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Film

Two times ten

We're making our lists and checking them twice. By TOC Film Staff

Still in theaters

- Black Swan
- Burlesque
- Carlos
- Due Date
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- For Colored Girls
- The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest
- Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1
- Idiots and Angels
- Inside Job
- Love & Other Drugs
- Made in Dagenham
- Megamind
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- Morning Glory
- The Next Three Days
- 127 Hours
- Red
- Saw 3D
- 7 Days in Slow Motion
- Skyline
- The Social Network
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- The Town
- Unstoppable
- Waiting for "Superman"
- The Warrior's Way
- Welcome to the Rileys



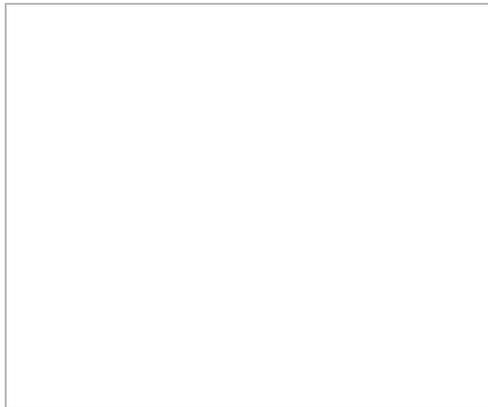
REVOLUTIONARY GOAD Benicio Del Toro wants *Che* at number 1 on both our lists.

It's all over but the shouting. The year has provided a lot of much-hyped disappointments, and you'll notice the absence of certain much-mentioned films from both our lists (*Benjamin Button*, *Doubt*, *Revolutionary Road*, et al.). But top tens aren't about what we were supposed to like. So here without further ado, our lists.

Ben Kenigsberg, Film writer:

- Che** Steven Soderbergh's brilliant anti-biopic deliberately holds Che Guevara at an iconic remove; no film this year was so determined to test the boundaries of what film could depict. In compulsively, sometimes surreally focusing on the minutiae of jungle warfare, it creates a world to get lost in—to contemplate and debate. The movie opens in Chicago in two parts on January 16.
- Paranoid Park** Shot for shot, the year's most perfectly judged film, delineating the dilemma of its tortured adolescent protagonist (newcomer Gabe Nevins) through precision editing and a flawless, mainly nonprofessional cast. Gus Van Sant had a banner year between this and *Milk*, which might have made this list on another day.
- Hunger** Easily the year's best debut, portraying the buildup to Bobby Sands's 1981 hunger strike as a sensationally visualized hell of rebellions and reprisals. No, I'm not in the tank for IFC Films, which released all three of my top picks. (I'd praised two before they were bought.) Opens in March.
- WALL•E** It's about time Disney made a postapocalyptic, anticorporate, environmentalist family film.
- The Wrestler** Proof that evoking your milieu with insane confidence can take you a long way. Mickey Rourke helps.
- Flight of the Red Balloon** Taiwanese filmmaker Hou Hsiao-hsien shows once again that no working director is so attuned to the possibilities of light and framing. IFC again—is anyone else buying interesting festival fare?
- Changeling** Okay, the acting is erratic. But isn't this the kind of movie that people usually overpraise Clint Eastwood for making—classical, slyly self-critical, morally ambiguous? A procedural in which the truth keeps shifting and evidence is routinely ignored, it begs to be read as allegory.
- Burn After Reading** This seemed like a disappointment in Toronto, but like other Coen brothers films, it only gets funnier with repeat viewings. As Brad Pitt's bouffanted doofus says, "Appearances can be...deceptive."
- A Christmas Tale** Arnaud Desplechin's novelistic family reunion movie finally channels his crazy narrative gambits into a stable structure. Goddamn you, IFC, for making me look like a

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Film 2.0
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TOCblogs

Five things to do Sunday 12: Holiday Express. "Daniel Shea: Lesson 1: Misanthropy"

ART & DESIGN - "Daniel Shea: Lesson 1: Misanthropy" The artist's summer ACRE residency yields new works in photography, sculpture and video, which explore "longing and potential" from a nihilisti...

12/12/10 9:00 am

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Video

Film trailers

skill.

10. *Synechdoche, New York* Charlie Kaufman's directorial debut registers like a pair of live wires attached to the brain.

Hank Sartin, Film editor:

- 1. *Milk* At first I was thrown by the conventionality of Gus Van Sant's biopic, but it grew on me. The straightforward approach lets Harvey Milk's amazing strength of character and Sean Penn's stellar performance take center stage.
- 2. *Hunger* Filmmaker Steve McQueen tells the story of Irish hunger striker Bobby Sands in three "acts" that move through near silence to an incredible dialogue scene and then back to a hushed observational approach. Devastating.
- 3. *Che* The idea of a four-hour account of Che Guevara's military campaigns—without any of the usual biopic back story—sounds daunting, but in Steven Soderbergh's hands it's riveting.
- 4. *Dear Zachary: A Letter to a Son About His Father* Yes, as some charge, this documentary about the aftermath of a murder is manipulative, but so is all film. Is that so wrong? Kurt Kuenne's careful management of pacing packs an emotional wallop.
- 5. *Happy-Go-Lucky* Mike Leigh takes a break from his usual grim characters and focuses on someone who always sees the sunny side. Is she crazy? Infuriating? Some sort of wise fool? We're left to consider whether we're even supposed to like the main character.
- 6. *WALL-E* Yes, the part in space can't possibly live up to the wonderful first half-hour, but it's still a great movie that manages to get across a message without jamming it down our throats.
- 7. *The Order of Myths* This doc about Mobile, Alabama's separate black and white mardi gras celebrations gives a rich and nuanced take on a tough topic, and it's a healthy corrective for all the talk about our "postracial" America.
- 8. *The Dark Knight* Seriously, it's not provincial Chicago bias at work: Christopher Nolan has big things on his mind, and despite our quibbles about Christian Bale's throaty vocal choice, this is an awesome achievement.
- 9. *Let the Right One In* For pure chilly pleasure, this creepy Swedish vampire flick can't be beat. Every crunch of snow, every frosty midnight landscape throbs with potential menace.
- 10. *The Witnesses* The moral murkiness of André Téchiné's AIDS drama put some people off; characters do good things for bad reasons. But that moral messiness is what I loved. It's raw and honest and says a lot about how it felt to live through the 1980s.

For more of the best of 2008, visit timeoutchicago.com/2008lists.

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In honor of *Saw 3D*, a look at series' seventh films



Edward Norton goes con in *Stone*

On demand



Colin Fitz Lives!
The makers of this 1997 comedy thank David Mamet, but they owe more to Kevin Smith.



Mythical movie musicians
In honor of *Colin Fitz Lives!*, we assess some fictional musical acts from the movies.

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From Shout! Factory, Joe Dante's *Piranha*



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