

OSCURIDAD
CERCANA

There is something worse than being chosen
by an outer God... be rejected.

PERIFERIA

A FILM SPELL BY CARLOS MOLINERO

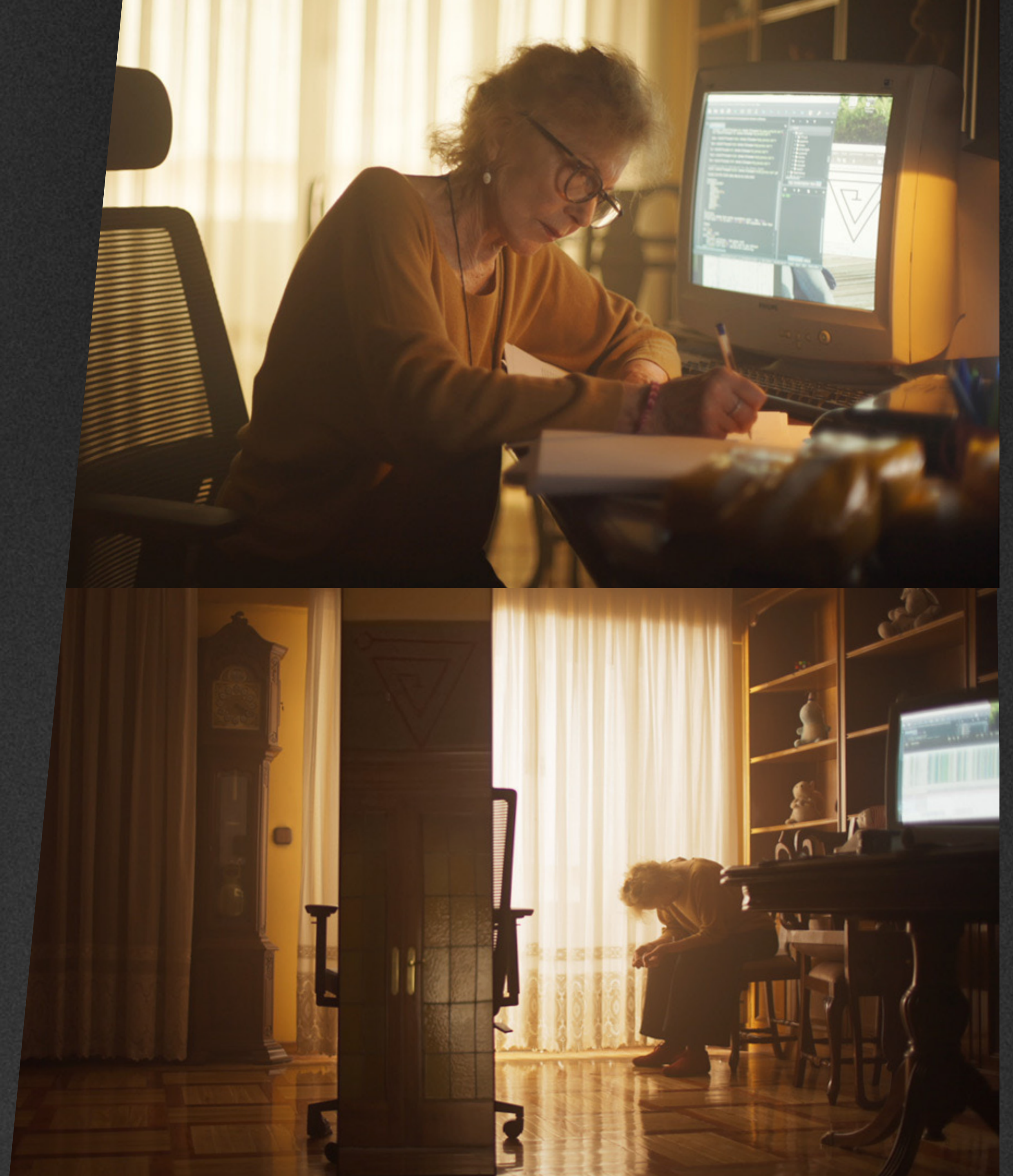
SYNOPSIS

Maria, a 70-year-old mathematician, is dying in a run-down (except for a children's room) flat. It is her long-dead daughter's, who she is trying to connect with by using strange formulas and disturbing sound waves, offering her cancerous pain and making her cola-cao with biscuits.

