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OSCAR BUZZ

THE ART OF IMITATION

KEIRA KNIGHTLEY talks about remaking reality, using wardrobe as a weapon and appreciating fashion visionaries.

THE OLD DOUBLE-CROSS: IT'S SOMETHING that all good actors have to master when portraying characters with secrets. In her more than 20-year career, Keira Knightley, 29, has learned to beguile the camera with gestures that conceal meaning. In 2005's *Pride & Prejudice*, in which she flawlessly played the role of Elizabeth Bennet, it was her eyelash flicks and damning glances that told Mr. Darcy to go to »

hell (while imploring that he take her to heaven). During much of 2012's *Anna Karenina*, the way that Knightley dispassionately yet grippingly embraced her boring husband revealed a faux-wife going through the motions of marital duty (while yearning to be a 19th-century Kardashian). In the upcoming drama *The Imitation Game*, Knightley's mouth does all the work. She plays Joan Clarke, an English cryptanalyst who smirks knowingly at the lie she has to live during her partnership with the gay (but closeted) code-breaking genius Alan Turing (played by Benedict Cumberbatch). Set during the Second World War, the movie is based on a true story (albeit fluffed by Hollywood) that revolves around Turing's and Clarke's winning tale as the duo who helped win the war by deciphering enemy messages.

Embracing subtlety on the screen in high-wired dramas isn't always natural, and it takes a lot of work. Knightley says there are tools she uses to bring nuance to a scene. As she sits in a Toronto hotel room, hours before the Toronto International Film Festival premiere of *The Imitation Game*—nervously picking at the shimmering scarlet hearts on her Alexander McQueen dress—Knightley insists that clothes can help make or, in Clarke's case, remake the woman.

"Part of the job is really knowing hair, makeup and wardrobe," she says. "You're very much hired to embody another person...their whole being." Perhaps she's reflecting on her breakout role in *Bend It Like Beckham* at 16, and how, instead of going to college as many of her friends did, she spent time learning about fabrics in the ateliers of top-tier costume designers. "Costume gave me a sense of how Joan fit into the whole scheme of things.... [She wore a] very autumnal palette and we had a lot of knitted stuff—her cardigan was important and so was layering. In all of the research,

they talk about how cold it was in Bletchley," says Knightley, referring to the town where Clarke and Turing cracked war codes. "Most of the time there were wind tunnels, so [they] were bundled up. There was clothes rationing during the Second World War, so what they had would be mended to death. If the costume designer had said, 'I just see [Joan] in bright pink and lots of diamante,'" she laughs, "that would change my character completely."

In terms of her own personal style, Knightley admits that her red carpet looks don't reflect her personality at all. "I'm really scruffy and can't be bothered in my real life," says the Chanel spokeswoman. "So [events] are a chance to play dress-up." For those matters, she consults her dear friend Leith Clark, a Canadian expat living in London who is the brainchild behind stunning art-house-style fashion magazines such as *Violet* and *Lula*. "Leith and I were friends before we started working together. There's an issue we've always totally been at one with: that a party dress should always look like a cake."

As someone who is constantly being photographed in clothes—dessert-inspired or otherwise—Knightley appreciates the talent of visionary shooters. "Photographers that have been schooled using film still know how important the relationship between the photographer and the subject is. What the camera is doing is capturing that intimate relationship.... There's no way of seeing that romance until they develop it later."

Knightley says she's had the most artistically satisfying shoots with legends such as Annie Leibovitz, Mario Testino and Patrick Demarchelier. "They always get that personal connection, so they capture something real as opposed to something just fleeting." —*Elio Iannacci*



WELCOME RETURN

RENE RUSSO riffs on self-reflection, scene stealing and her mighty comeback.

