the woman in the V\textsuperscript{th}

ETHAN HAWKE
KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS

A FILM BY
PAWEL PAWLIKOWSKI

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France/Poland/UK - 2011 - 83 min. - Color - 35 mm - 1 : 1.85 - Dolby SRD
SYNOPSIS
American writer Tom Ricks comes to Paris desperate to put his life together again and win back the love of his estranged wife and daughter. When things don’t go according to plan, he ends up in a shady hotel in the suburbs, having to work as a night guard to make ends meet. Then Margit, a beautiful, mysterious stranger walks into his life and things start looking up. Their passionate and intense relationship triggers a string of inexplicable events… as if an obscure power was taking control of his life.
You're flying with the clouds of gaze, a gazette.

I'm not sure whether “flying” is the right way to describe it. Horror or suspense films are shot in such a way that the viewer quickly realizes what the game is. THE WOMAN IN THE FIFTH doesn't give you these any genre handles, doesn't signal anything clearly, things become more or less realistic but imperceptibly the boundaries of reality and dream start to dissolve. The language of the film is also very different. It's less explicit, more allusive, the plotting is heavier, things ensnared with images and reality is shifty and ambiguous. The film starts out as more or less realistic but imperceptibly the boundaries of reality and dream start to dissolve.

So in the end, the film more your original screenplay than a literary adaptation? It is original. Although I wouldn't say actually "entirely" mine. screenplaying is a collective and rather representational way of working. I'm not its designer, but I'm somewhere in the middle, on the various projects. It's an merger, an overall idea, two or three characters with dramatic possibilities, ones who are paradoxical or conflicted. And then I write, I rewrite. I look for the actors, I find the locations, I take a landscape, I experiment with the work… then I write again with these places in mind.

Let's say the making of a film is like putting together the parts of a car in a factory, shuffling around and adding some new things and putting it together in a different way. So we don't have this relatively innocent hero who solves a world, facing one problem after another, but a hero who remains "the problem".

What is your approach to adaptation, in general?

Pretty literal. In MY SUMMER OF LOVE, I also started from a novel, but the film mutated into something quite different. For me books are simply a starting point, like newspaper cuttings, or dreams, or situations from your past life. They give you the ideas, the characters, the situations, the dialogue. But you have to use your imagination. The book has a certain logic and its own language. Staying close to the novel is usually bad news for a film… In THE WOMAN IN THE FIFTH I went down a slightly looser, things unfold with images and the reality is slippery and ambiguous. The film starts out as more or less realistic but imperceptibly the boundaries of reality and dream start to dissolve.

As for the way Pawlikowski talks about adaptation, it's interesting to me. There’s a lot of talk about the ‘adapting’ process, but in reality it’s often just an extension of the creative process. Pawlikowski talks about starting with a novel, then looking for a story, finding a way to tell it, and then adapting it for the screen. This process is iterative and often involves a lot of experimentation and risk-taking. The final result is often a work that is very different from the original source material.

Pawlikowski’s approach to adaptation is one that values intuition and creativity over strict adherence to the original text. He believes that the creative process is not linear, but rather a series of iterations and experiments. This approach allows for a greater sense of freedom and experimentation, which can lead to a unique and powerful final product. In Pawlikowski’s case, this approach is exemplified in his film THE WOMAN IN THE FIFTH, which takes a novel and transforms it into a visually striking and thematically rich film. This film is a testament to the power of adaptation and the importance of creative vision in the filmmaking process.
next moment you’re lost and all at sea. You suspect people may be harbouring ill feelings, want to rip you off or plot against you. And you always bring your personal “baggage” with you.
The Paris in our film is all about Tom’s state of mind. That colours everything we see.

Did you try during the shoot to make him more sympathetic or likeable? Or to play with the idea that he would hide his hand, or even that he’s unaware of his actions?

Absolutely. That was key. The audience had to feel engagement and sympathy with the hero, while subtly realising that we can’t trust him, that there is something strange, possibly sinister about him. The heroine is common in novels, between the lines we discover that the narrator is not telling the truth or that he is deluded. Since cinema is less “interior” than literature — everything is shown — this procedure is a bit of a challenge. I’ve never seen this kind of thing done in a film before.

