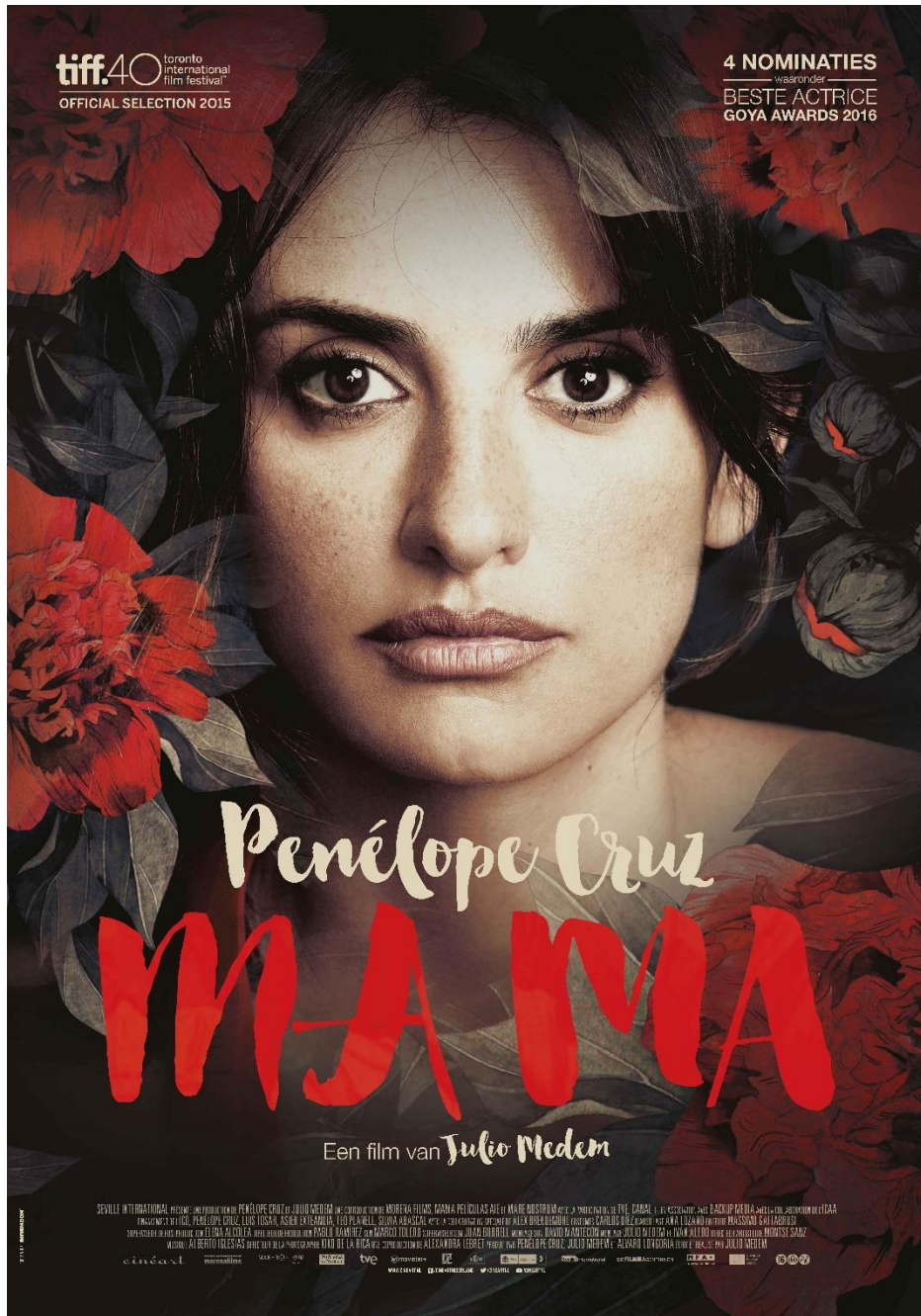


# Persmap



# MA MA

## Een film van Julio Medem

*Magda, een werkeloze lerares komt erachter dat ze ongeneeslijk ziek is en nog maar een paar maanden te leven heeft. Ze besluit volop te leven en te genieten van de tijd die ze nog heeft, terwijl ze wordt omgeven door dierbaren: haar tienjarige zoon die een voetbalfenomeen blijkt, haar gynaecoloog die van zingen houdt, en een man die zijn vrouw en dochter recent is verloren. Magda gelooft slechts in leven in het hier en nu en focust zich niet op het lot dat haar te wachten staat.*

