

**UN FILM DE ALMODÓVAR**



**VOLVER**

# volver

an almodóvar film



# synopsis

Madrid. Today. Raimunda is a young mother, hard working and very attractive, with an unemployed husband and a daughter in mid-adolescence. The family finances are very shaky, so Raimunda has got several jobs. She is a very strong woman, a born fighter, but also very fragile emotionally. She has kept a terrible secret to herself since childhood. Her sister Sole is a little older. Timid and fearful, she makes her living with an illegal (undeclared) hair salon. Her husband left her and went off with a client. Since then she has lived on her own.

Paula is their aunt. She lives in a village in La Mancha where the whole family was born. A village swept by the east wind, the direct cause of the high rate of insanity registered there. That damn wind is responsible for the many fires that devastate the area every summer. The parents of Sole and Raimunda died in one of those fires.

A Sunday in spring, Sole calls Raimunda to tell her that Agustina (a neighbour in the village) has phoned to tell her that their Aunt Paula has died. Raimunda adored her aunt, but she can't go to the funeral because moments before getting the call from her sister, when she had just come back from one of her jobs, she had found her husband dead in the kitchen, with a knife stuck in his chest. Her daughter confesses that she killed him because he had got drunk and kept making sexual advances to her.

The most important thing for Raimunda is to save her daughter. She still doesn't know how, but what she certainly can't do is accompany Sole to their aunt's funeral in La Mancha.

Sole reluctantly goes back to the village on her own. Among the women who accompany her at the wake she hears rumours that her mother (who died in a fire with her father) came back from the other world to look after Aunt Paula in her final years, when she was ill. The neighbours talk quite naturally about the mother's "ghost".

When Sole returns to Madrid, after parking her car, she hears noises coming from the trunk. A voice calls to her to open it and let her out, and says that she's her mother.

Sole is terrified at first. The knocking from the inside the trunk continues. Sole opens it and discovers the ghost of her mother in there, surrounded by bags. She doesn't dare even look at her, but when she manages to overcome her fear she sees that the ghost is just as her mother was in life, except that her hair is almost white and unkempt and her skin is paler.

She brings her upstairs to her apartment, and asks her how long she is going to stay. For as long as God wills, the ghost answers. Given the range of that reply, Sole has got no choice but to live with her mother's ghost and let her get involved in the work in the hair salon. She introduces her to the first clients as a Russian beggar she met on the street and took in out of charity. When there are clients, the mother doesn't speak, she just washes their hair and smiles.

Sole doesn't dare tell her sister about the situation she's in. For her part, Raimunda only tells her that Paco, her husband, has left her and that she has a feeling he won't be back. Really, she is trying to get rid of his body, but she can't find the right moment because she has got a new job that pays well and also offers a possible solution to her pressing problem... (what to do with the body).

The untenable becomes routine. Each of the two sisters takes a leap in the dark, surviving situations that are very tense, melodramatic, comic and also very emotional. Both women resolve them with audacity and by telling endless lies.

"Volver" is a story of survival. All the characters are fighting to survive, even the grandmother's ghost.

The grandmother's ghost tells Sole that she wants to see her daughter Raimunda, and her granddaughter. She has to talk to Raimunda. In fact, that conversation is the reason she has come back from the other world... and that supernatural urgency has to do with the secret that Raimunda has hidden since she was a child. She doesn't tell Sole this.

But Raimunda has a very strong character, she isn't as soft as Sole and she doesn't believe in ghosts, not even when she finds her mother hiding under the bed, in Sole's house...

All this is just the beginning of a story that is complex and simple, touching and atrocious, one that affects the women in Raimunda's family, the neighboring women and a few men.

Most of the writers I know are very interested in cinema. Some of them are friends of mine. Lola, my assistant, sent the script of "Volver" to Juan José Millás and Gustavo Martín Garzo. These were their replies, words which they never thought I would use parasitically in this pressbook.

From: Juan José Millás

To: Lola García

Re: Volver

Dear Lola,

I read the script in no time. The hyperrealism of the first scenes places you in a situation of great emotional tension. Hyperrealist painting has been given that name because they didn't know exactly how it differs from realist painting. In this country, we have always confused realism with the portrayal of local customs. Flemish painting is hyperrealist because it is fantastic, because it places us in a dimension of reality that allows us to be surprised by the most everyday situations. Once Pedro has placed us in that situation at the beginning, which is resolved with the appearance of the ghost in the trunk of the car, he can do what he wants with the spectator. And that's what he does. "Volver" is a permanent narrative conjuring trick, a prodigious device. And you never know where the trick is.

In this script there is no frontier that Pedro hasn't dared cross. He moves on the line that separates life from death like a tightrope walker. He mixes narrative materials from apparently incompatible origins with an amazing naturalness. And the more materials he adds, the greater the internal logic of the story...

