

List: Memorable Moments of 2015

A few choice bits from the year's choicest movies.

By [Jonathan Kiefer](#) December 28, 2015

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'Tom at the Farm'

In polling Keyframe critics and friends about their year in film, we wanted to hear not just about the big-picture stuff, like [overall favorite films](#), but also the little things—those special scenes, beats, bits of business, even single images—that make moviegoing most worthwhile. This is the stuff cinephiles live for.

Editor's note: Some of these moments might be considered spoilers. But if they're momentous enough, maybe that's okay. As to whether they've been "ranked" (numbered) or not, we've left that to each individual critic's discretion. Titles in bold on first mention only.

[Jeffrey Anderson](#)

1. **Creed** (Ryan Coogler): the second fight, shot in what appears to be a single take.
2. **The Night Before** (Jonathan Levine): playing "Runaway" on the big F.A.O. Schwartz piano.
3. **Spotlight** (Tom McCarthy): going to press.
4. **Spectre** (Sam Mendes): first appearance of Blofeld, at the meeting, in silhouette.
5. **The Assassin** ([Hou Hsiao-hsien](#)): Nie Yinniang hiding behind the curtain.
6. **Taxi** ([Jafar Panahi](#)): "Any film is worth watching."
7. **Mad Max: Fury Road** (George Miller): washing the blood off with mother's milk.

8. *Straight Outta Compton* (F. Gary Gray): performing “Fuck the Police” in Detroit
9. *Welcome to Me* (Shira Piven): eating meat cake live on the air.
10. *Time Out of Mind* (Oren Moverman): Richard Gere begging on the New York City sidewalk, and no one looks at him.

Sean Axmaker

1. *Clouds of Sils Maria* ([Olivier Assayas](#)): The Maloja Snake floats through the valley like a ghost train in the sky.
2. *Crimson Peak* (Guillermo del Toro): In the opening and final shots, the palette is pared down to a single color: red, seeping into the black-and-white landscape like the blood that has soaked the house.
3. *The Salvation* (Kristian Levring): Any close-up of Eva Green, her hard eyes and clenched mouth and the scar down her face, communicating everything she feels.

