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Hands Down, These Are the Best Movies of 2018 (in Opinion)

by MICHELLE VARTAN  | UPDATED 10/11/19

Movies can transport us into a hopeful world, away from the mundane day-to-day or discouraging news of political scandals (2018 has certainly delivered in these departments). But we can always count on cinema for a much-needed dose of compassion, laughter, and emotional catharsis. So while 2018 may have been rocky, a new child actor gave a breathtaking performance, an star directed his first major movie, and a foreign film invited us into the life of a woman trying to evolve in a religious home. If you're in the mood for a cinematic awakening, we've curated a roundup of 2018's best movies (and the critics and the public firmly agree with us on these).

Won't You Be My Neighbor?



Whether you or not you grew up watching the neighborhood trolley on *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, you won't want to miss one of 2018's best documentaries. *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* examines the life and legacy of Fred Rogers, a man who set out to change the world with kindness. The film gives insight into Rogers' melancholic childhood, which inspired his vision for a television show that changed



Finally, a popular film addresses postpartum depression, a difficult condition that affects one in seven women. *Tully* brings you into the dark, confusing depths many new mothers venture into yet seldom talk about. The film blends raw honesty and humor as Charlize Theron's character goes through identity shifts, conflicted feelings and fantasies. "*Tully* honestly highlights the real struggles of parenthood—untouched by a filter," writes Kristen Smith in [Plugged In](#).

Genre: Drama, Comedy

Critics' Score: 86%

Audience Score: 75%

Watch It: [Amazon](#)

Call Me By Your Name





Call Me By Your Name is a coming-of-age drama about a 17-year-old boy who falls in love with a charming older man visiting his family for the summer. The film, based on a novel by André Aciman, portrays a sensual (and controversial) account of first love set in a sun-drenched town in Northern Italy. (It also features incredible performances by Timothée Chalamet and Armie Hammer.) “*Call Me by Your Name* is a cinematic ravishment of the senses with a strong narrative tethering all the feelings and sensuous surfaces,” notes Manohla Dargis in the [*The New York Times*](#).

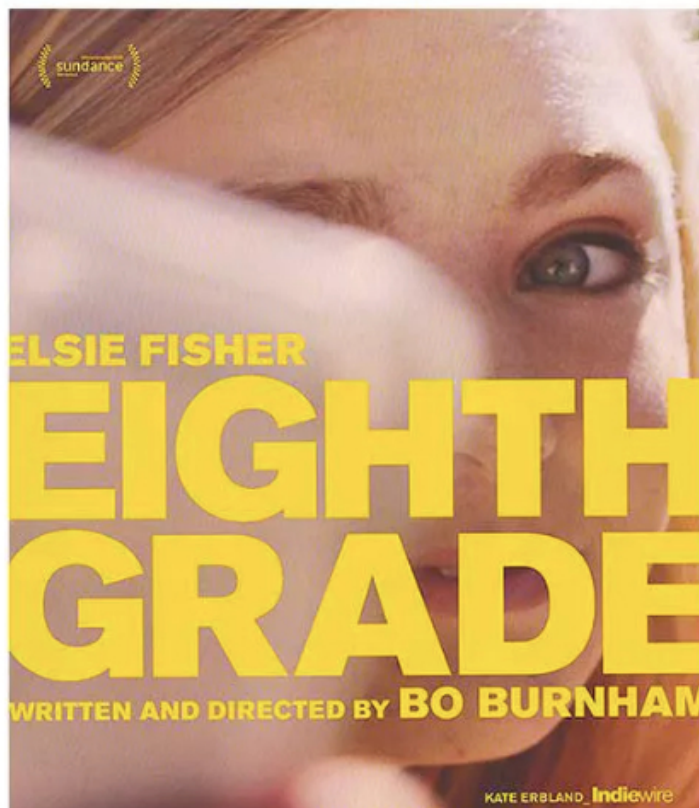
Genre: Romance, Drama

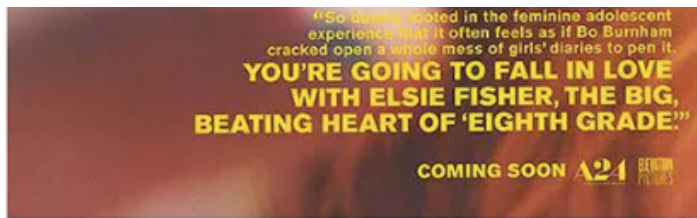
Critics’ Score: 95%

Audience Score: 85%

Watch It: [Amazon](#)

Eighth Grade





For better or worse, we can all remember the awkwardness of eighth grade. In this comedy, a 13-year-old Kayla, played by newcomer Elsie Fisher, narrates her last week of junior high following a disastrous year. *Eighth Grade* touches on the sobering realities of being a teen in the digital age. "In addition to its queasy verisimilitude, *Eighth Grade* offers acute observations on how social media and the language of self-care have warped teen life," writes Naomi Fry in the *The New Yorker*.

