



**Zaïd Abu Hamdan : "I did this film for my mother, she made me the man I am today"**

*A round of applause and laughter provided from the first minutes. Daughters of AbdulRahman, the first feature film by Jordan filmmaker Zaid Abu Hamdan, was a great success this Friday at the Institut Lumière. Meeting with this young and talented director.*

***Daughters of Abdul-Rahman* is a portrait of four sisters who are at odds with each other and who must come together to find their father who suddenly disappeared. How was the story of the film born ?**

Seven years ago, I returned to Jordan to visit my family. While talking with my mother, I realized that she carried a form of sadness within her, she suffered from the weight of traditions. Women always suffer the most. Following this conversation, I launched an anonymous survey of three hundred women to find out how they felt about their experiences, their relationship with men and their families. Most of these women were angry, they wanted to scream : I felt a kind of responsibility towards their experience, I had to make a film on this subject. Above all, I did this movie for my mother, she made me the man I am today. I also made it in hope of a better future for the young generation of women, like my nieces. Some of the characters are directly inspired by my family: one of my aunts is very similar to the character of Samah, the most outgoing of the four sisters. Amal, the one who wears the niqab, is also one of my aunts !

***Did your family see Daughters of Abdul-Rahman ?***

Yes, it's quite the memory (laughs) ! It was at the preview at the Cairo International Film Festival. My parents were in the room, it was funny to see them surrounded by Egyptian and Jordanian celebrities! At the end of the film, we got a seven-minute standing ovation, it was incredible! My father even came up on stage to give me a hug. And I asked the audience to applaud my mother, it was very moving. My aunts were very touched by the film too. The one who inspired me the character of Samah, told me that it was as if she had made a "revolution" by being a liberated woman, she said: "she is great Samah, but she should swear more" (laughs)! And my aunt who looks like Amal told me that with this film I had "given a meaning to her life". And then we had a lot of warm reactions on social networks: many women told us that they had decided to divorce, to change their lives after seeing the film.

***Will Daughters of Abdul-Rahman be screened in France ?***

We are currently looking for a distributor to show the film in Europe. Films that are selected at Cannes or the Toronto Film Festival (TIFF) are more easily distributed, but Daughters of Abdul-Rahman has received several international awards (Special Mention at the Beirut International Women's Film Festival, Audience Award at the San Diego Arab Film Festival, Audience Award at the Cairo International Film Festival, Audience Award at the Middle East Film Festival in Florence), so I hope that this will help the distribution of the film in Europe : the call is launched !

**What project are you currently working on ?**

I am currently writing my next feature film, *Boomah* (the owl in Arabic). The main character will be a woman who is a criminal : it is inspired by three women who organized a kind of mafia in Jordan in the 80s, 90s and 2000s. They were leaders of organized crime gangs, nicknamed the "bastards". The shooting will take place in Jordan. If my film *Daughters of Abdul-Rahman* has already created altercations in the Jordanian parliament, you can imagine how this one might be perceived by the conservatives !

**Laura Lépine**