

WINTER OF DISCONTENT

(El sheita elli fat)

a film by

Ibrahim El Batout



Venice Film Festival 2012 - Orizzonti

Egypt 2012/ 96 mins / Arabic with English subtitles/ Certificate 15

Opens August 23rd 2013

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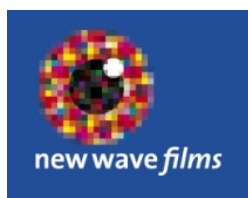
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CREW

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Director | Ibrahim El Batout |
| Screenplay | Ibrahim El Batout, Ahmed Amer Yasser Naeem, Habi Seoud |
| Camera | Victor Credi |
| Editor | Hisham Saqr |
| Music | Ahmed Mostafa Saleh |
| Production design | Mostafa Emam |
| Visual Effects | Tamer Mortada |
| Producers | Amr Waked, Salah Al Hanafy, Ibrahim El Batout |
| Production | Zad Communication and Production LLC |
| In Association with | Aroma, Ein Shams, Material House Production |

CAST

| | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| Amr | Amr Waked |
| Adel | Salah Al Hanafy |
| Farah | Farah Youssef |

SYNOPSIS

Set against the momentous backdrop of the whirlwind protests of Cairo's Tahrir Square that began on January 25th, 2011, WINTER OF DISCONTENT explores the lives of three people, each one involved differently with the Egyptian revolution: activist Amr (Amr Waked), journalist Farah (Farah Youssef) and state security officer Adel (Salah Al Hanafy).

Amr, a computer programmer, had already been a victim of state terror in 2009. Two years later, he hears the news of the demonstrations engulfing Cairo and making their way to Tahrir Square.

Farah is a news anchor on Egyptian television. As events unfold, she soon realizes that the news she is delivering, aimed at minimizing the protests, is very different from what is being reported online and internationally. Adel is an officer with Egyptian State Security - and the 25th of January becomes a day that he never imagined would come true.

As the stories of these three characters unfold, presaging and intertwining with the pivotal events that changed the face of Egypt and the Arab world, we are propelled headlong into the surreal atmosphere of terror and uncertainty that characterized the last days of Mubarak's rule. Amr, Farah and Adel will all be taken on a journey that is going to change their lives, as well as their country, forever.

More details at www.newwavefilms.co.uk

Photos at : www.newwavefilms.co.uk/press

Ibrahim El Batout

Ibrahim El Batout was born in Port-Said, Egypt in 1963. After graduating in Physics from the American University in Cairo, he worked as a cameraman and editor at the Video Cairo Production House. From 1987 to 2004, he worked as a documentary director, producer and cameraman specializing in war zones for international TV channels, including ZDF, ITN, ARTE, ABC, CBS, Channel 4 and TBS Japan. During that time, he covered 12 wars, including the Iraq-Iran war, Lebanon, the first gulf war, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Rwanda, Zaire, Palestine, Chechenya, Kosovo and the second Gulf War among others. During this time, he shot over 29 documentaries and was recognized with numerous international awards. In 2004, after being shot twice, El Batout decided to leave the trauma of war behind and return to Egypt to begin his career as a director of independent feature films. Going against the conventions of the Egyptian film industry, he challenged censorship, sidestepped the extremely long and bureaucratic process of getting shooting permissions and worked with first time actors and crew. He wrote, directed and produced his first feature film, *Ithaki*, in 2005. In 2007, he co-wrote and directed *Ein Shams* (Eye of the Sun), the first independently-financed film to receive a commercial release in Egypt. By making films outside of the heavily censored and bureaucratic film industry and sidestepping the need for funding from big producers, El Batout has demonstrated a new model for producing films in Egypt and opened the way for a new generation of Egyptian filmmakers and talent.

Filmography

2012 — Ali The Goat (Ali Meaza) — (In Development)

2011 — Winter of Discontent (El Sheita Elli Fat)

2010 — The Juggler (Hawy) — Best film and screenplay, Beirut IFF 2011 / Best Arab Film, Doha Tribeca FF 2010

2008 — The Eye of the Sun (Ein Shams) — Golden Hawk, Rotterdam FF 2008 / First Prize Taormina FF 2008

2005 — Ithaki

Director's Statement

In Egypt's history, there will always be, "before the 25th of January and after the 25th of January". On that specific day and the 17 days that followed, the impossible happened and the unthinkable became real. All of a sudden, after the killing void that lasted for tens of years, everything started to make sense to me yet I became very confused. Unexpectedly, the huge wall in which we were all trying to carve a small hole, crumpled down with the fall of Mubarak and his regime. There was no time to think or feel so I jumped back into my old routine — the one that always helped me gain my balance. I started to see how I can make a film. Only this time, I knew that the film I am going to make would have never been possible to make 'before the 25th of January'.

On the 10th of February I eagerly called Amr Waked to garner his interest to work with me on this film I had in mind. Amr is someone whom I highly respect as an actor and who was the first celebrity to denounce the regime publicly on the 25th of January. I called him and shared the vague concept I had in mind for *Winter of Discontent*. To my surprise, he came onboard immediately and met me in the now world renowned Tahrir square, literally 2 hours later with all his crew. Among them were Victor Credi, the film's DOP, and Yasser Naeem the first Assistant

Director. We embarked on shooting the first scene on that day as soon as the film's leading female actress — Farah Youssef — came to Tahrir square. The very next day, former president Mubarak stepped down, right after the birth of our film.

The task of making the film that we started two days earlier became our beacon of hope that guided us in surpassing the many ups and downs that came with this revolution. We all had to remain focused and united in order to achieve the very difficult task of making a film during a revolution. Why difficult? Because every minute and every day that passed, we witnessed change in the country. We always had to keep in mind that we are not making a film about the revolution itself — we are making a film about three human beings that lived through those historic and unforgettable 18 days of the January 25th revolution.

Amr Waked

Amr Waked was born in 1972 in Cairo. He studied Economics and Drama at the American University in Cairo, graduating in 1994. After his studies, he began working as a stock-broker, but his love for the stage remained, and he continued in theatre in parallel to his day job. He was with the Temple troupe for 4 years, followed by the Manna troupe for two years, and finally the Yaaru troupe for 3 years. He was cast as an actor for a first cinema role in 1999 in *The Fallen Angels Paradise*, directed by Ossama Fawzy. Following this first role he decided to make acting his full time career and co-founded ZAD Communication & Production LLC in 2005 with Salah Al Hanafy. Amr Waked has since been featured in numerous local and international productions, becoming one of the most internationally recognizable actors from the Middle East. His recent filmography includes roles *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* by Lasse Hallstrom, *Syriana* by Steven Gaghan, and the HBO/BBC miniseries *House of Saddam*.