The difficult thing was how to do this incrementally, how to avoid having a “key moment” when the audience discovers that the hero is not who they thought he was. It was a bit of a tightrope act. An audience is made up of individuals, who all very different, imagine the world differently, come with a different baggage. I like the idea of film as a kind of distorting mirror in which everyone discovers things — and themselves — in their own way and in their own time. It’s fascinating at which point will the person stop identifying with the hero and say to themselves: “Hang on, there’s something not quite right about this guy!”

What’s more, my ambition was to have it both ways, to make the audience start wondering about the hero, but at the same time to make them stay engaged with him right to the end. And hopefully to suffer when he goes under. Ethan is perfect for what I had in mind there. He exudes openness, warmth, generosity and despite his 40 years, he hasn’t lost his adolescent candour. You trust him, you go with him. What’s more, he’s got a sharp mind and a way with words. It’s difficult to play a writer if you don’t really have an intellect. Ethan actually is a writer. He’s on his third novel now.

AGAINST THE GRAIN

Ethan involved was crucial. Warmth, intellect, intensity, a certain romantic idealism — you can never play these qualities convincingly, if you don’t have them. (laughs)

We now move over to a computer screen. The delighted face of Ethan Hawke appears. He cannot yet see Pawel. Their complicity clearly didn’t end with the shoot: Hawke enthusiastically tells Pawlikowski about the dream he had the night before: they were both working on a big-budget epic in Russia. “It’s a deal!” Pawel replies. “Just have to find the right oligarch!”

So how did you both meet?

PAWEL: …Do you remember, Ethan?

ETHAN: You came to London, I was on stage at the Old Vic. I didn’t even know who you were! My on-stage partner was Rebecca Hall. I told her your name and her eyes widened: “He’s the hottest director right now!” I said to myself: “Shit! I’d better watch his films!”

We met in another theatre, the Royal Court. I was appearing in two plays, one by Chekhov and Shakespeare’s “A Winter’s Tale”. Pawel didn’t like the Chekhov performance, so he came to see me after the Shakespeare. By now I’d seen most of his films and I wanted to work with him. He resisted in New York and with each meeting, we took it forward. I really played a part in creating it, and it ended up becoming one of my favourite roles.

What was your first impression of your character?

ETHAN: To be completely honest, neither Pawel nor I had any preconceived ideas about Tom. It was something about the mood of the piece that appealed to me. At several points I wondered about Tom’s true personality — all gradually fell into place. Pawel and I had some long conversations about the script and the film ahead of the shoot. We exchanged ideas, we discussed who he is. But in the beginning, I wasn’t sure about anything.
PAWEL: You asked me at our first meeting why I wanted to make this film. And I answered, because the hero is wonderfully messed up, it's the story of a breakdown. Could be beautiful. A tragic swansong. That's not in the novel, but it could really work. That's when Ethan perked up. He could relate to that. A film about depression, schizophrenia and suicide! Irresistible.

ETHAN: And for me, the film deals with the torment surrounding one's desire to be the father you always dreamt of being. That's something I'm interested in. Everyone has their own idea of what it means to be an ideal parent. But you also have to juggle with the constraints of everyday life. That's what I'm interested in at this moment of writing.

PAWEL, do you relate to this more intimate aspect of the story?

PAWEL: Totally. This conflict between love, work, ego... Wanting incompatible things, not being able to choose or cooperate, being torn apart... we can all relate to that.

ETHAN: Our mutual trust gave us a great deal of freedom. Pawel works on instinct; if he doesn't like something, he doesn't like it, period. And he says so. When he watched the rushes of the first day's filming, he sent me an email. I knew that after all our research around the character, he felt we'd arrived at something spot-on. Pawel doesn't lie. If it wasn't working, he'd have said so. We'd have been in quite a mess! But in the event, I was very confident. The character became richer every day after that.

Did you feel like you were moving through a labyrinth?

ETHAN: I really like that word, “labyrinth”... That fits perfectly. I hadn't thought of it. This character is caught in a maze; he takes one path, finds it's a dead end, then looks for the way out without being sure which way he came in. This film will speak to anyone who, at some point in their life, has felt themselves in that situation.

