign land? The charm of raven-haired Bengali women seems to have disappeared; how will poets ever again write lines like: “Your kohl-black hair spread like night, making it sweet and sublime”?

The audience for *Borbad* had been held back as viewers for *Dagi* streamed in. Both films were scheduled within 20 minutes of each other at Star Cineplex. Once inside, we followed the rules and reached our seats, only to realize we were stuck in the front row—practically the “third class.” Why? Because *Borbad* had sold out.

It felt like a scene straight out of a classroom: a teenage boy tries to woo a girl with his gaze; the girl remains indifferent. Suddenly, he dashes over and kisses her. The teacher lashes out with a cane, and the boy, in a frenzy, stabs him with a compass. How on earth did this pass censorship? A teacher is casually murdered!

So began *Borbad*, a film whose name has roots in Persian—but the culture it represents is utterly indiscernible.

It felt like an episode from *One Thousand and One Nights*—everyone is rich, drinking day and night, clad in luxurious attire, doing whatever pleases them. And at the root of it all is Shakib Khan—the ultimate destroyer. Yet, even he has a master. That master is none other than love. And of course, Shakib falls for the dusky beauty Idhika Paul. Who wouldn’t?

The age-old trope returns: love burns away impurities and refines a man into pure gold. Our megastar tries just that—with his signature action-packed “*Borbad*” flair.

The story is rusted, the suspense bloated. Shakib is framed by Idhika, who uses love as bait to avenge her innocent father’s imprisonment and sister’s suicide.

Right before intermission, Idhika lights a cigarette in such a stylish manner, the whole theater gasped. Her character—Mitu—is both fiercely smart and strikingly beautiful.

There’s no subtlety here—murders, guns, blades, revenge, and madness. A touch of politics, a spoonful of betrayal, and a heavy dose of romance complete this fiery cocktail. Shakib dons many avatars: fierce, terrifying, tender, gentle, romantic. No sign of poverty in his lover-boy look. Some scenes echo old films like *Laily-Majnu*, but without the poetry—no torn robes, no desert melancholy. Just blunt violence.



Shot in a neighboring country (left unnamed), *Borbad* offers a hopeful hint—maybe we can stop bickering and start sharing curry bowls instead of bullets.

But the madness on screen—men urinating on others’ faces, applauded by the audience—leaves me wondering: is this our collective psyche?

Shakib kills for love; a rival suitor, Jesus-like in charm, dies for no reason. Idhika too perishes for betrayal.

When the heroine dies, what’s left for the hero? He embraces his fate: “I’ll laugh my way to the gallows.” A father commits suicide to spare his son the shame of a public hanging. A gunshot wipes away all sins. And the film ends, taking with it every last bit of destruction—destroyed (*English translation of Borbad*) in every sense.

Viewers are flocking to Cineplexes to watch this tale, chasing the illusion of grandeur. But as for me? I sat stunned, hands shielding my eyes from the endless barrage of bloodshed. 🍷

# Jongli

## A Heartfelt Bangladeshi Cinema Experience

Maruf Emon

**L**ike many others, today's Bangladeshi audiences—exposed to diverse content globally—demand more than just 'formula films'. They require compelling storytelling, quality writing, and impressive acting to justify the theater experience.

This shift has raised the bar for filmmakers everywhere. *Jongli* meets these expectations by connecting with viewers' emotions. Siam Ahmed—serving as producer, writer, and actor—brings authenticity to the project. A young, enthusiastic team presents a hopeful narrative that resonates deeply with audiences seeking meaningful entertainment.

The film tells the story of a woman who abandons her newborn in the garbage after being rejected by the father. Dr. Tithi finds the baby and attempts to help the mother recognize the child's worth by relating the transformative tale of a man called 'Jongli', who finds a rhythm of life with a girl named 'Pakhi'.

Unfolding primarily through flashbacks, the narrative follows Siam's character Jonny in a well-structured progression that tackles social issues, parenting struggles, and legal matters. Azad Khan deserves credit for his thematic vision, while Mehedi Hasan Moon and Sukriti Saha's joint screenplay balances entertainment with important social commentary.