Genre: Comedy

Critics' Score: 99%

Audience Score: 85%

Watch It: [iTunes](#)

Blindspotting





Two best friends are made aware of the intersections of racism in a gentrifying Oakland neighborhood. *Blindspotting*, written and starring Rafael Casal and Daveed Diggs, is passionate, darkly funny and takes on various controversial topics in one gripping storyline. “Racism, gentrification, police brutality, start-up culture, corporate branding, social media, the justice system ... *Blindspotting* is eager to take them all on with style and wit, and it succeeds more often than not,” notes Barry Hertz in [The Globe and Mail](#).

Genre: Comedy, Drama

Critics' Score: 93%

Audience Score: 88%

Watch It: [Amazon](#)

RBG





If you want a true story about a real-life superhero, start streaming this [documentary](#). *RGB* chronicles the life and success of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the first female Supreme Court justice who serves as, what she calls “a kindergarten teacher” to a room full of men. The documentary couldn’t be more timely as it showcases Ginsburg’s feats in establishing equality for American women. Though known as quiet, Ginsburg is revealed to be delightfully cheeky. “This riveting, surprisingly touching documentary reveals how the quiet, intense Ginsburg became one of the most iconic Supreme Court justices in American history,” observes Sandie Angulo Chen from [Common Sense Media](#).

Genre: Documentary

Critics’ Score: 94%

Audience Score: 77%

Watch It: [iTunes](#)

Summer 1993





Summer 1993 follows a young child living in an adult world. Set in a sunny countryside in Spain, 6-year-old Frida, played by the incredible Laia Artigas, has lost her mother and is adapting to life with a new family. This foreign film captures the loss of a loved one through the eyes of a child. What's even more touching is that the film's writer and director, Carla Simón, drew upon her own childhood. "Not since *Boyhood* has a film shown this much respect and understanding for what it's like to be a child," observes Scott Marks in [San Diego Reader](#).

Genre: Drama

Critics' Score: 100%

Audience Score: 83%

Watch It: [Fandango Now](#)

Paddington 2





Paddington 2 tops the charts as 2018's best movie as an adorable bear embarks on an adventure to find a special gift for his aunt. Escape into this airiness and heartwarming animation that preaches a message of acceptance and tolerance. "A delightful sequel that will charm audiences of all ages, this is precisely the sort of earnest, crowd-pleasing family film that parents and kids can enjoy for their own reasons," writes Sandie Angulo Chen for [Common Sense Media](#).

Genre: Animation

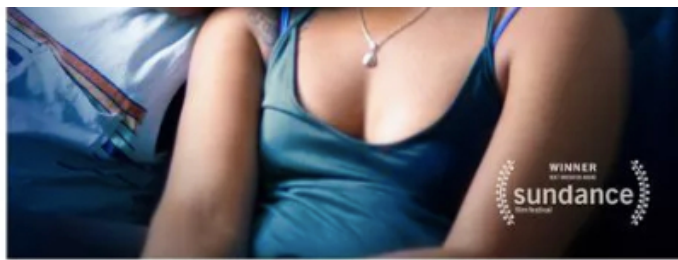
Critics' Score: 100%

Audience Score: 88%

Watch It: [Amazon](#)

Night Comes On





Night Comes On is what a lot of women may need right now: a tale of loss, revenge, perseverance, and hope. The film follows an 18-year-old girl, recently released from juvenile hall, who plunges into a journey with her 10-year-old sister to vindicate their mother's death. But open endings and unshakable hope ensue. "A film that balances penetrating clarity with compassion," writes Teo Bugbee in [*The New York Times*](#).

