

= Mulholland Drive (film) =

Mulholland Drive (stylized onscreen as Mulholland Dr.) is a 2001 American neo @-@ noir mystery film written and directed by David Lynch and starring Justin Theroux , Naomi Watts , Laura Harring , Ann Miller , and Robert Forster . It tells the story of an aspiring actress named Betty Elms (Watts) , newly arrived in Los Angeles , California , who meets and befriends an amnesic woman (Harring) hiding in an apartment that belongs to Betty 's aunt . The story includes several other seemingly unrelated vignettes that eventually interlock , as well as some surreal and darkly comic scenes and images that relate to the cryptic narrative .

Originally conceived as a television pilot , a large portion of the film was shot in 1999 with Lynch 's plan to keep it open @-@ ended for a potential series . After viewing Lynch 's version , however , television executives decided to reject it . Lynch then provided an ending to the project , making it a feature film . The half @-@ pilot , half @-@ feature result , along with Lynch 's characteristic style , has left the general meaning of the movie 's events open to interpretation . Lynch has declined to offer an explanation of his intentions for the narrative , leaving audiences , critics , and cast members to speculate on what transpires . He gave the film the tagline " A love story in the city of dreams " .

Categorized as a psychological thriller , the film was highly acclaimed by many critics and earned Lynch the Prix de la mise en scène (Best Director Award) at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival , as well as an Oscar nomination for Best Director . Mulholland Drive launched the careers of Watts and Harring and was the last feature film to star veteran Hollywood actress Ann Miller . The film is widely regarded as one of Lynch 's finest works , alongside Eraserhead (1977) and Blue Velvet (1986) , and was chosen by 40 critics as one of the greatest films of all time in the British Film Institute 's decennial Sight & Sound poll . A. O. Scott of The New York Times writes that while some might consider the plot an " offense against narrative order ... the film is an intoxicating liberation from sense , with moments of feeling all the more powerful for seeming to emerge from the murky night world of the unconscious . "

= = Plot = =

The story may not be linear and exhibits several instances of temporal disruption . A dark @-@ haired woman (Harring) escapes her own murder , surviving a car accident on Mulholland Drive . Injured and in shock , she descends into Los Angeles and sneaks into an apartment that an older , red @-@ headed woman has just vacated . An aspiring actress named Betty Elms (Watts) arrives at the same apartment and finds the dark @-@ haired woman confused , not knowing her own name . The dark @-@ haired woman assumes the name " Rita " after seeing a poster for the film Gilda (1946) , starring Rita Hayworth . To help Rita remember her identity , Betty looks in Rita 's purse , where she finds a large amount of money and an unusual blue key .

In what seems to be a scene from a different narrative , set at a diner called Winkies , a man (Patrick Fischler) tells his companion (Michael Cooke) about a nightmare in which he dreamt there was a horrible figure behind the diner . When they investigate , the figure appears , causing the man with the nightmare to collapse in fright . As the principal narrative resumes , Hollywood director Adam Keshner (Justin Theroux) has his film commandeered by apparent mobsters , who insist he cast an unknown actress named Camilla Rhodes (Melissa George) as the lead in his film . After he resists , he returns home to find his wife having an affair and is thrown out of his house . He later learns that his bank has closed his line of credit and he is broke . He agrees to meet a mysterious figure called The Cowboy , who urges him to cast Camilla Rhodes for his own good . Later , a bungling hit man (Mark Pellegrino) attempts to steal a book full of phone numbers and leaves three people dead .

Trying to learn more about Rita 's accident , Betty and Rita go to Winkies and are served by a waitress named Diane , which causes Rita to remember the name " Diane Selwyn " . They find Diane Selwyn in the phone book and call her , but she does not answer . Betty goes to an audition , where her performance is highly praised . A casting agent takes her to the set of a film called The

Sylvia North Story , directed by Adam , where Camilla Rhodes gives an audition and Adam declares , " This is the girl . " Betty smiles shyly as she locks eyes with Adam , but she flees before she can meet him , saying that she is late to meet a friend .

Betty and Rita go to Diane Selwyn 's apartment and break in when no one answers the door . In the bedroom they find the body of a woman who has been dead for several days . Terrified , they return to their apartment , where Rita disguises herself with a blonde wig . The two women have sex that night and awake at 2 a.m. , when Rita insists they go to an eerie theater called Club Silencio . On stage , a man explains in several languages that everything is an illusion ; a woman begins singing then collapses , although her vocals continue . Betty finds a blue box in her purse that matches Rita 's key . Upon returning to the apartment , Rita retrieves the key and finds that Betty has disappeared . Rita unlocks the box , and it falls to the floor with a thump .

The older red @-@ headed woman investigates the sound , but nothing is there . The Cowboy appears in the doorway of Diane Selwyn 's bedroom saying , " Hey , pretty girl . Time to wake up . " At this point , all elements of the narrative seem to change . Diane Selwyn (played by Watts) wakes up in her bed . She looks exactly like Betty , but is portrayed as a failed actress driven into a deep depression by her unrequited love for Camilla Rhodes (played now by Haring) . On Camilla 's invitation , Diane attends a party at Adam 's house on Mulholland Drive . Her limousine stops before they reach the house and Camilla escorts her using a shortcut . Adam appears to be in love with Camilla . Over dinner , Diane states that she came to Hollywood when her aunt died , and she met Camilla at an audition for The Sylvia North Story . Another woman (played by George) kisses Camilla and they turn and smile at Diane . Adam and Camilla prepare to make an important announcement , and dissolve into laughter and kiss while Diane watches , crying .

