

ADR PRODUCTIONS IN COPRODUCTION WITH 27 FILMS PRODUCTION AND ORIENT PRODUCTIONS
PRESENT

KARIM SALEH

HIAM ABBASS

HAFSIA HERZI



DAWN OF THE WORLD



WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ABBAS FAHDEL



EDITOR SYLVIE GADMER CINEMATOGRAPHER GILLES PORTE AFC SOUND EMMANUEL ZOUKI SOUND MIXER CHRISTIAN RIEGEL ORIGINAL SCORE JÜRGEN KNIEPER FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ELYES ZRELLI
SET DECORATOR AND COSTUME DESIGNER HUSSEIN BAYDOUN CASTING FRANCE NICOLAS LUBLIN PRODUCTION MANAGER MOHAMED EL GOHARY LINE PRODUCER PASCAL VERROUST COPRODUCERS OLIVER DAMIAN AND AHMED EL ATTAR
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Production
ADR Productions
2, rue de la roquette
75011 Paris
France
Tel : +33 1.43.14.34.34
Fx : +33 1.43.14.34.30
adr@adr-productions.fr

Co-Production
27 FILMS Production
Erich-Weinert-Str. 30
10439 Berlin
Germany
Tel.: +49 - (0) 30 - 847 116 60
Fax: +49 - (0) 30 - 847 116 90
E-Mail: info@27films.biz

World Sales
REZO
Sebastien Chesneau
29 rue du Faubourg Poissonnière
75009 Paris, France
Mob : +33 6 21 71 39 11
sebastien.chesneau@rezofilms.com

Cast

Karim Saleh
Hafsia Herzi
Hiam Abbas

Crew

Producer: Pascal Verroust
Screenplay: Abbas Fahdel
Director assistant : Elyes Zrelli
Cinematography: Gille Porte, A.F.C
Sound: Emmanuel Zouki
Costume designer: Hussein Baydoun
Editing: Sylvie Gadmer

Technical Information

Duration: 97 min
Ratio: 1,85
Sound: Dolby Digital 5.1

Director's filmography :

2004: *We Iraqis*. Documentary.
Mention Spéciale du Jury, Festival
cinema africano, Milan, Italie, 2005
2002: *Back to Babylon*. Docu-
mentary. Carthage Film Festival,
FIPA , Biarritz, France



The Mesopotamian Marshes, at the delta of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, in the south of Iraq. This is where Mastour and Zahra grow up. Shortly after their marriage, Mastour and Zahra are forced to separate when the Gulf War breaks out. On the battlefield, Mastour befriends Riad, a young soldier from Baghdad. Mortally wounded, Mastour makes Riad promise to protect Zahra when the war is over.

When Riad arrives in the village, he falls deeply in love with Zahra. But unable to bear the loss of her husband, Zahra shuts herself off. In this completely foreign environment that is hostile to this newcomer, and as a new conflict is on the verge of inflaming the whole area, Riad will do the impossible to find his place.

Abbas Fahdel (Screenwriter – Director)

Abbas Fahdel is born in Babylon, Iraq. He moved to France when he was 18 years-old to study cinema. It is only in January 2002 that he returns to Iraq, with a French passport. This return is the subject of the documentary film *Back to Babylon*, about his childhood friends with the country's dramatic situation in background.

One year later, in 2003, he returns to Iraq and discovers a country shaken by violence, the nightmare of dictatorship replaced by chaos, but a country where, nonetheless, everything remains possible: the best or the worse. This historical moment is the theme of his second documentary film, *We Iraqis*, in which he reasserts his sense of belonging and his commitment.

Interview - extracts

The action of Dawn of the World primarily unfolds in the swamps of the Tigris-Euphrates Delta, in southern Iraq. Can you talk about the specificity of that region?

That region, which straddles the Iranian border, is famous for being the mythic land of the Garden of Eden. The Arabs of the marshes live there today, just as they did 5,000 years ago. That's also where people vanquished in the epic battles that have characterized Iraqi history since Sumer and Babylon have always taken refuge — and, more recently, thousands of Iraqi deserters from the Iran-Iraq War and survivors of the 1991 insurrection against Saddam Hussein. In an attempt to wipe this irrepressible sanctuary off the map, Saddam Hussein gave orders to drain the marsh, thus provoking a major ecological and human disaster, which observers have called "ethnic genocide" and a "crime against nature."

Riad and Zahra, the two surviving protagonists in the ravaged remains of the ancient earthly paradise, also seem to hearken back to mythical figures — Adam and Even to be exact.

That's a reference that I indeed thought about. Riad and Zahra are the Adam and Eve of a post-apocalyptic world, implying that the survival of humanity, at least in the marshes, depends upon both their survival and their love.

If Dawn of the World is neither a political film nor a war film, what genre does it belong to?

To the post-apocalyptic genre, which generally describes that fragile balance between an annihilated civilization and an emerging chaos. Like Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, that genre allows a filmmaker to put forward a radical discourse on the real world, by way of the imaginary and the poetic. Emily Dickinson wrote, "Nature is a Haunted House — but Art — a House that tries to be Haunted." *Dawn of the World* strives to be a haunted film — haunted by the mystery and beauty concealed behind the horrors that make up the framework of the real world.

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