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CAIRO TIME – synopsis nl + fr

De overwerkte Juliette (Patricia Clarkson, speelde o.a. mee in Woody Allens *WHATEVER WORKS* & Isabel Coixets *ELEGY*) heeft met haar man Mark, die werkt voor de UNO, in Egypte afgesproken om samen eens helemaal te ontspannen. Maar bij haar aankomst in Cairo hoort ze tot haar ontsteltenis dat Mark in de Gazastrook opgehouden is. Omdat het niet handig is als hoogblonde vrouw alleen in de straten van Cairo rond te lopen, vraagt Mark zijn Egyptische vriend Tareq (Alexander Siddig) Juliette alvast kennis te laten maken met de vele kleuren en geuren van Caïro. De twee worden verliefd.

CAIRO TIME is een romantisch drama van Ruba Nadda met een knipoog naar het werk van Jane Austen, haar klassiekers vol van binnengehouden emotionele spanning. De film won de prijs voor beste Canadese speelfilm op het Toronto International Film Festival 2009.

À son arrivée au Caire, Juliette (Patricia Clarkson, e.a. *WHATEVER WORKS* de Wody Allen & *ELEGY* d'Isabel Coixet) est déstabilisée en apprenant que son mari Mark, travailleur de l'ONU qu'elle était venue rejoindre, est retenu dans la bande de Gaza.

Prévoyant, ce dernier a dépêché son ami Tareq, un ex collègue égyptien, pour qu'il cueille sa femme à l'aéroport et la conduise à son hôtel où elle l'attendra. Mais les nouvelles qui lui parviennent font craindre un long délai, si bien que Juliette, éditrice surmenée, en vacances pour la première fois depuis que ses enfants ont quitté la maison, part visiter la ville. Or, la présence dans les rues d'une femme seule, blonde de surcroît, lui attire une attention gênante qui la force à demander à Tareq de l'escorter. Au fil des jours, une complicité amoureuse se tisse entre eux...

CAIRO TIME est un drame romantique de Ruba Nadda qui fait pensé un peu aux romans de Jane Austen, ses histoires plein de tensions émotionnels. Le film a gagné le prix de meilleur long métrage canadien au Festival de Film international de Toronto 2009.

Lengte 88min. / Taal: Engels - Arabisch / Land: Canada

Durée 88min. / Langue: anglais - arabe / Pays: Canada



CAIRO TIME – cast

Juliette Grant Patricia Clarkson
Tareq Khaliffa..... Alexander Siddig
Kathryn Elena Anaya
Mark Tom McCamus

CAIRO TIME – crew

Regisseuse/réalisatrice Ruba Nadda
Producent/producteur Daniel Iron
Producent/producteur David Collins
Uitvoerend producent/producteur executif ... Christine Vachon
Fotografie/fotographie Luc Montpellier
Montage Teresa Hannigan



CAIRO TIME – Ruba Nadda

Ruba Nadda is Syrische van origine, ze groeide op in Canada en het Midden Oosten. In haar werk beschrijft, onderzoekt en bevraagt ze ook zichzelf over de verschillende sociale, religieuze en culturele waarheden in de arabische wereld. CAIRO TIME is de vierde film, die zowel door haar geschreven als geregisseerd is. Haar andere films zijn SABAH (2005), UNSETTLED (2001) en I ALWAYS COME TO YOU (2000). Ze schreef, regisseerde en produceerde ook 14 kortfilms.

Ruba ging naar de prestigieuze Tisch School of the Arts (New York University) waar zij filmproductie studeerde. Terug in Toronto begon ze onmiddellijk aan haar filmcarrière, haar 13 korte films werden meer dan 500 maal vertoond op filmfestivals over de hele wereld.

Ruba is ook een fictieschrijver, met korte verhalen die in meer dan 200 internationale bladen zijn gepubliceerd. Momenteel werkt ze, samen met producent Daniel Iron, aan twee nieuwe films: ABU MANA en AN OCTOBER GALE.