Diane meets with the hit man at Winkies , where she gives him Camilla 's photo and a large amount of money , and they are served by a waitress named Betty . The hit man tells Diane that when the job is done , she will find a blue key . Diane asks what , if anything , the key opens , but the hit man just laughs . Diane looks up and sees the man who had the nightmare standing at the counter . Back at her apartment , with the key on a table in front of her , she is terrorized by hallucinations . She runs screaming to her bed , where she shoots herself . A woman at the club whispers " Silencio " .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

Originally conceived as a television series , Mulholland Drive began as a 90 @-@ minute pilot produced for Touchstone Television and intended for the ABC television network . David Lynch sold the idea to ABC executives based only on the story of Rita emerging from the car accident with her purse containing \$ 125 @,@ 000 in cash and the blue key , and Betty trying to help her figure out who she is . An ABC executive recalled , " I remember the creepiness of this woman in this horrible , horrible crash , and David teasing us with the notion that people are chasing her . She 's not just ' in ' trouble ? she is trouble . Obviously , we asked , ' What happens next ? ' And David said , ' You have to buy the pitch for me to tell you . ' "

Lynch described the attractiveness of the idea of a pilot , despite the knowledge that the medium of television would be constricting : " I 'm a sucker for a continuing story [...] Theoretically , you can get a very deep story and you can go so deep and open the world so beautifully , but it takes time to do that . " The story included normal and surreal elements , much like Lynch 's earlier series Twin Peaks . Groundwork was laid for story arcs , such as the mystery of Rita 's identity , Betty 's career and Adam Kesher 's film project .

Actress Sherilyn Fenn stated in a 2014 interview that the original idea came during the filming of Twin Peaks , as a spin @-@ off film for her character of Audrey Horne .

= = = Casting = = =

Lynch cast Naomi Watts and Laura Harring by their photographs . He called them in separately for half @-@ hour interviews and told them he had not seen either of their previous works in film or television . Harring considered it fateful that she was involved in a minor car accident on the way to the first interview , only to learn her character would also be involved in a car accident in the film . Watts arrived wearing jeans for the first interview , direct from the airplane from New York City . Lynch asked her to return the next day " more glammed up " . She was offered the part two weeks later . Lynch explained his selection of Watts , " I saw someone that I felt had a tremendous talent , and I saw someone who had a beautiful soul , an intelligence ? possibilities for a lot of different roles , so it was a beautiful full package . " Justin Theroux also met Lynch directly after his airplane flight . After a long flight with little sleep , Theroux arrived dressed all in black , with untidy hair . Lynch liked the look and decided to cast Adam wearing similar clothes and the same hairstyle .

= = = Filming = = =

Filming for the television pilot began on location in Los Angeles in February 1999 and took six weeks . Ultimately , the network was unhappy with the pilot and decided not to place it on its schedule . Objections included the nonlinear storyline , the ages of Harring and Watts (whom they considered too old) , Ann Miller 's character cigarette smoking and a close @-@ frame shot of dog feces in one scene . Lynch remembered , " All I know is , I loved making it , ABC hated it , and I don 't like the cut I turned in . I agreed with ABC that the longer cut was too slow , but I was forced to butcher it because we had a deadline , and there wasn 't time to finesse anything . It lost texture , big scenes and storylines , and there are 300 tape copies of the bad version circulating around . Lots of people have seen it , which is embarrassing , because they 're bad @-@ quality tapes , too . I don 't want to think about it . "

The script was later rewritten and expanded when Lynch decided to transform it into a feature film . Describing the transition from an open @-@ ended pilot to a feature film with a resolution of sorts , Lynch said , " One night , I sat down , the ideas came in , and it was a most beautiful experience . Everything was seen from a different angle [...] Now , looking back , I see that [the film] always wanted to be this way . It just took this strange beginning to cause it to be what it is . " The result was an extra eighteen pages of material that included the romantic relationship between Rita and Betty and the events that occurred after the blue box was opened . Watts was relieved that the pilot was dropped by ABC . She found Betty too one @-@ dimensional without the darker portion of the film that was put together afterward . Most of the new scenes were filmed in October 2000 , funded with \$ 7 million from French production company StudioCanal .

Theroux described approaching filming without entirely understanding what the plot was about : " You get the whole script , but he might as well withhold the scenes you 're not in , because the whole turns out to be more mystifying than the parts . David welcomes questions , but he won 't answer any of them [...] You work kind of half @-@ blindfolded . If he were a first @-@ time director and hadn 't demonstrated any command of this method , I 'd probably have reservations . But it obviously works for him . " Theroux noted the only answer Lynch did provide was that he was certain that Theroux 's character , a Hollywood director , was not autobiographical of Lynch . Watts stated that she tried to bluff Lynch by pretending she had the plot figured out , and that he delighted in the cast 's frustration .

= = Themes and interpretations = =

Giving the film only the tagline , " A love story in the city of dreams " , David Lynch has refused to comment on Mulholland Drive 's meaning or symbolism , leading to much discussion and multiple interpretations . The Christian Science Monitor film critic David Sterritt spoke with Lynch after the film screened at Cannes and wrote that the director " insisted that Mulholland Drive does tell a coherent , comprehensible story " , unlike some of Lynch 's earlier films . On the other hand , Justin Theroux said of Lynch 's feelings on the multiple meanings people perceive in the film , " I think he 's

genuinely happy for it to mean anything you want . He loves it when people come up with really bizarre interpretations . David works from his subconscious . "

= = = Dreams and alternative realities = = =

An early interpretation of the film uses dream analysis to explain that the first part is a dream of the real Diane Selwyn , who has cast her dream @-@ self as the innocent and hopeful " Betty Elms " , reconstructing her history and persona into something like an old Hollywood film . In the dream , Betty is successful , charming , and lives the fantasy life of a soon @-@ to @-@ be @-@ famous actress . The last one @-@ fifth of the film presents Diane 's real life , in which she has failed both personally and professionally . She arranges for Camilla , an ex @-@ lover , to be killed , and unable to cope with the guilt , re @-@ imagines her as the dependent , pliable amnesiac Rita . Clues to her inevitable demise , however , continue to appear throughout her dream .

