



PRESS RELEASE MAY 2011

11/33

Good Morning Freedom! Spanish Cinema After Franco At BFI Southbank in June 2011



The death of Spain's long term dictator **Francisco Franco** in 1975 gave rise to an alternative, adventurous and eclectic movement within Spanish culture that is reflected in its filmmaking. **BFI Southbank**, throughout **May**, mounts a season celebrating the birth of this exciting period of cinema and features an extended run of the BFI release, **Cria Cuervos** (*Raise Ravens*, 1975) as well as screenings of both well known examples of the era, such as **Pedro Almodóvar's Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown** (*Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios*, 1998), alongside lesser known titles including **The Anchorite** (*El anacoreta*, 1977) and **Opera Prima** (1980).

The lifting of censorship following Franco's demise brought with it the birth of a filmmaking generation unleashed from a climate of repression, approaching subjects that couldn't have been mentioned before: sex, drugs, homosexuality, politics and all with an innovative, free spirit that brought together filmmakers, professional and amateur actors, designers and musicians.

From late 1975 to the end of the 80s, when democracy had already consolidated in the country, emerged the movement which has come to be known as 'la Movida Madrileña', which saw such talents as **Pedro Almodóvar** and **Iván Zulueta** emerge in the field of cinema. The Movida was mainly a music movement to which many young bands from the capital contributed but, with mottos like 'Madrid nunca duerme' ('Madrid never sleeps') or '¡Esta noche todo el mundo a la calle!' ('Everybody in the street tonight!') – its spirit extended to other fields such as film, television, photography, fashion, comics and fanzines. The work of Fernando Trueba and Fernando Colomo epitomise the movement; their first films often being made among friends whose main wish was to enjoy life, sex, grass and have fun which reflected the mood of much of the youth of the time. Though most of the film industry was still concentrated in Madrid, Spain's cinema also found a new pluralism, and some communities – particularly in Catalonia and the Basque Country – found a way to express their particular identity through cinema.

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Press Contacts:

Tim Mosley tim.mosley@bfi.org.uk 020 7957 8918

Ilona Cheshire ilona.cheshire@bfi.org.uk 020 7957 8986

Good Morning Freedom! Spanish Cinema After Franco takes place at **BFI Southbank** on **2 - 30 June 2011**

in collaboration with:



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The Anchorite (El anacoreta)

Spain-France 1977. Dir Juan Estelrich.

With Fernando Fernán Gómez, Martine Andó, José María Mopín, Charo Soriano, Claude Dauphin. 108min. EST

Middle-aged Fernando decides one day to retire to his bathroom, and to not leave it. He renounces everything – trying to avoid the two main temptations of love and money – while sending messages enclosed in bottles through the bog. Based on Flaubert's *The Temptation of St Anthony*, with the substitution of a bathroom for the desert allegedly a budgetary convenience for the scriptwriter (the great Rafael Azcona) and the director. Lead actor Fernán Gómez won the Berlin Silver Bear in 1977.

Thu 2 June 18:00 NFT2

Sun 5 June 20:40 NFT2

Confessions of a Congressman The Congressman / El diputado

Spain 1978. Dir Eloy de la Iglesia. With José Sacristán, María Luisa San José, José Luis Alonso, Agustín González, Enrique Vivó. 110min. EST

Roberto Orbea always had something to hide. At first, during the dictatorship, it was his political beliefs; now that he is a successful socialist politician, it is his homosexuality. A fine portrait of Spanish society during the transition years to democracy, it caused a stir at the time because of its explicit treatment of homosexuality at the same time as highlighting the parallels between political and sexual repression

Sat 4 June 15:50 NFT2

Tue 7 June 20:45 NFT3

Pepi, Luci, Bom...

Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón

Spain 1980. Dir Pedro Almodóvar. With Carmen Maura, Eva Siva, Olvido Gara (Alaska), Cecilia Roth, Julieta Serrano, Fabio McNamara. 82min. EST

Life in Madrid during the Movida Madrileña, highlighting punks, musicians, wild parties, drugs, aggressive women... and much sex. Almodóvar's first feature is a crazy and daring comedy, illustrating the compelling thirst at that time for breaking barriers in a taboo-ridden society just assimilating democracy and its new freedoms.

