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presenteert

Satin Rouge

Een film van Raja Amari



Winner - New Directors Showcase Award

Best New Director - 2002 Seattle International Film Festival

Winner - Audience Award - 2002 Maine International Film Festival

Satin Rouge - SYNOPSIS

Raja Amari's eerste lange speelfilm SATIN ROUGE vertelt het verhaal van een Tunesische huisvrouw die, moe van het leven in de schaduw van haar dochter en haar overleden man, zichzelf terugvindt in een geheime, nachtelijke wereld vol verleiding.

Lilia (HIAM ABBASS) is een doodgewone 'fatsoenlijke' vrouw. Ze woont in Tunis, met haar opgroeiende dochter Salma (HEND EL FAHEM), die ze alleen opvoedt sinds de dood van haar man. Door een samenloop van omstandigheden en om haar dochter te beschermen van wat ze ziet als haar afgrond, begeeft Lilia zich op een avond naar het cabaret. Ze ontdekt er een in haar ogen gevaarlijke wereld: de lichten, de muziek, de danseressen, de mannen, de pleziertjes... Door angst bevangen vlucht ze weg.

Maar iets dwingt haar de volgende nacht weer terug te keren naar het cabaret. Er gaat een hele nieuwe wereld voor haar open, aantrekkelijk en verontrustend tegelijk; de wereld van de nacht, de dans en het plezier. Het cabaret biedt haar gezelschap en ze sluit er vriendschap met een van de sterdanseressen. Uiteindelijk bloeit Lilia op en openbaart ze zichzelf als danseres. Ze wil zich verliezen, zich laten gaan. Het summum daarvan vormt de relatie die ze aangaat met Chokri (MAHER KAMOUN), het vriendje van haar dochter, een van de muzikanten in het cabaret.

Regisseuse Raja Amari: *"Mijn vriendinnen hebben allemaal vrienden en vriendjes, maar hun familie weet het niet of doet alsof ze het niet weet. Het is de sociale schijnheiligheid die dit gedrag opwekt. Het personage van Lilia speelt erop in, in de film: ze trouwt haar dochter op dezelfde manier - in die algemene schijnheiligheid, met Chokri, een muzikant in het cabaret! Iedereen is daar, haar vrienden van het cabaret, haar buurvrouw en haar familie. Haar succes is er toe te komen de twee werelden daar te verenigen. Wat een zelfverloochening of een berusting van haar kant lijkt, is eigenlijk een sociale dekmantel: ze houdt haar vroegere minnaar bij haar door zijn schoonmoeder te worden."*

SATIN ROUGE / 90 MIN / KLEUR/35 MM / FRANKRIJK 2002/ DITRIBUTIE: CINEMIEN

"Hiam Abbass gives a positively glowing performance as Lilia, a butterfly who bursts out of her cocoon in the heady world of the cabaret." - David Stratton, *Variety*

"Exhilarating! The most good-hearted yet sensual entertainment I'm likely to see all year" - Andrew Sarris, *The New York Observer*

"A delight from start to finish!" - Matt Zoller Seitz, *New York Press*

"Sensual Performance, excellent acting and great Arabic music only adds to the films garden of many earthly delights." - *Flaunt Magazine*

Satin Rouge - CREW

Scenario & regie	RAJA AMARI
1 ^{ste} assistente	PAMELA VARELA
Scenario	SAIDA BEN MAHMOUD
Camera	DIANE BARATIER
Geluid	FRÉDÉRIC DE RAVIGNAN
Decor	KAÏS ROSTOM
Montage	PAULINE DAIROU
Montage geluid	THOMAS ROBERT
Mixage	CYRIL HOLTZ
Kostuums	MAGDALENA GARCIA CANIZ
Haar & Make-up	HAJER BOUHAOUALA
Originele muziek	NAWFEL EL MANAA



Satin Rouge - CAST

Lilia	HIAM ABBASS
Salma	HEND EL FAHEM
Chokri	MAHER KAMOUN
Folla	MONIA HICHRI
De buurvrouw	FAOUZIA BADR
Hela	NADRA LAMLOUM
De baas	ABOU MOEZ EL FAZAA
Béchir	SALAH MILED

Satin Rouge - over actrice HIAM ABBASS

HIAM ABBAS: Filmografie -als actrice:

