

Hey, what were our personal favorite movies of the decade?

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Our personal picks for the best of the decade



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As we inch closer and closer to the end of the year, not only will we be ringing out the year, but we'll be closer out an entire decade. It's been an insane ten years in the film world, and with so many good movies to discuss, it's going to take some time for us as a site to come together to decade what were the best movies of the decade. Until then you can do one of two things. One, you can catch up on the Decade Decathlon for a comprehensive look at the past decade of film, or two, you can read what our personal favorite movies of the decade were!

As much as we may try to be as objective as possible, there's no denying that we all have our own personal likes and dislikes that influence our taste in film. So while our Best of the Decade list may be us trying to be as objective as possible about which movies delivered truly wonderful experiences, this list is for us to shed light on the movies that we loved and hold dearly. Some of these movies are critical darling and commercial successes. Others received middling reviews and bombed at the box office. But the one universal fact is that out of the thousands of movies that came out in the past 3,652 days, we each chose one movie as our favorite.

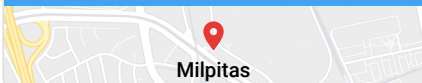
These were agonizing choices for all of us. No one answered this question after taking a brief pause. We had to think long and hard about our choices, and these are the results. We wish we could give you a Top 100 list of the best movies of the decade, and even then we would have to leave a bunch of worthy candidates off. There were several shouting matches on who would claim each movie at the Flixist offices and tough choices all around, but here are what we personally believe are our favorite movies of the decade in chronological order.

***The Social Network* (October 1st, 2010)**






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In one night, a single man with a grudge against his newly ex-girlfriend changed the landscape of how millions interact on a daily basis. Amidst explosive growth littered with lawsuits and not one, but two Armie Hammers, the Hollywood story of Facebook's creation and maturation (used loosely, given its current climate) struck at a time when infatuation with social media was hitting its stride. Add in Aaron Sorkin's storytelling with David Fincher's directorship mixed with Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross' masterful score creation, and *Social Network* deserves the top spot as the Film of the Decade.

Think about how ingrained Facebook has been in nearly everyone's life since it's inception in 2004. It's exclusivity to colleges spread like wildfire, eventually opening to anyone from teenagers to aunts who like their own posts every single time. Even those who have stood fast in their resolve not to join still know exactly what it is when someone mentions the social site. Facebook opened the door to the likes of Twitter and Instagram, for better or for worse. The constant evolution has kept it relevant for the past 15 years, something other sites (looking at you, MySpace) couldn't or wouldn't do.

The movie lends itself to a non-linear way of telling the story, flipping from multiple depositions to past events that led to a brilliant and disdainful Mark Zuckerberg (played wonderfully by Jesse Eisenberg) to create a site in a simple act of revenge towards his ex. With the help of a tweaked idea that may or may not (but definitely was) stolen and a best friend with an open bank account, Zuckerberg had free reign to light the world on fire. At some point, we've all dreamed of what it would be like to have one big, fantastic idea that would change the world. The reach amassed by Facebook drew interest to its origin story, and the performances from its cast, its writers, its directors, and its composers forged a story worthy of being called great. — *Nick Hershey*

***Fast Five* (August 29, 2011)**



It's about the family. At least, it was starting with the fifth iteration of the venerable *Fast & Furious* action series. It isn't a film franchise that really had my attention until this 2011 release, which defined the series moving on forward. The first four films were disparate, getting close to direct-to-DVD territory with each successive film. The first was a standard action thriller about muscle cars, street racing, and petty crime, the second was a cheesy, terrible action sequel, the third being a strange spin-off (with an iconic name), and the fourth being a pseudo-reunion for the first movie.

The fifth movie is... all of the above—plus, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson.

Characters from the first four movies all rounded back to return for *Fast Five*, and with each character having a specific role in this team, the *Fast* franchise had accidentally created a master ensemble cast. Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, and crew were no longer stealing DVD players—they were traveling around the world and pulling off elaborate heists. It is here where the *Fast* franchise becomes entirely driven by set-pieces, mostly for the better. From driving a car off a bridge to pulling a giant safe by chains through the streets of Rio de Janeiro, this film's ridiculous yet practical stunts is a reminder of why we go to the movies.

