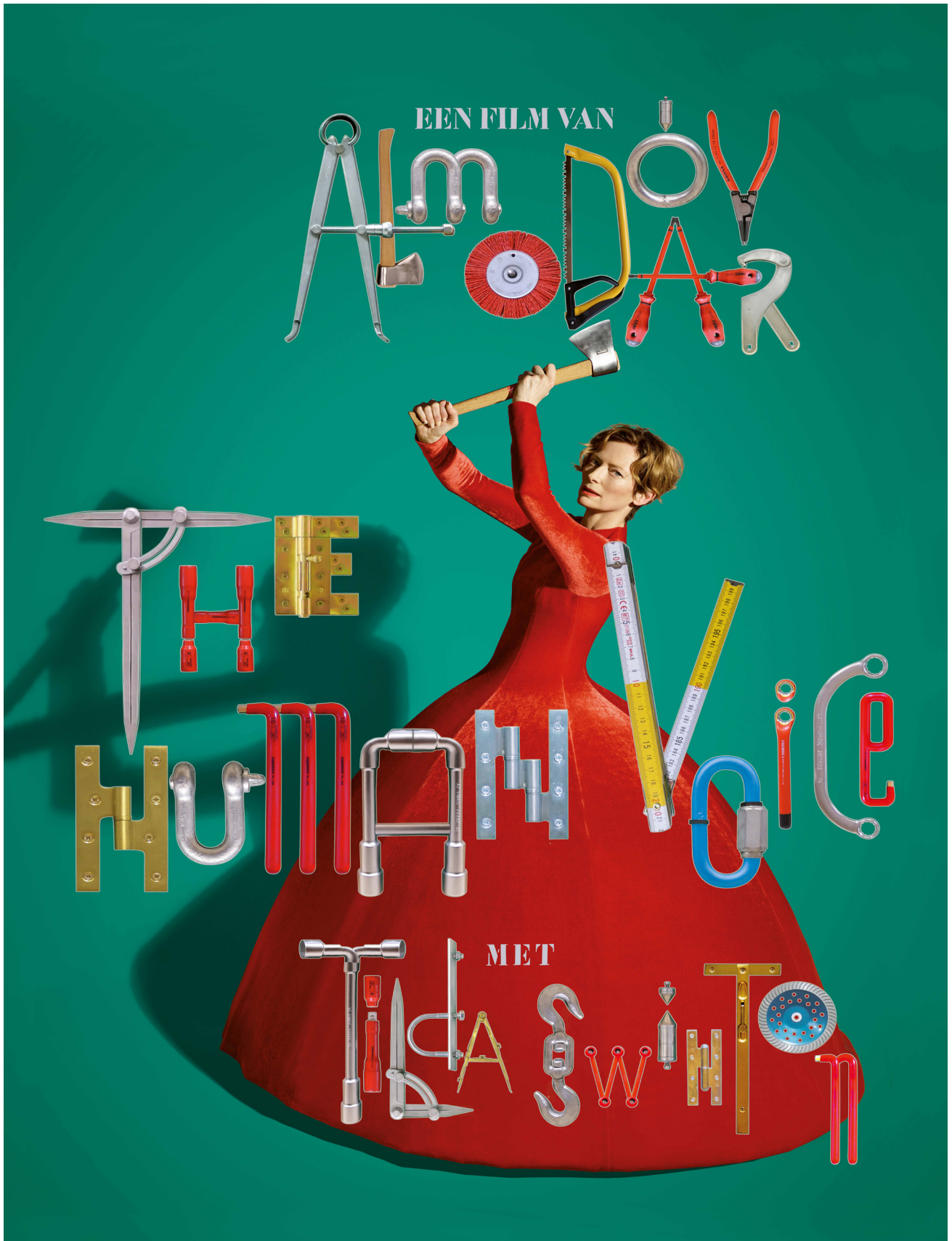


cinéart

PERSMAP



THE HUMAN VOICE

EEN FILM VAN PEDRO ALMODÓVAR
VRIJ GEBASEERD OP HET TONEELSTUK VAN JEAN COCTEAU



Drama - 2020 - Spanje - 30 minuten

Releasedatum: 18-03-2020

Meer over de film: [Cineart.nl/films/the-human-voice](https://www.cineart.nl/films/the-human-voice)

