

# Lose yourself in these five surreal cult titles from Studio Ghibli

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Japanese animation or anime is well-known and popular all over the world, and for all the right reasons. Studio Ghibli, however, takes away the cake singlehandedly due to their extraordinary works. This revered Japanese animation film studio was founded by famous Hayao Miyazaki and genius Isao Takahata in 1985. They have gifted anime-lovers 22 startling feature films till date, and we talk about some of them in this article. If you have not watched any Studio Ghibli film yet, you are in luck.

## Spirited Away

This Oscar-winning movie masterfully encapsulates the very essence of Studio Ghibli. It follows the journey of the ten-year-old Chihiro in a whimsical and enchanting spirit world where she transforms greatly with the help of some kind souls. The themes of the movie range from the concepts of capitalism to environmentalism to a lot more which will leave its lasting impact on



you forever. This masterpiece by Hayao Miyazaki is a treat to the eyes and soul for people of all ages.

## The Grave of the Fireflies

A movie that is on the darker side to show us the true cost and the heart-wrenching reality of war, courtesy of longtime director Isao Takahata. This film is based on a semi-autobiographical short story written by Akiyuki Nosaka in 1967 and centres around the two siblings, Seita and Setsuko as they struggle and try to survive in war-torn Japan. The realistic representation and direct parallel of the short lifespan of fireflies and innocence of the main characters are soul-crushing.

## The Whisper of the Heart

A heart-touching coming-of-age story in a mundane setting gets the magical

touch of Studio Ghibli to make you crave for more. The film follows the story of Shizuku Tsukishima who immerses herself in writing, creating a fantasy world after encountering a cat statuette called The Baron at an antique store while developing a blossoming romance with violin-maker Seiji Amasawa. The film makes us realise how many gems we are deprived of by showing us how promising the director Yoshifumi Kondō was who sadly passed away leaving his legacy behind.

## My Neighbour Totoro

This movie, directed by Hayao Miyazaki is an outright classic that depicts the adventure of the two sisters Satsuki and Mei, whose innocence will make you both laugh and cry at the same time. The movie

teleports you to their world where you ride the cat-bus with them, get happy, sad and worried with them, and you will find yourself wishing that their mother gets to return home safe and sound. And yes, the lovable giant furry Totoro has been Studio Ghibli's mascot ever since the film debuted.

## Only Yesterday

This movie is about 27-year-old Taeko Okajima, who travels to the countryside to get away from the hustle-bustle of Tokyo's city life. She looks back at the past to reminisce about her experiences which gives her a better understanding of life. The movie certainly ticks a lot of boxes. Moreover, the movie successfully resonates as a joyous celebration of the preciousness of life and with its satisfying ending, you will find yourself at peace as the final credits rolls.

These movies, however, are recommended only to get you introduced to their artistic vision. All the other Studio Ghibli films are worth checking out because you do not want to miss out on any of them. A Ghibli marathon is what you need to properly appreciate their range of works and creativity with recurring motifs and themes, unique style, empowered female protagonists, memorable characters, dreamlike pastoral backdrop and spectacular landscapes, mouthwatering food scenes and much-needed moral messages. The Ghibli fans are wholeheartedly waiting for its upcoming projects including **Earwig and the Witch** by Gorō Miyazaki and **How Do You Live?**, which will mark Hayao Miyazaki's coming out of retirement.

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