

## Feedback from members and guests for *I'm Still Here*

Enjoyable and shocking.

I really enjoyed this film, it kept me engrossed from start to finish despite being long. I really felt for the characters and what they were going through. The beach shots and lighting in Rio were beautiful.

I really enjoyed the film. The acting was excellent, particularly Fernando Torres. And the five children were engaging and very likeable. It portrayed the fear of living under a military dictatorship with great clarity. I liked the portrayal of some scenes through the cine camera. I was engaged throughout the film, despite it being over two hours and enjoyed the talk beforehand.

I will award a score of Good to this film, which was beautifully shot and acted. It felt like being in a home-movie, reminding me of Roma but sadly did drift in the later years. So, it was too long! Thank you for the introduction, it explained a lot, such as the family connection with the film maker, for example. Another good choice but another late night!

Excellent - if I could give it more, I would. insightful and brilliant!

Very interesting film, completely convincing.

A marvelous film and she, the lead woman, was excellent almost luminous.

A moving story which was at the same time devastating and joyful. The acting was superb, especially Fernanda Torres as Eunice, who had to face the reality of the situation and be strong for her family, whilst protecting the younger children. The blissful seeming family life and beach locations at the start of the film contrasted with the gradual realisation of the grim reality of life under the military regime and yet in later scenes we see the spirit of the family carried forward in the next generation. Setting and music superb.

Brilliant film, I really enjoyed it!

A worthy film and also clearly a labour of love from Salles as he recreated the Brazil of his childhood. As the fourth film recounting the oppression of military dictatorships in central and southern Americas to win the foreign language Oscar, it finds itself inevitably being compared with the high-quality offerings. In doing so I found it felt a little bit short, slightly too long and possibly slightly too nostalgic. I appreciated the introduction and would hope to see *The Secret Agent* on the 2006/07 programme.

I thought this was an important and powerful film, well-acted and relevant for our times. All the more impressive for having been based on a true story. What a remarkable woman to achieve so much. An academic degree, raising five children, campaigning tirelessly for indigenous people and finally getting her husband's death certificate. Sometimes a difficult watch, especially when she and her daughter were detained but ultimately uplifting.

Thanks for the interesting insights in the introduction. Especially highlighting the importance of the music and the use of different types of film stock including home cinema to add both poignancy and a sense of realism. Just wonderful.

Best film of the season so far.

This was a 100% political film - therefore limited. I'm sure it is important that such events are recorded but did this film do anything more than that? The photography and the editing were good but surely there is more?

A film of tremendous depth and power, with an outstanding performance from Fernanda Torres. The introduction was excellent, providing a great deal of important historical context. Heartening that Brazil's Supreme Court held last November that Bolsonaro had exhausted his appeals and had to begin serving his 27-year prison sentence for plotting a coup after losing the last election.

Unrelenting! Rated Excellent.

The way the film built up such a happy family life before the father was taken made it even more tragic.

Such a clever film. Showed the warmth, love and friendship within a family so naturally which emphasised the tension and horror after the kidnapping. Captured throughout.

Wonderful performance by the lead actress.

Excellent - best film of this year so far!

An absorbing film about a tenacious and resilient mother holding her family together after the illegal abduction of her husband by a totalitarian government in Brazil. Suspenseful, terrifying and thought provoking.

A brilliant film and a terrible warning. We must be very careful the way we vote.

Such a moving story.

An excellent film and excellently acted. It was amazing how true to life physically the actors were. The happy, carefree pace of the first part, shot with a slightly fuzzy, golden glow lens contrasted so strongly with the harsh later aesthetic. Each character fulfilled their role admirably and there was even a glimmer of humanity in two of the guards, the prison guard and the bearded house arrest policeman. In addition, the real-life footage and information at the end of the film, was an excellent rounding off of a fascinating, well-scripted and shocking film.

I watched the film after a long car journey from the Southwest and at the time I found it extremely slow. But in retrospect (and after a good night's sleep) it has grown on me!! The only quibble I had was the juddering camera work and flashing images which was supposed to indicate real-time recordings and which gave me eyestrain. It turned out to be a very topical film what with "regime change" in Venezuela and elsewhere.

Way too long and drawn out!

A really gripping film with excellent performances, especially from Fernanda Torres as a loving, determined and dignified woman coping with the loss of her husband and huge pressure from a hostile and oppressive government.

Another powerful film. Just as rewarding on a second viewing, helped by Jon Hackett's informative talk.

A slow start which sets the background to the trials and tribulations the family (the wife mainly) went through after the abduction of the father. It also shows the close ties which held the family together despite the challenges they faced.