*De hoofdrol wordt gespeeld door Penélope Cruz. Cruz won een Oscar voor haar rol in VICKY CHRISTINA BARCELONA en was genomineerd voor een Oscar voor haar rol in VOLVER (2001). MA MA is geregisseerd door Julio Medem, die eerder de films LUCÍA Y EL SEXO (2001) en HABITACIÓN EN ROMA (2010) regisseerde.*



Speelduur: 110 min. - Land: Spanje - Jaar: 2015 - Genre: Drama  
Release datum bioscoop: 15 september 2016  
Distributie: Cinéart

### Meer informatie over de film:

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[www.cinéart.nl](http://www.cinéart.nl)

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## Cast

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<b>Magda</b>	Penélope Cruz
<b>Arturo</b>	Luis Tosar
<b>Julián</b>	Asier Etxeandia
<b>Dani</b>	Teo Planell
<b>Raúl</b>	Alex Brendemühl
<b>Nurse</b>	Silvia Abascal

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## Crew

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<b>Regie</b>	Julio Medem
<b>Producent</b>	Penélope Cruz Julio Medem
<b>Co-producent</b>	Alvaro Longoria Alexandra Le Bret
<b>Scenario</b>	Julio Medem
<b>DoP</b>	Kiko de la Rica
<b>Editing</b>	Julio Medem Iván Aledo
<b>Productie designer</b>	Montse Sanz
<b>Muziek</b>	Alberto Iglesias
<b>Originele muziek</b>	Eduardo Cruz: "Origen del Mundo" en muzikale arrangementen van "Mi Gran Noche" en "Vivir"
<b>Line producer</b>	Pablo Ramírez
<b>Postproductie supervisor</b>	Elena Alcolea
<b>Sound editing</b>	David Mantecón
<b>Sound recording</b>	Marco A. Toledo
<b>Sound recording supervisor</b>	Juan Borrell
<b>Kostuum designer</b>	Carlos Díez
<b>Haar designer</b>	Massimo Gattabrusi
<b>Make-up designer</b>	Ana Lozano
<b>Casting</b>	Ana Trápaga Patricia Álvarez
<b>Productie</b>	Morena Films Ma Ma PC Ma Ma Películas AIE Marenostrum Productions

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## Regisseur Julio Medem

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Julio Medem was born in San Sebastián-Donostia in 1958. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Medicine and General Surgery in the University of País Vasco. Since his studies he has developed a career in film, publicity and as a writer as well. Since the beginning of his journey Julio's work has been recognized in first tier film festivals on a national and international scale. Some of his feature length films are: VACAS (COWS) (1992, writer and director), which won the Goya Prize for best new director and was nominated for best screenplay, LA ARDILLA ROJA (THE RED SQUIRREL) (1993), which he wrote and directed, it premiered in the Director's Fortnight at Cannes, where he won the youth prize, the public prize and the best foreign film; TIERRA (1996, writer and director) which premiered in the official selection at Cannes and won the special jury prize in the Festival of Sao Paolo; LOS AMANTES DEL CÍRCULO POLAR (LOVERS OF THE ARCTIC CIRCLE) (1998, writer and director) which premiered in Venice and was selected at Sundance, Toronto, Karlovy Vary and won best picture at the Brussels Film Festival, LUCÍA Y EL SEXO (SEX AND LUCÍA) (2001, writer and director) premiered in Toronto and was selected in London and Paris Film Festivals and received the Emerging Masters award and the Public Prize of Best Director at the Seattle Film Festival; ROOM IN ROME (2010, script adaptation, director and editor), which is based on the book "En la cama" de Matías Biche which premiered in the Málaga Film Festival; 7 DAYS IN HABANA (short film La tentación de Cecilia, 2012, writer and director) which premiered in Cannes and was selected in The Habana Film Festival and at San Sebastián.



His noteworthy documentaries include LA PELOTA VASCA, LA PIEL CONTRA LA PIEDRA (2003, writer, director, editor and producer) which won the award for best documentary film in Guadalajara Film Festival (Mexico) and was also nominated for a Goya for best documentary film and 1% ESQUIZOFRENIA (2006).

He is also the author of the historic novel "Aspasia, amante de Atenas" (2012) published by Espasa-Planeta.

