

## The Wonders: Alice and Alba Rohrwacher

December 4 - 23, 2019

Celebrating two visionary, blossoming careers in contemporary cinema, MoMA and Istituto Luce Cinecittà honor the Italian writer-director Alice Rohrwacher and the actress Alba Rohrwacher with their first-ever retrospective. A Cannes prizewinner, Alice Rohrwacher (b. 1981) introduces her three feature films—*Corpo Celeste*, *The Wonders*, and *Happy as Lazzaro*—as well as her little-known documentaries with Pier Paolo Giarolo, the film projections she created for her 2016 staging of *La Traviata*, and her fanciful confection *De Djess*, made for the fashion house Miu Miu. Her sister Alba Rohrwacher (b. 1979), considered “one of the finest actresses of her generation” by *New York Times* critic A. O. Scott, introduces the North American premiere of Ginevra Elkann’s *If Only* and the opening-night screening of *Happy as Lazzaro*. Her astonishing range is further evidenced by her award-winning collaborations with Luca Guadagnino (*I Am Love* and *Part Deux*), Marco Bellocchio (*Dormant Beauty* and *Blood of My Blood*), Laura Bispuri (*Sworn Virgin* and *Daughter of Mine*), Doris Dörrie (*Bliss*), and Saverio Costanzo (*Hungry Hearts* and *The Solitude of Prime Numbers*), among others.

When Oscar Wilde famously observed that “We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars,” he might well have been speaking of the characters in Alice Rohrwacher’s films. Victims of genuine cruelty and cynicism, they also embody fairy-tale archetypes of goodness and wonder, finding escape through their imaginations, superstitions, and folkloric traditions. Rohrwacher envisions a place where Neorealism and Magic Realism coexist. The material world—whether of bees, children, or plants, a couture dress, a television, or an antique crucifix—seems to vibrate with those strange, elusive magical powers for which our conventional and comfortable understandings of time, language, and psychology offer little explanation. To evoke this world, Rohrwacher works regularly with a crew of brilliant artisans, including her cinematographer Hélène Louvart, production designer Erita Frigato, and costume designer Loredana Buscemi.

Of her sister in *The Wonders*, Alice Rohrwacher has said that “Alba is an exceptional actress and perfectly embodies the role of this young mother, who is simultaneously strong and fragile like a metal wire.” Alba Rohrwacher radiates intelligence and sensuousness in all her performances. At once earthy and ethereal, she mines shopworn roles—the neurotic mother-to-be, the unhinged daughter, the sexually restless wife, the hooker with a heart of gold—for their rich possibilities of emotional and physical expression, while also making less familiar types, such as a woman who lives as a man, entirely her own.

Organized by Joshua Siegel, Curator, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art, and Camilla Cormanni and Paola Ruggiero, Luce Cinecittà.

**Magari (If Only).** 2019. Italy/France. Directed by Ginevra Elkann. Screenplay by Elkann, Chiara Barzini. With Alba Rohrwacher, Céline Sallette, Brett Gelman. Eight-year-old Alma dreams of

reuniting her divorced parents in this beautifully observed coming-of-age drama, which opened the Locarno Film Festival and now has its North American premiere at MoMA. An accomplished producer making her feature directing debut (she apprenticed with Bernardo Bertolucci on *Besieged*), Ginevra Elkann does astonishing work with the film's nonprofessional child actors. Alba Rohrwacher is equally impressive as Benedetta, the writing partner and lover of Alma's father, who conspires to win over the girl and her older brothers with her mischievous transgressions. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Rai Com. In Italian; English subtitles. 104 min. North American premiere.

**Wednesday, December 4, 4:00. T2 (introduced by Ginevra Elkann and Alba Rohrwacher);  
Monday, December 9, 4:00. T2**

**Lazzaro Felice (Happy as Lazzaro).** 2018. Italy. Written and directed by Alice Rohrwacher. With Alba Rohrwacher, Adriano Tardiolo, Agnese Grazian. With its magical twists of fate and sudden leaps of time, its fairy tale archetypes of wicked queen, holy fool, and menacing wolf, Rohrwacher's exquisitely tender but tough fable follows Lazzaro, "a saint from pagan times," a man too good for this age or any other, as he enters into a kidnapping scheme to rescue a young nobleman from the moral turpitude of his cruelly feudal family. "This movie feels bracingly new and also like something that has been here forever. It has the urgency of a news bulletin and the authority of a classic" (A. O. Scott, *The New York Times*). DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Netflix. In Italian; English subtitles. 128 min.