Persmaterialen: [Cineart.nl/pers/the-human-voice](https://www.cineart.nl/pers/the-human-voice)

Distributie:

Cinéart Nederland
Herengracht 328-III
1016 CE Amsterdam
T: +31 20 530 88 48

Contact:

Julia van Berlo
T: +31 20 5308840
M: +31 6 83785238
julia@cineart.nl

SYNOPSIS

THE HUMAN VOICE is een korte film van Pedro Almodóvar, gebaseerd op het beroemde toneelstuk 'La voix humaine' van Jean Cocteau. In Tilda Swinton vond Almodóvar de ideale vertolker van het personage dat hem al decennia inspireert: een verlaten en ontredderde vrouw.

Een vrouw (Tilda Swinton) komt thuis en wacht op de man die haar verlaten heeft. Zijn koffers staan klaar, maar hij komt niet. Ook de hond is rusteloos zonder zijn baasje. Tijdens een telefoongesprek tussen de vrouw en haar ex-geliefde worden we deelgenoot van haar wanhoop, rusteloosheid en sarcasme. Haar wereld stort ineen. Eerst figuurlijk, daarna letterlijk.

THE HUMAN VOICE is de eerste Engelstalige film van Pedro Almodóvar. Zoals altijd met aandacht voor detail, schitterend design en felle kleuren. Tilda Swinton is adembenemend in een decor dat laat zien hoe dicht het leven bij het theater staat. Zo kennen we Almodóvar. De film ging in première op het filmfestival van Venetië.



PEDRO ALMODÓVAR

Director

Op 24 september 1949 werd Pedro Almodóvar geboren in de Spaanse gemeenschap Castilla-La Mancha. Al vanaf jonge leeftijd was Almodóvar een vaste bezoeker van de dorpsbioscoop. Op zestienjarige leeftijd vertrekt hij naar Madrid met het idee te gaan studeren op de filmacademie. Aangekomen in Madrid blijkt echter dat Franco de filmacademie heeft laten sluiten. Ondanks deze teleurstelling besluit Almodóvar in deze periode alsnog te beginnen met het maken van films.

Hij maakt eerst vooral korte stomme films, die hij zelf inspreekt tijdens de vertoningen. Pas later gaat Almodóvar over tot het maken van speelfilms met daarin terugkerende thema's omtrent transseksualiteit, travestie, homoseksualiteit en drugsgebruik. Met zijn film MUJERES AL BORDE DE UN ATAQUE DE NERVIOS breekt hij door bij het grote publiek. De film wordt genomineerd voor een Oscar en wint diverse nationale en internationale prijzen. Voor TODO SOBRE MI MADRE sleept Almodóvar een oscar in de wacht, waarna hij ook in 2003 het felbegeerde beeldje mee naar huis mag nemen. Ditmaal voor het scenario van HABLE CON ELLA.

Almodóvar staat bekend om zijn herkenbare visuele stijl met felle kleuren en opvallende personages. Het was deze stijl die al in Almodóvars eerste film PEPI, LUCI, BOM Y OTRAS CHICAS DEL MOTION goed naar voren kwam. Daarnaast keren diverse actrices, zoals Penelope Cruz en Rossy de Palma regelmatig terug in Almodóvars films.