### Selective filmography

2015 MA MA  
2010 ROOM IN ROME  
2003 LA PELOTA VASCA, LA PIEL CONTRA LA PIEDRA  
2001 LUCÍA Y EL SEXO  
1998 LOS AMANTES DEL CÍRCULO POLAR  
1996 TIERRA  
1993 LA ARDILLA ROJA  
1992 VACAS

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## Actrice Penélope Cruz

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Penélope Cruz was born in Madrid in 1974. She did her first feature film in 1990, *EL LABERINTO DEL GRIEGO*, (*THE GREEK LABYRINTH*) directed by Rafael Alcázar and 2 years later her career catapulted with the success of *JAMÓN, JAMÓN*. Since then her career has been meteoric: in the 1990's she starred in *LA CELESTINA* by Gerardo Vera and in the comedy *EL AMOR PERJUDICA GRAVEMENTE LA SALUD* (*LOVE CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH*) by Manuel Gómez Pereira; in 1997 an opportunity arose in her first Almodóvar film, *CARNE TRÉMULA* (*LIVE FLESH*), and 2 years later she officially became the actress of the moment thanks to the film by Alejandro Amenábar *ABRE LOS OJOS* (*OPEN YOUR EYES*) (1997) and *LA NIÑA DE TUS OJOS* (*THE GIRL OF YOUR DREAMS*) by Fernando Trueba.

Thanks to the Oscar winning film by Almodóvar *TODO SOBRE MI MADRE* (*ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER*) (1999) Penélope received international notoriety and began her Hollywood career where she was cast in *ALL THE PRETTY HORSES* by Billy Bob Thornton costarring Matt Damon. She also participated in the remake of *ABRE LOS OJOS*, *VANILLA SKY* with Tom Cruise.

Her next collaboration with Almodóvar was in *VOLVER* (2006) for which she won best actress at Cannes and was nominated for an Oscar. In *VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA* directed by Woody Allen in 2007 she won her first Oscar for best actress and in 2009 she would work again with Almodóvar in *LOS ABRAZOS ROTOS* (*BROKEN EMBRACES*). In *NINE* 2009 she was nominated for a third time for an Oscar and in 2010 she had a small role in *SEX AND THE CITY 2*. The Italian film *TWICE BORN* premiered at the beginning of 2013 by Sergio Castellitto and she was also in *THE COUNSELOR* that same year with Ridley Scott.

### Selective filmography

2015 MA MA  
2013 THE COUNSELOR  
2013 LOS AMANTES PASAJEROS  
2012 TO ROME WITH LOVE  
2011 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: ON STRANGER TIDES  
2009 LOS ABRAZOS ROTOS  
2008 VICKY CHRISTINA BARCELONA  
2006 VOLVER  
2006 BANDIDAS  
2001 BLOW

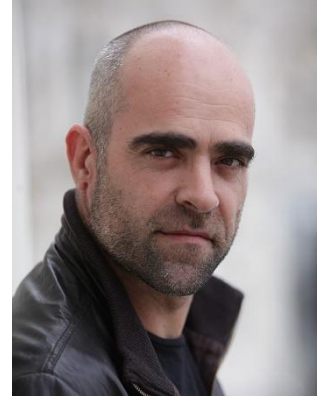
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## Acteur Luis Tosar

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Born in 1971 in Lugo Spain, he began his career in 1994 in his native home of Galicia acting in short films and TV series, since then he has worked as an actor in film, television and theater and has worked as a producer as well.

His film work is extensive and varied, his notable film work includes: MONDAYS IN THE SUN (2002) by Fernando León for which he won the Goya for best actor; TE DOY MIS OJOS (TAKE MY EYES) by Icíar Bollaín (2003) for which he won the Goya for best actor and the Silver Shell at the Festival in San Sebastián, following this he joined independent filmmaker Jim Jarmusch in THE LIMITS OF CONTROL, and later CELL 211 (2009) directed by Daniel Monzón for which he won best actor at the Goya's for the second time. He was a nominated for many awards with the film TAMBIÉN LA LLUVIA also directed by Icíar Bollaín. Last year he formed part of the cast of the box office success EL NIÑO, where he worked with Daniel Monzón once again, and MUSARAÑAS, a thriller directed by Juan Fernando Andrés and Esteban Roel.