Siam delivers his career-best performance, with notable contributions from child actors Nairita and Bubli, who bring natural charm to their roles. His dedication is evident through his two-and-a-half-year commitment to the project. Supporting characters serve functional roles without leaving lasting impressions, though Siam's performance shifts from understated to overly narrated in the final portions, which somewhat detracts from the film's impact.

First-time screenplay writers demonstrate surprising competence in crafting emotional scenes. M. Rahim's directorial approach, though emotionally focused, follows a somewhat predictable path with pacing issues and logical inconsistencies. Despite this, the accessible storyline maintains viewer engagement throughout its runtime.

Legendary Prince Mahmud's music works well but feels excessive; two songs could be removed without affecting the narrative. The product placement strategy stands out as clever and well-integrated, never feeling forced or distracting. As a family-friendly offering, *Jongli* avoids excessive violence, featuring only two modest action sequences that serve the story.

Budget constraints are noticeable, particularly in the opening sequence, which needed strengthening to better hook viewers. The film also suffers from insufficient comic relief to balance its emotional weight. Despite these flaws, *Jongli* is a sincere, human narrative—perfect for family viewing during the festive season and appropriate for all ages. It has the emotional power to provoke unexpected tears and self-reflection, especially on the themes of good and bad parenting. 🍿



# **WHY IS DISNEY'S 'SNOW WHITE' BANNED IN LEBANON?**



**D**isney's live-action 'Snow White' has been banned from cinemas in Lebanon... And it's not because of the acting or the CGI dwarfs. Lebanon has banned Disney's live-action film Snow White from playing in cinemas because Israeli actress Gal Gadot is on the country's boycott list.

According to local newspaper An-Nahar, Ahmad Hajjar, Lebanon's Interior Minister, recommended the ban.

This is not the first time Lebanon has banned Gadot and films the 39-year-old actress has starred in. Both Death On The Nile and the Wonder Woman films were prevented from screening in the country due to the actress' ties to Israel.



Gadot, who stars as the Evil Queen in *Snow White*, was born in Israel and prior to becoming a model and actress, served in the Israel Defense Forces. The actress has been a prominent supporter of Israel since October 7.

During an impassioned speech at the Anti-Defamation League's summit in 2024, she said: "Never did I imagine that on the streets of the United States, and different cities around the world, we would see people not condemning Hamas, but celebrating, justifying and cheering on a massacre of Jews."

The ban was prompted by the country's film and media watchdog during Israel's attacks on Hezbollah in Lebanon that have resulted in civilian casualties. It follows Lebanon's earlier decision to block Marvel's *Captain America: Brave New World*, which stars Israeli actress Shira Haas.

From racist attacks on the film's Latina lead, Rachel Zegler, to controversy over the portrayal of the seven dwarfs and Gal Gadot's pro-Israel stance clashing with Zegler's comments on Palestine, *Snow White* has been fraught with controversy. Indeed, Zegler has been publicly pro-Palestine since 2021, and there were already calls for bans last year when the teaser trailer was released.

Disney scaled back the 15 March Los Angeles premiere of the film due to ongoing controversies and since its premiere, *Snow White* has been both a critical and box office bomb. 🍌

Courtesy:  
David Mouriquand, euro news



# A Portrait of Pain

Utpal Datta

**T**he portrayal of sexuality, prostitution, and various social perspectives in Indian cinema is nothing new. Many Hindi films, created with commercial interests in mind, have embraced the use of sexuality—particularly female-centric sexuality—as a formula.

In recent years, some films, especially in regional languages, have incorporated provocative images and scenes of the female body under the guise of narrative necessity. Even if such scenes do not enhance the film's core message, they add an element of excitement for the audience, sometimes even igniting controversy. Against this backdrop, Pradeep Nair's film *Oridam* (2005 Indian Malayalam film) stands out as a remarkable exception.

Pradeep Nair's film '*Oridam*' focuses on the life, struggles, and dreams of a sex worker. The protagonist, an orphaned young woman, survives as a sex worker. She shares her joys and sorrows with another sex worker. She also has a child, whom she kept in an orphanage. Desperate to leave her life behind, she seeks work elsewhere, but after failing to find employment, she approaches an NGO that supports sex workers. However, the organisation only brings her in front of television cameras to share her tragic story but cannot offer her a job. Ultimately, she hands over all her savings and jewellery to a broker in hopes of securing a job opportunity in the Middle East. Meanwhile, she is assaulted and humiliated by a client. The broker, who promised to help her travel abroad, is arrested by the police, closing all doors of opportunity for her. The very profession she wished to escape now becomes her inevitable reality again. Soon, the dead body of her companion is found on the roadside. In the end, she takes her child from the orphanage and embarks on a new journey in search of a better life.