That's movie magic, baby. And don't you dare call it "dumb "action," because while these scenarios might be improbable, that spits in the face of all of the precise work done by the excellent stunt coordinators and performers. Don't get me wrong, it's an absurd movie, with wonky physics and a constantly sweaty and glistening Dwayne Johnson. But in terms of setting a precedent with action blockbusters, *Fast Five* is not to be ignored.

Family! -- *Chris Compendio*

***The Help* (August 10, 2011)**

Change begins with a whisper.

the Help



I had never fully known the true story behind *The Help*, a film that was actually based on a book of the same name, until I saw it in theaters. The trailer showed off a stellar cast giving us a look into the lives of African American women who looked after wealthy white families' kids or just took care of the families in general. They were "The Help" or servants if you will, and were treated as less than a person. The kids often came to care for these women far more than their own parents who often ignored them entirely and left the nurturing and caring to these women. When one of these characters, Skeeter, a journalist played by the talented and charming Emma Stone, comes home to find the woman who raised her is gone, she wants to find out why. Not only does this lead her on a journey to find out the truth about these women's lives, it also leads to a scandalous story with some of her friends as key players. What's the kicker here? These women are not allowed to use the same bathroom as the family. In some cases, they have an outhouse or in others, they actually build a separate one just for "The Help". It's no wonder this film won so many Oscars, simply not just for its story but for the actors' amazing performances.

Skeeter begins interviewing the woman for her story under the guise of needing advice for her column on cleaning and homemaking tips. The true stars of *The Help* would be not only Emma Stone but the talented Viola Davis and Octavia Spencer. There are so many memorable scenes in this film beyond the heart of the true story, mine being "Minny's Chocolate Cake". You can watch it on YouTube for a good laugh if you don't want to sit through the entire film, but I suggest you do. I honestly had tears in my eyes during many parts of this film, which proved just how well done it was.

What makes this film the best of the decade for me was that it told a story we needed to hear much like *Hidden Figures*. It didn't sugar coat anything. It was real and we became connected with these characters. It taught us to see these women as people, not women of color, something that still rings true today. If you don't cry by the end of the film, then you must have a heart of stone. I highly recommend you watch this film or at least read the book. Trust me, it's a film that will live on for generations to come with a message that continues to be an important one. -- Tarah Bleier



There's a sliver of my being that believes that, if it weren't for *Drive*, we wouldn't have *Stranger Things*. Netflix's breakaway hit, dripping with '80s nostalgia, is at the forefront of the retro-kitsch revival. Major franchise shifts like *Thor: Ragnarok* and *Bumblebee* towards heavy metal album art and Spielbergian childhood stories all call back to the Reagan years at the box office, while films like *It Follows* supplant their atmospheric cinematography with synthesizer-heavy scores, reminiscent of '80s classics like Tangerine Dream's soundtrack for *Thief* (1981) or Brad Fiedel's haunting, utterly iconic work on the original *Terminator* (1984). The '80s had been an era largely mocked and left to linger in our memories as a time of big hair, the rich getting richer, and boxy suits. In 2011, *Drive* made the '80s seem cool.

In its execution, Danish filmmaker Nicolas Winding Refn's 2011 crime film resembles the stark and dreary later-day noir films of the '60s, with the Driver, our unnamed and *very handsome* lead played by Ryan Gosling, resembling more the silent, suave hitman protagonist of Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Samourai* (1967) or Lee Marvin's relentless revenge streak in *Point Blank* (1967). But the genius of *Drive* is its merging of such contrary, distinct cinematic flavors.