Conor Bateman

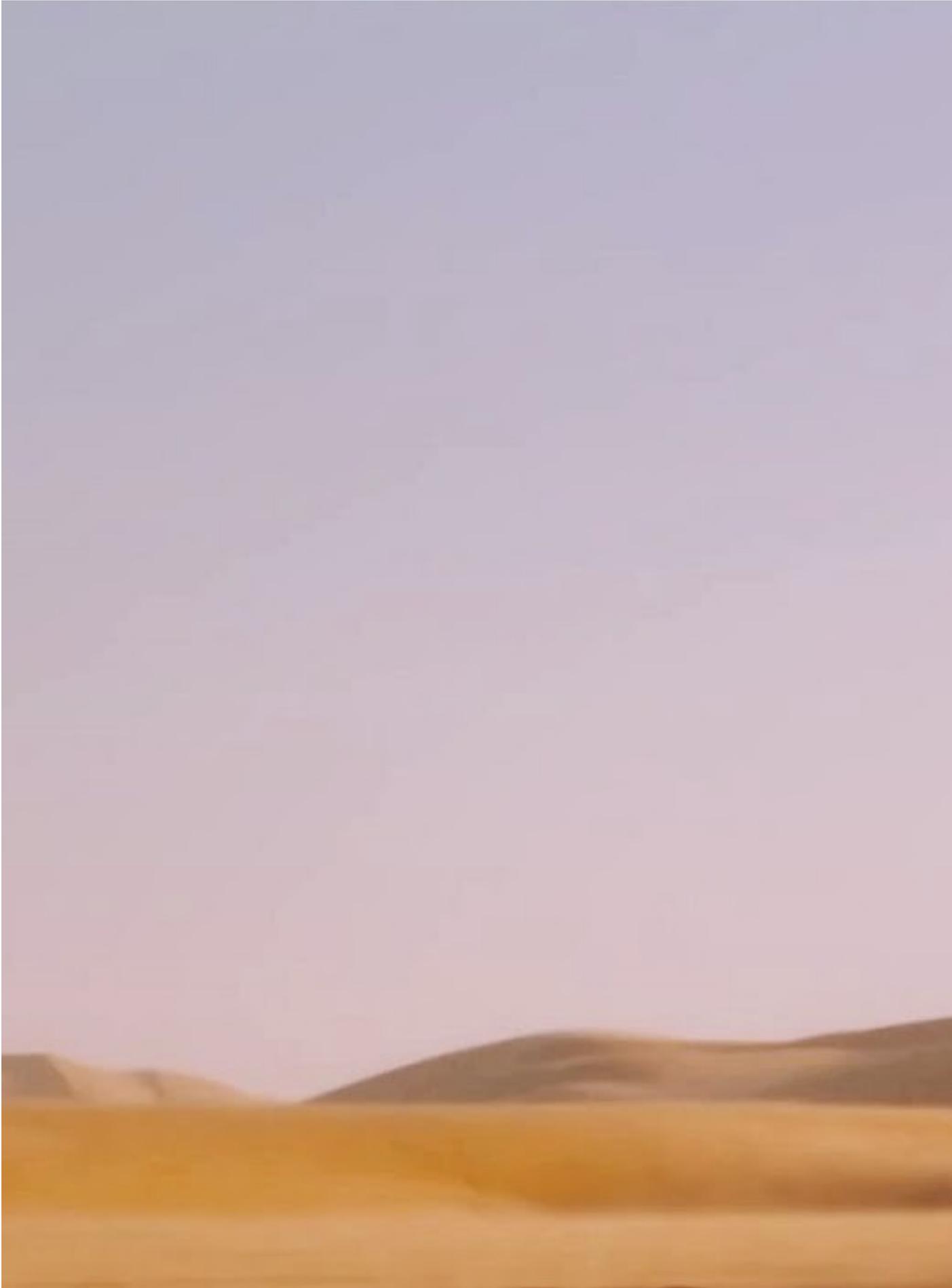
1. *Taxi*: the long take that opens the film, a wonderfully engaging look at the city of Tehran underscored by the unseen voices of bickering passengers
2. *Cemetery of Splendor* ([Apichatpong Weerasethakul](#)): dissolve between the escalators outside a cinema in a shopping centre and the hospital beds lit up by coloured fluorescent lights
3. *Tom at the Farm* ([Xavier Dolan](#)): the waltz in the barn that feels like it’s from a completely different film
4. *Phoenix* ([Christian Petzold](#)): the stunning final sequence and performance
5. *Ricki and the Flash* (Jonathan Demme): the family restaurant scene

Steven Boone

The montages in *The Grief of Others* (Patrick Wang).

Serena Bramble

When *Fury Road* and *Far From the Madding Crowd* were released at the same time, and I had the amazing dilemma of being able to choose between two feminist movies involving someone named Tom Hardy.



'Mad Max: Fury Road'

Nelson Carvajal

1. *Sicario* ([Denis Villeneuve](#)): Alejandro kills the family of drug kingpin Fausto Alarcon at their dinner table.
2. *Legend*: Reggie Kray goes apeshit and murders Jack McVitie at his brother's holiday party.
3. *Taxi*: Ending scene where street hoodlums steal the mounted camera from Panahi's taxi dashboard.
4. *Mad Max: Fury Road*: Furiosa realizes her home no longer exists and she drops to her knees and screams at the foreboding desert.
5. *Wild Tales* (Damián Szifrón): Everyone on the plane realizes they were all deceived in a diabolical plot to have their plane crashed.

Aaron Cutler

A November screening of work by the Spanish video artist María Cañas at the [Cinemateca Brasileira](#) as part of the series "MIRA," devoted to Spanish-language experimental cinema. Cañas works entirely with Internet-based found-footage materials that she weaves together in symphonic fashion. Her best works that I have seen, such as 2013's *Sé villana* (*La Sevilla del diablo*), are both funny and terrifying in their rendering of a nightmare of modern life whose highs and lows rub constantly against each other. Some of her work can be seen [here](#).