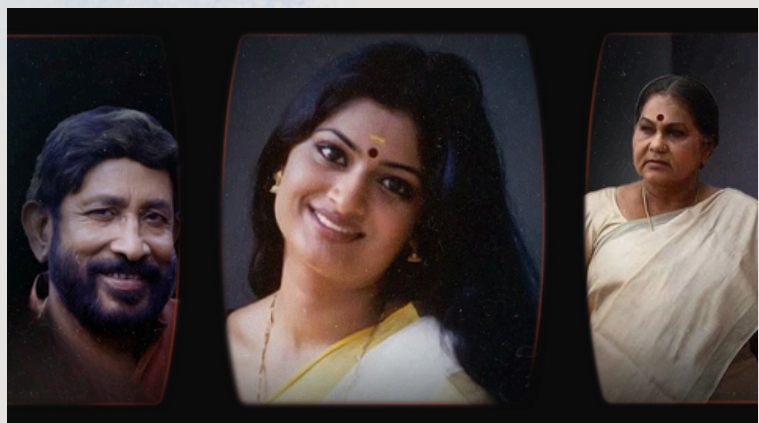
The way this concise story is told through the camera highlights the director's control over the narrative. Remarkably, despite the subject matter, the film avoids obscene dialogue and provocative scenes. The director had ample opportunity to showcase the female body or intimate moments, yet he chose not to. Instead, his focus remains solely on capturing the protagonist's pain and suffering.

The film has minimal dialogue, relying on visual storytelling to convey its message. The director's skill is evident in how he portrays the protagonist's loneliness amidst the bustling city. The cinematography effectively conveys this feeling—sometimes showing her surroundings blurred, out of focus, representing the uncertainty and hopelessness she faces, while moments of clarity highlight the rare glimpses of possibility. The contrast between the city's bright neon signs, the glowing advertisements, and the bleak, painful reality of the protagonist waiting for clients creates a striking emotional tension. The dimly lit encounters with customers, the illusion of hope sparked by dazzling billboards, and the brutal reality of her existence all contribute to the film's poignant and layered storytelling.

The camera movements in the film are slow and deliberate, yet each shot is filled with emotion. Cinematographer Manoj Mundayat masterfully employs light, shadows, and colour to create poetic and haunting visuals. The film's philosophical undertones are beautifully conveyed through the cinematography. Editor Ranjan Abraham skilfully sustains the rhythm of the narrative, particularly in the emotional scenes, ensuring that each shot is impactful. The background score by Issac Thomas Kottukapilly adds another layer of depth to the film's atmosphere.

Geetu Mohandas delivers an outstanding performance as the protagonist. Through her body language and expressions, she exhibits remarkable sensitivity in conveying the character's pain, aspirations, and despair.

*Characters from film Oridam*





Her struggle between outwardly inviting clients while internally grappling with anguish is portrayed with exceptional nuance. The performances of the supporting characters also effectively complement the film's central theme.

Oridam is a successful cinematic portrayal of a woman's pain. However, the film could have gained even more impact had it presented a broader perspective on the protagonist's environment and the societal structures surrounding her.

Director Pradeep Nair received the National Film Award [Special Jury Award] for this film. It also won several Kerala State Film Awards, including Best Director (Special Jury), Best Actress, Best Music, Best Costume Design, and Best Processing.

The film's strongest aspect is the director's masterful epic restraint in storytelling. This is exactly why Oridam continues to hold its timeless emotional resonance, even two decades later, in a world of shifting values and sensitivities. 🎬

## Do you know?

# Clapstick

## Small Tool, Big Role

### What It Is

A clap stick is a rectangular board, usually with a hinged stick (or sticks) on top that makes a sharp "clap" sound when snapped shut. It's often black-and-white striped for visibility.

