



# THE BEST FILMS OF THE DECADE

2010-19

Gregory  
College  
House

SPRING 2020

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**I**t's the dawn of a new decade. And like many film critics and film fans online and in the media, your Gregory College House staff who are also faculty in Penn Cinema & Media Studies (Chris and Lance) are keen to weigh in.

Okay, we're burying the lead. We did this 10 years ago! In spring 2010, Lance (then the GA director of the Film in Residence program) and Chris (Gregory House Dean, yes, even then) independently made choices for Top 100 films of the decade 2000-09, shared our notes, and created a weekly screening at Gregory celebrating our Top 10s. We loved it, so we're doing it again! This booklet, in fact, is an exact decade-later update of the program we created 10 years ago—complete with our full lists, screening schedule, and some of our further thoughts on the decade in cinema.

This film series is part of the for-credit Film in Residence program at Gregory. But, as with all films in the program, every screening is open to the entire House community.

Come, watch, and enjoy the best films of 2010-2019!

*In our opinions,*  
— Chris and Lance

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# the best films of the decade

2010-2019

01/21   8 pm	<b>Inside Llewyn Davis</b>
01/28   8 pm	<b>The Tree of Life</b>
02/04   8 pm	<b>Moonlight</b>
02/07   8 pm*	<b>Mad Max: Fury Road</b>
02/11   8 pm	<b>Frances Ha</b>
02/18   8 pm	<b>Under the Skin</b>
02/25   8 pm	<b>The Master</b>
03/03   8 pm	<b>Roma</b>
03/17   8 pm	<b>Brooklyn</b>
03/20   8 pm*	<b>Weekend</b>
03/24   8 pm	<b>A Separation</b>
03/31   8 pm	<b>The Lobster</b>
04/07   8 pm	<b>The Rider</b>
04/14   8 pm	<b>Holy Motors</b>
04/21   8 pm	<b>Carol</b>
04/24   8 pm*	<b>Black Swan</b>
04/28   8 pm	<b>The Act of Killing</b>
	<b>The Look of Silence</b>
05/05   8 pm	<b>Boyhood</b>

All screenings will be held in the Van Pelt Film Lounge and are part of the Film in Residence Program. A short discussion will follow each screening.

All films are on Tuesday nights, except those with an asterisk (\*), which are on Fridays.

All students are welcome to attend film screenings.

# Chris Donovan's Top 10 Films of the Decade

## 1. **Holy Motors** (2012, Leos Carax)

Leos Carax's melancholy yet magical exploration of the protean nature of cinema is equal parts fantasy, family drama, crime thriller, musical, science fiction, and industry critique... and that's just getting started.

## 2. **A Separation** (2011, Ashgar Farhadi)

Asghar Farhadi's precisely calibrated drama of marriage, morality, law, and religion in contemporary Iran remains impartial while deeply empathizing with the plight of its characters.

## 3. **Under the Skin** (2013, Jonathan Glazer)

Jonathan Glazer's experimental sci-fi horror (bolstered by Mica Levi's disquieting score and Scarlett Johansson's meta performance) invites us to view humanity as a lion does an impala; or, we do a cow. Inscrutable by design but gets, well, under the skin.

## 4. **Inside Llewyn Davis** (2013, The Coen Brothers)

The Coen Brothers are in their fourth decade of idiosyncratic creative freedom, but their best work of the 2010s depicts how easy it is for talent to fail, whether through personality flaws, financial imperatives, or plain bad timing.

## 5. **Roma** (2018, Alfonso Cuarón)

Alfonso Cuarón reflects back on his childhood in Mexico City, focused not on himself but on his family's beleaguered, often-ignored housekeeper. Every bit as technically staggering as his blockbuster *Gravity*, but rooted firmly in compassion.

## 6. **Boyhood** (2014, Richard Linklater)

Another semi-biographical account, this one shot over a decade, Richard Linklater's unique coming-of-age piece is somehow emotionally engaging in its eschewal of conventional drama.

## 7. **Moonlight** (2016, Barry Jenkins)

Another moving, more subtly experimental coming of age story, Barry Jenkins's second feature (and first masterpiece) is intimate, almost delicate.... yet feels big and bold. The disastrous announcement of its Oscar win overshadows the fact that this was one of the greatest Best Picture winners in Academy history.