P.S. I couldn't help, while reading "Volver", recalling "Pedro Páramo". Rulfo's novel has got nothing to do with Pedro's script, except in the naturalness with which both manage to have the dead co-existing with the living; the real with the unreal; the fantastic with the mundane; the imagined with the experienced; sleep with wakefulness. While reading the script, as happens while reading Rulfo's novel, the reader has a permanent oneiric sensation. He is awake, of course, but trapped in a dream, the story he is reading. The strange thing is that Rulfo's novel is furiously Mexican in the same way that Pedro's script is furiously Manchegan...

# shooting

The most difficult thing about "Volver" has been writing its synopsis. My films are becoming more and more difficult to tell and summarize in a few lines. Fortunately, this difficulty has not been reflected in the work of the actors, or of the crew. The shooting of "Volver" went like clockwork.

I guess I enjoyed it more because the last shoot ("Bad Education") was absolute hell. I had forgotten what it was like to shoot without having the feeling of being permanently on the edge of the abyss. This doesn't mean that "Volver" is better than my previous film, (in fact, I'm very proud of having made "Bad Education"), just that this time I suffered less. In fact, I didn't suffer at all.

In any case, "Bad Education" confirmed something essential for me (which I had discovered already, in "Matador" and "Live Flesh"): you can't throw in the towel. Even if you're convinced that your work is a disaster, you have to keep fighting for every shot, every repetition, every look, every silence, every tear. You mustn't lose an iota of enthusiasm even if you're in despair. The passing of time gives you another perspective and at times things weren't as bad as you thought.

# confession

"Volver" (Coming back) is a title that includes several kinds of coming back for me. I have come back, a bit more, to comedy. I have come back to the female world, to La Mancha (undoubtedly this is my most strictly Manchegan film, the language, the customs, the patios, the sobriety of the facades, the cobbled paving in the streets). I am working again with Carmen Maura (after seventeen years), with Penélope Cruz, Lola Dueñas and Chus Lampreave. I have come back to maternity, as the origin of life and of fiction. And naturally, I have come back to my mother. Coming back to La Mancha is always to come back to the maternal breast.

During the writing of the script and the filming, my mother was always present and very near. I don't know if the film is good (I'm not the one to say), but I'm sure that it did me a lot of good to make it.

I have the impression, and I hope it's not a passing feeling, that I have managed to slot in a piece whose misalignment has caused me a lot of pain and anxiety throughout my life, I would even say that in recent years it had damaged my existence, dramatizing it too much). The piece I am talking about is "death", not just mine and that of my

loved ones but the merciless disappearance of all that is alive. I have never accepted or understood it. And that puts you in a distressing situation when faced with the increasingly faster passing of time.

The most important thing that comes back in "Volver" is the ghost of a mother, who appears to her daughters. In my village those things happen (I grew up hearing stories of apparitions), yet I don't believe in apparitions. Only when they happen to others, or when they happen in fiction. And this fiction, the one in my film (and here comes my confession) has produced a serenity in me such as I haven't felt for a long time (really, serenity is a word whose meaning is a mystery to me). I have never in my life been a serene person (and it's never mattered to me in the slightest). My innate restlessness, along with a galloping dissatisfaction, has generally acted as a stimulus. It's been in recent years that my life has gradually deteriorated, consumed by a terrible anxiety. And that wasn't good either for living or for working. In order to direct a film, it's more important to have patience than to have talent. And I had lost all patience a long time ago, particularly with trivial things which are what require most patience. This doesn't mean that I have become less of a perfectionist or more complacent, not at all. But I believe that with "Volver" I have recovered part of my "patience", a word which naturally entails many other things.

I have the impression that, through this film, I have gone through a mourning period that I needed, a painless mourning (like that of the character of Agustina the neighbour). I have filled a vacuum, I have said goodbye to something (my youth?) to which I had not yet said

goodbye and needed to, I don't know. There is nothing paranormal in all this. My mother hasn't appeared to me, although, as I said, I felt her presence closer than ever.

"Volver" is a tribute to the social rites practiced by the people of my village with regard to death and the dead. The dead never die. I have always admired and envied the naturalness with which my neighbours talk of the dead, cultivate their memory and tend their graves constantly. Like the character of Agustina in the film, many of them look after their own grave for years, while they are alive. I have the optimistic feeling that I have been impregnated with all that and that some of it has stayed with me.

I never accepted death, I've never understood it (I've said that already). For the first time, I think I can look at it without fear, although I continue to neither understand nor accept it. I'm starting to get the idea that it exists.

Despite being a non-believer, I've tried to bring the character (of Carmen Maura) from the other world. And I've made her talk about heaven, hell and purgatory. And, I'm not the first one to discover this, the other world is here. The other world is this one. We are hell, heaven or purgatory, they are inside us. Sartre put it better than I.