"It's a power grab everywhere...it's across the board and in every industry, whether you're a journalist or on Wall Street," says 60-year-old actress Rene Russo. She's referring to the moral bleakness of the ratings-obsessed TV producer she portrays in the destined-to-be-a-blockbuster crime thriller *Nightcrawler*, which premiered at this year's Toronto International Film Festival and had Russo heating up the red carpet in a fringed Michael Kors dress. Directed and penned by Russo's husband, Dan Gilroy, the film chronicles the unexpected pairing of Russo's Nina and a twisted, go-getter photographer named Lou (played by Jake Gyllenhaal). To channel Nina's internal angst and ruthless drive, Russo says some self-reflection was necessary. "I looked inside myself and said, 'OK, where have you been desperate? At what point in your life could you have, or did you, cross moral boundaries?' I think what makes her so frantic and mean-spirited is that she's just »

so sad and so broken and so desperate in a business where she just keeps getting demoted.”

Russo, a former *Vogue* cover model whose film career spans 25 years and includes hits such as *Tin Cup* and *The Thomas Crown Affair*, says her own dilemmas are quite different than Nina's, coming more in the form of “I spoke behind my girlfriend's back; that was really effed up,” or “I lied to try and get out of something and it really came back to bite me in the ass.” She can, however, relate to the challenge of ageism in the film industry and beyond. “I don't think parts are getting better for women—I mean for a few people like Meryl Streep,” she says. Russo admits that she feels incredibly lucky that her husband wrote this role with her in mind. “The funny part is, I never feel older. I look at Jake and I'm like, ‘Yeah, I'm his age because inside I'm his

age.’ I didn't go into it thinking, ‘I'm the older woman.’ I went into it thinking, ‘Dude, what's up?’” she laughs.

Looking at least 15 years younger than her actual age helps with this mindset (something she attributes to skipping Botox and fillers in favour of laser treatments). And then there's the BS filter that comes with experience, not to mention her newfound ability to appreciate the simple things. “I'm like ‘Wow, there's a full moon. How many more full moons am I going to get to see?’ Not in a morbid way, but it's just like you better pay attention because life is short,” she says.

Russo is still on the quest to find her next great film. “I love comedy and I wish that would have been more of an open door for me. I love my character in [the upcoming indie comedy] *Frank and Cindy*,” she says. “But I don't think I've played my dream role yet.” —Alexandra Breen

CUE CUMBERMANIA

BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH is a new breed of leading man.



Benedict Cumberbatch always seems to be camera-ready, onscreen and off. Whether he's working that double-breasted Belstaff coat on TV's *Sherlock* or working the red carpet in a perfectly tailored Spencer Hart suit, he's the kind of actor who appreciates the power associated with fashion. Since landing his breakout role as the imperious and unsettling Sherlock Holmes in 2010, Cumberbatch has charted an unlikely path to superstardom with roles like Julian Assange in *The Fifth Estate* and Khan in *Star Trek Into Darkness*.

Mark 2014 as another marquee year for the 38-year-old actor, as Oscar buzz is already building for his performance as the misunderstood genius Alan Turing in the biopic *The Imitation Game*. Celebrated as the father of computer science, Turing was a British mathematician who broke the Enigma codes used by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. Persecuted after the war for being gay, Turing died in 1954 at the age of 41 (there's uncertainty regarding whether or not it was a suicide).

“He was a very repressed and bullied human being all through his life,” says Cumberbatch. “He was seen as being different and he was punished for being different.... But he used [that experience] to propel himself into the world of cryptography, of understanding codes, of communication and linguistics.”

In portraying Britain during the '40s and '50s, the film's production team goes for “heightened” realism. The period's drab grey wardrobe palette is enlivened by rich blues, reds and greens. Turing sports the civilian uniform of the era: high-waisted, well-made utility suits, which were economical due to wartime rationing. It's a masculine but still functional look, offering protection against England's horrid weather. But it can't protect a man like Turing against the savage forces blowing through the country.

“It's a very shameful period of history,” says Cumberbatch. “We had a McCarthyist fear of anything different.” —Gordon Bowness



WOMAN ON THE VERGE

FELICITY JONES on her big guns performance and the problem with being a breakout.

