

Release: 2021

Cert: 12A

Country: UK

Language: The very few words are In English

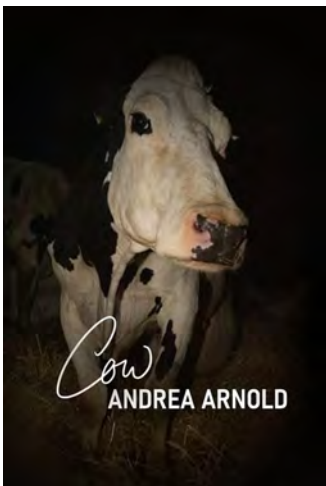
Runtime: 1 hour 34 mins

Directed by: Andrea Arnold

Written by: Andrea Arnold

Cinematography : Magda Kowalczyk

Cast : Luma



We have already shown three of Andrea Arnold's films ('Fish Tank', 'Red Rose' and 'American Honey'), but this one is different in every way. First off it is a documentary, though there are really no words to speak of. Secondly, virtually the only cast is Luma the cow and her calves, plus a few farmers from time to time. Andrea Arnold has supplied no talk over...*'You just get to be alongside Luma as she's milked, mated, has a baby that is taken away from her, over and over. It's relentless. She can never kick back and say: 'I've decided to take two weeks off in July, if that's OK.'* And it makes you question why we drink cow's milk in the first instance. Why not dog's milk? Why not hippo's

milk? It would make as much sense. Obviously, if you want to trade something for magic beans, it has to be a cow. But otherwise?'

It is unflinching and bleak but there are also moments of beauty. When the cows are released into pasture in the spring they race and gambol with joy. Cows are not graceful creatures and watching Luma gambol so clumsily is somehow doubly affecting. There is also a dazzling moment when the silhouettes of the herd are caught under a starlit night sky. But the ending is emotionally challenging, shall we say' – Deborah Ross, Spectator.

Not the film club's usual fare, obviously, but it seems like a film with a message even without any words... and just maybe one we should all think about? To misquote Guy Garvey's Finest Hour on Radio 6: 'And why are we showing you this? Because you need to know'.