

MIKE LEIGH



IN FOCUS

Week Nine

Welcome to *Mike Leigh In Focus*

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As we rush headlong into our final two weeks, we have reached 2012. Mike Leigh has a decades-long career in the rearview and the public could be forgiven (almost) for thinking that despite the continued praise heaped upon his work, he might not have any further surprises left.

Which might have something to do with the often-surprising work that has followed.

Not a sea change, perhaps. It's not a left turn into Mike Leigh's *Spider-Man*, for instance. The remaining films on our list are still stories about people, painstakingly built in collaboration with the actors, but two out of the three features between 2014 and 2025 are period pieces – *Peterloo*, in particular, is on a much grander visual scale than even, say, *Topsy-Turvy*.

The stories are resolutely human, but the palette continues to expand.

But first we have one last seldom seen short to look at in 2012's *A Running Jump*, starring Leigh perennial Eddie Marsan and commissioned for the London Cultural Olympiad. There aren't a huge number of sport-focused Leigh films. *The Birth of the Goalie* in the *Five-Minute Films* series, perhaps. But certainly, *A Running Jump*.

And then there's the towering turn(er) from Timothy Spall in another of Mike Leigh's films that expanded beyond his core audience, not least amongst awards bodies in 2014's *Mr Turner*.

Sport and Art.

Now that's a balanced diet.

SUGGESTED READING

Mike Leigh on Mike Leigh

Amy Raphael and Mike Leigh

Mike Leigh: Interviews

Howie Movshovitz