Satin rouge (2002) Lilia
Fais-moi des vacances (2002) De moeder van Lucien en José
L'Ange de Goudron (2001)
Ligne 208 (2000) De moeder van Khaled
Le Mariage en papier (2000) Tata Rabiaa
Le Pain (2000)
Venise est une femme (1998) (TV) De moeder van Aïcha
Vivre au paradis (1997)
Haïfa (1996) Oum Said
3000 scénarios contre un virus (1994) (segment "Poisson rouge")

Filmografie - als regisseuse:

Le Pain (2000)



Satin Rouge - over acteur MAHER KAMOUN

MAHER KAMOLIN: Filmografie als acteur:

Satin rouge (2002) Chokri
Se souvenir des belles choses (2002) Zizou
Yamakasi (2001) Vincent
Gens en maillot de bain ne sont pas (forcément) superficiels, Les (2001) Aziz
Même pas mal (2000)
Fille préférée, La (2000) (TV) Clément
Le Cœur à l'ouvrage (1999) Eric
La Vieille barrière (1998) Samir

Satin Rouge - over regisseuse RAJA AMARI

Raja Amari studeerde Romaanse talen en werkt in haar moederland Tunesië als filmcriticus. Enkele jaren later ging zij studeren aan de Parijse filmacademie Femis, waar ze ook haar eerste korte film **AVRIL** (1998) realiseerde. Hiermee won ze diverse prijzen waaronder een speciale jury prijs op het Film Festival van Milaan. Met **SATIN ROUGE**, waarvoor zij het scenario schreef terwijl zij nog studeerde, won ze de New Directors' Showcase Award op het Seattle Film Festival.

Raja Amari is zelf een getraind buikdanseres, hoewel het haar door haar familie verboden werd te dansen in het nabij het familievertrek gelegen cabaret in Tunis - simpelweg omdat mensen van haar milieu zo iets niet doen. Toen zij naar Tunis terugkeerde om er **SATIN ROUGE** te draaien was haar grootste wens dan ook dit cabaret en de danseressen ervan in haar film te gebruiken.



Filmografie:

Avril (1998)

Korte film - 30'

Speciale prijs van de jury op het Filmfestival van Milaan - Speciale prijs van de jury op het Kortfilmfestival van Tunis - Fotoprijs op het Internationaal Kortfilmfestival van Larissa (Griekenland)

Un Soir de Juillet (2000)

Korte film - 20'

Satin Rouge (2002)

Juniorprijs voor beste scenario - New Directors' Showcase Award op het Seattle Film Festival - Audience Award - 2002 Maine International Film Festival

Het cabaret, het buikdansen, zijn die elementen een achtergrond voor het verhaal van de bevrijding van een Tunesische vrouw en van de vrouw in de Arabische wereld in het algemeen?

Ik heb altijd iets willen doen rond het buikdansen. Ik heb het zelf enkele jaren gedaan in het Conservatorium van Tunis. Ik ben ook beïnvloed door de musicals uit de gouden jaren van de Egyptische cinema van de jaren 40-50, die trouwens heden op de Arabische televisiestations gespeeld worden. Samen met mijn moeder ontdekte en adoreerde ik de beroemde danseres Samia Gamal, de zanger Farid El Atrache...

Kende u het wereldje van het cabaret voor u met de film begon?

Nee, ik had er nog nooit een voet binnen gezet. Enkele vrienden hadden me erover verteld. Maar in Tunesië, zoals in alle Arabische landen, is het een wereldje met een te slechte reputatie opdat er een slechte vrouw naartoe zou gaan. Ik ben er voor de eerste keer binnen geweest tijdens het locatieonderzoek, samen met mijn productieleidster, mijn operatiechef en de hoofdactrice. Een hele delegatie vrouwen die daar dus binnen stapte! Dat lokte eerst verwondering uit bij de klanten, een stilte in het midden van de gesprekken, maar daarna namen de gewone zaken hun gang weer aan. Het is geen agressief wereldje... We werden allemaal heel snel geaccepteerd. Uiteindelijk werd het nog heel grappig want op een avond toen ik uitging, nog altijd tijdens het locatieonderzoek, vroeg mijn vader waar ik heen ging, ik antwoordde hem "Naar het cabaret.". Daarop zei hij 'Werk ze meisje!'

