



# Crucé

EDITOR:  
ELIO IANNACCI

## TIFF Talk

The brightest stars  
of the Toronto  
International Film  
Festival.

### LUXURY CRUZ

*Penélope Cruz is navigating a new cinematic voyage.*

WHEN PENÉLOPE CRUZ WAS 13 YEARS old, she lied about her age to buy a ticket to see director Pedro Almodóvar's *Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down!* Naturally, she left the theatre crushing on the film's leading man, Antonio Banderas, but fell in love with something far more important: a career in movies.

"I remember deciding that day that I would become an actress," she says. "I had to take a walk to digest the film and that's when working with Pedro and Antonio became one of the biggest obsessions I began to have in life." It took 25 years—and four films with the director, who would >

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become her mentor—but Cruz’s teenage fantasy became reality when she was cast opposite Banderas in Almodóvar’s new comedy, *I’m So Excited* (hitting theatres in March).

According to Cruz, she could not have realized her ambition without her colourful upbringing. Her family ran a hair salon that saw a steady stream of stylish, chatty clients who wore hyper-colourful outfits and often talked over one another (staple elements in Almodóvar’s best scenes). “I learned how to dream big at my mom’s salon. I think of it as my first theatre experience. Being there felt like I was already living in an Almodóvar movie,” she says. “I learned about drama and performance from all the fascinating customers. They were part of my early education as an actress. I was pre-

Woody Allen’s rom-dram, *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*. “These characters have a piece of my mother in them... and some of her clients,” Cruz says. “There is a little bit of her strength in them all.”

A performance fuelled by Cruz’s own experience as a mother—she has a one-year-old son, Leo, with her husband, actor Javier Bardem—can be seen in her next project, *Twice Born*. Based on the novel by Margaret Mazzantini, the film, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and hits theatres next year, centres around a woman who is infertile yet desperate to become a mother. “I understood Gemma on a deeper level because I was blessed with the biggest life could give you,” Cruz says, alluding to Leo. “She fights to find that gift her whole life and cannot have it.”

“It can’t be just about movies for me. I need art around me too.”

tending to do my homework while they would get their hair fixed but I was studying these women.

“They used the salon as a place of therapy,” Cruz continues. “While these women were trying to convert their image into what they dreamed of being, they were revealing all of their intimate secrets. I soaked up all that they were saying about men, family matters and life.”

She also credits her time among the blow dryers and curling irons as informing her approach to key roles in her career. These include *Hermana Rosa*, a pregnant nun dealing with an HIV diagnosis in *All About My Mother*; Lena, an aspiring actress infatuated with the lime-light in *Broken Embraces*; and her Oscar-winning turn as Maria Elena, a manic, short-tempered artist in

The next projects on Cruz’s plate include a Ridley Scott-directed thriller co-starring Michael Fassbender slated for release next year, a lavish calendar campaign for Campari (snapped by Romanian-born fashion photographer Kristian Schuller), and her ongoing job as the face of Lancôme’s Trésor perfume. Cruz feels her many-fingers-in-different-pies approach to life keeps her creative juices flowing.

“It can’t be just about movies for me,” she says. “I need art around me too. Right now I would love to buy a huge Guy Bourdin photo and put it in my house. He is my favourite photographer and the way he uses colours with such a sophisticated ’70s touch is so innovative. I can look at his images for hours and they inspire me as much as a film can.” —*Elio Iannacci*

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*Reintroducing*  
**PENN BADGLEY**

*Gossip Girl's leading love interest faces his first major film as a changed man.*

PENN BADGLEY IS HAVING ONE OF those rare moments in life when everything seems to be falling into place. His performance as the late singer-songwriter Jeff Buckley in the biopic *Greetings from Tim Buckley* has critics praising the 26-year-old's scene-stealing skills and emotional range. On the romance front, actress Zoë Kravitz—whom he has been dating for several months—has been named as the woman who has made him both a better man and actor.

According to the Baltimore native, his personal and professional lives are intimately connected. “I was falling in love while I was shooting this film in the same way that Jeff was falling for Allie [played by Imogen Poots]. More than

I ever had,” he confesses. “I couldn’t shoot this movie now. I was in a place and it worked. It all fell into place.”

Work, it did. The film, which centres on a tribute concert Jeff Buckley took part in to honour his late, estranged father, has Badgley shedding his TV persona as *Gossip Girl's* Dan Humphrey. “I didn’t let the pressure get to me because I knew no one thought I could do it,” he says. Badgley felt the payoff at the film’s premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival—the audience broke into cheers after a scene where he gives an impromptu a cappella performance to unsuspecting customers in a record store. “That was awesome,” he says. “You’re not making a biopic for any other reason

than you want to tell a story about an exceptional artist. That moment was profoundly satisfying because people were able to see this part of Jeff that I was able to evoke.”

