

**CAPITAL FILM FESTIVAL 2024
ONLY AT DENDY CANBERRA**



THE ROOM NEXT DOOR

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Room Next Door is my first feature film in English. My insecurity disappeared after the first table reading with the actresses, with the exchange of the first indications. The language wasn't going to be a problem, and not because I master English, but because of the total disposition of the whole cast to understand me and to make it easy for me to understand them.

People talk a lot in my films. Among all the narrative elements (all of them important and in which I am unreservedly involved), it is the actors who really tell the story. In The Room Next Door Tilda Swinton and Julianne Moore take the weight of the whole film on their shoulders, and they are a spectacle. I have been fortunate in that both give a veritable recital. At times during shooting, both the crew and I were on the verge of tears watching them. It was a very moving shoot and, in some way, blessed.

The Room Next Door talks about the rekindling of an old friendship, in an intimate, extreme situation. One of the friends, Martha, is going to die and the other, Ingrid, will learn, among other things, to recognize and accept death, provided it is decided by the person; also that death, ultimately, is not the absolute end. People don't die completely; from my atheism, the possibility of reincarnation or that "beyond" there is something more than darkness has slipped into this film's script. Martha, ill with terminal cancer, is reincarnated (neither literally nor paranormally) in her friend Ingrid. This is the process about which the film talks, the friendship regained by the two women, which is sublimated into an emotion similar to love, but without love's inconveniences, during the weeks they share in the House in the Woods, a place, like a limbo, that lies between real existence and the beyond.

The nearest genre for telling this story would be melodrama, but I've tried to make a contained film, avoiding sentimentality and melodramatics.

Although the subject of death is very present, I didn't want the film to be lugubrious or gory, it is full of light and vitality: these are provided by Martha's character and the force of nature, which protects the two women in the House in the Woods.

Since Julieta I have tended towards a greater stylistic austerity. In The Room Next Door the storyline of the film (death as the only desirable future) demanded it of me. It is an eternal subject which I try to approach with tact and delicacy.

Tilda Swinton and Julianne Moore are very well accompanied by John Turturro, a lover shared by the two women in their youth. Damian Cunningham, Turturro's character, provides the testimonial of other death throes, the one of the planet on which we live. The day when neoliberalism and the far right walk together will be the moment to start the countdown, and at present the extreme right and neoliberalism are already hand in hand. The cast is completed by Alessandro Nivola, in the character of detective Flannery, an aggressive fundamentalist police officer.

-Pedro Almodóvar