November 5, 2013 (XXVII:11)  
Pedro Almodóvar, HABLE CON ELLA/TALK TO HER (2002, 112 min)

Academy Award for Best Writing, Original Screenplay  
(Pedro Almodóvar)

Directed by Pedro Almodóvar  
Original Music by Alberto Iglesias  
Cinematography by Javier Aguirresarobe

Javier Cámara...Benigno Martín  
Dario Grandinetti...Marco Zuluaga  
Leonor Watling...Alicia  
Rosario Flores...Lydia González  
Mariola Fuentes...Rosa  
Geraldine Chaplin...Katerina Bilova  
Pina Bausch...Herself  
Malou Airaudo...Herself  
Caetano Veloso...Himself

PEDRO ALMODÓVAR (director) (b. Pedro Almodóvar Caballero,  
September 24, 1949 in Calzada de Calatrava, Ciudad Real,  
Castilla-La Mancha, Spain) has directed and written 33 films:  
2013 I'm So Excited!, 2011 The Skin I Live In, 2009 Broken  
Embraces, 2009 The Cannibalistic Councillor (Short), 2006  
Volver, 2004 Bad Education, 2002 Talk to Her, 1999 All About  
My Mother, 1997 Live Flesh, 1995 The Flower of My Secret,  
1988 Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown, 1987 Law of  
Desire, 1986 Matador, 1985 “Tráiler para amantes de lo  
prohibido” (TV Short), 1984 What Have I Done to Deserve  
This?, 1983 Dark Habits, 1982 Labyrinth of Passion, 1980 Pepi,  
Luci, Bom and Other Girls Like Mom, 1978 Folle... folle...  
fólleme Tim!, 1978 Salomé (Short), 1977 Sexo va, sexo viene  
(Short), 1976 Muerte en la carretera (Short), 1976 Sea caritativo  
(Short), 1976 Tráiler de ‘Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?’  
(Short), 1975 Blanco (Short), 1975 El sueño, o la estrella  
(Short), 1975 Homenaje (Short), 1975 La caída de Sòdoma  
(Short), 1974 Dos putas, o historia de amor que termina en boda  
(Short), and 1974 Film politico (Short). He also produced 13  
films and had small acting parts in 11: 2004 Bad Education, 1989  
“Delirios de amor” (TV Series), 1987 Law of Desire, 1986  
Matador, 1984 What Have I Done to Deserve This?, 1983 Dark  
Habits, 1982 Labyrinth of Passion, 1980 Pepi, Luci, Bom and  

ALBERTO IGLESIAS (Original Music) (b. Alberto Iglesias  
Fernández-Berridi, 1955 in Donostia-San Sebastián, Guipúzcoa,  
Pais Vasco, Spain) has composed music for 52 films, including  
2013 I'm So Excited!, 2011 Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, 2011 The  
Monk, 2011 The Skin I Live In, 2010 Even the Rain, 2009 Broken  
Embraces, 2008 Che: Part One, 2008 Che: Part Two, 2007 The  
Kite Runner, 2006 Volver, 2005 The Constant Gardener, 2004  
Bad Education, 2003 Take My Eyes, 2002 Talk to Her, 2002 The  
Dancer Upstairs, 2001 Sex and Lucia, 1999 All About My  
Mother, 1997 The Chambermaid on the Titanic, 1997 Live Flesh,  
Rain, 1986 Bilbao Blues, 1985 Luces de bohemia, 1984 La  
muerte de Mikel, and 1984 La conquista de Albania.

