

Penelope cruz research paper example

[Business](#), [Career](#)



In recent years, Hispanic actors have risen in prominence more and more, to the point where Latino and Latina actors and performers have become a vital and important part of pop culture and the entertainment industry. Of particular note is Penelope Cruz, who in just over a decade has become one of the most well-known and critically acclaimed actresses in Hollywood. Her career in the entertainment industry has been eventful and long, and she holds herself up as a role model for other Spanish-speaking actors and actresses, due to her substantial success and acclaim in both small, independent films and big blockbusters. Penelope Cruz's history, career, philanthropy, and other pursuits have shown her to be a well-rounded individual and an proud representative of Hispanic figures in pop culture.

Penelope Cruz was born on April 28, 1974 in Madrid, Spain, to an auto mechanic and a hairdresser; she is the oldest of three children in that family. Her small town, Alcobendas, was a small working-class community, and she was raised as a Roman Catholic while growing up there. Her younger sister, Monica, is also an actress, and they now frequently collaborate on projects and commercials, including fashion designs (and even body doubling when Penelope does movies while pregnant; this occurred recently on the set of her latest movie) (Daily Mail, 2011).

Her education was specifically geared towards performance and acting; for nine years, she studied classical ballet at the National Conservatory in Spain (Rose, 2010). After that, she went to Cristina Rota's school in New York to train in Spanish ballet for three years, and then moved to four years of acting training for the theatre. All of these skills would serve her well when she began becoming interested in film, after seeing the Pedro Almodovar film Tie

Me Up! Tie Me Down! After that, she started looking for agents, which was a substantial feat as a teenager; she eventually acquired an agent at age 15, and began looking for work in film (Rose, 2010). Soon, she found herself in lead roles; her first was in 1992's *Jamon, Jamon*, where she played Silvia, a young woman who is seduced by Cruz' future husband Javier Bardem, paid by her mother to keep her from the father of her child (Daily Telegraph, 2010.. This film cemented her status as a sex symbol and she received many nominations, including a Goya Award for Best Actress (Rose, 2010).

After that big breakout role, she continued working in Spanish language films, while living in New York for a couple years in order to learn English and continue studying ballet (Rose, 2010). However, in 1997, she starred in the Spanish sci-fi film *Abre Los Ojos*, in which she played the love interest; critical acclaim was substantial, but she spent the next couple of years appearing primarily in other Spanish-language films, especially those of her idol Pedro Almodovar. In the meantime, she also appeared in many American films, including *Woman on Top* in 2000 - here, she played a chef who had to deal with motion sickness.

In 2001, American director Cameron Crowe decided to make an English-language version of *Abre los Ojos*, called *Vanilla Sky*. Here, Cruz reprised her role of Sofia, with the main role going to Tom Cruise. The film gave Cruz substantial attention with American audiences, as the film was a huge hit at the box office, and brought Cruz to the eye of many international critics. She followed this performance up later that year costarring with Johnny Depp in *Blow*, where she played Mirtha Jung, the wife and enabler of Depp's

character's drug habit. These two roles cemented her as an established star in America, and it was from this platform that she continued to act and garner acclaim. Further roles she took in 2001 were opposite Nicolas Cage in Captain Corelli's Mandolin as the love interest Pelagia, as well as a minor role as a mental patient in Halle Berry's horror film Gothika.

Cruz continued to gather an impressive film resume, eventually starring in the 2005 action adventure film Sahara, opposite Matthew McConaughey. All of these films roles were high profile and had many big-name actors in them, but they did not allow her career to flourish as much as she might have wanted it to; her career in Hollywood is said to have "stalled out" by the mid-2000s (Rose, 2010).

During this time, she also took more mainstream and independent films, one of her most acclaimed performances being in Pedro Almodovar's 2006 film Volver, in which she played Raimunda, a woman who deals with an abusive man attempting to rape her daughter, and the consequences of those actions. The film turned out to be a critical darling, and Cruz in particular received significant acclaim. She was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actress, the first person from Spain to ever receive that honor. Cruz followed up this accomplishment by working on more small, independent films, including The Good Night, where she played a dual role, and Elegy, where she starred opposite Ben Kingsley as a student who falls in love with her noncommittal professor (Rose, 2010).

