

Frantz

The year is 1919. Anna (Paula Beer), a young German woman, visits the grave of her fiancé who died in the war. There, she discovers fresh flowers have already been laid. A foreigner – a Frenchman, no less – is grieving for the man she lost to a French bullet in an anonymous trench. The opening gambit of François Ozon’s elegant interwar romance invites us to second-guess the story that links Parisian musician Adrien Rivoire (Pierre Niney) to Anna’s late love, Frantz. Colour flashbacks are infused with inviting warmth, which contrasts with the black and white of a reality in which everyone mourns at least one loved one. There’s a pleasing symmetry to this story – lie is matched by lie, journey by journey – and Beer’s silky self-possession is utterly beguiling. Wendy Ide



Ernst Lubitsch was a Berliner who had moved to Hollywood and become celebrated for his “saucy” comedies that contained the sort of sexual innuendo that slipped past the censors, and became known as “the Lubitsch Touch”. One of his less successful films (it was the height of the Depression and audiences were weary of war films) was **Broken Lullaby**. Now the talented and prolific French director Francois Ozon has made a new version of the story, titled **Frantz** – it is one of Ozon’s best films and also one of his most

touching. The emotionally rich story works beautifully, hinging as it does on misunderstandings and misinterpretations. David Stratton

Compiled by Di

Handsome Devil

When you spend your life trying to be someone you are not, who is going to be you?! Ned, a fiercely independent teen at a rugby obsessed boarding school, struggles with the answer to this question. Isolated and bullied just because he is different, Ned figures that keeping his head down is the best option to endure the school year. Yet how quickly things can change. A dynamic teacher and omnipotent rugby star, each grappling with their own demons, transfer to the school. Meeting them is the worst and the best thing to happen to Ned. He discovers that what is more important than being cool, is what is beautiful. Yet beauty has its price.



In **Handsome Devil**, new twists are added to the familiar tale of a teen attempting to stand up in the face of bullying, and reconcile athletics with learning. The added perspectives include a faculty member and a star athlete who face harassment and threats as harsh as those faced by the main character. While the film is predictable in places and the scenes and acting not as exquisite as they

might be, I enjoyed the rich dialogue and the new angles on the characters. Think of **Dead Poets Society** with a twist

Compiled by Neil

Whiteley

Whiteley is a visual journey into the private life and creative legacy of Australia's most iconic artist, Brett Whiteley, told "in his own words" using personal letters, notebooks and photographs, interwoven with reconstructions, animations, archival interviews and rare footage.



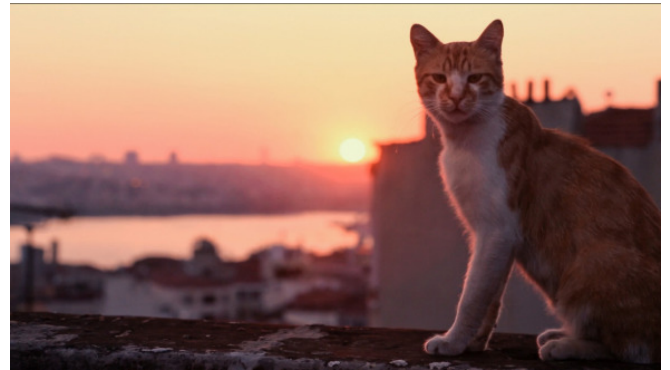
A comprehensive cinematic chronicle of the extraordinary life, times and art of the late Australian painter Brett Whiteley is long overdue. This exemplary documentary makes the wait worthwhile. Director James Bogle does a terrific job illustrating his life and the impact of his work, providing a glimpse into how far ahead of his time Whiteley really was.

Compiled by Alex

Kedi

Calling all cat lovers – you cannot miss Kedi! This delightful film will also appeal to those who love Turkey, and travel, and skilful documentary filmmaking. It is a labour-of-love portrait of the cats who roam the streets of Istanbul, supported and adored by the city's citizens. Turkish director Ceyda Torun and her cinematographer husband spent months following and filming seven of the city's famed street cats, each of whom displays a distinctly individual character. As the Herald Sun describes: "This captivating documentary casts a

serenely powerful spell as it explores the extraordinary bond shared between the Turkish city's omnipresent four-pawed nomads and the humans who look after them."



