Aisha Can't Fly Away Anymore

a film by Morad Mostafa

Technical Information

Title: Aisha Can't Fly Away Anymore
Director: Morad Mostafa
Screenplay: Morad Mostafa & Sawsan Yusuf
Nationality: Egypt
Genre: Drama
Format: HD
Duration: 120 min
Shooting location: Cairo, Egypt
Production Company: Bonanza Films
Co-Production: Film Clinic - Dulac Productions

Director's Information

Morad Mostafa is an Egyptian Filmmaker, born in Cairo in 1988. He worked on several independent films and collaborated as an Executive Director on ***Souad***, a feature film which was in the official selection at the Festival de Cannes 2020 and the Berlinale 2021.

Morad is an alumnus of the Berlinale Talents Campus.

He also wrote and directed three short films, all of which were selected in Clermont-Ferrand for three consecutive years, screened at over 300 festivals worldwide such as BFI London but also at Palm Springs – Shanghai – Thessaloniki – Karlovy Vary – Cinemed – FIFF Namur – Buenos Aires – Durban – Cairo – FESPACO – Carthage and won several awards around the world.

His fourth short film, ***I Promise You Paradise***, has just been selected in La Semaine de la Critique 2023.
After Torino Film Lab, Red Sea Lodge and Rotterdam Lab, Morad is currently developing his debut feature film ***Aisha Can't Fly Away Anymore*** at La Résidence du Festival de Cannes.

Morad Mostafa

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Festival de Cannes, La Résidence

Since 2000, La Résidence du Festival de Cannes has provided each year accommodation and support to 12 selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film.These young filmmakers are selected on the basis of their short films, or even first feature film, and the merits of their feature film project.

During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Festival de Cannes, to bring their project to co-production status.

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FESTIVAL DE CANNES

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FESTIVAL DE CANNES

Synopsis

Aisha, a Somali young woman of 26 who works as a caregiver for elderly patients, lives in the neighborhood “Ain Shams” located in the heart of Cairo among the African migrant community. Witness of the tension between different groups, she’s also involved with an Egyptian gang who blackmails her to steal her patients’ keys so they rob them. While Aisha is stuck in an undefined relationship with Abdoun, a young Egyptian cook, her routine is disturbed when she gets assigned to work in a new house and Abdoun disappears without a trace. Aisha tries to cope with her fears, her lost battles, and her dreams cross to her reality releasing an imaginary ostrich which leads her to an impasse.

Note of Intent

The place in which I’m telling this story is where I spent my childhood and teenage years, the local neighborhood of “Ain Shams” where many migrants from the countries of the Horn of Africa live. It was clear to me that the social pressure from the bigger Egyptian society they are all subjected to, piles up and turns these people into time bombs.

I started thinking about the film a while ago, through a moment stuck in my memory, when I was in a microbus while visiting the neighborhood. I noticed an African girl with a tired face resting her head on the window and sleeping next to me. She suddenly woke up frightened, crying hysterically, which startled me and the other passengers. Then she left without any explanation. That was the trigger for this project. Neither this girl nor that moment came out of my mind for days as I tried to get into that girl’s mind wondering about her dreams and nightmares that merged into the world of reality, in a city that is cruel on its people, then how about newcomers?!

Synopsis

Aisha, une jeune Somalienne de 26 ans, travaille comme aide à domicile chez des personnes âgées. Elle habite le quartier d’Ain Shams au cœur du Caire au sein d’une communauté de migrants africains. Témoin de diverses tensions entre clans, elle est également victime de chantage par un gang égyptien qui essaie de lui soutirer les clés de ses patients afin de les cambrioler. Alors qu’Aisha est coincée dans une relation amoureuse incertaine avec Abdoun, un jeune cuisinier égyptien, son quotidien va être perturbé quand elle se voit affectée à une autre résidence pendant qu’Abdoun lui, disparait sans laisser de trace. Aisha essaie tant bien que mal de gérer ses peurs et ses échecs, tandis que ses rêves se mêlent à la réalité, laissant alors apparaitre une autruche imaginaire qui la mènera dans une impasse.

Note d’intention

Le lieu où se déroule l’histoire est celui de mon enfance et de mon adolescence : le quartier de Ain Shams, où vivent beaucoup de migrants issus des pays de la Corne de l’Afrique. Il était clair pour moi que les pressions sociales qu’ils subissent tous de la part de la société égyptienne s’accumulent et les transforment en véritables bombes à retardement.

J’ai commencé à penser à ce film il y a un moment déjà, à travers un souvenir ancré dans ma mémoire : alors que j’étais dans un minibus en train de visiter le quartier, j’ai remarqué à côté de moi une jeune Africaine au visage fatigué, endormie, sa tête reposant sur la vitre. Soudain, elle se réveilla effrayée en criant de façon hystérique, me surprenant ainsi que les autres passagers. Et puis elle partit, sans explication. C’est ce qui fut le déclencheur de ce projet. Cette fille et cet instant sont restés présents à mon esprit pendant des jours durant lesquels j’ai essayé d’entrer dans sa tête, m’interrogeant sur ses rêves et ses cauchemars fondus dans la réalité, tout ça à l’intérieur d’une ville cruelle envers ses habitants… et que dire des nouveaux venus ?!