

## On Falling [15]

2024 UK/Portugal 104 mins

UK released	<b>7 March 2025</b>
Director	<b>Laura Carreira</b>
Screenplay	<b>Laura Carreira</b>
Cinematography	<b>Karl Kürten</b>
Music	<b>Ines Adriana</b>
Cast	<b>Joana Santos</b> (Aurora) ; <b>Ines Vaz</b> (Vera) ; <b>Piotr Sikora</b> (Kris) ; <b>Neil Leiper</b> (Ben)

On Falling tells the story of Aurora, a Portuguese warehouse picker working in a vast fulfilment centre in Scotland. Trapped between the confines of her workplace and the solitude of her flatshare, she seeks to resist the loneliness, alienation, and ensuing small talk that begin to threaten her sense of self.

It's no surprise to see the name Ken Loach appear on the credits as an executive producer. Thematically similar to the acclaimed director's own work, in particular I, Daniel Blake and Sorry We Missed You, writer-director Laura Carreira's debut feature peels back the curtain and shines a spotlight on the harsh realities of life for the working class in the UK. Whenever on shift, the speed of Aurora and her colleagues is constantly monitored. Do a good job and you're rewarded with a chocolate bar. Slow down, even for a moment, and you receive a condescending pep talk from your supervisor. Despite the pressure to work fast, the film's editing takes the opposite approach. Carreira uses long, extended takes of her lead character moving up and down the aisles of the warehouse, slowly eating her modest meals, or doom-scrolling on her phone. Eat. Sleep. Pick items in a warehouse. Repeat.

The monotony only broken by the sacrifice of a meal in order to fix a phone. Or the flatshare being plunged into darkness when the electricity isn't paid. The film will force audiences to confront their own lives and privileges and/or anxieties that their job provides. It may also make them question the unknown, or deliberately avoided, realities of their

convenient online shopping habits. A job should be a means to support your desired lifestyle, not the central focus of your life, allowing you to maintain a healthy work-life balance. When watching Aurora's story, the phrase that comes to mind is “work to live, not live to work”.

Thanks to Joana Santos's quietly restrained performance, there's a consistent sense of pressure. The conversations in the staff cafeteria feature talk of missing colleagues who have committed suicide. Like the shot of the box tumbling in perpetuity on the conveyor belt, neither moving forward nor back, Aurora is destined to be stuck in this life forever.

It all comes to a head when she finally gets a glimmer of hope with a job interview for a social care role. The initial wave of joy and excitement quickly dissipates when she is asked the simple question, “tell me about yourself”. Confronted by the truth that her life revolves solely around her work, Aurora invents experiences and stories, only to crumble as her emotions overwhelm her. It opens up a tap in Aurora and the banality of her existence is briefly overtaken by a moment of heartbreaking sadness. Audiences can go to the movies to escape the everyday world. Yet cinema also has the power, and responsibility, to hold a mirror up to that world. Carreira does just that and delivers a timely, relevant, and sobering portrait of the true cost of living.

**Dallas King**, *Filmhounds*, 16 March 2025 (abridged)

Tell us what  
you think,  
like or want



Scan to get a weekly  
email about what's next



**[www.buxtonfilm.org.uk](http://www.buxtonfilm.org.uk)**



**Buxton Film is a Registered Charity no. 1165040**

[admin@buxtonfilm.org.uk](mailto:admin@buxtonfilm.org.uk)



[@buxtonfilm.bsky.social](https://twitter.com/buxtonfilm.bsky.social)