JAVIER AGUERRERAREBO (Cinematographer) (b. October 10,  
1948 in Eibar, Guipúzcoa, País Vasco, Spain) has been the  
cinematographer for 94 films, including 2013 Blue Jasmine,  
2013 Identity Thief, 2013 Warm Bodies, 2012 The Five-Year


PIÑA BAUSCH...Herself (b. Josephine Bausch, July 27, 1940 in Solingen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany—d. June 30, 2009...
[age 68] in Wuppertal, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany) was a German performer of modern dance, choreographer, dance teacher and ballet director. In 1955 at the age of 15 she entered the Folkwangschule in Essen, then directed by Germany's most influential choreographer Kurt Jooss, one of the founders of German Expressionist dance. After graduation in 1959, Bausch left Germany with a scholarship to continue her studies at the Juilliard School in New York City in 1960. In 1962, Bausch joined Jooss' new Folkwang Ballet Company as a soloist and assisted Jooss on many of the pieces, before choreographing her first piece in 1968, *Fragment*, to music by Béla Bartók. In 1969, she succeeded Jooss as artistic director. She was known for her unique style, blend of movement, sound, and prominent stage sets, and with her elaborate cooperation with performers during the composition of a piece (a style now known as Tanztheater). She was a leading influence in the world of modern dance from the 1970s on. In addition to her career in the world of ballet, Bausch appeared in 2 films—2002 *Talk to Her* and 1983 *And the Ship Sails On*. She choreographed 7 pieces for film and TV: 2011 *Pina* (Documentary), 2010 *Dancing Dreams* (Documentary), 2008 *Orphée et Eurydice de Christoph W. Gluck* (TV Movie), 2002 *Talk to Her*, 2002 “Pina Bausch - A Portrait by Peter Lindbergh based on 'Der Fensterputzer'” (TV Short), 1990 *The Complaint of an Empress*, and 1983 “On Tour with Pina Bausch” (TV Movie documentary). She also wrote and directed 1990 *The Complaint of an Empress.*

**Malou Airaudo...Herself** began dancing at the Marseille Opera in 1956. In 1970 she moved to New York to join the Manuel Alum Dance Company, where Alum created the solo *Woman of Mystic Body* to showcase her dance. Through Paul Sanasardo she met Pina Bausch, who invited her to join the Tanztheater Wuppertal in 1973. Since 1984, Airaudo has taught at the Folkwang Hochschule in Essen, where she also choreographs performances featuring ballet dancers, modern dancers, Hip Hop dancers and a Flatland BMX rider. In addition to dancing in Europe and New York, Airaudo appeared in 1 film—2002 *Talk to Her*—was the rehearsal director for 2011 *Pina* (Documentary), and assistant choreographer for 2008 “Orphée et Eurydice de Christoph W. Gluck” (TV Movie).


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**From an interview w/ Almodóvar, 1995:**

Paul Julian Smith: You’ve told the Spanish press that this [*The Flower of My Secret*, 1995] is your most La Mancha [Almodóvar was born in the village of La Mancha] and most traditional film. But it strikes me that with its references to NATO and Bosnia, to the newspaper El País and Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, this is your most European and most contemporary film.

Pedro Almodóvar: When I say the film’s La Manchan I mean it’s my most realistic film yet. Of course I’m not interested in naturalism: even if I made a documentary it would turn out to be a fictional work on that subject. Between what inspires me and what I actually make, there is always the element of distance, of representation. Even when you decide where to place the camera, you’re manipulating reality. So this is my most realist film, but with the proviso that my realism is very personal and that there is always a touch of artifice there. It’s also my most contemporary film, with references to political demonstrations and to the tension that people now feel on the street. It’s based on the place where I was born: La Mancha; and the place where I now live: Madrid at this particular historical moment.

PJS: You’ve said that it’s your most personal film.
PA: Normally I’m very embarrassed to speak about my roots and my mother, and of myself in the first person. This time the film turned out like that in spite of myself. However, all of my films are absolutely personal; it’s just that normally the things that affect me personally are hidden behind the characters. For example, people often say to me: ‘Your films are full of mothers, it’s as if you didn’t have a father.’ But it’s not true. In *High Heels*, for example, my father is the model for elements of the mother played by Marisa Paredes: my father had cancer and returned to die in the room in which he had been born, just like the mother in the film. I haven’t spoken about this before.

PA: All my films are literary in the sense that there is a lot of dialogue. But Rohmer’s cinema is literary and colloquial at the same time. For me a literary cinema is one in which language is centre stage and is the motive force for the action. This film talks about literature as a means of self-understanding: Leo’s writing becomes darker, just as her life does.

PJS: When you start to write a film you begin with the dialogue.

