

# Gear up for November film releases!

By  Daniel Derksen

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Get ready for mindful escapism in cinemas this November, with inspirational true stories, seductive interludes, valiant heroes, psychological horror, courageous firefighters battling the burning of Notre Dame, animated sci-fi and the South African Horrorfest.



Source: [www.unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com)

## 4 November

Inspired by the novel *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, the horror thriller *The Invitation* film follows a young woman who, following her mother's death, meets long-lost family members for the first time - only to discover the dark secrets they carry with them.

Invited by her newfound family to a lavish wedding in the English countryside, she's at first seduced by the sexy aristocrat host but is soon thrust into a nightmare of survival as she uncovers twisted secrets in her family's history and the unsettling intentions behind their sinful generosity.

Directed by Jessica M. Thompson, it stars Nathalie Emmanuel and Thomas Doherty.

*The Survivor* is based on the true story of Harry Haft (Ben Foster), who is driven by his love of a woman to survive the unimaginable horrors of the German concentration camps.

An SS Officer forces Harry to fight to the death against fellow prisoners in gruesome gladiatorial boxing matches. Harry finally escapes and makes it to New York. Haunted by his memories and guilt over his survival, he fights boxing legends, like Rocky Marciano, in the hopes that his name will get noticed and he will find his first love again.

Based on the novel *Harry Haft: Survivor of Auschwitz, Challenger of Rocky Marciano* by Alan Scott Haft.

## 11 November

Marvel fans can indulge in *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, the sequel to *Black Panther* (2018) and the 30th film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

Queen Ramonda (Angela Bassett), Shuri (Letitia Wright), M'Baku (Winston Duke), Okoye (Danai Gurira) and the Dora Milaje (Florence Kasumba), fight to protect their nation from intervening world powers in the wake of King T'Challa's death.

As the Wakandans strive to embrace their next chapter, the heroes must band together with the help of War Dog Nakia (Lupita Nyong'o) and Everett Ross (Martin Freeman) and forge a new path for the kingdom of Wakanda. Introducing Tenoch Huerta as Namor, king of a hidden undersea nation. It is directed by Ryan Coogler.

*Emily* tells the imagined life of one of the world's most famous authors, Emily Brontë.

The film stars Emma Mackey as Emily, a rebel and misfit, as she finds her voice and writes the literary classic *Wuthering Heights*. The film explores the relationships that inspired her – her raw, passionate sisterhood with Charlotte (Alexandra Dowling) and Anne (Amelia Gething); her first aching, forbidden love for Weightman (Oliver Jackson-Cohen) and her care for her maverick brother Branwell (Fionn Whitehead), whom she idolises.

Frances O'Connor makes her directorial debut from her own original screenplay.

Jean-Jacques Annaud delivers a gripping blow-by-blow of the day France's church went up in flames in 2019 in Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Notre Dame On Fire*.

This dramatisation of the Notre-Dame fire holds a vice-like grip as it records the 12 hours or so of the blaze in forensic detail. Women and men will do everything to save the building.

## 18 November

In the black-comedy-horror, *The Menu*, young couple Margot and Tyler travel to a remote island to eat at Hawthorne, an exclusive restaurant run by celebrity chef Slowik.

Slowik has prepared a lavish molecular gastronomy menu where food is treated as conceptual art, but his approach to cuisine has some shocking surprises for wealthy guests.

Directed by Mark Mylod, the film stars Anya Taylor-Joy, Nicholas Hoult, Ralph Fiennes, Hong Chau, Janet McTeer, Judith Light, and John Leguizamo.

*She Said* is a biographical drama directed by Maria Schrader.

It is based on the 2019 book of the same name by Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, the journalists from *The New York Times* who exposed Harvey Weinstein's history of abuse and sexual misconduct against women.

The film stars Carey Mulligan and Zoe Kazan as Twohey and Kantor, respectively, alongside Patricia Clarkson, Andre Braugher, Jennifer Ehle, and Samantha Morton in supporting roles.

## 25 November

The computer-animated science-fiction adventure *Strange World* chronicles the legendary Clades, mainly Searcher Clade who has always been a farmer and has never had the bravery of his family of explorers.

Still, they are forced to tackle their latest and most crucial mission as they must rely on each other and are forced to put away their differences while in the uncharted and treacherous land of Avalonia to find a special creature that awaits.

Produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios and released by Walt Disney Pictures, it marks the 61st animated film produced by the studio and is directed by Don Hall, featuring the voices of Jake Gyllenhaal, Dennis Quaid, Jaboukie Young-White, Gabrielle Union, and Lucy Liu.

The biographical crime-thriller *Bandit* is based on the true life story of Gilbert Galvan Jr (also known as The Flying Bandit).

Galvan escaped from a Michigan prison in 1984 and crossed the border into Canada where he went on to rob 59 banks and jewellery stores while being chased by a police task force. He still holds a record for the most consecutive robberies in Canadian history.

The screenplay by Kraig Wenman is largely based on interviews and accounts featured in the 1996 true crime book *The Flying Bandit* and stars Josh Duhamel, Elisha Cuthbert, Nestor Carbonell and Mel Gibson.

*Nanny* is a psychological horror fable of displacement. Aisha (Anna Diop), a woman who recently emigrated from Senegal, is hired to care for the daughter of an affluent couple (Michelle Monaghan and Morgan Spector) living in New York City.

Haunted by the absence of the young son she left behind, Aisha hopes her new job will afford her the chance to bring him to the U.S., but becomes increasingly unsettled by the family's volatile home life.

As his arrival approaches, a violent presence begins to invade both her dreams and her reality, threatening the American dream she is painstakingly piecing together. It is directed by Nikyatu Jusu.

## **The South African Horrorfest**

The festival enters its 18th edition and brings horror fans an amazing batch of new, indie, rare, classic movies and short films from around the world, which they're unlikely to see anywhere else in the country, cinema screenings at The Labia Theatre in Cape Town and streaming.

The festival opens with the return of the silent film soundtrack performance, for an in-person show of the Makabra Ensemble's live score for *Nosferatu*'s centenary screening; there's a special 16mm projection of Bela Lugosi's classic *Dracula*; a *Rocky Horror Picture Show* audience participation screening; South African feature film *Pou* with cast and crew attending for a Q&A; four documentaries including subjects like Stephen King and Chucky; Horror/fantasy literature fans will get another dose of authors reading from their original work.

***Read more about the latest and upcoming film releases [here](#).***

## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co.za](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)

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