**Wednesday, December 4, 7:00 (introduced by Alice and Alba Rohrwacher, T1); Sunday,  
December 8, 3:30 (T2)**

**Cecosamanca (What Is Missing) ["Calabria" episode].** 2006. Italy. Written and directed by Alice Rohrwacher. Political and urgent in spirit, *Cecosamanca* is the collective effort of a group of young documentary filmmakers to give voice to the voiceless in contemporary Italy. Alice Rohrwacher's contribution, her first solo directorial effort, is the story of a Calabrian boy who creates a fantasy world out of the detritus of a local river. DCP. Courtesy RAI Com. 4 min. North American premiere.

**Corpo Celeste (Celestial Body).** 2011. Italy. Written and directed by Alice Rohrwacher. With Yle Vianello, Salvatore Cantalupo, Pasqualina Scuncia. In Alice Rohrwacher's extraordinary feature film debut, 12-year-old Marta (Yle Vianello), willful and receptive like Robert Bresson's Mouchette, experiences a spiritual and physical awakening. Marta finds grace in the most unlikely of places: not among the grownups whose acts of betrayal and cruelty belie their Catholic professions (and processions) of faith and love, but instead among the Calabrian children who make a world of their own along the riverbed trash heaps. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Film Movement. In Italian; English subtitles. 100 min.

**Thursday, December 5, 6:30 (introduced by Alice Rohrwacher); Sunday, December 8, 1:00. T2**

#### **Alice Rohrwacher: Four Short Films**

**Un piccolo spettacolo (A Little Show).** 2005. Italy. Directed by Pier Paolo Giarolo, Alice Rohrwacher. Cowritten, co-edited, and photographed by Alice Rohrwacher. This documentary portrait of a traveling circus family—populated with performing kids, dogs, and chickens—seems to situate us squarely in Fellini country. But Giarolo and Alice Rohrwacher are up to

something far less obvious, tempering the film's antic whimsy by capturing the dogged determination of the Solunas as they venture by overstuffed caravan from town square to town square, all the way to the Balkans. Digital projection. Courtesy Officina Outroad. 62 min. North American premiere.

**9 × 10 novanta: "Una canzone" (9 × 10 Ninety: "A Song").** 2014. Italy. Written, directed, and edited by Alice Rohrwacher. One of the little-seen delights of this retrospective, Alice Rohrwacher's short film recovers the lost art of singing through an ever-surprising montage of archival footage, commissioned by the Istituto Luce on its 90th anniversary. Where did you learn the songs you know? Who taught you? These are the questions Rohrwacher posed in her neighborhood and combined the answers with archival material from Luce Cinecittà. Italians recall their childhood memories of music against a strange concatenation of historical images involving peasant rituals, World War I fighter planes, scientific studies of plants and sounds, and an underwater ballet of mermaids and dolphins. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà. In Italian; English subtitles. 10 min. North American premiere.

**La Traviata ["Violetta"].** 2016. Italy. Directed by Alice Rohrwacher. In 2016 Alice Rohrwacher directed her first opera, Verdi's *La Traviata*, for Teatri di Reggio Emilia, observing that "the image we chose to tell *Traviata* evokes the hands of a little girl who is doing 'he loves me he loves me not' with a daisy. It's the gesture that made Violetta famous, allowing us to say that while yes, she is Violetta the prostitute, the kept woman, the spirit of her gesture is young and spontaneous, [and through it] we are able to see the little girl she was." This excerpt was projected during the prelude of the play's third act. North American premiere. 4 min.

**De Djess.** 2015. Italy. Written and directed by Alice Rohrwacher. With Alba Rohrwacher, Yanet Mojica, Chiara Paoluzzi. Commissioned by the fashion house Miu Miu for its Women's Tales series, Alice Rohrwacher's absurdist delicacy uses stop-motion animation, spoken nonsense, and a playful *haute couture* aesthetic to create a series of arresting tableaux: diaphanous dresses that wash ashore like jellyfish, a prick of blood that drops on white silk, a prim waitress who follows a trail of rhinestone bread crumbs, and a Marilyn Monroe lookalike (Alba Rohrwacher) who toys with the impotent paparazzi crowding around her. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Miu Miu. 14 min. New York theatrical premiere.

