

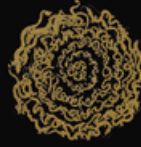
Best Hungarian Films of the 21st Century: The Movies of Soul, Depth & Passion

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Hungarian Films of the 21st century

Source: Budapest Reporter (all images for reference)



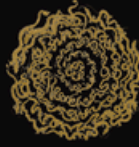
The 21st-century Hungarian films compose a bonanza of diverse genres, from larger-than-life stories and real-life inspirations to touching dramas of love. Hungarian filmmakers like Béla Tarr, and Miklós Jancsó have created some of the most critically acclaimed films of the previous century - *The Red and the White* (1967), and *Sátántangó* (1994). The budding Hungarian filmmakers of the current millennium continue to craft stories that are passionate and offer something deeper than mere entertainment. Let's dive into some of the prominent films from Hungary that have gained international acclaim and conceptually contributed to world cinema.



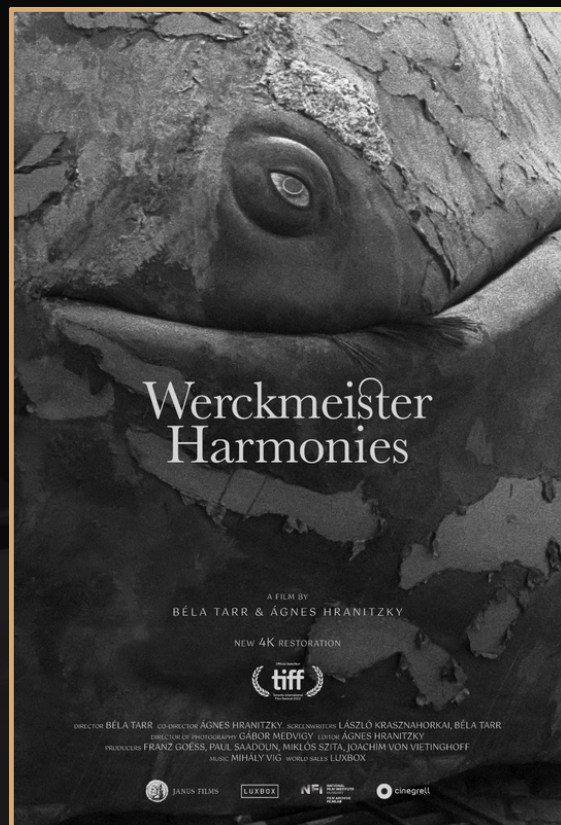
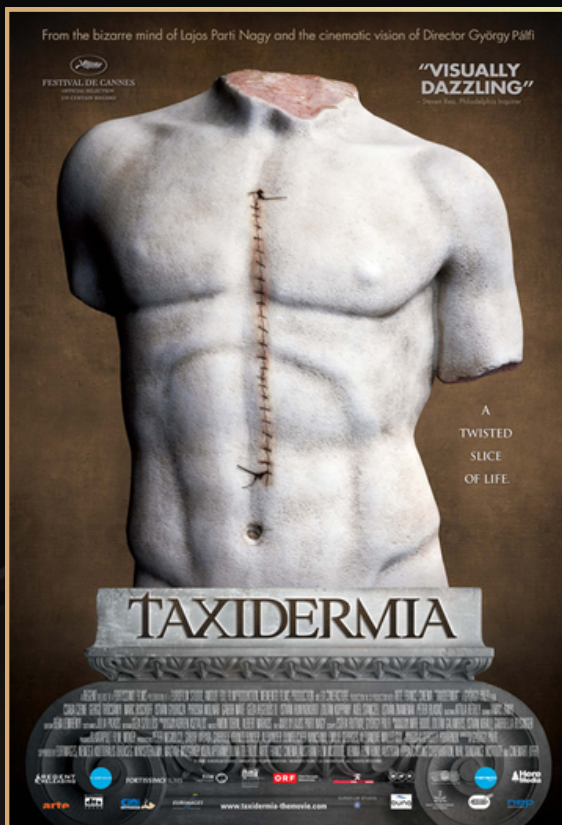
László Nemes' *Son of Saul*