Genre: Drama

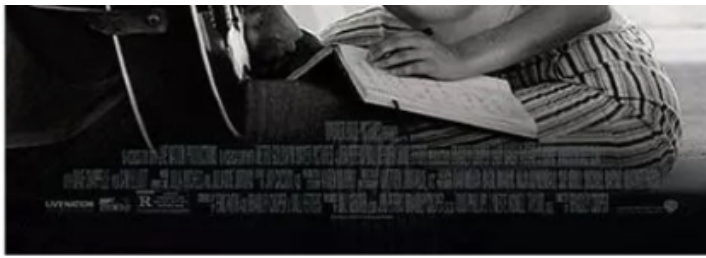
Critics' Score: 100%

Audience Score: 85%

Watch It: [Amazon](#)

A Star Is Born





A remake of the classic film *A Star Is Born* will capture your heart with breakthrough acting and musical performances by Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper. It's a romantic spectacle that uncovers the nuances of relationships and internal demons that come with stardom. "A total emotional knockout, but it's also a movie that gets you to believe, at every step, in the complicated rapture of the story it's telling," writes Owen Gleiberman in [Variety](#).

Genre: Drama

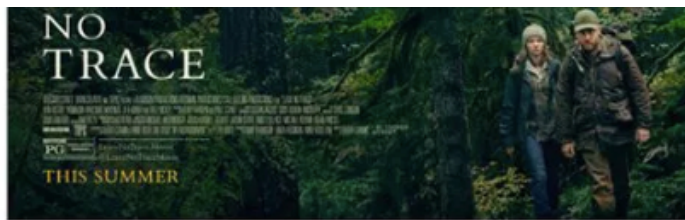
Critics' Score: 90%

Audience Score: 84%

Watch It: [In theaters](#)

Leave No Trace





Speaking of a star being born, [Leave No Trace](#) stars young actress Thomasin Harcourt McKenzie, who gives a refreshing performance. The film follows a father and daughter who are forced back into society after living in peace in the Oregon mountains. It's both uplifting and heartbreaking making this low-key film a must see. "It covers difficult ground, but to say it leaves no trace would be a lie. It definitely makes its mark," writes Adam Grand in [The Detroit News](#).

Genre: Drama

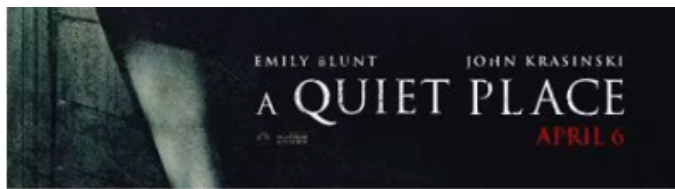
Critics' Score: 100%

Audience Score: 83%

Watch It: [iTunes](#)

A Quiet Place





Actor John Krasinski made his directorial debut with *A Quiet Place*. A heart-pounding thriller in its purest form, you'll be on the edge of your seat through the entire movie, even though dialogue is nonexistent. While the film builds on suspense after suspense, the crux of the story is rooted in the family dynamics during deeply scary and unimaginable living circumstances. "As a celebration of the physical expressiveness and visual storytelling of silent cinema, *A Quiet Place* speaks volumes without a word being uttered," writes Ann Hornaday in [The Washington Post](#).

Genre: Thriller

Critics' Score: 95%

Audience Score: 83%

Watch It: [Amazon](#)

In Between





In Between, directed by Maysaloun Hamoud, takes place in Tel Aviv, where three Palestinian women are trying to balance tradition with freedom. The film is touching yet tough as it portrays women breaking the difficult barriers just to be accepted as they are. “Hamoud’s clever, nuanced screenplay offers a critique of traditional, patriarchal Palestinian society, threatened by modernity, feminine power, and the court of public opinion,” observes Alissa Simon in *Variety*.

