the secret of the grain

THE NEW FILM BY ABDELLATIF KECHICHE
HIRSCH AND PATHE RENN PRODUCTION PRESENT:

ABDELLATIF KECHICHE’S

the secret
of the grain

Featuring
HABIB BOUFARES, HAFSIA HERZI, FARIDAH BENKHETACHE,
AND ABDELHAMID AKTOUCHE

Run time: 2:31
The city of Sète, on the harbor.

Mister Beiji, a weary sixty years old, is still grinding it out at the shipyard, in a job that has become more painful as the years have worn on. A divorced head of family, he desperately tries to remain close to his loved-ones, a task made the more difficult because of family break-ups and seething tensions which seem to be about to erupt, and which financial difficulties only exacerbate. In this delicate part of his life, it seems like everything contributes to his feeling of uselessness. He has carried the weight of what he sees as his failure for a long time and his only thought is to overcome it by founding his own business, a restaurant. But it isn’t going to be easy. His income is insufficient and irregular, and falls far short of what he’ll need to realize his ambition. That doesn’t keep him from dreaming about it, talking about it, mostly to his family. That family is, little by little, drawn together around the plan, which has for one and all taken on the symbolic value of a quest for a better life. Thanks to their can-do attitude and all their hard work, the dream will come true...

Well, almost...
I began with a popular fantasy, the kind of story they like to tell about in the projects, the myth of those who “made it,” or in other words, those who escaped the modern slavery of a nowhere career path by starting their own businesses. And I wanted to treat it with a certain irony, unbridal the story in the way you can with a narrative tale.

So this is an adventure story, one where the narration is closer to that of a tale, with all the digressions, suspensions, etc. that implies, rather than an action film per se.

He is old, poor and Arab and he wants to create something big in order to regain his dignity and help his loved ones get a leg up. Even as I confined myself to concentrating and maintaining interest in this central action, which because of its euphoric and symbolic value was very important to me, paradoxically, I allowed the parentheses to freely pile up, like so many escapades justified by the simple pleasure of contemplating the events in the daily life of a family drama.

In the end, that is the dimension which interests me most. It’s about getting close to these characters who are my loved ones, in order to show little things from everyday life. That’s why I had to adopt a singular narrative rhythm. Generally, an ongoing action doesn’t allow you to stay on one thing too long, but a real family meal or the beginnings of an emotion showing through on someone’s face needs screen time to happen.

This marriage between a novelistic dimension and the accurate portrayal of the characters and their environment is crucial to me, in part because I belong to the milieu described and so I am emotionally invested in it. But more importantly, it is a reaction to the still all-too-frequently broad and schematic portraits, I wanted to show all the complexities of this Franco-Arabic family, all of them deeply involved in the opening of this family restaurant, and therefore looking to a future which does not necessarily mean the denial of their own identity.

It seemed important to me to make a frank and energetic plea for the right to be different, without falling into the trap of the blithe and approximate stigma inherent in exoticism. A fine line to walk, and an essential one, which I believe I am particularly predisposed to because of my own emotionally invested point of view.

Abdellatif Kechiche
ABDELLATIF KECICHE FILMOGRAPHY

DIRECTOR
2003  L’ESQUIVE (GAMES OF LOVE AND CHANCE) César 2005 (Best Film, Best Director, Best New Actress)
2001  LA FAUTE A VOLTAIRE (BLAME IT ON VOLTAIRE) Venice Mostra 2000 (Golden Lion for First Film, Youth Award)

ACTOR
2005  SORRY, HATERS by Jeff Stanzler
2001  LA BOITE MAGIQUE (THE MAGIC BOX) by Ridha Behi
1996  MARTEAU ROUGE by E. Plumet et L. Phan - LE SECRET OF POLICHINELLE by Franck Landron
1992  BEZNESS (BUSINESS) by Nouri Bouzid Best Actor Festival Francophone de Namur 1992
1991  UN VAMPIRE AU PARADIS (A VAMPIRE IN PARADISE) by Abdelkrim Bahloul
1987  LES INNOCENTS (THE INNOCENTS) by André Téchiné - MUTISME by Philippe Ayache
1984  UN THE A LA MENTHE by Abdelkrim Bahloul
CAST

SLIMANE Habib BOUFARES • RYM Hafsia HERZI • KARIMA Faridah BENKHETACHE • HAMID Abdelhamid AKTOUCHE
SOUAD Bouarouïa MARZOUK • JULIA Alice HOURI • SERGUEÏ Cyril FAVRE • LILIA Leila D’ISSERNIO • KADER Abdelkader
DJEOULLI • MARIO Bruno LOCHET • JOSE Olivier LOUSTAU • MAJID Sami ZITOUNI • OLFA Sabrina OUAZANI
RIADH Mohamed BENABDESLEM • LATIFA Hatika KARAOUI • HENRI Henri RODRIGUEZ • SARAH Nadia TAOUIL

CREW

DIRECTOR .............................................................................................................. Abdellatif KECHICHE
SCREENPLAY ....................................................................................................... Abdellatif KECHICHE
ADAPTATION AND DIALOG .............................................................................. Abdellatif KECHICHE and Ghalya LACROIX
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ........................................................................ Lubomir BAKCHEV
EDITOR ................................................................................................................ Ghalya LACROIX, Camille TOUBKIS
SETS ...................................................................................................................... Benoît BAROUH
COSTUMES ......................................................................................................... Maria BELOSO HALL
SOUND ............ Nicolas WASCHKOWSKI, Olivier LAURENT, Eric LEGARÇON, Eric ARMBRUSTER, Jean-Paul HURIER
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ........................................................................ Carlos DA FONSECA PARSOTAM
CONTINUITY ...................................................................................................... Dominique ARCE
CASTING ............................................................................................................ Monya GALBY
PRODUCTION MANAGER .................................................................................. Benoît PILOT
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER .................................................................................. Pierre GRUNSTEIN
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER .................................................................................... Nathalie RHEIMS
PRODUCED BY ................................................................................................. Claude BERRI

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