She finally manages to hear her spectral daughter's whisper, but it's a whisper accompanied by a roaring, dangerous force: a force that enters her home. It wants to devour her, her daughter's soul, or even reality itself.

Though she is a sick, older woman, her mind is that of a mathematician who has learned to use geometry and its formulas to make magic spells and reach reality's essence

Risking her life, she manages to trap the roaring creature. Now the channel has been opened. She decodes her daughter's spectral voice and builds the geometric image that could bring her back to life.





But that mathematical act will disturb the very nature of reality. That resurrection might be a new beginning for a dead girl, but it could also be the end of the Universe.

Cristina, a goth woman in her forties, was a comic book writer when she was young. She attends Fuenlabrada's Cosmic Horror Week as a guest on a discussion panel honoring an old co-worker, who, apart from being well-known, is rude and arrogant, and he is supposed to attend an "Awards Ceremony".

When the famous guest announces he can't attend the ceremony, Cristina is invited as a last-minute substitute. She can't imagine that she is the "award" given at this Ceremony. Every year, Fuenlabrada sacrifices one of the guests to Cthulhu, an ancient horror god.

What seems to be a joke is not, and Cristina embarks on a frantic escape from Fuenlabrada, which turns into a nightmarish, Lovecraftian, though still authentic and traditional, labyrinth.

Emile, a metalhead immigrant from Uganda, and Almudena, a young, spirited reggaeton fan, help Cristina escape.

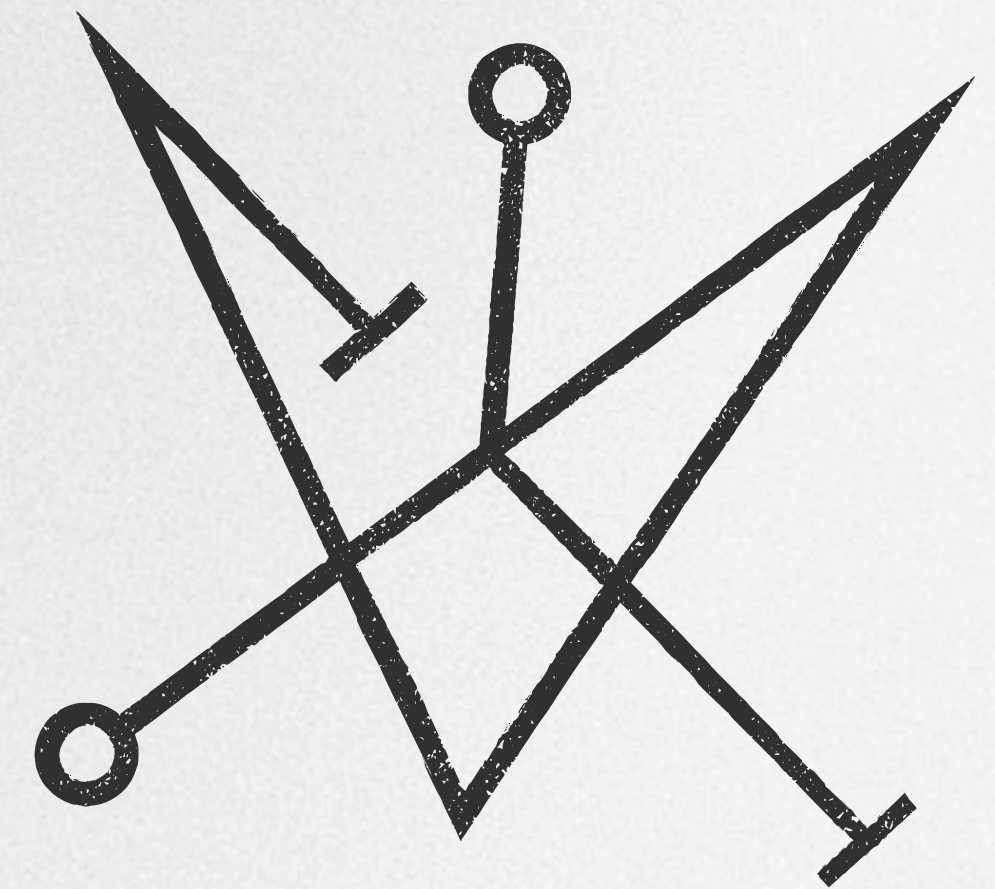
At the same time, children roam around Fuenlabrada playing hopscotch with impossible geometries, blowing dissonant flutes, singing songs that adults cannot understand, and performing blood rituals, which are terrifying to grown-ups but pure fun for them. They are hunting for something roaring, dangerous, and invisible.

