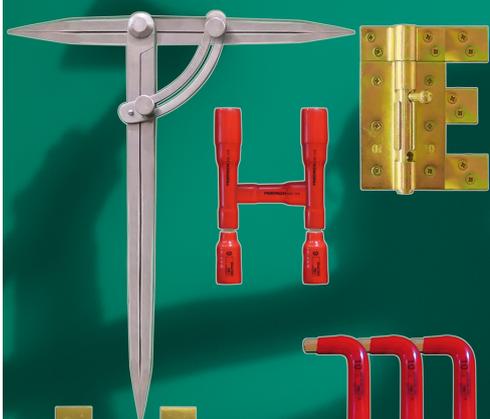
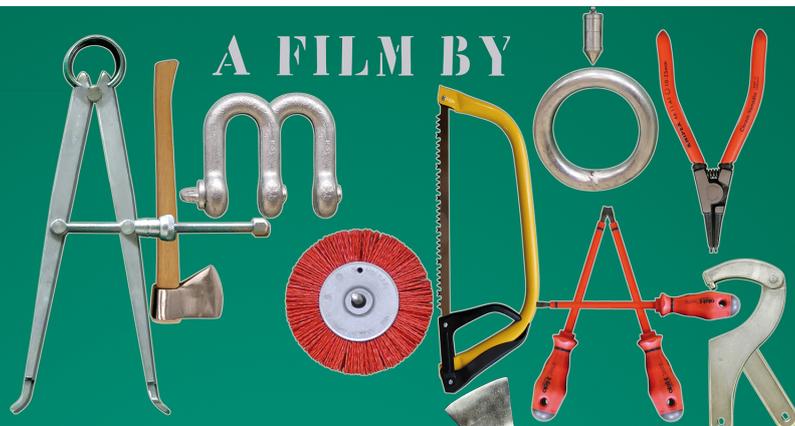


cinéart

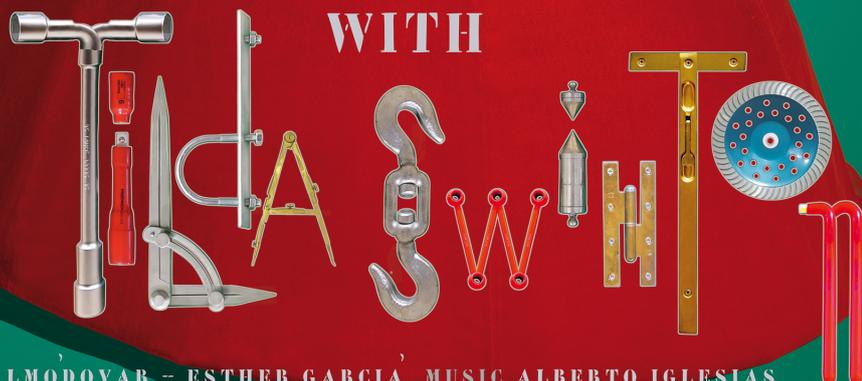
DOSSIER DE PRESSE - PERSMAP

EL DESEO
PRESENTS

A FILM BY



WITH



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2020
Official Selection

PRODUCERS AGUSTIN ALMODÓVAR - ESTHER GARCIA MUSIC ALBERTO IGLESIAS
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JOSÉ LUIS ALCAINE (AECI) EDITOR TERESA FONT
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY PEDRO ALMODÓVAR FREELY BASED ON JEAN COCTEAU'S PLAY

THE HUMAN VOICE

UN FILM DE - EEN FILM VAN
PEDRO ALMODÓVAR

Librement basé sur la pièce de - Vrij gebaseerd op het toneelstuk van
JEAN COCTEAU



Drama - 2020 - Spain - 30 minuten

Info & Material : www.cineart.be

Distribution:

Cinéart
Rue de Namur, 72-74
1000 Brussel
T. 02 245 87 00

Contact:

Heidi Vermander
T. 0475 62 10 13
heidi@cineart.be

SYNOPSIS

Une femme regarde le temps passer à côté des valises de son ex-amant qui l'a quittée pour une autre femme. Lors de ces trois jours, elle ne quitte sa maison qu'une seule fois : pour aller acheter une hache et un bidon d'essence...