Was het moeilijk om twee werelden die elkaar compleet lijken te negeren, samen te brengen?

Het gaat om twee tegengestelde werelden. De wereld van overdag, streng, dominant, preuts en de wereld van de nacht, los, marginaal en wulps. Ik wou ze elkaar laten ontmoeten in het personage van een gewone vrouw, want ze worden geacht elkaar niet te ontmoeten in onze traditionele samenleving, waar het cabaret gezien wordt als mistroostige en verdorven plaats. Lilia is een "normale" vrouw, een voorbeeld van een familiemoeder, met voeling voor haar werk en haar sociale verplichtingen. Beetje bij beetje, en bijna tegen zichzelf, gaat ze van alle dingen doen die ingaan tegen de opvoeding die ze haar dochter geeft en tegen alles wat ze haar verwijt en verbiedt: buitenshuis slapen, met een jongen gaan...

De twee liefdesscènes en de manier waarop u ze filmt is iets heel zeldzaams voor een Tunesische film. Riskeert u hiermee geen polemiek te ontketenen bij de uitbreng van de film In Tunesië?

Ja, zonder twijfel... In de Arabische context gaan die scènes waarschijnlijk bepaalde mensen shockeren, omdat men « die dingen » niet toont in de bioscoop op zulk een

expliciete manier. Tegelijkertijd is het ook zo dat de film op 8 april uitkomt in Tunesië en hij heeft Tunesische subsidies toegekend gekregen. We hebben ook een Algerijnse distributeur die geïnteresseerd is in de uitbreng. Voor mij, als er iets shockerend te zien is, dan vertegenwoordigt dat de weigering om de realiteit onder ogen te komen. In de film is de moeder een weduwe die ook fysieke verlangens heeft. Dankzij wat ze doormaakt, maakt ze uiteindelijk komaf met de verstikkende moraliteit die haar opgelegd is.

Denkt u niet dat u juist gaat shockeren door het symbool van de Moeder "aan te vallen"?

Het is waar dat als er iets is dat storend kan werken het feit is dat het hoofdpersonage een moeder is. De moeder wordt geacht de codes van een goed leven waarop de samenleving gebouwd is, in zich te dragen, zoals: de familie, de kuisheid en de waarden die overgedragen moeten worden. Door haar de controle over "de goede waarden" te laten verliezen, is in zekere zin die orde verstoort. Lilia gaat alles in teken van haar verlangens zetten en gaat net tot aan de perversiteit in de laatste scène van de film. Als Lilia verliest dan is dat omdat ze geen zin meer heeft om tegen haar verlangens te vechten en zich af te zetten tegen die innerlijke kracht die haar eigen tekorten leert kennen. Ze volgt haar droom, zonder rebellie, en haar optreden in het cabaret laat haar toe haar statuut van moeder te verlaten en dat van vrouw die wordt opgemerkt en begeerd aan te nemen. Op haar weg vindt ze tegenstrijdige gevoelens, het verlangen en de liefde maar ook de vernedering en de jaloezie.

Waarom blijven de mannen in de film stom of praten ze amper?

Ik heb me niet voorgenomen een film met enkel vrouwen te maken. Doordat het hoofdpersonage een vrouw is, zijn haar relaties natuurlijk ook vrouwelijk maar het blijft de man die in het middelpunt van hun bezigheden blijft staan, ook aangezien Lilia schrik heeft voor haar dochter omwille van een man. Voor mij is hij er wel, zelfs als hij weinig praat staat hij in het middelpunt van dit verhaal want hij is het aanstootgevende element.

Is het realistisch dat u Lilia toont terwijl ze in het midden van de nacht alleen door de straten van Tunis loopt? U toont trouwens weinig van de stad...

Het is niet uitzonderlijk dat een vrouw alleen uitgaat 's nachts, zelfs als « dat niet gedaan wordt », is het vrij normaal vandaag de dag. Het gaat overigens niet om een film over de stad. Ik heb geen plannen gemaakt van het medina of pittoreske ambachtslui...want dat was niet de bedoeling. Ik heb het sociale kader tot een minimum herleid om me te concentreren op het verhaal van een evoluerend personage in een actueel en realistisch Tunesië, waar er verhalen zich voordoen die ook universeel zijn.