Ruba Nadda est d'origine syrienne, elle a grandi au Canada et au Moyen-Orient. Dans ses œuvres, elle décrit, interroge et s'interroge souvent sur les réalités sociales, religieuses et culturelles diverses du monde arabo-musulman. CAIRO TIME est son 4^{ième} long-métrage. Les trois longs-métrages précédents sont SABAH (2005), UNSETTLED (2001) et I ALWAYS COME TO YOU (2000). Elle a aussi écrit, réalisé et produit quatorze courts-métrages.

Ruba a suivi des cours de production de films au Tisch School of the Arts (New York University). De retour à Toronto elle commençait immédiatement de filmer. Ses 14 courts-métrages ont été projeté plus de 500 fois sur de festivals de film autour du monde.

Ruba est aussi écrivaine, ses courtes histoires ont été publiées dans plus de 200 magazines internationaux. Maintenant elle est en train de faire deux nouveaux films avec producteur Daniel Iron : ABU MANA en AN OCTOBER GALE.

CAIRO TIME – Production notes

He who hath not seen Cairo hath not seen the world. Her soil is gold; her Nile is a marvel; her women are like the black-eyed virgins of Paradise; her houses are palaces; and her air is soft, as sweet-smelling as aloe-wood, rejoicing the heart. And how can Cairo be otherwise, when she is the Mother of the World? --"A Thousand and One Nights"

Cairo Time is a love letter to a city intertwined with a love story about a woman. It began when Syrian-Canadian writer/director Ruba Nadda first visited Cairo with her family many years ago. Returning a decade ago with one of her sisters, (and no longer under the protective eye of her father) they had memorable adventures. "The city was beautiful and the people were beautiful," Nadda recalled. Having lived in Damascus, and subsequently travelled the world, Nadda never forgot the grandeur and the chaos of this ancient city that was originally settled in Palaeolithic times. Sitting at the border of what was once Upper and Lower Egypt, the area that was to become the metropolis of Cairo has played host to the Greeks, Romans, Crusaders, the Ottomans, Napoleon, and the British and is now one of the most densely populated cities in the world. "I remember the city being alive. It's gritty and historical and seething with humanity and I just had to capture it on screen." Truly, a journey through Cairo is a journey through time and it awakens your soul.

It was during Nadda's many trips to international film festivals with her 14 short films and her previous feature Sabah, that she came to appreciate the feelings of introspection and melancholy that travelling alone engenders. From these experiences came Cairo Time, something Nadda deems a "real love story, but one that is very un-West because to me the West is about acquiring, accomplishing, deadlines and running, running, running. The central character, Juliette, is suddenly forced to slow down and move on Cairo time." This film has a West-meets-East quality to the unexpected, unrequited love between an Arab man and a North American woman. It's also a throw to old style, classic films reminiscent of the restrained, emotional tension in the work of Jane Austen.

Juliette is a woman who married young and still ardently loves her husband, Mark, who works abroad. Their children have grown up and moved away. Life, doing what it usually does to a marriage, has replaced their hopes and dreams with accomplishment and responsibilities. In the back of her head, Juliette had thought that sooner or later, she and her husband would have time for each other, which was the reason for her trip to Cairo.

"I love this woman," explained Nadda. "She is quiet. And she has a sadness that's just under the surface which comes from a lifetime of being by herself a lot because she's been stood up by a husband whose work has often taken priority."

Unable to meet Juliette when she lands, but knowing that she is an independent woman who is likely to head off on her own, Mark asks Tareq to care for her. For years, Mark had trusted Tareq with his own life, so it made sense to extend that trust to Juliette's wellbeing.

