


TOP 10

-  **1. Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles** Akerman, Bel/Fr., 75; Criterion \$39.95
- 2. Godard x 2: *Made in U.S.A.*, 66; *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, 67; Criterion \$29.95 each**
-  **3. Husbands** ext. cut, Cassavetes, 70; Sony \$19.94
-  **4. High Hopes** Leigh, U.K., 88; BFS \$24.98
- 5. [REC]** Jaume Balagueró & Paco Plaza, Sp., 07; Sony \$24.96
- 6. Icons of Screwball Comedy Volume 1: *If You Could Only Cook***, William A. Seiter, 35; *Too Many Husbands*, Wesley Ruggles, 40; *My Sister Eileen*, Alexander Hall, 42; *She Wouldn't Say Yes*, Hall, 45; Sony \$24.96
- 7. Icons of Screwball Comedy Volume 2: *Theodora Goes Wild***, Richard Boleslawski, 36; *The Doctor Takes a Wife*, Alexander Hall, 40; *A Night to Remember*, Richard Wallace, 43; *Together Again*, Charles Vidor, 44; Sony \$24.96
- 8. Adventureland** Mottola, 09; Miramax \$29.99
- 9. Katyn** Wajda, Pol./Rus./Ger., 07; Koch Lorber \$26.99
- 10. Outrage** Dick, 09; Magnolia \$26.98

RECOMMENDED

- The Class** Cantet, Fr., 08; Sony \$28.96
-  **Coraline** Selick, 09; Universal \$34.98
- I Love You, Man** John Hamburg, 09; Paramount \$29.99
- Surveillance** Jennifer Chambers Lynch, U.S./Ger., 08; Magnolia \$26.98
- Tokyo!** Gondry, Carax & Bong Joon-ho, Jap./Fr., 08; Liberation \$24.99
- The Tiger's Tail** Boorman, Ire., 06; MGM \$26.98
- Watchmen** dir.'s cut, (24 min. longer), Snyder, 09; Warners \$28.99

TOP 10 ON DEMAND

- 1. Ana y los otros/Ana and the Others** Celina Murga, Arg., 03; Netflix, free w/membership
- 2. Cul-de-sac** Polanski, U.K., 66; Hulu, free
- 3. The Housemaid** Kim Ki-young, S. Kor., 60; The Auteurs, free
- 4. El otro/The Other** Ariel Rotter, Arg./Ger., 07; The Auteurs, \$5.00
- 5. Night Wind/Le Vent de la nuit** Garrel, Fr./Switz., 99; The Auteurs, \$5.00
-  **6. The Bottom of the Bottle** Hathaway, 56; Hulu, free
-  **7. Fear Me Not** Kristian Levring, Den., 08; IFC FestivalDirect, \$6.99
- 8. Mad Detective** Johnnie To & Wai Ka-fai, H.K., 07; Sundance Channel, free
- 9. The Accused** Dieterle, 49; Netflix, free w/membership
- 10. World Without Thieves** Xiaogang Feng, China/H.K., 04; Sundance Channel, free

HOME MOVIES

New DVD Releases

BOX SET PICK | *Surveying the First Decade: Video Art and Alternative Media in the U.S. Vol. 1 & 2* (Video Data Bank, \$1,500)

IN 1967, SONY RELEASED the first video camera/recorder designed for the home market. Compared to today's consumer-grade digital video cameras, the Portapak was pricey (\$1,500, i.e. the cost of this box set!) and cumbersome, and the visual quality left a lot to be desired. It only recorded in black and white, and since image and sound were recorded on a single strip of half-inch reel-to-reel magnetic tape, editing was next to impossible. But it also had certain advantages over 16mm silent or sync-sound movie cameras, which were the tools of choice for avant-garde and independent filmmakers at the time. When you used a Portapak, you saw exactly what you were recording as you recorded it. You didn't have to wait until the lab processed your film to discover that you hadn't used enough light or it was out of focus. Any idiot could use a Portapak, although some people, of course, made better images than others. The other great advantage was that videotape was dirt cheap next to the cost of film stock and processing.