## LETTER FROM GUSTAVO MARTÍN GARZO

Dear Pedro, I really liked the script of your new film. Everything in it seems very familiar to me, very much you. It reminds me of the world of "What Have I Done to Deserve This?!" But it is less baroque, there is a transparency in it that situates us again in that world, it couldn't be otherwise, but at the same time in a different, more poetic, wiser, more touching way. That mixture of horror and happiness is wonderful. As if your characters could always find in the midst of hell, as Calvino wanted, that which isn't hell, and they'll always manage to make it last in their lives. That mixture, so typically yours, of candor and perverseness which makes the most dreadful things funny, and manages to find beauty and hope where it seems they can't exist, seems to me one of the most marvelous things in your films. Your script reminded me of a story that Tolstoi tells somewhere. A priest visits an isolated monastery in the Greek islands and finds four monks. He discovers that they don't know the Our Father and, shocked, he teaches it to them. Then he takes his leave of them. When he is far from the coast he sees something gliding rapidly across the water towards his boat. He looks harder and sees that it is the monks whom he has just visited. They are running over the water! When they catch up with him they tell him they have forgotten the prayer he has just taught them, and ask him to repeat it. The

priest, filled with emotion, replies that they don't have to remember it, they don't need it.

That is how the characters in your film seem to me. They come to us, vulnerable and lost, to ask us for help, but they do it running over the water. They don't realize, but that is the strange, wonderful path they follow to reach us. And then, what can we tell them? That it doesn't matter what happens to them, what they suffer, what strange, terrible things may happen to them, we are not the ones to judge them. What's more, they are the ones who could judge us, even though we know they never will, because they aren't obsessed with justice but with love. And the best thing they can do is to continue being as they are.

That is how I see this script, like a tale. There are terrible things in tales: people being chopped up, fathers who want to sleep with their adolescent daughters, children who are abandoned in a forest, fierce creatures who devour human flesh... The most extreme has a place in them, and yet, alongside that horror, there is always that rare thing we call innocence. It's very hard to define what it is but there is nothing easier to identify when it appears. I think that art exists to pursue that innocence, which usually appears in the darkest places...

# the river

The happiest memories of my childhood are related to the river.

My mother used to take me with her when she went to wash clothes there because I was very little and she had no one with whom to leave me.

There were always several women washing clothes and spreading them out on the grass. I would sit near my mother and put my hand in the water, trying to stroke the fish that answered the call of the fortuitously ecological soap the women used back then and which they made themselves.

The river, the rivers, they were always a celebration. It was also in the waters of a river where, a few years later, I discovered sensuality.

Undoubtedly the river is what I miss most from my childhood and puberty.

The women would sing while they were washing. I've always liked female choirs. My mother used to sing a song about some gleaners who would greet the dawn working in the fields and singing like joyful little birds. I sang the fragments that I remembered to the composer on "Volver", my faithful Alberto Iglesias, and he told me it was a song from the operetta "La rosa del azafrán". In my ignorance, I would never have thought that that heavenly music was an operetta. That is how the theme has become the music that accompanies the opening credits.

In "Volver", Raimunda is looking for a place to bury her husband and she decides to do it on the banks of the river where they met as children. The river, like the graphics of any transport, like tunnels or endless passageways, is one of many metaphors for time.

# genre and tone

I suppose that "Volver" is a dramatic comedy. It has got funny sequences and dramatic sequences. Its tone imitates "real life" but it isn't a portrayal of local customs. Rather it has a surreal naturalism, if that were possible. I've always mixed genres and I still do. For me, it's something natural.

The fact of including a ghost in the plot is a basically comic element, particularly if you treat it in a realistic way. All of Sole's attempts to hide the ghost from her sister, or the way she introduces her to her clients, give rise to very comic scenes.

Although what happens in Raimunda's house (the death of the husband) is terrible, the way in which she fights so that no one should find out and the way she tries to get rid of him also create comic situations. Although mixing genres is something natural for me, that doesn't mean it's free of risk (the grotesque and the "grand guignol" are always a threat). When you move between genres and cross opposing tones in a matter of seconds, the best thing is to adopt a naturalistic interpretation that manages to make the most ludicrous situation plausible. The only weapon that you have, apart from a realistic setting, are the actors. The actresses, in this case. I had the good fortune that they are all in a constant state of grace.

They are the great spectacle in "Volver".



# family

"Volver" is a film about the family, and made with the family. My own sisters were the advisers on what happened both in La Mancha and inside the houses in Madrid (the hair salon, the meals, cleaning materials, etc.) Although they were more fortunate, my family, like that of Sole and Raimunda, is a migrant family which came from the village to the big city in search of prosperity. Fortunately my sisters have continued to cultivate the culture of our childhood and have kept intact the inheritance received from my mother. I moved away from home very young and became an inveterate urbanite. When I return to the habits and customs of La Mancha, they are my guides.

The family in "Volver" is a family of women. The grandmother who has come back is Carmen Maura, her two daughters are Lola Dueñas and Penélope Cruz. Yohana Cobo is the granddaughter and Chus Lampreave is Aunt Paula, who still lives in the village. This group would have to include Agustina, the neighbor in the village (Blanca Portillo), the one who knows many of the family's secrets, the one who has heard so many things, the one who, as soon as she gets up, taps on Aunt Paula's window and doesn't let up until the old lady answers, the one who brings her a full stick of bread every day, the one who finds her dead and calls Sole in Madrid. The one who opens her home to the corpse in order to give it a proper wake until the nieces arrive. The one who converts her mourning for the neighbor into mourning for her own mother, who disappeared years before,

she doesn't know where. The character of Agustina is, in her own right, part of the family that is headed by Carmen Maura.