PA: That’s right: dialogue is action for me. I’ve often said and it seems like a joke but it’s not: in Europe we make films about people because it’s cheaper to put two people in a living room talking than to make a film full of special effects. For me two girls and some good dialogue are as effective as all the FX in *Terminator*.

PJS: Godard said that all you need for a film is a girl and a gun. But you’d rather have two girls?

PA: Maybe they’re carrying a gun in their handbag, and you can’t see it. Or maybe they use their tongues as guns.

PJS: Can we talk about your first experience of film? You’ve compared it to the opening of Erice’s *The Spirit of the Beehive*, when the traveling cinema comes to the village.

PA: My relationship with cinema started as a child in the village when I’d go with a tin can full of glowing pieces of cheap charcoal: it was right in the middle of the post-War period and to keep warm in the cold you took a tin can with you. I seem to remember that in *The Spirit of the Beehive*, the characters went to just this kind of improvised cinema. My conception of cinema is still that it’s something that gives me warmth, that comforts me, like that tin can.

PJS: If this is an image of the past of Spanish cinema, what of its future? You’ve now made three successful features in co-production with the French company Ciby 2000. Is this a model for European film-making?

PA: My relation with Ciby is absolutely free. It’s not just that they don’t bother me when I’m shooting; they don’t even see the film until it’s subtitled in French. It’s the ideal model because it means that co-production doesn’t become hybrid and deracinated. With us the money doesn’t affect the idiosyncrasy of the project and the decisions are artistic, not financial. The film is still Spanish, although the funding is French. Moreover, my films are cheap and Ciby knows they sell all over the world. So it’s good business for them. That’s why I have so much freedom. If I got involved with a film like *Little Buddha* that cost forty millions dollars I’d have more problems.

PJS: But your films are expensive by Spanish standards.

PA: A normal Spanish film costs less than mine, that’s true. I spend a lot of money on set design. I won’t settle for things you can buy in shops. I have things brought in from all over. This stylization is expensive. I also rehearse the actors a lot, which is costly. These things are essential for my films.

PJS: What about postproduction? You’ve made all eleven features with editor José Salcedo.

PA: I’m very fast with editing. I cut every day after shooting and I continue refining the rough-cut as I go. It makes things cheaper, because after we finish shooting we have a cut of the whole film and ten days later we always have the final version. I can’t shoot and wait until the end to edit. The film is alive and if you cut as you shoot you know what rhythm it’s taking on and how the characters are really turning out. You can also sort out problems as you see them coming up in the editing process.

PJS: Critics in the UK and US have often asked you to take up a clearer political position in your films.

PA: My political position is perfectly clear. I’ve never been a member of a political party because I need to keep my independence. But I’m very much on the left. In films it’s not necessary for characters to talk about politics. The politics is implicit in the film.

PJS: To finish: this may strike you as crazy, but there seems to be a connection between two characters called Angel: the one who comes to the aid of Leo in *The Flower of My Secret* and the Angel (played by Antonio Banderas) who plays a similar role in *Matador*. They are both creatures without sex.
This is something that hadn’t occurred to me. But it’s true that this Angel undergoes a process of feminization throughout the film. By the ends he and Leo have become two female writers toasting each other by the fireside, like Candice Bergen and Jacqueline Bisset in *Rich and Famous*. So the man ends up as the woman’s best girlfriend. It’s a very positive process.

**Sight and Sound (February 1996)**

Foreigners cannot expect Almodóvar to subscribe to forms of resistance which evolved in response to the triumph of the British and North American Right in the eighties; and if they are serious about respecting cultural difference they must pay more attention to a nation whose understanding of such issues as gender, nationality, and homosexuality may well be more sophisticated than their own. In his celebration of fluidity and performance, in his hostility to fixed positions of all kinds, Almodóvar anticipates that critique of identity and essence that was later to become familiar in academic feminist, minority, and queer theory.

The discontinuities of Almodóvar’s technique are not to be dismissed as the result of chance or incompetence; rather they form part of a critique of representation (of the relationship between film as presence and film as language) which is also manifest in a love of the reflexive ironies reminiscent of Sirk (a frequent point of reference), or even Godard.

