

Peterborough Arts Cinema

Films that make you think

Thursday 12th April at 7:30pm

The Party ([2017](#))

15 | 1h 11min UK

Director/ Writer; [Sally Potter](#).

Stars; Bruno Ganz, Timothy Spall, Kirsten Scott Thomas, Patricia Clarkson

In Sally Potter's new dark comedy, Janet (Kristin Scott Thomas) is hosting an intimate gathering of friends in her London home to celebrate her political ascension, while her husband, Bill (Timothy Spall), seems preoccupied. Janet's acerbic best friend, April (Patricia Clarkson), arrives and others follow, some with their own dramatic news to share, but an announcement by Bill provokes a series of revelations that gradually unravel the sophisticated soiree, and a night that began with champagne may end with gunplay.



Sally Potter, film director – portrait of the artist

Interview by [Laura Barnett](#)

What first drew you to film-making?

First, watching films as a child. Second, putting a camera to my eye when I was about 14. My uncle and his then partner lent me their 8mm movie camera. I realised that, when you frame the world, you see and feel different things.

What was your big breakthrough?

The premiere of [Orlando](#) at the Venice film festival. It was startling: I don't think I'd ever had people appreciate something I'd done on such a scale.

Was it always your intention to take a multidisciplinary approach to your art (1)?

At the time, these life choices don't even feel like choices, and they're very confusing, especially as a young person. But with hindsight, it was the best possible training to be a director, which is very much a mongrel art form: you've got to know something about every aspect of the medium.

Do you suffer for your art?

Yes. I don't like to romanticise the suffering of the artist, but I think it's inevitable. When you try to push yourself beyond your perceived limits, it gets very painful. It's like a scab coming off.

Your new book is about working with actors (2). How would you sum up your own directorial approach?

I just keep my eyes and ears open. And I try to be kind and clear.

What has been your biggest challenge?

I haven't made anything like the quantity of films I feel I've been capable of. This is not unique to me, as a female director: the so-called glass ceiling has, along the way, felt more like cast-iron. A lot of the films I've made have been risk-taking, and it's a very, very risk-averse culture. Is the industry more worried about female directors taking risks compared to men? Well, the statistics do rather speak for themselves.

Only one woman (3) has ever won a best director Oscar. Why is this?

There are real – even if subtle – impediments for any female director. Film-making is an act of leadership and often involves a lot of money. It is also one of the biggest art forms that reflect back who we are: the resistance to being shown a reflection that is *different* is extremely strong. And the obstacles are also internal: in young women not having the confidence just to do it and brave the criticism.

Which artists do you most admire?

John Berger, the writer, [for his integrity and bravery](#), both politically and aesthetically. And [Billie Holiday](#), because her voice carries both the sorrows and the ecstasies of being alive.

What song would soundtrack your life?

Anything by the Romany singer [Nicolae Guta](#). There's this wonderful word "dor" in Romanian meaning "longing". I feel my life has been pervaded by a sense of longing.

How would you like to be remembered?

I'd much rather go on living.

Born: London, 1949 **Career:** Films include [Orlando](#), [The Man Who Cried](#), and [Ginger & Rosa](#). She has won more than 40 awards, including an OBE. "When I made my first feature, [The Gold Diggers](#), I was really torn to shreds. Toughens a girl up, though." Potter's [groundbreaking feminist piece](#) was [savaged](#) by many critics on its release in 1983. [The New York Times](#) called it "pure torture".

Edited by Alex O'Reilly