This interpretation was similar to what Naomi Watts construed , when she said in an interview , " I thought Diane was the real character and that Betty was the person she wanted to be and had dreamed up . Rita is the damsel in distress and she 's in absolute need of Betty , and Betty controls her as if she were a doll . Rita is Betty 's fantasy of who she wants Camilla to be . " Watts ' own early experiences in Hollywood parallel those of Diane 's . She endured some professional frustration before she became successful , auditioned for parts in which she did not believe , and encountered people who did not follow through with opportunities . She recalled , " There were a lot of promises , but nothing actually came off . I ran out of money and became quite lonely . "

The Guardian asked six well @-@ known film critics for their own perceptions of the overall meaning in Mulholland Drive . Neil Roberts of The Sun and Tom Charity of Time Out subscribe to the theory that Betty is Diane 's projection of a happier life . Roger Ebert and Jonathan Ross seem to accept this interpretation , but both hesitate to overanalyze the movie . Ebert states , " There is no explanation . There may not even be a mystery . " Ross observes that there are storylines that go nowhere : " Perhaps these were leftovers from the pilot it was originally intended to be , or perhaps these things are the non @-@ sequiturs and subconscious of dreams . " Philip French from The Observer sees it as an allusion to Hollywood tragedy , while Jane Douglas from the BBC rejects the theory of Betty 's life as Diane 's dream , but also warns against too much analysis .

Another theory offered is that the narrative is a Möbius strip , a twisted band that has no beginning and no end . In another interpretation Betty and Rita and Diane and Camilla may exist in parallel universes that sometimes interconnect . Or the entire film is a dream , but whose dream is unknown . Repeated references to beds , bedrooms and sleeping symbolize the heavy influence of dreams . Rita falls asleep several times ; in between these episodes , disconnected scenes such as the men having a conversation at Winkies , Betty 's arrival in Los Angeles and the bungled hit take place , suggesting that Rita may be dreaming them . The opening shot of the film zooms into a bed containing an unknown sleeper , instilling , according to film scholar Ruth Perlmutter , the necessity to ask if what follows is reality . Professor of dream studies Kelly Bulkeley argues that the early scene at the diner , as the only one in which dreams or dreaming are explicitly mentioned , illustrates " revelatory truth and epistemological uncertainty in Lynch 's film " . The monstrous being from the dream , who is the subject of conversation of the men in Winkies , reappears at the end of the movie right before and after Diane commits suicide . Bulkeley asserts that the lone discussion of dreams in that scene presents an opening to " a new way of understanding everything that happens in the movie " .

Philosopher and film theorist Robert Sinnerbrink similarly notes that the images following Diane 's apparent suicide undermine the " dream and reality " interpretation . After Diane shoots herself , the bed is consumed with smoke and Betty and Rita are shown beaming at each other , after which a woman in the Club Silencio balcony whispers " Silencio " as the screen fades to black . Sinnerbrink writes that the " concluding images float in an indeterminate zone between fantasy and reality , which is perhaps the genuinely metaphysical dimension of the cinematic image " , also noting that it might be that the " last sequence comprises the fantasy images of Diane 's dying consciousness , concluding with the real moment of her death : the final Silencio " . Referring to the same sequence ,

film theorist Andrew Hageman notes that " the ninety @-@ second coda that follows Betty / Diane 's suicide is a cinematic space that persists after the curtain has dropped on her living consciousness , and this persistent space is the very theatre where the illusion of illusion is continually unmasked " .

Film theorist David Roche writes that Lynch films do not simply tell detective stories , but they force the audience into the role of becoming detectives themselves to make sense of the narratives , and that Mulholland Drive , like other Lynch films , frustrates " the spectator 's need for a rational diegesis by playing on the spectator 's mistake that narration is synonymous with diegesis " . In Lynch 's films , the spectator is always " one step behind narration " and thus " narration prevails over diegesis " . Roche also notes that there are multiple mysteries in the film that ultimately go unanswered by the characters who meet dead ends , like Betty and Rita , or give in to pressures as Adam does . Although the audience still struggles to make sense of the stories , the characters are no longer trying to solve their mysteries . Roche concludes that Mulholland Drive is a mystery film not because it allows the audience to view the solution to a question , but the film itself is a mystery that is held together " by the spectator @-@ detective 's desire to make sense " of it .

= = = A " poisonous valentine to Hollywood " = = =

Regardless of the proliferation of theories , critics note that no explanation satisfies all of the loose ends and questions that arise from the film . Stephen Holden of The New York Times writes , " Mulholland Drive has little to do with any single character 's love life or professional ambition . The movie is an ever @-@ deepening reflection on the allure of Hollywood and on the multiple role @-@ playing and self @-@ invention that the movie @-@ going experience promises [...] What greater power is there than the power to enter and to program the dream life of the culture ? " J. Hoberman from The Village Voice echoes this sentiment by calling it a " poisonous valentine to Hollywood " .

Mulholland Drive has been compared with Billy Wilder 's film noir classic Sunset Boulevard (1950) , another tale about broken dreams in Hollywood , and early in the film Rita is shown crossing Sunset Boulevard at night . Apart from both titles being named after iconic Los Angeles streets , Mulholland Drive is " Lynch 's unique account of what held Wilder 's attention too : human putrefaction (a term Lynch used several times during his press conference at the New York Film Festival 2001) in a city of lethal illusions " . The title of the film is a reference to iconic Hollywood culture . David Lynch lives near Mulholland Drive , and stated in an interview , " At night , you ride on the top of the world . In the daytime you ride on top of the world , too , but it 's mysterious , and there 's a hair of fear because it goes into remote areas . You feel the history of Hollywood in that road . " Watts also had experience with the road before her career was established : " I remember driving along the street many times sobbing my heart out in my car , going , ' What am I doing here ? ' " .

One critic cautions viewers against a cynical interpretation of the events in the movie , stating that Lynch presents more than " the façade and that he believes only evil and deceit lie beneath it . " As much as Lynch makes a statement about the deceit , manipulation and false pretenses in Hollywood culture , he also infuses nostalgia throughout the film and recognizes that real art comes from classic filmmaking as Lynch cast thereby paying tribute to veteran actors Ann Miller , Lee Grant and Chad Everett . He also portrays Betty as extraordinarily talented and that her abilities are noticed by powerful people in the entertainment industry . Commenting on the contrasting positions between film nostalgia and the putrefaction of Hollywood , Steven Dillon writes that Mulholland Drive is critical of the culture of Hollywood as much as it is a condemnation of " cinephilia " (the fascination of filmmaking and the fantasies associated with it) .