The offices of El Deseo, S.A. are situated in an undistinguished residential street outside central Madrid.... Their anonymity, even invisibility (there is no identifying sign on the street or in the building itself) seem somewhat uncharacteristic when contrasted with the all-pervasiveness of the Almodóvar ‘trademark’ and the flagrant visibility of the director and his films. Few visitors could fail to be impressed by the loyalty and industry of Almodóvar’s ‘family’ of co-workers (most particularly his producer-brother Augustin) and by their determination to protect him from unsympathetic critics (known as ‘detractors’) who have dogged him since the beginning. It would be difficult to underestimate the role of such a collaborative enterprise in the success of films identified, perhaps improperly, by the single name ‘Almodóvar’. One specific advantage of El Deseo is Almodóvar’s ability to shoot each film in sequence, thus following the natural development of character and narrative, an expensive option which would be denied him by other production companies.

El Deseo has produced three of the top five grossing Spanish films of all time; and it has been the most profitable production company in Spain (often by a considerable margin) in the last four years for which figures are available. And this achievement has to be seen in the context of a Spanish cinema in perpetual crisis, with the eighties marking a steep decline in the industry, in all three sectors of production (the falling numbers of domestic features), distribution, (the increasing stranglehold of US-controlled multinationals), and exhibition (the collapse in the number of functioning theatres).

One secret of Almodóvar’s success has been determination from the very beginning to devote as much time to promotion as to production.

I shall argue that in his love of fantasy and cross-gender identification, Almodóvar coincides with recent psychoanalytically inspired feminist film theorists. Both he and they pose a challenge to an earlier view which read narrative cinema primarily as the sadistic or voyeuristic gaze which the male exercises over a passive female object. If desire is unlimited (if spectator positioning is mobile and labile), then opportunities for visual pleasure proliferate.

To juxtapose Almodóvar with US gender studies is perhaps incongruous; for his films have often been criticized by foreign feminists, or men claiming to speak on their behalf. My own position is that images can never be inherently transgressive or hegemonic, and must always be placed in historical debates around cinema, censorship, and sexuality.

One favorite technique of Almodóvar is cross-cutting….Cross-cutting can lead…to confusion, to discontinuity. But it also promises the spectator access to simultaneous action in discrete locales and significant juxtapositions in montage. [It is] a key to a privileged understanding of a complex and contradictory cinematic phenomenon. By naming his production company El Deseo, S.A. Almodóvar hints with typically sly irony at the intersection of the psychic and the commercial. His practice of cinema will also prove to be a model of libidinal economy, unprecedented in film history.

**Epigraph**

“In North American films friendship is generally between men, but I enjoy the complicity which exists between women. . . . Women have been able to give themselves up unashamedly to friendship for cultural reasons, because they have been condemned to live out their private life [intimiadad] in secret and that private life has only been revealed to female friends. . . . Men deserve to be deceived by women. I love the idea of a girl deceiving her husband with a girlfriend. It’s an image which I find attractive and which forms part of the secret autonomy of women. . . .Now I’m aware that the fact that I like the private life of women may still be a reflection of machismo.
But I hope not, because I’m interested in women and their world, not just when they go to gossip in the bathroom, but at all times. I believe I’m one of the least machista men in the world, one of the most authentically feminist.” [interview given in 1987]

Revisions to the censors’ code as late as 1975 (shortly before the death of Franco) included amongst a list of forbidden topics: suicide; the use of violence as a means of solving social or human problems; prostitution, sexual perversions, adultery and illicit sexual relations; abortion and anything tending to undermine the institution of marriage and the family; drug abuse and alcoholism. . . .

It may be more than a coincidence, then, that Almodóvar’s first film should consist of a string of vignettes devoted almost exclusively to topics banned from cinema screens only a few years earlier.

As a consummate female impersonator, Almodóvar has clearly placed himself on that side of the cinematic gender division which is coded as feminine. Thus he posed cheekily for Spain’s best-selling daily El País peeking out from behind a pair of curtains, an oversize polka-dotted bow in his bushy hair. The same paper carried pictures of the director in costume for all the principal roles of the film, male and female.