Source: Metacritic

Son of Saul (2015) can be considered the most recognizable Hungarian film produced in the current century. The film marked a successful feature debut of the native director László Nemes. The film has redefined the genre of Holocaust films due to its deep and highly impactful portrayal of lives in the Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II. The protagonist, Saul is a part of the work units composed of prisoners and the entire story is from his POV. The film critically compares with another quintessential European film based on the Holocaust - *The Pianist* (2002), directed by Roman Polanski.



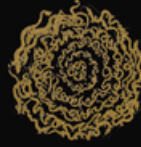
The Hungarian film won the 'Grand Prix at the 2015 Cannes, the Oscar for 'Best International Feature Film', and also made history by becoming the first Hungarian film to win the Golden Globe Award. Nemes' creation is the 'golden goose' of modern Hungarian cinema.



Taxidermia, and Werckmeister Harmonies

Source: IMDb, and Janus Films



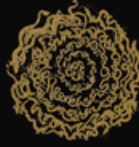


However, the glorious feat of *'Son and Saul'* wasn't an abrupt success for Hungarian cinema but a gradual process. The 2000s led to many innovative Hungarian movies that experimented with human identity, horror, and gothic themes. *'Werckmeister Harmonies'* (2000) by auteur Béla Tarr gained critical acclaim from all across the globe and became one of the monumental films for the transition from 20th-century cinema to innovative 21st-century cinema. The mysterious thriller film is inspired by the novel *'The Melancholy of Resistance'* by native writer László Krasznahorkai. On the other hand, *'Taxidermia'* (2006) is a surrealist horror film with a dash of dark comedy. It's considered one of the best cinematic attempts in the genre of 'body horror'. Directed by György Pálfi, the film was screened in the 'Un Certain Regard' section at the 2006 Cannes thanks to its unique themes.



On Body and Soul

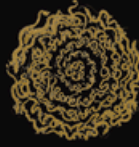
Source: Medium



***The Story of My Wife* had its world premiere at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival**

Source: Variety

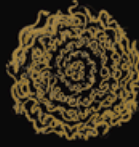
Ildikó Enyedi is another compelling Hungarian film director of modern times. Her films act as the perfect embodiment of 'soul, depth and passion' on-screen. Her film *'On Body and Soul'* (2017) is a surreal romantic movie unlike any other. The two protagonists of the film come across a realization that they can communicate through their subconscious dreams and this leads to a profound bond. The film was awarded the 'Golden Bear' at the 2017 Berlin International Film Festival and was also nominated at the 2017 Oscars. Her film *'The Story of My Wife'* (2021) is another romantic drama that is one of the fan-favorites and captivates audiences with mystery, complexity of emotions, nature of life, and rich aesthetics. Another of Ildikó's creations that present her true creative prowess is *'My 20th Century'* (1989) - a successful sci-fi, feminist film. The female director's career spans over 30 years and continues to flourish in the present era.



Director Ildikó Enyedi is one of the pillars of 21st-century Hungarian cinema

Source: IMDb

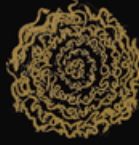
The New-age Hungarian filmmakers are the cause of the rise of Hungarian films since the late 1990s, and the 2000s. The national cinema's international outreach and participation at global festivals are immense at present. The critical quality of films, infused with in-depth narratives, intense innovations, and a spirit to present something distinct can be considered the primary reasons for their success. Other notable Hungarian films from the millennium are *White God* (2014), *Sunset* (2018), *Valan: Valley of Angels* (2019), and *Post Mortem* (2021). Such exceptional films indicate a promising future for innovative storytelling and criticality in Hungarian cinema's upcoming decades.



White God (2014)

Source: Magnolia Pictures & Magnet Releasing (YouTube)





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