

JULIETA

Spain (2016) 97 minutes

Director & Screenplay: Pedro Almodóvar

Cast: Emma Suárez (Julieta), Adriana Ugarte (Julieta Joven), Daniel Grao (Xoan), Inma Cuesta (Ava)



Screening 21 February 2018 at Swindon Arts Centre

Synopsis

After a chance meeting, middle-aged Julieta learns that her long-lost daughter has resurfaced in Madrid. This begins a painful reflection into her chequered past, flashing back to the moments of pain that defined her current life. This drama is directed by Spanish master Pedro Almodóvar.

Reviews



... Almodóvar's 20th feature and his best, in my view, since *Volver* a decade ago, is a film of such quietly assured mastery that it reminds you American cinema today has virtually no one comparable to him: an artist who exercises total control over his work, employs a filmic idiom derived largely from the lushest productions of classic Hollywood, and operates in a fictional realm of his own creation.

...Like most Almodóvar films, this one centers on women. Its narrative premise can be simply stated: a woman faces the painful mystery of her long alienation from her daughter. But this is only the germ of a drama that grows steadily richer, more resonant and complex as the filmmaker elaborates it...

Spanish auteur Pedro Almodóvar's latest, his most moving and entrancing work since 2006's *Volver*, is a sumptuous and heartbreaking study of the viral nature of guilt, the mystery of memory and the often unendurable power of love. At times, the emotional intrigue plays more like a Hitchcock thriller than a romantic melodrama, with Alberto Iglesias's superb Herrmannesque score (the director cites Toru Takemitsu, Mahler and Alban Berg as influential) heightening the noir elements, darkening the bold splashes of red, blue and white.

Three short stories from the Canadian author Alice Munro's 2004 volume *Runaway* provide the source material, but the spirit of Patricia Highsmith looms large as strangers on a train fuel the circling narrative (one character even observes that he is becoming a Highsmith obsessive).

I was also startled to find echoes of George Sluizer's Dutch-French 1988 chiller *Spoorloos* in the depiction of a life defined by the disappearance of a loved one, although there is a tenderness here wholly lacking from Sluizer's altogether more unforgiving work.

Almodóvar's script was based on three stories by Alice Munro, and for a while he considered making it in her native Canada. That he ended up back in Spain is of course altogether fitting. He may share Catholic roots with Hitchcock and Bresson, but this film's concern with guilt, transference, fate, mystery and (more obliquely) faith connects intricately with his native culture as well as the ideas expressed in his previous films. Building on his previous work while also charting a new course, it is suffused with the casual confidence of an established master.

Godfrey Cheshire, rogerebert.com

Film Facts

- All the sculptures made by Ava are in reality made by Miquel Navarro, a well known artist from Spain.
- The working title was *Silencio*, after one of the short stories of Alice Munro, but when Pedro Almodóvar learned that Martin Scorsese was making a movie with the same title, he decided to change it to *Julieta*.
- Almost every shot contains the red colour.

Mark Kermode, The Guardian

swindonfilm.org.uk