Harring described her interpretation after seeing the film : " When I saw it the first time , I thought it was the story of Hollywood dreams , illusion and obsession . It touches on the idea that nothing is quite as it seems , especially the idea of being a Hollywood movie star . The second and third times I saw it , I thought it dealt with identity . Do we know who we are ? And then I kept seeing different things in it [...] There 's no right or wrong to what someone takes away from it or what they think the film is really about . It 's a movie that makes you continuously ponder , makes you ask questions . I 've heard over and over , ' This is a movie that I 'll see again ' or ' This is a movie you 've got to see

again . ' It intrigues you . You want to get it , but I don 't think it 's a movie to be gotten . It 's achieved its goal if it makes you ask questions . "

= = = Romantic content = = =

Treatment of the relationships between Betty and Rita and Diane and Camilla varied between those who were honestly touched by their sincerity and those who were titillated . A review of the film by Premiere states that the relationship between Betty and Rita is " possibly the healthiest , most positive amorous relationship ever depicted in a Lynch movie " , while Thierry Jousse , in his review for Cahiers du cinéma , notes that the love between these two women is " of lyricism practically without equal in contemporary cinema " . Another points out that the pivotal romantic interlude between Betty and Rita is so poignant and tender by Betty 's " understanding for the first time , with self @-@ surprise , that all her helpfulness and curiosity about the other woman had a point : desire [...] It is a beautiful moment , made all the more miraculous by its earned tenderness , and its distances from anything lurid . " Another review states the scene 's " eroticism is so potent it blankets the whole movie , coloring every scene that came before and every one that follows " . Betty and Rita were chosen by the Independent Film Channel as the emblematic romantic couple of the 2000s . Writer Charles Taylor states , " Betty and Rita are often framed against darkness so soft and velvety it 's like a hovering nimbus , ready to swallow them if they awake from the film 's dream . And when they are swallowed , when smoke fills the frame as if the sulfur of hell itself were obscuring our vision , we feel as if not just a romance has been broken , but the beauty of the world has been cursed . " The co @-@ dependency in the relationship between Betty and Rita ? which borders on outright obsession ? has been compared to female relationships in two similar films , Persona (1966) and 3 Women (1977) , which also depict identities of vulnerable women that become tangled , interchanging and ultimately merge : " The female couples also mirror each other , with their mutual interactions conflating hero (ine) worship with same @-@ sex desire " .

An analysis of the film in terms of the lesbian as a tragic figure notes the media response to the film : " reviewers rhapsodized in particular and at length about the film 's sex scenes , as if there were a contest to see who could enjoy this representation of female same @-@ sex desire the most . " The author , Heather Love , writes that the film used a classic theme in literature and film depicting lesbian relationships : Camilla as achingly beautiful and available , rejecting Diane for Adam . Popular reaction to the film suggests the contrasting relationships between Betty and Rita and Diane and Camilla are " understood as both the hottest thing on earth and , at the same time , as something fundamentally sad and not at all erotic " as " the heterosexual order asserts itself with crushing effects for the abandoned woman " .

Media portrayals of Naomi Watts ' and Laura Elena Harring 's views of their onscreen relationships were varied and conflicting . Watts said of the filming of the scene , " I don 't see it as erotic , though maybe it plays that way . The last time I saw it , I actually had tears in my eyes because I knew where the story was going . It broke my heart a little bit . " However , in another interview Watts stated , " I was amazed how honest and real all this looks on screen . These girls look really in love and it was curiously erotic . " While Harring was quoted saying , " The love scene just happened in my eyes . Rita 's very grateful for the help Betty 's given [her] so I 'm saying goodbye and goodnight to her , thank you , from the bottom of my heart , I kiss her and then there 's just an energy that takes us [over] . Of course I have amnesia so I don 't know if I 've done it before , but I don 't think we 're really lesbians . " Heather Love agreed somewhat with Harring 's perception when she stated that identity in Mulholland Drive is not as important as desire : " who we are does not count for much ? what matters instead is what we are about to do , what we want to do . "

= = Characters = =

Betty Elms (Naomi Watts) is the bright and talented newcomer to Los Angeles , described as " wholesome , optimistic , determined to take the town by storm " , and " absurdly naïve " . Her perkiness and intrepid approach to helping Rita because it is the right thing to do is reminiscent of

Nancy Drew for reviewers . Her entire persona at first is an apparent cliché of small @-@ town naïveté . But it is Betty 's identity , or loss of it , that appears to be the focus of the film . For one critic , Betty performed the role of the film 's consciousness and unconscious . Naomi Watts , who modeled Betty on Doris Day , Tippi Hedren and Kim Novak , observed that Betty is a thrill @-@ seeker , someone " who finds herself in a world she doesn 't belong in and is ready to take on a new identity , even if it 's somebody else 's " . This has also led one theorist to conclude that since Betty had naively , yet eagerly entered the Hollywood system , she had become a " complicit actor " who had " embraced the very structure that " destroyed her . In an explanation of her development of the Betty character , Watts stated :

I had to therefore come up with my own decisions about what this meant and what this character was going through , what was dream and what was reality . My interpretation could end up being completely different , from both David and the audience . But I did have to reconcile all of that , and people seem to think it works .

Film critic Amy Taubin suggests that Betty is a reincarnation of Sandy from Lynch 's Blue Velvet : Betty 's hometown , Deep River , Ontario , shares the same name as the apartment building of Blue Velvet 's femme fatale , Dorothy . Having been freed from her small @-@ town constrictions , Sandy is reborn as Betty , drawn to a dark @-@ haired mystery woman like Dorothy , and falls in love with her and loses herself .

Betty , however difficult to believe as her character is established , shows an astonishing depth of dimension in her audition . Previously rehearsed with Rita in the apartment , where Rita feeds her lines woodenly , the scene is " dreck " and " hollow ; every line unworthy of a genuine actress 's commitment " , and Betty plays it in rehearsal as poorly as it is written . Nervous but plucky as ever at the audition , Betty enters the cramped room , but when pitted inches from her audition partner (Chad Everett) , she turns it into a scene of powerful sexual tension that she fully controls and draws in every person in the room . The sexuality erodes immediately as the scene ends and she stands before them shyly waiting for their approval . One film analyst asserts Betty 's previously unknown ability steals the show , specifically , taking the dark mystery away from Rita and assigning it to herself , and by Lynch 's use of this scene illustrates his use of deception in his characters . Betty 's acting ability prompts Ruth Perlmutter to speculate if Betty is acting the role of Diane in either a dream or a parody of a movie that ultimately turns against her .