Self-Empowerment by Way of the Midriff; Raja Amari's "Satin Rouge"

- by Kate Schultz

The director stopped by New York for a few days on her way back from the LA Film Festival, before heading home to Paris. After a few minutes with this stylish, funny woman, it's clear she does not and never has resembled the withdrawn widow in the film.

indieWIRE: In both of your short films and with "Satin Rouge," you present characters and stories many viewers have never seen before. I wondered if your stories are based on your own experiences?

Raja Amari: Yes and no. I've probably seen things around me and then I've taken them and put them into stories, but it's not autobiographical or anything like that. It's like it was in my surroundings. I got inspired and moved on. Conservative people are a good case to study, actually, because they're different from me. I see them evolve around me and I get inspired from it and develop some characters and stories out of that too. I come from a family that's normal, verging on conservative. In Tunis, I live just next to a cabaret. And that's a world I had no access to before. The film enabled me to make the jump to get to see that world.

iW: How do you compare Tunisian belly dance cabarets to American strip clubs?

Amari: It's actually very different from strip tease because there's a certain code in cabaret. Usually people are there to have fun. I tried to transmit the atmosphere of fiesta, fun and enjoyment. In terms of the actual women who dance, they exhibit their bodies, but not at all the way you would in strip tease. They are in control of the situation and they are imposing themselves as they are.

iW: The footage in the cabaret seemed to demonstrate your great love for dance. What can you tell us about that?

Amari: Well, first of all I studied dance, just like the daughter in the film. I really loved belly dancing. And also I really loved the actresses from Egyptian musicals from the '40s and '50s, like Samia Gamal. She was a real diva at the time, very well known. I really love watching musicals from that time.

Shooting "Satin Rouge" was a way for me to get into that world. A few weeks ago, Le Monde, which is a famous French newspaper, asked me to present and introduce a film as part of a cinema club and I chose one of the Samia Gamal musicals. People were very surprised at how modern the film was, and by how much liberty and freedom the dancer had in the film.

Dancers actually had more freedom than they have now in the current Arab world. And they were very interested in how the women would dance in a more Oriental way and then shift to a more Occidental way. They were not expecting that.

iW: In "Satin Rouge," were you making a comment on the role of women in society or are you describing one woman's personal story of mourning and awakening?

Amari: I started out with Lilia, the main character, who is not representative of Tunisian society. I just started out with that specific character. I wanted to study her evolution and how she's going to journey throughout the film. I didn't want to set the character in conflict with society. That was not my intention. Typically, in Arab films and Tunisian films you have a woman who is in conflict with the society, and she'll fight against it. I didn't want that. That was not my subject. Lilia, the character played by Haim Abbass, actually finds her freedom in the context of what I call social hypocrisy. She is involved in a society that is hypocritical in the sense that there are two worlds out there: the world of the night and the world of the day. What you do -- what you really do -- you do not show. She finds a compromise in the sense that society is like that. She just adapts to society. She does what she wants, but she doesn't show it to the world.

iW: What can you tell us about the title?

Amari: People often misinterpret the title as being the name of the cabaret. The title actually comes from the red satin fabric. It's a very important scene for me because that's the moment where Lilia dreams in front of that wonderful texture, and she is tempted. That's also the moment where things shift for her toward a different type of life. That's also very important because starting from that point she can start buying things she could not buy before. She could take liberties with herself and with money that she couldn't take before. The material, the texture, is a way for her to accept another world. The mere fact that it's so soft and so colorful and full of light, attracts her to another world and helps her to awaken her senses and dream of a better life.

iW: How do you feel American audiences have responded to "Satin Rouge" and has anything surprised you?

Amari: I was pleased with the welcome of the audience because when I expected them to react, they reacted nicely. They responded very well. I wasn't sure what to expect because, of course, reactions always vary from one country to another. I wasn't worried, but people had told me back in France that Americans are kind of prudish around the edges and so I was kind of tense about their reaction.

iW: What was the budget and how was it funded?

Amari: \$1 million. It was a co-production, so the money was shared between France and Tunisia, so that made it easier. It was funds from the government. In Tunisia, you can't do otherwise. You have to have funding from the government, otherwise you have no funding whatsoever.

iW: You have already won numerous awards for your shorts and "Satin Rouge." What secrets can you reveal about your filmmaking technique for other young filmmakers?

