

## **BFI welcomes Pedro Almodóvar to BFI Southbank for season of his work 1 Aug – 5 Oct**



- **Includes onstage appearances from directors Pedro Almodóvar and Pablo Berger, actor Rossy de Palma and fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier**
- **Season will be accompanied by ‘In Almodóvar’s Words...’ a special programme of 13 Spanish films, especially chosen by the director to screen at BFI Southbank**

**Friday 17 June 2016, London.**

BFI Southbank today announces a season dedicated to one of contemporary cinema’s most unique and talented filmmakers **Pedro Almodóvar**. Running from **1 August – 5 October**, the season will include an extensive events programme with onstage appearances from **Almodóvar**, actor **Rossy de Palma** and fashion designer **Jean Paul Gaultier**, with more special guests to be announced in due course. Running alongside the Almodóvar film programme will be a series of 13 Spanish films which Almodóvar has personally selected to screen at BFI Southbank, all of which he holds great admiration for, and have been inspirational to him. *In Almodóvar’s Words...* will include *Blancanieves* (2012), which will be introduced by its director **Pablo Berger** on **Monday 1 August**, and Victor Erice’s *El sur* (1983), which will be released for the first time in the UK by the BFI in selected cinemas UK-wide on **Friday 16 September**.

The season, which will include all the director’s best-loved films such *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1988), *All About My Mother* (1999) and *Volver* (2006), coincides with the release of his twentieth feature *Julieta* (2016). *Julieta* will preview at BFI Southbank on **Thursday 11 August**, introduced by Almodóvar and Rossy de Palma, before screening on extended run from **Friday 26 August** when it is released in UK cinemas. One of the highlights of the season will be **Pedro**

**Almodóvar in Conversation on Friday 12 August**, where we will welcome the Spanish master for an in depth conversation about his career, his love of cinema and the influences that have shaped his unique cinematic language.

Pedro Almodóvar's remarkable body of work embraces melodrama, screwball comedy, noir and sci-fi, all worked through with a magical imagination that has produced a genre all of its own – it's what the Cuban writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante termed *Almodrama*. A number of different themes which emerge when watching Almodóvar's work will be addressed during discussion events in the season, from Queer sensibilities and Melodrama, to how he represents space and architecture. Known for repeatedly working with actors, including Penélope Cruz, Carmen Maura, Antonio Banderas and Rossy de Palma, Almodóvar's relationship with the stars of his films as well as the supporting actors will also be looked at. Contributors including critic and curator **Maria Delgado**, director **Pablo Berger**, Professor of Spanish at the University of Cambridge **Brad Epps** and urban designer **Marc Funda** will all bring their expert knowledge to panel discussions during the season.

The film programme kicks off with *Pepi, Luci, Bom...* (1980), Almodóvar's first full-length feature; this irreverent tale of creativity and friendship sees the worlds of a masochistic housewife, a teenage punk-rocker and a neighbour out for revenge collide. *Dark Habits* (1983) follows a nightclub singer on the run, who finds refuge in a zany convent, while *What Have I Done to Deserve This?* (1984) is a darkly funny tale of domestic dysfunction set in working-class Madrid. *Matador* (1986) stars Nacho Martínez as a voyeuristic bullfighter and Antonio Banderas (in his first of four films made with Almodóvar) as his student who falsely confesses to murders that his teacher has committed. The film is a playful engagement with Spanish iconography realised with supreme visual flair, and featuring a scene-stealing star turn from Almodóvar himself.

The first of his works to be commercially released in Britain, *Law of Desire* (1987) is a melodrama of love triangles, family and high theatrics, while the wild and wonderful screwball comedy *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1988) sees Carmen Maura in glorious form as warm, spirited dubbing actress called Pepa, who's keen to track down her elusive suave and smooth talking ex-lover. For his fourth collaboration with Almodóvar, following *Matador*, *Law of Desire* and *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, Antonio Banderas stars in *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* (1989); he plays a naïve and troubled man who kidnaps a porn star and former junkie that he once had sex with the intention of making her his wife. *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* is one of Almodóvar's most audacious films, but also one of his funniest.

