

David Walsh picks his favorite films of 2005

David Walsh
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I include two lists below. The first contains what in my opinion were the best films shown in a cinema in the US in 2005 (although, in some cases, this might have meant only a limited run in New York and Los Angeles, for example). The second list includes films that I saw in 2005, at film festivals, for example, which I thought significant but which have not yet received a showing in an American movie theater.

Many difficulties persist in filmmaking, and the true state of the world continues to show itself rarely there and often weakly. It is noteworthy, however, that a number of American works treating social and political problems made this year's list, four fiction films and two documentaries. Something is stirring, and no doubt disgust and horror with the Bush administration and its war in Iraq and relentless assault on democratic rights play a role in this. The increased sensitivity of the best US films to human suffering, a growing hostility to official criminality and brutality, an overall radicalization, all this can only develop and deepen.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the ranking of films that are quite disparate in their content and approach. The works below are listed in no particular order.

The 12 best films released in a cinema in the US in 2005:

The World (Jia Zhang-Ke)
Land of Plenty (Wim Wenders)
Syriana (Stephen Gaghan)
Memories of Murder (Bong Joon-Ho)
Paradise Now (Hany Abu-Assad)
Munich (Steven Spielberg)
The Downfall: Hitler and the End of the Third Reich (Oliver Hirschbiegel)
Good Night, and Good Luck (George Clooney)
The Ninth Day (Volker Schlöndorff)
The Constant Gardener (Fernando Meirelles)
The Oil Factor: Behind the War on Terror (Audrey

Brohy & Gerard Ungerman)

Gunner Palace (Petra Epperlein & Michael Tucker)

The 10 best films I saw in 2005 that have not yet been released in a cinema:

October 17, 1961 (Alain Tasma)

La trahison (Philippe Faucon)

Conversations on a Sunday Afternoon (Khalo Matabane)

China Blue (Micha Peled)

The Last Hangman (Adrian Shergold)

Gilaneh (Rakhshan Bani-Etemad & Mohsen Abdolvahab)

The Gravel Road (Chemman Chaalai) (Deepak Kumaran Menon)

The Riverside (Alireza Amini)

Off To War (Brent & Craig Renaud)

Yasmin (Kenny Glenaan)



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