Were you aware of trying to keep the audience on your side? There's always a lingering doubt, a mystery about what you say and what you do.

ETHAN: In cinema, the actor is what is beautiful, but it's also about what the film, the editing, and the image does with him. True, he remains likable. If you hold too many shady areas, you discredit him. That's part of the construction of the character and of this film. But everyone, I am serving Pawel's vision of things. He was the one who shaped these characters. The madness comes through from time to time, when it's the right moment. But not too often. The love too, at the right moment. Add the humor. We shift from one register to another. In cinema, the actor doesn't construct his character on his own. You have to put your faith in others to create it with you. You offer your palette, that's all.

But playing this kind of character is an internal experience. The actor and the directing become one. In cinema, the camera often captures the actor just as he performs. In this film, everything seen seems from Tom's point of view. His point of view and the camera's merge into one. I realized the kind of film Pawel wanted to make and that I had to enter into it, so that our approaches became one and the same.

Had you ever worked like that before?

ETHAN: Never! But we made a great team and I felt like I was discovering the film at the same time as Pawel. There's something in this story, and even in the novel, which is unsaid. And which spoke through. The film has backbones... that's the character of Margit. Her personality is always very clear. It's “sex, death, ghost, life, mother.” That makes her very interesting for the others. You could build things around that.

PAWEL: Yes, she is a presence throughout. A sort of magnet. Her character may be quite enigmatic, but her function in the story is pretty clear.
AGAINST THE GRAIN

INTERVIEW BY HARROLD MANNING

ETHAN: For me, certain actors embody the very essence of cinema. Kristin Scott Thomas has that quality. She has an incredible presence, she’s a fantastic actress. She has that strange sensuality, that natural elegance. It’s an experience to act with someone like that. With her, everything seems easy. With others, you have to work really hard to get there. They need exceptional lighting, an exceptional text. Her character is above all symbolic: a lot of actors aren’t up to that.

PAWEL: Yes. Margot is a mystery wrapped up in an enigma, without a clear backstory — even her nationality is uncertain. For an actor, that’s complicated, but Kristin was great, fearless. I approached her with some trepidation at first. I’d heard that she was very demanding of her directors, but I found her fantastic to work with, very courageous and open, and at the same time very precise. She gave me everything I needed and more. She has great elegance in her working relationships.

I like the scene when she talks about her roots. It’s already a bit off-key and bizarre, but Kristin does that with a naturalness that makes you totally believe in it!

PAWEL: I didn’t want to give too much information. It’s also a question of rhythm. I like the idea that each scene has to have a musical rhythm. It’s not simply a matter of the meaning of the words. It’s about length, you have to find a certain swing. That’s part of cinema for me, a sense of rhythm. Joanna Kulig, the Polish actress who plays Ania, has a lot of that too.

ETHAN: Yes, she understood exactly what you wanted when you talked to her about music. You asked her to act at a certain moment like a mazurka! Pawel knows how to find a rhythm, a little filmic melody, without moving his camera. I watched his crew at work, especially Ryszard Lenczewski, his director of photography: they were like an orchestra. Like an old-school rock band, where the words alone aren’t the most important thing. There’s the bass, the drums, lots of things going on. Right on the beat, as you said.

PAWEL: Ryszard and I have a very strong understanding, we’re pretty much in tune, almost symbiotic at times. Ryszard is an old fox who knows all the tricks and shortcuts, but he’s never lost his childhood excitement, a sense of adventure, a sense of wonder. He’s good together. He’s like me, a bit lazy. He doesn’t do too many takes; he doesn’t get out of bed unless he’s really excited by a project. I work with him in the same way I work with a good actor. Each scene is a little dance, a give and take.

ETHAN: Yes. And that gives the film a presence, a visual power. Every scene is the tip of an iceberg.

