

Press report: 'Roqia'

Venice International Film Festival 2025
Settimana internazionale della Critica (SIC)



Last updated: 22 September 2025

- Press quotes [here](#)
- Press overview [here](#)
- Articles [here](#)

PRESS QUOTES

‘an effective possession narrative’

- Screen International

‘effectively explores issues of memory, faith and violence, filtering the enduring horrors of civil war [...] through an enigmatic genre lens’

- Screen International

‘Men are not born with evil, [Yanis] Koussim theorises, but are infected with it; that’s a resonant, universal message.’

- Screen International

‘a disquieting soundscape amps up the growing sense of unease’

- Screen International

‘[Ali] Namous’ restrained, vulnerable performances’

- Screen International

‘destined for further festival play and could well attract interest from an arthouse distributor or streamer’

- Screen International

‘creates a dark atmosphere conducive to visual and auditory hallucinations’

- Cineuropa

an atmosphere of mental and physical confusion is recreated with effective minimalism [...] to lift the veil, little by little, on the true subject of a film that aims to shed light on the vampires of fundamentalism’

- Cineuropa

PRESS QUOTES

‘Under the guise of a dark genre film about possession and exorcism, Yanis Koussim distils an allegory about the timeless dangers of fundamentalism.’

- Cineuropa

‘strikingly unsettling’

- BFI

‘one of the most accomplished Arab horrors ever made’

- BFI

‘a nightmarish vision of the lingering fears of the Algerian civil war’

- BFI

‘realised with remarkable panache’

- BFI

‘thematically rich’

- BFI

‘a foreboding treatise on collective trauma, repressed guilt and the lurking violence of the everyday’

- BFI

‘a haunting tale of memory, horror, and the unhealed trauma of Algeria’s Black Decade’

- GQ Middle East

‘ transforms the traumas of Algeria’s Black Decade [...] into cinematic dread’

- GQ Middle East

‘[Yanis] Koussim is uncompromising in the message Roqia delivers’

- GQ Middle East

PRESS QUOTES

‘an effective and original horror film’

- A Shot Magazine

‘fits perfectly in a year of allegorically rich and socially aware horror cinema’

- A Shot Magazine

‘a very pleasant surprise’

- A Shot Magazine

‘a work that refuses to look away’

- The New Arab

‘confronts the spectres of Algeria’s Black Decade’

- The New Arab

‘at once intimate and epic’

- The New Arab

‘a cinematic exorcism of Algeria’s haunted past, one whose resonance will
linger long after the credits fade’

- The New Arab

‘[Yanis] Koussim offers both Algerians and global audiences a mirror: to deny
the past is to risk repeating it.’

- The New Arab

‘By daring to merge horror and history, [Yanis] Koussim makes visible what
many would prefer to leave unspoken.’

- The New Arab

PRESS QUOTES

‘[Yanis] Koussim builds a mood of creeping dread not with monsters, but with silence and the horror of forgetting.’

- Hyphen / Leila Latif

‘a dark parable about what happens when memory - personal, communal, historical - is lost’

- Hyphen / Leila Latif

‘It’s slow, hypnotic and at times unbearable, precisely because it asks the question: can you really claim to be the same person if you no longer remember your own life?’

- Hyphen / Leila Latif

‘a bold act of filmmaking’

- The People’s Movies

‘a rediscovery of the power of script and camera’

- The People’s Movies

‘comes as an argumentative force in international cinema, declaring how stories and the medium can bind complexities with emotional gravity and visual assertion’

- The People’s Movies

‘throws us into a free fall at the core of the unthinkable brutality unleashed during Algeria’s dark decade of civil war’

- The People’s Movies

‘a chilling, arresting piece of modern horror’

- Loud and Clear

PRESS QUOTES

‘a bleak, arresting piece of supernatural horror that effectively blurs the line between fact and fiction with dizzying effects’

- Loud and Clear

‘feels like a snapshot of everyday life – until it doesn’t’

- Loud and Clear

‘a very engaging piece of supernatural horror’

- Loud and Clear

‘boasts a tight command of atmosphere and three-dimensional characters that bring its demons off the screen and into the real world’

- Loud and Clear

‘thoroughly succeeds in building a frightening, unsettling atmosphere that keeps the audience on the edge of their seats throughout’

- Loud and Clear

‘never fails to capture the audience’s attention’

- Loud and Clear

‘an important story’

- Loud and Clear

‘horror, rooted in realism and memory, is used as a tool to confront that past, preserve it, and ensure it is never forgotten’

- CloseUp

‘the multi-temporal setting is [...] fascinating and engaging’

- CloseUp

PRESS QUOTES

'brilliantly blends horror and social criticism'

FRED Film Radio

'stands out for its original dystopian vision and political stakes'

FRED Film Radio

'is not just a horror film; it is a visual and cultural pamphlet that leaves no one indifferent'

FRED Film Radio

'one of the festival's most moving and political horror films'

- FRED Film Radio

'The director's ability to turn the horror genre into a vehicle for political ideas is a testament to his talent and originality.'

FRED Film Radio

'The images are both frightening and poetic, with an oppressive atmosphere that keeps the viewer on the edge of their seats.'

