

The 10 Best Films of 2022 (So Far)

By

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Everett Collection/Nick Wall

Blockbusters are back, and so are audiences, judging by the billion-dollar take of Tom Cruise’s “Top Gun: Maverick,” or the indie underdog sensation that is “Everything Everywhere All at Once.” But now that moviegoers once again have a full range of offerings to choose from (after too long a stretch of being stuck at home with streaming options), the age-old questions looms: Which movies are worth leaving your bubble to see? Variety chief film critics Peter Debruge and Owen Gleiberman look back at the first six months of 2022, selecting the movie gems that have stood out the most.

Navalny



Photo: Courtesy of CNN Films

When you watch Daniel Roher’s extraordinary, riveting-as-a-thriller documentary about Alexei Navalny, the Russian opposition leader who rose up against Vladimir Putin, challenged him in the 2017 presidential election, was poisoned by him (but survived), and has now been imprisoned by him, you may think: If only there were half a dozen politicians in the United States who operated with this much fearless conviction. (If only Merrick Garland were Alexei Navalny!) The movie is a portrait of a freedom fighter whose pragmatic heroism has made him a figure comparable to Nelson Mandela or Lech Walesa. The story of how he was poisoned, and wound up outing his undercover adversaries, is the stuff of cloak-and-dagger suspense. And while the war in Ukraine hasn’t changed the film’s meaning, it has heightened it. The name “Navalny” now signifies *the ability to stand tall against Putin’s tyranny*. “Navalny” documents nothing less than the spirit a free society is built on. – OG