

Get ready for some great escapism in cinemas this April

By  Daniel Derksen

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Here's what to expect at the cinema this April.



Image supplied

5 April

Fans of the original 1976 film will finally learn how Damien came into existence in *The First Omen*.

An American woman sent to work at a church in Rome who uncovers a sinister conspiracy to bring about the birth of an Antichrist. This supernatural horror is directed by Arkasha Stevenson, and written by Stevenson, Tim Smith and Keith Thomas, from a story by Ben Jacoby.

It's the prequel to *The Omen* (1976).

"I'm really proud of *The First Omen* because I think we take a lot of big swings when it comes to horror," says director/co-screenwriter Arkasha Stevenson. "And I do think that a lot of those are particular to the female experience and the female perspective, and the fact that we had a whole film production who was in support of that and ready to take that big jump with

me is a really cool feeling.”

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When writer/director/producer Dev Patel was imagining the story of *Monkey Man*, little could he fathom that a tale inspired by childhood stories would become his directorial debut.

He also stars in the film as Kid, an anonymous young man working in an underground fight club, sets out to exact revenge against a group of corrupt leaders, who are responsible for his mother’s death and also taking advantage of the poor and powerless people.

This action-thriller is directed by Patel, from a screenplay he co-wrote with Paul Angunawela and John Collee.

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If there’s one film you cannot miss, it’s the heartwarming and inspiring *Ordinary Angels*. A hairdresser rallies the community to help a widowed father save the life of his critically ill young daughter after Louisville is hit by a major snowstorm. The faith-based drama is directed by Jon Gunn and written by Meg Tilly and Kelly Fremon Craig, it is based on

true events that transpired during the 1994 North American cold wave.

“As I was looking at the true story and looking at the real people, I felt like there was a responsibility and an obligation to tell their story in a way that honored their life,” says director Jon Gunn. “My vision was to share—with honesty and integrity—the truth and the challenges and the pain of that true story in a way that was optimistic and uplifting.”

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12 April

From filmmaker Alex Garland comes *Civil War*, a journey across a dystopian future America, following a team of military-embedded journalists as they race against time to reach DC before rebel factions descend upon the White House.

Garland's dystopian-action film imagines, with both grounded intimacy and at times terrifying scale, the very human consequences of the loss of this shared idea of a nation. In this America, when the fabric of society has been torn apart, there is only the individual, unsparing drive to survive.

“I wrote it out of a mixture of anger and anxiety, and then you go about the long process of making the film,” Garland says.

“Whatever sense of frustration I had while originally writing the script, it did not diminish. It grew. I grew up in the post-hippie-punk era, and there's a part of me that just wants to do something subversive. The reason why I feel motivated to do it is because I don't think the dangers, the fears, are paranoid. Paranoia implies that you are scared of something you should not be scared of.”

Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire is a supernatural comedy film directed by Gil Kenan from a screenplay he co-wrote with Jason Reitman. It is the sequel to *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* (2021) and the fifth film in the Ghostbusters franchise.

Years after averting a dimensional crossrip in Summerville, Oklahoma, the veteran Ghostbusters must join forces with their new recruits to save the world in New York City from a powerful death-chilling adversary who seeks to build a spectral army.

Back To Black is a biographical drama film based on the life of British singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse, played by Marisa Abela. It delves into the life and career of Amy Winehouse, beginning with her early days in the early 2000's as a North London jazz musician and culminating in her rise to fame as a Grammy-winning singer.

This biographical drama is based on the life of British singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse. Directed by Sam Taylor-Johnson and written by Matt Greenhalgh.

Mother's Instinct is a psychological thriller film directed by Benoît Delhomme in his directorial debut. It stars Jessica Chastain and Anne Hathaway as housewives who are best friends and neighbours who seem to have it all. However, when a tragic accident shatters the harmony of their lives, guilt, suspicion and paranoia begin to unravel their sisterly bond.

The film is a remake of Olivier Masset-Depasse's 2018 French film, which itself is an adaptation of the 2012 novel *Mothers' Instinct* (*Derrière la haine*) by Barbara Abel.

19 April

Sleeping Dogs is an American crime mystery thriller film directed by Adam Cooper in his feature-length directorial debut starring Russell Crowe as a former homicide detective suffering from memory loss and tries to solve a brutal murder that he can't recall.

As he pieces together evidence from a decade-old investigation, he soon uncovers a sinister web of buried secrets tied to his forgotten past. It is based on the E.O. Chirovici novel *The Book of Mirrors* (2017) which was adapted by Adam Cooper and Bill Collage.

Abigail is a monster horror film based on and a reimagining of the 1936 Universal Classic Monsters film *Dracula's Daughter*. A group of kidnappers who capture and must watch over Abigail, the daughter of the most powerful underworld

figure for the \$50 million ransom, until they get more than what they bargain for when Abigail reveals her true nature as a vampire child, hunting them down one by one.

It is directed by Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett from a screenplay written by Stephen Shields and Guy Busick.

From the world-renowned animation studio, that brought us *Howl's Moving Castle* and *Spirited Away*, Studio Ghibli brings us *The Boy And The Heron*, which won the 96th Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.

Mahito, a young 12-year-old boy, struggles to settle in a new town after his mother's death. However, when a talking heron informs Mahito that his mother is still alive, he enters an abandoned tower in search of her, which takes him to another world. Japanese animated fantasy written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki.

26 April

In the action-thriller *Boy Kills World*, a deaf man named Boy escapes to the jungle when his family is killed. He is trained by a mysterious mentor to enact vengeance on the murderers. Directed by Moritz Mohr in his feature directorial debut, from a screenplay by Tyler Burton Smith and Arend Remmers, and a story by Remmers and Mohr.

The film stars Bill Skarsgård, Jessica Rothe, Michelle Dockery, Famke Janssen, Sharlto Copley, Brett Gelman, Isaiah

Mustafa and Andrew Koji. Filming took place in South Africa.

In the animated comedy *10 Lives*, Dr Rose Everhart comes across a stray kitten on the road, she decides to take him home after taking him to an animal shelter. They soon develop a close bond but one day, Beckett's comes precariously close to losing his ninth life.

The Fall Guy is an action comedy loosely based on the 1980s TV series about stunt performers and stars Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt, with Winston Duke, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Hannah Waddingham, and Stephanie Hsu in supporting roles.

In the film, Colt Seavers, a battered and past-his-prime action-choreographer finds himself working on a film set with Tom Ryder, a famous actor for whom he had doubled long ago. When Tom goes missing and the film, which is being directed by debutant Jody Moreno (Colt's ex-girlfriend) is in danger of being shut down, Colt volunteers to find Tom and save Jody's debut film.

This action-comedy is directed by David Leitch and written by Drew Pearce.

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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

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