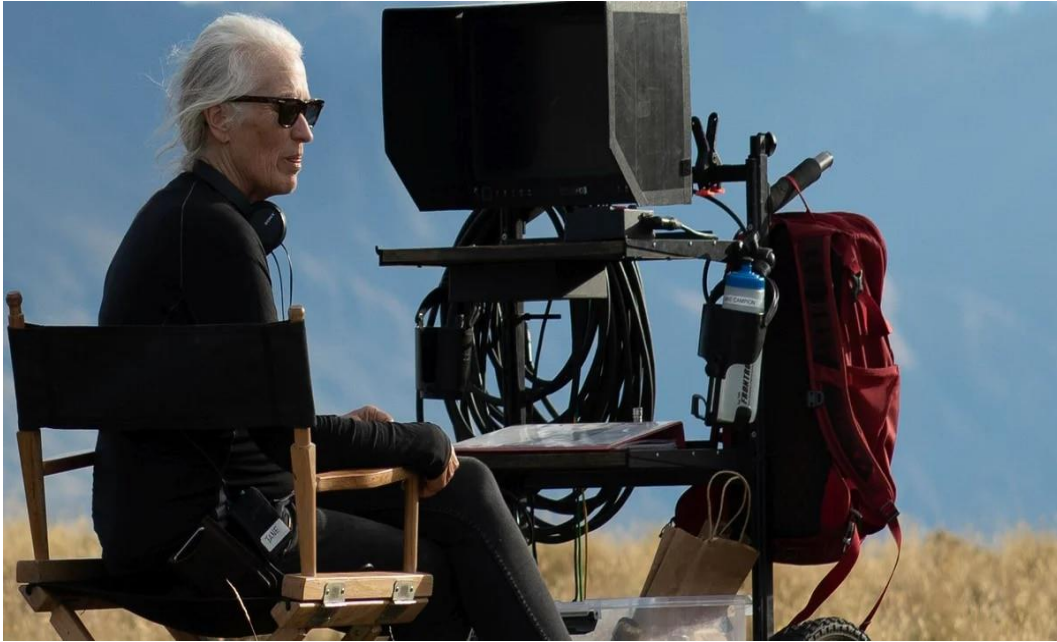


The intimacy in the cinema of Jane Campion, great candidate for the Oscars 2022



Campion during the filming of "The Power of the Dog" (Netflix)

The Palme d'Or that **Jane Campion** (Wellington, New Zealand, 1954) received in 1993 for his feature film ***The piano Lesson*** (1993) made her the first woman to win the highest award at the Cannes festival, as well as placing her at the center of academic discussion.

This is not, however, the only Palme d'Or received by the filmmaker, who already won the same award in 1986, in the category of best short film, for ***An Exercise in Discipline: Peel***. Time, critics, the public and the academy –as well as Oscars, Golden Globes, Emmys or BAFTAs– have confirmed the international relevance of this author, who in 2014 was chairing the Cannes jury.

Complex universes and unique characters

Any attempt to synthesize the essence of Jane Campion's cinema by describing her characters or the action of her stories is reductive. The tremendous poetic force of the cinematography of the New Zealand filmmaker contrasts the immensity of

sublime spaces such as the ocean, the jungle, cliffs, deserts or even Roman architecture, with the humanity of her characters.

The protagonists of ***the power of the dog***, ***Top of the Lake***, ***The piano Lesson***, ***Holy Smoke*** or ***An angel at my table***, to name just a few of their works, respond to powerful wills, sensitivities and intuitions that, on numerous occasions, are indomitable for themselves. Its apparent fragility is linked to a radical singularity.

Jane Campion and two of the protagonists of "The power of the dog", Benedict Cumberbatch and Kirsten Dunst, at the Venice Film Festival (REUTERS / Yara Nardi) Ada, memorable protagonist of *The piano*, is characterized from the intense romantic aesthetic that Campion explores in the film. The particular obscurantism of her, the intricacy of the jungle, the poetry of the beach or the abysmal of the cliffs describe the enigmatic character of the protagonist and the stormy relationships that are interwoven between the characters, located at the antipodes of Victorian Scotland.