The three stories converge in an ending in which Cristina dies in a senseless, stupid, but heroic way, María, finally easing her anguish, achieves a brief contact with her daughter, and Almudena reveals herself not as the future priestess of a dead god, but as a new Goddess invoked by the children. A deity that will bring either liberation or damnation to humanity.





TOPICS



1. MAGIC

Cinema has been connected to magic since its beginnings. It's a device that creates ghosts, dreams, and even monsters.

A tool that apparently only serves to capture the visible, really becomes magical when it manages to reflect the invisible. Good cinema is not the one that shows us reality, but the one that with an image produces the revelation of what is hidden in our mind, whether that hidden thing is an idea, an emotion or even a memory.

That magic of cinema is in all good films.

But cinema has also been used as a magical tool per se, as a ritual to contact other parts of our mind.

Iván Zulueta, Luis Buñuel, José Val Del Omar or Maya Deren. They are our filmic and magical masters.

That's why this film will appropriate their tools, how to achieve from simplicity, come on, from a low budget, images and sounds that produce a spell in the mind of the spectator and maybe in reality itself.

This 'invisible' can be something as ethereal as a spectre or as concrete as a peripheral neighbourhood.

Spanish cinema today has in essence two realities that it represents incessantly. One is that of a large and luminous city, with even larger and more luminous flats and characters who are not so large but luminous. The other is the return to the rural, to the origins, to the village as a strange place where a forgotten secret is found.

This is said without irony or acrimony, because among these films there are good, average and boring ones, as is natural.

What is scarcer is to talk about the world that is the periphery of cities, especially the periphery of Madrid, especially Fuenlabrada. The cities that nourish these comedies with secondary characters, the cities that have that rural past to which they don't need to return, the cities full of characters that practically don't exist in our cinema. Neither the space, nor the characters.





‘Periferia’ (‘Periphery’) is going to talk about that space, it is going to show it, but not from where it is usually done, social realism, but from fantastic realism, social surrealism, cosmic horror or comic horror, let's go, from a place far away from preconceived and exhausted ideas.

So, visual and tonal references will be more ‘Candyman’ by Bernard Rose than ‘Barrio’ by Fernando León, more ‘Gente en Sitios’ by Juan Cavestany than ‘La Maternal’ by Pilar Palomero, more ‘La Última Ola’ by Peter Weir than any film by Ken Loach.

The periphery, an unknown and magical place.

Like Fuenlabrada.

2. MUSIC

The expression in Spanish ‘mute movies’ could not be more accurate, unlike in English ‘silent movies’. Because in its beginnings, cinema had no spoken words, but music. That's why the screenplay is more like writing a musical score than a novel.

This foundational relationship reached a point of mutation when the music did not favour the images, but the other way around, when the images served to enhance and increase the strength of the music.

That spell was called videoclip.

Reviled by critics and scholars who accused the brilliant Tony Scott of being a ‘videoclip maker’, as if this were a bad thing.

