

CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

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I'M STILL HERE Monday 23 February 2026 126 mins

At the recent Berlinale Film Festival, the writer Arundhati Roy withdrew after remarks from Wim Wenders, the chair of the jury committee, that “movies can change the world” but “not in a political way”. She was there to attend a screening of her restored 1988 film *‘In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones’* and said that Wenders’ words were “unconscionable”. She is quoted as adding that “To hear them saying that art should not be political is jaw-dropping. It is a way of shutting down a conversation about a crime against humanity even as it unfolds before us in real time”. She clearly had the situation in Gaza in mind. Wenders went on to qualify his position: “If we make films that are dedicatedly political we enter the field of politics...we are the counterweight of politics...the opposite of politics. We have to do the work of people, not the work of politicians.”

Walter Salles has said about our film tonight, when it was nominated for an Oscar in 2025, that “Cinema, as opposed to noise, used to be at the heart of the Oscars”. What he meant by the term ‘noise’ we cannot be sure, but maybe we could guess. However, *‘I’M STILL HERE’* is essentially based on the actual ‘disappearance’ of the Brazilian ex-congressman and civil engineer Rubens Paiva at the hands of the then brutal military dictatorship. Once released from prison, Eunice, Rubens’s wife, admirably portrayed by the actress Fernand Torres, is determined to do everything she can to find out what happened to her husband, and to hold her family together.

So is Wenders right? Will we be watching a movie about ‘people’, and hopefully bringing our own experience and political ideologies to bear, to draw conclusions and inferences, or just be ‘entertained’ - could this be what Salles meant by ‘noise’? - or both? When we watched *‘THE ZONE OF INTEREST’* last season we surely became absorbed by the people, the ‘characters’ whose lives we experienced and observed going about their daily lives, but also came away from the film with ‘political’ reactions? Watching our last screening, *ALL THAT WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT*, we were surely gripped by the ‘people’, the fascinating characters which featured in glorious close-ups, but maybe were left to reflect on the way ‘politics’ shaped, if not determined, their lives?

Our next screening: ON FALLING on Thursday 12 March.