

2013: A Review

The film team pick their favourite films of last year. How many have you seen?

By [Francesca Donovan](#), [Christoph Macdowall](#), [Michael Brennan](#), [Alfie Packham](#), [James Lovatt](#), [Katy Sandalls](#), [Niall Whitehead](#), [Anwen Baker](#), [Kate Barlow](#) and [Gemma Horton](#)

Tuesday 21 January 2014

Django Unchained



2013 started with a literal bang in the release of Quentin Tarantino's much-awaited *Django Unchained*. Foxx, DiCaprio and Tarantino veteran Christoph Waltz deliver captivating, believable performances throughout; no mean feat considering the uniquely tongue-in-cheek stylisation synonymous with Tarantino. Not one to shy away from controversy, Tarantino tackles the sensitive narrative subject – slavery in America's deep South – with his usual graphic flair and finesse, culminating in a gripping combination of disturbingly violent displays and heart-warming characterisation of the protagonist duo.

As the infamous director's highest grossing film to date and the recipient of a multitude of Academy Awards and nominations, the blockbuster cemented Tarantino's place in twenty-first century popular movie culture.

F.D.

Only God Forgives



Having divided audiences last year, *Only God Forgives* is an extreme film in many ways – extremely violent, extremely stylised, with an extremely quiet Gosling. However, it's also a beautiful, haunting and totally unconventional presentation of violence, redemption and one man's self-imposed hell. Thanks to the strength of Refn as a director and strong performances from the cast, this is a film that will get under

your skin and stay there. And if nothing else, it's one of the most visually brilliant films ever made.
C.M.

Frozen



Frozen is a modern classic; a sincere fairytale for the post-cynicism generation. By sidelining the overdone romantics of the genre, it leaves room to explore a rarer story of the estrangement between two sisters, brilliantly reinventing Disney tropes by shifting perspective. Supported by a witty, stirring soundtrack that pivots around the instantly-iconic 'Let It Go', I'd be surprised if there was a single movie in 2013 as simply joyous as *Frozen*.

M.B.

Prisoners



The parents of two missing girls hunt for their daughters' kidnapper in one of 2013's overlooked gems. Ethical conundrum, buttock-clenching suspense, a landmark performance from Jake Gyllenhaal, and yet more suspense ensues.

A.P.

Gravity



Probably the best thing I saw in a cinema this year was the *Doctor Who* 50th Anniversary special, but that's not a movie so it's disqualified. So, keeping with the theme of random women being sent out into space where everything wants to kill them, let's talk about *Gravity*.

The premise is simple – woman is stranded in space. It's cold outside, there's no kind of atmosphere and she's all alone (more or less). It's how it's done that sells it: long, sweeping shots across eternal voids and the Earth's surface, near-constant tension, convincing performances from both of its cast and an atmosphere that flits seamlessly between claustrophobic and agoraphobic like a girl picking an outfit on club night.

It's not a movie I'd get on DVD, but in 3D on a big screen it actually managed to make me feel a bit sick. In a good way.

N.W.

Captain Phillips



No director today does tension like Paul Greengrass. His frenetic hand-held camerawork fixes you to your seat and stops your heart. Couple this with astonishingly compelling performances from Tom Hanks and debutant Barkhad Abdi, and you have a film that is unquestionably going to flourish at this year's Oscars. J.L.

Star Trek: Into Darkness



Into Darkness has stunning visuals, a second to none cast and a dark but emotive storyline. J.J. Abrams has again managed to create a story which could please Trekkies as well as a larger cinema going audience. Whilst Benedict Cumberbatch's moving portrayal of Kahn proved a satisfying addition to the franchise.

K.S.

The Hunger Games: Catching Fire



If the first film was anything to go by then it was surely a given that *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* was going to be a thrill. Katniss Everdeen, played by the fantastically talented Jennifer Lawrence, is forced back into the brutal world of the Hunger Games and made to fight for her life once more. With a greater focus on the simmering rebellion at hand, and a host of new characters, this chapter in the *Hunger Games* is able to concentrate on the overarching themes of the trilogy and not solely on the actions. Sharp, rich

and hugely compelling, *Catching Fire* is definitely my film of 2013.

A.B.

Thor: The Dark World



Alan Taylor's *Thor: The Dark World* may not be the best from the Avengers movie selection, but it was still an enjoyable film. Thor managed to catch up with Jane, whilst her sidekick Darcy provided plenty of laughs and down-to-earth humour. There was hammer throwing, scientific explanations with plot holes and chaos on Earth: perfect for a superhero film. Chris Hemsworth easily grew into the role of Thor, but it was Tom Hiddleston's Loki which stole the show for me. He gave the character layers of emotion, while retaining his sharp wit. Although the villain Malkeith wasn't memorable, it was Loki who stole Thor's thunder.

G.H.

The Great Beauty



Toni Servillo's portrayal of Jep Gambadella, a 60-something looking back on his life of enjoyment of the lavish nightlife of Rome, is haunting. *The Great Beauty* is a masterclass in cinematic beauty, speaking with unforgettable honesty about life, ageing and loss. The most visually stunning film of the year.

K.B.



Most Read Discussed

1. [Short Film Sunday: All These Creatures](#)
2. [TV Review: Endeavour – Series 3 Episode 2: 'Arcadia'](#)
3. [TV Review: Vera Series 5 Episode 2: 'Old Wounds'](#)
4. [Film meets fact – why is historical accuracy important?](#)
5. [TV Review: Endeavour – Series 3 Episode 4: 'Coda'](#)
6. [TV Review: Endeavour Series 2 Episode 2](#)

Write for Nouse Film & TV

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

More in Film & TV

[Short Film Sunday: All These Creatures](#)

[Interview: Get Ready With Me director Jonatan Etzler](#)

[Short Film Sunday: Fauve](#)

[Netflix sued by Satanic Temple](#)

[Vintage Sundays Review: The Wizard of Oz](#)

[Review: Manbiki Kazoku \(Shoplifters\)](#)

- [About Nouse](#)
- [Who's Nouse](#)
- [Website Credits](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Student Discounts](#)
- [Print Editions](#)
- [Mini-Sites](#)
- [Nouse on Twitter](#)
- [Nouse on Facebook](#)
- [Nouse on Google+](#)