At a deeper level, the threat of Almodóvar’s professions of performance is in their hints of subjective merger and fluidity. Just as his films are full of characters unable to separate from their parents or lovers, so Almodóvar’s over-identification with his creations, his compulsion to repeat and act out their dilemmas both on and off the set, puts fixed individual boundaries into crisis and throws the rigid divisions or gender binaries into confusion.

from a commentary discussion between Pedro Almodóvar and Geraldine Chaplin about Hable con ella / Talk to Her

Almodóvar:
The film is about words.

To speak naturally in the film means to love that person. It’s one of the codes in this movie. Whoever speaks, loves.
separateness. Inevitably connected by the forces of accident and change that surround us, and inevitably separated by the very fact of difference, we remain both intimate and strange to each other. And that, I think Almodóvar proposes, is how it should be.

**Anette Guse; “Talk to Her! Look at her! Pina Bausch in Pedro Almodóvar’s Hable con ella.”**

When Pina Bausch’s work appeared in two brief excerpts in Pedro Almodóvar’s film *Hable con ella* (‘Talk to Her’, 2002), it was very likely seen by a much wider, not specifically dance-oriented audience than previously. *Café Müller*, one of her earlier pieces (1978), and *Masurca Fogo* (‘Mazurka of Fire’; 1986) were used by Almodóvar to frame his narrative about two women in a coma, one a dancer, the other a bullfighter, and their relationship to two very different men who form a special friendship as a result of their care of these women. According to Almodóvar, Bausch’s ballet *Café Müller* served as a perfect way of communicating the limbo in which the story’s protagonists lived—the limbo between life and death (*Talk to Her*. Press Book 13). Conversely, the final scenes from *Masurca Fogo* convey the hope that follows loss. On an aesthetic level, the dance segments reflect the musical rhythm and language of the film, and at the same time become part of the film’s language (Strauss 222–23).

Both Bausch and Almodóvar are linked to artistic transgression in regard to genres and subjects, and both reflect on performance as such in their work. In addition, both invoke themes such as solitude, loss, gender identity, the “impossibility” of relationships between man and woman, and the existential need for communication and love. Taking Almodóvar’s comment as a point of departure, this article’s intention is twofold: it investigates stylistic affinities between his work and Bausch’s dance theatre, and it sheds light on the strategies at work in her use of visual language. It stresses the visual element to argue that both Bausch and Almodóvar point to perception and questions about perception as the crucial factor in their critique of cultural norms and conventions with regard to gender and gender relationships. Furthermore, the intersection of gender issues and universal issues about the human condition not only offers a social commentary on modern society but also probes facilely conceived victim-perpetrator constellations and thus constitutes the philosophical common ground between the two artists. This collaboration between them in *Hable con ella* has received little scholarly attention. Drawing on this film makes it possible to go beyond a discussion of general characteristics of Bausch’s theatrical language, and it affords readers unfamiliar with her work an insight into dance performance through the medium of film—a medium that conveys a far better impression of performance than photographs alone.

Bausch’s work as choreographer and director of the Tanztheater Wuppertal has transformed contemporary modern dance in the German-speaking world and beyond. She has challenged the boundaries between dance and theatre, as her dancers are also simultaneously actors, singers, and comedians, and, by using different media at her disposal, she has transformed dance craft into a unique form of visually strong performance art. She is internationally acclaimed by critics and dance practitioners, and she enjoys immense popularity with dance aficionados. She has become one of Germany’s most renowned modern cultural icons. Now in the third decade of its existence, the Tanztheater Wuppertal boasts a repertoire of over thirty works. Each year the company produces a new work, frequently commissioned by public institutions for special occasions, and it continues to tour the world. With her creative selection of music, often drawing on world music, her signature choreography, and her inventive staging, Bausch has an undiminished power to impress, entertain, puzzle, provoke, and annoy. The subjects that she represents on stage—fear, loneliness, frustration, age, relationship between men and women, the exploitation of humans—all resonate with her audience….