*We hope to welcome actress Alaska for a Q&A following this screening

Fri 10 June 18:20 NFT1

Tue 14 June 21:00 NFT1*

Rapture Arrebato

Spain 1980. Dir Iván Zulueta. With Eusebio Poncela, Cecilia Roth, Carmen Giralt, Will More. 105min. EST

A strange and phantasmagoric portrait of the darkness at the heart of the life of a filmmaker, the film explores his personal crisis, the joy and pain of living, taking heroin, and his love of cinema... and eventually his encounter with a younger, obsessive Super-8 filmmaker who will transport him to another realm. Largely considered a cult film, *Arrebato* is the sole feature by its director, who worked predominantly as a designer, being responsible for many of Almodóvar's film posters.

Sat 4 June 20:30 NFT3

Fri 17 June 18:00 NFT2

Opera Prima

Spain-France 1980. Dir Fernando Trueba. With Oscar Ladoire, Paula Molina, Antonio Resines, Kiti Manver. 94min. EST

One morning Matías, a divorced young journalist, meets his cousin (primain Spanish) Violeta at Madrid Opera's metro station. From this moment on he'll become a constant presence at his cousin's flat. Unfocused and extremely opinionated about nearly everything, Matías shows he may also be rather possessive when it comes to his cousin's plans with her violin teacher. The film, streaked with Trueba's exquisite sense of humour, is a clear example of what came to be known as *comedia madrileña*.

Sun 5 June 18:20 NFT2

Sun 12 June 20:45 NFT2

Labyrinth of Passion *Laberinto de pasiones*

Spain 1982. Dir Pedro Almodóvar. With Cecilia Roth, Antonio Banderas, Imanol Arias, Fabio McNamara. 100min. EST

Set in Madrid during the *Movida* madrileña, the film follows the love story between nymphomaniac pop star Sexilia and Riza, the homosexual son of the emperor of Tiran. With various complex sub-plots, it's a crazy comedy with bizarre and wild stories mingling gay terrorists, sex parties, drugs, some inspiration from the Shah of Iran and a large cast made up of professional actors, painters and musicians – many of them figures of the *Movida*. Plus the short *El león enamorado* (The Lion in Love; Spain 1979. Dir Fernando Trueba. 5min).

Wed 8 June 20:40 NFT1;

Sat 11 June 20:40 NFT2;

Sun 12 June 18:30 NFT1

Begin the Beguine *Volver a empezar*

Spain 1982. Dir José Luis Garci. With Antonio Ferrandis, Encarna Paso, José Bódalo, Agustín González, Pablo Hoyos. 87min. EST

Forced into exile by the events of the Civil War, Antonio Albajara, now a famous writer who has just won the Nobel Prize, returns to Gijón, his hometown in Spain, his old friends and to Elena, his first love. Garci's moving film is about Antonio's journey back to his past and his homeland, and was the first Spanish film to win a Best Foreign Language Film Oscar.

Sat 11 June 18:20 NFT2

Tue 21 June 20:40 NFT2

South *El Sur*

Spain-France 1983. Dir Víctor Erice. With Omero Antonutti, Lola Cardona, Rafaela Aparicio, Sonsoles Aranguren, Icíar Bollaín. 95min. EST. U

Estrella is a teenage girl growing up in the North of Spain during the postwar years. She's fascinated about the South of the country, which seems to be a marvellous place, holding the key to her father's mysterious past. Erice portrays a life in isolation including a certain dose of fear and a child's fresh, pure desire to uncover the previous life that every adult around her seems to have renounced.

Fri 3 June 20:45 NFT1

Sun 5 June 15:10 NFT1
Mon 13 June 20:45 NFT2

The Holy Innocents Los santos inocentes

Spain 1984. Dir Mario Camus. With Alfredo Landa, Terele Pávez, Francisco Rabal, Agustín González, Juan Diego. 107min. EST

Paco and his wife are tenant farmers for a wealthy landowner, to whose 'needs' they submit without hesitation. Camus' film is a sharp portrait of the Spanish countryside in the 60s at the same time as an attack on the consequences of fascism and the feudalism of land barons in rural Spain. It won a special mention at Cannes in 1984 and Best Actor awards for both Landa and Rabal.

Thu 2 June 20:30 NFT2

Wed 8 June 18:20 NFT2

Dark Habits Entre tinieblas

Spain 1984. Dir Pedro Almodóvar. With Carmen Maura, Julieta Serrano, Laura Cepeda, Marisa Paredes. 110min. EST. **15**

Yolanda Bell, a boleros singer addicted to various drugs, seeks refuge in the Humiliated Redeemers convent after seeing her boyfriend die from an overdose. There she finds some very peculiar nuns at whose head is a Mother Superior so fascinated by evil that she loves and becomes like the fallen women who go to the convent, even sharing their addictions... Almodóvar's third film is a colourful and surprising look at Catholic institutions and redemption.