## 8. **Black Swan** (2010, Darren Aronofsky)

Darren Aronofsky's immersive, much-imitated horror/thriller has all the subtlety of a hammer to the face, but the damn thing works, thanks to sensational directorial control and Natalie Portman's towering performance.

## 9. **Mad Max: Fury Road** (2015, George Miller)

Wizened filmmakers returning to their reputation-establishing franchises is usually a recipe for disaster. That's just part of the miracle of George Miller's post-apocalyptic romp, a two-hour action sequence that somehow feels like an existential art piece.

## 10. **The Act of Killing/The Look of Silence** (2012/2015, Joshua Oppenheimer)

Neither subversive installment of Joshua Oppenheimer's look at the perpetrators of 1960s genocide in Indonesia feels like any documentary you've seen before. As sobering about our capacity for violence—and for living with the evil we do—as one can possibly imagine or stomach.

# Lance Wahlert's Top 10 Films of the Decade

## 1. **Carol** (2015, Todd Haynes)

A stylish and thoughtful examination of lesbian affection and sacrificial love in an era of repression for women in general. It's been a 30-year hat-trick for Todd Haynes, with his decades' best queer-minded films *Safe* (1995), *Far from Heaven* (2002), and now *Carol* (2015)—all immediate queer cinema classics. The British Film Institute, in fact, recently named *Carol* the best LGBTQ film of all time. The last scene of *Carol* alone is 2 minutes of cinematic heaven: the longing, the hesitation, the fear, the bliss!

## 2. **Inside Llewyn Davis** (2013, The Coen Brothers)

Not a note wrong here (no pun intended). By turns sly and soulful (like all Coen Bros. films), this is *the* definitive film for, about, and dedicated to the loves and misfortunes of songwriters.

## 3. **Brooklyn** (2015, John Crowley)

On the surface: A heart-breaking story of emigration from Ireland to Brooklyn. Look more closely: It's one of the best movies about the interplay between homesickness and first love. How we wonderfully find a new home as we are painfully letting-go of a former one. The decade's most earnest film... and the better for it.

## 4. **Frances Ha** (2013, Noah Baumbach)

Here is what it's like to be a late-20s, post-college dreamer: smart, creative, eager, and undeniably fallible. Nevertheless, always both intimidated by and delighted by the newness of adulthood.

## 5. **Boyhood** (2014, Richard Linklater)

1 cast; 1 family's story; shot 1 time a year over more than a decade. And stitched together to make cinema's equivalent of a family quilt—interwoven yet piecemeal; a virtuoso work of art, but also a frayed work of handcraft.

## 6. **The Master** (2012, Paul Thomas Anderson)

All the materials of Paul Thomas Anderson's best work on display here: hubris, cultism, ambition, failure, Americana. This decade's colleague to his previous films *There Will Be Blood* (2007), *Magnolia* (1999), and *Boogie Nights* (1997).

## 7. **The Lobster** (2016, Yorgos Lanthimos)

Post-apocalyptic premise: You have no human mate, so you must become an animal in order to survive. What animal would you choose? A cow? A dog? A lobster? And so *begins* this singular wild-ride of a film. Not for everyone. But daring cinema rarely is.

## 8. **The Rider** (2018, Chloé Zhao)

A story of injury and survival; amazing ability and crushing disability. A rodeo-centered film about trying to find a new center of gravity, both in profession and in pride. The decade's most soulful film.

## 9. **The Tree of Life** (2011, Terrence Malick)

Like all the best Terrence Malick films, *Tree of Life* oscillates with ease and wonder in its deployment of best tools to register the love and woe of the human heart: cinemascope, microscope, telescope, kaleidoscope. After all that cinematic strategy, the naked human eye and the naked human heart always win with Malick. An empirical and emotional feast.

## 10. **Weekend** (2011, Andrew Haigh)

You do the one-night-stand thing. But then accidentally fall into some-kind-of-love. An excellent film about the minutiae of how both love-choices and life-choices sneak-up on you. Played-out perfectly in cinematic time.

