



No./12 The Elisabeth Moss Method

As the actor takes on another complex role in **SHIRLEY**, she reveals how she gets under a character's skin

ELISABETH MOSS' LATEST film, *Shirley*, sees her playing one of her most fascinating characters to date: notorious American horror author Shirley Jackson. Josephine Decker's intense indie thriller sees Moss and co-star Michael Stuhlbarg blur fact and fiction in a film offering an imaginative re-working of the traditional biopic. It's the latest challenging role in a career already full of them, from *Mad Men* to *The Invisible Man* — here, she reveals how she approaches each one.

PREPARE. BUT NOT TOO MUCH

Moss says *Shirley* marked a change in the typical preparation she does for a role. "Usually I do hardly any research at all; it's not part of my process," Moss says, revealing she's always driven by instinct. *Shirley* demanded a different approach, and Moss trawled through masses of biographies, letters and stories in order to get under the skin of a real-life character. In the end, though, the actor had to leave her extensive research behind to preserve the instinctiveness that guides her process.

"I had a lot more information than I normally do," Moss explains. "In the end, all of the research kind of disappears from me and I throw a lot of it away. If I get too much in my head or I make too



Clockwise from main: Moss plays a famous horror author in her new film *Shirley*; As June/Offred in *The Handmaid's Tale*; An iconic *Mad Men* scene; The actor as Shirley with her onscreen husband Stanley (Michael Stuhlbarg).



many decisions about how a character is supposed to be, then I lose a certain amount of flexibility and the ability to be instinctive."

USE PRESSURE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

One of *Shirley*'s most emotive scenes emerges when Jackson is awaiting feedback on a novel from her biggest critic: her patriarchal husband Stanley (Stuhlbarg). Moss portrays Jackson's fear and vulnerability silently. "It was really important to see that moment unbroken, and to see all the emotions she goes through. It's so defining for her character," Moss explains.

The scene was filmed very quickly, at the very end of the shoot — just hours before she was due to fly to LA to begin filming Jordan Peele's *Us*. Tension, she says, can often bring out the best in her. "That scene was shot on the very last

night. We were shooting in the house at 2am on a Saturday morning; I was leaving at 6am. It was a very pressure-filled situation and I knew it was one of the big moments of the movie, but I tend to thrive under such pressure: it really stimulates me. I found it very exciting that I had to pull off the performance in a very limited amount of time and wouldn't get to come back to do it again."

TAKE CONTROL

Alongside acting, Moss has moved into the producing realm: she is an executive producer on *The Handmaid's Tale*, and a producer on *Shirley*. It has had, she says, a positive effect on her acting. "Acting is my first love and I think one of the reasons I love producing is because I think it really enhances my performance," Moss says. "If I'm able to be a part of all the decisions that are made before day one of principal photography, it only helps me to have a better understanding of the material. An actor needs to know the material backwards and forwards, and this helps so much with that. It's not for everybody, but it's something that I love."

EMBRACE THE COMPLEXITY

From the rich, years-long arc of *Mad Men*'s Peggy to the heart-rending politics of *The Handmaid's Tale*'s June, Moss is at her best when playing complex characters — and *Shirley* is among her most compelling to date. "I don't think I've ever been very good at playing non-complicated people, at playing anything very simple," Moss laughs. But she doesn't see any secret to it. "It's my job to find multiple layers to a character and to show how complicated people can be. It's just my job." It might seem like an incredibly soul-baring experience, but for Moss, it's just another day at the office. **ELIZABETH AUBREY**

SHIRLEY IS DUE TO BE RELEASED IN AUTUMN

Alamy, Landmark Media

No./13 Inside the year's unlikeliest remake

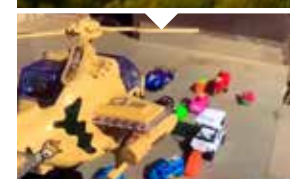
How a family of teenage boys from Lagos recreated the **Extraction** trailer — and won the support of Hollywood



THERE'S A CHANCE that you've caught a trailer that looks almost identical to that of the Netflix action thriller *Extraction*. Recreating the original trailer shot for shot, it includes the same punches thrown and the actors standing on the same marks. But there are subtle differences. A large puddle substitutes a wide shot of Dhaka. A drink-can simulates a sniper scope. The film's speeding cars are rendered by wheelbarrows.

This meticulous remake comes courtesy of the 'Korodu Bois', a group of Nigerian brothers and cousins who have quickly risen to fame as Hollywood's favourite low-budget mimickers. "I draw my creativity from the environment around me," says oldest brother Babatunde (23), who spent a month directing Muiz (15), Malik (10) and cousin Fawis (13) while remaking the *Extraction* trailer (a film they describe as "top-notch"). There is no secret to their ingenuity — just hard work. "We are not professional," Babatunde admits. "We shoot the scene. Then tomorrow we shoot the scene again. We just keep doing it."

The man behind the real thing, *Extraction*'s director Sam Hargrave, is nothing but flattered.



"I was blown away. It made my day," Hargrave tells *Empire*. "I'm honoured these super-talented, creative young filmmakers would take the time to recreate the trailer for our film. The Lego helicopter? Using fishing wire to flip the toy police car? Come on! Brilliant!"

Famous fans have lined up to praise the Bois, with tweets from Dwayne Johnson, Will Smith, and *Extraction* producers Joe and Anthony Russo — who invited the family to the premiere of *Extraction 2*, when it eventually arrives. "I was about to cry when I saw that tweet," Babatunde remembers. "Everyone was jumping around, even our mum and dad. It felt like nothing was impossible." They are stunned into silence when *Empire* reads Hargrave's reaction to them. Babatunde says, "To hear that he appreciates our creativity..

I don't think I'll be able to sleep tonight."

With luck, these videos are just the start, though. "We hope that with the support of the people in the industry, we can become professional filmmakers," says Babatunde. "This is something that we've been waiting for all of our lives." If Netflix needs someone to helm *Extraction 3*, we know just the guys. **BETH WEBB**