

22 Movies And TV Shows That Will Fire Up This Year's South By Southwest

Pee-wee Herman, "Star Wars" and more are invading Texas this week.

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SXSW

At this year's South by Southwest film festival, you'll spot Pee-wee Herman, Han Solo, and Key and Peele's missing cat. Look a little closer, and there are LSD dealers, the "Wizard of Oz" slippers, an HBO series and hip-hop pioneers among the motley crew descending upon Austin, Texas, for the 10-day conference that kicks off Friday.

Founded in 1986, South by Southwest brings together tech, music and movie lovers for premieres from both established and emerging media fixtures. (Hanson, Fred Armisen, John Mayer and Foursquare all got their start at the festival.) The Huffington Post will be on hand to cover the [film portion](#), which, in addition to

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several splashy world premieres, will feature screenings of hits from other festivals, including “[Midnight Special](#),” “[Hardcore Henry](#),” “[Demolition](#)” and “[Sing Street](#).”

There’s no way to see it all, but we’ll do our best to bring you the best SXSW buzz over the next several days. For now, here’s a handful of movies that seem likely to distract from the mounds of Texas barbecue that will be consumed.

“Keanu”



Warner Bros.

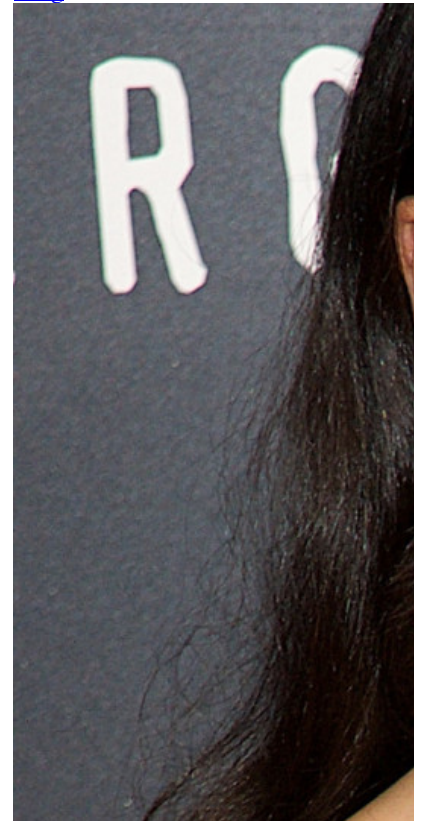
Directed by Peter Atencio • Written by Jordan Peele and Alex Rubens

Starring Keegan-Michael Key, Jordan Peele, Method Man, Gabrielle Union, Will Forte, Nia Long, Jason Mitchell and Keanu Reeves (duh)

What to expect: All hail the holy comedy gods: SXSW [added](#) “Keanu” to its lineup this week, and that alone is worth the airfare. The version that will screen is technically a “work-in-progress” cut, but so was “Trainwreck” when it played there last year. In case you haven’t already watched the [trailer](#) a dozen times, “Keanu” is about two pals who pose as drug dealers in an attempt to retrieve their beloved titular cat.

“Secrets of The Force Awakens: A Cinematic Journey”

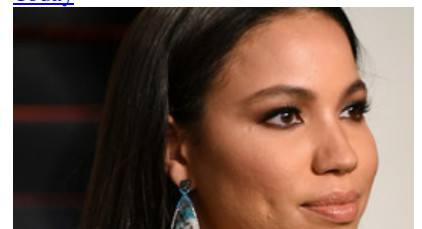
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Walt Disney Studios

What to expect: With another late blessing to the lineup, SXSW-ers will get an early look at the documentary included on the forthcoming “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” DVD/Blu-ray. The hourlong, Disney-sanctioned feature on the making of our latest other-galactic behemoth will premiere on Monday, the same afternoon that J.J. Abrams is scheduled to [speak on a panel](#) alongside “The Jinx” director Andrew Jarecki.

“Beware the Slenderman”



SXSW

Directed by Irene Taylor Brodsky

What to expect: If you aren’t familiar with 2014’s bizarre Slenderman murders — in which two teen girls stabbed their friend 19 times at the behest of a mysterious online fictional character — you should read this harrowing [New York magazine story](#) immediately. After you do, your interest in this documentary about the



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incident and the digital underbelly it exposed will skyrocket.

