**Almodóvar, Pedro**  Born 1949, Calzada de Calatrava, Ciudad Real. Director, scriptwriter and producer. Spain’s most famous living film director and one of its most famous personalities, Almodóvar has even eclipsed Buñuel within Spain in terms of public profile, partly because of his expertise in handling all publicity media. A truly self-taught film-maker, Almodóvar began his commercial film-making in 1978 with a 16mm film *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (*Pepi, Luci, Bom and Other Girls on the Heap*) which took over two years to complete and cost a mere £13,000. By 2000, his £2.3 million film *Todo sobre mi madre* (*All About My Mother*) had won him an Oscar for best foreign-language film. Almodóvar’s 20-year output comprises (as of 2001) 13 films, which include comedies, thrillers and melodramas, as well as mixtures of all three genres. His directorial style, though famous for kitsch décor and bright colour, ranges from the engaging poverty of the amateur to the visual mastery of the last three films. In content, the films break into territories hitherto uncharted for Spanish cinema. Almodóvar directly engages with Spanish national identity in a way which is quite different from the nationalistic cinema of the Franco period, but also distinct from the introverted creations of directors like Carlos Saura or Víctor Erice. He portrays institutions such as the Catholic Church, the police or politics in a satirical light, and contests, often through the knowing problematization of sexual politics, established gender roles and dominant sexuality. Since the 1990s, his production company El Deseo, which he co-runs with his brother Agustín, has produced other directors such as Alex de la Iglesia and Guillermo del Toro. *(Mark Allinson)*

See also Buñuel, Luis; Erice, Víctor; Franco; La Iglesia, Alex de; Saura, Carlos.

**Further reading**

Allinson (2001); Smith (2000b).