Once at the hotel, Juliette is alone again. Unwilling to wait quietly for her husband's arrival, every effort she makes to venture out on her own is rebuffed. Cairo is not a gentle city. With a population of 17 million, the noise is unbearable. The heat, mixed with dust, is oppressive. Traffic does not adhere to lanes or stop lights. And women, particularly foreigners, do not easily move about in public alone. Quickly, Juliette learns that the simple activities of everyday living in Canada, like walking across the street, become a test of wills in Cairo. And so she turns to Tareq who shows her first, Cairo, and then herself.

* * *

Ruba Nadda is nothing if not determined. Producer Daniel Iron of Foundry Films in Toronto had just finished working on Sarah Polley's *Away From Her*, when Nadda found him and gave him the script for *Cairo Time*. Upon reading it, Iron declared it, "Fantastic. I instantly realized this is someone I want to work with forever." His intuition was sound. "Ruba's previous feature *Sabah* had a lightness to it as a romance; it had a look and feel that matched the script particularly well. The performances were very good and I was impressed with what she was able to do on a miniscule budget. Her other scripts (Nadda is a prolific writer with several completed screenplays standing by) were vastly different from each other, and it was clear that not only is she a smart, careful writer whose work is all character-based, but she's a real filmmaker."

"This is a quiet love story about a woman at a crucial point in her life," said Iron. "She has a private epiphany and things happen to her that no one will ever know. While they are not overtly life changing, they are fundamentally life changing inwardly and this illuminates the world for her. She finds an inner freedom that perhaps she always had, but being a working mother with kids and a husband who was away a lot, never had the opportunity to explore. This is very different from a "my husband and I are having problems so I'm going to have a fling" story. *Cairo Time* is beautiful and sad at the same time. The emotions are not clear cut, but there is clarity in their ambiguity."

In 2005, Atom Egoyan had given the screenplay for *Cairo Time* to Christine Vachon and Charles Pugliese at Killer Films in New York. Vachon was pleased with the potential of the script, "*Cairo Time* is a simple and beautiful drama that explores romance from a point of

view we haven't really seen before. Couple that with a young, talented writer/director and you have a film that is a perfect fit for Killer Films."

"I was bowled over by the simplicity and elegance of her script and how it managed to be so emotional without being melodramatic," added Pugliese. Once they both met Nadda in person, they were enthusiastic about finding a way to become involved with the project. When Daniel Iron came along and the film was established as a Canadian project, Vachon and Pugliese came on board in the capacity of executive producers.

"Killer is a group I have always dreamed of working with," said Iron. "They have come on to executive produce, consult and help with key casting because their contacts are immense. They've been invaluable in every aspect. Ruba and I discovered that we work in the exact same way that they work in terms of producing and creative collaboration."

The two main challenges of making this film were location, which called for a sophisticated co-production arrangement, and casting a story with only four main characters, two of which carry the film.

Canada has co-production treaties with 80 countries around the world – but not Egypt. Again through Nadda (whom Iron maintains "seems to know everybody in the world because of her film festival attendance."), Iron was introduced to David Collins of Samson Films in Ireland. They had just completed *Once*, which garnered a slew of awards including an Oscar. By teaming up with Samson, and making *Cairo Time* a Canada-Ireland co-production, they were allowed to move forward with filming in a third country.

Collins had met Nadda at a film festival in Mannheim and again in Rotterdam. "I liked the fact that her films explore the themes of Muslim/Western relationships in a natural setting. When I read the script for *Cairo Time*, it reminded me of the world created in *Lost in Translation*, with its cross cultural, and ultimately platonic, love story."

CAIRO TIME – Patricia Clarkson

Nog maar net afgestudeerd aan de universiteit van Yale, met het diploma van drama op zak, wist Patricia Clarkson al meteen een grote filmrol op te strijken in **The Untouchables** (1987) van Brian de Palma. Ze speelde Catherine Ness, vrouw van agent Eliot Ness (Kevin Costner). Haar carrière als filmactrice nam zo een vliegende start, ze stond tegenover grote acteurs zoals Clint Eastwood in **Dirty Harry in The Dead Pool** (1988) of Robin Williams in **Jumanji** (1995).

