# Wes Anderson’s latest sparks debate while Mission: Impossible thrills at Cannes



The Cannes Film Festival, which draws global attention to the year's cinematic triumphs and controversies, has recently showcased two films that have made their way to UK cinema screens nearly simultaneously. However, while both films began with much fanfare, they have elicited contrasting reactions from critics and audiences alike.

Wes Anderson's "The Phoenician Scheme," featuring an ensemble cast that includes Benicio del Toro, Tom Hanks, Scarlett Johansson, and Bill Murray, has hit the screens with an intriguing premise yet has garnered mixed reviews. Set in the 1950s, the narrative revolves around the wealthy mogul Zsa-Zsa Korda, portrayed by del Toro, who survives a series of assassination attempts while attempting to reconnect with his daughter Liesl, a novice nun played by Mia Threapleton. Observers have noted that the film indulges in Anderson's signature style — characterised by vibrant visuals and a whimsical narrative — but suffers from a lack of depth. While the film commences delightfully, adopting a humorous touch, it quickly descends into a slower and more self-indulgent pace that may alienate viewers who revel in a more cohesive story.

Critics have pointed out that, despite its rich visual aesthetics, the plot remains unengaging for significant stretches, a sentiment echoed by Time magazine, which described the performances and narrative as somewhat understated and lacking in the usual vibrant engagement associated with Anderson's earlier works. This film continues a trend that has surfaced in recent Anderson projects, notably "The French Dispatch" and "Asteroid City," where the intricate web of whimsy occasionally overshadows substance. It appears that Anderson’s approach—while still visually captivating—may be losing its charm among viewers who once adored it.

Contrastingly, the latest entry in the "Mission: Impossible" franchise, "Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning," directed by Christopher McQuarrie, has received a more mixed acclaim, primarily for its ambitious scale and breathtaking action sequences. Starring Tom Cruise as Ethan Hunt, the film plunges the audience into a race against a rogue artificial intelligence that threatens world security. With a budget exceeding $400 million, the film ambitiously attempts to tie together multiple narratives from the series' three-decade run. While some critics highlight a tendency for sluggish pacing and convoluted storytelling, others commend the film's high-octane moments, including a breathtaking aerial stunt involving a biplane, which reinforces Cruise's known commitment to perform dangerous stunts himself.

However, reviews suggest that the film, while visually spectacular, is often bogged down by unnecessary weighty dialogue that detracts from its entertainment value. Some critics have called for a more streamlined narrative that prioritises the adrenaline-fueled escapism that has been a hallmark of the franchise, reflecting on how excessive seriousness can hinder the sheer enjoyment expected from such a film.

In a notable departure, Guy Ritchie's "Fountain Of Youth" offers a refreshing tonal contrast, delivering a fun and light-hearted experience amidst the other two serious offerings. Featuring John Krasinski and Natalie Portman in lead roles, the film weaves a whimsical tale of art theft that playfully engages with themes of familial bonds and unexpected twists. By not taking itself too seriously—unlike its more ponderous counterparts—it demonstrates how levity and charm can captivate audiences and provide an alternative viewpoint amid the heavy narratives dominating the festival.

Ultimately, the Cannes showcase has underscored the divided reception of cinematic offerings in modern filmmaking, with Wes Anderson’s latest effort highlighting both the charm and challenges of maintaining an iconic style, while the "Mission: Impossible" franchise showcases the balancing act between epic spectacle and coherent narrative. Ritchie’s film serves as a reminder that sometimes, embracing levity can lead to memorable storytelling, a sentiment that resonates deeply in today’s rapidly evolving cinematic landscape. This year’s festival highlights the importance of variety in viewer experience, revealing that while some cinematic styles thrive, others may need to evolve lest they risk alienating their audience.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: 1
2. Paragraph 2: 1, 2, 4
3. Paragraph 3: 1, 2, 4
4. Paragraph 4: 3, 7
5. Paragraph 5: 6, 5
6. Paragraph 6: 1, 4, 6