Thu 16 June 20:45 NFT1

Wed 29 June 20:45 NFT1

Mikel's Death La muerte de Mikel

Spain 1984. Dir Imanol Uribe. With Imanol Arias, Martín Adjemian, Ramón Barea, Daniel Dicenta, Xabier Elorriaga. 90min. EST

Recently deceased, Mikel was a bourgeois pharmacist and Basque militant. Through flashbacks, Uribe shows, in the context of an agitated Basque Country, how he tries to cope with a marriage in crisis while coming to terms with his newly-revealed homosexuality, and how he is rejected by his party comrades and his extremely traditional mother when his relationship with a transvestite becomes public

Fri 24 June 18:10 NFT3

Sun 26 June 20:30 NFT3

What Have I Done To Deserve This? ¿Que he hecho yo para merecer esto?

Spain 1984. Dir Pedro Almodóvar. With Carmen Maura, Verónica Forqué, Chus Lampreave, Kiti Manver, Cecilia Roth, Angel de Andrés López. 101min. EST

Gloria is a cleaning lady who works all day long and lives in a tiny flat with her husband, her mother in law, two sons and a lizard. Her life is miserable but she is ready to try to change it... Almodóvar turns here towards drama – portraying a dysfunctional family in peripheral Madrid, with the help of a superb performance from Carmen Maura – without wholly renouncing his comic inclinations

Sat 25 June 18:20 NFT2

Thu 30 June 20:40 NFT1

The Law of Desire La ley del deseo

Spain 1987. Dir Pedro Almodóvar. With Carmen Maura, Antonio Banderas, Eusebio Poncela, Miguel Molina, Bibiana Fernández. 102min. EST

Pablo and Tina are brothers and they have complicated sexual lives. Pablo, a filmmaker, is gay and in love with Juan, a young man who doesn't reciprocate. Tina is a transsexual, angry at men and trying to work as an actress. Through a complex narrative, Almodóvar's sixth film deals with desire, the need to be desired and unrequited desire...

Sat 4 June 18:20 NFT3

Mon 6 June 20:45 NFT1

Going Down in Morocco Bajarse al Moro

Spain 1989. Dir Fernando Colomo. With Verónica Forqué, Antonio Banderas, Juan Echanove, Aitana Sánchez Gijón, Chus Lampreave. 83min. EST

Chusa lives with her cousin, who earns some money by dealing drugs, and with her boyfriend, a policeman. She regularly travels down to Morocco and brings him stuff but, because they all smoke grass too, sometimes there's need for an extra hand and this time she plans to bring a new friend... A hilarious film set in Madrid: its director was one of the initiators of what was called the Comedia madrileña.

Sun 26 June 18:20 NFT2

Tue 28 June 20:45 NFT2

Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios

Spain 1988. Dir Pedro Almodóvar. With Carmen Maura, Antonio Banderas, Julieta Serrano, María Barranco, Rossy de Palma. 89min. EST

Pepa is abandoned by Iván, her lover. At the same time that she has to cope with his abandonment and his lies, she'll have to confront his wife, his son, his new lover and many other peculiar characters... Almodóvar empowers women in this ebullient melodramatic comedy with emotion and strength, resolution and action-power.

Mon 27 June 20:45 NFT1

Thu 30 June 18:30 NFT1

Cría cuervos Raise Ravens

Shot in the summer of 1975 as General Franco lay dying, Saura's masterpiece takes its title from a sinister Spanish proverb: 'raise ravens and they'll pluck out your eyes.'

A subtle yet unmistakable indictment of the family as a repressive force in Spanish society, *Cría cuervos* centres on an eight-year-old orphan (the spellbinding Ana Torrent from Erice's *The Spirit of the Beehive*) who believes herself to have poisoned her cold, authoritarian father (Héctor Alterio), a high-ranking military man whom she blames for the death of her adored mother (Geraldine Chaplin). Looking forward to Pan's Labyrinth, *Cría cuervos* is one of cinema's most hauntingly vivid depictions of a child's fantasy imbued reality. Darkly unsettling, deeply touching and comic by turns, this landmark of Spanish cinema – premiered shortly after the dictator's death – exposes a stifling world in which talk of sex or the Civil War is still largely taboo. – Margaret Deriaz

Fr 3 June 18:20 NFT1

+ Fri 10 – Tue 30 June (Continues in July)

About the BFI

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- 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

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