The best of the season! A wonderfully paced film that, despite the difficult subject matter, had a delicate lightness that shone through some truly desperate times.

Superb film. The characters felt very authentic and the portrayal of family life was very natural. The tension in the film was apparent without making the horrors too explicit. The introductory remarks were very interesting and added useful context. Thank you.

Beautifully acted and shot, this terribly sad movie must resonate with anyone who has ever lost a partner, a parent or a child, who formed an irreplaceable element in a family. Excellent use of photographs, film and other memorabilia. Too sad to watch again.

Excellent film which I enjoyed all over again having seen it maybe 2024ish. It was a gripping story well told. Although the central theme was very dark indeed, there was a wonderful showing of love....love of family and love of country and love of what is right. There are these extraordinary people in the world who resist oppression for love.

The film told a tragic story really well. In the early scenes, the contrast between the idyllic life by the beach and the growing sense of the danger of the authoritarian regime was well balanced. The acting was excellent, including from the children and the film justified its length.

Brilliant film - so well acted and relevant politically. Excellent choice for Film Club.

Amazing emotional film, loved every moment. There was always that tense undercurrent of a threat about to happen. What a wonderful, strong loving family who had to cope with unimaginable sadness.

Thanks and congrats to RFS for including this film in this term's programme. The best by far this year and deserves level Excellent. The lead performance fully deserved the accolades and awards it received. The ensemble work that created a plausible and sympathetic picture of the wronged family contributed to the creation of a chilling atmosphere of dread accurately drawn. A masterpiece.

Very sad but so engaging and uplifting. Echoes for now, which is frightening but the wife's resilience and sense of rightness, as portrayed, gives hope.

Best film of the year so far for me.

What a great film. Gripping and utterly convincing. The actress playing the mother was excellent and the horror of the brutal place she was taken to for interrogation very realistic. One got a very real sense of her fear about what was happening to her daughter, let alone her husband, in that place. The talk before the film helped enormously in that it gave one some idea what to expect, particularly in regard to the timelines, home videos and photographs. Best film so far this year.

The film was absolutely outstanding.

Excellent, thought-provoking film with some great performances which maintained tension throughout. Thought the final two sections could have been sharper or preferably even covered by a written synopsis at the end.

Terrific performance by Fernanda Torres.

Great introduction from Jon. Certainly, picked up on his music references and their hidden subtext which I would have missed without his pointers. The sense of day-to-day surviving in an oppressive sinister regime excellently portrayed.

A powerfully told story about brutal politics and extraordinary parenting. I learned a lot. The regimes had reckless regard for life and fairness; in contrast, great parenting gives children love, support and kindness (the very things missing from bad regimes).

There's an interesting extended interview with Marcelo Rubens Paiva, the son of Eunice and her husband, Rubens, in an episode of 'Lives Less Ordinary' on BBC Sounds. (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0lbhdrz>). The film is based on Marcelo's biographical book. He says in the interview that they subsequently discovered that the military's original plan was to torture, or threaten to torture, Rubens' wife and daughter in front of him in order to make him 'talk' but he died just before they were taken into custody.

Fernanda Torres was superb, her character displayed so much strength and resilience beautifully acted out. The dislocation of the times was depicted so well, families on the beach while armed thugs carried out their instructions from those in power, routine searches and casual violence being part of it. The cinematography and the music added to capturing the spirit of the times. A great film all round.

Great portrayal of family life and the aftermath.

An excellent compelling film and I ended up with enormous admiration for Eunice Paiva and her struggle to seek justice over so many years. So sad that she suffered so long afterwards with Alzheimers.

Fernanda Torres was outstanding as Eunice Paiva, Walter Salles' connection with the family provides the film with a very personal feel, the cinematography was so atmospheric, the music was wonderful...and it shone a light on a very ugly period in Brazilian history about which I knew very little. Thank you to Dr Hackett for a really useful introduction to the film.

Fernanda Torres gives a strong performance as Eunice Paiva, whose comfortable life in Rio de Janeiro is turned upside down when her husband is taken by members of the military dictatorship to make a statement and never returns. She slowly realises that her husband will not come back but through her strength of character, manages to keep family life as normal as possible for her five children. It was interesting to discover that the director, Walter Salles, as a child, was a close friend of the Paiva children, when they were growing up in Rio de Janeiro and that Fernanda Torres' mother, Fernanda Montenegro, played Eunice Paiva at the end of her life.

Second time I have seen this and it remains a film one could watch again every few years. An intimate portrayal of real-life horror in an historical setting. Occasionally justice prevails.