

← Back to Original Article

The 10 Best Films of Their Year--Three Views

December 22, 1991 | Kevin Thomas

1. *Swan Lake--The Zone*. Yuri Illienko's poetic account of a Gulag ordeal, based on stories by the late Sergei Paradjanov, evolves into a Christian parable expressed in astonishingly beautiful imagery.
2. *Queen of Diamonds*. The second feature film of formidable experimental filmmaker Nina Menkes is a lonely Las Vegas odyssey with feminist implications.
3. *Requiem for Dominic*. Robert Dornhelm takes us into the chaotic, treacherous heart of the Romanian revolution in a remarkable, near-seamless blend of fact and fiction of overwhelming immediacy.
4. *Korczak*. Poland's leading veteran director, Andrzej Wajda, makes the fate of pediatrician Janusz Korczak (played by Wojtek Pszoniak), who cared for 200 orphans in the Warsaw Ghetto, an affirmation of life and human dignity.
5. *Overseas*. Brigitte Rouan's daringly structured, partly autobiographical memoir of three privileged sisters living in French Colonial Algeria is at once a touching family chronicle and an implicit criticism of a colonial system.
6. *An Angel at My Table*. New Zealand filmmaker Jane Campion followed up her controversial "Sweetie" with a biography, both interior and epic, of the harrowing life of New Zealand writer Janet Frame.
7. *Boyz N the Hood*. John Singleton's straightforward, no-frills account of growing up black in South Central Los Angeles contains an exceptional portrait of a strong and loving father, well-played by Larry Fishburne.
8. *Grand Canyon*. Lawrence Kasdan's sharp, witty yet warm and even cautiously optimistic account of surviving the '90s in Los Angeles has notable performances by Kevin Klein, Danny Glover, Steve Martin, Mary McDonnell and Alfre Woodard.
9. *The Reflecting Skin*. Philip Ridley's parable of innocence and evil in the Midwest of the 1950s is a piece of gothic Americana that risks the grotesque to achieve a tragic effect.
10. *The Fisher King*. Terry Gilliam's soaring, magical telling of a contemporary "my brother's keeper tale" with deeply felt performances by Jeff Bridges, Robin Williams, Mercedes Ruehl and Amanda Plummer.