Golshifteh Farahani

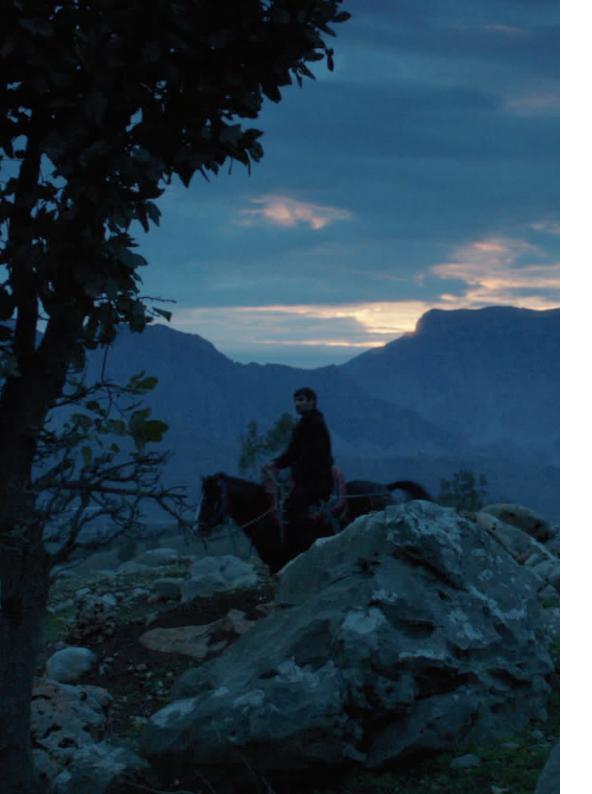


Korkmaz Arslan

MY SWEET PEPPER LAND

A film by Hiner Saleem







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A film by **Hiner Saleem**

with Golshifteh Farahani & Korkmaz Arslan

Kurdish - France - Germany / 2013 / Kurdish / 1,85 / 95'/ 5.1

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Synopsis

After the fall of Saddam Hussein, Baran, a Kurdish independence war hero, resolves to accept a position in a godforsaken village at the borders of Iran and Turkey, an illegal trafficking Mecca.

There he meets Govend, a beautiful young woman who has come to work as the teacher in the newly-opened school despite her twelve brothers' hostility to the idea.

Director's Statement

My grandfather used to say with a great big smile: "Our past is sad, our present is tragic, but lucky for us, we have no future."

When I returned to Kurdistan after several years of exile, I traveled more than two hundred kilometers across mountainous lands without seeing a single living soul. Those who survived the extermination had been deported to camps in southern Iraq. The only thing I could see were black patches where villages used to be. The Iraqi wars had razed them all to the ground. Then I saw a few goats through the car window and my eyes filled with tears of joy. It was a sign of life reasserting itself in this country devastated by a century of war. That was in 1991. A "safe haven" had just been established for the Kurds after Saddam Hussein's defeat in Kuwait. Since then, the Kurds have organi-

Since then, the Kurds have organized themselves and conducted free elections for the first time in history. They elected a Parliament, their own government, created an army and a national police force. But the entire country still needed to be reconstructed: infrastructure, villages, roads, electricity, schools, etc. On every visit, I noticed immense changes.

With the fall of Saddam Hussein (2003), Iraq officially became a Federal State: Forthwith, the Kurds began managing their own government, independent of Baghdad. Billions of dollars, oil money, started flowing in. The country became a huge building site. Life picked up again, starting with the rebirth of villages, new roads, all in a very oriental anarchy.

From then on, these distant regions would need to be given a sense of order. Baran, the film's male lead, dreams of being a part of this.

When I was writing my film, everything I saw reminded me of the Far West. Some former combatants had become sheriffs, others mercenaries, or businessmen. The border between Kurdistan, Iran and Turkey is an ideal thoroughfare for every kind of illegal trafficking. Oil is traded with the Turks for medicine (often past its useby date). Sometimes it's alcohol for Iranian soldiers – everything you can think of, down to tomato paste for the

Kurds. For the country has to import everything.

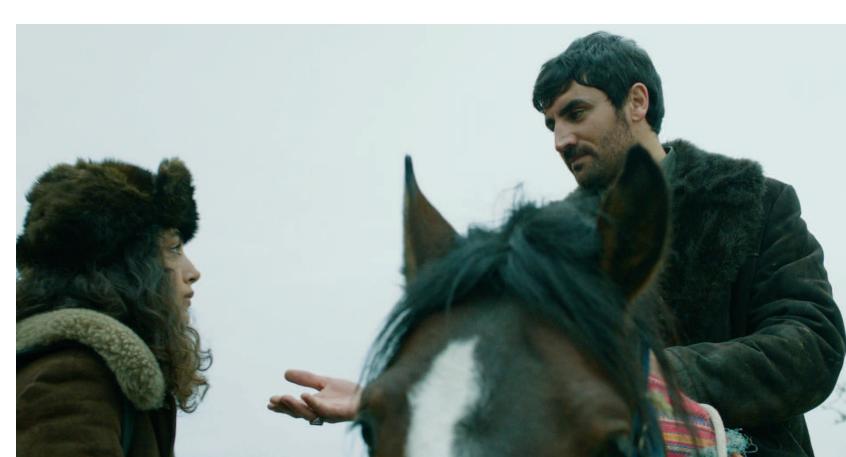
The opening of the country and democracy now allows the youth to express their secular and contemporary demands: More democracy, secularism and freedom of speech. My filmmaking has always focused on these questions.