You have the synthesizer score and stylized font that recall the '80s, the extreme ultra-violence of turn-of-the-century films of the European Extreme movement (like Gaspar Noe's *Irreversible*), and the brooding criminal leads of revisionist film noir all wrapped up in a sleek Hollywood production. A lot of people can point to *Drive* as auteur filmmaker Refn "selling out" by going to America to make a big movie. I see it as him bringing his brand of madness stateside. --*Sam van der Meer*

The Avengers (May 4, 2012)



Marvel's *The Avengers* was a cultural moment. Everyone saw this movie. Even if they hadn't watched all (or any) of the prior films in the franchise, they saw this movie. Many of us saw it multiple times in theaters (four times for me). It obliterated box office records. It dominated the pop culture conversation for weeks. It was brilliantly written, directed, and acted. It was fun, thrilling, and a tiny bit heart-breaking. Everything you could want in a superhero movie.

The Avengers is a wildly entertaining film, but its legacy goes far beyond that. This is the movie that defined what we now call the Marvel Cinematic Universe. If this movie had failed, the MCU would not exist. We wouldn't see nearly every other major movie studio attempt to make their own cinematic universe. *The Avengers* fundamentally changed how we view storytelling. We care about canon. We want every book, movie, comic, or TV show to be relevant to a larger narrative. We want stories that are massive in scope and scale, but that have smaller stories contained within them. We like to see every character have a place, a purpose, and an arc. It's difficult to overstate how impactful this movie has been on our culture. It will influence creators and artists for decades to come.

And it's done wonders for shawarma sales. -- *Jordan Bracken*

***The Act of Killing* (November 1, 2012)**



Joshua Oppenheimer released two masterpieces of non-fiction film this decade: *The Act of Killing* (2012) and *The Look of Silence* (2014). The two documentaries can be viewed as companion pieces that explore the fallout of the Indonesian genocide. Lasting from 1965-1966, at least 500,000 communists, communist sympathizers, leftists, and ethnic minorities were murdered. The perpetrators of the mass killings assumed power and were never held accountable for their crimes. *The Look of Silence* is about the genocide from the POV of the victims; *The Act of Killing* is about the genocide from the POV of the murderers. The titles convey the power dynamic: the killers act, the victims can only look on quietly.

The Act of Killing follows Anwar Congo, one of the death squad members responsible for killing at least 1,000 people. He demonstrates his methods with a smile; he even dances the Cha Cha on a killing floor. Oppenheimer asks Congo to recreate his experiences as a death squad member on film. Congo's absurd, surreal work resembles musicals, westerns, and gangster pictures, revealing the insidious ways that people insert their personal narratives into familiar, celebratory stories about power and glory. No one is the bad guy in their own movie, at least not initially.

Numerous publications have paired *The Act of Killing* and *The Look of Silence* in their Best of the Decade lists, which makes sense. The two films deserve to be seen together. I'm listing *The Act of Killing* since it was the first and more formally audacious of the two, but you owe it to yourself to watch both films. These instant classics were chilling several years ago, and they are even more chilling given the state of the world now. -- Hubert Vigilla

***The Raid 2: Berandal* (January 21, 2014)**



Having spent my formative years in high school watching Kung Fu films, I've grown to love hand-to-hand combat in films. While most Hollywood films leave me incredibly disappointed, it's typically indie or foreign films that pick up the slack. Casting actors that actually have training in martial arts, it's majestic watching them fight it out on screen with intense choreography and heightened stakes. There's nothing like watching the underdog take out some big bad guy.

While maybe not paced as well as its predecessor, the fight scenes here are some of the best ever committed to film. With everyone involved bringing their A-game, each action sequence ramps up in intensity until we get to the famous car chase scene. The film makers weren't given clearance to shoot on the Indonesian streets, so they simply went ahead and did it anyway. The end result is a moment where you can see pedestrians swerving in agony away from a speeding car where highly trained martial artists are throwing fists at each other. Camera guys are even hanging off the side of the vehicle and passing the camera around!

