

CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

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Julieta 2016

Spain 1hr 39min

Director: [Pedro Almodóvar](#)

Writers: [Pedro Almodóvar](#), [Alice Munro](#)

Cast:

[Emma Suárez](#) – Julieta; [Adriana Ugarte](#) – Young Julieta;

[Daniel Grao](#) – Xoan; [Inma Cuesta](#) – Ava; [Michelle Jenner](#) – Beatriz; [Darío Grandinetti](#) – Lorenzo;

[Blanca Parés](#) – Antia (18 years); [Priscilla Delgado](#) – Antia (child); [Sara Jiménez](#) – Beatriz (child); [Rossy de Palma](#) – Marian



“Told in flashback over 30 years of guilt and grief, this tender melodrama is Pedro Almodóvar’s best film in a decade” – Mark Kermode, Observer review

When we first meet Julieta, aged 56, she is preparing to move with her partner, Lorenzo (Darío Grandinetti), from her Madrid apartment to start a new life in Portugal. When Lorenzo suggests putting some things into storage until they return, she responds that she never intends coming back. But then, a chance meeting with Beatriz (Michelle Jenner), the childhood friend of Antia – Julieta’s absent daughter, changes everything. Unaware of their 12-year estrangement, Beatriz tells Julieta she has recently seen Antia (who now has three children) in Italy. This causes Julieta to cancel the move, split with Lorenzo and move back to the old apartment block she once shared with her daughter. There she begins writing a long letter, in which she explains the circumstances in which she and Antia’s father met and ultimately parted.

The flashback begins 25 years earlier, with a Hitchcock influenced night-time train journey, in which a young Julieta encounters two men; one who then dies and the other, a rugged fisherman, Xoan (Daniel Grao), becomes her lover. The story, told in non-linear fashion, jumping back-and-forwards in time, becoming more twisted but increasing engrossing as Julieta and Antia’s fates are revealed. There are also shades of Hitchcock about the Mrs Danvers-like Housekeeper, Marian (played by Almodóva’s long term muse, Rossy de Palma).

Adapted from three short stories by Canadian Authoress, Alice Munro (“Chance”, “Soon” and “Silence” from her 2004 **Runaway** collection), with Adriana Ugarte playing the younger, vibrant, Julieta and Emma Suárez her older, world-weary self. This is an impressive piece of double casting – it really feels as though we are seeing the same person, albeit with a totally different outlook on life. In a breathtaking sequence that underlines Almodóva’s genius, a young Antia dries her mother’s hair

and Ugarte's head is covered by a towel to re-emerge as Suárez; Julieta's once youthful countenance now transformed by grief.

Following the psychological horror of [The Skin I Live In](#) and the political satire of his last film, [I'm So Excited](#) (shown by the Film Club during our 2013/14 season), **Julieta** sees a return to the more female-centric Almodóva territory of [Volver](#) and [All About My Mother](#); 'the cinema of women, of great female protagonists', was Almodóva's own description in an interview about the movie. Forsaking comedy for straightforward melodrama, the performances are less over-the-top, and the directing more restrained, than his earlier works. However, the vibrant reds and rich textures, present throughout, means the film could hardly be mistaken for the work of any other director. Like 2003's [Talk to Her](#), the film opens with a red curtain – except here, instead of the curtain rising to reveal a theatre stage, the scarlet fabric appears to be breathing. The camera then draws back to reveal this is not a curtain at all, but a woman's red blouse. Similarly, many of Almodóva's signatures are present (bereavement, sex, male characters reduced to a peripheral role in the drama).

Apparently, the working title for this film was '*Silencio*' (Silence), since Julieta bears her grief in silent isolation (which, is partly responsible for driving Antia away) and much of the film is about the pain of trying to keep the past unspoken. The name was ultimately changed to avoid confusion with Martin Scorsese's film of the same name.

Bob Foale

Club notices:

Please do hand in your Reaction Slip at the end of this film. They provide extremely useful and valuable information. Thank you.

Our next presentation:

As part of our 30th Anniversary Season, [Goodfellas](#), one of the iconic films of the last 30 years, will be shown on Friday, 27 October, starting at 8:00pm¹.

¹ Note: At the request of the Cramphorn Theatre Management, this is a change of date from that originally scheduled