“Accidental Courtesy: Daryl Davis, Race & America”



SXSW

Directed by Matt Ornstein

What to expect: Google Daryl Davis, and you’ll learn that he has starred in Zora Neale Hurston plays and tickled the ivories with Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis. This documentary shows another side of Davis’ talents: his ([effective](#)) efforts to tackle racism via amicable dialogue with Ku Klux Klan members.

“Don’t Think Twice”



SXSW

Written and directed by Mike Birbiglia

Starring Keegan-Michael Key, Gillian Jacobs, Mike Birbiglia, Kate Micucci, Tami Sagher, Chris Gethard

What to expect: In his directorial follow-up to “Sleepwalk with Me,” Mike Birbiglia returns to the world of emotionally bruised comedians. Here, he profiles an improv group splintered by the loss of its home theater and the sudden success of one member.

“Everybody Wants Some”



SXSW

Written and directed by Richard Linklater

Starring Will Brittain, Zoey Deutch, Ryan Guzman, Tyler Hoechlin, Blake Jenner, Glen Powell and Wyatt Russell

What to expect: Richard Linklater’s spiritual sequel to “Dazed and Confused,” this rowdy comedy tracks a group of baseball bros as they adjust to college life in the 1980s.

“Orange Sunshine”



SXSW

Directed by William A. Kirkley

What to expect: In the late 1960s and early '70s, the Brotherhood of Eternal Love — also known as the Hippy Mafia — wanted the world to become one big acid trip. Members lived on a California commune, distributed LSD and helped Timothy Leary evade the law. Their psychedelic revolution came to an end with a 1972 raid, but the group left lasting impressions on today's drug trade, and now their story is the subject of a new movie from the director of “Excavating Taylor Mead.”

“My Blind Brother”



SXSW

Written and directed by Sophie Goodhart

Starring Adam Scott, Nick Kroll, Jenny Slate, Zoe Kazan and Charlie Hewson

What to expect: Two siblings — one an accomplished blind athlete, the other his resentful brother — compete over the same love interest in this comedy based on a short film that played at the Cannes Film Festival in 2003.

“Before the Sun Explodes”



SXSW

Directed by Debra Eisenstadt • Written by Debra Eisenstadt and Zeke Farrow

Starring Bill Dawes, Sarah Butler, Christine Woods and Michael Rivk

What to expect: What do we do when something — or someone — threatens to provide the escape we’ve avoided seeking? Debra Eisenstadt poses that question in her new movie, which revolves around a flailing stand-up comic whose rocky marriage is called into question in the wake of a surreal encounter with an alluring younger woman. Keep this movie on your radar — it’s great.

“Vice Principals” (HBO series)



SXSW

Starring Danny McBride, Walton Goggins, Kimberly Hébert Gregory, Georgia King and Busy Philipps

What to expect: HBO greenlighted two seasons of this forthcoming dark comedy about two high school vice principals sparring to become head honcho. Imagine Boyd Crowder going up against Kenny Powers. You'll witness it for yourself when the show airs in July.

“The Art of Organized Noize”



SXSW

Directed by Quincy “QD3” Jones

What to expect: Hip-hop production company Organized Noize gave us TLC’s “Waterfalls,” Outkast’s “So Fresh, So Clean” and Goodie Mob’s “They Don’t Dance

No Mo,” among other hits. Now the group’s influence is the subject of a documentary made by the producer of the well-received Lil Wayne doc “The Carter.”

“Tony Robbins: I Am Not Your Guru”



SXSW

Directed by Joe Berlinger

What to expect: Joe Berlinger’s documentaries have taken us inside the West Memphis Three, Metallica’s “St. Anger” recordings and Whitey Bulger’s criminal history. His latest promises unprecedented access to popular life coach Tony Robbins, whose mega-seminars have become wildly popular and wildly controversial.

“In a Valley of Violence”



SXSW

Written and directed by Ti West

Starring Ethan Hawke, Taissa Farmiga, James Ransone, Karen Gillan and John Travolta

What to expect: Ti West is steadily cementing a reputation as a horror maestro, having directed “The House of the Devil” and portions of the 2012 horror anthologies “V/H/S” and “The ABCs of Death.” The 1800s-set revenge Western “In a Valley of Violence” is his highest-profile gambit yet.