Agustina represents a very important element in this female universe: the solidarity of neighboring women. The women in the village spread out problems, they share them. And they manage to make life much more bearable. The opposite also happens (the neighbor who hates the neighbor and stores his hatred from generation to generation until one day the tragedy explodes and even they don't know why). I have only paid attention to the positive part of that Deep Spain, which is what I experienced as a child. In fact, "Volver" pays tribute to the supportive neighbor, that unmarried or widowed woman who lives alone and makes the life of the old lady next door her own life. For a great part of her final years, my mother was helped by her closest neighbors. Those women were the inspiration for Agustina, a magnificent creation thanks to Blanca Portillo. For me she is the real revelation, because I didn't know her. I had only seen her in a play and I liked her, but I couldn't imagine that, with barely any film experience, she would be such a precise, polished actress, overwhelming in her continence. Agustina, alone in the empty street, watching as Sole's car disappears, is the image of rural solitude, stripped of all adornment. Blanca absorbed the essence of all the good neighbors in my village and made it her own.

## THE STRENGTH AND FRAGILITY OF PENÉLOPE CRUZ

And her beauty. Penélope is at the height of her beauty. It's a cliché but in her case it's true. (Those eyes, her neck, her shoulders, her breasts!! Penélope has got one of the most spectacular cleavages in world cinema). Looking at her has been one of the great pleasures of this shoot. Although she has become stylized in the last few years, Penélope showed (from her debut in "Jamón, jamón") that she has more force in plebeian characters than in very refined ones. Seven or eight years ago, in "Live Flesh", she played an uncouth hooker who goes into labor and gives birth on a bus. They were the first eight minutes of the film and Penélope literally devoured the screen.

Her Raimunda in "Volver" belongs to the same stock as Carmen Maura's character in "What Have I done to Deserve This?!", a force of nature that isn't daunted by anything. Penélope can come up with that overwhelming energy, but Raimunda is also a fragile woman, very fragile. She can (and must, because of the script) be furious and a moment later collapse like a defenseless child. This disarming vulnerability is what surprised me most about Penélope-actress, and the speed with which she can get in touch with it. There isn't a more impressive spectacle than watching in the same shot how a pair of dry, threatening eyes suddenly start to fill with tears, tears that at times spill over like a torrent or, as in some sequences, only fill her eyes without ever spilling over. Witnessing that balance in imbalance has been thrilling.

Penélope Cruz is a strong minded actress, but it is the mixture with that sudden, devastating emotion which makes her indispensable in "Volver".

It was a pleasure to dress, comb and make up the character and the person. Penélope's body ennobles whatever you put on it. We decided on straight skirts and cardigans because they are classic garments, very feminine and popular in any decade, from the 1950s to 2000. And, it also must be said, because they reminded us of Sophia Loren, in her beginnings as a Neapolitan fish seller. We have to thank the hairdresser Massimo Gattabrusi for the wonderful disheveled hair-dos and Ana Lozano for the make-up. The extended eye line was a real find. There is just one false element in Raimunda's body, her ass. These characters are always big-assed women and Penélope is too slim. The rest is all heart, emotion, talent, truth, and a face that the camera adores. As I do.

## THE RETURN OF CARMEN

I never imagined that there was so much expectation about our reencounter. I'm surprised by the number of people who told me how happy they were that Carmen and I were working together again! A song by Chavela says: "you always go back to the old places where you loved life". That can also be applied to people.

There is always uncertainty, but fortunately Carmen's disappeared at our first work meetings.

There is a long sequence in the script of "Volver", almost a monologue, because only Carmen's character, the grandmother's ghost, speaks. In this sequence, Carmen explains to her beloved daughter, Penélope Cruz, the reasons for her death and her return, over the course of six intense pages and six equally intense shots. This sequence is one of the reasons why I wanted to make the film. I cried each and every time I corrected the text (like the character played by Kathleen Turner in "Romancing the Stone", a ridiculous writer of very kitsch, romantic novels who cried while she was writing).

The night we filmed it, the whole crew was aware of its importance. There was a lot of expectation. That made Carmen a bit nervous and she wanted it to tackle it as soon as she could.

We took a whole night to film it and everyone from the trainee to me had that extreme concentration you get with difficult scenes and which precisely because of that makes them the easiest scenes, because we all give the most of ourselves.

Once again I felt that sacred complicity with Carmen, that marvelous feeling of being in front of an instrument that was perfectly tuned for my hands. All the takes were good, and many of them were extraordinary. Penélope is listening to her, at times with her head down. In the film, there is a lot of talking, there is a lot that is hidden and, for a comedy (so the crew says) there is a lot of crying.

From "Women on the Verge..." to the monologue in "Volver", Carmen hasn't changed as an actress, and it was wonderful to discover that. She hasn't learned anything because she knew it all already, but keeping that fire

intact over two decades is an admirable, difficult task that can't be said of all the actors with whom I've worked.