Rita (Laura Elena Harring) is the mysterious and helpless apparent victim , a classic femme fatale with her dark , strikingly beautiful appearance . Roger Ebert was so impressed with Harring that he said of her " all she has to do is stand there and she is the first good argument in 55 years for a Gilda remake " . She serves as the object of desire , directly oppositional to Betty 's bright self @-@ assuredness . She is also the first character with whom the audience identifies , and as viewers know her only as confused and frightened , not knowing who she is and where she is going , she represents their desire to make sense of the film through her identity . Instead of threatening , she inspires Betty to nurture , console and help her . Her amnesia makes her a blank persona , that one reviewer notes is " the vacancy that comes with extraordinary beauty and the onlooker 's willingness to project any combination of angelic and devilish onto her " . A character analysis of Rita asserts that her actions are the most genuine of the first portion of the film , since she has no memory and nothing to use as a frame of reference for how to behave . Todd McGowan , however , author of a book on themes in Lynch 's films , states that the first portion of Mulholland Drive can be construed as Rita 's fantasy , until Diane Selwyn is revealed ; Betty is the object that overcomes Rita 's anxiety about her loss of identity . According to film historian Steven Dillon , Diane transitions a former roommate into Rita : following a tense scene where the roommate collects her remaining belongings , Rita appears in the apartment , smiling at Diane .

After Betty and Rita find the decomposing body , they flee the apartment and their images are split apart and reintegrated . David Roche notes that Rita 's lack of identity causes a breakdown that " occurs not only at the level of the character but also at the level of the image ; the shot is subjected to special effects that fragment their image and their voices are drowned out in reverb , the camera seemingly writing out the mental state of the characters " . Immediately they return to Betty 's aunt 's apartment where Rita dons a blonde wig ? ostensibly to disguise herself ? but making her look

remarkably like Betty . It is this transformation that one film analyst suggests is the melding of both identities . This is supported by visual clues , like particular camera angles making their faces appear to be merging into one . This is further illustrated soon after by their sexual intimacy , followed by Rita 's personality becoming more dominant as she insists they go to Club Silencio at 2 a.m. , that eventually leads to the total domination by Camilla .

Diane Selwyn (Naomi Watts) is the palpably frustrated and depressed woman , who seems to have ridden the coattails of Camilla , whom she idolizes and adores , but who does not return her affection . She is considered to be the reality of the too @-@ good @-@ to @-@ be @-@ true Betty , or a later version of Betty after living too long in Hollywood . For Steven Dillon , the plot of the film " makes Rita the perfect empty vessel for Diane 's fantasies " , but because Rita is only a " blank cover girl " Diane has " invested herself in emptiness " , which leads her to depression and apparently to suicide . Hence , Diane is the personification of dissatisfaction , painfully illustrated when she is unable to climax while masturbating , in a scene that indicates " through blurred , jerky , point of view shots of the stony wall ? not only her tears and humiliation but the disintegration of her fantasy and her growing desire for revenge " . One analysis of Diane suggests her devotion to Camilla is based on a manifestation of narcissism , as Camilla embodies everything Diane wants and wants to be . Although she is portrayed as weak and the ultimate loser , for Jeff Johnson , author of a book about morality in Lynch films , Diane is the only character in the second portion of the film whose moral code remains intact . She is " a decent person corrupted by the miscellaneous miscreants who populate the film industry " . Her guilt and regret are evident in her suicide , and in the clues that surface in the first portion of the film . Rita 's fear , the dead body and the illusion at Club Silencio indicate something is dark and wrong in Betty and Rita 's world . In becoming free from Camilla , her moral conditioning kills her .

Camilla Rhodes (Melissa George , Laura Elena Harring) is little more than a face in a photo and a name that has inspired many representatives of some vaguely threatening power to place her in a film against the wishes of Adam . Referred to as a " vapid moll " by one reviewer , she barely makes an impression in the first portion of the film , but after the blue box is opened and she is portrayed by Laura Elena Harring , she becomes a full person who symbolizes " betrayal , humiliation and abandonment " , and is the object of Diane 's frustration . Diane is a sharp contrast to Camilla , who is more voluptuous than ever , and who appears to have " sucked the life out of Diane " . Immediately after telling Diane that she drives her wild , Camilla tells her they must end their affair . On a movie set where Adam is directing Camilla , he orders the set cleared , except for Diane ? at Camilla 's request ? where Adam shows another actor just how to kiss Camilla correctly . Instead of punishing Camilla for such public humiliation , as is suggested by Diane 's conversation with the bungling hit man , one critic views Rita as the vulnerable representation of Diane 's desire for Camilla .

Adam Keshner (Justin Theroux) is established in the first portion of the film as a " vaguely arrogant " , but apparently successful , director who endures one humiliation after another . Theroux said of his role , " He 's sort of the one character in the film who doesn 't know what the [hell 's] going on . I think he 's the one guy the audience says , ' I 'm kind of like you right now . I don 't know why you 're being subjected to all this pain . ' " After being stripped of creative control of his film , he is cuckolded by the pool cleaner (played by Billy Ray Cyrus) , and thrown out of his own opulent house above Hollywood . After he checks into a seedy motel and pays with cash , the manager arrives to tell him his credit is no good . Witnessed by Diane , Adam is pompous and self @-@ important . He is the only character whose personality does not seem to change completely from the first part of the film to the second . One analysis of Adam 's character contends that because he capitulated and chose Camilla Rhodes for his film , that is the end of Betty 's cheerfulness and ability to help Rita , placing the blame for her tragedy on the representatives of studio power .

Minor characters include The Cowboy (Monty Montgomery , credited as Lafayette Montgomery) , the Castigliani Brothers (Dan Hedaya and Angelo Badalamenti) and Mr. Roque (Michael J. Anderson) , all of whom are somehow involved in pressuring Adam to cast Camilla Rhodes in his film . These characters represent the death of creativity for film scholars , and they portray a " vision of the industry as a closed hierarchical system in which the ultimate source of power remains hidden

behind a series of representatives " . Ann Miller portrays Coco , the landlady who welcomes Betty to her wonderful new apartment . Coco , in the first part of the film , represents the old guard in Hollywood , who welcomes and protects Betty . In the second part of the film , however , she appears as Adam 's mother , who impatiently chastises Diane for being late to the party and barely pays attention to Diane 's embarrassed tale of how she got into acting .