The Portapak, and the three-quarter-inch color video rig that replaced it in the mid-Seventies, were matched to the democratic idealism of the times. In the late Sixties, everyone was movie mad. To be able to shape the world with a motion-picture camera was to have power: cultural power, social power, political power. Artists bought Portapaks to use in their studios as moving-image sketchbooks and some artists made video their primary medium. Political activists and counterculture visionaries believed that owning the means of video production was the first step toward creating alternatives to network television and Hollywood.

In the mid-Nineties, Chicago's Video Data Bank, one of the two largest distributors of video art in the U.S. (the other is Electronic Arts Intermix), put together a VHS box set of video works made by artists and documentarians between 1968 and 1980. This collection, which includes nearly 70 titles of varying length (some of them excerpts of much longer pieces), is now available on DVD in two box sets, four discs in each. For historians, scholars, teachers, and serious moving-image makers, the collection is essential viewing—especially given the art world's current focus on the moving image. For anyone else, I'm not so sure, especially since it's priced for the institutional market. Certainly there are brilliant and innovative individual works here: Richard Serra and Carlotta Fay Schoolman's elegant, table-turning critique *Television Delivers People* (73); Joan Jonas's dazzling minimalist striptease, *Vertical Roll* (72); an excerpt from Vito Acconci's epic *The Red Tapes* (76); Martha Rosler's rigorous *Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained* (77); Shigeko Kubota's lyrical *My Father* (75); Nam June Paik's Dadaist portrait of Merce Cunningham *Merce by Merce by Paik* (78); and at least a half-dozen more. There are also documentaries that serve as time capsules and also could not be more of this moment, in particular TTVV's *Four More Years* (72) and DCTV's *Healthcare: Your Money or Your Life* (78).—Amy Taubin

ART-CINEMA PICK | *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (Criterion, \$39.95)

THE ADDRESS IN THE title of Chantal Akerman's masterpiece refers to that of a middle-class mother and prostitute (played with mesmerizing emptiness by Delphine Seyrig) whose everyday life the film presents as a nearly real-time representation of alienated labor. Jeanne's "woman's work"—the simple acts of lighting the kettle, peeling potatoes, going to the market—forms an indifferent repetition punctuated by the daily arrival of her middle-aged male clientele, who hand their scarves and hats over with bourgeois gentility. Akerman and cinematographer Babette Mangolte opt



for static symmetrical long takes and off-screen space to make the domestic hell of this commerce claustrophobically present. Even as Jeanne begins to lose the order and symmetry that sustains (albeit pathologically) her routine, the film doesn't give an inch, annihilating the expression "fille de joie" with a structural restraint that itself borders on the pathological.—*David Zuckerman*

INDIE PICK | *The Last Days of Disco* (Criterion, \$39.95)

WHIT STILLMAN'S FINAL SERVING of Doomed Bourgeois in Love chronicles postcollegiate dilettantism in the big city. Stillman's polysyllabic patricians endure the age-old travails of job security and railroad-apartment cohabitation, but find Eighties-specific refuge in the vodka- tonic oasis of the downtown disco scene. Their pursuit of velvet-rope access and strobe-lit romance results in varying degrees of success. Insecurity and competition ignite as group social life devolves into "ferocious pairing off" quicker than you can cry "Freak Out!" Chloë Sevigny demonstrates the expressive potential of downcast eyes, and Chris Eigeman reconfirms his



mastery of Stillman's distinctive cadences, but it's Matt Keeslar's manic sentimentalist who gets the girl. Exulting in their Epic and Important—and vibrantly soundtracked—zeitgeist, he embodies Stillman's celebration of dancing along the thin line between self-awareness and delusion. A masterful evocation of the giddiness and instantaneous nostalgia of waning youth.—*Brynn White*

LATE-CLASSICAL PICK | *The Bottom of the Bottle* (Hulu, free)

