

Keepers From a Crowded Cannes

Reputations are made and broken at the legendary film fest, where these upcoming releases distinguished themselves



● ANATOMY OF A FALL

Distributor: Neon

One of seven women filmmakers in competition, Justine Triet has taken a familiar genre (the courtroom drama) and turned it on its head. A frustrated writer dies of suspicious causes, leaving behind clues that implicate his wife (Sandra Hüller). But it's the death of the marriage, not the husband, that preoccupies Triet, so that it often feels as if the movie is eavesdropping on moments too intimate to be shared. Can any couple's relationship withstand the scrutiny this one is subjected to, as old fights and infidelities are dragged into the open? — *Peter Debruge*



● THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Distributor: N/A

A mysterious malady is sweeping France, unlocking something at a genetic level that causes people to transform into hybrid creatures. The mutations are slow and somewhat unpredictable: One person might sprout feathers and watch their arms become wings, while another grows scales and winds up slithering like a snake. Thomas Cailley hasn't made a traditional genre movie so much as a coming-of-age story with a creature-feature twist — picture a moody French "Teen Wolf," minus the laughs, in which our imaginations run wild. — *P.D.*



● CLUB ZERO

Distributor: N/A

The director, Jessica Hausner, channels some combination of Kubrick and Cronenberg and "Village of the Damned" and the Todd Haynes of "Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story" in this gripping and highly provocative thriller. Miss Markus (Mia Wasikowska), the nutrition teacher at an elite British boarding school, begins to initiate her students into the ways of "conscious eating." The movie is about a new kind of mentality: people looking for rituals of absolute virtue, for extreme methods to counteract their alienation and anxiety. — *Owen Gleiberman*



● THE DELINQUENTS

Distributor: Mubi

Over the course of its indefinitely strange three hours, Rodrigo Moreno's existential heist movie may well persuade you that the crazy thing is not to break from your normal routine. The crazy thing is to ever go back. As the film's shaggy, increasingly offbeat second half unfolds, events start to repeat with minor variations, and characters begin to echo each other's gestures and thoughts. Wherever he might be expected to zig, Moreno zags. Like its characters, the movie eschews the safe old daily grind in favor of the perilous unknown. — *Jessica Kiang*



● MAY DECEMBER

Distributor: Netflix

Todd Haynes' layered and endlessly fascinating movie focuses on the blurring of the lines between a Hollywood star (Natalie Portman) and her true-crime character (Julianne Moore), who was caught at the age of 36 in a sexual relationship with a seventh grader. The movie wants to know: Can playing this Mary Kay Letourneau-like tabloid sensation really answer what makes such a woman tick? As Portman's character goes about her research, trying to get into her subject's skin, what

follows isn't merely a captivating deconstruction of an actor's process. Everyone here is performing at all times. Lest we forget, on a meta level, Moore is also an actor playing a woman found guilty of corrupting a minor, which raises intriguing questions about reality and representation (à la "Kate Plays Christine"). Haynes' deep-as-you-want-to-go rabbit-hole drama offers a thorough dive into the psychology of everyone involved, not least those who'd be drawn to play such a role. — *P.D.*



• THE ZONE OF INTEREST

Distributor: A24

Jonathan Glazer's Holocaust drama is a remarkable film — chilling, profound and immersive. The central character, Rudolf Höss (Christian Freidel), is a German SS officer. We observe him and his family in long takes at their home, a roomy two-story structure that feels like the quintessence of bourgeois privilege. As we learn, though, the house is just on the other side of the wall from Auschwitz, the Nazi concentration camp in Poland. Höss is the comman-

dant. The film's haunting subject is the compartmentalization of evil. Much of what transpires is domestic and banal, yet what's going on at that camp is never quite invisible. We hear the muffled pop-popping of gun shots and a quiet roar that never goes away. (It's the sound of the fire from the ovens.) Sandra Hüller plays Höss' wife, who's oblivious to everything outside her home, until her lifestyle is threatened, at which point she flares up with a rage worthy of Carmela Soprano. —O.G.



• HOW TO HAVE SEX

Distributor: Mubi

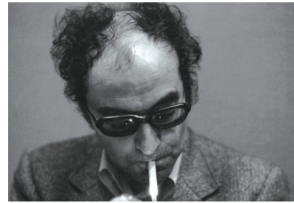
Here is a film for every 16-year-old still finding their real identity between their brash friend-squad front and the most diminishing taunts of their self-image, and for every older person who remembers that, and hasn't the heart to tell them it may be an ongoing search. As for that teasing title, it's both ironic and instructive. Molly Manning Walker's debut lays out the minefield of sexual education and consent for a post-#MeToo generation, with a precision to its ambiguities that will draw gasps from its characters' contemporaries and elders alike. —G.L.



• KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON

Distributor: Apple Studios

Overlong but never dull, Martin Scorsese's compelling retelling of an audacious 1920s conspiracy to steal resources from the Osage people shifts its focus from being a white-savior detective yarn to how the white culprits plotted and carried out their murders. It's classic Scorsese to present this case from the criminals' perspective, reducing most of the Osage to glorified extras. Leonardo DiCaprio has never gone this far to the dark side, daring us to follow as his character bumbles his way through a stone-cold "Gaslight"-style plot to steal his wife's fortune. —P.D.



• GODARD PAR GODARD

Distributor: N/A

Jean-Luc Godard was an outsider who was also an insider, a poet of cinema who made himself a celebrity. All that contradiction is on full luscious display in Florence Platarets' hourlong documentary, which draws together an extraordinary array of clips: on-the-set footage of Godard shooting his '60s classics, plus a cornucopia of television interviews in which he presents himself in that debonair austere way. The film invites us to look back, with fond fascination, on all the cinema Godard gave us, and on who he was. —O.G.



• THE GOLDMAN CASE

Distributor: N/A

Opening the Directors' Fortnight on an intelligent but accessibly mainstream note, Cédric Kahn's restrained but electrifying dramatization of a trial that divided France in 1976 offers a rigorous reworking of the legal drama template, sure to be defined by Arieh Worthalter's near-feral lead performance as political activist Pierre Goldman. Following a brief prologue in lawyers' chambers, the action never leaves the tense confines of the court, sticking to a factual record that nonetheless permits momentary, Hollywood-style catharsis. —Guy Lodge



• PERFECT DAYS

Distributor: Neon

The solitary life of a soft-spoken Tokyo toilet cleaner (Kōji Yakusho) is built around the things that make him happy and the work that keeps him solvent. Wim Wenders' portrait finds its maker in bracing, uncomplicated form: It hasn't the ecstatic spiritualist philosophy of "Wings of Desire" or the penetrating poetry of human and cultural desolation that marked "Paris, Texas." But the new film's humane, hopeful embrace of everyday blessings is enough to make it Wenders' freshest and most art-house-friendly fiction feature in close to 30 years. —G.L.



• THE POT-AU-FEU

Distributor: N/A

Thirty years after "The Scent of Green Papaya," French-Vietnamese director Tran Anh Hung has returned to the cinematic kitchen for a slab of outright gastronomic spectacle on the level of "Babette's Feast" or "Like Water for Chocolate." Food is the subject, the objective and the driving motor of this scantily plotted but captivating love story set almost entirely within a French gourmet chateau in the late 19th century. The two leads, played by Juliette Binoche and Benoît Magimel, are in love with each other, but perhaps in love with food a bit more. —G.L.