



## INTERNAL REFLECTIONS: THE FILMS OF JOANNA HOGG

# Archipelago

### Archipelago

Directed by: Joanna Hogg

©: JHP2 Ltd

Production Company: Wild Horses Film Company

Executive Producers: Kiyoshi Nomura,  
Edward Charlton

Produced by: Gayle Griffiths

Line Producer: Luke Schiller

Production Co-ordinator: Beni Hardiman

Production Accountant: Christine Gayford

Post-production Supervisor: Luke Schiller

Post-production Assistant: Jessica Charlton

Executive Assistant: Karol Griffiths

Production Assistant: James Emmott

1st Assistant Director: Paolo Guglielmotti

3rd Assistant Director: Georgina Paget

Script Supervisor: Sara J. Doughty

Casting Director: Lucy Bevan

Written by: Joanna Hogg

Director of Photography: Ed Rutherford

1st Assistant Camera: Andy Hill

2nd Assistant Camera: Philip Ravendale Martin

Stills Photographer: Nick Wall

Additional Stills: Rupert Lloyd-Parry

Editor: Helle Le Fevre

Assistant Editor: Immanuel Von Bennigsen

Production Designer: Stéphane Collonge

Art Director: Sonya Yu

Costume Designer: Stéphane Collange

Titles Layout: Ella Coleman

DI Colourist: Dan Coles

Sound Recordist: David F. Mitchell

Dolby Sound Stage: Point1Post

Boom Operator: Rebecca Morgan

Sound Trainee: Kirstie Christopher

Re-recording Mixer: Jovan Ajder

Final Dolby Re-recording Mixers: Graham Daniel,  
Adam Daniel

Supervising Sound Editor: Jovan Ajder

Dialogue Editor: Samir Foco

Sound Effects Editor: Jovan Ajder

Sound Post-production: Loudhailer

Camera Equipment: VMI

Lighting Equipment: Panalux

DI Producer: Erika Bruning

Digital Conform: James Cundill, Steve Garrett

DI Consultant: Matt Adams

Digital Intermediate Services:

Technicolor Creative Services London

Cast:

Tom Hiddleston (*Edward*)

Kate Fahy (*Patricia*)

Amy Lloyd (*Rose*)

Lydia Leonard (*Cynthia*)

Christopher Baker (*Christopher, artist*)

Mike Pender (*lobster fisherman*)

Andrew Lawson (*head gardener*)

Leigh Baker, Allannah Sheppard (*waitresses*)

Alan Hewitt (*chef*)

Will Ash, Paul Christopher, Ian Chesterman (*guns*)

Michael Foster, David Hamilton, Jon Taylor  
(*beaters*)

Steve Parkes (*gamekeeper*)

Keely Brooker, Anita Bujansky, Gabriel Bujansky,

Julian McCurdy (*cleaners*)

Buster, Tug (*gun dogs*)

UK 2010©

115 mins

Digital

**SPOILER WARNING** The following notes give away some of the plot.

This may not seem like headline news, exactly: the English upper middle class suffers from emotional repression and may harbour seething resentments beneath a patina of easygoing charm. But this is not the revelation of *Archipelago* so much as the underlying axiom on which Joanna Hogg builds her story about specific people in a specific setting. Like Hogg's debut *Unrelated* (2007), *Archipelago* is essentially a chamber piece – albeit an outdoorsy one – minutely mapping the tensions and emotional evasions among a group of English people on holiday. Again, an outsider is caught in the squabbles of an enclosed family group. The setting – although it's never named – is Tresco, one of the Scilly Isles, and the film is book-ended by the arrival and departure of a helicopter, linking the isle to the mainland. As much as a downbeat comedy of bourgeois mores, *Archipelago* is a sort of claustrophobic horror story, set in a place of no easy escape. This is Hogg's *Shutter Island*, if you like, although the madness is more discreet, in the English style.

An archipelago is a group of islands such as the Scillies, or indeed a family – a set of individuals supposedly forming a unit yet separate from each other and, in this case, woefully unable to communicate. Another connection with Hogg's earlier film is the repeat appearance of Tom Hiddleston, here playing the diametrical opposite of *Unrelated*'s bullish Oakley. His Edward is unassumingly pleasant, compassionate, idealistic – and irredeemably wet. The mother, Patricia (Kate Fahy), never gets round to rebuking her absent husband until the end of the holiday, when she can only scream at him. Edward's sister, Cynthia (Lydia Leonard), can barely express herself except through brittle signs of chagrin; with her monotone terseness (perfectly pitched by Leonard), she's a mistress of emotional displacement, with a curious habit of venting her rage over poultry. She flies off the handle over buckshot in her pheasant, and in a superbly understated scene – which perfectly nails English unease about dining out – she sends back her underdone guinea fowl in a restaurant, showering contempt on her companions for not doing the same (her bird is, of course, cooked quite correctly).