Maybe the plotline isn't revolutionary, but *The Raid 2* is some of the finest Kung Fu action you're ever to see. Anyone with an interest in these films owes it to themselves to watch. -- *Peter Glagowski*

Captain America: The Winter Soldier (April 4, 2014)



I've always been a comic book movie fanboy. I was first introduced to them by Tim Burton's *Batman* and fell in love from then on. Not all of them are winners I grant you, but when Marvel came along with the MCU I was ecstatic. It began with Iron Man and moved forward to the big team-up of *The Avengers*. I thought that that was as high as they would fly with these movies and the last time I'd feel that kind of excitement at watching the MCU. I was wrong. Not only was I wrong but it was topped in the unexpected form of *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*.

I knew the basic story of the comic but didn't know how it would be adapted. The movie took on the big themes of security versus freedom and delivered one of the biggest twists in the MCU. The twist felt organic and changed the landscape for not only this movie but every movie going forward and the Marvel TV shows. Captain America was finally given a chance to shine more so than in the previous movies and show a version of his fighting that was closer to the comics. It has arguably been topped since, but at the time no other Marvel movie had better action and fight scenes. They felt visceral and despite some of the editing were primarily done in-camera. The villain also felt like the terminator as he barreled his way towards his targets and seemed just as unstoppable. The action along with the story makes this one of Marvel's best and a movie experience I won't forget for a long time. -- *John Morey*

***Mad Max: Fury Road* (May 15, 2015)**



I'm not sure I could offer up better praise for *Mad Max: Fury Road* than to say that *Skyfall* came out this decade. You see, I'm a massive Bond fan and *Skyfall* is peak Bond. It's not just peak Bond, it's one of the best films of the decade beautifully shot by Roger Deakins and lovingly directed by Sam Mendes. So in order for *Fury Road* to be my favorite film of the last ten years it had to do something incredibly special: perfection.

Fury Road is a perfect film in almost every way. This doesn't just refer to George Miller's groundbreaking (or maybe ground-reaffirming) direction, his incredible trust in the audience's intelligence, or the movie's stunning soundtrack and world building. It also applies to its place in the general zeitgeist. It heralded the #MeToo movement, smacking a female lead into a movie named after the male lead. It rebuffed the digitized comic book movie for massive set pieces all done for real. It reaffirmed that strong direction and story can deliver massive box offices as much as massive action set pieces. *Fury Road* wasn't just a

technically perfect film it was the perfect film to land when it did. Now, if only we could get some more. -
- Matthew Razak

***Kubo and the Two Strings* (August 19, 2016)**



I haven't seen *Kubo and the Two Strings* since it originally released, but it managed to do something that so few films could ever do; it stuck with me ever since I saw it. As someone who watches an obscene amount of movies on a monthly basis, it's very hard for a movie to stand out in my mind unless it's really something special. I've only seen *Kubo and the Two Strings* twice in my life, but each time was simply magical not only from a technical perspective, but from a narrative one as well.

Our story feels like an old folktale with Kubo traveling with his monkey and beetle companion to stop the Moon King from stealing Kubo's remaining eye. The movie frames itself around the power of stories and imagination, culminating in using the power of stories to change the wicked Moon King into a benevolent and kind being. Outside of its pleasant allegories, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Laika's wonderful technical acumen. Like all of their productions, *Kubo* is animated via stop-motion figures, but the amount of detail in each scene, whether it be from the setting, the character movements, the action, or the movie's iconic giant skeleton animated in real-time, is jaw-dropping. It's still a marvel to watch to this day, offering up thrills, excitement, and a powerful story that will leave you with a wistful smile on your face when all's said and done. -- Jesse Lab

***Kimi no na wa / Your Name* (October 21, 2016)**



Between *La La Land* and *Manchester By The Sea*, it wasn't easy to narrow down my favourite films of the decade. But Makoto Shinkai's anime *Your Name* holds a special place in my heart. It was such an ordinary day when I first saw it, yet it's become one of the most memorable of the past few years. The story itself is of a girl in rural Itomori named Mitsuha, and a boy in modern Tokyo named Taki. Although they'd never met, the two become inextricably, spiritually linked during a natural phenomenon. Their story unfolds as they begin to understand what they're experiencing, and it guides them as they go through life. Although poles apart, they begin to understand the power of ancient rituals and a spiritual undercurrent which flows through everything and ultimately decides their fates: it's truly a paradigm-shifting movie.

