

David Walsh chooses his favorite films of 2000

30 December 2000

I thought this was a particularly poor year for American films, perhaps European as well. The strongest films continue to come from Asia. But film and art in general need a new aesthetic and social perspective. The current political crisis in the US marks a turning point, and much that has been taken for granted in a stagnant time will be shaken up. We are on the eve of a great change.

10 Best Films of 2000

(Lists are not strictly in order of preference, but the latter clearly plays some role.) *Links to WSWS reviews have been provided.*

1. *The House of Mirth*, Terence Davies (UK)

Terence Davies' *The House of Mirth*: a comment and a press conference with the director
[28 December 2000]

British director Terence Davies' extraordinary adaptation of Edith Wharton's novel about New York society circa 1905 and the precise way in which it grinds people to pieces.

2. *Little Cheung*, Fruit Chan (Hong Kong)

"The world is so complicated, who'd want to see it?"
[9 October 2000]

In Hong Kong, a small boy endures his father's stupidities; a small girl, from a poorer family, and a Filipino maid endure Hong Kong. The richness of detail adds up to something.

3. *Platform*, Jia Zhang-ke (China)

Independent filmmaking that is genuinely independent
[12 October 2000]

A young Chinese filmmaker looks at the Mao and the "free-market" eras in a provincial backwater, and finds them both wanting from the point of view of human needs.

4. *Beresina*, Daniel Schmid (Switzerland)

Preserving the utopian moment
[8 June 2000]

A comic assault on all that the Swiss petty

bourgeoisie holds dear, by veteran Swiss director Daniel Schmid, a survivor of the '60s generation.

5. *A Time for Drunken Horses*, Bahman Ghobadi (Iran)

Children in the mountains
[5 October 2000]

A devastating look at existence on the Iran-Iraq border, for four Kurdish children, directed by Iranian Kurd Bahman Ghobadi.

6. *Cecil B. Demented*, John Waters (US)

The rise and fall and rise again of John Waters
[23 August 2000]

"Death [or at the very least, ignominy] to those who support mainstream cinema!" John Waters made the best, most pointed American film of the year.

7. *The Circle*, Jafar Panahi (Iran)

Why are these women escaping?
[2 October 2000]

A film about oppression, of women in Iran—and everyone in every country—by Jafar Panahi, one of the world's most courageous artists.

8. *Bye Bye Africa*, Mahamet-Saleh Haroun (Chad)

Without flinching
[28 September 2000]

An African filmmaker, who lives in Paris, returns to Chad and discovers the disastrous situation for cinema, and most of the population, in his homeland.

9. *Looking for Angel*, Akihiro Suzuki (Japan)

The difference between feeling and playing at feeling
[26 October 2000]

Beauty and tragedy for Japanese young people. "Whatever I care for, I always lose. Whatever I want, I'll never get. Whoever I love, I can never have. Wherever I want to be, I can never stay."

10. *Hamlet*, Michael Almereyda (US)

Youth's anguish
[26 July 2000]

Honorable mention: *Bundled*, Singing Chen (Taiwan); *Peppermint Candy*, Lee Chang-Dong (South

Korea); *Yi Yi*, Edward Yang (Taiwan); *Daughters of the Sun*, Mariam Shahriar (Iran); *The Day I Became a Woman*, Marziyeh Meshkini (Iran); *Smell of Camphor*, *Fragrance of Jasmine*, Bahman Farmanara (Iran)

Some remarkable performances

1. Gillian Anderson, *The House of Mirth*
2. Sol Kyung-Gu, *Peppermint Candy* (South Korea)
3. Ethan Hawke, *Hamlet*
4. Elena Panova, *Beresina*
5. Melanie Griffith, *Cecil B. Demented*
6. Steve Lawrence and Tony Musante , *The Yards*
7. Wang Hongwei, *Platform*
8. Geraldine Chaplin, *Beresina*
9. Iben Hjejle , *High Fidelity*
10. Samantha Morton in two bad films, *Sweet and Lowdown* and *Jesus' Son*

Best Director

Terence Davies, *The House of Mirth*

Best Screenplay

Martin Suter, *Beresina*/Davies , *The House of Mirth*

Best Cinematography

Lam Wah Chuen, *Little Cheung*



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