

OFFICIAL COMPETITION

Argentina/Spain (2021) 114 minutes

Directors: Gastón Duprat and Mariano Cohn

Cast: Penelope Cruz, Oscar Martinez, Antonio Banderas, José Luis Gómez



Screening 22nd November 2023 at Swindon Arts Centre

Synopsis

An 80-year-old pharma billionaire Don Humberto [Gómez] wishes his posterity to be about more than money, so pays for a famous novel (that he has not read) to be made into a film. The Cannes Palm d'Or winning director Lola Cuevas [Cruz] uses two diametrically opposed leading men Félix Rivero, a movie star [Banderas] and Ivàn Torres, a serious theatre actor [Martinez], in this acerbic satire on the film industry.

Reviews



Official Competition puts prestige cinema in the spotlight, and comes up with a winner. The pomposity of the artistic process is exposed in moments such as a scene where Lola makes her stars act a scene underneath a dangling boulder, or Rivero covering his co-star in spit during his vocal warm ups.

Torres, the thespian pretends to not be interested in awards but secretly resents his colleague's acclaim. In contrast Rivero is all surface as an A-lister whose sincerity is as fake as his on-camera tears. The trio's contrast of bravado and vulnerability keeps things interesting until the climactic twist. *Official Competition* is an observant send-up of the self-importance of the festival circuit. Cinema buffs may squirm at the derision, but few can deny the accuracy of this caricature.

Victoria Luxford, City AM

Humberto buys the rights to the novel and Cuevas, a Palme d'Or winning director with a highly unconventional way of working, casts Rivero, film superstar and Torres, a theatre luminary, in the roles of brothers violently at odds but bound together by blood. Both take an immediate and visceral dislike to each other.

Rather than a love letter to the cinematic arts, this is more of a poison pen jab to the jugular. It dismantles the lofty ambitions of cinema as a monument on the cultural landscape. It shows us art for ego's sake, and it has a lot of wickedly spiteful fun doing so.

Wendy Ide, Guardian

Film Facts

- Best Comedy Film 2023 – 10th Feroz (Spain) Awards
- Directorial debut for Argentians Gastón Duprat and Mariano Cohn, who also co-wrote the script with Andrés Duprat

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