FRED Film Radio

'stands out as one of the most disturbing and intelligent horror films seen this entire year'

- Culture 24/7

'a powerful political feature'

- Culture 24/7

'truly impressive that this is a debut film'

- Culture 24/7

PRESS QUOTES

'Roqia is, at turns, jarring and heartbreaking.'

- Dread Central

'forces the audience to be a witness'

- Dread Central

'a hard watch'

- Dread Central

'impactful cinema that rattles the audience'

- Dread Central

'it reminds us of the power of storytelling'

- Dread Central

'unsettles, as it educates, while forcing viewers to think and feel'

- Dread Central

'the filmmaker [...] uses the subgenre to explore the after effects of
seemingly never-ending cycles of violence'

- Dread Central

'puts pain, fear, and devastation on display and asks why humans refuse to
do better'

- Dread Central

'This is the exorcism movie we need right now.'

- Dread Central

'Yanis Koussim creates an eerie, uncomfortable atmosphere within an Algeria
that has seen more than its fair share of horrors'

- DMovies

PRESS QUOTES

‘a grounded, human-driven horror film that houses a few sequences that are genuinely discomfoting and grim’

- DMovies

‘The supernatural elements are placed effectively throughout the movie by [Yanis] Koussim to convey that the acts that human beings are capable of are far more horrifying than the otherworldly horrors depicted in many horror films.’

- DMovies

‘curious and in its own way fascinating’

- Nocturno

‘proves to be a single, scathing corpus horrorificum’

- Nocturno

‘[Yanis Koussim’s] directorial debut delivers a dry, direct, and quite scathing take on Arabic horror’

- Nocturno

‘skillfully embraces the codes of the horror genre to explore and expose the intricacies of the dangerous fanaticism’

- Non Solo Cinema

‘Yanis Koussim manages to recreate a dark, claustrophobic, and disturbing atmosphere.’

- Non Solo Cinema

‘a novel entry in the indefatigable tradition of William Friedkin’s The Exorcist’

- IONCINEMA

PRESS QUOTES

‘[Yanis] Koussim gets kudos for not only eerily staging this familiarity in cultural specificity, but also treading into Islam, which has not been the customary religious ideation’

- IONCINEMA

‘Mysteriously staged through an identity crisis scenario, [Yanis] Koussim keeps the audience guessing with a growing sense of dread as to what’s happening and why’

- IONCINEMA

‘acts as a cinematic exorcism of the Algerian trauma’

- Taxidrivers.it

‘the chosen path of horror becomes the ideal tool to express a collective fear and the torn memory of Algerian society’

- Taxidrivers.it

‘a powerful narrative’

- Cinephilia

‘a visceral reckoning with Algeria’s Black Decade’

- Whitlock and Pope

‘a possession film that is grounded, visceral, and furious, a work that insists horror can and must lay bare the wounds of a nation’

- Whitlock and Pope

PRESS QUOTES

‘lands like a gut punch’

- Whitlock and Pope

‘a film of fractured timelines, haunted voices, and erupting violence, one that will leave you deeply unsettled long after it ends’

- Whitlock and Pope

‘A rather effective horror film, whose political reading places it at the top of the basket of Algerian productions.’

- Abus de ciné

‘Yanis Koussim brings a haunting vision to the screen with Roqia’

- Arabian Moda

‘at the crossroads of memory, trauma, and the supernatural’

- Arabian Moda

‘a story that is as much about Algeria’s painful recent history as it is about the universal struggle against fear and the persistence of evil’

- Arabian Moda

‘uncompromising in its vision’

- Awards Watch

‘a unique blend of body horror and exorcism’

- Awards Watch

‘an urgent reminder that the greatest loss of all is that of our own humanity, in a world where tolerance and acceptance seem to be fading away’

- Awards Watch

PRESS QUOTES

‘manages to effectively provoke its audiences’

- Awards Watch

‘it is wonderful to witness films like Roqia grace the screen, offering something that feels fresh’

- Awards Watch

‘a drama about memory loss, healing, and folklore’

- Akoroko

Press report ‘Roqia’

Venice International Film Festival 2025

PRESS OVERVIEW

21 July 2025

Deadline

Listed in line-up announcement

[Venice Critics’ Week Line-Up Features Julia Jackman’s ‘100 Nights Of Hero’ Starring Charli XCX & Emma Corrin](#)

21 July 2025

IONCINEMA

Listed in line-up announcement

[2025 Venice Critics’ Week: Caroline Deruas Peano, Julia Jackman & Evi Kalogiropoulou Among Selections](#)

21 July 2025

Screen International

Listed in line-up announcement

[Venice Critics’ Week Line-Up Includes ‘100 Nights Of Hero’ with Emma Corrin, Charli XCX](#)

21 July 2025

Variety

Mentioned and listed in line-up announcement

[Venice Critics’ Week Unveils Brit-Packed Lineup, Including Julia Jackman’s 100 Nights of Hero Starring Emma Corrin, Nicholas Galitzine and Charli xcx](#)

22 July 2025

Cineuropa

Mentioned and listed in line-up announcement

[Seven European Co-Productions Are Competing in Venice’s International Film Critics’ Week](#)

Press report 'Roqia'