PAWEL: What I wanted was to show a bit of both naturalist drama and genre and come up with something original… I wanted to open up a certain space and draw in the audience; hypnotise them in a way, so they slowly forget their expectations, the usual questions, and let themselves go on this mysterious journey… and hopefully recognise something of themselves in the process.
PAWEL PAWLIKOWSKI

Born in 1957 in Warsaw, Pawel Pawlikowski left Poland at 14, moved to London, Germany, Italy and finally settled in Great Britain. After studying literature and philosophy, he started his career directing documentaries, which were crowned by many prestigious awards. His transition to fiction came with medium-length film "Twockers" in 1998.

His debut theatrical feature film, LAST RESORT, earned international critical acclaim and remarkable receptions at numerous festivals. It was awarded a BAFTA for Most Promising Newcomer. His next film, MY SUMMER OF LOVE, won a BAFTA for Outstanding British Film of the Year, amongst a string of prestigious prizes. Between 2004 and 2007, Pawel Pawlikowski was a Creative Arts Fellow at Oxford Brookes University. He is fluent in six languages: his native Polish, as well as French, English, German, Italian and Russian.

THE WOMAN IN THE FIFTH is his third feature film. Its worldwide premiere will be presented in Toronto Film Festival 2011.

ETHAN HAWKES

Screenwriter, film director, theater director, and novelist. He has starred in over 30 films, including DEAD POETS SOCIETY, BEFORE SUNRISE, BEFORE SUNSET, REALITY BITES, GATTACA, GREAT EXPECTATIONS, HAMLET, TRAINING DAY, BEFORE THE DEVIL KNOWS YOUR NAME and THE WOMAN IN THE FIFTH. He has been nominated for an Academy Award as both an actor (TRAINING DAY) and a screenwriter (BEFORE SUNSET).

On stage he has performed in numerous off Broadway productions earning him an Obie Award for Best Actor, a Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk and Drama League nominations over the years. On Broadway, he starred in Lincoln Center's The Coast of Utopia for which he was nominated for a Tony Award. He also starred in Jack O'Brien's production of Shakespeare's Henry V, which was the Tony for best revival. Recently he has directed two plays for The New Group - Jonathan Marc Sherman's Things We Want and Sam Shepard's A Lie of the Mind earning him a Drama Desk for Outstanding Direction in a play as well as recognition in the New York Times and The New Yorker for top ten leading theater productions in 2010. He has directed two films - CHELSEA WALLS, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival and THE HOTTEST STATE, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival. He has written two novels, The Hottest State and Ash Wednesday.

Filmography

Feature Films

2000 - LAST RESORT
2004 - MY SUMMER OF LOVE
2011 - THE WOMAN IN THE FIFTH

Selected Documentaries

1989 - Vaclav Havel
1991 - From Moscow to Pietushki
1992 - Serbian Epics
1994 - Tripping with Zhirinovsky
1998 - Charlie Chaplin and the Cossack Gold

Ethnicity: British

Filmmography

1995 - EXPENDERS by Jim Jarmusch
1999 - DEAD POETS SOCIETY by Peter Weir
2000 - SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS by Scott Hicks
2001 - TAPE by Richard Linklater
2002 - TAKING LIVES by D.J. Caruso
2003 - BILLY DEAD by Keith Gordon
2005 - DAYBREAKERS by Michael and Peter Spierig
2006 - LORD OF WAR by Andrew Niccol
2007 - BROOKLYN'S FINEST by Antoine Fuqua
2009 - LITTLE NEW YORK by James DeMonaco
2010 - NEW YORK I LOVE YOU

1985 - EXPLORERS by Joe Dante
1989 - DEAD POETS SOCIETY by Peter Weir
1990 - DAD by Gary David Goldberg
1991 - MYSTERY DATE by Jonathan Wacks
1992 - WHITE FANG by Frank Marshall
1993 - RICH IN LOVE by Bruce Beresford
1994 - FLOUNDERING by Peter McCarthy
1994 - TELL ME by Julie Delpy
2007 - BEFORE THE DEVIL KNOWS YOU'RE DEAD by Sydney Lumet
2008 - WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU by Brian Goodman
Award-winning actress Kristin Scott Thomas has become internationally renowned for her talent, elegance, and commitment to her craft. Never shying away from challenging roles and determined not to repeat herself, Scott Thomas’s body of work is an extraordinary collection of acclaimed film, television and theatre performances.