Program 90 min.

**Friday, December 6, 4:00 (introduced by Alice Rohrwacher) T2; Sunday, December 15, 1:30. T2**

**Le meraviglie (The Wonders).** 2014. Italy. Written and directed by Alice Rohrwacher. With Alba Rohrwacher, Maria Alexandra Lungu, Sam Louwyck. In *The Wonders*, awarded the Grand Prize by a Cannes jury led by Jane Campion, Maria Alexandra Lungu is 12-year-old Gelsomina—her name, strength, and honesty borrowed from Giulietta Masina in *La Strada*—who toils for her sprawling beekeeping family in the hardscrabble Tuscan countryside. Magic arrives in the form of two strangers: a mute German boy whom her irascible father (Sam Louwyck) and beleaguered mother (Alba Rohrwacher) have taken in as a farmhand to help rescue their "crumbling kingdom"; and a Felliniesque TV talent-show host (Monica Bellucci) who comes dressed as an Etruscan Earth goddess in search of the region's "most traditional family." DCP.

Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Oscilloscope Laboratories. In Italian; English subtitles. 111 min.

**Friday, December 6, 7:00 (introduced by Alice Rohrwacher) T2; Monday, December 23, 7:30. T2**

**Part deux.** 2007. Italy. Directed by Luca Guadagnino. With Alba Rohrwacher, Massimo Mezzavilla, Valentina Cervi. Director Luca Guadagnino (*I Am Love*, screening on December 12 and 18) was inspired by a Wolfgang Tillmans photograph and Jonathan Demme's use of the Q Lazzarus song "Goodbye Horses" in *Silence of the Lambs* to make this steamy short about "dance, sex, and *joie de vivre*," collaborating with his regular costume designer Antonella Cannarozzi and his actor friends Alba Rohrwacher, Valentina Cervi, and Massimo Mezzavilla. DCP. Courtesy Frenesy. In Italian; English subtitles. 22 min.

**Vergine giurata (Sworn Virgin).** 2015. Italy/Switzerland/Germany/Albania/Kosovo/France. Directed by Laura Bispuri. Screenplay by Bispuri, Francesca Manieri. With Alba Rohrwacher, Emily Ferratello, Lars Eidinger. The fluidity of gender and European identity are considered with breathtaking originality in Laura Bispuri's *Sworn Virgin*, about an Italian woman (Alba Rohrwacher) who escapes her patriarchal home by spending 14 years in the Albanian highlands as "Mark," adopting the region's medieval tradition of *burnrnesh*a by pledging to live as a man and remain a virgin forever. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Strand Releasing. In Italian and Albanian; English subtitles. 90 min.

**Saturday, December 7, 1:00 (T2); Wednesday, December 11, 4:00 (T1)**

**Bella addormentata (Dormant Beauty).** 2012. Italy/France. Directed by Marco Bellocchio. Screenplay by Bellocchio, Veronica Raimo, Stefano Rulli. With Alba Rohrwacher, Isabelle Huppert, Toni Servillo. Inspired by the incendiary real-life case of Eluana Englaro, a woman who for 17 years laid in a vegetative state and whose fate was played out on Italian national television and in the courts, churches, and halls of Parliament, Marco Bellocchio confronts the ethical, political, and familial agonies of euthanasia. Through three interweaving stories, his complex, sensitive drama imagines the lives that Englaro unconsciously affected around her, including those of an anti-right-to-die activist (Alba Rohrwacher) and a famous actress (Isabelle Huppert) grievously coping with her own coma-stricken daughter. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Celluloid Dreams. In Italian and French; English subtitles. 110 min.

**Saturday, December 7, 4:00; Tuesday, December 10, 7:00. T2**

**Sangue del mio sangue (Blood of My Blood).** 2015. Italy/France/Switzerland. Written and directed by Marco Bellocchio. With Alba Rohrwacher, Roberto Herlitzka, Pier Giorgio Bellocchio. Set in an abandoned convent prison in his hometown of Bobbio, Marco Bellocchio's spellbinding anti-Catholic fable moves mysteriously from a 17th-century witch trial to a 21st-century society of Russian oligarchs, tax inspectors, and other vampires. Alba Rohrwacher and Federica Fracassi are the devoutly virginal Perletti sisters, who through medieval sorcery end up in bed with the twin brother of a dead priest. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and the Match Factory. In Italian; English subtitles. 106 min.