Venice International Film Festival 2025

PRESS OVERVIEW

23 July 2025	Variety Sales EXCLUSIVE Venice-Bound Algerian Horror Film 'Roqia' Acquired by Alpha Violet (EXCLUSIVE)
23 July 2025	Variety Sales EXCLUSIVE featured in newsletter, international breaking news Venice-Bound Algerian Horror Film 'Roqia' Acquired by Alpha Violet (EXCLUSIVE)
23 July 2025	IMDb Republish of Variety story Venice-Bound Algerian Horror Film 'Roqia' Acquired by Alpha Violet (Exclusive)
23 July 2025	Screen Anarchy Sales news 'Roqia': Algerian Horror Acquired by Alpha Violet Ahead of World Premiere at Venice
25 July 2025	Cineuropa Feature preview Yanis Koussim's 'Roqia' Heads to Venice
22 August 2025	Screen International Featured in preview Venice 2025 Preview: Screen's Guide to the Critics' Week Titles

Press report 'Roqia'

Venice International Film Festival 2025

PRESS OVERVIEW

25 August 2025	GQ Middle East Feature In 'Roqia', Yanis Koussim Confronts Algeria's Haunted Past
28 August 2025	Deadline Teaser EXCLUSIVE 'Roqia': Algerian Horror Flick From Yanis Koussim Debuts This Week In Venice - Teaser
28 August 2025	Yahoo Canada Republish of Deadline story 'Roqia': Algerian Horror Flick From Yanis Koussim Debuts This Week In Venice - Teaser
28 August 2025	CurioAtlas Republish of Deadline story 'Roqia': Algerian Horror Flick From Yanis Koussim Debuts This Week In Venice - Teaser
29 August 2025	Akoroko Mentioned as part of African line-up at Venice Africa's Record Year at Venice: What I'm Watching_
30 August 2025	Variety Mentioned among Arab features at Venice Female Filmmakers Lead Large Contingent of Arab Features Unspooling at the Venice Festival

Press report 'Roqia'

Venice International Film Festival 2025

PRESS OVERVIEW

31 August 2025	Arab News Mentioned in film roundup for Venice Film AlUla Hosts Reception for Hijra Cast at Venice Film Festival
31 August 2025	Ciak Magazine Short feature preview 'Roqia', l'esorcismo algerino di Yanis Koussim 'Roqia', the Algerian Exorcism of Yanis Koussim
1 September 2025	Ciak Magazine Mentioned Memoria (e sezioni) di Venezia 82 Memories (and sections) of Venice 82
1 September 2025	Cineuropa Positive review Review: 'Roqia'
1 September 2025	TaxiDrivers.it Feature 'Roqia': trauma e spiritualità 'Roqia': Trauma and Spirituality
1 September 2025	IONCINEMA Mixed review (3/5) 'Roqia' 2025 Venice Film Festival Review
1 September 2025	Non Solo Cinema Positive review (3.5/5) 'Roqia' di Yanis Koussim 'Roqia' by Yanis Koussim

Press report 'Roqia'

Venice International Film Festival 2025

PRESS OVERVIEW

1 September 2025	Nocturno Mixed review (3/5) 'Roqia'
1 September 2025	Loud and Clear Mixed review (3.5/5) 'Roqia' Film Review: The Curse Of History
1 September 2025	Sentieri Selvaggi Positive review 'Roqia', di Yanis Koussim 'Roqia', by Yanis Koussim
1 September 2025	Whitlock And Pope Positive review (4/5) 'Roqia' - Venice Review
1 September 2025	Cinephilia Positive review 'Roqia'
2 September 2025	A Shot Magazine Positive review 'Roqia': Allegorical Horror With Purely Middle Eastern Lore And Themes
2 September 2025	A Shot Magazine Instagram post 'Roqia': Allegorical Horror With Purely Middle Eastern Lore And Themes

Press report 'Roqia'

Venice International Film Festival 2025

PRESS OVERVIEW

2 September
2025

The National

Interview with director Yanis Koussim

[Horror Film 'Roqia' About Exorcist With
Alzheimer's, Blends Age-Old Tradition With
Algeria's 1990s Turmoil](#)

2 September
2025

Screen International / Nikki Baughan

Positive review

['Roqia' Review: Atmospheric Algerian Debut
Filters Civil War Through a Genre Lens](#)

2 September
2025

CloseUp (Storie della Visione)

Positive review (4/5)

[Festival di Venezia \(27 agosto-6 settembre
2025\): 'Roqia' di Yanis Koussim \(Settimana
della critica – Concorso\)](#)

Venice Film Festival (August 27-September 6,
2025): 'Roqia' by Yanis Koussim (Critics' Week
– Competition)

2 September
2025

Cineuropa

Interview with director Yanis Koussim

[Yanis Koussim • Director of 'Roqia'](#)

3 September
2025

Awards Watch

Mixed review (grade B)

[Roqia Review: \[B\] Venice](#)

4 September
2025

The People's Movies

Positive review

[Roqia Review \(Venice Film Festival 2025\)](#)

Press report 'Roqia'

Venice International Film Festival 2025

PRESS OVERVIEW

4 September
2025

Culture 24

Positive short review

[Duse, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi splende nei panni della Divina](#)