Brian Darr

1. *The Assassin*: bedchamber
2. *Phoenix*: "Speak Low"
3. *Ricki and the Flash*: "My Love Will Not Let You Down"
4. *Love & Mercy* (Bill Pohlad): recording "God Only Knows"
5. *Black Coal, Thin Ice* ([Diao Yinan](#)): hairdresser's
6. *Straight Outta Compton*: Detroit concert
7. *Office* (Johnnie To): staircase throng
8. *Jauja* ([Lisandro Alonso](#)): cave
9. *The Taking of Tiger Mountain* (Tsui Hark): tiger
10. *Iris* ([Albert Maysles](#)): crush on the filmmaker

David Ehrenstein

Clip of his scene from *The Sopranos* in [Peter Bogdanovich](#)'s *She's Funny That Way*.

Marilyn Ferdinand

James White (Josh Mond): James is painting a picture for his dying mother of an imaginary life in Paris, where he is happily married and successful and she is enjoying his children and her life. The intimacy and generosity of the moment reminds us that illusions have their place and that caring for a dying loved one offers us a unique chance at love and intimacy that we should embrace.



'Tokyo Tribe'

[Jaime Grijalba](#)

1. *Victoria* (Sebastian Schipper): Victoria plays the piano
2. *Wolf Totem* (Jean-Jacques Annaud): horses in the frozen lake
3. *Tokyo Tribe* ([Sion Sono](#)): beatboxing girl
4. *Wild Tales*: Bombita
5. *Li'l Quinquin* ([Bruno Dumont](#)): on two wheels
6. *Inside Out* (Pete Docter, Ronnie del Carmen): abstract thought
7. *The Assassin*: opening
8. *The Pearl Button* ([Patricio Guzmán](#)): throwing the body in
9. *Mad Max: Fury Road*: sand storm
10. *Arabian Nights: Volume 2, The Desolate One* ([Miguel Gomes](#)): the trial

[Glenn Heath Jr.](#)

Phoenix: the finale

[Glen Helfand](#)

1. *Amboy* (Frances Scholz, Mark von Schlegell) : this might technically be an art installation, which showed at the Wattis Institute in San Francisco, but it was a thrilling piece of fractured, multi-channel cinema that merged sci-fi, art school, [Paul Giamatti](#) and a whole host of film genres into a strangely compelling experience.
2. *Office*: the sets in this international finance melodrama musical are a dazzling merger of minimalism and theatrical glitz—[Lars von Trier](#)'s *Dogville* and [Jacques Tati](#)'s *Playtime* gone Broadway and CGI.
3. *The Revenant* (Alejandro González Iñárritu): the bear mauling scene—one of the litany of bloody, bone-crushing humiliations that the Leonardo DiCaprio character endures—is a piece of awe-inspiring cinema, a how-did-they-film-that moment that somehow manages to play believably.

Mark Holcomb

1. *Creep* (Patrick Brice): Soft-hearted Aaron (Patrick Brice) makes one last concession to the stalker ([Mark Duplass](#)) he misguidedly pities, but before you can throw a shoe at the screen and yell, "NO, you dumbfuck!" you remember that it's totally in character for him. A minor movie, but genre screenwriting is rarely this tight.
2. *Felt* ([Jason Banker](#)): The penultimate costume change, in which Amy (Amy Everson) proudly flexes in her

foreskin-faced, musclebound mansuit in the warm California twilight. This teases a liberating and even healthy turn for her that sadly (and, narrative-wise, disappointingly) never materializes, but for a little while it's a relief to see her finally comfortable in somebody's skin.

3. *It Follows* (David Robert Mitchell): The clamshell e-reader comes out, and it's even more plain that this isn't just another empty eighties horror-nostalgia jaunt.

