

David Walsh picks his favorite films of 2002

David Walsh
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2002 was an exceptionally poor year for the commercial cinema, especially American cinema. There was not a single US feature film I could include on either a list of best films that I saw during the year or best films that played in North American movie theaters in 2002. The gap between the harsh, rapidly-moving social and political events and the artistic perception of reality continues to grow. Something has to give.

The first list below contains what seemed to me the most successful artistic efforts in filmmaking in 2002. The second list is a response to the qualification established by various publications and organizations in the US for making out “Top Ten” lists, that a film had a theatrical run in North America in 2002. On that list I was obliged to place films I actively disliked (*L’emploi du temps*, *Warm Water Under a Red Bridge* and *Millennium Mambo*), but which nevertheless seemed to me to be among the “best” films screened during the past 12 months.

Best fiction films of 2002:

All or Nothing (Britain, Mike Leigh)

Waiting for Happiness (Mauritania, Abderrahmane Sissako)

Oasis (South Korea, Lee Chang-dong)

Les Diables (France, Christophe Ruggia)

Silence ... on tourne [*Silence ... We’re Rolling*] (Egypt, Youssef Chahine)

Failan (South Korea, Song Hae-sung)

The Last Letter (US, Frederick Wiseman)

Letters in the Wind (Iran, Ali Reza Amini)

The Magdalene Sisters (UK/Ireland, Peter Mullan)

Unknown Pleasures (China, Jia Zhang-ke)

The Cuckoo (Russia, Alexander Rogozhkin)

The Quiet American (US, Phillip Noyce)

Best documentaries:

L’Affaire Sofri (France, Jean-Louis Comolli)

An Injury to One (US, Travis Wilkerson)

Las Palmas, Chaco (Argentina, Alejandro Fernández Mouján)

The Inner Tour (Israel, Ra’anan Alexandrowicz)

Bowling for Columbine (Michael Moore)

Cul de Sac: A Suburban War Story (US, Garrett Scott)

Ten best films that had theatrical runs in North America in 2002:

1. *All or Nothing*, directed by Mike Leigh

2. *The Quiet American*, directed by Phillip Noyce

3. *Bowling for Columbine*, directed by Michael Moore

4. *The Diaries of Vaslav Nijinsky*, directed by Paul Cox

5. *Je rentre à la maison* [*I’m Going Home*], directed by Manoel de Oliveira

6. *Blackboards*, directed by Samira Makhmalbaf

7. *Beijing Bicycle*, directed by Xiaoshuai Wang

8. *L’emploi du temps* [*Time Out*], directed by Laurent Cantet

9. *Warm Water Under a Red Bridge*, directed by Shohei Imamura

10. *Millennium Mambo*, directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien

Five best lead performances:

1. Timothy Spall, *All or Nothing*

2. Michael Caine, *The Quiet American*

3. Michel Piccoli, *Je rentre à la maison*

4. Valentina Bassi, *Un día de suerte* ([*A Lucky Day*])

5. Lesley Manville, *All or Nothing*

Best supporting performances:

1. Ruth Sheen, *All or Nothing*

2. Naseeruddin Shah, *Monsoon Wedding*

3. Iben Hjejle, *The Emperor’s New Clothes*

4. Emily Watson, *Punch-Drunk Love*

5. Alfred Molina, *Frida*



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