As for Edward, there's something no less neurotic in the way he lets himself be treated. It turns out that Chloe, his girlfriend of 18 months – whom he'll only see briefly before leaving for Africa – has not been allowed to come to Tresco because this is strictly a family holiday. She's not family, Cynthia objects: 'It's [sic] just someone you're attracted to.' It's horrifying that Edward has abjectly tolerated this treatment of himself, and of Chloe. The enigmatic absence in the family is Will, apparently a cold, forbidding father and a negligent husband. Echoing his absence is the gap on the living-room wall, from which the family has taken down a large, oppressive picture of a stormy sea, seen in close-up at the end of the film. The picture's removal is a gesture of denial on the family's part, repressing an image of conflict (even if it is a sound aesthetic choice).

There are two additional presences in the household – for both of which Hogg has cast non-professionals playing versions of themselves, thus breaking and loosening the tight frame of dramatic representation. One is real-life cook Amy

## INTERNAL REFLECTIONS: THE FILMS OF JOANNA HOGG

### Unrelated

Mon 16 Oct 20:35; Sat 25 Nov 18:10

### Exhibition

Thu 19 Oct 18:10; Wed 29 Nov 20:50

### Archipelago

Thu 19 Oct 20:30; Sun 26 Nov 15:00

### The Souvenir

Fri 27 Oct 20:30; Thu 30 Nov 18:10

### The Souvenir: Part II

Sat 28 Oct 20:30; Thu 30 Nov 20:40

### Short Films

Sun 29 Oct 18:10; Tue 28 Nov 20:45

## JOANNA HOGG: INFLUENCES

### Criss Cross

Tue 17 Oct 20:40; Sun 26 Nov 18:40

### Suspicion

Wed 18 Oct 20:45; Sat 21 Oct 18:20

### The Exiles + Bunker Hill 1956

Thu 19 Oct 18:20; Tue 24 Oct 20:40

### Lady in the Dark

Fri 20 Oct 18:10; Sat 11 Nov 12:20

### Margaret

Sat 21 Oct 20:10; Sat 4 Nov 17:30

### The Killers

Sat 28 Oct 12:30; Wed 8 Nov 20:45

### Ticket of No Return

Bildnis einer Trinkerin  
Sun 12 Nov 18:30; Sat 25 Nov 20:30

### Journey to Italy

Viaggio in Italia  
Fri 17 Nov 18:20; Tue 28 Nov 18:15

### Italianamerican + The Neighborhood + extract

from *My Voyage to Italy*

Tue 21 Nov 20:40; Mon 27 Nov 18:20

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Lloyd, whose Rose disturbs the family unit in terms of both emotion and class. Her servant status – although she's possibly upper-middle-class herself – brings out the women's insular snobbery. The other outsider is the artist played by real-life painter Christopher Baker. Christopher functions as the film's resident aesthetic philosopher, his theory of painting loosely serving to articulate Hogg's cinematic method. He preaches the value of chaos – which in fact Hogg's filmic style, like her characters, rather tends to suppress. He believes in abstraction – and Hogg's cinema is more concrete than abstract; but when he describes it as 'a way of distilling and simplifying the important information', that certainly chimes with *Archipelago*.

Indeed, *Archipelago* itself distils and simplifies the formal insights of the already spartan *Unrelated*. Hogg again favours long takes, precise editing, quasi-documentary recording of terse, tentatively casual dialogue patterns. But the visual textures are more distinctive than in *Unrelated*. Hogg and DP Ed Rutherford frame their characters – typically dressed in bland khaki and navy – in an equally downbeat natural palette, the house's aquarium-like grey-green semi-darkness matching the tones of the surrounding country. This is a very distinctive landscape film – with its formal gardens and tropical foliage, Tresco looks almost dreamlike, half wild, half ornamental. But the HD-shot film is equally distinctive in its interiors, echoing the paintings of Danish artist Vilhelm Hammershøi. His muted, claustrophobic rooms provide models for images such as a shot of Edward at Patricia's bedside, head turned three-quarters from the camera, daylight touching his neck – a concise picture of intimate desolation.

Like Hammershøi and Christopher, Hogg adheres to the credo of understatement, withdrawing what other films might deem essential – such as any backstory to explain Cynthia's bitterness. Viewers will differ on whether it's daring or ill-advised of Hogg to visit similar territory twice. Between her two films, you lose something and you gain something. Some of *Unrelated*'s darker currents (notably of sexual menace) and some of the broader humour of social embarrassment are lost here. *Archipelago*'s sombre introspection may disappoint some of the earlier film's fans, but it's brave of Hogg to explore an austere restricted version of similar themes in more nuanced depth; this is, if not more abstract, certainly a rather more cerebral film. In any case, British filmmakers are often wary of repeating themselves, and it's a bold move for Hogg to hold her corner, even at the risk of eventually painting herself into it. 'I guess being tough is holding your course,' muses Christopher by way of avuncular advice to Edward. By that measure, Hogg – in her undemonstrative way – is one of the toughest filmmakers we have.

Jonathan Romney, *Sight and Sound*, March 2011