LIKE *A Kiss Before Dying*, made the same year at another studio, and 1955's *Violent Saturday*, this 1956 adaptation of Georges Simenon's novel was shot under the clear blue skies and hard light of Arizona. Simenon's story of two bitterly estranged brothers is set in the peculiarly low-key world of gentlemen ranchers in Nogales, who float from one booze-laden barbecue to the next. The carefully appointed homes and flat landscapes, composed into a uniformly handsome 'Scope image by the great Lee Garmes, make just as formidable an impression as Joseph



Cotten's neurotic local big shot or Van Johnson as his brother, on the lam, barely on the wagon, and desperate to join his family across the Mexican border. Like such earlier Henry Hathaway location items as *Call Northside 777*, *Kiss of Death*, and *Niagara*, *Bottle* has a nice balance of studio-bred opulence and willful leanness, with a keen sense of appropriately Simenonian harshness.—*Kent Jones*

CULT CORNER

- Animalada** Sergio Bizzio, Arg., 01; Synapse \$19.95
- Combat Shock** dir.'s cut, Buddy Giovinazzo, 86; Troma \$19.95
- The 5 Deadly Venoms** Chang Cheh, H.K., 78; Genius \$19.97
- The Howl** Tinto Brass, It., 70; Cult Epics \$29.99
- Violence and Flesh** Alfredo Sternheim, Braz., 80; Impulse \$24.95

STRAIGHT TO DVD

- The Cell 2** (w/Frank Whaley) Tim Iacofano, 09; Warners \$27.95
- The Chaos Experiment** (w/Val Kilmer, Armand Assante & Eric Roberts) Philippe Martinez, 09; Genius \$19.95
- The Code** aka *Thick as Thieves* (w/Morgan Freeman, Antonio Banderas, Radha Michel & Robert Forster) Mimi Leder, U.S./Ger., 08; First Look \$28.98
- Dark Streets** (w/Gabriel Mann, Bijou Phillips & Elias Koteas) Rachel Samuels, 08; Sony \$24.96
- Fragments** (w/Kate Beckinsale, Dakota Fanning & Guy Pearce) Rowan Woods, 08; Sony \$24.96
- The Human Contract** (w/Jada Pinkett Smith, Paz Vega & Idris Elba) Jada Pinkett Smith, 08; Sony \$24.96
- Ibid** Russell Friedenberg, 08; IndiePix \$24.95
- Night Train** (w/Danny Glover, Steve Zahn & Leelee Sobieski) Brian King, U.S./Ger./Rom., 09; National Entertainment Media \$24.98
- Simon Says** (w/Crispin Glover) William Dear, 06; Barnholtz/Lionsgate \$26.98

AVANT-GARDE

- The Animation of Alexieff** 30+ films, Rus.; FACETS \$39.95
- A Film Is a Burning Place: Works by Enid Baxter Blader** Microcinema \$19.99
- Henry Hills: Selected Films 1977-2008** Tzadik \$31.00

HOT DOCS

- At the Death House Door** Peter Gilbert & Steve James, 08; FACETS \$29.95
- Chops** Bruce Broder, 07; Arts Alliance \$24.99
- Harvard Beats Yale 29-29** Rafferty, 08; Kino \$26.99
- Our City Dreams** Chiara Clemente, 08; First Run \$24.95
- RiP! A Remix Manifesto** Brett Gaylor, Can., 09; Disinformation \$24.95
- The Top Secret Trial of the Third Reich** Jochen Bauer, W. Ger., 79; First Run \$24.95
- Trouble the Water** Carl Deal & Tia Lessin, 08; Zeitgeist \$29.99
- The Unwinking Gaze** Joshua Dugdale, U.K., 08; IndiePix \$24.95

