



IN DREAMS ARE MONSTERS

Arrebato

A key movie from the *movida madrileña*, the explosion of countercultural creativity that erupted in Spain in the years following the death of Franco, Iván Zulueta's second film is a radical, unpredictable journey to the wild side. Horror film director José (Eusebio Poncela) receives a mysterious parcel containing an audio tape, a reel of film and a key; coupled with the reappearance of his heroin-addicted ex-girlfriend (Cecilia Roth), this sparks off memories of two sinister encounters he had with Pedro (Will More), an eccentric Super 8 fanatic obsessed by the idea of achieving rapture (*arrebato*) through film.

Sometimes camp, often unnerving, with an arrestingly untamed performance by More, *Arrebato* is a sensational trip that alternates between obsessive adoration for and thrilled fear of cinema. While the film is occasionally messy, and the leaps back and forth through time are deliberately disorienting, it has some phenomenal sequences, and every scene with More is riveting. A moment when a film camera suddenly moves of its own accord judders the film into another realm, and Zulueta makes great use of the eerie appearance of projected flickering Super 8 film stock. Made just four years after Franco's death, the film embraces new freedoms. Sex, nudity, queerness, copious drug use (mainly heroin) feature prominently. There is little explicit political commentary, although one tense scene towards the end, involving a blindfold, evokes the decades of dictatorship.

Arrebato is one of the favourite films of Pedro Almodóvar – the best-known director associated with the *movida* – who, in a typically weird choice by Zulueta, dubs one of the female characters. Many of the actors would appear in Almodóvar's films throughout the 1980s, while Zulueta, who never directed another feature, went on to design the posters for Almodóvar's *Labyrinth of Passions* (1982) and *Dark Habits* (1983).

Alex Davidson, *Sight and Sound*, April 2022

Pedro Almodóvar on Iván Zulueta

How to begin? I met Iván in Madrid when I had been living there for almost ten years. He was already known and admired for his work in television – that mythical series *Último grito* (*The Latest Craze*) – as well as *Un dos tres al escondite inglés* (*One Two Three What's the Time Mr Wolf*) – a feature film credited to its producer José Luis Borau because Iván did not have the director's union card – and one of the few examples of pop cinema made in our country at the end of the 1960s that was not shabby, that could stand comparison with any product of English psychedelia in terms of quality, albeit outdoing their irony, of course. Fans of *Arrebato* may not know this, but Iván Zulueta was a person with a great sense of humour.

We hit it off immediately; we were bound together by psychedelia, the American undergrounds, the earliest English pop, some friends in common, some enemies in common too, the new wave music being made in Madrid, Glam, comics, Cecilia Roth, an absolute hunger for cinema, and the fact that we were both shooting small films in Super 8. He was much better than me.

I was a beginner with the camera when Iván was already an absolute virtuoso in his use of this instrument.

Arrebato (1979), his second work, a filmic testament right from the beginning of the shoot, wouldn't be anything without the thousands of metres that Iván filmed in Super 8 throughout the previous years. Not for nothing was it the Super 8 camera (like the 16mm camera of Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*, although with a different meaning) that enraptures the prostrate and expectant bodies of the protagonists Will More and Eusebio Poncela, that ushers them to a better, or non-world. The only information the film gives us is that this non-world is a sort of void of reddish colour.

It is difficult to speak about Iván Zulueta and death.

It is very difficult to speak about his latter years, those immediately after *Arrebato*, when he was retired in San Sebastián, like Norma Desmond, but with all of his senses intact, and without having relinquished one iota of his exquisite sensitivity. Spanish cinema has lost one of its most original filmmakers, and together with Erice, the one that managed to give his images the greatest aesthetic meaning. He never filmed a single banal image. The element in which he felt most comfortable was abstraction. The pure image, brimful of meanings but freed from the burden of fiction, always cushioned on a rich variety of soundscapes. David Lynch, but less shadowy and more pop. Psychedelia was his school, and he made genuine masterpieces in this style.

His work as a graphic designer and draftsman was inextricably linked to his cinematographic work. From the end of the 70s to the mid 80s he designed many wonderful film posters. I remember how impressed I was with the one for *Furtivos* (*Poachers*, 1975) and how much fun we had whilst he was designing the one for *Entre Tinieblas* (*Dark Habits*, 1983) or *Laberinto de pasiones* (*Labyrinth of Passions*, 1982). Even if he seems an ephemeral figure (I hope he doesn't), Iván Zulueta bequeaths an incredibly rich and essential legacy to the history of Spanish cinema, in minor formats but possessed of extraordinary greatness. *Arrebato* reverberates with the same force as it did 30 years ago, the year it opened.

Spanish cinema loses a unique individual, and José Luis Borau his best disciple. I remember those days in his flat in Plaza de España in Madrid so clearly. Everything was charged with life, and we used to laugh so much!