# House Dean Chris Donovan's TOP 100 FILMS OF THE DECADE

*(continued from page 2)*

11. Carol (2015, Todd Haynes)
12. Lady Bird (2017, Greta Gerwig)
13. Timbuktu (2014, Abderrahmane Sissako)
14. Get Out (2017, Jordan Peele)
15. The Social Network (2010, David Fincher)
16. A Touch of Sin (2013, Jia Zhangke)
17. The Rider (2018, Chloé Zhao)
18. An Elephant Sitting Still (2019, Hu Bo)
19. The Grand Budapest Hotel (2014, Wes Anderson)
20. Parasite (2019, Bong Joon-ho)
21. First Reformed (2017, Paul Schrader)
22. The Great Beauty (2013, Paolo Sorrentino)
23. Once Upon a Time in Anatolia (2011, Nuri Bilge Ceylan)
24. The Tree of Life (2011, Terrence Malick)
25. Melancholia (2011, Lars von Trier)
26. 12 Years a Slave (2013, Steve McQueen)
27. The Master (2012, Paul Thomas Anderson)
28. Frances Ha (2013, Noah Baumbach)
29. The Handmaiden (2016, Park Chan-wook)
30. Fish Tank (2010, Andrea Arnold)
31. Cold War (2018, Paweł Pawlikowski)
32. You Were Never Really Here (2018, Lynne Ramsay)
33. Portrait of a Lady on Fire (2019, Céline Sciamma)
34. Exit Through the Gift Shop (2010, Banksy)
35. The World of Tomorrow (2015, Don Hertzfeldt)
36. Inception (2010, Christopher Nolan)
37. Before Midnight (2013, Richard Linklater)
38. The Babadook (2014, Jennifer Kent)
39. Ex Machina (2015, Alex Garland)
40. The Florida Project (2017, Sean Baker)
41. Cameraperson (2016, Kirsten Johnson)
42. Moonrise Kingdom (2012, Wes Anderson)
43. Upstream Color (2013, Shane Carruth)
44. Mysteries of Lisbon (2010, Raúl Ruiz)
45. Little Women (2019, Greta Gerwig)
46. Shoplifters (2018, Hirokazu Koreeda)
47. Long Day's Journey into Night (2018, Bi Gan)
48. Elle (2016, Paul Verhoeven)
49. Manchester by the Sea (2016, Kenneth Lonergan)
50. Blue is the Warmest Color (2013, Abdellatif Kechiche)

51. Lincoln (2012, Steven Spielberg)
52. The Farewell (2019, Lulu Wang)
53. Two Days, One Night (2014, The Dardenne Brothers)
54. The Irishman (2019, Martin Scorsese)
55. Hugo (2011, Martin Scorsese)
56. Mustang (2015, Deniz Gamze Ergüven)
57. Another Year (2010, Mike Leigh)
58. Oslo, August 31st (2011, Joachim Trier)
59. Dogtooth (2010, Yorgos Lanthimos)
60. The Immigrant (2013, James Gray)
61. The Hunt (2012, Thomas Vinterberg)
62. Ghost Story (2017, David Lowery)
63. Jackie (2016, Pablo Larraín)
64. Moneyball (2011, Bennett Miller)
65. Arrival (2016, Denis Villeneuve)
66. The Ballad of Buster Scruggs (2018, The Coen Brothers)
67. Columbus (2017, Kogonada)
68. Certain Women (2016, Kelly Reichardt)
69. Birds of Passage (2018, Cristina Gallego & Ciro Guerra)
70. Annihilation (2018, Alex Garland)
71. The Illusionist (2010, Sylvain Chomet)
72. Inside Out (2015, Pete Docter)
73. Blue Valentine (2010, Derek Cianfrance)
74. The Salesman (2017, Asghar Farhadi)
75. Dunkirk (2017, Christopher Nolan)
76. Phoenix (2014, Christian Petzold)
77. The Clouds of Sils Maria (2014, Olivier Assayas)
78. Of Gods and Men (2010, Xavier Beauvois)
79. Minding the Gap (2018, Bing Liu)
80. The Lobster (2015, Yorgos Lanthimos)
81. Burning (2018, Lee Chang-dong)
82. On the Beach at Night Alone (2017, Hong Sangsoo)
83. Support the Girls (2018, Andrew Bujalski)
84. Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (2018, Ramsey et al.)
85. Dawson City: Frozen Time (2016, Bill Morrison)
86. Eighth Grade (2018, Bo Burnham)
87. The Turin Horse (2011, Béla Tarr & Ágnes Hranitzky)
88. 20th Century Women (2016, Mike Mills)
89. Leave No Trace (2018, Debra Granik)
90. Spotlight (2015, Tom McCarthy)
91. Personal Shopper (2016, Olivier Assayas)
92. Short Term 12 (2013, Destin Daniel Cretton)
93. Drive (2011, Nicolas Winding Refn)
94. Amour (2012, Michael Haneke)
95. Her (2013, Spike Jonze)
96. Zama (2017, Lucrecia Martel)
97. Guardians of the Galaxy (2014, James Gunn)
98. Nocturama (2016, Bertrand Bonello)
99. What We Do in the Shadows (2014, Taika Waititi & Jemaine Clement)
100. Star Wars: The Last Jedi (2017, Rian Johnson)