### Selective filmography

2015 MAMA  
2014 EL NINO  
2011 CELL 211  
2010 TAMBIEN LA LLUVIA  
2009 THE LIMITS OF CONTROL  
2003 TE DOY MIS OJOS  
2002 MONDAYS IN THE SUN

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## Acteur Asier Etxeandria

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Born in 1975 in Bilbao he left País Vasco after studying acting and moved to Madrid where the opportunity came for him to work on a TV series UN PASO ADELANTE. Since then Asier has developed a career as an actor in film, television and theater. He joined the cast of HEREDEROS, PACO'S MEN, and LOVE IS FOREVER, and he triumphed in his role as Raúl de la Riva in VELVET (2014- ). In film his prominent work includes CAFÉ SOLO O CON ELLAS (2006) by Alvaro Díaz Lorenzo, THE THIRTEEN ROSES (2007) by Emilio



Martínez Lázaro, and MENTIRAS Y GORDAS (2008) by Alfonso Albacete.

His theater work is extensive including Cabaret where he acted from 2003 until 2005, A Midsummer's Night Dream (2006-2007) directed by Tamzin Towshend, La Chunga (2013) directed by Aitana Sánchez Gijón and the spectacle The Interperter which has been a hit since 2013.

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## Director's notes

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### Magda's Feeling

The essence of MA MA is the feeling that Magda uses to confront tragedy in her life, a feeling that appears in two separate moments; after overcoming the first one, the second one appears. The first one warns her that she's fatally ill, the second one warns her that there's no escape. They are two cancers; the one on her right breast is treatable, the one on her left breast is incurable.

In this way MA MA is a story told in two distinct parts. The first "ma" is a story about overcoming disease, in this tragedy the crabs crawling on the sand carry with them a great deal of fear, but eventually they go back to the sea. The second "ma" is an undeniable tragedy, the crabs don't stop, even if Natasha grabs them with her white, child's hands and tosses them forcefully into the sea. Reality doesn't work like that, but the gesture in itself matters, the promise of life that Natasha represents, what Magda will leave behind once the crabs have taken her away.

Each part of MA MA has its own internal structure, with beginning, rising action, a climax and a resolution, but there's symmetry between the two parts. They both start with the dark, tragic news of her breast cancer, delivered by Julian, her gynecologist. During the middle and the resolution of both parts the characters who surround Magda lose and gain many things, or rather they start by losing much, but they end up gaining... how much? Quantity is not really important here, but rather quality, this is exactly what this story brings forward, Magda's legacy, the moving treasure containing a new life, which comes out in extremis of her own life. To give birth and to die.

The story of MA MA takes place during one long year and two summers, from 2012 to 2013. Magda has not yet turned 40 and she's a school teacher, but on day one of the story, when she goes to see her gynecologist because she has noticed a lump in her breast, she already knows she will be out of a job come September, they already told her that three months before. That afternoon, while she's at the hairdresser, the father of her son, Dani, breaks up with her via text-message. Later her gynecologist informs her that she has two carcinomas on her right breast, while her son plays his last football match of the season; he's great at scoring goals.

From that first day Magda's life is shaken, affecting those around her. At the center of it she keeps her son, but on this same day two new men appear in her life: Julian, her gynecologist, and Arturo, who carries with him a great deal of pain. The first man discovers her disease, he attacks it with drugs, he sings to her bits from her favorite songs, he removes her right breast, and leaves her to spend the summer in a little coastal village with a wig and a new man, for her and for her son.

Arturo is a talent scout for Real Madrid who watches Dani play and tells Magda that her son has a bright future ahead of him. After this hopeful statement she witnesses Arturo's worst moment in life: he finds out that his daughter has died, after being run over by a car, and his wife is in a coma. Magda tries to comfort Arturo; helping someone who is worse off than she is, someone who has lost a great deal more, helps her to endure better her own weeks of solitary treatment. Arturo's wife passes away, and after Magda's surgery the two come together. Or rather, they've become linked by a shared tragedy and they never let go of each other again.

From the first moment of this transcendent experience in the first "ma," Magda's personality starts to change, she becomes more vital, and her sense of humor sharpens. She reaches moments of fragile happiness, which become larger as she shares them with others. To this intimate triangle, in which Magda is the crown, with Dani at the center, and Julian and Arturo on each side of her, she brings a creature that is growing inside her during the second "ma." Natasha is the name she wants to give to her daughter, like the Siberian little girl who Julian, her gynecologist, was not able to adopt. Magda draws this possibility of life from her own Siberia, her cold fear of death, from the blue, windy cold to the red heat of her uterus. And thus the fatally ill mother becomes pregnant with her Natasha, and she challenges her fate with only six months left to live. Life against death, with one wrapped inside the other.

Magda doesn't believe that the soul lives on after death, she doesn't believe in God the creator, but she believes in life, here and now, which is the only thing we truly have. And in her teacher's voice she tells Dani that the only thing we can do in life is first try to be the happiest we can be, and then try to encourage others around us to do the same. This simple advice is at the spiritual core of the life affirming MA MA.

