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Women of Awards Season

Dec. 18, 2024

awards circuit

Ties That Bind Filmmakers in 2024 find inspiration in intergenerational female relationships

By **Todd Gilchrist**

→ Inspiring or irritating, empowering or exploitative, maternal or manipulative — with many shades of gray in between — female mentorship is a common dynamic in many of 2024’s most affecting stories.

In films as diverse as “All We Imagine as Light,” “Babygirl,” “Emilia Pérez,” “The Girl With the Needle,” “Inside Out 2” “The Last Showgirl,” “My Old Ass” and “The Substance,” women develop relationships with



Elliot (Maisy Stella, left) talks with her older self (Aubrey Plaza) in Megan Park’s “My Old Ass.”

Amazon Studios/Prime Video

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Artisans Look Book

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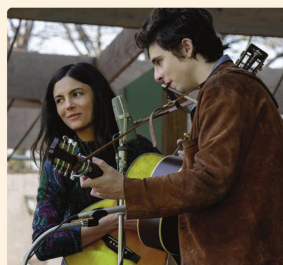


Putting It Together 'A Complete Unknown' artisans team up to capture Bob Dylan's vibe

By Jazz Tangcay

→ James Mangold's "A Complete Unknown" follows the rise of Bob Dylan, played by Timothée Chalamet, as a young musician who moves to New York in 1961, and it culminates with the 1965 Newport Folk Festival and his move to electric guitar.

Mangold is no stranger to the period (his "Ford v Ferrari" was mostly set in that same era), and he wanted to take a snapshot of Dylan's career. He chose this window because not only was there change happening in culture, but it also marked the



Sketches depict outfits for Joan Baez and Bob Dylan, above.

Dylan (Timothée Chalamet) and Baez (Monica Barbero) in "A Complete Unknown," left

arrival of a new post-war generation. "We have enough distance from this period to see it for what it is," he says.

To build this world, Mangold called on his go-to artisans: production designer François Audouy, costume designer Ariane Phillips, hair department head Jaime Leigh McIntosh and cinematographer Phedon Papamichael.

Audouy had an enormous challenge ahead of him, as the landscape change and the rise of corporations meant that this world didn't exist anymore. "I wanted to capture what it felt like to walk down Greenwich Village," Audouy says. In particular, MacDougal Street.

Jersey City became the production's home with Audouy re-creating the city blocks and building clubs, bars and coffee shops.

A park in Westfield, N.J., was large enough for Audouy and his team to re-create the stages for the music festivals in the film, including the key 1965 Newport Folk Festival. "Francois did his best to build a replica of what Newport looked like, and we did our best to create an artistic, lit vision of how it feels," Mangold says.

Dylan's story was divided into three main beats: 1961-62, 1963-64 and 1965. Those beats became the throughline across all departments.

Makeup department head Stacey Panepinto addressed the three different periods with a "less is more" approach.

Through research, Panepinto noticed how in 1961, Dylan had a round babyface. She used subtle nose prosthetics on Chalamet throughout the film, but internal cheek plumpers helped her with his early look. "We put them in every day," Panepinto says. "We had them on top and bottom, like a retainer to give him that roundness that we wanted to achieve in the early part of our story."

As for Dylan's distinctive hair, McIntosh mused on what would work best for Chalamet's own hair. "We didn't know whether we would wig Timothée's short hair and use his own hair for the longer, later period, or whether we would do it vice versa." But there were also conversations with Chalamet and "whether he would be OK with wearing a wig or want his natural hair."

In the end, it came down to the wire, days before shooting. "We cut his hair shorter and used his hair for the earlier Bob Dylan stuff," she says. "We adjusted the styling depending on the time."

McIntosh observed that Dylan's hair never looked the same in his photos. "I

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From the sketch, left, to screen with Chalamet as Dylan in a bold shirt, right



felt there was room to move because he doesn't need to have the same hair in every single scene because it was its own beast."

Costumes were a beast of their own. On the final count, Phillips created 67 costume changes for Chalamet, with denim the essential thread for Dylan's wardrobe evolution.

Phillips had worked with Levi's before and says, "I called them to help me identify a lot of denim that I was seeing on Bob. Initially, when we meet him, he's this kid who's modeling himself after Woody Guthrie, and he's wearing kind of worker-like carpenter jeans, which were the style of that time."

She adds, "Denim was really only worn, at that time, on a construction site or recreationally when someone went fishing." But through denim, Phillips could tell a story. "Initially you see the worker jeans. In the mid-'60s, you see more of the traditional Levi's 501."

She also leaned into his black leather jacket look. "The denim, the boots and the hair was really the thread, the through-line of what you see today with Bob," says Phillips.

Once that all came together, it was up to Papamichael to get into the character's head. "It's about making the audience really understand what makes that character tick," he says.

After years of collaborating with Mangold, Papamichael sought to emulate the street photography of the era, so he created texture charts. He also looked at the meaning of each scene and moved forward to capture its essence. "We do that by a combination of creating the world, but also, more importantly, having the close-ups and the interactions between the characters."

While the film features performances, Papamichael found power in the intimate scenes and wanted the viewer to feel physically present. "My job as a photographer is to put the camera in the right place at the right time and then allow [the actor] to give us these gifts and give us these moments and just not get in their way."

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