# House Fellow Lance Wahler's TOP 100 FILMS OF THE DECADE

*(continued from page 3)*

11. The Social Network (2010, David Fincher)
12. Moonlight (2016, Barry Jenkins)
13. Roma (2018, Alfonso Cuarón)
14. Call Me by Your Name (2017, Luca Guadagnino)
15. Force Majeure (2014, Ruben Östlund)
16. Before Midnight (2013, Richard Linklater)
17. Lady Bird (2017, Greta Gerwig)
18. The Act of Killing/The Look of Silence (2012/2015, Joshua Oppenheimer)
19. First Reformed (2017, Paul Schrader)
20. Certified Copy (2010, Abbas Kiarostami)
  
21. A Separation (2011, Asghar Farhadi)
22. Margaret (2011, Kenneth Lonergan)
23. Amour (2012, Michael Haneke)
24. We the Animals (2018, Jeremiah Zagar)
25. Stories We Tell (2012, Sarah Polley)
26. Mad Max: Fury Road (2015, George Miller)
27. Phantom Thread (2017, Paul Thomas Anderson)
28. Once Upon a Time in Anatolia (2011, Nuri Bilge Ceylan)
29. Parasite (2019, Bong Joon-ho)
30. Little Women (2019, Greta Gerwig)
  
31. Pariah (2011, Dee Rees)
32. Melancholia (2011, Lars von Trier)
33. 12 Years a Slave (2013, Steve McQueen)
34. Gone Girl (2014, David Fincher)
35. The Grand Budapest Hotel (2014, Wes Anderson)
36. Oslo, August 31st (2011, Joachim Trier)
37. The Irishman (2019, Martin Scorsese)
38. Eighth Grade (2018, Bo Burnham)
39. Anomalisa (2015, Charlie Kaufman)
40. Get Out (2017, Jordan Peele)
  
41. Jackie (2016, Pablo Larraín)
42. Lincoln (2012, Steven Spielberg)
43. Cold War (2018, Paweł Pawlikowski)
44. A Quiet Passion (2016, Terrence Davies)
45. Black Swan (2010, Darren Aronofsky)
46. Shame (2011, Steve McQueen)
47. God's Own Country (2017, Francis Lee)
48. Shoplifters (2018, Hirokazu Koreeda)
49. The Florida Project (2017, Sean Baker)
50. Timbuktu (2014, Abderrahmane Sissako)