Scott Thomas received a Cesar Award nomination for her performance in Gilles Paquet Brenner’s SARAH’S KEY. She is also recently seen in Alain Corneau’s CRIME D’AMOUR. Upcoming, she will appear in Declan Donnellan and Nick Ormerod’s BEL AMI; Lasse Halstrom’s SALMON FISHING IN THE YEMEN; SOUS TON EMPRISE, Alain Corneau’s UNE FEMME PARFAITE and DANS LA MAISON. In 2010, Scott Thomas co-starred in Sam Taylor Wood’s directorial debut, NOWHERE BOY. For her performance, she received a “Best Supporting Actress” British Academy of Film and Television Arts Award nomination and a British Film Independent Award nomination. Last year, Scott Thomas was working in Catherine Corsini’s PARTIR. For her performance, Scott Thomas received a “Best Actress” a Cesar Award nomination.

In 2001, Scott Thomas was part of the ensemble for Robert Altman’s acclaimed, Oscar winning film, GOSFORD PARK.

Scott Thomas first won over audiences and critics worldwide with her Academy-award nominated performance in the late Anthony Minghella’s THE ENGLISH PATIENT, where she starred opposite Ralph Fiennes and Juliette Binoche. For her performance she was honored by the National Board of Review, and was nominated for Golden Globe, the BAFTA, and the Screen Actors Guild Award.

Making her U.S. film debut in Prince’s UNDER THE CHERRY MOON, Scott Thomas went on to great acclaim in Mike Newell’s FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL, where she won a BAFTA award for Best Supporting Actress. Other notable credits include: Philip Haas’ ANGELS AND INSECTS; Richard Loncraine’s RICHARD III; Brian DePalma’s MISSION IMPOSSIBLE; Robert Redford’s THE HORSE WHISPERER; Sydney Pollack’s RANDOM HEARTS; Irwin Winkler’s LIFE AS A HOUSE; Roman Polanski’s BITTER MOON; Paul Schrader’s THE WALKER and Justin Chadwick’s THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL, EASY VIRTUE, and CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC.

**Filmography**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Film</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>UNDER THE CHERRY MOON by Prince</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>THE MAN WHO LOVED PRINCESS P *Priest - Pam MacKey</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>LOUNGE CHAIR by Jean-François Amatteau</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>LADY IN A DRESS by Christian Caid *</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>UNCONTROLLABLE CIRCUMSTANCES by Paris Jerivot</td>
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CAST

ETHAN HAWKE
KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS
JOANNA KULIG
SAMIR GUESMI
DELPHINE CHUILLOT
JULIE PAPILLON
GEOFFREY CAREY
MAMADOU MINTÉ
JEAN-LOUIS CASSARINO
JUDITH BURNETT
MARCELA IACUB
WILFRED BENAÎCHE
Pawel Pawlikowski

CREW

Director
Pawel Pawlikowski
Screenplay
Pawel Pawlikowski
based on the novel by
Douglas Kennedy
DOP
Ryszard Lanczewski
Production Designer
Benoit Barouh
Editor
David Charap
Original Music
Max de Wardener
Costume Designers
Sylvie Peyre
Casting Directors
Julian Day, Shaida Day
Sound Mixer
Julian Day, Shaida Day
Sound Re-recording Mixer
Stephane Relat, Alexandre Masselin
Sound Editor
Nicolas Cantin
Dialogue Editor
Jean Pierre Laforce
Production Manager
Valerie Deloof
Postproduction Supervisor
Agnès Ravez

Produced by
Caroline Bein, Carole Scotta
Executive Producer
Tessa Ross
Associate Producer
Simon Arnal
Line Producer
Barbara Letellier
Co-producers
Piotr Reisch, Soledad Gatti-Pascual

A co-production Haut et Court - Film4 - SPI International Poland - The Bureau in association with UK Film Council With the participation of Canal + - Orange Cinéma Séries - Haut et Court Distribution - Artificial Eye in association with Memento Films International - Cofinova - Back Up Films - La Banque Postale Image 4 - Soficinéma - Polish Film Institute With the support of I2I Audiovisuel - a MEDIA program of the European Union Developed with the support of Cofinova 2.

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