The rest of the cast has been on a level with their companions. Lola Dueñas probably gives one of her most complex performances. She is the most eccentric of the four women in her family. Lola undertook personally to dominate the complicated Manchegan accent. She learned the secrets of the hairdressing trade and developed a comic streak unknown in her. She is intense, authentic and rare, in the best sense of the word. Another of the blessings on this shoot was that all the girls lived and worked very closely. They had a wonderful relationship, like a family. And the lens captured that too.

I'm very moved by young Yohana Cobo's performance. She is present in almost all the sequences but as a witness. She does one of the most complicated things in acting, which is listening and being present. And her presence is eloquent while doing hardly anything. But Yohana's work is conscious, subtle and very rich. Apart from "her" sequences, her monologue in front of her dead father... etc, the rest, always close to her mother, understanding her without knowing what is wrong with her, provokes a great tenderness in me. She also has an abrasive look. I hope everything goes well for her. Chus Lampreave, María Isabel Díaz, Neus Sanz, Pepa Aniorte and Yolanda Ramos complete the cast, along with Antonio de la Torre, Carlos Blanco and Leandro Rivera.

José Luís Alcaine, behind the camera, Alberto Iglesias, with the music, and Pepe Salcedo, as editor, have once again tuned in to my secret intentions, each one in his respective area.

## PEDRO ALMODÓVAR - BIOGRAPHY

He was born in Calzada de Calatrava, province of Ciudad Real, in the heart of La Mancha, in the 50s. When he was eight, he emigrated with his family to Extremadura. There he studied for his elementary and high school diplomas in spite of the Salesian Fathers and the Franciscans. At seventeen, he left home and moved to Madrid, with no money and no job, but with a very specific project in mind: to study cinema and direct films. It was impossible to enrol in the Official Film School because Franco had just closed it. As he couldn't learn the language, he decided to learn the content, that is, life, living... Despite the dictatorship that was suffocating the country, for an adolescent from the provinces Madrid represented culture, independence and freedom. He worked at many, sporadic jobs but couldn't buy his first Super-8mm camera until he got a "serious" job at the National Telephone Company of Spain where he worked for twelve years as an administrative assistant, twelve years which he also devoted to multiple activities which provided his real training as a filmmaker and as a person. In the mornings, in the Telephone Company, he got an in-depth knowledge of the Spanish middle class at the start of the consumer era, its dramas and its misfortunes, a real gold mine for a future story teller. In the evenings and nights, he wrote, loved, acted with the mythical independent theater group Los Goliardos and made films in Super-8 (his only school as a filmmaker). He collaborated with various underground magazines and wrote stories, some of which were published. He was a member of a parodic punk-rock group, Almodóvar and McNamara, etc.

He had the good fortune that the opening of his first film in commercial cinemas coincided with the beginning of democracy in Spain.

After 18 months of eventful shooting on 16mm, in 1980 he opened "Pepi, Luci, Bom...", a no-budget film made as a cooperative effort with the rest of the crew and the cast, all beginners, except for Carmen Maura. In 1986, he founded the production company El Deseo S.A. with his brother Agustín. Their first project was "Law of Desire". Since then, they have produced all the films that Pedro has written and directed, and have also produced other young directors.

In 1988, "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" brought him international recognition. Since then, his films have opened all around the world. With "All About my Mother" he won his first Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, and also the Golden Globe, the César, 3 European Film Awards, the David de Donatello, 2 BAFTAs, 7 Goyas and 45 other awards. Three years later, "Talk to Her" had the same or better fortune (Academy Award for Best Script, 5 European Film Awards, 2 BAFTAs, the

Nastro de Argento, the César and many other awards throughout the world but not in Spain).

He produced three very special films, highly rated throughout the world for their valour and delicacy ("My Life Without Me", "The Holy Girl" and "The Secret Life of Words").

In 2004, "Bad Education" was chosen to open the Cannes Festival. It received extraordinary reviews throughout the world, was nominated for numerous awards (Independent Spirit Awards, BAFTAs, César, European Film Awards) and won the prestigious Award for Best Foreign Film given by the New York Critics' Circle, and also the Nastro de Argento.

Today, he is probably the director who enjoys the greatest freedom and independence when working.

## FILMOGRAPHY

1974-79 Various films of differing lengths on Super-8mm, including some on 16mm (Salomé)

1980 Pepi, Luci, Bom

1982 Labyrinth of Passions

1983 Dark Habits

1984-85 What Have I Done to Deserve This?!

1985 Trayler para amantes de lo prohibido (medium length, on video, for TVE)

1985-86 Matador

1986 Law of Desire

1987 Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown

1989 Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down

1991 High Heels

1992 Acción mutante (Producer)

1993 Kika

1995 The Flower of my Secret

1995 Tengo una casa (Producer)

1996 Pasajes (Producer)

1997 Live Flesh

1999 All About my Mother

2000 The Devil's Backbone (Producer)

2001 Talk to Her

2002 My Life Without Me (Producer)

2003 Descongélate (Producer)

2003 Bad Education

2004 The Holy Girl (Producer)

2005 The Secret Life of Words (Producer)

2006 Volver



## cast - biofilmographies

### PENÉLOPE CRUZ

After having participated in "Live Flesh" and "All About my Mother", Penélope has worked with Pedro Almodóvar again.