A genre that has taken the synthetic power of cinema to its maximum consequences. From Russell Mulcahy's first videos for ‘Duran, Duran’ to those of Rosalía, passing through Michael Jackson's ‘thriller’ and other impossible deliriums that made us blush with shame and joy like Kate Bush's ‘Wuthering Heights’ or Judas Priest's ‘Turbo Lover’.

The video clip allows us to narrate in a synthetic and heterogeneous way, again, cheaply. Where the quality of the images is not in using optics and cameras to keep everything in focus, as if life were an immense film set, but in their expressive and evocative power.



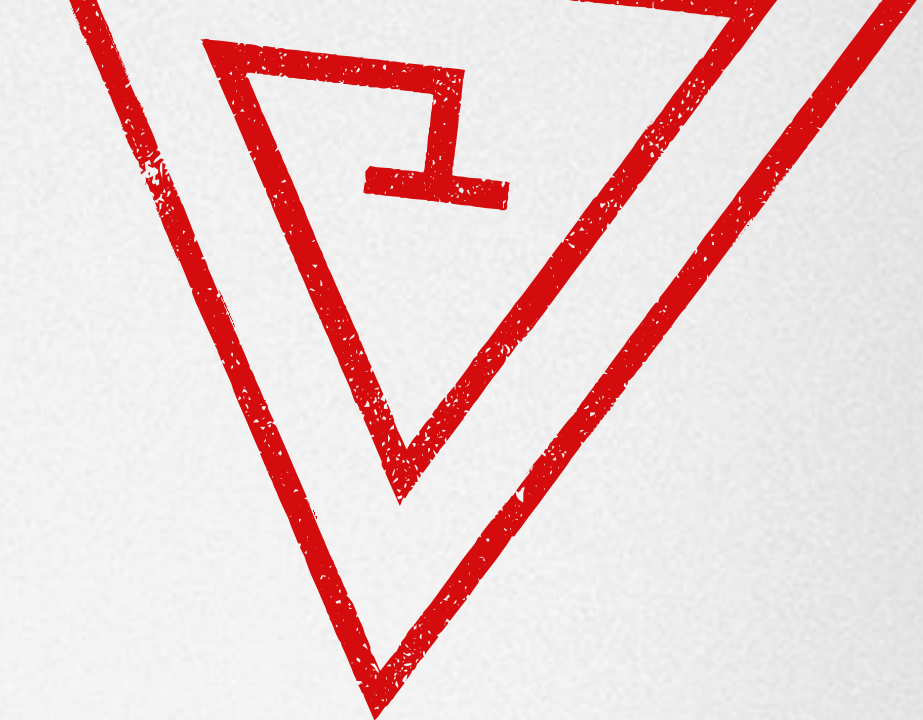
In ‘Periferia’ (‘Periphery’) the music is essential and there will be moments where the adjective ‘videoclip’ can be applied to it, which we will receive with gratitude and joy.

But it is music created for the film and perverting known genres.

We will have a rumba to primordial gods, a reguetón invocation, African black metal, a metal ballad of rupture with Cthulhu, children's songs, but not the kind that parents sing to children, but the kind that children will sing to grown-ups, and for those will be terrifying and incomprehensible songs accompanied by atrocious instruments that should not exist.

Like the recorder.





3. MATHEMATICS

Periphery is also a mathematical concept. It is the boundary of a geometric figure, an element of network topologies, zones where mathematical postulates change.

In our film, mathematics will be reflected in several ways:

The first with the story of a mathematician, who while dying is looking for a geometrical solution to the death of her daughter and finds that at the frontiers of thought and topology there are inhuman concepts that lead to very dangerous beings and places.

The second is a hunt for patterns in order to decontextualise them, everyday patterns that, when seen geometrically, change their meaning. Plans and the urban distribution of Fuenlabrada, the tessellation of the pavements, the distribution of the stars, the placement of the swings, the children's stripes. Patterns that are always the same will be re-signified and mutated in an attempt to discover the truth that they conceal.



And finally, the use of scientific images, mathematical results, solutions to equations, graphic representations of topological spaces, but disturbed and reused. The scientific archive turned into an emotional and perhaps terrible archive.