In *Hable con ella* (2002) he included the aforementioned two excerpts from her dance pieces. In addition, the central female character is a young ballet student who has decorated her room with pictures of her idol, Pina Bausch.

Almodóvar is known for his treatment of controversial subjects such as homosexuality, transsexuality, sadomasochism, drugs, rape, and incest, particularly in his early, mostly black-and-white films. Critics have also commented on his preference for melodrama, which, as he explains, allows him to “talk naturally about strong sentiments without a sense of the ridiculous” (Willoquet-Maricondi viii). Apart from these subversive themes and his critical insights into the social construction of norms around gender and sexuality, his penchant for women and their stories is also of interest in this context: When it comes time to write and direct, women attract me much more. I’ve always liked feminine sensitivity and when I create a character it’s much easier for me to do a feminine one, and I manage to shape it in a more solid and interesting way. On the other hand, women have more facets, they seem more like protagonist types. […] We, men, are cut from the same cloth, while women hold a greater mystery inside, they have more nuances and a sensitivity that is more authentic. (Willoquet-Maricondi x)

The film begins where *Todo sobre mi madre* ended: the same theatre curtain of salmon-coloured roses and heavy gold fringing that had revealed a darkened stage in the earlier film now opens to reveal the Bausch spectacle *Café Müller*. In fact, Almodóvar credits Bausch, who appears in the *Café Müller* excerpt, together with Malou Airaudo, an original dancer from the Tanztheater...
Wuppertal, as providing both a starting point and a conclusion to Hable con ella through her works Café Müller and Masurca Fogo:

When I finished writing “Talk to Her” and looked at Pina’s face again, with her eyes closed, and at how she was dressed in a flimsy slip, her arms and hands outstretched, surrounded by obstacles (wooden tables and chairs), I had no doubt that it was the image which best represented the limbo in which my story’s protagonists lived. Two women in a coma who, despite their apparent passivity, provoke the same solace, the same tension, passion, jealousy, desire and disillusion in men as if they were upright, eyes wide open and talking a mile a minute. (Talk to Her. Press Book 13)

The performances of these two pieces are an integral part of the plot development, as they enable the encounter of the protagonists. Moreover, the dance segments frame the film and thus function as a poetic symbol for the themes of love, loss, communication, and friendship. Finally, they represent performativity and the act of watching, and both are clearly an important part of life and become prominent themes in their own right.

The two main male characters of the film, Benigno and Marco, sit next to each other in the auditorium during a performance of Café Müller – the first chance encounter that leads to an unusual friendship between the two men. Two sleep-walking women wander Pina Bausch in Pedro Almodóvar’s Hable con ella around in a reeling motion running into chairs and tables and against walls, while a man attempts to clear the way for them by pushing away the chairs and table. The atmosphere is one of chaotic loss. In the play there is no explanation for the state in which the women appear on stage – it is described only through portrayal. The accompanying music of this sequence underlines the sense of disorientation and sadness. It is the elegiac “O Let Me Weep, For Ever Weep” from Henry Purcell’s Fairy Queen (1698 and 1702), its words lamenting lost love. During the dance sequence, the camera cuts twice very briefly to the auditorium of the theatre and shows two male spectators in medium closeup. The second time, we realize that one of them (Marco) is weeping, moved to tears by emotion. After this dance sequence lasting about three minutes, the camera cuts to a shot in a hospital room, as is soon apparent from the blue nurse uniform the younger man of the two (Benigno) is wearing. He tells Alicia, a patient not visible in the frame, that the performance he witnessed was so beautiful that this man cried. In the opening scene in the hospital that introduces Benigno’s relationship to Alicia, he presents to her an autographed photo by Bausch that the latter has signed with the words “I hope you overcome all your obstacles and start dancing!” This scene containing this foreboding message can be considered part of the prologue of the dance sequence….