"I feel like I've been breaking out for about 10 years—I'm too old to be a breakout [star]," says a Christian Dior-clad Felicity Jones after premiering her latest film at the Toronto International Film Festival. The 30-year-old Brit beauty (who starred in *Like Crazy*, *The Invisible Woman*) is modestly responding to the popular bet that her powerful turn as Stephen Hawking's first wife, Jane, in the tear-jerker biopic *The Theory of Everything* is destined to make her and equally brilliant leading man Eddie Redmayne household names come awards season. The flick—which begins in the '60s at the University of Cambridge before the physicist's motor neuron disease diagnosis—explores Hawking's beautifully complex relationship with Jane as his illness progresses. "She has such strength of character. Her loyalty to Stephen through some really difficult periods is inspiring," says Jones.

Spending time with the real Jane at her home in Cambridge helped Jones study the intricacies of her character. "I just literally sat with her and observed her physicalities.

I would be talking to her but then looking at the way she held her tea cup and moved and spoke, and then I wanted to find those things in myself to play her as truthfully as possible." Hair, makeup and clothing also had pivotal roles. "You go into makeup for two hours in the morning and slowly feel yourself finding who that character is. With Jane, she grew up in the '50s, when there was still very much an old-fashioned view of women.... She was the wife of a physicist. She would go to parties and no one wanted to talk to her. She was keen to be taken seriously and that was reflected in the way she dressed."

Stepping out of their characters' shoes once the camera stopped rolling was next to impossible for Jones and Redmayne (the two are admirers of each other's work, having grown up auditioning in London together). "Because of the tragedy of the situation, there are just so many scenes that are so profound," explains Jones. "It's not a story that you tell where you can keep emotional distance. It moves you."

Jones is thankful that her next two films forced her to switch gears and get out of her head. "It was fun to be jumping off buildings and doing fight scenes, especially after doing a movie where I was crying in every scene," says Jones of the thriller *Autobahn*, in which she acts alongside Sir Anthony Hopkins and Nicholas Hoult. She's also set to star opposite Jonah Hill and James Franco in the drama *True Story*. "The key is working with good people, and whatever comes from that is beyond you." —A.B.

MOORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Oscar-nominated actress JULIANNE MOORE pulls back the curtain on Hollywood.

After watching Julianne Moore shine through some of the most uncomfortable scenes of her career in her new film *Maps to the Stars*, you feel as though Hollywood should give the woman an employee of the month award. Canadian director David Cronenberg pushes Moore, 53, above and beyond the call of duty with some undeniably icky situations. Moore portrays Havana Segrand, an aging has-been actress, and some moments are pretty awkward: She was filmed within the intimate confines of her character's washroom, urinating while her personal assistant (played by Mia Wasikowska) watches and listens to her list of demands; she's also captured in the dubious hands of a New Age guru (John Cusack), who creepily twists Havana's loins to line up with her chakras. For Moore, the discomfort isn't daring at all, and to use a casting agent's favourite phrases, she is all for *committing to the character* and *going there*.

"To be called a fearless actress connotes that you have to be afraid of what you're doing. I'm not," Moore says while smoothing down the hem of her Balenciaga cocktail dress,

hours after the film's premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival. "There are plenty of things I'm afraid of: going fast in a car or on a bike. I'm scared of skiing and the ocean," she laughs. "In an imaginary world created by a storyteller, I know I can't get hurt by demonstrating feelings."

To get the truest sense of who Havana was, Moore was dressed in nouveau riche, boho-chic pants, dresses and blouses that appear to be inspired by the people who shop at Whole Foods in Beverly Hills. "Clothes are signifiers," Moore says of the connection she has with costume. "Although they may not be telling the truth about you, they are signifying something about you or your character's personality."

Her greatest roles—which include her brilliant turn as a status quo-challenging '50s housewife in *Far From Heaven*, a played-out good-time gal in Tom Ford's *A Single Man* and a germaphobic cult member in *Safe*—have all been with characters who teeter on the edge of truth. The same can be said about her turn in *Maps*, where Havana is faced with the kind of movie-biz ageism that is worthy of a thousand Jezebel.com posts. It is something Moore feels is part of a bigger issue that extends off the screen.

"*Maps* is a film about any profession where you are constantly seeking validation outside of yourself," Moore explains. "Hollywood is a perfect metaphor for that. We are projecting images into the ether that aren't real and people are connecting to them as if they are real. That's why it's important to answer the question: What do you do in your life that is essentially who you are?" —*E.I.*