“Starving the Beast”



SXSW

Directed by Steve Mims

What to expect: As the cost of higher education remains a fierce topic in this year's presidential race, "Starving the Beast" challenges the fixed notions of college's value on society.

"Pee-wee's Big Holiday"



SXSW

Directed by John Lee • Written by Paul Reubens and Paul Rust

Starring Paul Reubens, Joe Manganiello, Jessica Pohly, Alia Shawkat, Stephanie Beatriz and David Arquette

What to expect: Oh, you know what to expect. It's Pee-wee Herman's first movie since 1988. He goes on vacation! You'll be able to see it on Netflix starting March 18.

"The Hollywood Shorties"



SXSW

Directed by Ryan Steven Green

What to expect: In the 1980s, the Hollywood Shorties — a basketball team made up of little people with professional acting careers — found short-lived popularity that introduced a marginalized community to the world of organized sports. Its members will see another moment in the spotlight thanks to this documentary, which charts the group’s sweet-natured success.

“Search Party” (TBS series)



SXSW

Starring Alia Shawkat, John Early, John Reynolds and Meredith Hagner

What to expect: Alia Shawkat deserves more primo roles, so let’s hope “Search Party” is worthy of Maeby Fünke’s legacy. Shawkat plays one of four self-absorbed

Brooklyn millennials (bear with us) who take it upon themselves to hunt down a missing girl from college. Things become increasingly ominous in this mystery-comedy series, which is overseen by “Wet Hot American Summer” maestro Michael Showalter and written and directed by “Fort Tilden” colleagues Sarah-Violet Bliss and Charles Rogers. It will premiere on TBS later this year.

“The Waiting”



SXSW

Directed by Kasra Farahani • Written by Mark Bianculi and Jeff Richard

Starring James Caan, Logan Miller, Keir Gilchrist, Laura Innes, Edwin Hodge and Mindy Sterling

What to expect: This intriguing premise could lead to James Caan’s best role in years. Kier Gilchrist and Logan Miller play high school kids who stage the haunting of their elderly neighbor’s home. But the boys have picked the wrong target for their cruel prank, and said neighbor isn’t about to let them get away with it.

“Preacher” (AMC series)



SXSW

Starring Dominic Cooper, Ruth Negga, Joseph Gilgun, Ian Colletti, W. Earl Brown and Lucy Griffiths

What to expect: Created by Seth Rogen, Evan Goldberg and Sam Catlin, “Preacher” is based on the comic-book series about a small-town Texas pastor who acquires supernatural powers that send him on a quest to find God. “We want fans who love the comic to get everything they want, but also get some new twists and turns,” [Goldberg said earlier this year](#). But don’t worry — vampires still lurk.

“TOWER”



SXSW

Directed by Keith Maitland

What to expect: Mass school shootings may feel like everyday occurrences now,

but in 1966, when a gunman killed 16 on a Texas campus, the nation was floored. Keith Maitland, whose movie “A Song For You: The Austin City Limits Story” will also premiere at SXSW, blends archival footage and rotoscope animation to revisit the harrowing day that once appeared to be a singular tragedy.

“The Master Cleanse”



SXSW

Written and directed by Bobby Miller

Starring Johnny Galecki, Anna Friel, Oliver Platt, Anjelica Huston, Kyle Gallner and Diana Bang

What to expect: The first big-screen starring vehicle for “Big Bang Theory” and “Roseanne” star Johnny Galecki, “The Master Cleanse” follows a lonely man who discovers his spiritual retreat aims to exorcise much more than his unspoken demons. Galecki, who originally intended merely to produce the film, has [described](#) “Cleanse” as both a “rom-com” and a “weird fantasy thriller with puppets.”

“The Slippers”



SXSW

Directed by Morgan White

What to expect: Is there a more famous costume piece than Dorothy’s ruby slippers? According to this documentary about their cultural legacy, no. MGM auctioned a pair of the shoes in 1970, and their lore has escalated ever since. This documentary explores how one girl from Kansas influenced the Hollywood memorabilia industry.

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