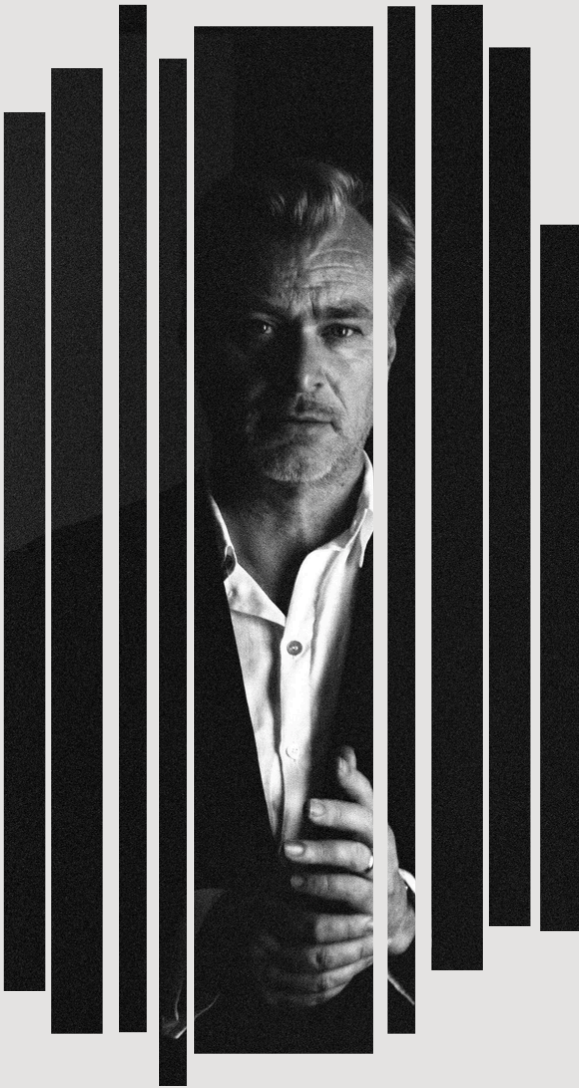
### What It's Used For

1. Syncing Audio and Video – The sharp clap sound is used to sync the audio track with the video, especially in productions where sound is recorded separately.
2. Scene Identification – The board shows important details like scene number, take number, director, date, and camera angle. This helps the editor organize footage.

### Fun Fact

In the old days, before digital timecodes, editors relied entirely on the clap and the visual cue of the sticks closing to sync scenes accurately.





## Christopher Nolan

**"Cinema thrives on ambiguity and complexity."**

Name: Christopher Edward Nolan

DOB: 30 July 1970

Place of birth: Westminster, London, UK

Occupation: Film director, screenwriter

**Mr. Nolan, from *Interstellar* to *The Prestige*, *Tenet*, and now *Oppenheimer*, many of your films have an element of science to them. Why is that?**

I think my initial interest in physics, in science and the universe and so forth, is from when I grew up. I grew up in the late seventies and when I was a young child, George Lucas' first *Star Wars* came out, and science-fiction was something that really fired up the imagination. And because of that, a lot of the presentation of science — in particular, programs like Carl Sagan's *Cosmos* — very much tried to tap into our interest in science fiction. It was something that stuck with me, and it was something I applied very much to films like *Interstellar*, where I worked with Kip Thorne, the Nobel Prize winning scientist. It showed us the dramatic possibilities, that looking at the universe from a scientific perspective could be very, very engaging.

**Kip Thorne also worked with you on *Tenet*, right?**

Kip once again helped me with that, yes, in terms of where that needed to tie into the laws of physics and so forth. With *Tenet*, I think I had moved on to much more of a science-fiction mindset than with *Interstellar*, and then in *Oppenheimer*, we are looking at scientists working in the 1920s, who are reappraising the very fabric of our world, they are visualizing it in completely revolutionary terms. And so you see science in that moment as analogous to the most dramatic revolutionary thought, almost to magic, they are visualizing the world in ways that nobody else can really understand. And to this day, quantum physics has not been fully reconciled with classical physics.