Empire Magazine says that the film not only delivers charming "feline footage" but "deftly goes beyond that and offers eloquent insights into the modern city, animals, humans and the relationship between all three;" while the Irish Times described Kedi as "A purrfect antidote to blockbuster fatigue." An absolute charmer.
Compiled by Liz

Quiet Passion

The story of American poet Emily Dickinson from her early days as a young schoolgirl to her later years as a reclusive, unrecognized artist. This is subtle biopic, which follows Dickinson from her childhood to her death. The poems are read by a voice-over, which is not the easiest way to appreciate poetry. But at the same time, the poems are a necessary element to understand Dickinson as she was.



British director Terence Davies shows Dickinson as a person who refused to stick to the strict rules of life in the Victorian era. She had a mind of her

own, and was not afraid to speak out. At the same time, she seemed to have trouble finding happiness. The most tragic element of her life was that her poetry was hardly appreciated. Only a few poems were published in the local paper.

There is some of witty dialogue in the early stages of the film, that proves that condescending New York intellectuals existed before Woody Allen came along.

Compiled by Neil

Hounds of Love

This harrowing feature film debut by Perth writer/director Ben Young was described by The Guardian as “the scariest film of the year,” and by David Stratton in The Australian as “a little masterpiece of horror.”



The film is loosely inspired by events involving David and Catherine Birnie, who kidnapped and murdered four young women in Perth during the 1980s. It tells the story of a married couple who commit a series of tortures and murders, whose new victim realises that she must create tension between them in order to save her own life. Star Stephen Curry – best known for his comedy roles, particularly as Dale Kerrigan in The Castle – gives an acclaimed performance astonishingly against type, described by Variety magazine as “redolent of pure evil.” The performances of Emma Booth as his wife and Ashleigh Cummings as the young captive have also been widely praised, with the Los Angeles Times describes the film as featuring a “trio of ferocious performances at its centre.”

While discomfiting in the extreme, ‘Hounds of Love’ is an exceptionally intense and cleverly made film which has received significant praise

overseas and screened at the Venice and Tribeca Film Festivals. It heralds the arrival of an important Australian film-making talent. Compiled by Liz

The Innocents

Warsaw, December 1945: the second World War is finally over and Mathilde is treating the last of the French survivors of the German camps. When a panicked Benedictine nun appears at the clinic one night begging Mathilde to follow her back to the convent, what she finds there is shocking: a holy sister about to give birth and several more in advanced stages of pregnancy.



César-nominated French star Lou de Laâge plays Mathilde Beaulieu in this powerful film inspired by a true story. Veteran French director Anne Fontaine approaches a spiritually and emotionally complex real-life slice of history with deftness and understated drama. Shot in artful, quiet light "The Innocents" is beautifully performed by its nearly all-female cast, who embody a story in which hope and horror are commingled to quietly moving effect. Compiled by Alex

Dance Academy

This big screen adaptation of the award winning Australian tv show doesn't disappoint, picking up the main members of the original cast 18 months after their graduation from the national ballet's dance school. Xenia Goodwin stars as former ballet student Tara Webster, who was destined to become one of the top dancers of her generation before a devastating injury crippled her career. Over the last eighteen months she has tried to embrace life as a university student but cannot get over her dream of dancing professionally. In her quest to defy the odds in a

near impossible comeback, Tara leaves her life and love behind in Sydney and travels to New York.



Oz acting greats Julia Blake and Tara Morice, star of the iconic 1992 dance pic *Strictly Ballroom*, feature in supporting roles, alongside Miranda Otto, who plays ice-queen Madeline Moncure, the ballet company's artistic director. While maintaining the heart that helped make it a small-screen hit, *Dance Academy* looks every bit the sumptuous big-screen drama. Compiled by Alex

Sense of an Ending

This film is a of the 2011 Booker prize winning novel by famed British author Julian Barnes with its Proustian meditation on memory.



We all reminisce. Older people have more to mull over than their younger counterparts, but we all do it. To what extent are our memories accurate representations of what actually happened? And how do the things that we forget, choose to leave out or just misremember affect how we view our past – and our present? These are the kind of

questions this film so eloquently and engagingly poses.

Dr Webster receives a letter informing him that he has been bequeathed an old diary by the recently departed mother of his college girlfriend. Questions abound. Tony wants to know whose diary it is. When he tells his ex-wife about the letter, she's curious why the mother of a long-lost love would be leaving him anything in her will. As Tony struggles with the family's lawyer to get his hands on the diary (or at least get some answers), he begins telling Margaret stories from a past that he has never before shared. She gets frustrated when she senses that he isn't telling her the whole story, while the audience is left to wonder what he's leaving out, why he's leaving things out and if he even realizes he's doing it.

Compiled by Neil