In het begin werd ze vaak gecast als liefhebbende echtgenote (**The Green Mile**, 1999 & **Married Life**, 2007) of als treurende moeder (**The Pledge**, 2001 & **Pieces of April**, 2003), beetje bij beetje werd ze de Egeria van de independent cinema, wat zich vertaalde in o.a. **Welcome to Collinwood** (2002), **Far from Heaven** (2003) en **The Station agent** (2003). Het grote publiek kent haar als tante Sarah in de successerie **Six feet under**, een rol waarvoor ze twee Emmy Awards kreeg.

Meer recent zette ze ook meer geëngageerde producties achter haar naam o.a. **Good Night, and Good Luck**. (2006) van George Clooney of **All the King's Men** (Oscar Beste Film 2006). Vervolgens was ze de echtgenote die verslaan moest worden in de komedie **Married Life** (2007), en ze speelde mee in Woody Allens **Vicky Cristina Barcelona** (2007). De zwaardere rollen die ze neerzette en de gerenommeerde regisseurs waarmee ze al werkte weerhouden haar er niet van om ook nog het lichtere werk te doen, bijv. **Reservations** (2007), de Amerikaanse remake van Bella Martha. In 2008 koos ze echter weer het meer dramatisch werk en speelde ze in films zoals **Blind Date** (2007), **Hurricane Mary** (2008), **Lars and the Real Girl** (2007) of ook **Elegy** (2008), waarin ze aan de zijde verscheen van Ben Kingsley en Penélope Cruz.

Nog recenter speelde ze mee in **Whatever Works** (2009) van Woody Allen en **Shutter Island** (2010) van Martin Scorsese.

Sortie de l'Université de Yale, diplômée en arts dramatiques, Patricia Clarkson décroche, pour son premier rôle au cinéma, une place de choix dans **Les Incorruptibles** (1987) de Brian De Palma. Elle y incarne en effet Catherine Ness, l'épouse de l'agent Eliot Ness (Kevin Costner). Sa carrière de comédienne lancée, elle donne la réplique à des acteurs de renom comme Clint Eastwood dans **La Dernière cible** (1988) ou encore Robin Williams dans **Jumanji** (1995).

Souvent d'abord cantonnée aux rôles d'épouse aimante (**La Ligne verte**, 1999 & **Married Life**, 2007) ou de mère éplorée (**The Pledge**, 2001 & **Pieces of April**, 2003), elle devient petit à petit l'égérie du cinéma indépendant, s'illustrant entre autres dans **Bienvenue à Collinwood** (2002), **Loin du paradis** (2003) et **The Station agent** (2003). Le grand public la connaît davantage pour son personnage récurrent de la tante Sarah dans la série télévisée à succès **Six feet under**, pour lequel elle a reçu deux Emmy Awards.

Plus récemment, sa carrière s'étoffe encore grâce à des productions plus engagées, comme **Good Night, and Good Luck** (2006) de George Clooney ou **Les Fous du roi** (Oscar du meilleur film 2006). Elle est ensuite l'épouse à abattre de la comédie **Married Life** (2007), et tourne sous la direction de Woody Allen pour **Vicky Cristina Barcelona** (2007). Ces rôles engagés et ces directeurs de renom ne l'empêchent pas de continuer à tourner des films plus légers, comme **Le Goût de la vie** (2007). En 2008, elle multiplie les projets et renoue avec une matière plus dramatique, avec des films comme **Blind Date** (2007), **Hurricane Mary** (2008), **Une fiancée pas comme les autres** (2007) ou encore **Elegy** (2008), où elle apparaît aux côtés de Ben Kingsley et de Penélope Cruz.

Récemment elle a joué dans **Whatever Works** (2009) de Woody Allen et **Shutter Island** (2010) de Martin Scorsese.