Currently, Penelope Cruz is married to fellow Spanish actor Javier Bardem, with whom she co-starred in Woody Allen's 2008 film Vicky Cristina

Barcelona, which proved to be her big breakout film into the Hollywood A-list (Daily Telegraph, 2010). This film, in which she played a crazy woman named Maria Elena, demonstrated her incredible talents and range - she was awarded with both an Academy Award and a BAFTA for Best Supporting Actress, in addition to many other awards nominations for that role.

Following up this role, she continued her streak of independent film roles with *Broken Embraces*, another Almodovar film, playing Lena, an aspiring actress who gets caught up in the jealous rage of her film financier boss. Later in 2009, she joined the cast of the Rob Marshall musical film *Nine*, playing Carla, the mistress of Daniel Day-Lewis' character. She gained another Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress for this role, in which she put her ballet and theatre talents to good use in extended song and dance sequences (Rose, 2010). Her most recent roles have shown an increased exposure in Hollywood; most recently, she appeared in the fourth *Pirates of the Caribbean* film, playing the sultry Spanish pirate Angelica, opposite Johnny Depp (for the first time since *Blow*). Her most recent film was in 2012's *To Rome With Love*, collaborating once again with writer/director Woody Allen to play an elegant Italian prostitute named Anna.

As previously mentioned, she has a very close friendship and collaboration with acclaimed Spanish director Pedro Almodovar, with Cruz appearing in many of his films over the past decade (Rose, 2010). Cruz often cites him as her mentor, and she his muse; she often directly attributes her comeback in Hollywood with her casting in *Volver* in 2006. As Cruz attributes her interest

in acting to seeing *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* as a child, this inspiration on both parts seems to have happened at a very early age.

In addition to her acting and work in the entertainment business, Cruz has used her high profile to perform considerable acts of philanthropy all around the world. She has done charity work and donated money to causes in Uganda, India and others; while in India, she worked for Mother Teresa for a week, and helped people suffering from leprosy in a clinic. After that trip, Cruz was inspired to create a foundation that would provide homeless Indian girls a chance to succeed and escape their circumstances through sponsorship. She spent time in Nepal for a photography project, taking pictures of Tibetan children for an exhibition that the Dalai Lama attended; more photography-related philanthropy included a photoshoot at the Pacific Lodge Boys' Home, where she took pictures of former gang members and drug addicts (De Vries, 2004). She attended International AIDS Day in New York City in 2010, and has posed for ads in support of anti-fur campaigns for PETA.

Between this philanthropy and her work in film, Penelope Cruz has established a substantial and high-profile public image, lending her personality to a number of causes and projects. She was the first Spanish actress to finally get a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (BBC, 2011). In addition to acting, she has a substantial modeling career, becoming the spokesmodel for L'Oreal in 2006 and modeling for other companies such as Mango and Ralph Lauren. She also dabbles in fashion design, as she and her sister Monica have designed clothes and appeared in commercials together.

She has also been an editor for Vogue, supervising photoshoots and writing columns; most notably, she ran a photoshoot for plus-sized models, in an attempt to emphasize the healthiness and acceptance of curvier women (Guardian, 2010). She is often ranked on many lists of Sexiest Movie Stars, including Empire's top 100 list, Askmen. com's Most Desirable Women list, and others. All of this adds up to a substantial presence in popular culture, providing representation for Latinas in some of the most high-profile industries in the world.

In conclusion, Penelope Cruz is a fascinating figure in Hispanic representation; her film career has spanned more than twenty years, working hard from adolescence to become a substantial star. In the past ten years, she has enjoyed considerable success, including Academy Award wins and nominations, as well as challenging roles that have won over critics and audiences alike. Her philanthropy and other creative efforts also deserve attention, as she proves herself to be a willing conduit for many causes (poverty, body image issues). Considered widely to be one of the most beautiful women in pop culture, Penelope Cruz's star can only go higher as she takes more challenging and unique roles and continues her unprecedented success as a Latina in Hollywood.

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