In 2019 presenteert Almodóvar zijn meest persoonlijke film met rollen voor Antonio Banderas en Penelope Cruz. DOLOR Y GLORIA gaat in première op het Filmfestival van Cannes, waar Antonio Banderas de prijs voor Beste Acteur won. Zijn laatste creatie, THE HUMAN VOICE, is een kortfilm vrij gebaseerd op het toneelstuk van Jean Cocteau. De film is de eerste samenwerking met Tilda Swinton en opgenomen tijdens de Corona pandemie in 2020.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 2020 THE HUMAN VOICE (SHORT)
- 2019 DOLOR Y GLORIA
- 2016 JULIETA
- 2013 LOS AMANT
- 2011 LA PIEL QUE HABITO
- 2009 LOS ABRAZOS ROTOS
- 2006 VOLVER
- 2004 LA MALA EDUCACIÓN
- 2002 HABLE CON ELLA
- 1999 TODO SOBRE MI MADRE
- 1997 CARNE TRÉMULA
- 1995 LA FLOR DE MI SECRETO
- 1993 KIKA
- 1991 TAÇONES LEJANOS
- 1989 ¡ÁTAME!
- 1988 MUJERES AL BORDE DE UN ATAQUE DE NERVIOS
- 1987 LA LEY DEL DESEO
- 1986 MATADOR
- 1984 ¿QUÉ HE HECHO YO PARA MERECEER ESTO?
- 1983 ENTRE TENIEBLAS
- 1982 LABERINTO DE PASIONES
- 1980 PEPI, LUCI, BOM Y OTRAS CHICAS DEL MONTÓN
- 1978 FOLLE...FOLLE...FÓLLEME TIM!



DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

The text by Cocteau on which the script of this human voice is freely based is an old acquaintance of mine, which had already served as inspiration for me on other occasions. I tried to adapt it when I started writing *Women On the Verge Of Nervous Breakdown*, but what came out was a screwball comedy where the lover didn't call and, therefore, there was no place for the telephone monologue. A year earlier, I included it in a scene from *Law of Desire*, where the protagonist is a director who directs his sister in a version of *The Human Voice*. At that time, I already thought that a character in such a state of nerves was capable of picking up an axe to destroy the house where she had lived with the man who is abandoning her. The idea of the axe came about in *Law of Desire*. And now it reappears.

I sat down once again to adapt Cocteau's text, determined to be faithful to the author. I read it for the first time in decades. But it's clear that I'm unfaithful by nature and that I have to add "freely based" to this version because that is what it is. I have kept what is essential, the woman's despair, the high price imposed by the law of desire, which she is willing to pay, even though it almost costs her her life. A dog that is also mourning its master, and some suitcases full of memories. The rest, the telephone conversation, the waiting and what happens afterwards, I have adapted to my way of conceiving a contemporary woman, insane with love for a man who takes days to call to collect his suitcases, but with sufficient moral autonomy so as not to bow down to him. She isn't a submissive woman, as in the original text. She can't be, given the times in which we live.

I always considered this adaptation as an experiment, a whim in which I would show what, in theater, is called the fourth wall, and in cinema would be to show the part behind, that is, the wooden structure that holds up the walls of the realistic set, the material reality of what is fictional.

The reality of this woman is the pain, the solitude, the darkness in which she lives. I have tried to make all this obvious, moving and eloquent through the (sublime) performance by Tilda Swinton, showing very early on that her house is a construction inside a cinema sound stage. By showing it on all sides, coming out of the realistic decor and making use of all the space in the studio, I have enlarged, as it were, the size of the setting where the monologue is performed. I have mixed the cinematic and the theatrical, combining their essences. For example, when She is on the terrace, waiting and looking at the city, the only thing we see is a wall (the wall of the studio) which still has marks from other shoots. There isn't a skyline, the urban landscape doesn't exist. She only finds emptiness, starkness and darkness. Which allows me to accentuate the feeling of solitude and darkness in which the character lives.

The studio where we filmed thus became the setting where all the action took place. And the construction of the realistic set where the protagonist lives and waits in a part of this set, inside and outside. Showing the wooden structure that holds up the realistic set is like showing the set's skin.

The use of English is also an experiment for me. I am a director who is totally free when it comes to working, but this time, as I wasn't doing it in a standard format, I felt freer than ever. Freeing myself of my own language, of the minimum length of 90 minutes, of having to be careful about not showing what is behind the set construction, etc., meant a real break for me.

