



# TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED IN 35MM BY THE YALE FILM STUDY CENTER

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

2:00PM • WHITNEY  
HUMANITIES CENTER

# VOLVER

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM  
PAUL L. JOSKOW '70 M.PHIL., '72 PH.D.



All about mothers, Pedro Almodóvar's 2006 quiet masterpiece blends tragedy, melodrama, magical realism, and farce in a story of three generations of working-class Spanish women and the secrets they carry between La Mancha and Madrid. Penélope Cruz gives the performance of her career as Raimunda, struggling to protect her teenage daughter (Yohana Cobo) while haunted by the ghost of her estranged mother (Carmen Maura). A.O. Scott said of the film, "To relate the details of the narrative—death, cancer, betrayal, parental abandonment, more death—would create an impression of dreariness and woe. But nothing could be further from the spirit of VOLVER which is buoyant without being flip, and consoling without ever becoming maudlin."



One of Almodóvar's most assured and mature works, it foregoes the flashy visuals and assertive soundtracks of his earlier comedies, as well as the complex plots of the dramas that immediately preceded it, TALK TO HER and BAD EDUCATION. Other than MATADOR and KIKA, it was his first film to be released in the U.S. under its untranslated Spanish title. *Volver* means *return*, and the many returns throughout the film help bring the characters and their director overdue resolutions to unfinished business from the past. The first is Almodóvar's return to his austere hometown of Almagro in La Mancha, where the film begins. He changes the town's name to Alcanfor de las Infantas—camphor of the princesses—and all of the curative, explosive, and embalming properties associated with camphor are experienced by the women of this windswept, fire-prone town. "I think my first childhood memories are from courtyards like this, watching the women talk, rush about, cook their food, wash stuff, water the plants," Almodóvar said of the traditional setting, returning to his first experiences of communities of women, the subject of so much of his subsequent work. The elderly women seen cleaning the graves in the opening scene, which was shot on the first day of filming, are not professional actors but locals tending to their own community cemetery, and Almodovar has spoken of the film as an expression of "the female universe in relation to death." Avid Almodóvar fans may recognize in some elements of VOLVER a return of Leo's gritty novel from 1995's THE FLOWER OF MY SECRET.

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **PEDRO ALMODÓVAR**  
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **JOSÉ LUIS ALCÁINE**

(2006) 121 MINS.

STARRING **PENÉLOPE CRUZ, CARMEN MAURA, LOLA DUEÑAS, BLANCO PORTILLO, YOHANNA COBO, AND CHUS LAMPREAVE**

VOLVER also marks the return of a number of Almodóvar's most favored actresses. These include Cruz (LIVE FLESH, ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER, later BROKEN EMBRACES and I'M SO EXCITED!) and Chus Lampreave, who has appeared in eight Almodóvar films, but most notable is the return of Carmen Maura. Maura began working with Almodóvar in the '70s when he was still shooting on Super-8, and starred in seven of his features before a falling out while shooting WOMEN ON THE VERGE OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN led to a regrettable 17-year separation.

VOLVER remains Almodóvar's most commercially successful film by far. It won Best Screenplay at Cannes, with a Best Actress win shared by its six leads: Cruz, Maura, Cobo, Lampreave, Lola Dueñas as the lonely sister with an unlicensed hair salon, and Blanca Portillo as a neighbor in search of her own lost mother. It garnered Cruz an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress, making her the first Spanish woman so honored. "With this role," A.O. Scott writes, "Ms. Cruz inscribes her name near the top of any credible list of present-day flesh-and-blood screen goddesses, in no small part because she manages to be earthy, unpretentious, and a little vulgar without shedding an ounce of her natural glamour."

**DID YOU KNOW:** THE FILM WATCHED ON TELEVISION IN THE CLOSING MINUTES OF VOLVER IS LUCHINO VISCONTI'S BELLISSIMA, AND ALMODOVAR INCLUDED IT AS A NOD TO THE MOTHERS IN ITALIAN NEOREALIST COMEDIES WHO SERVED AS INSPIRATION FOR VOLVER'S RAIMUNDA. ALMODOVAR SAYS, "TO ME, ONE OF THE MOST EXPRESSIVE IMAGES OF MOTHERHOOD ONSCREEN IS THIS WOMAN ANNA MAGNANI, IN UNDERWEAR, DOING HER HAIR, SOMEHOW OVERWHELMED BY HER PROBLEMS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME FULL OF STRENGTH."

**NEXT UP:** IN 1974, YALE COLLEGE SENIOR WARRINGTON HUDLIN MADE HIS FIRST FILM, **BLACK AT YALE: A FILM DIARY**, AN INSIGHTFUL LOOK INTO THE LIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF BLACK STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY. JOIN US FOR THE PREMIERE SCREENING OF THE NEWLY-PRESERVED FILM, WITH WARRINGTON HUDLIN IN PERSON, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BLACK STUDENT ALLIANCE AT YALE, **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6 AT 8:00 PM.**