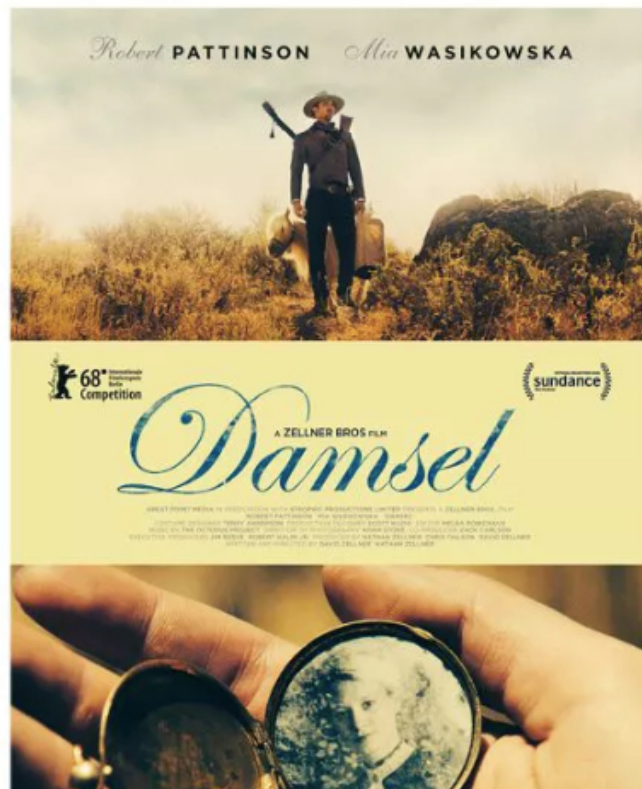
Genre: Drama

Critics’ Score: 98%

Audience Score: 75%

Watch It: [iTunes](#)

Damsel





Damsel is no ordinary Western; directed by the Zellner brothers, it playfully reinvents the genre by offering comic relief with odd yet relatable characters. A pioneer played by Robert Pattinson adventures across the West to find the love of his life (Mia Wasikowska), who needs no saving. Also starring a miniature horse, this Western will keep you guessing. “*Damsel* is a marvelous-looking picture, all the more so for the eccentric collection of faces the Zellners have found to populate their weird and well-timed flight of fancy,” notes Ann Hornaday in the *The Washington Post*.

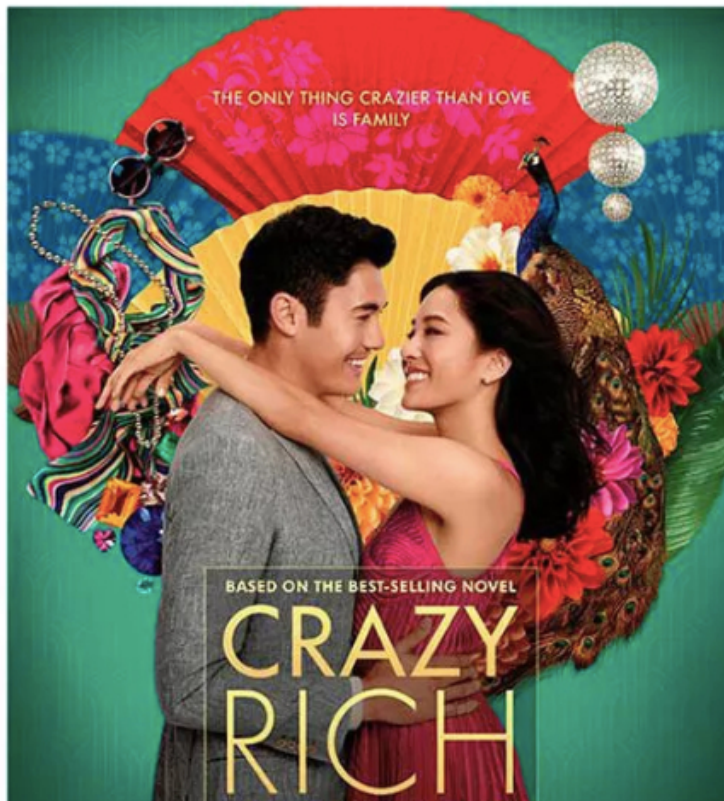
Genre: Comedy, Western

Critics’ Score: 70%

Audience Score: 67%

Watch It: iTunes

Crazy Rich Asians





Even if you're not rich, most of us can relate to having a crazy family. *Crazy Rich Asians*, the first film from a major U.S. studio to feature a majority Asian cast, follows a native New Yorker to Singapore to meet this family for the first time. This romantic comedy explores the dynamics and casualties of socialites. Perfect for a lighthearted fun flick! "The result is hugely enjoyable, and hooray for Hollywood for making it happen," notes Joe Morgenstern in [*The Wall Street Journal*](#).

Genre: Comedy

Critics' Score: 92%

Audience Score: 80%

Watch It: [Vudu](#)

Black Panther





“Virtually everything that distinguishes *Black Panther* from past Marvel pics works to this standalone entry’s advantage,” notes Peter Debruge in [Variety](#). Starring Chadwick Boseman, the film centers around a superhero returns home after his father’s death to a run a technologically advanced African nation when his role as a hero and king are tested by an enemy.

Genre: Action, Adventure

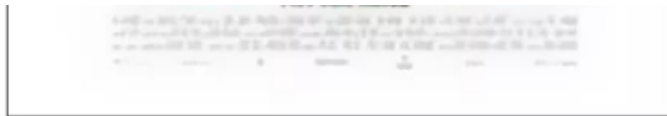
Critics Score: 97%

Audience Score: 79%

Watch It: [Netflix](#)

Oh Lucy!