In *High Heels* (1991), Mother-daughter rivalry has a deadly consequence; this stylish murder mystery has nods to Douglas Sirk and Ingmar Bergman, and is a superbly shot narrative of betrayal, loss and redemption, distinguished by Almodóvar's brilliant direction of actors. *Kika* (1993) is a smart satire on television's excesses, starring Verónica Forqué, Rossy de Palma and Victoria Abril, the latter of whose gloriously grotesque outfits were designed by **Jean Paul Gaultier**. Gaultier will take part in a special event as part of the season in September, with further details to be announced in due course. *The Flower of my Secret* (1995) is one of Almodóvar's most acclaimed films, an austere, elegant tale of love and loss, which marked a new direction in his filmmaking. One of the stars of the film, **Rossy de Palma**, who is a frequent collaborator with Almodóvar (*Law of Desire*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *Kika*, *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!*) will introduce *The Flower of my Secret* on **Tuesday 9 August**. Completing part one of the season is *Live Flesh* (1997), a compelling domestic thriller in which Almodóvar's brilliantly refashions Ruth Rendell's novel of the same name.

The second month of the season in September and early October covers Almodóvar's latest films from *All About My Mother* (1999) to *Julieta* (2016), works that have consolidated his position as one of the most stylish and ambitious of contemporary filmmakers. *All About My Mother* is an

outstanding study of female solidarity forged through the most testing of circumstances, starring Penélope Cruz, and won Almodóvar an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film. He followed up this study of women, with a tale of male friendship *Talk to Her* (2002), which won him a second Academy Award, this time for Best Original Screenplay. Gael Garcia Bernal stars in *Bad Education* (2004), a dazzling noirish tale of mystery, melodrama and a shared childhood secret, while Almodóvar teamed up with Penélope Cruz again for *Volver* (2006), a sumptuous tale of family secrets and female solidarity. His fourth collaboration with Cruz *Broken Embraces* (2009), is an homage to cinema, the importance of editing, and the stories we tell to make sense of our lives.

Twenty years after they last worked together, Almodóvar reunited with Antonio Banderas on *The Skin I Live In* (2011); Banderas excels as a mysterious plastic surgeon determined to create a flawless synthetic skin for the woman he holds in his fortress-like home. Almodóvar's penultimate feature *I'm So Excited!* (2013) is a camp 'up in the air' caper about three enterprising air stewards who devise ways of keeping the motley collection of business class travellers entertained; there's a nod to the 1980s in this corrosive farce, as fun and frolics meld with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to provide an incisive commentary on Spain's economic woes. Completing the season is Almodóvar's latest film *Julieta* (2016), an exquisite tale of a woman coming to terms with love and loss over different periods in her life. Adapted from three short stories by the Canadian Nobel Prize-winner Alice Munro, *Julieta* tells of a classics teacher struggling with past secrets and the consequences of her romance with a Galician fisherman she meets on a train in 1985.

For the special accompanying screening programme *In Almodóvar's Words...* the BFI asked Pedro Almodóvar to select the Spanish-made films that he admires and inspired him, and to talk through his choices. His selection offers audiences a unique insight into one of contemporary cinema's most brilliant filmmakers, and features such titles as **Carlos Saura's *Peppermint Frappé*** (1967), **Bigas Luna's *Jamón, Jamón*** (1992), Pablo Berger's *Blancanieves* (2012) and **Victor Erice's** unfinished masterpiece *El sur* (1983). *El sur* will be released by the BFI in selected cinemas UK-wide on **Friday 16 September**, while **Pablo Berger** will introduce *Blancanieves* on **Monday 1 August**.

### IN ALMODÓVAR'S WORDS...

***The South* *El sur*** (1983, Víctor Erice)

"Can it be that an unfinished film is one of the best in Spanish cinema history? Yes it can, and that film is *El Sur*... Ninety-six minutes of emotions so intense that you're left breathless. I cry every time I watch it"

***The Executioner* *El verdugo*** (1963, Luis García Berlanga)

"*The Executioner* is an absolute masterpiece; seen now, it seems inconceivable that it was filmed in 1963. It's an astonishing plea against the death penalty, disguised as a delightful and funny comedy of manners"

