

## **BFI Announces *Sight & Sound's* Films of the Year 2015**



### **Taiwanese martial arts epic, *The Assassin*, tops *Sight & Sound* poll with strong women featuring heavily in Top Ten**

**Embargo 00:01 Friday 27 November, London** – The international film magazine, *Sight & Sound's* hotly anticipated **Films of the Year** poll today reveals ***The Assassin***, from Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-Hsien, has been voted the best film of 2015, followed by Todd Haynes' ***Carol*** and ***Mad Max: Fury Road*** from director George Miller. The annual poll saw 168 UK and international film critics nominate their top five films from the year and will be published in full in the January 2016 issue of *Sight & Sound* and online at [bfi.org.uk/best-films-2015](http://bfi.org.uk/best-films-2015). The results mark 2015 as a year of strong female characters and stories as well as documentary on the big screen.

**Nick James, Editor, *Sight & Sound*** said "It's pleasing that such a gorgeous work of revenge, magic and delicate restraint – a work of martial arts cinema only in the loosest sense – should win out with the critics. Todd Haynes's swooning, subtle lesbian melodrama *Carol* has no peers in terms of craft and guile, so it's no surprise to see it in one of the top spots. On the other hand, finding George Miller's mega-chase-movie *Mad Max: Fury Road* in third place might seem a surprise but many critics have waited a long while for such a sharp, vivid and imaginative blockbuster."

Seven of the poll's Top Ten films have striking female leads, including *The Assassin's* heroine played by Shu Qi. *The Assassin* will screen at BFI Southbank from 22 January 2016 when it opens for general release. *Carol*, in second place, focuses on not one but two women leads, featuring Rooney Mara and Cate Blanchett who was recently awarded a BFI Fellowship. Both films had UK premieres at the BFI

London Film Festival. The dystopian blockbuster *Mad Max: Fury Road* in third place sees Charlize Theron drive the story as Imperator Furiosa, while the title character played by Tom Hardy, takes a passenger's seat.

Asif Kapadia's *Amy* (9<sup>th</sup> place) and Chantal Akerman's *No Home Movie* (6<sup>th</sup> place) not only focus on two women but also demonstrate an increase in critic's votes for documentaries. Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Look of Silence* was voted in joint 19<sup>th</sup> place. This may reflect the rise in documentaries being theatrically released.

Two British films were voted in the Top Ten – *45 Years* backed by the BFI Film Fund and directed by Andrew Haigh is positioned in seventh place and is joined by *Amy* in ninth. Other British films nominated includes Carol Morley's *The Falling*, Terence Davies' *Sunset Song*, Ben Wheatley's *High Rise*, Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*, Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth*, Peter Strickland's *The Duke of Burgundy*, Steve Oram's *Aaaaaaaah!*, Sarah Turner's *Public House* and Sean McAllister's *A Syrian Love Story*.

Hou Hsiao-Hsien was voted best director at Cannes for *The Assassin* and interestingly the Cannes Palme d'Or winner *Deepan* was not voted in the Top 20. *Taxi Tehran* placed at just 14 in *Sight & Sound*'s poll but won the Berlinale Golden Bear 2015.

To explore the full results of the **Films of the Year 2015** poll visit [bfi.org.uk/best-films-2015](http://bfi.org.uk/best-films-2015), the top 20 have been listed below.

1. **The Assassin** Hou Hsiao-Hsien
2. **Carol** Todd Haynes
3. **Mad Max: Fury Road** George Miller
4. **Arabian Nights** Miguel Gomes
5. **Cemetery of Splendour** Apichatpong Weerasethakul
6. **No Home Movie** Chantal Akerman
7. **45 Years** Andrew Haigh
8. **Son of Saul** La'szló Nemes
9. **Amy** Asif Kapadia
10. **Inherent Vice** Paul Thomas Anderson
11. **Anomalisa** Duke Johnson & Charlie Kaufman
- = **It Follows** David Robert Mitchell
13. **Phoenix** Christian Petzold
14. **Girlhood** Céline Sciamma
- = **Hard to Be a God** Aleksei German
- = **Inside Out** Pete Docter
- = **Tangerine** Sean Baker
- = **Taxi Tehran** Jafar Panahi
19. **Horse Money** Pedro Costa
- = **The Look of Silence** Joshua Oppenheimer

Last year's annual winner was Richard Linklater's *Boyhood*, followed by Jean Luc Godard's *Goodbye to Language 3D*, Andrey Zvyagintsev's *Leviathan* and Pedro Costa's *Horse Money* positioned joint third place.

## **About the BFI**

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

## **PRESS CONTACTS**

**Elizabeth Dunk – Press Office Assistant**

[elizabeth.dunk@bfi.org.uk](mailto:elizabeth.dunk@bfi.org.uk) / +44 (0) 20 7957 8986

**Judy Wells – Head of Press and PR , BFI**

[judy.wells@bfi.org.uk](mailto:judy.wells@bfi.org.uk) / +44 (0) 207 957 8919 / 07984 180501

Images of the film nominated in Sight and Sound's Film of the Year Poll are available at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under BFI / Sight & Sound Films of the Year 2015