= = Style = =

The filmmaking style of David Lynch has been written about extensively using descriptions like " ultraweird " , " dark " and " oddball " . Todd McGowan writes , " One cannot watch a Lynch film the way one watches a standard Hollywood film noir nor in the way that one watches most radical films . " Through Lynch 's juxtaposition of cliché and surreal , nightmares and fantasies , nonlinear story lines , camera work , sound and lighting , he presents a film that challenges viewers to suspend belief of what they are experiencing . Many of the characters in Mulholland Drive are archetypes that can only be perceived as cliché : the new Hollywood hopeful , the femme fatale , the maverick director and shady powerbrokers that Lynch never seems to explore fully . Lynch places these often hackneyed characters in dire situations , creating dream @-@ like qualities . By using these characters in scenarios that have components and references to dreams , fantasies and nightmares , viewers are left to decide , between the extremes , what is reality . One film analyst writes of him , " Like most surrealists , Lynch 's language of the unexplained is the fluid language of dreams . "

David Lynch uses various methods of deception in Mulholland Drive . A shadowy figure named Mr. Roque , who seems to control film studios , is portrayed by dwarf actor Michael J. Anderson (also from Twin Peaks) . Anderson , who has only two lines and is seated in an enormous wooden wheelchair , was fitted with oversized foam prosthetic arms and legs in order to portray his head as abnormally small . During Adam and Camilla 's party , Diane watches Camilla (played by Haring) with Adam on one arm , lean over and deeply kiss the same woman who appeared as Camilla (Melissa George) before the blue box was opened . Both then turn and smile pointedly at Diane . Film critic Franklin Ridgway writes that the depiction of such a deliberate " cruel and manipulative " act makes it unclear if Camilla is as capricious as she seems , or if Diane 's paranoia is allowing the audience only to see what she senses . In a scene immediately after Betty 's audition , the film cuts to a woman singing without apparent accompaniment , but as the camera pulls backwards , the audience sees that it is a recording studio . In actuality , it is a sound stage where Betty has just arrived to meet Adam Kesher , that the audience realizes as the camera pulls back further . Ridgway insists that such deception through artful camera work sets the viewer full of doubt about what is being presented : " It is as if the camera , in its graceful fluidity of motion , reassures us that it (thinks it) sees everything , has everything under control , even if we (and Betty) do not . "

According to Stephen Dillon , Lynch 's use of different camera positions throughout the movie , such as hand @-@ held points of view , makes the viewer " identify with the suspense of the character in his or her particular space " , but that Lynch at moments also " disconnects the camera from any particular point of view , thereby ungrounding a single or even a human perspective " so that the multiple perspectives keep contexts from merging , significantly troubling " our sense of the individual and the human " . Andrew Hageman similarly notes that the camera work in the film " renders a very disturbing sense of place and presence " , such as the scene in Winkies where the " camera floats irregularly during the shot @-@ reverse shot dialogue " by which the " spectator becomes aware that a set of normally objective shots have become disturbingly subjective " . Scholar Curt Hersey recognizes several avant @-@ garde techniques used in the film including lack of transitions , abrupt transitions , motion speed , nontraditional camera movement , computer @-@ generated imagery , nondiegetic images , nonlinear narration and intertextuality .

The first portion of the film that establishes the characters of Betty , Rita and Adam presents some of the most logical filmmaking of Lynch 's career . The later part of the film that represents reality to many viewers , however , exhibits a marked change in cinematic effect that gives it a quality just as surreal as the first part . Diane 's scenes feature choppy editing and dirtier lighting that symbolize her physical and spiritual impoverishment , which contrasts with the first portion of the film where "

even the plainest decor seems to sparkle " , Betty and Rita glow with light and transitions between scenes are smooth . Lynch moves between scenes in the first portion of the film by using panoramic shots of the mountains , palm trees and buildings in Los Angeles . In the darker part of the film , sound transitions to the next scene without a visual reference where it is taking place . At Camilla 's party , when Diane is most humiliated , the sound of crashing dishes is heard that carries immediately to the scene where dishes have been dropped in the diner , and Diane is speaking with the hit man . Sinnerbrink also notes that several scenes in the film , such as the one featuring Diane 's hallucination of Camilla after Diane wakes up , the image of the being from behind Winkies after Diane 's suicide , or the " repetition , reversal and displacement of elements that were differently configured " in the early portion of the film , creates the uncanny effect where viewers are presented with familiar characters or situations in altered times or locations . Similarly , Hageman has identified the early scene at Winkies as " extremely uncanny " , because it is a scene where the " boundaries separating physical reality from the imaginary realities of the unconscious disintegrate " . Author Valtteri Kokko has identified three groups of " uncanny metaphors " : the doppelgänger of multiple characters played by the same actors , dreams and an everyday object ? primarily the blue box ? that initiates Rita 's disappearance and Diane 's real life .

Another recurring element in Lynch 's films is his experimentation with sound . He stated in an interview , " you look at the image and the scene silent , it 's doing the job it 's supposed to do , but the work isn 't done . When you start working on the sound , keep working until it feels correct . There 's so many wrong sounds and instantly you know it . Sometimes it 's really magical . " In the opening scene of the film , the dark @-@ haired woman stumbles off Mulholland Drive , silently it suggests she is clumsy . After Lynch added " a hint of the steam [from the wreck] and the screaming kids " , however , it transformed Laura Elena Harring from clumsy to terrified . Lynch also infused subtle rumblings throughout portions of the film that reviewers noted added unsettling and creepy effects . Hageman also identifies " perpetual and uncanny ambient sound " , and places a particular emphasis on the scene where the man collapses behind Winkies as normal sound is drowned out by a buzzing roar , noting that the noise " creates a dissonance and suspense that draws in the spectator as detective to place the sound and reestablish order " . Mulholland Drive 's ending with the woman at Club Silencio whispering is an example of Lynch 's aural deception and surreality , according to Ruth Perlmutter , who writes , " The acting , the dreams , the search for identity , the fears and terrors of the undefined self are over when the film is over , and therefore , there is only silence and enigma . "

= = Soundtrack = =

The soundtrack of Mulholland Drive was supervised by Angelo Badalamenti , who collaborated on previous Lynch projects Blue Velvet and Twin Peaks . Badalamenti , who was nominated for awards from the American Film Institute (AFI) and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) for his work on the film , also has a cameo as an espresso aficionado and mobster .