Duse, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi shines as the Divina

4 September
2025

FRED Film Radio

Radio piece with director Yanis Koussim and actors Ali Namous and Akram Djeghim

['Roqia', interview avec le réalisateur Yanis Koussim et les acteurs Ali Namous et Akram Djeghim](#)

'Roqia', Interview with Director Yanis Koussim and Actors Ali Namous and Akram Djeghim

4 September
2025

Abus de ciné

Mixed review (3/5)

['Roqia'](#)

'Roqia'

4 September
2025

Hyphen

Roundup of Muslim directors in Venice by Leila Latif

[Venice Film Festival: the Movies That Matter Are Those That Refuse to Look Away](#)

8 September
2025

Dread Central

Positive review

['Roqia' Review: A Crucial Exorcism Movie \[Venice Film Festival 2025\]](#)

Press report 'Roqia'

Venice International Film Festival 2025

PRESS OVERVIEW

10 September
2025

Arabian Moda

Interview with director Yanis Koussim

[Venice Film Festival: Algeria's Past and Present on Screen in 'Roqia'](#)

10 September
2025

DMovies

Positive review

['Roqia'](#)

10 September
2025

The New Arab

Feature

[Algeria's Black Decade Reimagined as Horror in Yanis Koussim's 'Roqia'](#)

12 September
2025

BFI

Featured among discoveries at Venice

[6 Discoveries from Venice Film Festival 2025](#)

ARTICLES

21 July 2025

Variety
Mentioned in line-up announcement
Venice Critics’ Week Unveils Brit-Packed Lineup, Including Julia Jackman’s ‘100 Nights of Hero’ Starring Emma Corrin, Nicholas Galitzine and Charli xc

FilmTVWhat To WatchMusicDocsDigital & GamingGlobalAwards CircuitVideoWhat To Hear

☰

🔍

Got a Tip?

Newsletters

U.S. Edition ▾

VARIETY

Subscribe

Login ▾

Home > Film > Festivals

Jul 21, 2025 2:15am PT

Venice Critics’ Week Unveils Brit-Packed Lineup, Including Julia Jackman’s ‘100 Nights of Hero’ Starring Emma Corrin, Nicholas Galitzine and Charli xc

By Nick Vivarelli


📱

✕


📺

✉


⋮



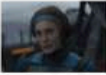
Most Popular




Kumail Nanjani Signed on for Six Marvel Movies Before ‘Eternals’: I Thought It Was ‘My Job for the Next 10 Years’ but ‘None of That Happened’



Netflix Broke Its Rules to Share ‘KPop Demon Hunters’ on the Big Screen – But Don’t Expect the Streamer to Make a Habit of It



‘Mandalorian’ Star Katree Sackhoff ‘Basically Didn’t Work’ for 3 Years After ‘Star Wars’ Show Because She ‘Didn’t Understand’ Her Character: ‘It Broke...



THE LIFE & LEGEND OF RIVER PHOENIX

SPONSORED

‘Variety Confidential’ Delves Into Pivotal Moments in River Phoenix’s Career and How His Dramatic Descent Began on ‘My Own Private Idaho’ Set

Rounding off the competition are Greek director Evi Kalogiropoulou’s dystopian drama “Gorgonà,” set in an oil refinery in the industrialized Greek heartland, and Algerian director Yanis Koussim’s horror film “Roqia,” about a disciple of an old Raqi (a Muslim exorcist) who is worried that his master’s Alzheimer’s may unleash a long-contained evil.

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

22 July 2025


Cineuropa

Mentioned in line-up announcement

[Seven European Co-Productions Are Competing in Venice’s International Film Critics’ Week](#)

search

Choose your language en | es | fr | it



Review: [Yugo Florida \(2025\)](#)

Database

Market Intelligence

News

Reviews

Interviews

Festival Reports

Services

More

previous


next

VENICE 2025 International Film Critics' Week

Seven European co-productions are competing in Venice's International Film Critics' Week

by CAMILLO DE MARICO

© 22/07/2025 - The autonomous section of the Venice Film Festival presents world premieres for a 40th edition made with "coherence, a hunger for novelty and an anarchic spirit".



Gorgorik by Evri Kelagimposlou

Co-funded by the European Union

Creative Europe MEDIA

Start Kijken

Murderbot op Apple TV+

Subscribe to our newsletter to receive the most important daily or weekly news on European cinema

GoCritic!

DISTRIBUTOR OF THE MONTH

PAUL & PAULETTE TAKE A BATH

IN UK CINEMAS 5 SEPTEMBER

"THIS MOVIE IS DELICIOUS"

Yanis Koussim, one of the founders of Plateau19, a collective of directors supporting independent cinema in Algeria, presents *Roqia*, set in 1993 when, following a car accident that caused his amnesia, Ahmed returns to his native village, where nothing seems familiar to him anymore, neither his wife nor his children. **Oscar Hudson** has moved away from ethnography to turn to the world of low-cost music videos in London and is now one of the most famous voices in the global short film sector; his debut feature *Straight Circle* tells the story of two enemy soldiers stationed in the remote border of a desert who suddenly forget which side they were on. The only documentary in competition is *Waking Hours*, by the Italian directing duo of **Federine Cammarata** and **Filippo Foscari**, about a clan of Afghani smugglers perpetually waiting for people to ferry across the border, travelling through the labyrinth of a never-ending and silent night.