FOREIGN RELEASES

A l'aventure Brisseau, Fr., 09; Axiom £19.99

A Child Is Waiting Cassavetes, 63; Optimum £15.99

The Coffin Joe Collection: *At Midnight I'll Take Your Soul*, José Mojica Marins, Braz., 64; *This Night I'll Possess Your Corpse*, 67; *The Strange World of Coffin Joe*, 68; *Awakening of the Beast*, 70; *End of Man*, 71; *Strange Hostel of Naked Pleasures*, 76; *Hellish Flesh*, 77; *Hallucinations of a Deranged Mind*, 78; *Coffin Joe: The Strange World of José Mojica Marins*, 01; Anchor Bay £39.99

Comrades Bill Douglas, U.K., 86; bfi £22.99

Embodiment of Evil José Mojica Marins, Braz., 08; Anchor Bay £17.99

Glastonbury Fayre Peter Neal & Nicolas Roeg, U.K., 71; Odeon £17.99

In the City of Sylvia José Luis Guerín, Sp., 08; Axiom £19.99

Louise-Michel Benoît Delépine & Gustave de Kervern, Fr., 08; MK2 €19.99

La Révolution française Robert Enrico & Richard T. Heffron, Fr., 89; TF1 €19.99

Modern Life Depardon, Fr., 08; Soda Pictures £15.99

Souls at Sea Hathaway, 37; Opening €19.99

Stella Sylvie Verheyde, Fr., 08; Diaphana €19.99

This Filthy Earth Andrew Köttling, U.K., 01; BFI £19.99

OF INTEREST

John Barrymore x 4: *Dr. Jeckyll & Mr. Hyde*, John S. Robertson, 20; *Sherlock Holmes*, Albert Parker, 22; *The Beloved Rogue*, Alan Crosland, 27; *Tempest*, Sam Taylor, 28; Kino \$59.95 box set

Absurdistan Veit Helmer, Ger., 08; First Run \$24.95

Alice's House Chico Teixeira, Br., 07; IndiePix \$24.95

Los Bastardos Amat Escalante, Mex./Fr./U.S., 08; Kino \$26.95

Becoming Charley Chase 40-plus shorts, 15-25; VCI \$39.99 box set

Big Man Japan Hitoshi Matsumoto, Jap., 07; Magnolia \$26.98

Bootleg Film Kobayashi, Jap., 99; FACETS \$29.95

British Cinema Crime & Noir: *Blackout*, Robert S. Baker, 50; *No Trace*, John Gilling, 50; *Home to Danger*, Terence Fisher, 51; *Recoil*, Gilling, 53; *Meet Mr. Callahan*, Charles Saunders, 54; *Bond of Fear*, Henry Cass, 56; VCI \$29.99

Eldorado Bouli Lanners, Bel./Fr., 08; Film Movement \$24.95

Frozen Land Aku Louhimies, Fin., 05; Olive Films \$29.95

Goodbye Solo Bahrani, 08; Lionsgate \$27.98

Homeboy Michael Seresin, 88; Lionsgate \$14.98

The Horsemen Jonas Akerland, U.S./Can., 09; Lionsgate \$27.98

ON-DEMAND PICK | *Fear Me Not* (IFC FestivalDirect, \$6.99)

IF DR. JEKYLL EXPERIENCED A midlife crisis, it might look something like what Mikael (Ulrich Thomsen) goes through in Dogma95 founding member Kristian Levring's slow-boiling thriller. An ostensibly caring and patient husband and father who's becoming disillusioned with his on-paper-perfect life (lovely wife, daughter, and home), he volunteers to take part in an antidepressant trial study while on an extended work leave. Things begin to look up, he becomes looser and more cheery—but when the trial is canceled, he continues popping the pills on the sly, and his sociopathic tendencies begin to surface. Thomsen convincingly portrays Mikael's duality of cool calm and ready-to-snap, bringing unnerving tension to every scene—a game of Scrabble seems closer to Russian roulette and each family interaction threatens to be the last. Lately Thomsen has been turning up in numerous thankless bit parts in major productions—in *Duplicity* he's credited as “Big Swiss Suit”—but he's clearly leading-man material.—*Laura Kern*



RECOMMENDED | *Los Bastardos* (Kino, \$26.95)

