

WIP U Zalava



COUNTRY/REGION: Iran

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:

Drama | Digital Format | Kurdish, Persian | 93mins

DIRECTOR:

Arsalan AMIRI

PRODUCER:

Ruhollah BARADARI

Samira BARADARI

Ruth Yoshie LINTON

WIP GOALS:

Funds, Co-producers, Sales agents, Pre-sales, Festival Screening

TOTAL BUDGET: US\$600,000

SECURED BUDGET: US\$342,800

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

First Feature Director

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

When a village claims to be cursed by a demon, a gendarmerie sergeant attempts to denounce the exorcist in charge, whom he believes is nothing but a fraud.

SYNOPSIS

In 1978, in a small village called Zalava, some inhabitants claim there is a demon among them. Masoud, a young gendarmerie sergeant, goes to investigate. He encounters an exorcist attempting to rid the village of the demon. He arrests the exorcist on charges of fraud, but he finds himself stuck in a cursed house with his lover. The villagers, who believe they are both possessed by the demon, decide to burn down the house.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Zalava is my first feature, based upon my experiences as a member of the Kurdish ethnic minority in Iran. My focus is on the problematic, paradoxical arguments between faith and uncertainty, between tradition and modernity, which incite war and unrest in the region. Middle East nations cannot escape the burden of thousands of years of religions and beliefs, so they remain trapped in wars, killings and hatred with no hope for a solution for peace. I want to depict this agonising dilemma in my film. Yet, in *Zalava* we explore the challenges people face with sensitive humour, showing how they can believe in a demonic creature and an exorcist while a gendarmerie sergeant tries to persuade them that metaphysics does not exist. As a scriptwriter and director I show these people in an ironic situation and make the audience laugh and worry at the same time for the hero and his lover. The story happens in 1978, a very important year in Iranian history; the year that led to the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

DIRECTOR

Arsalan AMIRI

Born in 1975 in Kurdistan, Iran, he holds a B.A. in Film and a Master's degree in Dramatic Literature from the University of Tehran. He began his career in 2007 writing and editing film scripts. His feature script, *Nahid* (2015), directed by Ida Panahandeh, won the Promising Future Prize in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes Film Festival. He continued his collaboration with Panahandeh in *Israfil* (2017), among others, and was invited to write *The Nikaidos' Fall* (2018) in Japan, also directed by Panahandeh.

PRODUCERS

Ruhollah BARADARI

A producer and production manager since 1981, Ruhollah Baradari has produced feature films for Touba Films since 1989, including *Silence of the Sea* (2002), *Bitter Dream* (2004), and *Dressage* (2018).

Samira BARADARI

She holds degrees in Filmmaking and Documentary Filmmaking, and has worked as a script supervisor, first assistant director and programmer for more than 20 films. Since 2013, she has been producing features for Touba Films.

Ruth Yoshie LINTON

A Japanese based in Singapore and has worked with international directors like Ida Panahandeh (*The Nikaidos' Fall*, 2018), Kawase Naomi (*Vision*, 2018) and Carlos Quintela (*The Wolf of the East*, 2017).

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Touba Film

Touba Film was established in 1996 in Iran and has been run by Ruhollah Baradari since then. At its onset, the feature films it produced gained worldwide recognition mainly owing to its strategy of supporting Iranian independent cinema through more than ten films. Among its top productions are *Bitter Dream* (2004) directed by Mohsen Amiryoussefi, screened in Cannes' Directors' Fortnight and also nominated for Cannes' Camera d'Or award. Another production, *Dressage* (2018) directed by Pooya Badkoobeh, was awarded the International Jury's special mention in Berlinale's Generation Kplus section.