***Aunt Tula* *La tía Tula*** (1964, Miguel Picazo)

"For someone like me, who would make films about lonely, courageous women, *Aunt Tula* by Miguel Picazo is still a role model"

***Strange Voyage* *El extraño viaje*** (1964, Fernando Fernán Gómez)

"Fernando Fernán Gómez was a genuine one-man band: actor, director, novelist, playwright – he shone in all disciplines... *El extraño viaje* is an 'accursed' masterpiece that was not actually released at the time, although Spanish censors could not really account for their rejection of it"

***Peppermint Frappé*** (1967, Carlos Saura)

“Its technical credits are mythical for Spanish cinephiles: Rafael Azcona co-wrote the script with Saura himself and Luis Cuadrado, the father of modern Spanish cinematography, was director of photography. And a young Geraldine Chaplin plays opposite López Vázquez, in what for me is one of her best performances”

***Poachers Furtivos*** (1975, José L Borau)

“*Poachers* mixes two genres that have only rarely been tackled in Spanish cinema: the western and the noir”

***Blancanieves*** (2012, Pablo Berger)

“Berger’s experiment is, in my opinion, the best cinematographic version of the Brothers Grimm tale, risky and brilliant in every sense”

***Main Street Calle Mayor*** (1956, JA Bardem)

“The story is told from the female point of view – something unusual at the time. Female sexual desire is repressed or becomes an object of ridicule. *Calle Mayor* is a major work that has not only stood the test of time but has consolidated its reputation”

***Magical Girl*** (2014, Carlos Vermut)

“Carlos Vermut is the latest big revelation of Spanish cinema. Not only is his second feature, *Magical Girl*, a deeply disturbing tale full of mystery, but it also looks like no other Spanish film”

***It Happened In Broad Daylight El cebo*** (1958, Ladislao Vajda)

“Directed by the Hungarian Ladislao Vajda, who lived in Spain and who had worked as editor for Billy Wilder at the beginning of the 30s, *El cebo* is one of the few examples of a film in which a diverse mix of nationalities and talents crystallises into something beautiful and personal”

***Rapture Arrebato*** (1979, Iván Zulueta)

“*Arrebato* is an ‘accursed’ film that nobody saw back then and which is now an absolute modern classic. Its actors would appear in some of my 80s films”

***Jamón, Jamón*** (1992, Bigas Luna)

“Bigas Luna’s film was Penélope Cruz’s debut and the reason why so many directors, me included, dreamt about working with her some day”

***Thesis Tesis*** (1996, Alejandro Amenábar)

“Alejandro Amenábar debuted in style with this skilful thriller about the market for violent images, in this case videos of real murders and torture, or snuff movies”

– ENDS –

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- **Pedro Almodóvar’s full text about his selection of films, can be found alongside complete listings for the season online here: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-press-release-pedro-almodovar-season-bfi-southbank-2016-06-17.pdf>**
- Audiences can buy 3 tickets for any 3 separate films in BFI Southbank’s Pedro Almodóvar season for just £21 (standard non-Member tickets are normally £10.65 each) Use promo code ‘Almodóvar’ when booking.
- ***Julieta*** (2016) will be released nationwide on **26 August 2016 by Pathé**
- STUDIOCANAL will release a six disc boxset, **The Almodóvar Collection**, on Blu-Ray and DVD on August 29th. The collection includes fully restored versions of *Dark Habits*, *What Have I Done To Deserve This?*, *Law Of Desire*, *Women on the Verge of a nervous breakdown*, *Kika* and *Flower Of My Secret* and will

feature brand new interviews and extras material for each title.. The films have all been restored (both sound and image) from the original negatives, supervised by **Agustín Almodóvar**.

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### **About the BFI**

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £11.00, concs £8.50 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket - [www.bfi.org.uk/southbank](http://www.bfi.org.uk/southbank).

Young people aged 25 and under can buy last minute tickets for just £3, 45 minutes before the start of screenings and events, subject to availability - <http://www.bfi.org.uk/25-and-under>.

**Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment**

### **BFI Shop**

The BFI Shop is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

### **The benugo bar & kitchen**

Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

**\*\*\* PICTURE DESK \*\*\***

**A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under BFI / BFI Southbank / Southbank 2016 / August / Almodóvar**