

Cheap Seats & Sticky Floors

Top Ten Films of 2000 — By Matt Mosley

film reviews

I know that my top ten film list of 2000 is arriving a little on the late side (hey, we've already reached mid-March), but because of film release patterns, I've just recently finished seeing all the potentially worthy contenders.

Over all, 2000 was definitely a disappointing year. We had too many teen flicks (*Loser*) and Bruckheimer hits (*Coyote Ugly*) sandwiched between over-ripe thrillers (*What Lies Beneath*) and underwrought epics (*Gladiator*). To make things worse, we had to put up with some of the most annoying titles in the history of cinema: *Dude, Where's My Car?*, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *O' Brother, Where art Thou?* (notwithstanding *Dude*, the latter two actually ended out being pretty good films).

Yes, it appears that the impending writers and actors strikes have already seen their effects come forth. Truthfully though, if I had to choose between the two, I'd take Stephen Gaghan (*Traffic*) and Christopher McQuarrie (*The Way of the Gun*) any day over Freddie Prinze Jr. and Tom Hanks. As bad as this *Patriot*-filled year was, some original and daring pieces

of work still emerged. You just had to know where to look. So without any further bashing, I'll give you my top ten list.

10. *The Way of the Gun*

It may not be the perfect film, but this directorial debut by Christopher McQuarrie is groundbreaking nonetheless. This crime drama about two loners who hold a pregnant woman for ransom allows every character in the film to be unredeemable in every way. It proves that films don't have to include that sympathetic protagonist. It may not be the moral thing to do, but then again, these days who gives a shit. This is the kind of bad-ass filmmaking I love.

9. *Wonderland*

Michael Winterbottom (*Jude*, *Welcome to Sarajevo*) gives us the down and dirty, British working-class-version of *Magnolia*. The film traces a bunch of young "Londonites" as their down-and-out lives spiral out of control. Winterbottom's hand-held, digital video style gives the film a powerful and realistic punch. It's his best film to date.

8. *Pollock*

Ed Harris gives a heartfelt and emotional performance as Jackson Pollock, the famous abstract expressionist painter, in a wonderful film that he also wrote and directed. The often-erratic life of Pollock is portrayed on-screen in a transforming and amazingly touching way. Harris' direction is rock solid as he allows you to interpret Pollock's life in the same vein as his art. It's all up to the viewer.

7. *Nurse Betty*

It is a rare thing to see a comedy that is more than just a bunch of laughs. The third directorial effort from Neil LaBute (*In the Company of Men*, *Young Friends & Neighbors*) is a delicate tale of a delusional woman on her way to California to meet her favorite soap character. Social commentary and the best performance of Renee Zellweger's career are what make the film sing and dance.

6. *Dance in the Dark*

Speaking of singing and dancing, Bjork does quite a number in this offbeat musical/drama about an immigrant woman

who lives in a blind world of Hollywood musicals. The film's ensemble cast of character actors, along with the European style, makes for an amazing theatrical piece of art. It's a tragic film about hope, loss, love and pity. The Academy really did a disservice this year when passing over Bjork for a best actress nomination.

5. *Sunshine*

This summertime art-house epic starring Ralph Fiennes spans three generations in the lives of one family in Hungary. Fiennes plays three characters of direct descent in this film and makes each one unique and convincing. The large-scale originality of the writing is pulled off perfectly. *Sunshine* is an example of what Hollywood should be moving toward: epics with heart, soul - and without Tom Hanks.

4. *Croupier*

This film almost didn't get released in this country, but luckily Shooting Gallery Films picked up this miniature royal British jewel from director Mike Hodges (the original *Get Carter*). Clive Owen

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