**Saturday, December 7, 7:00; Tuesday, December 10, 4:00. T2**

**Hungry Hearts.** 2014. Italy. Written and directed by Saverio Costanzo. With Alba Rohrwacher, Adam Driver, Roberta Maxwell. Comparisons with *Rosemary's Baby* and *Repulsion* are inevitable, but Saverio Costanzo's *Hungry Hearts* has far more than devil worship or crippling androphobia on its mind, creating instead a disturbing portrait of modern parenting and love *in extremis*, with a brilliantly contrapuntal Adam Driver and Alba Rohrwacher as the adversarial newlyweds, for which they both won top acting prizes at the Venice Film Festival. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and IFC Films. 109 min.

**Monday, December 9, 7:00; Saturday, December 14, 1:00. T2**

**Io sono l'amore (I Am Love).** 2009. Italy. Directed by Luca Guadagnino. Screenplay by Guadagnino, Barbara Alberti, Ivan Cotroneo, Walter Fasano. With Alba Rohrwacher, Tilda Swinton, Flavio Parenti. Despite its many knowing nods to Visconti, Antonioni, and Kubrick, Luca Guadagnino's drama of female sexual liberation perhaps owes its greatest debt to D. H. Lawrence. A Russian arriviste (Tilda Swinton) marries into the Recchi family, an old-world dynasty of Lombard industrialists, and embarks on a tempestuous affair that threatens to bring them down; as her lesbian artist daughter, Alba Rohrwacher also disturbs the illusion of domestic bliss. The Recchis make up in exquisite décor what they lack in feeling; among Guadagnino's many inspired conceits is his use of Piero Portaluppi's Villa Necchi Campiglio, a sumptuously austere masterpiece of fascist rationalism, as a central character. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Magnolia Pictures. In Italian; English subtitles. 120 min.

**Thursday, December 12, 4:00; Wednesday, December 18, 7:00. T1**

**Figlia mia (Daughter of Mine).** 2018. Italy/Germany/Switzerland. Directed by Laura Bispuri. Screenplay by Bispuri, Francesca Manieri. With Alba Rohrwacher, Sara Casu, Valeria Golino. Reuniting Alba Rohrwacher with writer-director Laura Bispuri (*Sworn Virgin*), *Daughter of Mine* confronts the contemporary meaning of motherhood with a ferocious vitality. Rohrwacher plays Angelica, a licentious Sardinian who retains a powerful hold over her nine-year-old daughter Vittoria (Sara Casu) even after secretly giving her up to the care of a devoted neighbor (Valeria Golino). DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Strand Releasing. In Italian; English subtitles. 100 min.

**Friday, December 13, 4:00; Friday, December 20, 7:00. T2**

**Tradurre (Translate).** 2008. Italy. Directed by Pier Paolo Giarolo. Edited by Alice Rohrwacher. Book translators, as director Pier Paolo Giarolo observes, have a lot in common with musicians and bakers: "[They] have to master not only a language but what's behind it: an entire culture and an idea of the world." Alice Rohrwacher performs a similarly interpretive role as Giarolo's assistant director and editor, creating meaning through the selection and splicing of images and sounds. In Italian; English subtitles. Digital projection. Courtesy Officina Outroad. 58 min. North American premiere.

**Boygo.** 2008. Italy. Directed by Pier Paolo Giarolo. Edited by Alice Rohrwacher. A young circus performer spends five solitary days carting a horse across the wintry Hungarian landscape in this Neorealist documentary short. Digital projection. Courtesy Officina Outroad. 28 min. North American premiere.