Back to what we did in 'The Mist in the Palmtrees' with the scientific archive from the 1920s to the 1950s, but without the limitation we had there of trying to unravel and explain the mysteries of quantum physics.

Here we leave Physics, which is interested in reality, and go to Mathematics, which does not need reality to remain.

Like Cinema.





4. COMEDY

Cosmic Horror in Fuenlabrada: It's a laugh. We know, but that's a good thing. As Alberto Ávila's mysterious 'Grimorio del triángulo negro' says, true magic is not afraid of humour. All that is excellent is always on the verge of the ridiculous.

This film has one of the essences of Spanish storytelling: humour as a tool not so much to understand the World, but rather to endure and share it. 'Don Quixote' managed to dismantle the epic and grandiloquent genre of chivalry with irony and, most importantly, empathy.

We are going to do the same with the cosmic horror stories of Lovecraft and his heirs. Not from mockery, but from admiration, from affection for these writers and these characters. To look at all the creatures in the film with irony, but with tenderness. It doesn't matter whether it's an old-fashioned goth or a primordial deity.

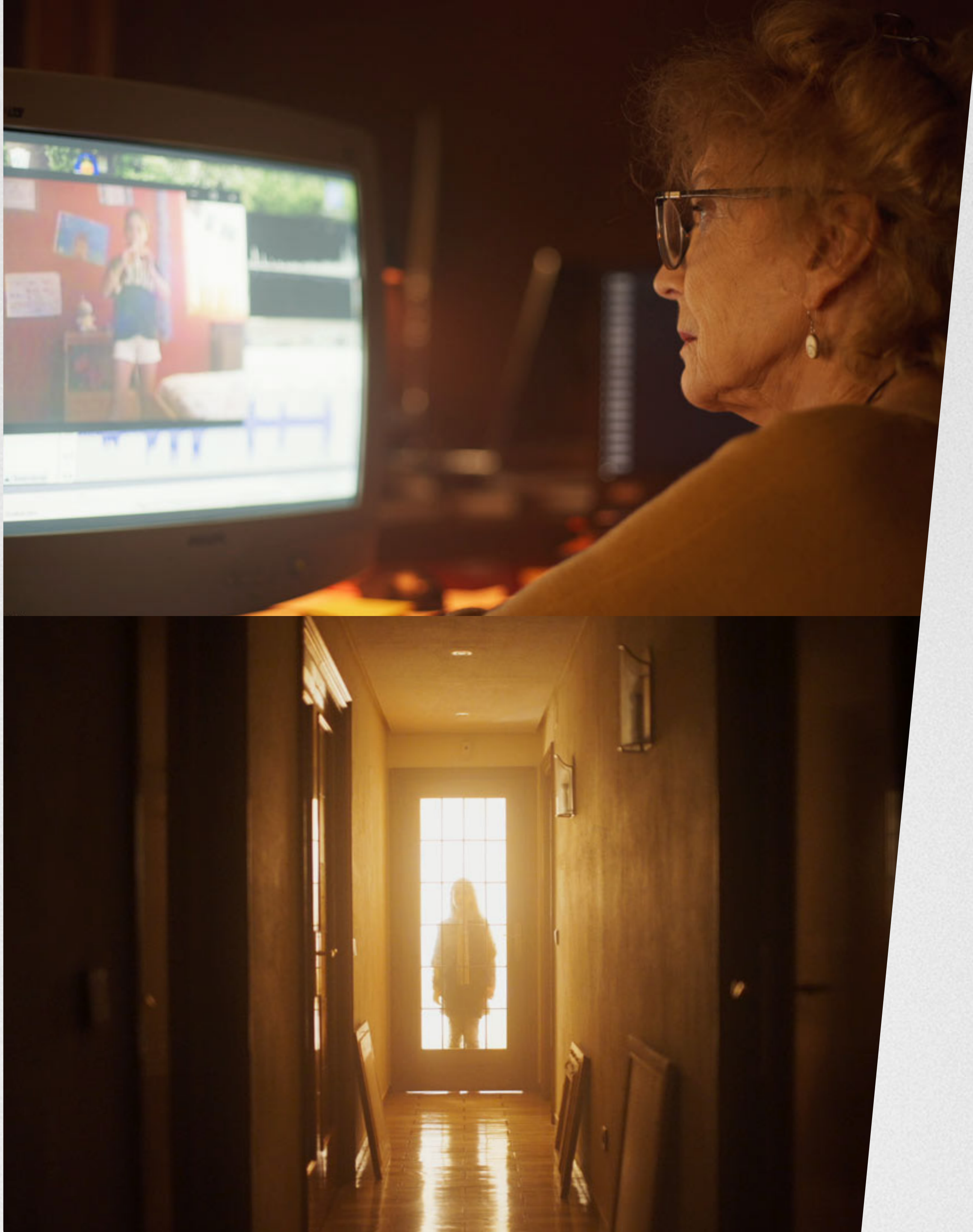
And for this, our model can only be the films of Azcona and Berlanga. Not only in tone and look, but also in form.