Although thankful to have found fame on the small screen, Badgley is ready to move on. “I wouldn’t be here without *Gossip Girl* [but]...my goal isn’t to be doing this in front of a camera all of the time,” he laughs as he mimics sending a *GG* trademark text message. He wants to focus on movie work, like the upcoming comedy, *Periods*. More importantly, he wants to relish this experience because, to quote one of the best lines from his breakout film: “Every moment of every day is this.” —Alexandra Breen

FASHION  
does TIFF



**SCREEN  
SAVER**

*At 23, actress Imogen Poots is experiencing the biggest break of her career.*

IMOGEN POOTS LOOKS LIKE A FASHION blogger and acts like an Oscar contender. Wearing black Derek Lam boots, faded Topshop pants and a reversible white T-shirt with the words “It was the best of times” printed on one side and “It was the worst of times” on the other, the 23-year-old British talent is eager to talk shop while doing the rounds at the Toronto International Film Festival for *A Late Quartet* and *Greetings from Tim Buckley*. Signed on to five new films for 2013—including a Jimi Hendrix biopic and Terrence Malick’s *Knight of Cups* (starring Natalie Portman, Cate Blanchett and Christian Bale)—Poots is on a serious mission to leading ladyland.

To ensure her performance in *A Late Quartet* hit all the right marks, Poots insisted she take part in choosing what her character, a Lolita-lite Juilliard violinist named Alexandra, would wear in various scenes. “She dressed very conservatively because she’s in an environment where that is required,” says Poots, whose first film role was a small part in *V For Vendetta*. “But she attempted to make those clothes provocative. She understood the power of her sexuality.”

One of the most demanding scenes in *A Late Quartet* had Poots going head to head with Catherine Keener, who plays Alexandra’s mother. Drawing from her

own experiences with her TV producer dad and novelist mom, Poots shared a knock-down-drag-out moment with Keener for the camera. “I knew that final confrontation between mother and daughter would be challenging,” she says. “I felt it was important for the audience to recognize Alexandra’s immaturity. It was a real pivotal moment for her to shape up.”

In preparation for the role, Poots had to learn how to play the violin for a scene

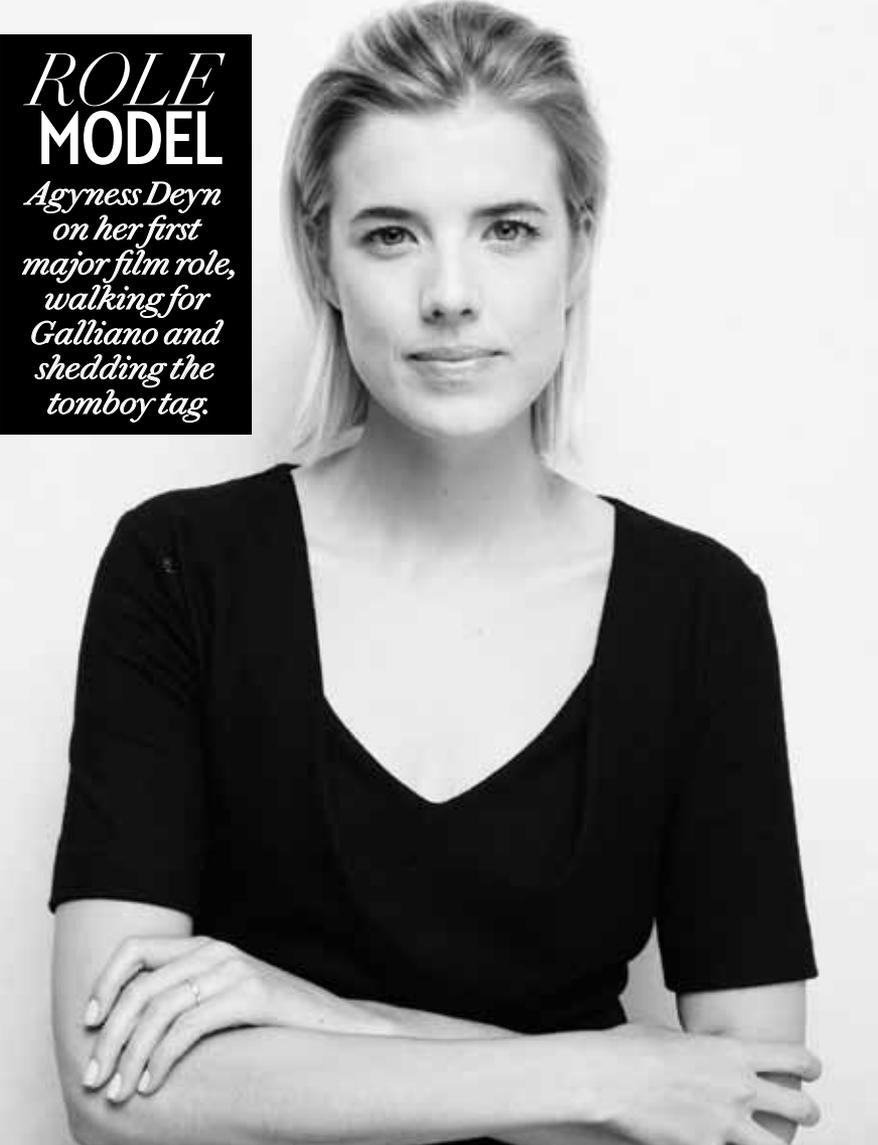
in which Alexandra performs a classical arrangement for her mentor-turned-lover, Daniel (played by Mark Ivanir).