THE HUMAN VOICE est un film de Pedro Almodóvar, adapté de la célèbre pièce de Jean Cocteau "La voix humaine". Almodóvar a trouvé en Tilda Swinton l'interprète idéale du personnage qui l'inspire depuis toujours : une femme abandonnée et désespérée.

THE HUMAN VOICE is een korte film van Pedro Almodóvar, gebaseerd op het beroemde toneelstuk 'La voix humaine' van Jean Cocteau. In Tilda Swinton vond Almodóvar de ideale vertolker van het personage dat hem al decennia inspireert: een verlaten en ontredderde vrouw.

Een vrouw (Tilda Swinton) komt thuis en wacht op de man die haar verlaten heeft. Zijn koffers staan klaar, maar hij komt niet. Ook de hond is rusteloos zonder zijn baasje. Tijdens een telefoongesprek tussen de vrouw en haar ex-geliefde worden we deelgenoot van haar wanhoop, rusteloosheid en sarcasme. Haar wereld stort ineen. Eerst figuurlijk, daarna letterlijk.



PEDRO ALMODÓVAR

FILMOGRAPHY

2020 THE HUMAN VOICE (SHORT)
2019 DOLOR Y GLORIA
2016 JULIETA
2013 LOS AMANT
2011 LA PIEL QUE HABITO
2009 LOS ABRAZOS ROTOS
2006 VOLVER
2004 LA MALA EDUCACIÓN
2002 HABLE CON ELLA
1999 TODO SOBRE MI MADRE
1997 CARNE TRÉMULA
1995 LA FLOR DE MI SECRETO
1993 KIKA
1991 TACONES LEJANOS
1989 ¡ÁTAME!
1988 MUJERES AL BORDE DE UN ATAQUE DE NERVIOS
1987 LA LEY DEL DESEO
1986 MATADOR
1984 ¿QUÉ HE HECHO YO PARA MERECEER ESTO?
1983 ENTRE TENIEBLAS
1982 LABERINTO DE PASIONES
1980 PEPI, LUCI, BOM Y OTRAS CHICAS DEL MONTÓN
1978 FOLLE...FOLLE...FÓLLEME TIM!



DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

The text by Cocteau on which the script of this human voice is freely based is an old acquaintance of mine, which had already served as inspiration for me on other occasions. I tried to adapt it when I started writing *Women On the Verge Of Nervous Breakdown*, but what came out was a screwball comedy where the lover didn't call and, therefore, there was no place for the telephone monologue. A year earlier, I included it in a scene from *Law of Desire*, where the protagonist is a director who directs his sister in a version of *The Human Voice*. At that time, I already thought that a character in such a state of nerves was capable of picking up an axe to destroy the house where she had lived with the man who is abandoning her. The idea of the axe came about in *Law of Desire*. And now it reappears.

I sat down once again to adapt Cocteau's text, determined to be faithful to the author. I read it for the first time in decades. But it's clear that I'm unfaithful by nature and that I have to add "freely based" to this version because that is what it is. I have kept what is essential, the woman's despair, the high price imposed by the law of desire, which she is willing to pay, even though it almost costs her her life. A dog that is also mourning its master, and some suitcases full of memories. The rest, the telephone conversation, the waiting and what happens afterwards, I have adapted to my way of conceiving a contemporary woman, insane with love for a man who takes days to call to collect his suitcases, but with sufficient moral autonomy so as not to bow down to him. She isn't a submissive woman, as in the original text. She can't be, given the times in which we live.

I always considered this adaptation as an experiment, a whim in which I would show what, in theater, is called the fourth wall, and in cinema would be to show the part behind, that is, the wooden structure that holds up the walls of the realistic set, the material reality of what is fictional.

The reality of this woman is the pain, the solitude, the darkness in which she lives. I have tried to make all this obvious, moving and eloquent through the (sublime) performance by Tilda Swinton, showing very early on that her house is a construction inside a cinema sound stage. By showing it on all sides, coming out of the realistic decor and making use of all the space in the studio, I have enlarged, as it were, the size of the setting where the monologue is performed. I have mixed the cinematic and the theatrical, combining their essences. For example, when She is on the terrace, waiting and looking at the city, the only thing we see is a wall (the wall of the studio) which still has marks from other shoots. There isn't a skyline, the urban landscape doesn't exist. She only finds emptiness, starkness and darkness. Which allows me to accentuate the feeling of solitude and darkness in which the character lives.