Amari: Hard work. Maybe the reason I'm successful is because what I talk about in my films is different from the way Arab cinema is normally made, viewed, seen, and interpreted. Maybe I have a different approach that people relate to more easily or like better. I think it may be also how I deal with women as subjects. The female characters aren't submissive, they are active, and that may be appealing to the audience.

iW: I understand Tunisia has an active filmmaking community. What can you tell us about that in light of your development as a filmmaker?

Amari: There is indeed a cultural and cinematographic atmosphere in Tunisia and that enabled me to attend some films that were being made on location there. I was also a film critic, so I was immersed in that atmosphere right from the beginning when I was in Tunis. But it's true that in France, it's very lively, very active in terms of the film community, and so it was definitely important for me to go out and meet people there.

iW: What's your take on the state of affairs for women filmmakers these days?

Amari: Tunisia may be the exception in the sense that there are actually as many men filmmakers as there are women filmmakers and they're very used to it.

iW: If that's the case, then I want to live there.

Amari: (Laughs) Well there are other problems. Anyway, it was not difficult for me to shoot there. It's pretty normal. I think that in Tunisia, as much as anywhere else probably, people are kind of condescending and patronizing in a way, but I can't figure out if it's because I'm a woman or because I'm young. They are condescending, but if they do what I ask them to do, well, who cares if they're patronizing? The only problem with being a woman filmmaker and having a woman as the film's subject is that the woman is often seen as the victim and is soft-spoken. They don't have very strong issues. They're not pushy, they don't go far enough and I really want to push the envelope, to go outside of that and really tackle difficult subjects and not be so sweet and soft-spoken about it. I think that's the tendency for women filmmakers making films about women.

iW: Was it hard to break into the film world?

Amari: It's very difficult to get into that world obviously, but right from the beginning, when I made my short, I met with producers who were very interested in my scripts. I started working with Nomadis Images, the Tunisian co-producer of the film, so that helped with my introduction into that world. Also, I submitted the script to various organizations and commissions. If they can give you funding that helps a tremendous amount to work in film. I won a prize [Femis' Laureate du Prix Junior de Meilleur Scenario] for the script "Satin Rouge," and that really helped a tremendous amount because then a lot of doors opened up for me because of that prize. It would have been harder without that prize.

iW: What filmmakers have inspired you?

Amari: As a schoolgirl, I was very much impressed with Pasolini. I really liked the way he dealt with women and had images of women being charismatic, mythical, very strong. Overall I like Italian cinema. And French, because I've been immersed in it, in particular

The New Wave and also Truffaut. Right now, I feel close to the new French cinema, young French cinema, like Francois Ozon, Arnaud Desplechin. It's not that they came out of the same school as me, Femis, it's more that I like the way they deal with their characters.

iW: What didn't I ask that is important to say about the film or yourself?

Amari: I made the film in a particular context. The post production was done after September 11, so of course our producer was kind of worried, thinking "Oh my God, what kind of career is an Arab film going to have in such a context?" And he was wondering if it was going to be rejected altogether. What's very important is that "Satin Rouge" brings something different to this world. We are bombarded by the media, and they show a certain image of the Arab world. What I want to do is bring a more subtle, more nuanced, vision of the world and open people up to other images.



Review by David Stratton (Variety) at Berlin Film Festival (Forum), Feb. 10, 2002.

"Like Jane Wyman in Douglas Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows*," the protagonist of *Red Satin* is a still-attractive widow stuck in a rut who eventually seizes the chance to break out and enjoy life. This handsomely produced and exhilarating romantic drama is the first feature by 30-year-old femme director Raja Amari, and it should certainly crop up in more festival programs, especially those devoted to women's films, as well as having quite a good chance for theatrical and video exposure in many territories.

Lilia, beautifully played by Hiam Abbass, has lived an increasingly lonely existence since the death of her husband. Her teenage daughter, Salma (Hend El Fahem) is always at school, or out with friends, leaving her mother to eat her meals alone, watch television sans much enthusiasm, and, by day, obsessively dust and clean the house.

All that changes when she goes to see Salma at her dancing class and suspects, rightly, that her daughter has a thing going with a musician, Chokri (Maher Kamoun). One evening, she sees Chokri in the street and follows him to the cabaret nightclub where he works at night.