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)

noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

23 July 2025

Variety
Sales EXCLUSIVE
Venice-Bound Algerian Horror Film ‘Roqia’
Acquired by Alpha Violet (EXCLUSIVE).

FilmTVWhat To WatchMusicDocsDigital & GamingGlobalAwards CircuitVideoWhat To Hear

☰ 🔍

Got a Tip?NewslettersU.S. Edition ▾

VARIETY

SubscribeLogin ▾

Home > Film > Global

Jul 23, 2025 4:00am PT


Venice-Bound Algerian Horror Film ‘Roqia’ Acquired by Alpha Violet (EXCLUSIVE)

By Leo Barraclough ▾

f X

✉

⋮




Courtesy of Supernova Films


French sales outfit [Alpha Violet](#) has acquired the rights for Algerian horror film “Roqia,” written and directed by [Yanis Koussim](#), which will have its world premiere at the [Venice Film Festival](#) as part of International Critics’ Week.

Virginie Devesa and Keiko Funato, co-founders of Alpha Violet, said they had been struck by the film’s “visceral portrayal of historical trauma through gripping mise-en-scène and haunting imagery.”

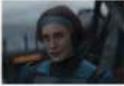
Most Popular




Kumail Nanjiani Signed on for Six Marvel Movies Before ‘Eternals’: I Thought It Was ‘My Job for the Next 10 Years’ but ‘None of That Happened’



Netflix Broke Its Rules to Share ‘KPop Demon Hunters’ on the Big Screen – But Don’t Expect the Streamer to Make a Habit of It




‘Mandalorian’ Star Katee Sackhoff ‘Basically Didn’t Work’ for 3 Years After ‘Star Wars’ Show Because She ‘Didn’t Understand’ Her Character: ‘It Broke...



SPONSORED
‘Variety Confidential’: River Phoenix Left Behind Just 14 Film Credits but Also a Legacy That Reverberates to This Day


ADVERTISEMENT



ARTICLES

23 July 2025

Variety (continued)
Sales EXCLUSIVE
Venice-Bound Algerian Horror Film ‘Roqia’
Acquired by Alpha Violet (EXCLUSIVE).




Read Next: Oscilloscope Laboratories Buys Sundance Award Winner ‘Mad Bills to Pay’ (EXCLUSIVE)

Subscribe Login >

In 1993, a car crash leaves Ahmed with amnesia. He returns to his village where nothing seems familiar. His youngest child, disturbed by Ahmed’s fully bandaged face, harbors a deep fear of him.

Popular on Variety




Each night, mysterious visitors torment Ahmed, whispering litanies in an incomprehensible language. Who are these strange figures? And why does his so-called friend, the neighbor, make him feel so uneasy?

In the present day, an aging Raqi, a Muslim exorcist, struggles with Alzheimer’s disease. His forgetfulness and erratic behavior alarm his disciple. As violence intensifies in the city and the possessed speak in an unknown tongue, the disciple begins to fear the worst.

Film

COVER | Channing Tatum's 'Roofman' Reinvention




Film

Venice Film Festival Reviews


Film

Cooper Hoffman on ‘The Long Walk,’ Coming of Age After ‘Licorice Pizza’




TV

‘SNL’ Adds Five: Meet the New Cast Members



Film

E. Jean Carroll Hopes Her Explosive Telluride Doc Will ‘Finish Off’ Donald Trump



Sign Up for Variety Newsletters

Enter Your Email Address

Sign Up →

By providing your information, you agree to our Terms of Use and our Privacy Policy. We use vendors that may also process your information to help provide our services. // This site is protected by reCAPTCHA Enterprise and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply.

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

23 July 2025

Variety (continued)

Sales EXCLUSIVE

Venice-Bound Algerian Horror Film ‘Rogja’

Acquired by Alpha Violet (EXCLUSIVE).

VARIETY

Read Next: Oscilloscope Laboratories Buys Sundance Award Winner 'Mad Bills to Pay' (EXCLUSIVE)

Subscribe Login >

While Ahmed, in the past, dreads regaining his memory, the disciple, in the present, fears that his master's decline will unleash an ancient evil.

Koussim said: "I grew up during Algeria's bloody 1990s, and the trauma and fear from that time still linger beneath the surface of daily life. With 'Roqia,' I use horror, grounded in realism and memory, as a tool to confront that past, preserve it, and ensure it is never forgotten."

"Roqia" is produced by Farès Ladjimi for Supernova Films, in co-production with 19 and Mulholland Drive Production. Jean-Marie Delorme served as the director of photography; the editors were Sarah Zaanoun and Maxime Pozzi-Garcia.

ADVERTISEMENT

Koussim has directed several short films, including "Khouya," which was awarded at Locarno and Amiens, and was part of the official selection at Clermont-Ferrand. He later contributed to the documentary "A Summer in Algiers: the Night," and co-wrote the screenplays of "I Still Hide to Smoke" by Rayhana Obermeyer, and "El Zahia," the next feature of Adila Bendimerad and Damien Ounouri.