The studio where we filmed thus became the setting where all the action took place. And the construction of the realistic set where the protagonist lives and waits in a part of this set, inside and outside. Showing the wooden structure that holds up the realistic set is like showing the set's skin.

The use of English is also an experiment for me. I am a director who is totally free when it comes to working, but this time, as I wasn't doing it in a standard format, I felt freer than ever. Freeing myself of my own language, of the minimum length of 90 minutes, of having to be careful about not showing what is behind the set construction, etc., meant a real break for me.

This doesn't mean that everything fitted in. The limits were inside my head, but they existed and they were inflexible. A work made with such freedom also needs the rigor of the *mise-en-scène*, almost more than others do. It wasn't a matter, for example, of filming the filming of the monologue, cinema within theater, showing the spotlights, the cameras, the cables, along with all the other elements of the construction. It wasn't that. Everything I have shown that wasn't realistic was to reinforce the idea of the protagonist's solitude and exile: the isolation in which She lives. Behind each extravagance, there is always a dramatic idea. When the whole set appears, in an overhead shot, I wanted to show the protagonist enclosed in it, tiny, as in a dolls' house

The beginning, before the credits, works like the prologue of an opera. The dresses by Balenciaga helped me create that illusion. The first sequence shows a woman who waits, dressed extravagantly. She seems like a dummy left behind in a storeroom.

The truth is I have really enjoyed this experiment. Transforming, for example, an enormous chroma green screen, usually so ugly, into a kind of operatic curtain was stimulating, fun and exciting. The fact of approaching the film as a chamber piece, an experimental work, made me forget little prejudices about furniture, props and music. There are several pieces of furniture that have appeared in other films of mine. The same has happened with the music. I suggested to Alberto Iglesias that he developed compositions from our other films, adapted to the tempo and mood of *The Human Voice*. And that is what he has done. With the exception of some electronic base, the soundtrack is composed of themes from *Broken Embraces*, *Bad Education*, *Talk To Her* and *I'm So Excited!*, revisited for this film.

Before starting, I already had many practical aesthetic ideas, but *The Human Voice* is above all a text and an actress. It was difficult to adapt the text to myself, but it needed an exceptional actress who would bring truth and emotion to my words. My version is more abstract than Cocteau's (where everything is more recognizable and naturalistic), this makes mine more difficult to perform. It came about surrounded by artifice, with few realistic supports. The actress's voice is the only continuity that must be respected, it is the only guide that the spectator has in order to follow the story without sudden shocks. Never as in this whim have I needed an exceptional actress. And I found her, with all the dreamed-about attributes, in Tilda Swinton.

Despite that fact that it is spoken in English, that *The Human Voice* is my debut in that language, and that the shoot was absolutely idyllic, I'm not sure that I'm ready to tackle another shoot in English. What I am sure about is that I can direct Tilda Swinton in her native language. I think that this short film, inhabited from start to finish exclusively by her, shows her wide range of registers. For the crew, it was a gift to hear her talk and move through the set. Her intelligence and willing disposition made my work much easier. And in particular, in addition to her enormous talent, her blind faith in me. This is a feeling that all directors dream of and the mere fact of it being produced makes you grow.

Once again, the lighting was in the hands of José Luis Alcaine, the last great maestro of light left in Spanish cinema. The legendary director of photography in *The South*, Víctor Erice's masterpiece. All the favorite colors of my palette are represented in the set, but after eight films, Alcaine is the one who best knows my preference for saturation and vibrant colors, my nostalgia for Technicolor.

For the second time, after *Pain and Glory*, Teresa Font was responsible for the editing, with her usual enthusiasm and efficiency. And Juan Gatti undertook the design of the credits and the poster. Heading it all, my family at *El Deseo*, our production company, with a guest of honor. Tilda Swinton. I hope that you enjoy it as much as we enjoyed making it.



CAST

Her TILDA SWINTON



CREW

Written and directed by PEDRO ALMODÓVAR
Producers AGUSTÍN ALMODÓVAR
ESTHER GARCÍA
Original score ALBERTO IGLESIAS
Director of photography JOSÉ LUIS ALCAINE
Editing TERESA FONT
Art Director ANTXON GÓMEZ
Costumes SONIA GRANDE
Make-up ANA LOZANO
Hair-stylist MANOLO GARCÍA
Sound SERGIO BÜRMAN



