

The best films of 2025, according to critic Erin Trahan

December 10, 2025

By [Erin Trahan](#)



clockwise from top left: "Ask E. Jean" (Courtesy Ivy Meeropol); "Cosmic Coda" (Courtesy Mary Jane Doherty); "Sorry, Baby" (Courtesy Warner Bros. Pictures); and "The Bend in the River" (Courtesy Robb Moss).

'Cosmic Coda'



Wildly original and funny, "[Cosmic Coda](#)" explains how gravity works well enough to convince a layperson they might understand, too. Doherty does this by "proving" astrophysicists are living, breathing, coffee-drinking people who run a lot of cables and use a lot of foil. She also creates an avatar of herself as a curious cow. The film starts as Doherty describes in voiceover her 1985 thesis film while a student at MIT. Scientists there were developing a prototype antenna to measure gravitational waves. When one of the subjects of her thesis film, Rainer Weiss, won a Nobel Prize for that accomplishment in 2017, Doherty started filming again to see how the science, and scientists, had progressed. The result, "Cosmic Coda," connects scenes from recent years with footage from her thesis. The 39-year lapse offers an invaluable lesson — that scientific research, and perhaps filmmaking, requires a relationship to time that most humans do not possess. Their mission might exceed their lifespan. "Cosmic Coda" also captures the scale of scientific research from the unfathomably infinite to infinitesimally small. It boggles the mind to think that while I was a kid watching "Oprah" and gossiping on a corded phone, scientists were figuring out how I stick to the earth. Decades later, this film sticks with me.