Starring Josh Hartnett and a lovable Shinobu Terajima, *Oh Lucy!* is a funny drama about a single woman who, after developing a relationship with her English teacher, leaps across a cultural divide by leaving her life in Tokyo for California. The quirky dark comedy explores a woman's battle with regret and hope. "It's weird, sometimes challenging, and surprisingly engaging, thanks in large part to Terajima, who is outstanding," writes Bill Goodykoontz in [The Arizona Republic](#).

Genre: Drama, Comedy

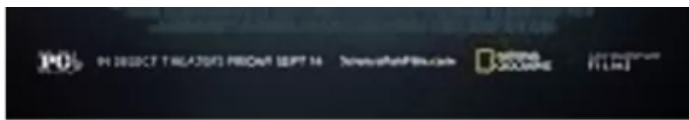
Critics' Score: 100%

Audience Score: 88%

Watch It: [iTunes](#)

Science Fair





An ode to your inner geek, *Science Fair* is a brilliant documentary about a group of kids who just want to make the world a better place. The lovable heroes of the film enter a pressure-cooker competition that ends up being surprisingly entertaining. “The milieu is intense, the stakes are high, and the science prodigies themselves are fascinating,” notes Leah Pickett in [The Chicago Reader](#).

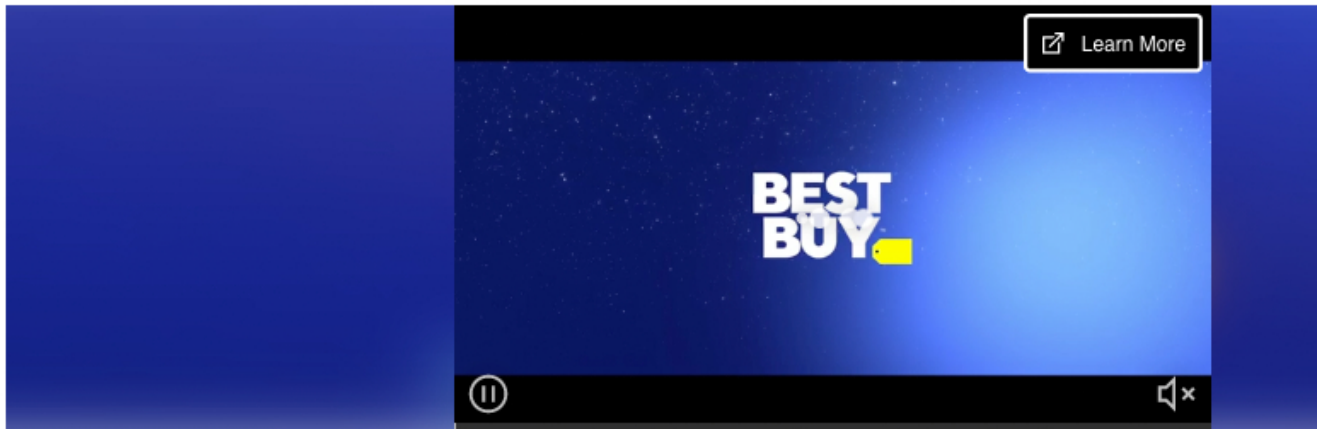
Genre: Documentary

Critics' Score: 98%

Audience Score: 92%

Watch It: [Vudu](#)

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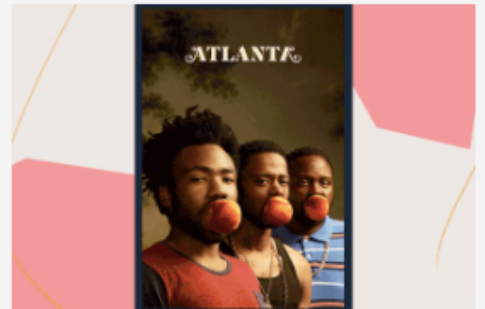
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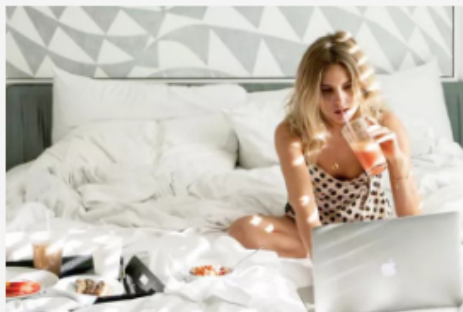
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