



A Single Man

Tom Ford

USA, 2009
English

99 minutes ■ Colour/HDCAM

Production Company: Fade to Black/
Depth of Field/Artina Films

Producer: Tom Ford, Chris Weitz,
Andrew Miano, Robert Salerno

Screenplay: Tom Ford, David Searce,
based on the book by Christopher
Isherwood

Cinematographer: Eduard Grau

Editor: Joan Sobel

Production Designer: Dan Bishop

Sound: Lori Dovi

Music: Abel Korzeniowski, Shigeru

Umebayashi

Principal Cast: Colin Firth, Julianne Moore,
Matthew Goode, Nicholas Hoult

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Tom Ford's historical importance (to date) rests in part on his unique collaborations with the late twentieth century's great commercial photographers: Richard Avedon, Steven Meisel, Helmut Newton, Herb Ritts and so on. With them, he championed the idea that style could govern our memories, without an appeal to straightforward nostalgia. Evidence of this same balance of past and present can also be found in the clothes he famously created at Gucci. Ford drew from the past in ways that clearly distinguish tribute from innovation, evoking both technological change and the timeless truths of the human form.

In his first feature film, Ford continues along this rich and aesthetically complex pathway, using the recent history of the photographic image to tell a story both historical and bracingly contemporary. The setting is Southern California and our moment in time is officially the early sixties. We meet George Falconer (Colin Firth), a gay college professor, as he learns that his lover Jim (Matthew Goode) has died in a car wreck. Grief overwhelms him, and his "invisible status" in society begins to close in again. Suicide seems the best way out. But a mad night with Charley (Julianne Moore), his best girlfriend from England, and the unexpected attentions of an angora-sweater-clad young man make George think twice.

Based on a late-career Christopher Isherwood novel, told largely through flashback and featuring alarmingly precise attention to period detail in furniture, costume and

architecture, *A Single Man* could easily have felt like a throwback, a work of atavism. But Ford pulls this pre-AIDS tale of gay love and loss into our age by reminding us, again, of what is eternal in life, love and how we choose to forgive. The film deliberately reveals how George pulls himself from the narcissism of self-sacrifice to an understanding of his value to the world and the people around him. Ford seems to be gently insisting that the rich and complex personal histories of gay men, from any age, must be part of the political calculations of our time. *A Single Man* confirms this artist's ongoing impact on our culture and our awareness of our place within it.

■ Noah Cowan



Tom Ford was born in Austin, Texas, and grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He studied architecture at the Parsons School of Design in New York. An iconic fashion designer, he was creative director of Gucci for many years before also becoming the creative director of Yves St. Laurent Rive Gauche and YSL Beauté. He launched the Tom Ford brand in 2005. Ford is the recipient of multiple awards for his designs and his contributions to the fashion industry. *A Single Man* (09) is his first feature film.

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