Outside of Magda's intimate setting, behind her, is the rest of the world. We merely get peeks of the paradox that was Spain during the summer of 2012. During the worst year of the financial crisis, when the Spanish government is getting pressured from the outside to accept the conditions for a financial rescue, the Spanish national football team wins the European Cup. They're lauded as the best football team in the world. The same newscasts show the highest accomplishment in a sport with the lowest moments in national self-esteem, due to the devastating effects of the crisis and the subsequent rise in unemployment, and cuts to the healthcare system, which Magda suffers in her own skin. In this way her disease becomes a metaphor for the situation in Spain, and her vital outlook on life the formula to heal emotionally.

During the second summer, in 2013, Julian climbs up on the stage of a boardwalk bar to dedicate to her Nino Bravo's song "Vivir" with these words: "This one's for you Magda; here's to your beautiful madness, thank you for everything you've given us and everything you're leaving behind." And yes, it's this "beautiful madness" of Magda, which makes her decide to give her son a sister, and a daughter, for the one he lost at the beginning of the story, to Arturo. Magda is convinced that Arturo will be a good father to Dani and Natasha. "Your children are my children," he tells her. "And you're my only God," she replies.

And that's how these four characters are left, like a family. It's easy to imagine them going to spend their summer vacation to that same spot. And, how many times will Natasha, Dani, Arturo and Julian sing "to cry, to fight, to laugh... to always move forward even when you're in pain, that's what it means to live, live, live..." as they call upon Magda's spirit?



## PE!

During the winter of 2006 I visited the Düsseldorf Art Museum, and I brought in my memory a disturbing sculpture: "Brozen frau nº 6" by Thomas Schütte. The image of that woman made of bronze, crawling in pain while she seems to carry a mass of life and a mass of death inside her, is the genesis of MA MA. We could say that its first cell is made of bronze.

I only saw the sculpture that one time, I haven't seen it again, not even a picture on the Internet. As soon as I got back to Spain, I named that creature in pain in the shape of a she-wolf, Magda. And I started to write a screenplay about her, about how simultaneously in her body grows a malignant shape that destroys her from her woman's breast, while a daughter grows inside her uterus. The first draft ended up inside a drawer that same summer. And that's where it stayed for the next eight years, until the autumn of 2014, when I personally handed it to Pe, and she immediately made the decision to star in MA MA, to embody Magda, to bring that bronze woman to life and give her soul and her skin to her... And she made art from art. From the moment Pe got attached to the project my writing was stimulated, I was inspired again and Magda grew, and improved, first from my hand, as I gave her freshness, humor, authenticity, vitality... In short, all the qualities I imagined that Penélope Cruz had, an actress I have admired from the beginning of her career, and whom I'd called in three previous occasions; I always understood that it couldn't be. Later she was the one to bring her own ideas into the script, her contributions so clear, solid, and grounded increased the character's understanding and expressivity, and, by extension the story's. MA MA is not just Magda, it is Magda's, it belongs to her.

In the spring of 2015 the film machine of MA MA got in motion. The team that would build it with me came together. We knew it would be an easy movie to shoot, with not too many production elements, a protagonist around whom the story revolves, two men, and a boy, but it was also dramatic and emotionally intense and delicate at the same time. It needed to be discovered. We needed to find the place from where to tell the story, that invisible point of view somewhere in the air, where I could put my eye, and once I had seen what could be seen, show it to my partners in this adventure, my great supporters, the four pillars of MA MA. The first and most important pillar is Penélope Cruz's performance, accompanied by the performances of Luis Tosar and Asier Etxeandia, and the boy Teo Planell; the second pillar is the lighting in the hands of Kiko de la Rica; the third pillar the art direction by Monste Sanz, including the costume design by Carlos Díez, the make-up by Ana Lozano and hair design by Massimo Gattabrusi; the fourth would be the music, composed by Alberto Iglesias. And once I had this cast, this DP, art and music departments I started looking for the final film, the best one in my imagination before knowing it, the one in my dreams, the one that will endure... Filmmaking is all about searching and measuring.

One of the intentions I had from the beginning was to avoid highlighting the tragedy, avoid falling in the shadows, avoid exploiting the suffering, in its darkness or its lightness, avoid turning it into a sentimental tear-jerker. The characters would have to hold back their tears; many times it was almost impossible for the actors not to break out crying, just as it was for the crew around them, but those shots are not part of the movie, they belong to our own experience. In very few occasions do Magda and Arturo cry, because they can't. And Julian doesn't even cry, but we can see what an effort he's making to hold back the tears.