Jane Campion discreetly explores the intimacy of the characters. ***The piano Lesson*** It is an illustrative example of how the author conveys the feelings of the characters to the viewer through exchanges of glances, silences loaded with meaning, the camera stopping on some particularly symbolic object, the intensity or subtlety of the soundtrack and other genuine resources. of film language.

Write the story about the bodies

One of the common denominators in almost all her work is the limiting of bodies – almost always women–, constrained by various circumstances. This feature has aroused the interest of gender studies, especially since ***The piano Lesson***. The bodies of the characters are put to the test by their very nature, by social dynamics that shake them and even by the will of their own owners. They go through forced pregnancies, suicide attempts, sexual blackmail, clinical aberrations, abortion attempts, etc.

We could trace, throughout her work, the different traces that all of this leaves in some of the women who inhabit her stories, beginning, for example, with ***sweeties*** (1989). The film, a rarity premiered at Cannes, explores the mental instability and aggressive outbursts of its protagonist, which oscillate between the vindictive, the irrational and the disastrously uncontrollable. Her second feature

film, ***An angel at my table*** (1990), biopic of the New Zealand poet **Janet Frame**, develops with a paradoxically crude tenderness the hostility and the multiple losses that are permeating the young teacher and writer. Having been diagnosed with schizophrenia, Frame (**Kerry Fox**) escapes a lobotomy for the opportune publication of his work.

Two exhausted bodies that have used and hurt each other close ***Holy Smoke*** (1999), in which young Ruth (**Kate Winslet**), immersed in the beliefs and lifestyle of a Hindu sect, runs away from PJ Walters (**Harvey Keitel**), a supposed American therapist who was supposed to disconnect her from the sect. After challenging him as a patient, ridiculing him as a man and seducing him, they end their tortuous story bruised and dirty, dragging themselves through the Australian desert, he dressed as a woman and begging her not to leave him.

Jane Campion in her acceptance speech for the award received at the Critics Choice Awards in Los Angeles, last Sunday, March 13 (REUTERS / Mario Anzuoni)

Jane Campion unfolds complex and contradictory female universes without judging the women and men who inhabit them. Ada, a single mother already when the story begins, she does not give herself to the husband chosen by her father and ignores social rules and Victorian morals without altering. Furthermore, she ends up lusting after the man who has previously blackmailed her, desperate to gain her closeness.

Kirsten Dunst in "The Power of the Dog" by Jane Campion

in the thriller ***raw meat*** (2003), Franny (**meg ryan**) enters into a murky relationship with detective Malloy (**Mark Ruffalo**) knowing that he may be a murderer.

Believing him guilty, he chains him to a pipe in his bedroom while he runs off with the real killer. Bloodied and wounded, after surviving the latter's attack, she trudges back to the room where Malloy is still chained and curls up next to her just before the image fades to black.

In a clear rhyme with the end of ***The piano Lesson*** the television series ***Top of the Lake*** (2013-2017) begins with a girl who enters the frozen water of a lake, also with ambiguous suicidal intentions. Pregnant at twelve, Tui (**Jacqueline Joe**) disappears a little later.

chinese girl, the subtitle that accompanies the second season, plays with a double meaning characteristic of Campion's artistic approach. In addition to alluding to Asian geography, the English meaning of the Chinese word is porcelain. In the promotional poster for the series, the cracked back of Detective Robin Griffin

(**Elizabeth Moss**) alludes to the brittleness of the body. Not in vain, under the epidermal surfaces –Top– of the fictional town of Laketop and the city of Sydney there is a rotten web of corruption and child trafficking.

“The power of the dog” adds 12 nominations for the Oscars that will be delivered next Sunday 27 in Los Angeles

The latest work by the director, the introspective western ***the power of the dog***, has once again placed her at the center of nominations for international awards. In it, Campion recovers the visual power of the desert and the characters torn by internal contradictions, facing others who serve as a mirror. Immersed in a hostile environment that threatens to engulf him, young Peter Gordon (**Kodi Smith-McPhee**), like so many other characters filmed by the author, breaks her own limits.

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