After studying acting in Cristina Rota's school, she worked with some of the most important directors in Spain: Bigas Luna, in "Jamón, jamón" and "Volaverunt", Fernando Trueba, in "Belle Epoque" and "The Girl of your Dreams" (for which she received the Goya for Best Actress), Alejandro Amenábar in "Open Your Eyes", and Agustín Díaz Yanes in "Don't Tempt Me". Added to this is a more than notable international career that includes films like "The Hi-Lo Country" (Stephen Frears), "All the Pretty Horses" (Billy Bob Thornton), "Blow" (Jonathan Demme), "Captain Corelli's Mandolin" (John Madden) and "Vanilla Sky" (Cameron Crowe).

With "Don't Move", by Sergio Castellito, she won the David di Donatello award and the Best Actress Award from the Academy of European Cinema (People's Choice Award). The New York Times chose her performance in this film as one of the ten best female performances of the year.

After "Volver", she worked in "The Good Night" (Jake Paltrow) and is about to begin shooting on "Manolete" (Meno Meyjes).

With her sophisticated, Mediterranean beauty, she has been the image of Ralph Lauren for years.

Her interests include that of becoming a photographer.

### CARMEN MAURA

She began in one of the most difficult areas, the one where you learn most, café theatre. Her portrayal of Marilyn Monroe was one of the milestones in this sub-genre in the 70s.

At the end of the 70s and the start of the 80s, she became the queen of what was known as Madrid comedy, working with Colomo, Trueba and Almodóvar.

She and Pedro Almodóvar shared the most important moments of their careers in the 80s ("Pepi, Luci, Bom", "Dark Habits", "What Have I Don't to Deserve This?!", "Matador" and "Law of Desire"). It culminated with the international success of "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (for which she won, among others, the Goya, the Ciak, the Fotogramas de Plata and the European Film Award for Best Actress). With a career that spans over thirty years, it is impossible to summarize the national and international productions, in cinema, theatre and television, in which Carmen has participated, or the awards she has won.

We would mention "Ay, Carmela" (Carlos Saura) with which she won both the Goya and the European Film Academy's Award for Best Actress, and "La comunidad" (Alex de la Iglesia) for which she won, among others, the Silver Concha (San Sebastian Film Festival) and the Goya for Best Actress.

Recently she finished shooting "Nos chères têtes blondes" in France, with director Charlotte Silvera.

### LOLA DUEÑAS

Lola Dueñas is also working again with Pedro Almodóvar after a small part in "Talk to Her".

After studying with Juan Carlos Corazza, Lola began her career with Salvador García Ruiz in "Mensaka", for which she won the Best Actress Award at the Toulouse Festival and the Most Promising Actress Award from the Actors' Union. She has also appeared in "Marta y alrededores" (Nacho Pérez de la Paz and Jesús Ruíz), "Las razones de mis amigos" (Gerardo Herrero), "Piedras" and "Veinte centímetros" (both by Ramón

Salazar) and, above all, "The Sea Inside" (Alejandro Amenábar). For this last film, she received the Goya for Best Actress and also the Award for Best Supporting Actress from both the Film Writers' Circle and the Actors' Union.

At present she is shooting "Lo que sé de Lola", by Javier Rebollo, for whom she already worked in his award-winning short films, "En medio de ninguna parte", "El equipaje abierto" and "En camas separadas".

## BLANCA PORTILLO

Born in Madrid in 1963, she studied at the Royal School of Dramatic Art where she began a successful theater career for which she has received such recognition as the Celestina and Max awards for "Madre, el drama padre", the Max award, the Actors' Union award and the Teatro de Rojas award for "Family Resemblances", or the Miguel Mihura and Actors' Union awards for "La hija del aire", directed by the prestigious Jorge Lavelli.

Very popular thanks to the television series "Siete vidas", Blanca has also appeared in several films. In fact, she was nominated for a Goya as Most Promising Actress for "El color de las nubes" (Mario Camus).

She has also appeared in the films "Alatriste" (Agustín Díaz Yanes) and "Goya's Ghosts" (Milos Forman), both of which are in post production.

## YOHANA COBO

Gifted with an abrasive look, young Yohana Cobo, who is from Madrid, has appeared in several television series, but her talent really became noticed in "La vida mancha" (Enrique Urbizu). It was confirmed with her leading role in "El séptimo día" (Carlos Saura) for which she was nominated as Most Promising Actress by the Film Writers' Circle.

## crew - biofilmographies

### AGUSTÍN ALMODÓVAR

He was born in La Mancha and graduated in Chemical Science from Madrid's Complutense University.

He began participating actively in cinema in 1985 and joined the crew of "Sé infiel y no mires con quien" (Fernando Trueba) at a production trainee. That same year he began his participation in his brother's films, working as assistant director on "Matador" and in 1986 he and Pedro founded their own production company, El Deseo.