**It is still very much a mystery.**

One of the great mysteries, exactly. And so when you think of it in storytelling terms, *Oppenheimer* is very explicit about the idea that young *Oppenheimer* trying to visualize quantum theory, trying to build on Einstein's discoveries, he's really looking into the dull matter, everything around us. And he's seeing energy in energy waves so there is a sort of almost mystical, magical component to that. And that's very dramatic, that's very inherently I think relatable to an audience in terms of genre. They don't have to understand it, they just have to feel this sense of revolutionary excitement, almost like a wizard or a magician or whatever, that he was feeling at the time. And so I think for me really where science has come into my work, it's really about the dramatic possibilities.

**How do those dramatic possibilities work in tandem with the storytelling techniques you know and love, like your non-linear approach?**

I would say that I use the structure that is appropriate for the story I want to tell. In the case of *Oppenheimer*, you are trying to give the audience the experience of an entire life, a concentrated experience of the myriad aspects of this person's existence.

And the only way to do that effectively, in my opinion, rather than adhering to the conventional structure of a biopic, is to really view things in a more prismatic way; where you are seeing different aspects of his life at different times and you are contrasting them against each other to give the audience a feeling about who this character is and how they have developed over time.

### So the structure of the film is an essential part of the narrative?

It is an inseparable element. I don't start writing a script until I am firmly in control of the structure of the piece, it is not imposed after the fact. I think of all of the forms of storytelling, cinema is the one perhaps with the most conservative outlook and structure! No one really tends to question a novelist's approach to structure or a playwright's in the same way, and I think that's because of the influence of television over the years, I think there's been a push towards linear storytelling because it suited the television format very well. But those of us working in a post-home video age, where audiences have access to films in a different way, they could watch DVDs and so forth, you could stop and start the film, we have been able to use more sophisticated chronological structures depending on what's best for the story we are telling.

### It seems like that might impact the way you shoot your films, but apparently Oppenheimer was shot in only 57 days.

I think the pace was certainly fast, but it had the right energy for the piece. We are always constrained by budget and the marshaling of resources and we had a lot of very large scale things to pull off in this film, we had to build the town of Los Alamos from scratch, things like that. So the schedule to some extent is dictated by circumstance. But I actually found that working fast, more the way I had on my earlier, smaller films, created a sense of energy; actors could come to set with great preparation and real authority because they researched their characters. These are real life people so they know everything about these people, and come to set as experts. And so we would allow the drama, the excitement of these individuals coming together to dictate the shooting. And that felt absolutely right for this project and that works best at speed.

### Is that at odds with your other films?

I mean, of course there are some films where you are breaking things down into very small parts and so the actors are having to work within those constraints. This felt like a film that had to be led first and foremost by the energy of the people involved and so you wanted them to be able to really run into a scene and really be able to go through the entire thing and lead the camera to where it needed to be.

### I guess you had to choose your cast wisely — not every actor would or could be up for that kind of challenge.

When I am writing scripts, I try to be very disciplined and not think about actors. If you are writing to an actor, you are imagining things they have already done. So I think a script stage is very important to write the character in a more pure way, particularly in the case of a real life figure like Oppenheimer, you are able to write with the real historical person in mind and not think at all about how this is going to come to life and who you are going to get to play the part. But then once I finish the script, I sort of knew who can do this role. My friend Cillian [Murphy] who I have worked with for 20 years, I'd known since I very first worked with him, I screen tested him for Batman on Batman Begins. It was very clear to me that he was one of the great talents, one of the greatest actors. And so this made complete sense to me.

### In what way?

Well, what I am looking for in the performance, which is what I tried to put in the script, is intense subjectivity. I really want the audience to experience the events of the film through Oppenheimer's eyes, I want them to be in his head, rather than creating a judgment of him. And so for me, the end of the film is about having developed an understanding of who he is, perhaps why he did some of the things he did, finishing that story and then the resonance of the story is finished, I think it should leave you with some troubling questions. There are some things that you perhaps reassess about what you have seen and what you have experienced.

### So there's no message you're trying to send out with this particular work?

I think to be too specific about a message, or feeling that we had the answers to these difficult questions, I don't think that's what dramatic features and cinema thrives on. I think they thrive on ambiguity and complexity and I want to view his story as a Rorschach test, as something that people will interpret in their own way. That's what attracted me to this story in the first place was the complexity of it, the difficult questions that it asks. So, no, I did not intend any specific message. We are not making a documentary or advocacy. I think that cinema does not work well when it's didactic, when it's telling people what to think — I think audiences are naturally resistant to that. 🤖

Interview by Patrick Heidmann.  
Courtesy: The Talks



# 10 FEEL-GOOD FILMS TO BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY

**The Pursuit of Happyness (2006) – Dir. Gabriele Muccino**

A heartfelt journey of hope, struggle, and triumph. Based on a true story, Will Smith shines as a single father fighting homelessness. It's a moving reminder that perseverance and love can overcome all odds.