CAIRO TIME – Alexander Siddig

Alexander Siddig geniet de meeste bekendheid door zijn rol als Dr. Julian Bashir in de serie **Star Trek: Deep Space Nine**. Meer Recentelijk speelde hij in grote films zoals **Clash of the Titans** (2010), **Syriana** (2005), **Kingdom of Heaven** (2005), **Vertical Limit** (2000) en de BBC-serie **Spooks**. Ook speelde Alexander in de uiterst populaire serie **24**.

Siddig werd geboren in Sudan en groeide daar op totdat zijn Britse moeder door politieke onrust het land moest ontvluchten. In Engeland werd zijn scholing betaald door zijn oom, de acteur Malcolm McDowell, vooral bekend door zijn rol in **A Clockwork Orange** (1971). Later studeerde hij geografie en antropologie, denkend dat hij hiermee later zijn geboorteland zou kunnen helpen. Tijdens deze periode raakte hij echter geïnteresseerd in acteren en regisseren en verliet hij de universiteit om aan de prestigieuze Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts in Londen te gaan studeren.

Als een van de weinig getrainde acteurs van Arabische komaf in Londen in die tijd, werd hij al snel gecast voor verschillende rollen. Dit leidde ertoe dat Star Trek producer Rick Berman zijn oog op hem liet vallen



Né au Soudan, il y passe sa jeunesse jusqu'à ce que la situation politique oblige sa mère à émigrer avec lui en Angleterre. Après que son oncle, Malcolm McDowell, eut financé ses études secondaires, Siddig suivit une formation scientifique, puis s'orienta vers la carrière d'acteur en ralliant la prestigieuse London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts.

Étant à l'époque l'un des rares acteurs d'origine arabe à Londres, il décrocha sans tarder le rôle d'un jeune Palestinien dans la mini-série *The Big battalions*, et fut après ce premier succès engagé pour interpréter Faisal dans le téléfilm **A Dangerous man: Lawrence after Arabia** (1992).

Alexander Siddig est principalement connu pour le rôle vedette du Dr. Julian Bashir dans la série à succès **Star Trek : Deep Space Nine**. Découvert à l'écran dans **Sammy et Rosie** (1987) s'envoient en l'air de Stephen Frears, il a compte parmi ses films **Kingdom of heaven** (2005) de Ridley Scott et **Vertical limit** (2000) de Martin Campbell. En janvier 2009, on le voit dans **Espion(s)** (2009) de Nicolas Saada.

CAIRO TIME – recencies / critiques

REEL FILM REVIEWS

Cairo Time follows an American magazine writer (Patricia Clarkson's Juliette) as she arrives in Cairo hoping to spend some time with her husband, though his ongoing work-related absence ultimately forces Juliette to see the sights with a friendly local named Tareq (Alexander Siddig). Director Ruba Nadda does a superb job of luring the viewer into the proceedings almost instantly, as the filmmaker effectively captures the inherent chaos and sleaziness of the titular city - yet it's just as clear that the awe-inspiring visuals and Nadda's emphasis on seriously scenic locales inevitably ensures that the film comes off as an unexpectedly captivating travelogue. The plot, which is certainly as thin as one could possibly envision, exists primarily as a springboard for Juliette's continuing escapades in and around Cairo, with her back-and-forth banter with Siddig's character establishing itself as a highlight within the proceedings virtually from the get-go - as Clarkson and Siddig offer up compelling, thoroughly ingratiating work that draws the viewer into even the most seemingly inconsequential of their encounters (ie the two share a nighttime cruise around the Nile river). Siddig's effortlessly magnetic performance is nothing short of a revelation, as the actor - best known for his role on Deep Space Nine - more than holds his own opposite an equally affecting Clarkson and cements his place as the film's secret weapon early on. The end result is a very low-key, very charming little movie that's as delightful as it is entertaining, with the touching (and unexpectedly heartbreaking) conclusion ensuring that Cairo Time lingers in one's mind long after the end credits have rolled.

