

# MUCH LOVED

A film by Nabil AYOUC



**QUINZAINE**  
DES RÉALISATEURS  
Société des réalisateurs de films  
**CANNES**

# MUCH LOVED

## SYNOPSIS

Marrakech today...

Noha, Randa, Soukaina, and Hlima live a life of 'love for sale'. They're whores, objects of desire, flashes of flesh. In the heat of the night money flows freely, to the rhythms of pleasures and humiliations suffered. But united in their womanhood, they're queens of their kingdom. Full of light, dignity and joy, they manage to keep their spirits and dreams alive.

They're loved, they're unloved, they're too much loved...

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

## NABIL AYOUCHE

Tell us about your encounter with the film's protagonists.

What struck me most meeting all these young women was how they suffered in love. They are supporting whole families, and yet they feel that they have never done enough for anyone to love them. Because all they get in return is judgment, condemnation, and at best, contempt. "To them, I was just a credit card," said one of them, without any apparent emotion. Excessively loved by some, not loved enough by others, or at least loved in the wrong way. Like a curse, the money they earn is inevitably "haram", the wages of sin, which burns them, devouring them from inside, and which means they have to get rid of it as fast as possible. To avoid being sucked under, they live life to the full. They laugh, they dance, they entertain the men, and themselves. Their solitude ravages them, sometimes making them cruel. It's hard being alone when there are so many people around you.

What do they represent to you?

Noha, Randa, Soukaina, and Halima are the stigmata of a society in search of identity. Between their tolerated subsistence economy and an ostentatious conservatism, there is a good deal of hypocrisy. For some of these women, God protects them; for others, it's their innocence or their strength which gets them through. But there are always the same fears, the same wounds. I wanted to recount this reality, far removed from the myths. Recounting means showing. Everything, without restraint, without compromise or false modesty. Lifting the veil on this industry means making each face their responsibilities, or what they refuse to see. I don't feel any pity or feeling of miserableness towards these women, and I would be disappointed if anyone felt that watching my film. I feel tenderness and attachment. I find them staggering in terms of their freedom, and

Do you often classify your actresses as warriors?

Yes, they are present-day Amazons. As such, their rapport with men should speak to us. They use this, like a vengeance on the men who think they own them because they pay them. This rapport with men is one of the film's essential themes because it's there to remind us that the Arab world is, above all, a matriarchal society in which the woman, despite appearances, is dominant. Saïd, their protector, servant, and driver, is the physical embodiment of this. His narrative or introspective journeys around Marrakech, which itself is one of the film's main characters, are an immersion in an intoxicating city. Like all cities which give of themselves, you need to be guided round Marrakech to not be submerged by it. And it is when the real takes over from the mythical that this becomes violent, and therefore fascinating.

How do you introduce the real into the fiction?

I opted for the real, with which I am obsessed. The city is the main setting. Young women who have come so close to this milieu that they end up scorning it. Before that, they had some sort of truth to offer, their truth. The virginity of their rapport to the camera became a rich source, once they forgot who they were in their lives. They first had to learn to forget to look at themselves. It took long weeks of work for them to find themselves, to remind themselves who they were before, or who they really are. This work with them was a pure joy. Our exchanges lifted the film above all my hopes. They agreed to open up, to tell their story, to undress and show us their souls, "without make-up", as they say.

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A film written and directed by  
NABIL AYOUC

Morocco, France - 2015  
103 min - 2K - 1,85 - Arabic

Starring	Loubna ABIDAR Asmaa LAZRAK Halima KARAOUANE Sara ELMHAMDI ELALAOUI Abdellah DIDANE
Cinematography	Virginie SURDEJ
Sound	Nassim EL MOUNABBIH, Saïd RADI Samuel AICHOUN
Editing	Damien KEYEUX
Music	Mike KOURTZER
Producers	Eric POULET Saïd HAMICH Nabil AYOUC
Nationalité du film	Marocain, Français, Européen
French & International Publicity	LE PUBLIC SYSTEME CINEMA Bruno BARDE, Céline PETIT Célia MAHISTRE <a href="mailto:cmahistre@lepublicsystemecinema.fr">cmahistre@lepublicsystemecinema.fr</a>
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the directors label

