

“East of Noon” – a lovely avant-garde mess

The second feature film by Egyptian filmmaker and visual artist Hala Elkoussy, “East of Noon” is a lovely avant-garde mess that allows us to get off the beaten track.

A truly grotesque fable, East of Noon takes place in a dystopian Middle East, where Abdo, a young man crazy about music who gathers sounds from the street, tries to escape from a buffoonish authoritarian power. The film is first and foremost striking in its creation of a totally unique universe, which is refreshing in this year's edition. Shot on black-and-white film, it's made up of carpets and baroque odds and ends that furnish huge sheds. The only outlet remains the sea, existing only in the characters' dreams and always accompanied by a magnificent transition to color, like a promise of freedom that haunts Abdo's grandmother's stories.

Stories to lull the people to sleep, as the current totalitarian regime does, with tales and grotesque cabaret shows, but also stories to save oneself, for it is thanks to the invention of a mysterious treasure that Abdu will free the population. In all this jumble of objects and stories, we feel that Hala Elkoussy, a visual artist by craft, is trying to squeeze into these two hours all the elements of a mental universe she has been building up forever, even if this means making her film confusing. It's a drawback that's easy to forgive, as it's rare to see a filmmaker's creative enthusiasm pushed to this extent.

Traduction Emma Frigo



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par Maud Tenda