The idea of the sequence shot, the choral scene, the character trying to navigate in a chaos that does not interrupt the montage, but which in our case will be interrupted by ominous flashes, flashes of memory, stellar flashes, disturbances of all kinds. As if the images of Zulueta's 'Arrebato' invaded Berlanga's 'La Escopeta Nacional'.

A deranged tone that has always existed in our cinema with films that deserve to be remembered such as 'Ditirambo' by Gonzalo Suárez or 'Total' by José Luis Cuerda. Cervantes. Berlanga. Azcona. Zulueta. Suárez. Cuerda.

With the creative blood of all of them we will do the ritual to invoke our film and that the dapper critics and the purist freaks will say: How could they dare?





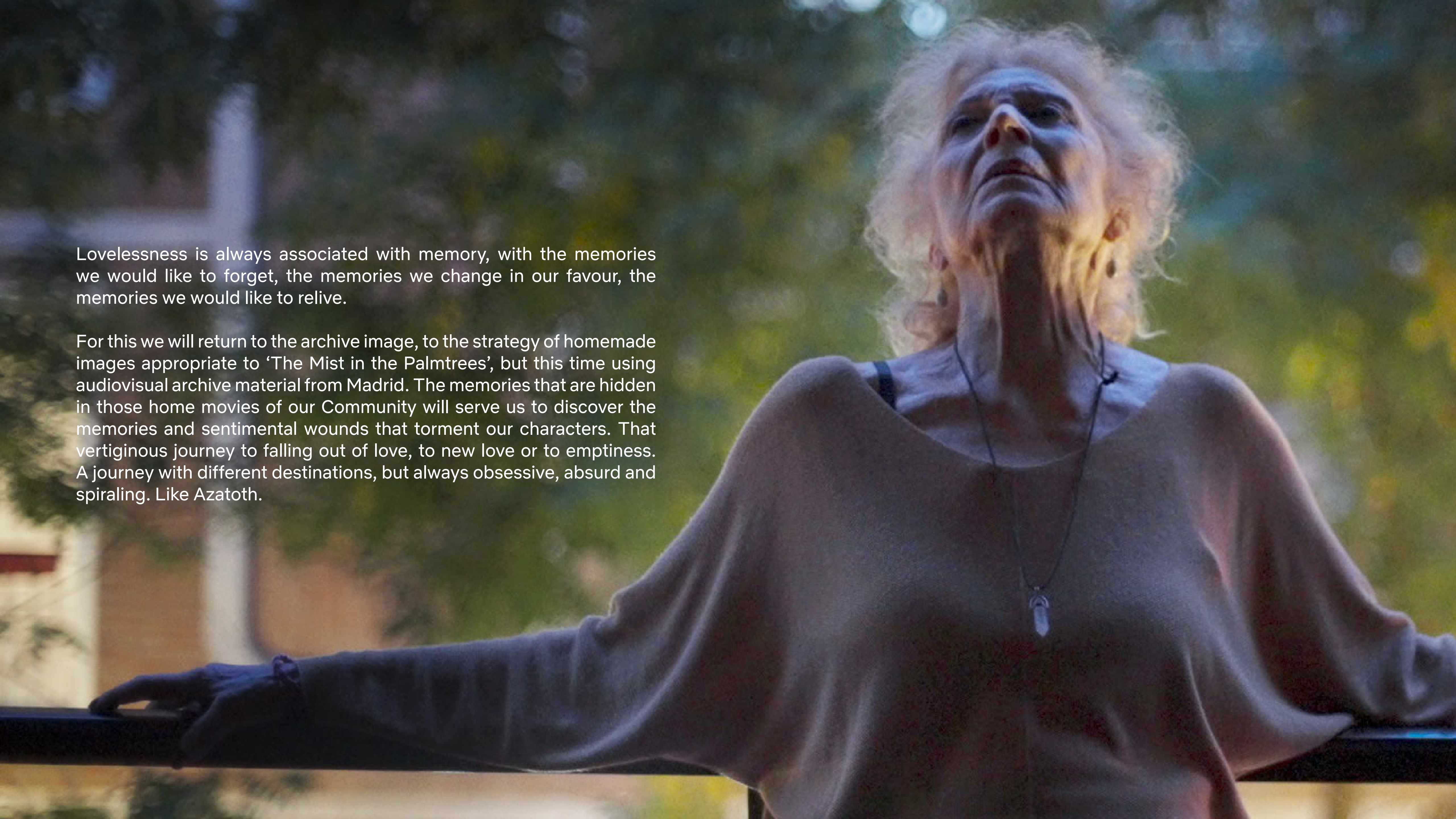
5. DISAFFECTION - MEMORY

All these ingredients to talk about falling out of love, mourning, loss, rupture. Or of love badly channelled, wasted, exhausted or transcended.

Love as a stupid and uncontrollable force and its absence as an even more uncontrollable emptiness.

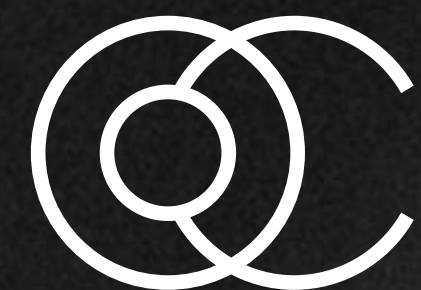
The mathematician with her infinite love that she was never able to channel because of the death of her daughter; the mature gothic woman wounded by rejection and disaffection for almost thirty years who will let herself be carried away by resentment, which is 'feeling' the same thing over and over again without any consolation; the African metalhead who comes in search of a love he does not admit, only to find that when he recognises it there is no longer anyone to love; a teenager who has been loved and has loved a lot, but who understands that to grow up she has to leave her divine and terrible love, to find others who will make her know the World and know herself.

And finally, Childhood. Where there is only love, fear and boredom. All mixed, all noisy, all pure and cruel. The one-eyed girl who brings a song that we adults can't understand in an indecipherable language. Noise, laughter and fury mixed together. The one that leads the film to the end, to the connection with a primal, silly and wild god that only children can embrace.

A woman with short, curly, light-colored hair is shown from the chest up. She is looking upwards with her mouth slightly open, as if in awe or contemplation. Her arms are outstretched horizontally to the sides, resting on a dark, thin horizontal bar. She is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved top with a wide neckline. A thin necklace with a small, dark pendant is visible around her neck. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green foliage and a building with a red roof visible on the left. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

Lovelessness is always associated with memory, with the memories we would like to forget, the memories we change in our favour, the memories we would like to relive.

For this we will return to the archive image, to the strategy of homemade images appropriate to 'The Mist in the Palmtrees', but this time using audiovisual archive material from Madrid. The memories that are hidden in those home movies of our Community will serve us to discover the memories and sentimental wounds that torment our characters. That vertiginous journey to falling out of love, to new love or to emptiness. A journey with different destinations, but always obsessive, absurd and spiraling. Like Azatoth.



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