

Films of my life

Sam Taylor-Wood

The Railway Children reminds the artist of the father who left when she was a child, *Brokeback Mountain* just makes her cry and *Woman Under the Influence* inspired her to make movies. **Interview by Roger Clarke**

THE ONES THAT STILL LINK ME TO MY YOUTH

The Railway Children

Lionel Jeffries (1970)

I lived next to a railway line when I was 11 and I missed my dad, who wasn't living with us any more. So I loved this film, especially the bit where the father comes out of the cloud of locomotive steam to be reunited with his family. Dad left us when I was nine and I always imagined seeing him again in this way, walking out of the mist, even though the trains were all electric by then.

The Man Who Fell to Earth

Nicolas Roeg (1976)

I remember seeing it one night, as a teenager with some friends. You know at that age you always talk through films? This was the first in which we were all just struck dumb. It was the most terrifying, extraordinary thing I'd ever seen. It's the isolation of David Bowie's character that resonated with me. There's also a line in it that I love – when he leans forward and says to the chauffeur, 'Slow down, Arthur, stick to 30.' My friend Harland Miller wrote a book with that as a title.

THE ONES THAT GOT ME INTO FILM-MAKING

Woman Under the Influence

John Cassavetes (1974)

It's the first film I saw that was completely different from anything I had seen before. The emotional content of that film is so extraordinary, as was the way Gena Rowlands was having a nervous breakdown from the

beginning to the end of the film. It just felt very real. I became a huge fan of every film Cassavetes ever made as a result. When I was at college, maybe in 1995, I went to see it with a friend. At the end my sleeve was wet with snot and tears.

In the Mood for Love

Kar Wai Wong (2000)

It's flawless from beginning to end. I love the sublimated emotion of it. I love the look of the film and the design of it. It moves at such a beautiful, languid pace. It's one of those films that slowly absorbs you. It's all about seduction and it's a film that utterly seduced.

THE ONES THAT MAKE ME CRY

The Bridges of Madison County

Clint Eastwood (1995)

I'm a wuss when it comes to this film. I'm out and proud about it, it's not even a guilty pleasure or in any way ironic. It feels like a play, with one set and two characters. And there's the intensity of it all. There's one scene that every single time makes me weep, with the hands on the door handle and Clint Eastwood outside crying. It's such an outlet for when we can't cry at real things.

Brokeback Mountain

Ang Lee (2005)

This is one of my favourite films. I heard that script was around for 10 years and just nobody wanted to make it, which I just find unbelievable. I must have read the story by Annie Proulx about two years before, and I

remember thinking, 'God, this is so cinematic. What a beautiful film this could be.' The thing that is so great about Ang Lee is the diversity in his filmmaking, from *Brokeback...* to *The Hulk*. That scene where they're in a tent – I just want to crawl in and be between them!

THE ONES WITH GREAT MALE LEADS

There Will Be Blood

Paul Thomas Anderson (2007)

I had a pile of Bafta screeners this year and found it quite shocking how many films were all just about male testosterone – and then there was *Juno*. But of all the films of the last few years this was a powerful piece of film-making; from the opening scene here you know you are in the presence of something special. Daniel Day-Lewis is one of the greatest actors of our age, he's like Olivier. He's one of those people who can take you into a place where no one else can take you.

The Bad Lieutenant

Abel Ferrara (1992)

This really inspired me in several of my installations. Ferrara always makes completely dark, mental films and he's very anarchic, and a bit bonkers. This is such a raw film – hardcore raw – especially that scene when Harvey Keitel takes all his clothes off in church. In fact I think I just love films where men have complete breakdowns. Funny how I like that, crying men...

Sam Taylor-Wood's Love You More has been selected for the Short Film competition at the Cannes Festival later this month

Sam Taylor-Wood in her London studio. Photograph by Eamonn McCabe

