



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

BANEL & ADAMA (12A)

Director: Ramata-Toulaye Sy

Starring: Khady Mane, Mamadou Diallo, Binta Racine Sy, Moussa Sow

Senegal/France/Mali, 2023, 1 hour 27 minutes, Pulaar + English subtitles

Nearly a decade ago, when Ramata-Toulaye Sy sat down to write her graduation script at the end of a screenwriting degree, her goal was simple. "I wanted to tell the most beautiful and greatest African love story," says the 37-year-old French Senegalese film-maker with a smile. "When I was growing up a lot of African stories were about misery, poverty, war. I wanted to say: we can have African stories about people falling in love. She pauses, her grin widening. "Most importantly, I wanted to write the story of how Juliet became Lady Macbeth." –

The Guardian

Making the film was no easy feat... It was a gruelling shoot, working in 50C heat in a village with no electricity. Sy lost 10kg while filming, grabbing just a few hours' sleep a night. But directing felt right: "It's not easy, because it's never easy, but it felt natural." In interviews, Sy has said that there is a lot of herself in Banel, that she was rebellious growing up. "I grew up in a very traditional African way: you have to be married early, you have to have children, you have to have a house." She shrugs. "I'm 37 and I don't have any of that. I'm not married. I don't have kids. I'm not settled. Even when I was young, I didn't want to be normal. I just wanted to be me." – **The Guardian**

Sy's film is a curious little fable, not quite fully formed in its final stages, and occasionally so sedate and opaque, under Bachar Mar-Khalifé's melodic, piano-forward score, that it feels like it is drowsing. But it's a striking debut nonetheless, especially as it revolves, with graceful poetry around the inner experiences of such a curious, unknowable woman. Banel, beautifully played by Mane who, even when we don't, seems to perfectly understand her character's joys and miseries and her flashes of prideful feminine ego ("Look at him," she murmurs in voiceover, "No, look at me. Aren't I a woman?") is the one who will, for all her protestations of devotion, inherit the film. – **Variety**

Preview courtesy of We Are Parable

Notes compiled by Holly Dennison

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