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14741277/BRIAN-VINER-Cannes-Wes-Andersons-Phoenician-Scheme.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://time.com/7286400/the-phoenician-scheme-review/> - Time magazine's review of Wes Anderson's 'The Phoenician Scheme' highlights the film's departure from Anderson's typically vibrant style, presenting a more somber and restrained narrative. Set in the 1950s, the story follows Anatole 'Zsa Zsa' Korda, a wealthy tycoon, and his daughter Liesl, a nun-in-training, as they embark on a multi-nation scheme. The film features an ensemble cast including Benicio del Toro, Mia Threapleton, and Michael Cera. Despite a few standout moments, the review notes that the film's unengaging plot and understated performances may not appeal to all viewers.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/a54a0ee674e920ec066c65ee0eb23351> - The Associated Press provides a review of 'Mission: Impossible — The Final Reckoning,' directed by Christopher McQuarrie and starring Tom Cruise as Ethan Hunt. The film pits Hunt against a parasitic artificial intelligence threatening nuclear catastrophe, attempting to unify over 30 years of narratives. The review mentions returning characters and newcomers, noting that some cast members are underused. Despite a sluggish start, the film delivers standout action sequences, including a tense scene in a sunken submarine and an aerial chase with vintage biplanes over South Africa. Cruise's dedication to physical stunts remains a highlight, with the film earning 2.5 out of 4 stars.
4. <https://elpais.com/cultura/2025-05-19/wes-anderson-deleita-en-cannes-con-su-nuevo-juguete-sobre-familia-fe-y-negocios.html> - El País reports on Wes Anderson's presentation of 'The Phoenician Scheme' at the Cannes Film Festival. The film combines themes of family, faith, and business with Anderson's characteristic visual and narrative style. The story revolves around Zsa-Zsa Korda, a magnate who, after facing death, seeks to reconnect with his daughter, a novice nun, to pass on his business legacy. The film features an ensemble cast including Scarlett Johansson, Bill Murray, and Tom Hanks, with Michael Cera's performance being particularly noted. The soundtrack is composed by Alexandre Desplat. The film received positive reception at Cannes, though it shared the spotlight with other acclaimed films.
5. <https://cadenaser.com/nacional/2025/05/18/cannes-2025-benicio-del-toro-un-antiheroe-canalla-en-la-entretenida-geopolitica-de-wes-anderson-cadena-ser/> - Cadena SER discusses Wes Anderson's 'The Phoenician Scheme' presented at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival. The film is described as a vibrant and stylized geopolitical adventure set in the 1950s, featuring Anderson's characteristic aesthetic. Benicio del Toro plays a Lebanese businessman who survives an assassination attempt and embarks on a global journey with his nun daughter to implement a colonial infrastructure plan. The film includes cameos from stars like Tom Hanks, Bryan Cranston, and Benedict Cumberbatch. Anderson combines satire, comedy, and a critique of capitalism, reflecting on family beyond blood ties. The film incorporates influences from Buñuel, 'Metropolis,' and gangster cinema, addressing themes of faith, politics, and the possibility of breaking the system, with a more committed and emotional tone compared to Anderson's previous works.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/wes-anderson-makes-light-trumps-movie-tariff-plan-cannes-2025-05-19/> - Reuters reports on Wes Anderson's humorous response to President Donald Trump's proposed 100% tariffs on foreign-made films during a press conference at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival. Anderson questioned the practicality of the tariffs, joking about customs procedures. His latest film, 'The Phoenician Scheme,' primarily shot in Berlin and competing for the Palme d'Or, tells the story of corrupt billionaire Zsa-Zsa Korda, played by Benicio del Toro, who enlists the help of his daughter Liesl, played by Mia Threapleton, and insectologist Bjorn, played by Michael Cera, to complete shady business endeavors. Bill Murray also stars, playing God. The film received a mixed but generally amused reception, with the BBC describing it as 'daft but fun' and The Hollywood Reporter noting it was more accessible for those previously alienated by Anderson’s distinct style.
7. <https://www.cinemablend.com/movies/mission-impossible-stunts-scare-me-final-reckoning-director-explained-why-he-could-not-be-afraid-while-making-movie> - CinemaBlend features an interview with Christopher McQuarrie, director of 'Mission: Impossible – Final Reckoning,' discussing the immense pressures and mental discipline required when orchestrating complex stunts involving lead actor Tom Cruise, who famously performs all his own stunts. The film features high-risk action scenes, including a dramatic aerial sequence shot early in production. To ensure safety, the crew held rigorous safety briefings, during which any unrelated stressors, or 'ducks,' had to be declared to prevent distractions that could lead to accidents. McQuarrie stressed the importance of maintaining a calm mindset and suppressing fears to effectively manage the high-stakes environment of what is one of the most expensive films ever made, with a reported budget of $400 million. Despite production challenges, including the 2023 Hollywood strikes, early reviews have praised the film for its intensity and entertainment value, calling it a fitting and anxiety-inducing finale to the franchise. 'Mission: Impossible – Final Reckoning' is scheduled for release on May 23 and is also available for streaming via Paramount+.