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The Ape Woman

1964 92 min. B&W

Directed by Marco Ferreri; title translation: "La Donna Scimmia;" produced by Carlo Ponti; screenplay by Ferreri and Rafael Azcona; photography by Aldo Tonti; music by Teo Usuelli. With Ugo Tognazzi, Annie Girardot, Achille Majeroni, Elvira Paoloni. Italian dialog with English subtitles.

Marco Ferreri's peculiar mixture of sensationalism and compassion suits this grotesque yet often moving story of a woman (Annie Girardot) whose body is completely covered with hair, and the man (Ugo Tognazzi) who exploits and then falls in love with her. Ferreri examines opportunism, sentiment and sexual identity in this side-show, half-world framework. The viewer cannot fail to notice the implicit connection between the hero's talent for



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Marco Ferreri

exploitation, and the exploitative showmanship of the film's director. Annie Girardot and Ugo Tognazzi render the freaky nature of the story with exceptional naturalness. They enact the couple's wedding night with a subtlety that bridges the distance between surface values and authentic feelings. Ferreri's monstrous vision of humanity, so graphically demonstrated in *The Conjugal Bed* and *La Grande Bouffe*, is sharply dramatized in *The Ape Woman*. For Ferreri, monstrosity is truly in the eye of the beholder. (CA)