



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

GOODBYE JULIA (15)

Director: Mohamed Kordofani

Starring: Eiman Yousif, Siran Riak, Nazar Gomaa

Sudan/Egypt/Germany/France/Saudi Arabia/Sweden, 2023, 2 hours, Arabic + English subtitles

Goodbye Julia, which takes place in Khartoum during the six years prior to the 2011 secession of South Sudan, as a worthy, topical history lesson. And it certainly does have merit as a primer for the class, ethnic and religious unrest that besets the troubled state. But what actually transpires is far more engaging, in the vein of Asghar Farhadi, wherein a tight, high-concept moral core unravels into strands of widening, deepening social consequence. Telling the story of a fraught friendship between two very different women, Kordofani's intelligent, compassionate scripting ensures that the political never overwhelms the personal. Yet it also illuminates just how well the fault lines that divide a nation can map onto the rifts within a human heart divided against itself. - **Variety**

Each character is in a prison of circumstance, we learn. Mona in a prison of her own lies, living in fear of her overbearing husband. Akram is trapped in a traditional mindset, treating southerners as inherently inferior and his wife as a caged bird. And Julia is stuck with limited options of how to provide for her son and herself in a city that has grown increasingly inhospitable to those of her race and background. What makes it all work so well is the empathy that the film shows the three, not only holding them accountable for their flaws, but giving each space to reckon with them. Racism and misogyny are realities, but are not inexorable parts of life, and society is capable of growth. Even if every person will not make the choice to change, it is there, if they have the courage to see their own failings and work to fix them. - **The National News**

The logistics of shooting in Khartoum were challenging to say the least. [Mohamed Kordofani said] "We started shooting in November 2022. And this coincided with the one year anniversary of the military coup that overthrew the democratic government that the revolution brought. So you can imagine how many protests were going on, the security forces were blocking the bridges, we could not move from one place to another. Added to this, no electricity, no internet, no transportation, also the sanctions were imposed, so he could not send money through the bank." Tear gas from nearby protests sometimes drifted into the location. - **Variety**

Notes compiled by Holly Dennison

If you liked **GOODBYE JULIA**, you may also enjoy:

BANEL & ADAMA (12A) - Set in Senegal, part-fable, part-love story, a marriage is tested by a devastating turn of events that challenges the whole village's way of life.

OMEN (15) - Threaded with mysticism and Congolese witchcraft, musician Baloji's first feature follows a character's return home to confront a troubled past.