Since then, he has been responsible for the production of all of Pedro's feature films (winning the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film for "All About my Mother") and has combined this with producing other directors (Alex de la Iglesia, Mónica Laguna, Daniel Calparsoro, Guillermo del Toro, Isabel Coixet, Félix Sabroso and Dunia Ayaso, and Lucrecia Martel). With El Deseo he has also been involved in many co-productions with France.

### ESTHER GARCÍA

Esther, who was born in Segovia, has won three Goyas as production manager on "Acción Mutante", "All About my Mother" and "The Secret Life of Words". She has been associate producer on over ninety films and television series since she began in 1976 with "Curro Jiménez".

She has worked at every level in production, from trainee to executive producer, a position she has held since the film "My Life Without Me" (Isabel Coixet).

As well as working uninterruptedly with Pedro since "Matador", she has done production work for Fernando Trueba, Mariano Ozores, Luis María

Delgado, Gonzalo Suárez, Emilio Martínez Lázaro and Fernando Colomo. As part of El Deseo's team, she has been associate producer on "Acción Mutante" (Alex de la Iglesia), "Tengo una casa" (Mónica Laguna), "Pasajes" (Daniel Calparsoro), "The Devil's Backbone" (Guillermo del Toro) and "Descongélate" (Felix Sabroso and Dunia Ayaso).

Together with Agustín Almodóvar, she has gone into television production ("Mujeres", by Dunia Ayaso and Félix Sabroso) and international production ("My Life Without Me" and "The Secret Life of Words", by Isabel Coixet, and "The Holy Girl", by Lucrecia Martel).

## ALBERTO IGLESIAS

He was born in San Sebastian in 1955 and studied piano, guitar, counterpoint and harmony with Blanca Burgaleta and Francisco Escudero in his home city. He furthered his studies in Paris with Francis Schwartz and in Barcelona with Gabriel BrnCic. He has collaborated with Carlos Saura, Bigas Luna, Julio Medem and Iciar Bollain, among others.

He has collaborated closely with Pedro since they first worked together on "The Flower of my Secret", and has been the regular composer for his films.

His most notable soundtracks include "The Lovers from the North Pole" (Julio Medem), "All About my Mother" and "Talk to Her" (Pedro Almodóvar). He has received six Goyas for his work in the above mentioned films as well as for his scores for Julio Medem's films, "The Red Squirrel", "Tierra" and "Sex and Lucía". He has recently worked on "The Constant Gardener" (Fernando Mireilles), for which he has been nominated to the best original score at the BAFTAs and the Academy Awards.

In addition to his film work, he has composed symphonic and chamber music, and several ballets for the National Dance Company.

## JOSÉ SALCEDO

He has edited over ninety films to date, including the entire filmography of Pedro Almodóvar.

He worked as assistant editor for Pedro del Rey and Pablo del Amo. He began his career with the film "Una mujer prohibida" and since then has received three Goyas for his work in "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (Pedro Almodóvar), "Nobody Hill Speak of Us When We're Dead" (Agustín Díaz Yanes) and "All About my Mother" (Pedro Almodóvar). He has worked with the most important Spanish directors, including Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, Eloy de la Iglesia, Pedro Olea, Gonzalo Suárez, Jaime Chávarri, José Luis Borau and Manuel Gómez Pereira.

## JOSÉ LUIS ALCÁINE

Born in Morocco, José Luis is one of our most prolific and international directors of photography. He studied at the Official Film School in Madrid and is a member of the Spanish Association of Cinematography. He has worked with a multitude of directors in various countries and languages. In Spain he has collaborated with Vicente Aranda, Fernando Trueba, Bigas Luna, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, Fernando Colomo, John Malkovich, Pilar Miró, Victor Erice, Carlos Saura, Fernando Fernán-Gómez and Montxo Armendáriz, among others.

Responsible for lighting on over one hundred films, he is working with Pedro again on "Volver" after having collaborated on "Bad Education", "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" and "Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down"

To date he has received three Goyas for his excellent work behind the camera on films such as "El pájaro de la felicidad" (Pilar Miró), "El sueño del mono loco" (Fernando Trueba) and "El caballero Don Quijote" (Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón).

CAST

Raimunda: PENÉLOPE CRUZ  
Grandmother Irene: CARMEN MAURA  
Sole: LOLA DUEÑAS  
Agustina: BLANCA PORTILLO  
Paula: YOHANA COBO  
Aunt Paula: CHUS LAMPREAVE  
Paco: ANTONIO DE LA TORRE  
Emilio: CARLOS BLANCO  
Regina: Mª ISABEL DÍAZ  
Inés: NIEVES SANZ ESCOBAR  
Production Assistant: LEANDRO RIVERA  
TV Presenter: YOLANDA RAMOS  
Carlos: CARLOS GARCÍA CAMBERO  
Neighbors: PEPA ANIORTE  
ELVIRA CUADRUPANI  
ALFONSA ROSSO  
FANNY DE CASTRO  
ELI IRANZO  
MAGDALENA BROTO  
ISABEL AYUCAR  
CONCHA GALÁN  
MARIE FRANÇ TORRES  
NATALIA ROIG

