

CINEMA



Actor Scarlett Johansson is the femme fatale lead in Woody Allen's "Match Point"

Old world, new game

Allen leaves the Big Apple, but loses something on the way

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● Director Woody Allen swaps his beloved offshore island of Manhattan for England in *Match Point*, a story of hubris and the terrible consequences it can have. It's a bold move — both physically and stylistically — for a veteran director who could easily repeat old formulas.

Chris Wilton (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers) is a young tennis instructor from Ireland with a modest background. His job allows him to mingle with British high society, and soon he's involved with two women: one with the right connections for his future, the other, his brother-in-law's fiancée, played by a photogenic but unconvincing Scarlett Johansson.

Allen's protagonist reads Dostoyevsky and quotes Sophocles, but we never get a true sense of his depth, or the motivation behind his actions at the climax of the film. There is no chemistry with Johansson; their lust is just a dribble

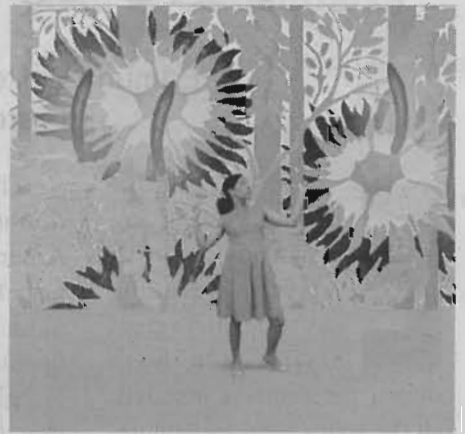
of scripted words. The secondary characters, strangely enough, do the best acting here.

In this movie, Allen is trapped in the clever conceptual metaphor of a tennis ball bouncing off the top of a net, with a fifty-fifty chance of falling on either side. Depending on where it falls, it could decide the whole game. The young tennis stud says: "I'd rather have luck than talent" and it's this line which serves as the narrative lead into the final twist a few short minutes before the end of the movie. What's missing is the in-between.

The hallmark of a great artist is the ability to re-invent themselves. Allen sometimes slides into self-parody, but for the most part he has avoided it in his directorial career. Despite the familiar white on black opening credits, it's hard to see his signature on *Match Point*. We get no jazz this time but a soundtrack mainly comprising opera; no human warmth, just an idea.

London video artists on show at Espai Ubú

● Coinciding with the third edition of LOOP '05: The Video Art Festival, and with over 200 contributors, Video London sets out to reflect the vitality and diversity of video art made by young artists working, studying or exhibiting in London and the UK. The exhibition, which will be held at Espai Ubú in the Barcelona district of Sant Andreu (www.espaiubu.com) offers visitors the opportunity to see new talent in the making by bringing together more than 50 artists who can be seen in London's smaller commercial galleries with the best of this year's graduating students. From low-tech shorts to more complex work with high production values, this is art that is in turn witty, engaging, challenging or simply visually stunning. At the heart of the exhibition is a 60 minute program featuring 24 short



works by 21 contributors, while a separate part of the program features a series of monographic screenings of individual works by a range of video artists including Hiraki Sawa, Stuart Croft, Doug Fishbone and Zatorski and Zatorski./A.M.



This year's festival reaches the lofty summits of the Himalayan Mountains

Sherpas honoured at mountain film festival

● This year's Festival Internacional de Cinema de Muntanya i Aventura de Torelló — an annual festival dedicated to films about mountains and climbing — is a special one, as it is dedicated to all the Sherpas who have helped mountaineers reach the lofty summits of the Himalayas.

One of the high points of the festival will be the appearance of Snowflower Jamling Tenzing, son of Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, who was the first to climb Everest, with Sir Edmund Hillary. The festival, which runs from Nov. 11 to 20. Go to www.torellomountainfilm.com/A.M.



Barcelona's independent film festival opens

● This year's L'Alternativa independent cinema festival, which will run from November 11 to 19, will include a retrospective on the documentary maker Nicolas Philibert, a look at films made by young Germans of Turkish origin, such as Faith Akin and Yüksel Yavuz and work by the Basque filmmaker Ivan Zulueta. L'Alternativa, which is now in its 12th year, is presenting more than 400 films this year, 66 of which will be competing in the official sections of short films, animation, full-length films and documentaries. The organizers are hoping that this year's festival will surpass the success of last year's, which attracted a total of 33,000

people to the screenings.

L'Alternativa takes place in 7 different venues around the city: CCCB (Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona; C/Montalegre, 5). This is the main venue of the festival where films in the Official and Parallel sections are screened. It is also where the opening and closing functions take place. Other venues include Cines Méliès (C/Villarroel, 102), FNAC (Plaça Catalunya), Institut Francés (C/Moia, 8), Casa América en Catalunya (Córcega, 299), Societat General d'Autors i Editors (SGAE, Passeig Colom, 6) and the Círculo de Lectores (Travessera de Gràcia, 47-49)./A.M.