★★★1/2 out of ★★★★★

CTV NEWS

Cairo Time a masterful look at repressed romance

Repressed passions stir the air in "Cairo Time," Ruba Nadda's sumptuous new tale about two strangers who struggle with attraction. Actress Patricia Clarkson stirs this illicit pot with electric ease.

Clarkson, Nadda and co-star Alexander Siddig serve up something here that could easily be called a chick flick. Don't sell "Cairo Time" so short.

There are no flavour-of-the-month faces here. No bonehead story lines, indigestible camp or stale clichés. What Clarkson and company do deliver is a finely-drawn, grown-up look at an age-old question: "Should I or shouldn't I?" Set against the sun-drenched bustle of Cairo's streets, magazine editor Juliette (Clarkson) arrives to join Mark, her Canadian diplomat husband (Tom McCamus). To her dismay, escalating tensions in Palestinian territories keep Mark stranded in Gaza and Juliette stuck in a hotel waiting for his return. Nadda wisely keeps the camera on Juliette's resigned face.

Slowly and steadily, she hints at something stirring behind Juliette's luminous, cornflower blue eyes as she scans Cairo from the safety of her balcony. Of course, that deliberate pacing might annoy those who like their action fast and their noise meter cranked way past the decibel on "Transformers 1 or 2." But, look past this devoted wife's still, 40-something exterior and you intuit a swell of unhappiness churning inside Juliette's head and heart.

Suddenly, the enigma that Juliette is comes careening towards us. Is she happily married? Is her husband having an affair? Is Juliette about to crack? The subtle subtext that Clarkson plays so well gives this elegant, secretly-sorrowed woman a sense of mystery that rivals Egypt's pyramids. Whatever is going on inside in her mind, we're stuck to Juliette like white on rice -- much like her husband's former employee, Tareq (Alexander Siddig). Tired of waiting, Juliette invites this lanky looker to show her Cairo. Tareq's the perfect gentleman: Kind, attentive and protective, as well, when the local men swarm Juliette at the first sight of her milky skin and long-flaxen hair. His attraction to the boss' wife, however, is right there in Siddig's big, sea-green orbs. Ditto for Juliette.

There, amidst those silent walks and intimate meals they share together, the pair's unspoken passion for one another pounds the screen. Will Juliette stray? Can Mark's honorable friend control himself? The tensions build with nothing more than a stroke of a hand or a lingering look.

Have audiences forgotten how good that can be? Not so judging by the film's reception at the Toronto International Film Festival. I personally sat in a row filled with men and women of all ages at the film's premiere. They applauded the fact that two ordinary

people did a seemingly extraordinary thing by Hollywood's "more is more" standards: They just said no. It's not a decision that comes easily. In fact, one of "Cairo Time's" most electric moments comes when Tareq takes one bold step towards Juliette in her hotel room. She skittishly recoils, then steps towards him and smiles, "Let's go." That's not code for "Hey, let's jump into the sack." Not by a long shot. In an act that signals just how much she feels for this man, Juliette takes Tareq to the pyramids – a trip she had been saving to share with husband. If that doesn't say I want you, what does? We never really know if Juliette regrets choosing her marriage over that "over-the-moon" love Tareq awakens her to. But, in an age where every thought, feeling and body part is out there for everyone to see, Nadda does something daring with "Cairo Time."

She bravely revisits a style of romantic filmmaking that has not been seen since "Brief Encounter," David Lean's 1945 classic. The end result is moving, modern and visually stunning even by Lean's standards. As for Clarkson, who came to this film after playing a Southern belle-turned-artiste in Woody Allen's comedy, "Whatever Works," Juliette screams to the world that there is no one like her working in Hollywood today. Once Shakespeare's star-crossed Juliet filled my memory banks. Now Clarkson's Juliette lingers there too - as does "Cairo Time's" welcome reminder that less is more.