This brings her in contact with a world she'd never known, a world in which ample women perform belly dances for enthusiastic, mostly male, audiences in a wild and exotic environment. Lilia finds herself strangely attracted to the place, and before long has befriended Folla (Monia Hichri), one of the dancers, and is trying on the scanty, sequined costumes herself. And then she's dancing on the stage with ever increasing abandon. Tunisian films have always been in the forefront of permissiveness in Arab cinema, and *Red Satin* is no exception. This story of a "respectable" widow who kicks over convention, and even becomes involved with her daughter's lover, is handled with confidence and a gentle sense of humor that's most attractive. At the same time, the writer-director's depiction of the conservative neighbors and relatives who surround the heroine is incisive, and, again, reminiscent of the conservatives in '50's small-town America who were portrayed so vividly in Sirk's film.

Hiam Abbass gives a positively glowing performance as Lilia, a butterfly who bursts out of her cocoon in the heady world of the cabaret. Other cast members, including Hend El Fahem's rebellious teenage daughter, acquit themselves well, and the film is technically smooth in all departments. Costumes and music provide particular enjoyment."

Belly dance has ancient roots and thriving international traditions that remain extraordinarily vital today. From the oldest ritual traditions of the eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans, and the Mideast, belly dancing has spread throughout the world, finding many adherents not only in its areas of origin but also in such areas as North America, India, and eastern Asia.

The multitude of dance forms grouped in English as "belly dance" have a variety of names in the cultures that produced them. To Greeks, belly dance is the *cifte telli*; to Turks, *rakkase*; to Egyptians, *raks sharki*. Despite such variety, the belly dance traditions of different cultures share some generally recognized features. Other dances may also have long traditions and important functions, but belly dance is associated--at least in the minds of many scholars and practitioners--with the deepest sources of dance in ancient fertility rituals that blended the erotic with the religious.

One of belly dance's sources may lie in the existence in the ancient world of prostitutes attached to civic temples. Far from being part of any shady or criminal subculture, such women held high social position. Throughout the ancient cultures of Greece, Persia, Palestine, and North Africa, sacred dancing was an important part of the fertility rituals conducted by such temple priestesses. In the animistic, polytheistic religions of ancient times, erotic ritual dance was intended to placate gods, ensure crop fertility, and bring glory to a given city.

As belly dance developed from its ancient roots, some cultures endowed it with new meanings that belie the kind of "nightclub" eroticism often projected on the form today. In late-19th-century Persia, for example, belly dance was performed only privately, among women; it was not intended for male viewing pleasure. In keeping with its sources in fertility ritual, Persian belly dance was associated less with the act of conception than with the movements of labor in birth. The common practice among traditional belly dancers of avoiding high-heeled shoes and dancing barefoot also connects the dance to ancient practice--the barefoot dancer remains in physical touch with the earth--while defying modern stereotypes of eroticism.

The sounds to which belly dancing is traditionally performed also have origins in ancient music. Unlike much Western music, which operates on principles of harmonic and rhythmic progress through conflict toward resolution, the music of the Mediterranean, the Balkans, and the Mideast tends to emphasize continuous flow, the development of rhythmic swirls of modal sound that envelop a listener in large, complex patterns and provide space for contemplation. In Eastern forms of music and dance, much may be improvised; such is certainly the case with belly dancing, which captures in movement the musical differences

between East and West. Emphasizing the flow and ripple of belly muscles and the sway of the hips, belly dance is not based on patterns of steps, as in Western dance, but on continuous movement.

After a long, multicultural development throughout its areas of origin, belly dancing was discovered by Westerners during the age of Western expansion and colonialism. At the Chicago Exposition at the turn of the twentieth century, Americans and Europeans, at once scandalized and titillated by belly dancing, began to use modernized forms of the style in pseudo- "oriental" cabaret acts. As the modern world developed, immigrations to Europe and North America from the parts of the world in which belly dance flourished created crosscurrents of influence between Western pop styles and belly dance tradition.

Today, belly dance takes many forms. Some belly dance remains highly traditional; some employ Westernized music and glitzy show-biz ambience. In whatever form it expresses itself today, belly dance remains one of the world's strongest and most vital links to an ancient heritage.