Read More About: Alpha Violet, Venice Film Festival, Yanis Koussim

Variety Confidential

A Variety and iHeartRadio Podcast

ARTICLES

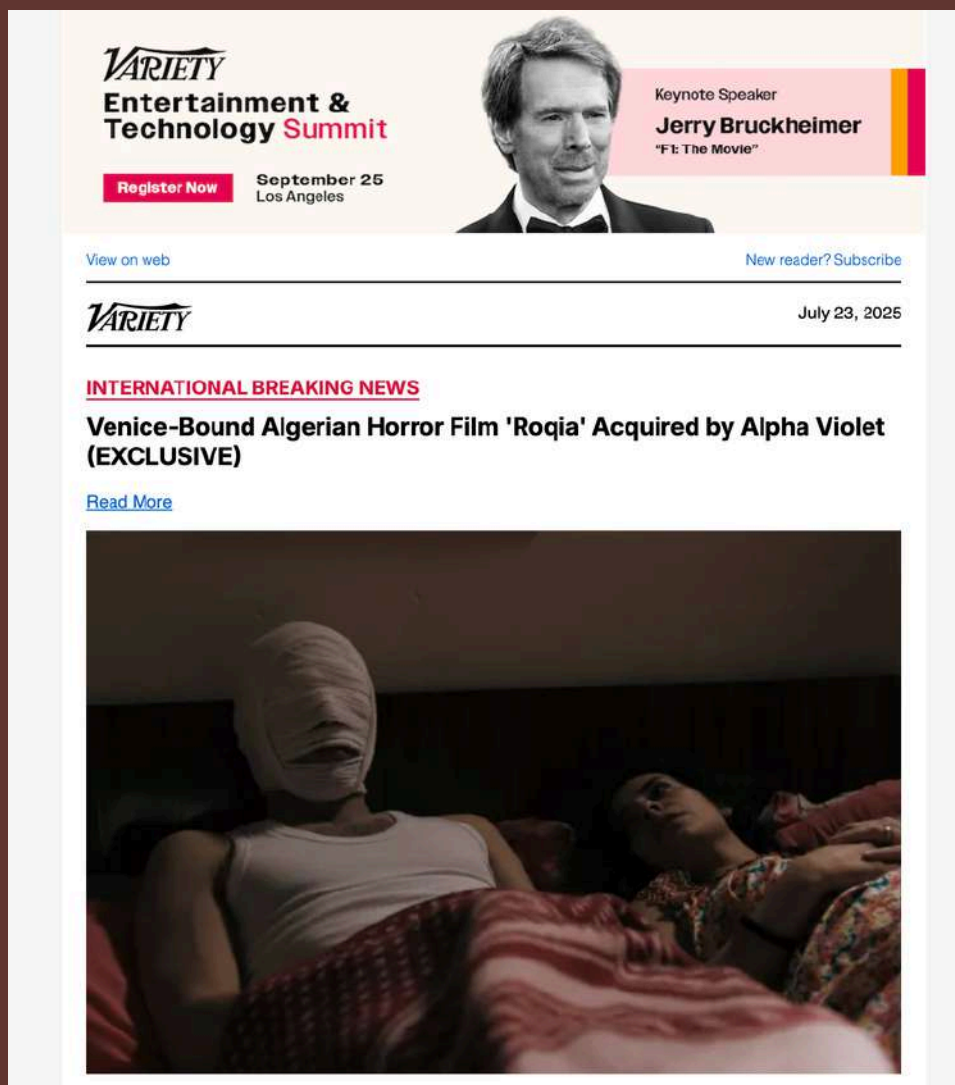
23 July 2025

Variety

Sales EXCLUSIVE featured in newsletter,
international breaking news

Venice-Bound Algerian Horror Film 'Roqia'

Acquired by Alpha Violet (EXCLUSIVE)



ARTICLES

23 July 2025

IMDb

Republish of Variety story

[Venice-Bound Algerian Horror Film ‘Roqia’](#)

[Acquired by Alpha Violet \(Exclusive\)](#).

IMDb

Menu

All

IMDb Pro

Watchlist

Sign in

EN



THUIS PREMIÈRE

KOOP EN HUUR NU

prime video

Venice-Bound Algerian Horror Film ‘Roqia’ Acquired by Alpha Violet (Exclusive)



French sales outfit [Alpha Violet](#) has acquired the rights for Algerian horror film “Roqia,” written and directed by [Yanis Koussim](#), which will have its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival as part of International Critics’ Week.

[Virginie Devesa](#) and [Keiko Funato](#), co-founders of Alpha Violet, said they had been struck by the film’s “visceral portrayal of historical trauma through gripping mise-en-scène and haunting imagery.”

In 1993, a car crash leaves Ahmed with amnesia. He returns to his village where nothing seems familiar. His youngest child, disturbed by Ahmed’s fully bandaged face, harbors a deep fear of him.

Each night, mysterious visitors torment Ahmed, whispering litanies in an incomprehensible language. Who are these strange figures? And why does his so-called friend, the neighbor, make him feel so uneasy?

In the present day, an aging Raqi, a Muslim exorcist, struggles with Alzheimer’s disease. His forgetfulness and erratic behavior alarm his disciple.

