

CINEMA

Lost in Jarmusch's America

Veteran actor Bill Murray stars as a jaded lothario who goes on a search for his lost past

ANDREW MINH

● *Broken Flowers*, the follow-up to last year's uneven *Coffee and Cigarettes*, finds director Jim Jarmusch back in his stride. Funny and contemplative without being sentimental, he stays true to his independent roots in this story of an ageing Casanova's search for his past.

Meet Don Johnston, played by Bill Murray: an "over the hill Don Juan" who's on an autumnal plateau and seems happy (or apathetic enough) to stay that way. Here's a guy who made a fortune years ago in computers, yet now refuses to own one. He'd rather watch old black and white versions of *Don Juan* on his plasma TV. This character is in sharp contrast to his neighbour, an Ethiopian immigrant named Winston who has five kids, three jobs and a newfound passion for internet sleuthing. It's his curiosity and enthusiasm which will set the movie in motion.

Sherry, played by Julie Delpy, has just left Don because he refuses to commit. That very day an anonymous pink letter arrives at his swank, leather-upholstered bachelor pad saying he has a 19-year-old son who might be looking for him. The problem is, who, among his many paramours 20 years earlier, could be the mother? Or is it just a ruse by an estranged ex-girlfriend?

Jaded Johnston hardly lifts an eyebrow when he reads the letter. It is Winston, his go-getter neighbour, who motivates Johnston to find out who she is, and if, in fact, he has a son. Winston gets him to compile a list of all the possible mothers, scours the Internet for addresses, and sets up his entire travel itinerary complete with a great mix CD. John-



A scene from "Broken Flowers", starring Bill Murray as an ageing Don Juan

ton's search for his past then takes us across the American landscape.

Its cross-section of eccentrics is small but telling: from vacuous track housing realtors to northern metalhead bikers to mystical animal communicators. In one of the funnier scenes we meet a stock car racing widow (Sharon Stone) and her precocious daughter, Lolita. We finally get a genuine reaction from Murray, the deadpan ashen-haired lothario, when they both try to seduce him. It's a clear homage to Kubrick's version of *Lolita*, and the gag is in hilarious counterpoint to

the subtle humour of the rest of the film. So, how are these women (also starring Jessica Lange, Tilda Swinson, Francis Conroy) so attracted to an all too natural and imperfect Murray, who even 20 years ago could hardly have passed for a Don Juan? It's the way his stillness in the face of absurdity draws us to him; when all we want is a small twitch of complicity. When we get it, it's tremendous for all its low key glory. In fact, throughout *Broken Flowers* you get lows where you expect highs — a testament to Jarmusch and Murray's minimalist mastery.

Filling the city with video art

ANDREW MORRISON

● The third Loop festival, which is devoted to promoting video art in all its forms, opens in Barcelona on November 4. Just like last year, this innovative festival will be divided into two sections: the first, *Loop: the Video Art Fair*, will take place at Barceló Hotel Sants, and will run from November 11 to 13.

Fifty of the hotel's rooms will be turned into small video cinemas, showing an extensive selection of video art from around the world. The second part, *Loop: the Place for Video Art Lovers* takes place in over 150 different venues, including museums, shops, bars and restaurants, which will all be fitted with video screens that will help to bring video art into people's everyday lives. This section, which runs from November 7 to 20, will be divided up into eight different routes through the old city; the idea is that fans of video art can wander through neighbourhoods such as the Raval and Ciutat Vella, visiting the different public and private establishments where these screenings will be taking place. In addition, this year, for the first time, Loop will be including a series of conferences and round tables.

For further information on screenings and other activities, go to the festival website: www.loop.com

Italian Institute places film-maker Pier Paolo Pasolini in perspective

BRADEN PHILLIPS

● The influential Italian essayist, poet and neo-realist film director, Pier Paolo Pasolini, will be the focus of a film retrospective, conferences and exhibitions in a joint program by Filmoteca de Catalunya and the Italian Institute of Barcelona.

The retrospective, which takes place November 1-15, will offer nine of Pasolini's 26 films, including the neo-realist classics *Accatone* and *Mamma Roma*. The highlight of the event will be the documentary about the artist, *Pasolini: A Journey in Italy*, made by the Catalan

film-maker Xavier Juncosa, who will answer audience questions after the screening. The film will show at Filmoteca on November 1, at 22:00.

On November 5, three of Pasolini's adaptations of literary classics will be screened, *Decameron*, *The Canterbury Tales* and *A Thousand and One Nights*, also at Filmoteca. The Italian Institute will screen three of the artist's films, among them *The Gospel According to St Matthew*, and hold related events, including exhibitions that will run until late December.



The film director Pasolini photographed on the set of *Mamma Roma* / ARCHIVE