



NEW RELEASES

1976

Winning the Sutherland Award for a debut feature at LFF2022, Manuela Martelli's *1976* is an unnervingly brilliant portrait of the ways in which the Pinochet dictatorship realised its brute force and pervasive influence. Carmen is overseeing renovations to the family's summer beach home when she witnesses a forced disappearance. Visited by the local priest, she finds her understanding of the present shift as a climate of uncertainty and paranoia increasingly takes over her life. Can she be sure she is not being watched? As Pinochet is heard on a TV broadcast justifying his brutal presidential approach, so Carmen finds her daily existence governed by an increasing sense of fear.

Former actor Martelli (*Machuca*, *Two Shots Fired*) delivers a taut thriller about the ways in which a dictatorship exerts its influence, all grounded in an outstanding performance by Aline Küppenheim as the chain-smoking, pill-popping Carmen, whose elegant, composed exterior masks secrets and discontents.

Maria Delgado, bfi.org.uk

Set three years into Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, Manuela Martelli's unnerving debut feature presents a blistering portrait of the ways in which the regime realised its culture of intimidation and fear. The opening scene – emblematic of Martelli's approach, which is characterised by understatement rather than explanation – introduces the film's protagonist, Carmen, a wealthy middle-aged (grand)mother overseeing renovations to her family's summer beach home. As she stands in a hardware shop, the commotion of one of the Chilean junta's enforced 'disappearances' provides an ominous soundtrack to the camera's insistent focus on the salmon-pink paint being whisked up. The paint drips from a stick onto Carmen's blue court shoe – a symbol of the bloodshed of the regime. Once she's left the shop, a shoe lying by the door of her car remains as a trace of what just took place in the now empty street.

This visually suggestive sequence sets the scene for a film of impressive economy. Snippets of passing conversation point to Carmen's frustrated aspirations and past bouts of mental illness. In conversations with Elías (Nicolás Sepúlveda), the wounded political activist who is being sheltered by local priest Father Sánchez (Hugo Medina), and to whom she clandestinely attends, Carmen reveals that she was unable to study medicine because her father wanted her to marry rather than pursue a career – she has become a doctor's wife. Watching home movies, Carmen refers to a holiday where she 'went crazy' and 'took off'. The film charts Carmen's growing sense of agency as she aids Elías – and her gradual awakening to the horrors of the dictatorship.

Aline Küppenheim is outstanding as the enigmatic, chain-smoking Carmen, whose poised Jackie Kennedy-like exterior masks secrets and discontentment. Ringing her son from a hotel booth to request antibiotics for Elías, she suspects the line is being tapped. An uneasy encounter with a diver [sic] at a roadside café leads her to wonder if she is being followed. When identity documents stolen from her car are returned with a warning from

neighbour Humberto ('Try to be more careful next time. You won't always be this lucky'), she cannot be sure how much he (or her own husband, Miguel) knows about her clandestine activities. Carmen lies to Miguel, hospital staff and strangers, Father Sánchez lies to his housekeeper and Carmen; both seek to protect Elías, but lies beget further lies as the pair create ever more elaborate fictions to cover up their actions.

The dictatorship is shown to be a pervasive presence, infiltrating all corners of society, with curfews and military checks restricting movement and cultivating a climate of surveillance. Workmen in Carmen's house speak in hushed tones of disappeared persons, and a radio programme that Carmen listens to in the car supports the crackdown on political dissent.

Gradually, the film's mood takes a more ominous turn. Tensions flare at the dinner table between Carmen's son Tomás and son-in-law Pedro over the regime's modus operandi. Out walking with her grandchildren, Carmen sees a woman's body washed up on the beach. On a boat trip with a hospital colleague of Miguel's, a barrage of pro-Pinochet propaganda from his animated wife literally makes Carmen sick. Soon Carmen is self-administering a daily cocktail of painkillers, alcohol and cigarettes just to get through the day.

In conversation with her housekeeper, Carmen refers in passing to Miguel as a 'control freak', suggesting a link between domestic and institutional patriarchy. The extent of Miguel's involvement in cover-ups is not made clear, but he is part of an elite who, by looking the other way, effectively kept Pinochet in power. *1976*'s exploration of the line between intervening and bystanding is undertaken through a lean screenplay (co-authored by Martelli) and an escalating sense of paranoia; violence may be off screen but its consequences – the body on the beach, the discarded shoe by the car door – are all too visible.

Brazilian composer Mariá Portugal's creepy electronic score operates in effective contradistinction with the film's largely warm colour palette. Director of photography Yarará Rodríguez, a veteran of independent Argentine production company El Pampero Cine, is evidently an expert at shooting films in which surface appearances camouflage conflicting realities; her previous credits include Laura Citarella's *Trenque Lauquen* (2022) and Mariano Llinás's *La flor* (2018). The red food colouring whipped into cream by Carmen at the film's end echoes the dripping paint of the opening sequence – a signal of further bloodshed. Martelli uses allusion, metaphor, and potent, distinctive imagery with consummate skill to capture the pulse of a dictatorship that sought to silence its critics and conceal its abuses.

