

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Movies That Show the Reality of Dating and Not Just a Fairytale Story

Our Friends · Friday, October 17th, 2025

### The Messy Middle Ground Between Meeting and Moving In

Recent films have started depicting relationships that include uncomfortable truths about modern dating. In *Materialists*, directed by Celine Song, a New York City matchmaker finds herself torn between someone who looks perfect on paper and an ex who complicates her life. The film explores how money and career ambitions affect romantic decisions, showing characters who calculate relationship costs beyond emotional investment. Dakota Johnson's character weighs financial stability against personal chemistry, a calculation many people make but rarely see portrayed on screen.

*The Idea of You* presents Anne Hathaway as a 40-year-old single mother dating a 24-year-old boy band member. The film addresses public scrutiny and power imbalances that come with age gaps in relationships. Rather than presenting this pairing as purely romantic, Michael Showalter's direction shows how dating someone at a different life stage creates practical problems. The mother must balance her teenage daughter's reactions, manage unwanted media attention, and deal with friends who question her choices.

### When Films Strip Away the Romance Filter

Movies released in recent years have started showing dating scenarios that feel closer to actual life experiences. Characters deal with situations like managing an ex who keeps texting while trying to date someone new, having awkward conversations about exclusivity, or figuring out boundaries in **a relationship with no strings attached**. These films replace grand gestures at airports with wacky situations or the satire of the mundane.

The characters in these movies face the same dating complications that viewers encounter. A protagonist might ghost someone after three dates because they feel overwhelmed, struggle to define what they want after a breakup, or find themselves caught between wanting commitment and fearing it. Films now show people swiping through profiles while watching TV, having mediocre first dates at chain restaurants, and dealing with the reality that sometimes relationships end not with dramatic confrontations but with gradual disinterest and unanswered messages.

### Health Crises and Rooftop Climbing

Andrew Garfield and Florence Pugh star in *We Live in Time*, which uses nonlinear storytelling to

show a couple facing a serious health crisis. The film depicts IVF treatments, cancer diagnoses, and the strain these medical realities place on relationships. Rather than showing love conquering all obstacles, the movie presents two people making difficult choices about treatment options, financial burdens, and the possibility of limited time together.

*Skywalkers: A Love Story* documents Angela Nikolau and Ivan Beerkus, who free climb skyscrapers without safety equipment. The documentary shows how their relationship develops while they scale buildings in Malaysia and other countries. Trust becomes literal when your partner holds your life in their hands hundreds of feet above ground. The film demonstrates how some couples bond through shared risk-taking behaviors that most people would consider reckless.

## Violence, Competition, and Corporate Drama

*Love Lies Bleeding* combines romance with criminal activity. Kristen Stewart and Katy O'Brian play outcasts who fall for each other and then deal with violent consequences. Rose Glass directs scenes showing how Lou's criminal family connections trap both women in dangerous situations. The film depicts love as something that can pull people into harmful circumstances they cannot escape.

Tennis serves as the backdrop for relationship dynamics in *Challengers*. Zendaya, Mike Faist, and Josh O'Connor portray three players whose romantic entanglements span thirteen years. Luca Guadagnino shows how professional competition bleeds into personal relationships. Characters use romantic connections to gain advantages in their careers, sleep with rivals to hurt former partners, and struggle to separate their athletic ambitions from their emotional needs.

The biographical film *Swiped* tells **Whitney Wolfe Herd's** story, though she stated in a CNBC interview that she neither approved nor participated in the production. The movie follows her journey creating a dating app while dealing with tech industry sexism. This disconnect between the subject and the film itself adds another layer to questions about truth in storytelling.

## Three Women in Mumbai

*All We Imagine As Light* follows three Indian women facing different relationship problems in Mumbai. One deals with an absent husband who works in another city. Another hides an interfaith romance from family and coworkers. The third faces eviction while mourning her late spouse. Payal Kapadia's film shows how housing instability, religious differences, and economic pressures shape romantic possibilities in urban India.

## Mental Health on Screen

*Turtles All the Way Down* adapts John Green's novel about a teenager with OCD attempting to date while managing intrusive thoughts. The protagonist becomes fixated on solving a billionaire's disappearance, showing how mental health conditions affect romantic relationships. The film depicts therapy sessions, medication discussions, and the exhaustion that comes from explaining your brain to someone new.

These films replace meet-cute moments with awkward app conversations, swap perfect endings for compromises and separations, and show couples dealing with money problems, health scares, and family interference. Characters make selfish choices, hurt each other unintentionally, and sometimes stay in relationships for practical rather than romantic reasons. The movies

---

acknowledge that dating involves risk assessment, boundary negotiation, and acceptance that some relationships fail despite both people trying their best.

*Photo: yanalya via Freepik.*

---

**[CLICK HERE TO DONATE IN SUPPORT OF OUR NONPROFIT COVERAGE OF ARTS AND CULTURE](#)**

This entry was posted on Friday, October 17th, 2025 at 8:37 am and is filed under [Check This Out](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.