“We had a week of rehearsal prior to the actual shooting...we actually jumped right to the deep end because there was so little time. We were given sections of Opus 31 and other basic scales to focus on. It’s beyond the ability to play an instrument,” she says of the experience. “It’s really the physicality of the playing that matters.” —*E.I.*

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**ROLE  
MODEL**

*Agyness Deyn on her first major film role, walking for Galliano and shedding the tomboy tag.*



and lacy Agent Provocateur lingerie—but the film isn't about framing her in a posh context. In fact, to avoid the cliché-laden path of past stripper flicks like *Showgirls*, *Striptease* and *Grindhouse*, Deyn sought out an expert coach in London to help her prepare.

"I was learning on the job," she says. "I worked with this wonderful woman called Jen and I went to work with her at night before we filmed. She's such an intelligent, beautiful woman and she earns a lot of money dancing. She was like a psychologist on stage because she'd have to figure out what all these guys wanted from her without talking much. She had such class and was so generous with her time."

Deyn's next project is a film tentatively titled *Sunset Song*, in which she is cast as a farmer's daughter in early 1900s Scotland who is trying to find her way. It's a role that Deyn can relate to, being in the midst of her own reinvention. "I'm nearly 30 so I'm less of the tomboy that everyone knows me for," she says. "I feel like I'm more of a woman. I'm just not a kid anymore. I'm looking for roles like that too."

Considering her model past, she recalls disgraced Dior designer John Galliano as having a particularly cinematic approach. (Galliano was fired in 2011 after being caught on video delivering an anti-Semitic tirade.) "He created a wonderland during his shows—especially with his own line," she says. "The models felt like they were going through this maze and experiencing different points of interaction. With him, it did feel like more of a performance." If he were to make his rumoured return to the runway, Deyn would be happy to work with him again. "Yes, I would walk for him," she says. "He's such an amazing person. I hope he gets to do what he loves again."

In addition to her husband, actor Giovanni Ribisi, Deyn has found inspiration in the work of director Terrence Malick (she credits *Badlands* as the film that made her want to act) and another model-turned-actress, Isabella Rossellini. "She's unique, classic, grounded and so focused," says Deyn. "When you look at her, you can see this centredness and this womanly power." —E.I.

FOR EVERY MODEL-TURNED-ACTOR success story (Halle Berry, Charlize Theron), there are too many failure-to-launch careers to count (Cindy Crawford, Estella Warren, Naomi Campbell). One can guess which tribe Agyness Deyn, a former face of Shiseido and Burberry, would like to join. In Canada to promote her first major movie role—in *Pusher*, an action thriller that premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival—Deyn says fashion and film are "two opposite worlds."

"There are so few parallels," says the 29-year-old Brit. "Any job where you have to be up in front of people may have some similarities but the same thing could be said about being a model and a come-

dian. I'm not cutting modelling off from my life but I do want to jump into film more. Acting involves the kind of exploration I feel like I'm missing."

It hasn't been a seamless transition for Deyn. Her fans in the fashion flock were betting that she would become a star in 2010 when she was cast as the goddess Aphrodite in a remake of *Clash of the Titans*. Unfortunately, Deyn's scenes ended up getting snipped from the film's final cut. Fortunately, *Pusher* (currently in theatres) makes up for that cinematic false start. In the role of a drug-abusing exotic dancer named Flo, Deyn's screen time is substantial and vital to the film's plot. There are flashes of her fashion past—shimmery Topshop archive pieces

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