Furthermore, born in a Muslim country I am particularly sensitive to the standing of women in our society. In today's Kurdistan, women are hoping to find a new identity, a new social and political role.

Women, old friends of mine, who

have become doctors, professors or school teachers, have gone to work in these distant villages and have told me their stories. I created and fleshed out the character of Govend from their experiences. Govend respects some aspects of tradition, but defies her family, society and the culture of honor. I admire these women; I love them and want to pay tribute to them. This is the story I want to tell in my film, with feeling and humor. For as the saying goes: God created ten Kurds, and then one more to make them laugh.

Hiner Saleem







Director's Biography

born March 9th, 1964 in Akré, Irak. Hiner Saleem had already started shooting scenes for his first film, Un bout de frontière, when he was interrupted by bombardments and prevented from completing the film. Gillo Pontecorvo, however, decided to present this footage in 1992 at the Venice film festival as an "unfinished work," which in turn allowed Mr. Saleem to raise the financing he needed for his next film, Vive la mariée... et la libération du Kurdistan (Kebab Connection).

He then made a drama with autobiographical underpinnings, Passeurs de rêves (Beyond our Dreams), followed by Vodka Lemon: awarded Best Film (Controcorrente) at the Venice Film Festival 2005. His feature film, Kilomètre zéro, was part of the official selection at the Cannes Film Festival. This was followed in 2007 by the release of Dol ou la vallée des tambours. He directed Michel Piccoli in the film Les Toîts de Paris (Beneath the rooftops of Paris - Best actor prize, Locarno International Film Festival), and in 2011 shot Si tu meurs, je te tue (If you die, I'll kill you).

Director and screenwriter

2013	MY SWEET PEPPER LAND Un certain regard, Cannes Film Festival
2011	SITU MEURS, JE TE TUE (If you die, I'll kill you) Hong Kong and Dubai International Film Festivals
2007	LES TOITS DE PARIS (Beneath the rooftops of Paris) Golden Leopard Best Actor, Locarno Toronto Film Festival
2007	DOL OU LA VALLÉE DES TAMBOURS Panorama, Berlinale 2007
2004	KILOMÈTRE ZÉRO Official Selection, Cannes Film Festival
2003	VODKA LEMON Grand Prize, Mons International Love Film Festival San Marco Prize, Venice Film Festival
2001	ABSOLITUDE (Arte TV)
1999	PASSEURS DE RÊVES (Beyond Our Dreams)
1997	VIVE LA MARIÉE ET LA LIBÉRATION DU KURDISTAN (Kehah Connection) Audience Award

International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg



Cast

Govend Golshifteh Farahani Baran Korkmaz Arslan Reber Suat Usta

TajdinMir Murad BedirxanJaffarFeyyaz DumanAziz AgaTarik Akreyi

Nîroj Véronique Wüthrich

Credits

Screenplay & Dialogues in collaboration with 1st Assistant Director Editing

Script Supervisor

Make-up/Costume

Cinematography

Sound mix

Art director

Sound design

Colorist

VFX

Hiner Saleem Antoine Lacomblez Antoine Chevrollier Sophie Reine

Clémence Samson
Juliette Haubois
Véronique Wüthrich
Pascal Auffray
Miroslav Babic
Fehmi Salim

Pauline Batista Ceylan Remezan

Location manager Sirwann Mahmud Adbulahman

Post-production Pierre Huot

Recording mix Michael Kaczmarek
Daniel Sobrino

Moritz Hoffmeister Isabelle Julien Arnaud Chelet

Producers Marc Bordure & Robert Guédiguian

/ AGAT Films & Cie (France)

Co-producers Benny Drechsel & Karsten Stöter

/ Rohfilm (Allemagne)

Hiner Saleem / HS Production (Kurdistan) Arnaud Bertrand, Dominique Boutonnat & Hubert Caillard / Chaocorp (France)

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et de l'image animée – Ministère des affaires étrangères – Institut Français

Ministère de la culture et de la communication (CNC) France

Ministère de la culture et de la jeunesse du Kurdistan

And Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung (Germany), Filmförderanstalt mit Unterstützung

der Deutsch-Französischen Kommission

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