The film was only out for a limited release but somehow a group of us were able to get last-minute tickets and speed down the motorway to see it. It was beautifully shot and executed from the start, only building throughout the run-time, before delivering the most heart-wrenching, cathartic ending I'd ever experienced. I distinctly remember reading reviews of the film as we drove home, one describing it as leaving viewers in a 'heady reverie' long after the credits had rolled. That's remained with me because it was so precise -- so accurately describing a film that I've struggled to put into words since. -- *Sian Francis-Cox*



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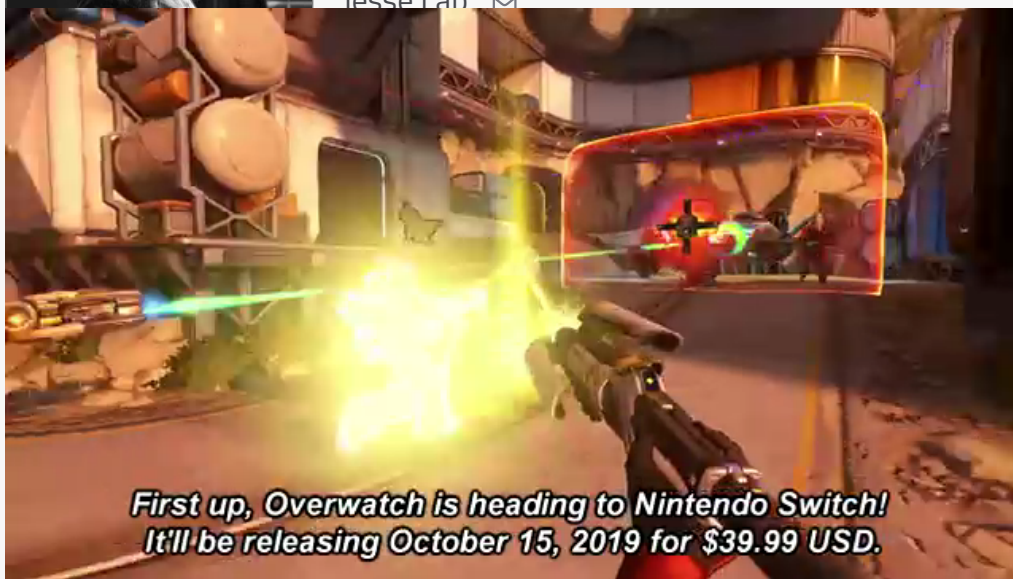
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Parasite wins Best Ensemble Cast at the Screen Actors Guild Awards

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I don't have many regrets, but if I had one that's been kicking me for the past few months, it would be my review for *Parasite*. When I first saw the movie I enjoyed it, but didn't love it like most other critics, but the longer I've spent away from

the movie, the more and more I enjoy it. *Parasite* is a brilliant satire and the fact that it's been able to earn heaps of critical praise despite a very real language barrier is incredibly impressive. Consider this me formally saying that my opinion has changed on it and that now I'm a Bong fan for life. After all, it's not often that a foreign language picture is able to make history in the way that *Parasite* is currently doing.

Adding on to its historical importance, Bong Joon-Ho's thriller made history last night at the Screen Actor's Guild Awards not once, but twice. First, *Parasite* has become the first foreign language feature to be nominated for its most prized award, Best Ensemble Cast. Not only that, but *Parasite* was able to take that award, becoming not only the first South Korean movie to win a SAG award, but also the first foreign language movie ever to win the Best Ensemble Cast in the award's 26 year history. And like a great dad, Bong Joon-Ho sat in the crowd with recording his cast accept the award with a smile beaming across his face.