Reviewers note that Badalamenti 's ominous score , described as his " darkest yet " , contributes to the sense of mystery as the film opens on the dark @-@ haired woman 's limousine , that contrasts with the bright , hopeful tones of Betty 's first arrival in Los Angeles , with the score " acting as an emotional guide for the viewer " . Film music journalist Daniel Schweiger remarks that Badalamenti 's contribution to the score alternates from the " nearly motionless string dread to noir jazz and audio feedback " , with " the rhythms building to an explosion of infinite darkness . " Badalamenti described a particular technique of sound design applied to the film , by which he would provide Lynch with multiple ten- to twelve @-@ minute tracks at slow tempo , that they called " firewood " , from which Lynch " would take fragments and experiment with them resulting in a lot of film 's eerie soundscapes . "

Lynch uses two pop songs from the 1960s directly after one another , playing as two actresses are auditioning by lip synching them . According to an analyst of music used in Lynch films , Lynch 's female characters are often unable to communicate through normal channels and are reduced to lip @-@ synching or being otherwise stifled . Connie Stevens ' " Sixteen Reasons " is the song being

sung while the camera pans backwards to reveal several illusions , and Linda Scott 's version of " I 've Told Ev 'ry Little Star " is the audition for the first Camilla Rhodes , that film scholar Eric Gans considers a song of empowerment for Betty . Originally written by Jerome Kern as a duet , sung by Linda Scott in this rendition by herself , Gans suggests it takes on a homosexual overtone in Mulholland Drive . Unlike " Sixteen Reasons " , however , portions of " I 've Told Ev 'ry Little Star " are distorted to suggest " a sonic split @-@ identity " for Camilla . When the song plays , Betty has just entered the sound stage where Adam is auditioning actresses for his film , and she sees Adam , locks eyes with him and abruptly flees after Adam has declared " This is the girl " about Camilla , thereby avoiding his inevitable rejection .

At the hinge of the film is a scene in an unusual late night theater called Club Silencio where a performer announces " No hay banda (there is no band) ... but yet we hear a band " , variated between English , Spanish and French . Described as " the most original and stunning sequence in an original and stunning film " , Rebekah del Rio 's Spanish a cappella rendition of " Crying " , named " Llorando " , is praised as " show @-@ stopping ... except that there 's no show to stop " in the sparsely attended Club Silencio . Lynch wanted to use Roy Orbison 's version of " Crying " in Blue Velvet , but changed his mind when he heard Orbison 's " In Dreams " . Del Rio , who popularized the Spanish version and who received her first recording contract on the basis of the song , stated that Lynch flew to Nashville where she was living , and she sang the song for him once and did not know he was recording her . Lynch wrote a part for her in the film and used the version she sang for him in Nashville . The song tragically serenades the lovers Betty and Rita , who sit spellbound and weeping , moments before their relationship disappears and is replaced by Diane and Camilla 's dysfunction . According to one film scholar , the song and the entire theater scene marks the disintegration of Betty 's and Rita 's personalities , as well as their relationship . With the use of multiple languages and a song to portray such primal emotions , one film analyst states that Lynch exhibits his distrust of intellectual discourse and chooses to make sense through images and sounds . The disorienting effect of the music playing although del Rio is no longer there is described as " the musical version of Magritte 's painting Ceci n 'est pas une pipe " .

= = Release = =

Mulholland Drive premiered at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival in May to major critical acclaim . Lynch was awarded the Best Director prize at the festival , sharing it with co @-@ winner Joel Coen for The Man Who Wasn 't There . It drew positive reviews from many critics and some of the strongest audience reactions of Lynch 's career .

= = = Box office = = =

Universal Pictures released Mulholland Drive theatrically in 66 theaters in the United States on October 12 , 2001 , grossing \$ 587 @,@ 591 over its opening weekend . It eventually expanded to its widest release of 247 theaters , ultimately grossing \$ 7 @,@ 220 @,@ 243 at the U.S. box office . TVA Films released the film theatrically in Canada on October 26 , 2001 . In other territories outside the United States , the film grossed \$ 12 @,@ 892 @,@ 096 for a worldwide total of \$ 20 @,@ 112 @,@ 339 .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Since its release , Mulholland Drive has , according to two film scholars , " garnered both some of the harshest epithets and some of the most lavish praise in recent cinematic history " . It received acclaim from many critics ; even Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun @-@ Times , who had given negative or mixed reviews to most of Lynch 's previous films , awarded the film four stars and commented , " David Lynch has been working toward Mulholland Drive all of his career , and now that he 's arrived there I forgive him for Wild at Heart (1990) and even Lost Highway (1997) . At last his experiment doesn 't shatter the test tubes . The movie is a surrealist dreamscape in the form

of a Hollywood film noir , and the less sense it makes , the more we can 't stop watching it . " Ebert subsequently added Mulholland Drive to his " Great Films " list in November 2012 . In The New York Times , Stephen Holden said the film " ranks alongside Fellini 's 8 ½ and other auteurist fantasias as a monumental self @-@ reflection " and added , " Looked at lightly , it is the grandest and silliest cinematic carnival to come along in quite some time : a lurching journey through one filmmaker 's personal fun house . On a more serious level , its investigation into the power of movies pierces a void from which you can hear the screams of a ravenous demon whose appetites can never be slaked . " Edward Guthmann of the San Francisco Chronicle called it " exhilarating [...] for its dreamlike images and fierce , frequently reckless imagination " and added , " there 's a mesmerizing quality to its languid pace , its sense of foreboding and its lost @-@ in @-@ time atmosphere [...] it holds us , spellbound and amused , for all of its loony and luscious , exasperating 146 minutes [and] proves that Lynch is in solid form ? and still an expert at pricking our nerves . "