SIMMERING CLASS RESENTMENT and latent sexual tension come to a head in Amat Escalante's striking follow-up to *Sangre* (05). Carlos Reygadas again served as producer on this tale of two Mexican laborers who are hired to murder a seemingly ordinary Californian mom. Playboy Jesus (Jesús Moises Rodriguez) and his laconic sidekick Fausto (Ruben Sosa) set out for their target's suburban home, a sawed-off shotgun stuffed inside their knapsack. An ominous, drug-filled, and unpredictable evening ensues, ending up at a backyard swimming pool glowing with electric-blue light. Impressively executed on a technical level, *Los Bastardos* is at once intense and simple, and boasts an angry parting shot that will leave viewers reeling. A raw tour de force of visceral filmmaking that draws on traditions of horror, political allegory, and social realism, it's not to be missed.—*Livia Bloom*



CULT PICK | *Combat Shock* (Troma, \$19.95)

IMPROBABLY IF THANKFULLY embraced by horror enthusiasts during the Eighties VHS exploitation onslaught, *Combat Shock* is a no-budget, no-wave 16mm labor of trauma that shares a strong affinity with its frequently cited antecedents *Eraserhead* and *Taxi Driver*. Set in a virtually postapocalyptic Staten Island industrial wasteland, writer-director Buddy Giovinazzo's feature debut follows a disturbed, disenfranchised Vietnam vet shuffling through a day filled with poverty, heroin addiction, prepubescent prostitution, and inevitable violence, albeit of an entirely non-cathartic sort—and all the while, the shrieks of his shrewish wife and deformed infant fuse in his mind with grisly war flashbacks. Ludicrously marketed by the schlockmeisters at Troma as a *Rambo*-esque action movie, Giovinazzo's grim, grimy plunge into despair is actually one of Eighties American independent cinema's most powerful and uncompromising triumphs, clearly made with no regard for commercial appeal, and if the ambition occasionally exceeds the production resources, Giovinazzo's harrowing vision remains undiluted.—*Travis Crawford*



SEVENTIES PICK | *Husbands* (Sony, \$19.95)

LONG OVERDUE FOR DVD release and now available at the full 139-minute running time in a transfer that captures the rich, warm tones of Victor Kemper's cinematography, John Cassavetes' 1970 film is a rollercoaster ride of male bonding, starring Ben Gazzara, Peter Falk, and the director himself. Following the uncanny nuance of *Faces*, *Husbands* contains similar bouts of actorly showboating, highlighted with snippets of poetic insight that at times resonate and at others fall flat. When they're really on, nothing beats Cassavetes' inebriated aphorisms or a Gazzara freak-out, but viewed askew, some of the dialogue inevitably calls to mind the maudlin philosophizing of lesser Seventies "talkies" like *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice*. Mazursky may have



delved into primal-scream territory with only a hint of sarcasm, but that's nothing compared to the outrageous walking race or drunken basketball in *Husbands*. "Love means never having to say you're sorry" may have been the movie quote of 1970 for many, but it's hard to top Cassavetes' comforting observation "You're not the first guy to punch his wife out."—Margaret Barton-Fumo

ANIMATION PICK | *Coraline* (Focus, \$34.98)

Coraline PROVES THAT HENRY SELICK should never have been living in Tim Burton's shadow. Thanks in part to the groundbreaking use of 3-D in his latest opus, the *Nightmare Before Christmas* director can now be recognized as his own man. Set among the gray and rainy skies of rural Oregon, the film is the story of a headstrong girl (Dakota Fanning) who, in the face of her parents' neglect, longs for a version of her life in which she is fawned over and doted upon—which, of course, she finds behind a magic door in the living room. The inconvenient truth with



which Coraline must come to grips, however, is that love and respect are two-way streets. Selick has complete command of the 3-D format, adding eerie depth and texture to the image, rather than merely having objects fly out at the audience. *Coraline* marks Selick's arrival as an artist, and 3-D's arrival as more than just a marketing gimmick.—Evan Davis

KITCHEN-SINK PICK | *High Hopes* (BFS, \$24.98)

