

SFGate.com**DVD: 'The Garden of Earthly Delights'**

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Sunday, October 5, 2008



Here's a 2004 English-language film that has never been distributed in the United States. Written and directed by Lech Majewski, it's about two scholars, an art historian and a boating engineer, who meet and fall in love with Venice. Because the man has a new camera and is obsessed with videotaping everything, the film is told almost entirely through his home movies, though occasionally we look over his shoulder as he chooses which video to play on his monitor. At times, this is a near-great film. The love affair, between two adults in their late 30s, is mature, erotic and grounded in recognizable emotion, and the setting couldn't be better - emphasizing both the timelessness and temporal nature of what they're going through. British actress Claudine Spiteri (left), in her only starring role, is moving and absolutely convincing as a passionate woman determined to leave a mark on the world. The movie's weakness, which is what I suspect kept it out of distribution, is that it is light - very light - on story. Also, the guy-filming-everything gimmick has two drawbacks: It renders a couple of scenes absurd (they wouldn't play that way on camera), and it renders the character of the guy something of a creep. That said, I've seen a lot of movies this year, but I don't think I'll forget this one. It has a strange, longing beauty about it.

THE GARDEN

OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

2004

NOT RATED

KINO INTERNATIONAL

\$29.95

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