**Forrest Gump (1994) – Dir. Robert Zemeckis**

Life is full of surprises when you run with kindness. Tom Hanks plays a simple man who lives an extraordinary life. With warmth and charm, it shows how kindness leaves a lasting legacy.

**Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara (2011) – Dir. Zoya Akhtar**

Three friends rediscover life, love, and freedom on a road trip. Stunning visuals, soulful poetry, and deep bonds make this a Bollywood gem. It's about living in the moment and letting go of fear.

**The Intouchables (2011) – Dir. Olivier Nakache & Éric Toledano**

An unlikely friendship that heals and uplifts both lives. A wealthy quadriplegic hires a carefree caregiver from the streets. Funny, touching, and real—this French film celebrates human connection

**Paddington 2 (2017) – Dir. Paul King**

A small bear with a big heart makes everything better. Paddington's misadventures are packed with humor and heart. This sequel is pure joy, filled with warmth and whimsical charm.

**Taare Zameen Par (2007) – Dir. Aamir Khan**

Every child is special—and some just need to be seen. It follows a dyslexic child's struggles until a teacher changes his world. A deeply emotional, eye-opening film that touches every heart.

**My Love, Don't Cross That River (2014) – Dir. Jin Mo-young**

A touching tale of eternal love in old age. This Korean documentary follows a couple married for over 76 years. It's tender, real, and deeply moving—a quiet ode to lasting love.

**Julie & Julia (2009) – Dir. Nora Ephron**

Two women connect across time through cooking and courage. Meryl Streep and Amy Adams shine in this deliciously inspiring tale. It's about chasing passion, finding purpose, and loving food.

**Amélie (2001) – Dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet**

A quirky girl brings joy to others while finding her own. Set in a dreamy Paris, this film is a visual and emotional treat. Amélie teaches us that even small acts of kindness can be magical.

**Coco (2017) – Dir. Lee Unkrich, Adrian Molina**

A young boy's musical journey celebrates family and dreams. Set in vibrant Mexico, it explores Día de los Muertos with heart and humor. It's a visual delight and an emotional celebration of heritage.



## QUIZ



1. Who plays Iron Man in the Marvel movies?

- a) Chris Evans
- b) Robert Downey Jr.
- c) Chris Hemsworth
- d) Tom Holland

2. Which Bollywood movie features the famous line, "All is well"?

- a) PK
- b) Dangal
- c) 3 Idiots
- d) Munna Bhai M.B.B.S

3. Who is known as the "King of Dhallywood"?

- a) Manna
- b) Riaz
- c) Shakib Khan
- d) Salman Shah



4. What kind of creature is "Shrek"?

- a) Giant
- b) Ogre
- c) Troll
- d) Goblin

5. Which Bollywood actor is known as the "Baadshah of Bollywood"?

- a) Salman Khan
- b) Aamir Khan
- c) Shah Rukh Khan
- d) Hrithik Roshan

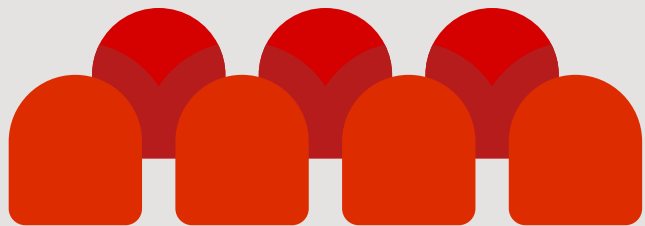
6. Which South Korean film won the Oscar for Best Picture in 2020?

- a) Train to Busan
- b) Parasite
- c) Minari
- d) Oldboy



Answers:

- 1. b) Robert Downey Jr.
- 2. c) 3 Idiots
- 3. c) Shakib Khan
- 4. b) Ogre
- 5. c) Shah Rukh Khan
- 6. b) Parasite



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