The idea was to look for the light wherever it could come from, barely being noticed. To open a little hole in the ceiling when the story got too hard and you just want to give up. But, how much light? Just the bare minimum, so we can see the life inside it, and how soft it is, even sweet sometimes. We've

also looked for harmony and beauty. And then when reality becomes cruel, and you can't look away, the point of view is full frontal, unmitigated.

This careful search for the proper measure has been an especially difficult task in a movie like MA MA, which has quite a few risks that we identified from the beginning, and not easy to solve, even dangerous. One of them is the dark pairing of breast cancer and death, something so present in the life of so many women and the people close to them... it commands a deep respect. In MA MA we posit that once death is visible in the horizon, the life we have left becomes more powerful, more exalted, even if it also gets sad, depressed and it sinks... it is then that we have to give it new value, even overvalue it. Why not celebrate life for as long as it lasts, if we're talking about the death that will extinguish it?

Another potential pitfall is that all the characters, except for Magda's husband, are "good people." There are no evil characters here, because we already have the malignant growth, the cancer, which becomes everyone's antagonist, pushing them to fight and bring out the best in them. And that's how in a catharsis to a tragedy from an evil none of them deserve, free from guilt, love develops between the four characters, and towards the fifth growing in Magda's uterus. In this way, MA MA is love story in its most profound sense.

Of course, there are many ways to talk about a sensitive subject matter like breast cancer, as many as we can imagine and more, and MA MA has its own unique way of doing it. And now that the movie is finished and about to open I can say with great satisfaction that we found the right measure. I can say with pride that the photography by the master Kiko de la Rica has made MA MA a luminous film. A delicate and fragile light, which reflects Magda's life-affirming attitude as opposed to her tragedy, her search for happiness as opposed to her misfortune. In this atmosphere we find the sets created by Montse Sanz (who knows Magda from when it was a bronze statue); bright rooms free of density, like Julian's office, or the new house free of memories where Magda's new family lives. Rooms that seem to have been built on the last floor of life, in the entrance hall to darkness. And if the lights and rooms flee from tragedy, the minimalist music composed by Alberto Iglesias, which he has specially composed for piano to be played by him, always seems to start lingering on sadness, looking at it with respect, and love, but the notes then swell to cheer it up, to turn it into joy and even make you smile. This has been the special and personal care that Magda's suffering has had at the hands of an artist like Alberto, it stays with her, never giving up on her, even when her cold fear of death knocks her over.

I've left for the end the first pillar in MA MA, the performances. I have always loved Luis Tosar's work from other movies, and after seeing his performance here and directing him, I have marveled at his incredible sobriety. I have never known an actor to accomplish so much with so little. He seems to hide his secret in the back of his eyes; his strength comes from his depths and it effortlessly reaches very far as it comes out. Asier Etxeandia instead is quite different, almost the opposite, with his wide range of registers, his colors and extroversion. I saw him live in the theatre last year, while he was doing his wonderful show "El Intérprete," and I came up with the idea (another risky proposition) to offer him the part of Magda's gynecologist and have him sing to her from time to time. That way he would literally turn the movie into the "song for life" that it is. As an actor, Asier is intense, restless, generous. And tremendously elegant.

And now let me get back to Pe (I left her for last), who is at the very center of the measure of it all. She is the one who gives meaning to everything and everyone, from Thomas Schütte's bronze woman, to

her castmates, to Kiko, Montse, Alberto and to my work and everyone else's. The transformation from the inspiration of a memory to the living matter of the images of MA MA, has been the most incredible experience I've had in my twenty-four years as a director.

Penelope's performance is so amazing, that I couldn't even have conceived of it when I reactivated my imagination and started rewriting the script for her, when I started dreaming of the best search and the best discovery... Every day when I would shoot her, because she's in every sequence, I could not believe my eyes, I was bewildered by her spectacular talent. Her creativity, her intuition, her ease, her conviction... they all happen in her with complete spontaneity. I mentioned before that MA MA is not just about Magda, it belongs to Magda; and now I have to say that MA MA is not just Pe, it belongs to her, it is made of her, her very flesh. And thus her tribute to life is also a tribute to beauty. Pe's performance is in itself a priceless work of art. Thank you, my dear Pe, in the name of all of us who have been with you!