MOVIES MAY 16, 2022 ISSUE

SUMMER MOVIES PREVIEW

Jordan Peele looks to outer space, Tom Cruise flies again in "Top Gun: Maverick," Dakota Johnson meets Jane Austen, and more.



By Richard Brody
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Illustration by Diego Mallo

The blockbuster season is, as usual, filled with fantasy franchise films, such as the sequels **"Jurassic World Dominion"** (June 10) and **"Thor: Love and Thunder"** (July 8), and the "Toy Story" spinoff **"Lightyear"** (June 17), but its more visionary offerings also spotlight original stories, including Jordan Peele's horror drama, **"Nope"** (July 22), starring Daniel Kaluuya, Keke Palmer, and Steven Yeun, about a Black-run horse farm in Northern California that's invaded by space aliens. In David Cronenberg's **"Crimes of the Future"** (June 3), starring Viggo Mortensen, Léa Seydoux, and Kristen Stewart, accelerated evolution drastically transforms the

human species. In the Afrofuturist musical **"Neptune Frost"** (June 3), directed by Saul Williams and Anisia Uzeyman, a coltan miner (Bertrand Ninteretse) and an intersex hacker (Cheryl Isheja and Elvis Ngabo) unite against a repressive regime. Katie Aselton's comedy **"Mack & Rita"** (August 12) stars Elizabeth Lail as a young woman who is struck by lightning and turns into a senior citizen (Diane Keaton).

Realist drama, too, takes many forms this summer, including the high-speed action of the long-awaited sequel **"Top Gun: Maverick"** (May 27), directed by Joseph Kosinski; Tom Cruise returns as an ace pilot who, this time around, volunteers to train fliers for a secret mission, and Val Kilmer reprises his role as Iceman. David Leitch's thriller **"Bullet Train"** (July 29), about a group of assassins who meet and compete while in transit in Japan, is also a copious star vehicle, with Sandra Bullock, Brad Pitt, Zazie Beetz, Brian Tyree Henry, and Michael Shannon, among many others. The directors Miguel Gomes and Maureen Fazendeiro set **"The Tsugua Diaries"** (May 27) on a farm in rural Portugal that serves as a pandemic bubble for a film shoot; the intimate and imaginative drama, involving the cast and crew's romantic entanglements and artistic connections, runs backward, day by day, from the end of the production to the start. In Claire Denis's turbulent melodrama **"Both Sides of the Blade"** (July 8), a Parisian ex-convict (Vincent Lindon) tries to resume his career as a soccer scout; Juliette Binoche plays his wife, a journalist whose ex is his business partner.

There's a varied array of historical dramas in the offing, starting with Terence Davies's **"Benediction"** (June 3), a wide-ranging bio-pic of the British poet Siegfried Sassoon. It follows the author in the course of fifty years, from his resistance to military service in the First World War to his death, in 1967. (Jack Lowden plays Sassoon in his youth; Peter Capaldi portrays the elderly writer.) Davies presents a poignant vision of Sassoon's romantic relationships with men in a time when homosexuality was illegal in Great Britain, as well as a tribute to Sassoon's literary achievement and a lament for the ravages of war. Baz Luhrmann's first bio-pic, **"Elvis"** (June 24), stars Austin Butler as Presley, Olivia DeJonge as Priscilla Presley, and Tom Hanks as Colonel Tom Parker. The British theatre director Carrie Cracknell's first feature, **"Persuasion"** (July 15), an adaptation of Jane Austen's last completed novel, stars Dakota Johnson as Anne Elliot, a woman from an aristocratic family in financial trouble, who reconnects with her former fiancé, the naval officer Frederick Wentworth (Cosmo Jarvis). ♦

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