AS WORKING-CLASS INTELLECTUAL CYRIL BENDER (Philip Davis) laconically philosophizes: "Families fuck you up." It's a plausible-sounding tagline for Mike Leigh's *High Hopes*, a satirical yet compassionate portrait of the emotionally alienated Bender clan as they reluctantly reunite for their mother's seventieth birthday. Injecting elements of caricature and broad comedy into a kitchen-sink scenario, Leigh's film—his return to the big screen after a 17-year TV-drama-only hiatus—is as unclassifiable (screwball realism?) as the improvisationally generated characters are unique. Particularly memorable is Cyril's upwardly mobile sister Valerie (Heather Tobias), a no-holds-barred send-up of *nouveau riche* vulgarity. (Picture a jacketed poodle riding shotgun in her cherry-red sports car.) Disillusioned but never pessimistic, Leigh's snapshot of Thatcher-era England is a small miracle of interpersonal honesty and political acuity.—Paul Brunick



In Love We Trust Wang Xiaoshuai, China, 07; FilmMovement \$24.95

Julia Erick Zonca, Fr./U.S./Mex/Bel., 08; Magnolia \$26.98

Le Jupon rouge Geneviève Lefebvre, Fr., 87; Strand \$27.99

Lonely Are the Brave David Miller, 62; Universal \$14.98

M. Butterfly Cronenberg, 93; Warners \$19.97

Ménage Blier, Fr., 86; Koch Lorber \$22.98

Nights and Weekends Greta Gerwig & Joe Swanberg, 08; IFC \$24.98

Nikkatsu Noir: I Am Waiting, Koreyoshi Kurahara, 57; *Rusty Knife*, Toshio Masuda, 58; *Take Aim at the Police Van*, Seijun Suzuki, 60; *Cruel Gun Story*, Takumi Furukawa, 64; *A Colt Is My Passport*, Takashi Nomura, 67; Criterion Eclipse \$69.95

One Day You'll Understand Gitai, Fr./Ger./Isr., 08; Kino \$29.95

Push Paul McGuigan, 09; Summit \$26.99

Severed Ways: The Norse Discovery of America Tony Stone, 07; Magnolia \$26.98

The Strange One Jack Garfein, 57; Warners \$19.94

Sunshine Cleaning Christine Jeffs, 08;

Overture/Anchor Bay \$29.98

Trail of the Lonesome Pine Henry Hathaway, 36; Universal \$19.98

The Window Carlos Sorin, Arg./Sp., 08;

Film Movement \$24.95

REISSUES & SPECIAL EDITIONS

Ferreri x 2: Don't Touch the White Woman, Fr./It.,

74; *Bye Bye Monkey*, It./Fr., 78; Koch \$17.98 each

Bad Lieutenant Ferrara, 92; Lionsgate \$19.98

The Human Condition 4-disc sp. ed., Kobayashi, Jap., 59; Criterion \$79.95

The Last Days of Disco Stillman, 98; Criterion \$39.95

Repulsion Polanski, U.K., 65; Criterion \$39.95

The 10th Victim Petri, It./Fr., 65;

Blue Underground \$14.99

Torso Sergio Martino, It., 73; Blue Underground \$14.95

PRIME-TIME

Coco Chanel Christian Duguay, It./Fr./U.K., 08; Screen Media \$24.98

Dollhouse season 1, 12 eps., 08-09; Fox \$49.98

Grey Gardens Michael Sucsy, 09; HBO \$26.98

Heroes season 3, 25 eps., 08-09; Universal \$59.98

The Hunger season 1, 22 eps., U.S./Can./U.K., 97; E1 \$39.98

Life on Mars season 1, 8 eps., U.K., 06; Acorn \$59.99

Mad Men season 2, 13 eps., 08; Lionsgate \$49.98

Prison Break: The Final Break 09; Fox \$29.99

The Simpsons season 12; 21 eps., 00-01; Fox \$49.98

The State season 1-3, 27 eps., 93-95; MTV \$79.99