[See full article at Variety - Film News](#)

7/23/2025 · by [Leo Barraclough](#) · [Variety - Film News](#)



Sponsored

More to explore

Top news

Annette Bening to Lead ‘Yellowstone’ Spinoff Series With Kelly Reilly, Cole...
8/25/2025 · by [Loree Seitz](#)

‘KPop Demon Hunters’ Becomes Netflix’s First Box Office No. 1 With...
8/24/2025 · by [Jeremy Fuster](#)

Francis Ford Coppola Set to Honor Werner Herzog During Venice Film...
8/25/2025 · by [Nick Vivarelli](#)

‘KPop Demon Hunters’ Sing-Along Version Coming to Netflix
8/25/2025 · by [Nicole Feil](#)

Summer Box Office Won’t Reach \$4 Billion Milestone After All
8/24/2025 · by [Rebecca Rubin](#)

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)

noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

23 July 2025

Screen Anarchy

Sales news

'Roqia': Algerian Horror Acquired by Alpha Violet Ahead of World Premiere at Venice

July 23, 9:00 am

ROQIA: Algerian Horror Acquired by Alpha Violet Ahead of World Premiere at Venice



Andrew Mack

EDITOR, NEWS, TORONTO, CANADA (@MACK_SANARCHY)

[Tweet](#) [Post](#) [Submit](#)



Variety has reported that French sales outfit Alpha Violet has acquired the rights for **Roqia**, an Algerian horror film written and directed by Yanis Koussim. The horror movie appears to be Koussim's feature film debut and will have its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival.

In 1993, a car crash leaves Ahmed with amnesia. He returns to his village where nothing seems familiar. His youngest child, disturbed by Ahmed's fully bandaged face, harbors a deep fear of him.



Each night, mysterious visitors torment Ahmed, whispering litanies in an incomprehensible language. Who are these strange figures? And why does his so-called friend, the neighbor, make him feel so uneasy?

In the present day, an aging Raqi, a Muslim exorcist, struggles with Alzheimer's disease. His forgetfulness and erratic behavior alarm his disciple. As violence intensifies in the city and the possessed speak in an unknown tongue, the disciple begins to fear the worst.

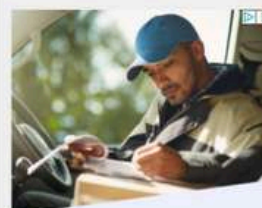


BE ANARCHIST!



SUBSCRIBE TO SCREEN ANARCHY

Your E-Mail Address



indeed
Niemand kan op je vacature solliciteren als ze die niet zien, dus verhoog je zichtbaarheid met Gesponsorde Vacatures

ARTICLES

23 July 2025

Screen Anarchy (continued)

Sales news

'Roqia': Algerian Horror Acquired by Alpha Violet Ahead of World Premiere at Venice

Each night, mysterious visitors torment Ahmed, whispering litanies in an incomprehensible language. Who are these strange figures? And why does his so-called friend, the neighbor, make him feel so uneasy?

In the present day, an aging Raqi, a Muslim exorcist, struggles with Alzheimer's disease. His forgetfulness and erratic behavior alarm his disciple. As violence intensifies in the city and the possessed speak in an unknown tongue, the disciple begins to fear the worst.



While Ahmed, in the past, dreads regaining his memory, the disciple, in the present, fears that his master's decline will unleash an ancient evil.

The multi time period set up is intriguing, for sure, specifically setting part of their film during Algeria's Black Decade, a time of civil war in the country. It is to give Algerians an opportunity to revisit the past, and outsiders like myself the opportunity to learn more about that time period.

Koussim said: "I grew up during Algeria's bloody 1990s, and the trauma and fear from that time still linger beneath the surface of daily life. With 'Roqia,' I use horror, grounded in realism and memory, as a tool to confront that past, preserve it, and ensure it is never forgotten."

Also, if you look up a definition of the word roqia, you will find information about an exorcism ritual for the purpose of expelling jinns. Neat.

ARTICLES

25 July 2025
Cineuropa
Feature preview
Yanis Koussim's ‘Roqia’ Heads to Venice

search

Choose your language en | es | fr | it

<



>

Review: *Otter* (2025)

Database

Market Intelligence

News

Reviews

Interviews

Festival Reports

Services

More

previous

next

PRODUCTION / FUNDING France / Algeria

Yanis Koussim's *Roqia* heads to Venice


by FABIEN LEMERCIER

© 25/07/2025 - Produced by Supernova Films and distributed by Alpha Violet, the Algerian filmmaker's first feature film will be unveiled at the Lido during the International Film Critics' Week



All Namous and Hanza Mansour in *Roqia*

Co-funded by the European Union



Start Kijken

Murderbot
op Apple TV+

Subscribe to our newsletter to receive the most important daily or weekly news on European cinema

e-mail address

✓

GoCritic!