4. *Mad Max: Fury Road*: In a movie where practically every moment is a Moment, one stands out: Our (non)hero, having narrowly escaped a horrific, humiliating vehicular death, first confronts his liberators/captors—a group of angel-garbed supermodel types and their punk-rock-goddess wrangler. Instead of cutting loose with a double-take or a wolf whistle or any number of cliched, lecherous responses, however, Rockatansky (Tom Hardy) just wants a drink of milk. Interesting dystopia they've got there.

5. *Predestination* (Peter and Michael Spierig): The unmarried mother (Sarah Snook) sits awkwardly in the SpaceCorps foyer with a dozen other would-be “hostesses,” waiting to interview for a job she's unqualified for in ways that we—and she—can't even begin to anticipate.



‘Carol’

[Eric Hynes](#)

1. *Phoenix*: last scene

2. *Carol* ([Todd Haynes](#)): first meeting in the department store, sex scene, last shot— i.e. all of it

3. *Arabian Nights: Volume 2*: “Say You, Say Me” scene

4. *Clouds of Sils Maria*: Juliette Binoche scrolling through Google Image search

5. *(T)error* ([Eugene Jarecki](#)): the moment we flip from one side of the story to the other

6. *Western* (Bill Ross, Turner Ross): holding camera on Martin as he tries to explain away the suspicious plane crash that imperils his livelihood

7. *The Iron Ministry* ([J. P. Sniadecki](#)): following a concessions cart down the aisle of a crowded train; panning from young men opining about China to a man sweeping trash up the aisle

8. *Results* ([Andrew Bujalski](#)): [Kevin Corrigan](#) taking pictures of pizza; Guy Pearce hanging upside down mid-conversation
9. *We Come As Friends* (Hubert Sauper): panning from drunken expatriate louts to a Sudanese laborer cleaning trash outside the window
10. *45 Years* ([Andrew Haigh](#)): Rampling in the attic, flipping through slides

[Gary M. Kramer](#)

1. *Slow West* (John Maclean): the salt falling in the wound in the final shootout. Palpable and painful.
2. *99 Homes* ([Ramin Bahrani](#)): Michael Shannon's speech about the American Dream
3. *Brooklyn* (John Crowley): Saoirse Ronan entering America
4. *Glass Chin* (Noah Buschel): Billy Crudup's scene in Corey Stoll's kitchen
5. *Wild Tales*: the bride throwing her groom's mistress into the mirror
6. *Tangerine* ([Sean Baker](#)): the carwash sex scene
7. *The Overnight* (Patrick Brice): Adam Scott and Jason Schwartzman letting it all hang out
8. *Eastern Boys* (Robin Campillo): the apartment being robbed
9. *Furious 7* (James Wan): the Paul Walker montage
10. *Grandma* (Paul Weitz): Lily Tomlin's encounter with Sam Elliott

[Thomas Logoreci](#)

Inherent Vice (Paul Thomas Anderson): The tears welling up in the eyes of Joaquin Phoenix's hippie private detective, Doc, as his nemesis, the crew-cut cop, Bigfoot, played by Josh Brolin, devours his entire marijuana stash.

Krom: Klodiana Keco as the mute, desperate mother soberly smashing up her family's dishware in director Bujar Alimani's best Albanian fiction feature of the year.

A German Youth (Jean-Gabriel Périot): The closing minutes of Périot's doc about the Baader-Meinhof group deftly utilizes Rainer Werner Fassbinder's segment from the 1978 omnibus *Germany in Autumn* where the director engages in an angry debate with his mother. The furious echo of the late German master's voice cutting through the late night outdoor screening at Prizren, Kosovo's Dokufest was the high point of my movie year; somehow containing the promise of what the cinema once was and still could be.



'Germany in Autumn,' as seen in 'A German Youth'

[Adrian Martin](#)

La Sapienza (Eugène Green): "I am Bernini."