51. Inside Out (2015, Pete Docter)
52. The Handmaiden (2016, Park Chan-wook)
53. Her (2013, Spike Jonze)
54. A Touch of Sin (2013, Jia Zhangke)
55. Paddington 2 (2017, Paul King)
56. Krishna (2015, Trey Edward Shults)
57. Moonrise Kingdom (2012, Wes Anderson)
58. Stranger by the Lake (2013, Alain Guiraudie)
59. I Am Not Your Negro (2016, Raoul Peck)
60. Winter's Bone (2010, Debra Granik)
61. Spotlight (2015, Tom McCarthy)
62. Fruitvale Station (2013, Ryan Coogler)
63. Once Upon a Time in Hollywood (2019, Quentin Tarantino)
64. Blue Is the Warmest Color (2013, Abdellatif Kechiche)
65. Exit Through the Gift Shop (2010, Banksy)
66. Tangerine (2015, Sean Baker)
67. The Clouds of Sils Maria (2014, Olivier Assayas)
68. The Kids Are All Right (2010, Lisa Cholodenko)
69. Spiderman: Into the Spider-Verse (2018, Ramsey et al.)
70. How to Survive a Plague (2012, David France)
71. Blue Valentine (2010, Derek Cianfrance)
72. 120 BPM (2017, Robin Campillo)
73. Toni Erdmann (2016, Maren Ade)
74. Martha Marcy May Marlene (2011, Sean Durkin)
75. Beasts of the Southern Wild (2012, Ben Zeitlin)
76. Holy Motors (2012, Leos Carax)
77. The Big Sick (2017, Michael Showalter)
78. Under the Skin (2014, Jonathan Glazer)
79. The Favourite (2018, Yorgos Lanthimos)
80. BlacKkKlansman (2018, Spike Lee)
81. Kon-Tiki (2012, Joachim Rønning & Espen Sandberg)
82. Biutiful (2010, Alejandro González Iñárritu)
83. Love & Friendship (2016, Whit Stillman)
84. The Perks of Being a Wallflower (2012, Stephen Chbosky)
85. Philomena (2013, Stephen Frears)
86. Hugo (2011, Martin Scorsese)
87. Faces Places (2017, Agnès Varda)
88. Mudbound (2017, Dee Rees)
89. Gravity (2013, Alfonso Cuarón)
90. This Is Not a Film (2011, Jafar Panahi & Motjaba Mirtahmasb)
91. Nebraska (2013, Alexandra Payne)
92. The Farewell (2019, Lulu Wang)
93. The Ballad of Buster Scruggs (2018, The Coen Brothers)
94. Love, Simon (2018, Greg Berlanti)
95. Enough Said (2013, Nicole Holofcener)
96. I, Tonya (2017, Craig Gillespie)
97. If Beale Street Could Talk (2018, Barry Jenkins)
98. Arrival (2016, Denis Villeneuve)
99. Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work (2010, Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg)
100. Contagion (2011, Steven Soderbergh)

# MORE THOUGHTS ON THE DECADE IN FILM: 2010-2019

## DIRECTOR OF THE DECADE

CHRIS SAYS:

1. **Martin Scorsese:** *STILL?* At an age when most auteurs are resting on their laurels, Scorsese spent his 70s churning out a string of grand work, including *Hugo*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, *Silence* and *The Irishman*. He also championed great works of international cinema, and stirred up controversy with some astute criticisms of modern blockbuster filmmaking.
2. **Richard Linklater:** Some of his efforts are pedestrian, but his long-in-the-works meditations on how we change and stay the same over time, *Boyhood* and *Before Midnight*, are masterful and uniquely his.
3. **Wes Anderson:** It's easy to dismiss his signature style, and late last decade he seemed in a creative rut. But there's a newfound maturity in the humor and eye-popping visuals of *Moonrise Kingdom* and *The Grand Budapest Hotel* that marks him as a true original who is still evolving. And he works in animation just as effectively as in live-action.
4. Also: **Paul Thomas Anderson:** I'm not as uniformly rapturous of his post-*There Will Be Blood* output as many cineastes, but there's no question that his trio of *The Master*, *Inherent Vice* and *The Phantom Thread* are as provocative and self-assured as they come.

LANCE SAYS:

1. **Alfonso Cuarón:** He made only two films this decade: *Gravity* and *Roma*. Each appearing very different than the other in terms of look, genre, language, and stride; and yet each displaying the director's unwavering fascinations with the despair of family's under duress, lives in crisis, and loneliness manifest in so many ways. Cuarón's direction may have been the conscience of the decade.
2. **Paul Thomas Anderson:** With *The Master*, *Inherent Vice*, and *Phantom Thread* (one film more stimulating than the next), Anderson's artistic vision and ambition are as undeniable now as in his bold debut 25 years ago.
3. **Steve McQueen:** A brash, auspicious visual artist, McQueen turned to film directing in his 2008 *Hunger*, a gritty and wrenching dramatization of IRA hunger strikers in Northern Ireland. This decade he followed up with three great films (*Shame*, *12 Years a Slave*, *Widows*), the first two in particular maintain his commitment to emotionally and somatically palpable strains of imprisonment—sex addiction and human slavery.
4. Also: **David Fincher**, winner of "best director of the first-half of the decade." His directorial output was three films in 2010, 2011, 2014: *The Social Network*, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, and *Gone Girl*, respectively. Each feature rich cinematography and even richer psychology; all unequivocally Fincher creations.