**Saturday, December 14, 4:00; Wednesday, December 18, 4:30. T2**

**Troppa grazia (Lucia's Grace).** 2018. Italy. Directed by Gianni Zanasi. Screenplay by Zanasi, Giacomo Ciarrapico, Michele Pellegrini, Federica Pontremoli. With Alba Rohrwacher, Elio Germano, Giuseppe Battiston. Single parent and businesswoman Lucia (Alba Rohrwacher) experiences the most bizarre of midlife crises: an encounter with the Virgin Mary that throws everything she holds dear into question. Gianni Zanasi's comic parable, with its echoes of James Thurber's *Unicorn in the Garden* and Mary Chase's *Harvey*, was the closing night feature of the Critic's Week section at Cannes. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and The Match Factory. In Italian; English subtitles. 110 min.

**Sunday, December 15, 4:30; Monday, December 16, 4:30. T2**

**L'uomo che verrà (The Man Who Will Come).** 2009. Italy. Directed by Giorgio Diritti. Screenplay by Diritti, Giovanni Galavotti, Tania Pedroni. With Alba Rohrwacher, Greta Zuccheri Montanari, Claudio Casadio. Winner of 10 David di Donatello awards (the Italian equivalent of the Oscars), including Best Picture and Best Supporting Actress (Alba Rohrwacher), *The Man Who Will Come* witnesses the infamous Marzabotto massacre of 1944 through the eyes of a mute eight-year-old girl, experienced as a nightmarish tale of Nazi barbarism and partisan heroics. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Intramovies. In Italian; English subtitles. 115 min.

**Monday, December 16, 7:30; Saturday, December 21, 4:00. T2**

**Glück (Bliss).** 2012. Germany. Written and directed by Doris Dörrie. With Alba Rohrwacher, Vinzenz Kiefer, Matthias Brandt. Writer-director Doris Dörrie (*Cherry Blossoms, Men...*) transforms the sensational true-crime romance between a homeless punk (Vinzenz Kiefer) and a Macedonian war refugee turning tricks in Berlin (Alba Rohrwacher) into the blackest of comedies. DCP. Courtesy Beta Cinema. In German; English subtitles. 112 min. New York premiere.

**Tuesday, December 17, 4:00 (T1); Sunday, December 22, 1:30 (T2)**

**Il papà di Giovanna (Giovanna's Father).** 2008. Italy. Directed by Pupi Avati. Screenplay by Antonio Avati, Pupi Avati. With Silvio Orlando, Francesca Neri, Ezio Greggio. Alba Rohrwacher plunges unnervingly into madness as the volatile teenage daughter of an overprotective teacher in fascist Bologna, a breakthrough performance for which she won Italy's prestigious David di Donatello Award. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Duea Film. In Italian; English subtitles. 104 min.

**Thursday, December 19, 4:30; Saturday, December 21, 1:00. T2**

**La solitudine dei numeri primi (The Solitude of Prime Numbers).** 2010. Italy/Germany/France. Directed by Saverio Costanzo. Screenplay by Costanzo, Paolo Giordano. With Alba Rohrwacher, Luca Marinelli, Arianna Nastro. Based on the bestselling novel by Paolo Giordano, author of Luca Guadagnino's forthcoming television series *We Are Who We Are*, *The Solitude of Prime Numbers* earned Alba Rohrwacher a top acting prize at the Venice Film Festival for her performance as the emotionally scarred Alice, who cautiously befriends a man who was similarly wounded in childhood. Director Saverio Costanzo cast three actors to play each character at different ages, ambitiously freewheeling among temporal periods and emotional

registers. DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà and Le Pacte. In Italian; English subtitles. 118 min.

**Thursday, December 19, 7:30; Friday, December 20, 4:00. T2**

**Cosa voglio di più (Come Undone).** 2010. Italy/Switzerland/France. Directed by Silvio Soldini. Screenplay by Soldini, Dorian Leondeff, Angelo Carbone. With Alba Rohrwacher, Pierfrancesco Favino, Teresa Saponangelo. With a keen eye for bourgeois discontentment, Silvio Soldini's story of modern-day infidelity and its consequences gives Alba Rohrwacher and Pierfrancesco Favino the freedom to explore their characters' feelings of regret, resentment, and sexual hunger with an intelligence rarely seen since Meryl Streep and Robert De Niro's affair in *Falling in Love* (1984). DCP. Courtesy Istituto Luce Cinecittà, Pyramide International, and Film Movement. In Italian and French; English subtitles. 126 min.

**Sunday, December 22, 4:30; Monday, December 23, 4:30. T2**