Maria Delgado, *Sight and Sound*, [bfi.org.uk/sight-and-sound](https://www.bfi.org.uk/sight-and-sound), 23 March 2023

1976

Director: Manuela Martelli

©: Cinestación, Wood, Movimiento Audiovisual

Production Company: Cinestación, Wood

In co-production with: Magma Cine

In association with: Movimiento Audiovisual

Supported by: Doha Film Institute

Producers: Omar Zúñiga, Dominga Sotomayor Castillo, Alejandra Garcia, Andrés Wood

Screenplay: Manuela Martelli, Alejandra Moffat

Director of Photography: Yarará Rodríguez

Editor: Camila Mercadal

Art Director: Francisca Correa

Costume Designer: Pilar Calderón

Music: Mariá Portuga

Cast:

Aline Küppenheim (*Carmen*)

Nicolas Sepúlveda (*Elias*)

Hugo Medina (*Father Sanchez*)

Alejandro Goic (*Miguel*)

Carmen Gloria Martinez (*Estela*)

Amalia Kassai (*Leonor*)

Chile-Argentina-Qatar 2022

96 mins

NEW RELEASES

Rye Lane

From Mon 27 Mar

Dance Craze

From Mon 27 Mar

1976

From Mon 27 Mar

God's Creatures

From Fri 31 Mar (Q&A with actors Emily Watson and Toni O'Rourke on Fri 31 Mar 18:10)

Sick of Myself

From Fri 21 Apr

RE-RELEASES

Dance Craze

From Mon 27 Mar

The Age of Innocence

From Fri 31 Mar

Top Hat

From 7 Apr

Raging Bull

From 14 Apr

Young Soul Rebels

From Fri 28 Apr

The Passion of Remembrance

From Fri 28 Apr

BIG SCREEN CLASSICS

Touch of Evil

Mon 27 Mar 20:45; Tue 4 Apr 14:30; Sun 9 Apr 18:30; Fri 28 Apr 20:45

Wild Strawberries (Smultronstället)

Tue 28 Mar 20:50; Wed 12 Apr 18:10 (+ intro by Geoff Andrew, Programmer-at-Large); Fri 14 Apr 20:50; Mon 24 Apr 14:30

To Sleep with Anger + Borom Sarret (The Wagoner)

Wed 29 Mar 18:10 (+ intro); Mon 10 Apr 12:45; Wed 12 Apr 18:00

Rio Bravo

Thu 30 Mar 20:20; Sun 9 Apr 12:50; Fri 21 Apr 20:20

Aguirre, Wrath of God (Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes)

Fri 31 Mar 21:00; Thu 13 Apr 21:00; Thu 20 Apr 18:15

Last year in Marienbad (L'Année dernière à Marienbad)

Sat 1 Apr 12:50; Mon 3 Apr 20:30; Sat 8 Apr 18:20; Tue 18 Apr 20:45

La Grande Illusion

Sat 1 Apr 13:00; Wed 12 Apr 20:40; Sat 15 Apr 18:00; Fri 21 Apr 18:15

The Godfather Part II

Sat 1 Apr 16:00; Sat 22 Apr 18:40; Sun 30 Apr 16:30

Nashville

Sun 2 Apr 17:50; Sat 8 Apr 20:00; Sat 29 Apr 16:30

The Passenger (Professione: reporter)

Wed 5 Apr 18:00 (+ intro by Geoff Andrew, Programmer-at-Large); Fri 7 Apr 20:20; Sun 16 Apr 18:15; Thu 27 Apr 18:10

Pickpocket

Thu 6 Apr 20:45; Tue 11 Apr 14:30; Mon 17 Apr 20:50; Mon 24 Apr 20:50

The Portrait of a Lady

Fri 7 Apr 14:30; Wed 19 Apr 17:50 (+ intro); Sat 29 Apr 20:15

Code Unknown (Code inconnu)

Sun 9 Apr 15:45; Wed 26 Apr 18:15

The Lady Eve

Mon 10 Apr 18:15; Sat 15 Apr 12:40; Sun 30 Apr 14:15

BECOME A BFI MEMBER

Enjoy a great package of film benefits including priority booking at BFI Southbank and BFI Festivals. Join today at [bfi.org.uk/join](https://www.bfi.org.uk/join)

BFI PLAYER

We are always open online on BFI Player where you can watch the best new, cult & classic cinema on demand. Showcasing hand-picked landmark British and independent titles, films are available to watch in three distinct ways: Subscription, Rentals & Free to view.

See something different today on player.bfi.org.uk

SIGHT AND SOUND

Never miss an issue with Sight and Sound, the BFI's internationally renowned film magazine. Subscribe from just £25*

* Price based on a 6-month print subscription (UK only). More info:

sightandsoundsubs.bfi.org.uk



BFI SOUTHBANK

Welcome to the home of great film and TV, with three cinemas and a studio, a world-class library, regular exhibitions and a pioneering Mediatheque with 1000s of free titles for you to explore. Browse special-edition merchandise in the BFI Shop.

We're also pleased to offer you a unique new space, the BFI Riverfront – with unrivalled riverside views of Waterloo Bridge and beyond, a delicious seasonal menu, plus a stylish balcony bar for cocktails or special events. Come and enjoy a pre-cinema dinner or a drink on the balcony as the sun goes down.

Join the **BFI mailing list** for regular programme updates. Not yet registered? Create a new account at www.bfi.org.uk/signup