## SCREENWRITER OF THE DECADE

CHRIS SAYS:

1. **Greta Gerwig:** She was queen of the indies as an actress, but that was just the tip of the iceberg. She cowrote the delightful scripts to *Frances Ha* and *Mistress America* with partner Noah Baumbach, and, after moving behind the camera, deceptively sophisticated coming-of-age work with *Lady Bird* and *Little Women*.
2. **Asghar Farhadi:** Farhadi's complicated, all-encompassing dramas *A Separation* and *The Salesman* seem to capture the world in concise dramatic structure. The only living filmmaker to have helmed two Oscar winners for Best Foreign Language Film, both deserved.
3. **Jordan Peele:** Few filmmakers nimbly balance trenchant social criticism and high entertainment. *Get Out* was a stunner, and *US* proves it wasn't a fluke.

LANCE SAYS:

1. **Greta Gerwig:** Author of *Frances Ha*, *Mistress America*, *Lady Bird*, and *Little Women*, she's the decade's highest-percentage, winning screenwriter.
2. **Aaron Sorkin:** (*The Social Network*, *Moneyball*, *Steve Jobs*, *Molly's Game*) Already renowned for his TV, theater, and film scripts for politically informed content and walk-and-talk scenes, Sorkin really delivered this decade with four scripts better than anything he did before. With age, maybe those tortoise-shell glasses get less stifling.
3. **Julie Delpy, Ethan Hawke, & Richard Linklater:** (*Before Midnight*) Only one screenplay from this trio this term, but it's the third time in as many decades that we've witnessed these actors and their director uniting for a near-perfect cinematic waltz as collaborators and co-screenwriters. I don't know if we'll ever see this level of partnership from both sides of the camera again. Remember when Cannes 2013 broke with tradition and awarded its Palme d'Or to the director *and* two lead actors of *Blue Is the Warmest Color* because the committee felt all three were the true authors of the film? Maybe so. But Delpy, Hawke, and Linklater are the platinum standard in that demesne.

## ACTOR OF THE DECADE

CHRIS SAYS:

1. **Joaquin Phoenix:** He might pick up his first Oscar while dialed-up to 11 in *Joker*, but he's been flaunting his nervy, mesmerizing energy throughout the decade in *The Master*, *The Immigrant*, *Her*, *Inherent Vice* and *You Were Never Really Here*. Let's hope *Joker* doesn't do to him what *Pirates of the Caribbean* did to Johnny Depp!
2. **Daniel Day-Lewis:** He made only two films this decade, won his third Oscar, and retired. But those two performances, human and endearing in *Lincoln*, bristly and uncompromising in *The Phantom Thread*, are the gold standard.
3. **Adam Driver:** He was everywhere this decade, working with a who's who of notable directors including Scorsese, Spielberg, the Coens, Soderbergh, Jarmusch, Spike Lee, Baumbach, Gilliam, etc, and every time warranted the faith they invested in him. Oh, and he was the best thing in an uneven new *Star Wars* cycle.
4. Also: **Michael B. Jordan.** Though acting from a young age, Jordan achieved stardom with his compelling turn in *Fruitvale Station*, thrived in an impossible task replacing an icon in *Creed*, and was the first dynamic Marvel villain in *Black Panther*.

LANCE SAYS:

1. **Daniel Day-Lewis:** Two roles in ten years. Two home-runs as visionary men of their professions: the towering and determined titular president in *Lincoln*; the steely and fastidious fashion designer in *Phantom Thread*. Each a masterclass.
2. **Michael Fassbender:** A spellbinding performer who inhabits his roles in ways both fleshy and cerebral, Fassbender added an incredible range and number of performances to his CV this decade: woeful sex addict in *Shame*, canonical Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, merciless slave master in *12 Years a Slave*, determined psychoanalyst in *A Dangerous Method*, titular Apple founder in *Steve Jobs*.
3. **Mark Ruffalo:** Go-to guy in American film for the past 20 years: loveable, likeable, or infuriating as each role demands. Great turns this decade in *The Kids Are All Right*, *Shutter Island*, *Margaret*, *Foxcatcher*, *Spotlight*, and six times as The Hulk.
4. Also: **Ethan Hawke** (for his performances in *Before Midnight*, *Boyhood*, and the amazing *First Reformed*) and **Tom Hardy** (for a slew of great major and minor roles: from *Inception* to *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* to *The Dark Knight Rises* to *Mad Max: Fury Road* to *Locke* to *The Revenant*).