In Rolling Stone , Peter Travers observed , " Mulholland Drive makes movies feel alive again . This sinful pleasure is a fresh triumph for Lynch , and one of the best films of a sorry @-@ ass year . For visionary daring , swooning eroticism and colors that pop like a whore 's lip gloss , there 's nothing like this baby anywhere . " J. Hoberman of The Village Voice stated , " This voluptuous phantasmagoria [...] is certainly Lynch 's strongest movie since Blue Velvet and maybe Eraserhead . The very things that failed him in the bad @-@ boy rockabilly debacle of Lost Highway ? the atmosphere of free @-@ floating menace , pointless transmigration of souls , provocatively dropped plot stitches , gimcrack alternate universes ? are here brilliantly rehabilitated . "

While reviews of the film were mostly positive (receiving an 82 % rating on movie review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes) , Mulholland Drive was not without its detractors . Rex Reed of The New York Observer said it was the worst film he had seen in 2001 , calling it " a load of moronic and incoherent garbage . " In New York , Peter Rainer observed , " Although I like it more than some of his other dreamtime freakfests , it 's still a pretty moribund ride [...] Lynch needs to renew himself with an influx of the deep feeling he has for people , for outcasts , and lay off the cretins and hobgoblins and zombies for a while . " In The Washington Post , Desson Howe called it " an extended mood opera , if you want to put an arty label on incoherence . " Todd McCarthy of Variety found much to praise ? " Lynch cranks up the levels of bizarre humor , dramatic incident and genuine mystery with a succession of memorable scenes , some of which rank with his best " ? but also noted , " the film jumps off the solid ground of relative narrative coherence into Lynchian fantasyland [...] for the final 45 minutes , Lynch is in mind @-@ twisting mode that presents a form of alternate reality with no apparent meaning or logical connection to what came before . Although such tactics are familiar from Twin Peaks and elsewhere , the sudden switcheroo to head games is disappointing because , up to this point , Lynch had so wonderfully succeeded in creating genuine involvement . " James Berardinelli also criticized it , saying : " Lynch cheats his audience , pulling the rug out from under us . He throws everything into the mix with the lone goal of confusing us . Nothing makes any sense because it 's not supposed to make any sense . There 's no purpose or logic to events . Lynch is playing a big practical joke on us . " Film theorist Ray Carney notes , " You wouldn 't need all the emotional back @-@ flips and narrative trap doors if you had anything to say . You wouldn 't need doppelgangers and shadow @-@ figures if your characters had souls . "

Mulholland Drive was named the best film of the decade by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association , Cahiers du cinéma , IndieWire , Slant Magazine , Reverse Shot , The Village Voice and Time Out New York , who asked rhetorically in a reference to the September 11 attacks , " Can there be another movie that speaks as resonantly ? if unwittingly ? to the awful moment that marked our decade ? [...] Mulholland Drive is the monster behind the diner ; it 's the self @-@ delusional dream turned into nightmare . " It was also voted best of the decade in a Film Comment poll of international " critics , programmers , academics , filmmakers and others " , and by the magazine 's readers . It appeared on lists among the top ten best films of the decade , coming in third according to The Guardian , Rolling Stone critic Peter Travers , the Canadian Press , Access Hollywood critic Scott Mantz , and eighth on critic Michael Phillips ' list . In 2010 it was named the second best arthouse film ever by The Guardian . The film was voted as the 11th best film set in Los Angeles in the last 25 years by a group of Los Angeles Times writers and editors with the primary criterion of

communicating an inherent truth about the L.A. experience . Empire magazine placed Mulholland Drive at number 391 on their list of the five @-@ hundred greatest films ever . It has also been ranked number 38 on the Channel 4 program 50 Films to See Before You Die . In 2011 , online magazine Slate named Mulholland Drive in its piece on " New Classics " as the most enduring film since 2000 .

Sight & Sound ranked Mulholland Drive 28th on their list of the fifty greatest films ever on August 2 , 2012 . It is one of only two films from the 21st century to be included in the list , along with 2000 's In the Mood for Love .

= = = Home media = = =

A DVD was released in April 2002 in the United States and Canada , with few special features . It was released without chapter stops , a feature that Lynch objects to on the grounds that it " demystifies " the film . In spite of Lynch 's concerns , the DVD release included a cover insert that provided " David Lynch 's 10 Clues to Unlocking This Thriller " , although one DVD reviewer noted the clues may be " big obnoxious red herrings " . Nick Coccillato of Eccentric Cinema gave the film a rating of nine out of ten and the DVD release an eight out of ten , saying that the lack of special features " only adds to the mystery the film itself possesses , in abundance . " Special features in later versions and overseas versions of the DVD include a Lynch interview at the Cannes Film Festival and highlights of the debut of the film at Cannes .

Optimum Home Entertainment released Mulholland Drive to the European market on Blu @-@ ray as part of its StudioCanal Collection on September 13 , 2010 . New special features exclusive to this release include : an introduction by Thierry Jousse ; In the Blue Box , a retrospective documentary featuring directors and critics ; two making @-@ of documentaries : On the Road to Mulholland Drive and Back to Mulholland Drive and several interviews with people involved in making the film . It is the second David Lynch film in this line of Blu @-@ rays after The Elephant Man .

On July 15 , 2015 , The Criterion Collection announced that it will release Mulholland Drive , newly restored through a 4K digital transfer , on DVD and Blu @-@ ray on October 27 , 2015 , both of which will include new interviews with the film 's crew and the 2005 edition of Chris Rodley 's book Lynch on Lynch , along with the original trailer and other unannounced extras . It will become Lynch 's second film to receive a Criterion Collection release on DVD and Blu @-@ ray , proceeding Eraserhead which was released in September 2014 .

= = Awards and nominations = =

Lynch was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Director for the film . From the Hollywood Foreign Press , the film received four Golden Globe nominations , including Best Picture (Drama) , Best Director and Best Screenplay . It was named Best Picture by the New York Film Critics Circle at the 2001 New York Film Critics Circle Awards and Online Film Critics Society .