

FILM FACTS

The Draughtsman's Contract

Director: Peter Greenaway

Main Cast: Anthony Higgins, Janet Suzman, Anne-Louise Lambert, Hugh Fraser

Release Year: 1982

Country: UK

Run Time: 103 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Plot

Peter Greenaway's first fiction feature (after the mock-documentary *The Falls*) made him immediately famous and was named one of the most original films of the 1980s by British critics. The action is set in the director's beloved 17th century. Ambitious young artist Mr. Neville (Anthony Higgins) is invited by Mrs. Herbert (Janet Suzman) to make 12 elaborate sketches of her estate. Besides money, the contract includes sexual favors that Mrs. Herbert will offer to the draughtsman in the absence of Mr. Herbert. Entirely confident in his ability to weave a web of intrigues, Mr. Neville eventually becomes a victim of someone else's elaborate scheme. The film is structured as a sophisticated intellectual puzzle like the ones popular in the 17th century. There is a lot to pay attention to besides the intrigues -- fancy wigs, conversations by candlelight, English parks, Purcell-inspired baroque music by Michael Nyman, all to please the eyes, soothe the ears, and stimulate the mind. ~ Yuri German, *All Movie Guide*

Review

The Draughtsman's Contract is a seductive cinematic puzzle, with all the visual richness and style that have come to be associated with the film's director, Peter Greenaway. Like other Greenaway efforts, the story is dense with multiple layers. Deception, both of fact and motive, permeate the texture to the point that there is almost too much for audiences to assimilate in one viewing. While the performances are uniformly excellent, it is Greenaway's ability to create a vivid historical setting that most distinguishes the film. Michael Nyman's carefully crafted and historically appropriate score contributes greatly to the verisimilitude. The cinematography is unusually straightforward for a Greenaway film, with numerous static camera set-ups providing a head-on look at the proceedings. ~ Richard Gilliam, *All Movie Guide*

Cast

Anthony Higgins - Mr. Neville

Janet Suzman - Mrs. Herbert

Anne-Louise Lambert - Mrs. Talmann

Hugh Fraser - Mr. Talmann

Nicholas Amer - Mr. Parkes

Suzanne Crowley - Mrs. Pierpont

Neil Cunningham - Mr. Noyes

Michael Feast - The statue

David Gant - Mr. Seymour

David Meyer - Mr. Poulenc

Dave Hill - Mr. Herbert
Vivienne Chandler - Laundress
Joss Buckley - Mr. Porringer
Geoffrey Larder - Mr. Hammond
Tony Meyer - The Poulenas
Steve Ubels - Mr. Van Hoyton
Mike Carter - Mr. Clark
George Miller - Valet

Credits

Sue Blane - Costume Designer; Curtis Clark - Cinematographer; Peter Greenaway - Director; Peter Greenaway - Screenwriter; Michael Nyman - Composer (Music Score); Bob Ringwood - Art Director; Bob Ringwood - Costume Designer; John Wilson - Editor; David Payne – Producer

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