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2001: A Time Capsule

Bittersweet Y2K nostalgia in Eye

In its film programme *2001: A Time Capsule*, Eye Filmmuseum is marking the 25th anniversary of the year 2001 with a generous helping of nostalgia, screening 25 films that were released in 2001. From *Donnie Darko* (Richard Kelly) and *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* (Steven Spielberg) to *La pianiste* (Michael Haneke), *Îles flottantes* (Nanouk Leopold) and *Spirited Away* (Hayao Miyazaki). 2001 proved to be a watershed year not only in film, but also in politics, technology and culture.

2001: A Time Capsule, 18 April – 14 June in Eye Filmmuseum, IJpromenade 1, Amsterdam, eyefilm.nl/2001

Once upon a time, 2001 was seen as a legendary year in a faraway future, thanks to the science fiction film *2001: A Space Odyssey*; in 2026, we look back at that year – a harbinger of seismic changes that started to take place around the turn of the century. Gen Z and Alpha didn't (consciously) experience the year 2001, but nevertheless see it as a reference point: for example, the Y2K (Year 2000) nostalgia for clothing from that time, and the trend among young people for returning to analogue technology. Most of the films in this programme are screening in 35mm, from the Eye collection.

Transitional period

Flip phones, file sharing (Napster) and dial-up internet, before the dawn of social media: 2001 is a perfect example of a transitional period in terms of technology – bringing both hopes and fears for the technological future.

It was also a spectacular film year that produced many films looking ahead to the coming century with a prescient gaze, both in their themes and form. In addition, 2001 was a memorable year for the film industry. During the early 2000s, a transition took place from analogue to digital, throughout the entire chain, from production to exhibition. The programme in Eye therefore also includes films making use of early CGI animation, which were then released on analogue 35mm film.

9/11 & the calm before the storm

The year 2001 also brought watershed developments in global politics and culture. The 9/11 terror attacks and subsequent war in Afghanistan changed the world forever. Prior to 9/11, Western culture was drenched in irony and optimism – the calm before the storm – but in the wake of 9/11 a considerably more sombre atmosphere prevailed.

Many of the titles from 2001 retain their currency – whether in terms of social issues such as artificial intelligence, or revisiting Y2K aesthetics, or because they mark a cultural moment.

From the collection

The programme places popular Hollywood and arthouse films alongside one another as equals. Each of the films – some of which are even screening on the exact anniversary of their world premiere back then – represents a particular type of cinema. The films are mainly drawn from the Eye collection, a treasure-trove of modern classics, and they are all celebrating their 25th anniversaries this year.

The one exception is *With Hasan in Gaza* (Kamal Aljafari), a film from 2025 based on rediscovered footage created by the filmmaker in Gaza in 2001.

Films in the 2001 programme

A.I. Artificial Intelligence (Steven Spielberg, US)
 Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner (Zacharias Kunuk, CA)
 Batang West Side (Lav Diaz, PH)
 La ciénaga (Lucrecia Martel, AR/FR/ES)
 Donnie Darko (Richard Kelly, US)
 Dream Work (voorfilm, Peter Tscherkassky, AT)
 Éloge d'amour (Jean-Luc Godard, FR/DE/CH)
 Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, FR/DE)
 Fat Girl (Catherine Breillat, FR)
 Ghost World (Terry Zwigoff, US/GB/DE)
 Îles flottantes (Nanouk Leopold, NL)
 Kandahar (Mohsen Makhmalbaf, IR/FR)
 Millennium Mambo (Hou Hsiao-hsien, TW)
 Minoes (Vincent Bal, NL)
 Mulholland Drive (David Lynch, US)
 Onvoltooid tegenwoordig (voorfilm, Johan van der Keuken, NL)
 La pianiste (Michael Haneke, AT/FR)
 Pulse (Kiyoshi Kurosawa, JP)
 Shaolin Soccer (Stephen Chow, HK/CN)
 Spirited Away (Hayao Miyazaki, JP)
 Trouble Every Day (Claire Denis, FR)
 Waking Life (Richard Linklater, US)
 What Time Is It There? (Tsai Ming-liang, TW)
 With Hasan in Gaza (Kamal Aljafari, PS/DE/FR/QA)
 Y tu mamá también (Alfonso Cuarón, MX)

Specials Screenings

Special screenings in this programme include the enduring influence of Y2K fashion and costumes, as seen in films such as *Ghost World*; the portrayal of sexual transgression in *La pianiste* in light of contemporary films exploring similar themes; and reflections on AI and its cultural imagination, then and now.

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Note for the press, not for publication

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