[Michael Pattison](#)

1. *Sicario*: border crossing
2. *The Tribe* (Miroslav Slaboshpitsky): four bedside cabinets
3. *Love* (Gaspar Noé): stereoscopic semen
4. *45 Years*: withdrawn hand
5. *Amour Fou* ([Jessica Hausner](#)) shot in the back
6. *Tangerine*: launderette pals
7. *The Royal Road* ([Jenni Olson](#)): cartographic evolution of US territory
8. *Mad Max: Fury Road*: flaming gee-tar!
9. *Maps to the Stars* ([David Cronenberg](#)): celebrating tragic news
10. *Spectre*: Hinx speaks!

[David Riedel](#)

Grandma, when Sam Elliott is a total bastard to Lily Tomlin. I would have put his performance in my Best Performances list but it's really short and too hateful for me to be really comfortable with. But it proves that Elliott's charm can be used for evil as well as good.

[Justine Smith](#)

1. *Mad Max: Fury Road*: First introduction of The Doof Warrior literally brought tears to my eyes—such an ecstatic meeting of sound, image and imagination.
2. *The Duke of Burgundy* (Peter Strickland): The homage to [Stan Brakhage](#)'s *Mothlight*—not only a fitting visual tribute, but the ambient sound of insects was a fitting touch that added so much textural richness to an already beautiful image. The summation of decorative identity and animalistic anxiety.
3. *Love*: The ballsiness of opening your film by bringing you up close and personal with an intimate sexual moment. It was sexy, confrontational and loaded with so much emotional baggage. Feeds my obsession with human bodies in motion.
4. *Timbuktu* ([Abderrahmane Sissako](#)): Children playing football with an imaginary ball
5. *Phoenix*: As Nelly sings “Speak Low,” her voice growing stronger, the piano queues out as her husband and friends realize the truth of their complicity in her trauma.
6. *Queen of Earth* ([Alex Ross Perry](#)): Opening sequence with [Elisabeth Moss](#)' face wet with tears and mascara. Perfect image, and a scene that challenges the comfort of romantic relationships.
7. *The Forbidden Room*: “The Final Derriere.”
8. *James White*: Handjob in the shower. Love its sadness and awkwardness.
9. *Ex Machina*: Not a huge fan of the movie, but Oscar Isaac and Sonoya Mizuno's dance sequence is cinematic poetry.



'Ex Machina'

[Jacob T. Swinney](#)

Steve Jobs (Danny Boyle): As Jobs approaches his launch of NeXT, he runs into former colleague John Sculley. Besides being a showcase of brilliant acting between Michael Fassbender and Jeff Daniels, the scene informs us of everything we were not shown between acts one and two. As the scene jumps decisively between flashbacks and the present, Aaron Sorkin's sharp dialogue battles Daniel Pemberton's building score as the confrontation comes to a head of unbearable tension—and then it simply releases.

Contributors to *Keyframe*'s 2015 Year-end Poll: [Jeffrey M. Anderson](#), [Sean Axmaker](#), [Cristina Álvarez López](#), [Conor Bateman](#), [Steven Boone](#), [Chuck Bowen](#), [Serena Bramble](#), [Adam Cook](#), [Aaron Cutler](#), [Jordan Cronk](#), [Mike D'Angelo](#), [Brian Darr](#), [Nick Davis](#), [David Ehrenstein](#), [Steve Erickson](#), [Marilyn Ferdinand](#), [Kenji Fujishima](#), [Chloé Galibert-Lainé](#), [Cody Lang](#), [Leo Goldsmith](#), [Pam Grady](#), [Jaime Grijalba](#), [Glenn Heath Jr.](#), [Glen Helfand](#), [Mark Holcomb](#), [Eric Hynes](#), [Richard T. Jameson](#), [Tara Juda](#), [Ehsan Khoshbakht](#), [Gary M. Kramer](#), [Jay Kuehner](#), [Shari Kizirian](#), [Kevin B. Lee](#), [Beth Lisick](#), [Thomas Logoreci](#), [Adrian Martin](#), [Jessica McGoff](#), [Sheila O'Malley](#), [Michael Pattison](#), [David Riedel](#), [Shade Rupe](#), [Justine Smith](#), [Jacob T. Swinney](#).

This is but one list, and also the grist for our annual [List of all Lists](#), not to be missed.

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