The excerpt from Masurca Fogo that we see near the end of Hable con ella opens with a midrange shot of the stage: we see a woman in a long flower dress, lying and being passed on the supporting hands of men who lie next to each other shoulder to shoulder with outstretched arms functioning like a human conveyer belt or, as the dance mistress excitingly explains to Alicia during the intermission, “like a wave” carrying the female dancer. All the while the woman breathes into a seventies style microphone, and her amplified sighs are a strange, disparate sound accompanied by k. d. lang’s song “Hain’t that funny,” which, with its line “It slowly dawned on me that my baby is gone/ My baby’s gone,” echoes the bereaved, lost-love mood of the Purcell passage. After being lifted to an extreme elevated and open position with arms stretched out to the side, she lets herself fall down in the waiting net of arms of the male dancers. The particular moment of the free falling forward of the Masurca Fogo woman’s body is breathtakingly beautiful, for it displays complete openness and trust and the moment of catching the body represents a moment of perfect interplay between the woman and the men. The camera zooms in on the female dancer, tracking her movement and revealing her safe landing only at that very moment. Again, the theme of the song is that of loss, of alienation and sudden disillusionment, and the song enhances the emotion of mourning.

The very last dance sequence shows an organized and oddly stylized pair dance, in which only a small sway of the hip and the lush stage setting of a bucolic idyll hints at its erotic nature. Yet it is unmistakably a sexually charged atmosphere.

The couples dance in a very orderly manner in harmony to the sounds of an instrumentally upbeat Cabo Verde Mazurka (“Raquel,” by Bau) – until finally one couple breaks away from the formation. Choosing this idyllic scene for the end of the film corresponds with the miraculous recovery of Alicia, the young dancer, and the allusion to the blossoming romance between her and Marco. Almodóvar elaborates in an interview the chosen scene from Masurca Fogo: “[It] begins with the sadness of the absent Benigno (the sighs) and unites the surviving couple (Marco and Alicia) through a shared bucolic emotion: [...] If I had asked for it specifically I couldn’t have got anything better. Pina Bausch had unknowingly created the best doors through which to enter and leave Talk to Her” (Talk to Her. Press Book 13)…

What enabled the organic melting of Bausch’s dance theatre into Almodóvar’s film may be precisely the fact that both artists embrace the image, the visual and sensual, in ways that speak to faculties beyond the intellect, yet are supported by strategies that enhance critical awareness. These strategies strive to show and transgress limitations, norms, and convention and, in consequence, also venture into the surreal, the absurd, the childlike, or the power of nature. What is demonstrated, finally, is an understanding of performance and of witnessing performance that appears as a natural response to, or refuge from, reality – and is therefore an integral part of life itself.
ONLY THREE MORE IN THE FALL 2013 BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS XXVII:
November 12 Charlie Kaufman Synecdoche, New York 2008
November 19 Wim Wenders Pina 2011
November 26 Baz Luhrmann The Great Gatsby 2013

The online PDF files of these handouts have color images

COMING UP IN THE SPRING 2014 BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS XXVIII:
January 28 Josef von Sternberg, Underworld, 1927, 81 minutes
February 4 Jean Cocteau, Orpheus, 1950, 95min
February 11 Kenji Mizoguchi, The Life of Oharu, 1952, 136 min
February 18 Satyajit Ray, Charulata/The Lonely Wife, 1964, 119 minutes
February 25 Metin Erksan, Dry Summer, 1964, 90 min
March 4 Monte Hellman, Two-Lane Blacktop, 1971, 103 min
March 11 John Cassavetes, Killing of a Chinese Bookie, 1976, 135 min
Spring break March 17-22
March 25 Agnes Varda, Vagabond, 1985, 105 min
April 1 Gabriell Axel, Babette’s Feast, 1987, 104min
April 8 Louis Malle, Vanya on 42nd Street, 1994, 119 min
April 15 Wes Anderson, The Royal Tenenbaums, 2001, 110 min
April 22 Tommy Lee Jones, The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada, 2005, 120 min
April 29 José Padilha, Elite Squad, 2007, 115 min
May 6 John Huston, The Dead, 1987 83 min

CONTACTS:
...email Diane Christian: engdc@buffalo.edu
...email Bruce Jackson bjackson@buffalo.edu
...for the series schedule, annotations, links and updates: http://buffalofilmseminars.com
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....for cast and crew info on any film: http://imdb.com/

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