This doesn't mean that everything fitted in. The limits were inside my head, but they existed and they were inflexible. A work made with such freedom also needs the rigor of the *mise-en-scène*, almost more than others do. It wasn't a matter, for example, of filming the filming of the monologue, cinema within theater, showing the spotlights, the cameras, the cables, along with all the other elements of the construction. It wasn't that. Everything I have shown that wasn't realistic was to reinforce the idea of the protagonist's solitude and exile: the isolation in which She lives. Behind each extravagance, there is always a dramatic idea. When the whole set appears, in an overhead shot, I wanted to show the protagonist enclosed in it, tiny, as in a dolls' house

The beginning, before the credits, works like the prologue of an opera. The dresses by Balenciaga helped me create that illusion. The first sequence shows a woman who waits, dressed extravagantly. She seems like a dummy left behind in a storeroom.

The truth is I have really enjoyed this experiment. Transforming, for example, an enormous chroma green screen, usually so ugly, into a kind of operatic curtain was stimulating, fun and exciting. The fact of approaching the film as a chamber piece, an experimental work, made me forget little prejudices about furniture, props and music. There are several pieces of furniture that have appeared in other films of mine. The same has happened with the music. I suggested to Alberto Iglesias that he developed compositions from our other films, adapted to the tempo and mood of *The Human Voice*. And that is what he has done. With the exception of some electronic base, the soundtrack is composed of themes from *Broken Embraces*, *Bad Education*, *Talk To Her* and *I'm So Excited!*, revisited for this film.

Before starting, I already had many practical aesthetic ideas, but *The Human Voice* is above all a text and an actress. It was difficult to adapt the text to myself, but it needed an exceptional actress who would bring truth and emotion to my words. My version is more abstract than Cocteau's (where everything is more recognizable and naturalistic), this makes mine more difficult to perform. It came about surrounded by artifice, with few realistic supports. The actress's voice is the only continuity that must be respected, it is the only guide that the spectator has in order to follow the story without sudden shocks. Never as in this whim have I needed an exceptional actress. And I found her, with all the dreamed-about attributes, in Tilda Swinton.

Despite that fact that it is spoken in English, that *The Human Voice* is my debut in that language, and that the shoot was absolutely idyllic, I'm not sure that I'm ready to tackle another shoot in English. What I am sure about is that I can direct Tilda Swinton in her native language. I think that this short film, inhabited from start to finish exclusively by her, shows her wide range of registers. For the crew, it was a gift to hear her talk and move through the set. Her intelligence and willing disposition made my work much easier. And in particular, in addition to her enormous talent, her blind faith in me. This is a feeling that all directors dream of and the mere fact of it being produced makes you grow.

Once again, the lighting was in the hands of José Luis Alcaine, the last great maestro of light left in Spanish cinema. The legendary director of photography in *The South*, Víctor Erice's masterpiece. All the favorite colors of my palette are represented in the set, but after eight films, Alcaine is the one who best knows my preference for saturation and vibrant colors, my nostalgia for Technicolor.

For the second time, after *Pain and Glory*, Teresa Font was responsible for the editing, with her usual enthusiasm and efficiency. And Juan Gatti undertook the design of the credits and the poster. Heading it all, my family at *El Deseo*, our production company, with a guest of honor. Tilda Swinton. I hope that you enjoy it as much as we enjoyed making it.



CAST

Her TILDA SWINTON



CREW

Written and directed by PEDRO ALMODÓVAR
Producers AGUSTÍN ALMODÓVAR
ESTHER GARCÍA
Original score ALBERTO IGLESIAS
Director of photography JOSÉ LUIS ALCAINE
Editing TERESA FONT
Art Director ANTXON GÓMEZ
Costumes SONIA GRANDE
Make-up ANA LOZANO
Hair-stylist MANOLO GARCÍA
Sound SERGIO BÜRMAN