CREW

Script and Direction PEDRO ALMODÓVAR  
Executive producer AGUSTÍN ALMODÓVAR  
Produced by ESTHER GARCÍA  
Music ALBERTO IGLESIAS

Editor JOSÉ SALCEDO  
Director of photography JOSÉ LUIS ALCÁINE A.E.C.  
Art director SALVADOR PARRA  
Line producer TONI NOVELLA  
Camera operator JOAQUÍN MANCHADO  
Direct sound MIGUEL REJAS  
Mixes JOSÉ ANTONIO BERMÚDEZ  
Make-up supervisor ANA LOZANO  
Hair stylist MASSIMO GATTABRUSI  
Wardrobe BINA DAIGELER

Casting director LUIS SAN NARCISO

“VOLVER” interpreted by ESTRELLA MORENTE

Title sequence JUAN GATTI

Assistant director RAFA CARMONA  
Director’s assistant LOLA GARCÍA  
Continuity YUYI BERINGOLA  
2nd assistant directors ELENA VALVERDE  
EVA SÁNCHEZ  
3rd assistant director JUAN VARELA  
Direction auxiliaries MARI FRANÇ TORRES  
BRUNO VELASCO

Location manager SERGIO DÍAZ  
Production coordinator VERÓNICA DÍAZ  
Production assistant MARTA DE MIGUEL  
2nd production assistant FEDERICO ROZADILLAS  
Production auxiliaries CONCHA FONTENLA  
PATRICIA ALCOLEA



Production aux. in Almagro VANESSA CONTRERAS

Camera assistant JOSÉ RAMÓN DELGADO

Camera auxiliary LUIS LATTANZI

Video technician IGOR IGLESIAS

Camera trainee SANDRA LÓPEZ

Steady cam JOAQUÍN MANCHADO

Still photographer PAOLA ARDIZZONI

EMILIO PEREDA

Operator on "The making of" LARA GÓMEZ

Microphones JAIME FERNÁNDEZ-CID

Sound auxiliary RUTH MÁRQUEZ

Set dresser MARA MATEY

Assistant set dresser ZALOA ZILUAGA

2nd assistant set dresser INÉS APARICIO

Props buyers JOSÉ MARIANO SERRANO

MARIONA JULBE

Construction manager ALEJANDRA LOISEAU

Draftswoman and architect INMACULADA JIMÉNEZ

Stand-by props JUAN I. VIÑUALES

ALEJANDRO PAVÓN

Props MIKEL IZAGUIRRE

VALENTÍN ISAKOV

Wardrobe assistants ANA CUERDA

PAOLA TORRES

Dressmakers ANA LÓPEZ

ROSA LÓPEZ

Make-up MARILÓ OSUNA

Assistant make-up ANA CABALLERO

Assistant hairstylist ESTHER GÁZQUEZ

Trainee make-up and hair stylist JESSICA AGUIRRE

Assistant editors ROSA ORTIZ

MANOLO LAGUNA

Office manager DIEGO PAJUELO

Financial director OSCAR VALERO

Advisor to executive producer MAURICIO DÍEZ

Press DEBORAH PALOMO

Internacional relations BÁRBARA PEIRÓ ASO

Production secretary ADELA DONAMARÍA

Cashier BEATRIZ GORDO

Press assistant ROSA SERRANO

Auxiliary accountant ARANCHA YUSTI

Auxiliar cashier SILVIA SANCHO

Administration auxiliaries JAVIER RUIZ

M<sup>a</sup> PAZ SANCHO

MERCEDES GONZÁLEZ

LILIANA NIESPIAL

Pedro's driver ANTONIO BARRIO

Penélope Cruz's driver ANTONIO ESTRADA

Advisors on La Mancha ANTONIA ALMODÓVAR

M<sup>a</sup> JESÚS ALMODÓVAR

Advisor on set hair salon JUANI MORENO

Gaffer FERNANDO BELTRÁN

Electricians ALBERTO SÁNCHEZ

ANTONIO DE BENITO

JUAN POMPAS

JOSÉ MANUEL REBOUL

Key grip CARLOS MIGUEL MIGUEL

Grip JOSÉ LUIS MOLERO

Special effects REYES ABADES

CÉSAR ABADES

OSCAR ABADES

DANIEL REBOUL

TOMÁS URBAN

Stunts ÁNGEL PLANAS

Action double DIEGO GARCÍA PLATERO

Graphic Design STUDIO GATTI JUAN SÁNCHEZ

GABRIEL DEL BOCA

Postproduction coordinator ASCEN MARCHENA

Production COVADONGA R. GAMBOA

Special effects supervisor EDUARDO DÍAZ

Production visual effects NIKÉ ALONSO

Postproduction visual effects THORSTEN RIENTE

RAMÓN RAMOS

IVÁN LÓPEZ

JAVIER GARCÍA-PLAZA

FEDERICO REANO

JUAN ALONSO

3D SERGIO GARCÍA

Sound editor MANOLO LAGUNA

Sound editor

and mixes assistant DIEGO GARRIDO

Sound effects MANOLO CORRALES



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