## ACTRESS OF THE DECADE

CHRIS SAYS:

1. **Saoirse Ronan:** Consistently impeccable and still in her mid-twenties, Ronan lived up to her early promise with irresistible turns in *Brooklyn*, *Lady Bird* and *Little Women*.
2. **Scarlett Johansson:** A more divisive figure, Johansson ruled the decade with her unusual star power, both flaunting and playing off her sex symbol status in posthuman science fiction like *Her*, *Under the Skin* and *Lucy*, serving as MVP of the Marvel franchise despite never headlining, and rounding things out in 2020 with a career-best double-header in *Marriage Story* and *Jojo Rabbit*.
3. **Lupita Nyong'o:** A smaller sample size, and that's almost a tragedy. After her sensational, Oscar-winning breakthrough in *12 Years a Slave*, one of the decade's best performances, she initially (tellingly) seemed to be relegated to voiceover. But she finally flourished in *Black Panther* and especially her smashing dual role in *US*, which should establish her as one of the biggest stars.
4. Also: **Cate Blanchett**, almost at a Streep level of versatility and star power, continued to class up every film she appeared in (and there were many)

LANCE SAYS:

1. **Saoirse Ronan:** No hesitation. She was the lead and the soulful center in three marvelous films: *Brooklyn*, *Lady Bird*, and *Little Women*. I can only imagine how many directors she has the potential to inspire as muse. Hands down the most talented actor of her generation.
2. **Amy Adams:** Just as a decade prior, in the 2010s Amy Adams wins the awards for All Star team and Most Reliable Player. Adroit in both starring and supporting roles, she was excellent in nearly a dozen films this decade: *The Fighter*, *The Master*, *Her*, three Superman movies, *Arrival*, *American Hustle*, *Vice*, *Nocturnal Animals*, *Big Eyes*, and even an endearing reboot of *The Muppets*.
3. **Michelle Williams:** A teen star in the 90s and a burgeoning film talent in the 00s, Williams exploded in 2010 as an achingly moving actress with a remarkable leading turn in *Blue Valentine*. She has followed that with tender, gritty performances in *My Week with Marilyn*, *Take This Waltz*, *Manchester by the Sea*, and the recent TV serial *Fosse/Verdon*.
4. **Jennifer Lawrence:** A prestige pictures ingenue with four Oscar nominations (*Winter's Bone*, *Silver Linings Playbook*, *American Hustle*, *Joy*) and a franchise fixture from the *X-Men* reboot to those *Hunger Games* movies, Lawrence had the first half of the decade in the palm of her hand.
5. Also: The across media acting standouts: **Patricia Arquette** and **Regina King**. Both won Oscars this decade for Best Supporting Actress for their stunning turns in *Boyhood* and *If Beale Street Could Talk*, respectively. But they also killed it and reaped award after award for all of their work on TV this decade.

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## **HYPHENATE OF THE DECADE**

CHRIS SAYS:

**Brad Pitt:** He bookended the decade with some of his best work as an actor. Weathered and relatable in the doubleheader of *The Tree of Life* and *Moneyball*; in full movie-star swagger in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. But he also produced or executive produced a string of the most significant films of the period, including *12 Years a Slave*, *Selma*, *Tree of Life*, *Moneyball*, *The Big Short*, *Moonlight*, *The Lost City of Z*, *Okja*, *Ad Astra* and *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*.

LANCE SAYS:

Agreed. Pitt was like Michael Douglas in the 1970s and George Clooney in the 2000s, finding his artistic comfort zone by alternating his work as star actor with bold, shrewd, empowering choices as producer.