Pedro Almodóvar, 2009. Translated by Mar Diestro-Dópido for *Sight and Sound*

ARREBATO

Directed by: Iván Zulueta
Presented by: Nicolás Astiarraga Producciones Cinematográficas
Executive Producer: Augusto M. Torres
Produced by: Nicolás Astiarraga
Production Manager: Miguel Ángel Bermejo
Production Assistant: Tito Goyanes
Assistant Directors: Eduardo Eznarriaga, Carlos Astiarraga
Script Supervisor: María Eugenia Cuesta
Written by: Iván Zulueta
Director of Photography: Ángel Luis Fernández
Assistant Camera: Fátima Ochando
Gaffer: Rafael García Martos
Key Grip: Antonio Martínez Roque
Editor: José Luis Pelaez
1st Assistant Editor: María Elena Sainz De Pozas
2nd Assistant Editor: José Pérez Luna
Costumes: José Alberto Urbieta
Make-up: José Alberto Urbieta
Laboratory: S.A. Fotofilm Madrid
Music: Negativo
Sound Recordist: Miguel Polo
Boom Operator: Francisco Femenía
Re-recording Mixer: Francisco Peramos
Camera Equipment: S.A. Camararent Internacional

Cast

Eusebio Poncela (*José Sirgado*)
Cecilia Roth (*Ana Turner*)
Will More (*Pedro P.*)
Marta Fernández Muro (*Marta*)
Helena Fernán-Gómez (*Gloria*)
Carmen Giralt (*Tía Carmen*)
Max Madera (*hustler*)
Javi Ulacia (*photo shop employee*)
Rosa Crespo (*vampire*)
Luis Ciges (*porter*)
Antonio Gasset (*assembler*)*
Pedro Almodóvar (*voice of Gloria*)*

Spain 1979
105 mins

* Uncredited

The screening on Wed 14 Dec will be introduced by writer and broadcaster Anna Bogutskaya

IN DREAMS ARE MONSTERS

The Uninvited

Thu 1 Dec 18:05; Sat 17 Dec 14:30 (+ intro by broadcaster and writer, Louise Blain)

Kwaidan (Kaidan)

Thu 1 Dec 20:00; Tue 13 Dec 17:40

Night of the Eagle

Fri 2 Dec 21:00; Sat 10 Dec 12:10

Daughters of Darkness (Les lèvres rouges)

Sat 3 Dec 20:45; Tue 13 Dec 21:00

Transness in Horror

Tue 6 Dec 18:20

Let the Right One In (Låt den rätte komma in)

Tue 6 Dec 20:45; Thu 22 Dec 18:15

Philosophical Screens: The Lure

Wed 7 Dec 20:10 Blue Room

The Lure (Córki dancing)

Wed 7 Dec 18:15; Thu 22 Dec 20:45 (+ intro by

Dr Catherine Wheatley, Reader in Film Studies at King's College London)

Cat People

Wed 7 Dec 20:50; Mon 19 Dec (+ intro by Clarisse Loughrey, chief film critic for The Independent)

Black Sunday (La maschera del demonio)

Fri 9 Dec 21:00; Sun 18 Dec 18:30

Ring (Ringu)

Sat 10 Dec 20:40; Tue 13 Dec 21:05;

Tue 20 Dec 21:00

Atlantics (Atlantique) + Atlantiques

Sun 11 Dec 14:50; Tue 27 Dec 18:20

Sugar Hill

Sun 11 Dec 18:00; Sat 17 Dec 20:40

Häxan

Mon 12 Dec 18:10 (+ live score by The Begotten); Sat 17 Dec 11:45 (with live piano accompaniment)

Sweetheart

Mon 12 Dec 21:00; Tue 27 Dec 12:40

Arrebato

Wed 14 Dec 20:30 (+ intro by writer and broadcaster Anna Bogutskaya);

Fri 23 Dec 18:05

The Final Girls LIVE

Thu 15 Dec 20:30

One Cut of the Dead (Kamera o tomeru na!)

Fri 16 Dec 18:15; Fri 30 Dec 20:45

The Fog

Fri 16 Dec 21:00; Wed 28 Dec 18:10

Being Human + Q&A with Toby Whithouse and guests (tbc)

Sat 17 Dec 18:00

Day of the Dead

Mon 19 Dec 20:40; Thu 29 Dec 18:20

Society

Tue 20 Dec 18:15; Wed 28 Dec 20:50

Interview with the Vampire

Wed 21 Dec 18:10; Thu 29 Dec 20:40

Ginger Snaps

Wed 21 Dec 20:50; Tue 27 Dec 15:10

A Dark Song

Fri 23 Dec 20:45; Fri 30 Dec 18:20

City Lit at BFI: Screen Horrors –

Screen Monsters

Thu 20 Oct – Thu 15 Dec 18:30–20:30 Studio

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Programme notes and credits compiled by the BFI Documentation Unit

Notes may be edited or abridged. Questions/comments? Email prognotes@bfi.org.uk

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