## **OVERRATED FILMS OF THE DECADE**

CHRIS SAYS:

1. **Hereditary.** Toni Collette is magnificent, but the hackneyed horror “scares” of the climax sideline her (ditto for Florence Pugh in Ari Astor’s acclaimed *Midsommar*). 2. **Goodbye to Language.** I’m one of the philistines who prefers Godard’s early, playful work over his impenetrably experimental late era. I like pretentious (look at my list!), but good lord. 3. **Bohemian Rhapsody.** Okay, critics didn’t rate this film highly at all, but \$900 million and 5 Oscars for Rami Malek lip-syncing through grotesque prosthetic teeth? Pedestrian (and weirdly judgy) filmmaking. (And I do love Queen.)

LANCE SAYS:

1. **Life of Pi:** Heartbreak of the decade: The fall of Ang Lee. What a rough decade for one of our most talented directors. He made three films this decade. Two were abysmal: the boring and frighteningly (inexplicably) super-high-frame-rate filmed *Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk*; and the boring and frightening face-off of Will Smith with his CGI-molded younger self in *Gemini Man*. Lee’s most acclaimed film this decade was *Life of Pi* (earning him a second Oscar as Best Director), another visually ambitious exercise, but also a boring dud without its pageantry. I love no less than seven Ang Lee films. Sadly, it’s been since 2007 that I have been able to claim a new one. 2. **Argo:** Hollywood to the rescue. Snore. 3. Ambitious live-action musicals that made for just okay movies: *Les Misérables*, *Into the Woods*, *The Greatest Showman*, the parade of recent Disney live-action reboots, etc.

## **UNDERRATED FILMS OF THE DECADE**

CHRIS SAYS:

1. **Annihilation:** Critics celebrated Alex Garland’s austere sci-fi meditation, but it got buried by a studio that didn’t believe in brainy sci-fi. 2. **Mistress America:** Baumbach and Gerwig’s sparkling follow-up to *Frances Ha*. 3. **Star Wars: The Last Jedi:** It topped a billion dollars and was critically acclaimed—but was piled on relentlessly by rabid fans for daring to (slightly!) challenge and democratize the tired clichés of franchise filmmaking, an ominous sign for the decade to come.

LANCE SAYS:

I’ve chosen three films from my Top 100 that mystifyingly made almost none of the “best of” lists by critics. 1. **A Quiet Passion:** This biopic on the understated daily life and boundless artistic mind of Emily Dickinson is the decade’s best literary love letter. 2. **Love & Friendship:** Based on the last incomplete work of Jane Austen and adapted by indie cinema’s 1990s darling of sophisticated conversation (Whit Stillman of *Metropolitan*), this was a perfect pairing of director and source material. Also, a fun yet funny period piece. Tougher to pull off than you think. 3. **Stories We Tell:** Written and directed by Canadian film darling Sarah Polley (an indie movie star in her teens before she became an Academy Award-nominated writer/director), this pseudo-biopic imagines her family’s history through found footage, reenacted footage, and stuff somewhere in-between.

## **LOOKING BACK AT YOUR TOP 10 FROM A DECADE AGO: 2000-2009**

CHRIS SAYS:

I’m pretty good with my choices, though I’d tweak the order a bit. The dreadful *Hobbit* films have sapped some of the glow from *The Lord of the Rings*, but I still love those; *Children of Men* was rising in my estimation as the decade ended (it had crept into my top 20), but it would be well into my top 10 now. My top ten now would likely be: (1) *Before Sunset*; (2) *Mulholland Drive*; (3) *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*; (4) *In the Mood For Love*; (5) *There Will Be Blood*; (6) *The Royal Tenenbaums*; (7) *Children of Men*; (8) *Lost in Translation*; (9) *The Lord of the Rings*; (10) *A Christmas Tale*.

LANCE SAYS:

I’m also cool with my choices from a decade ago, bearing in mind some minor tweaks. *In the Mood for Love* and *Mulholland Drive* unequivocally jump into my top 10 list now, after bubbling under at #11 and #16 in 2010. Otherwise, I’m just rearranging a couple movies. My 2000-2009 Top Ten would be: (1) *Far from Heaven*; (2) *Yi-Yi*; (3) *Beau Travail*; (4) *Before Sunset*; (5) *There Will Be Blood*; (6) *In the Mood for Love*; (7) *Mulholland Drive*; (8) *Caché*; (9) *Brokeback Mountain*; (10) *The House of Mirth*.