DISTRIBUTOR OF THE MONTH

PAUL & PAULETTE
TAKE A BATH

"TERRIFIC"
"INSPIRED"
"THIS MOVIE IS DELICIOUS"

IN UK CINEMAS 5 SEPTEMBER

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com


ARTICLES

25 July 2025

Cineuropa (continued)

Feature preview

Yanis Koussim's 'Roqia' Heads to Venice

Choose your language [en](#) | [es](#) | [fr](#) | [it](#)

[Database](#) | [Market Intelligence](#) | [News](#) | [Reviews](#) | [Interviews](#) | [Festival Reports](#) | [Services](#) | [More](#)

Acclaimed for his short film *Mon frère* (in competition at Locarno in 2010 and Clermont-Ferrand in 2011) and his documentary *Algiers by Night* [+]
(2018), Algerian filmmaker **Yanis Koussim** will unveil his first feature film *Roqia* [+]
at the 40th *International Film Critics' Week*, which will take place as part of the 82nd *Venice Film Festival* (27 August to 6 September).

The cast includes **Ali Namous** (who gave a fine performance last year in *Algiers*), **Akram Djeghim** (seen in *The Rooftops* [+]), **Mostefa Djadjam** (recently acclaimed in *Six Feet Over* [+]), **Hanaa Mansour** (*Front Row* [+]) and **Lydia Hanni**.


Written by the director, the screenplay unfolds in two time periods. In 1993, after a car crash leaves Ahmed amnesiac, he returns to his village, where nothing feels familiar—not his wife, not his children. His youngest, frightened by Ahmed's bandaged face, fears him deeply. Each night, strange visitors whisper litanies in an unknown tongue. Who are they? Why does his neighbour unsettle him? In the present, an aging Raqi battles Alzheimer's. His disciple grows worried. As possessed people speak in foreign tongues and violence rises, Ahmed fears regaining memory—while the disciple fears his master's decline may unleash an ancient evil...


Beatrice Fiorentino, Artistic Director of SIC, says, "Like an exorcism, the film investigates trauma, memory, and fear, reflecting on the fragmented identity of the Arab World. A ritual of collective catharsis unveils the fracture separating faith from violence, spirituality from terror. The horror genre becomes a space of tension, of removal, of confrontation between generations."


Produced by **Farès Ladjimi** for French company **Supernova Films** and co-produced by Algerian company 19, Mulholland Drive, *Roqia* received support from **Doha Film Institute**, the Red Sea Fund, the CNC's Aide aux Cinémas du Monde, the Sud region, the Algerian Ministry of Culture and the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC). **Jean-Marie Delorme** (the filmmaker's loyal collaborator) was director of photography. The rights for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region were acquired by Film Clinic based on the script, and international sales are being handled by **Alpha Violet**.

For the record, Supernova Films was already featured at last year's International Film Critics' Week with *Perfumed with Mint* [+]
by **Muhammed Hamdy** and headlining the 2022 Directors' Fortnight with *Ashkal* [+]
by **Youssef Chebbi**.


(Translated from French)




Organiza:  **Creators Lab** **PLAY LAB**



Eduard Fernández

 amomama.com [VISIT SITE](#)

MOVE FORWARD WITH THE INDUSTRY JOIN NOW 

Subscribe to our newsletter to receive the most important daily or weekly news on European cinema

ARTICLES

22 August 2025

Screen International


Featured in preview

Venice 2025 Preview: Screen’s Guide to the Critics’ Week Titles

SCREENDAILY

Search our site

NEWSREVIEWSFEATURESFESTIVALSBIX OFFICEAWARDSGLOBAL PRODUCTION







HANNAH EINBINDER
OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A COMEDY SERIES

FEATURES

Venice 2025 preview: Screen’s guide to the Critics’ Week titles

BY SCREEN STAFF | 22 AUGUST 2025






Roqia (Alg-Fr-Qat-Saudi)

Dir. Yanis Koussim

This debut feature from Algeria’s Koussim unfolds in two timelines: in 1993 a car crash leaves Ahmed a bandaged amnesiac who becomes disturbed by strange voices in the night, and in the present an ageing Raqi battles Alzheimer’s while Ahmed fears regaining memory. Roqia follows Koussim’s early shorts including 2010’s Khouya (My Brother), which played both Locarno and Clermont-Ferrand. Koussim is the founder of Plateau19, a collective of filmmakers advocating for independent cinema in Algeria. Production is headed by Farès Ladjimi of France’s Supernova Films.


Contact: [Alpha Violet](#)

ADVERT



The Netherlands
35% cash rebate
The Netherlands supports the production of feature films, documentaries, animated features & high-end series.

MOST POPULAR




‘The Thursday Murder Club’ star joins Steven Spielberg’s next project; Richard Osman praises UK film industry

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)

noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

25 August 2025 **GQ Middle East**
Feature
In ‘Roqia’, Yanis Koussim Confronts Algeria’s
Haunted Past


STYLECULTUREGROOMINGWATCHESFITNESSFOOD AND DRINKTRAVEL

Culture

In *Roqia*, Yanis Koussim Confronts Algeria’s Haunted Past

At Venice’s Settimana Internazionale della Critica, Algerian filmmaker Yanis Koussim premieres his debut feature *Roqia*, a haunting tale of memory, horror and the unresolved trauma of Algeria’s ‘Black Decade’

By **Tariq Manshi**
August 25, 2025



ARTICLES

25 August 2025

GQ Middle East (continued)

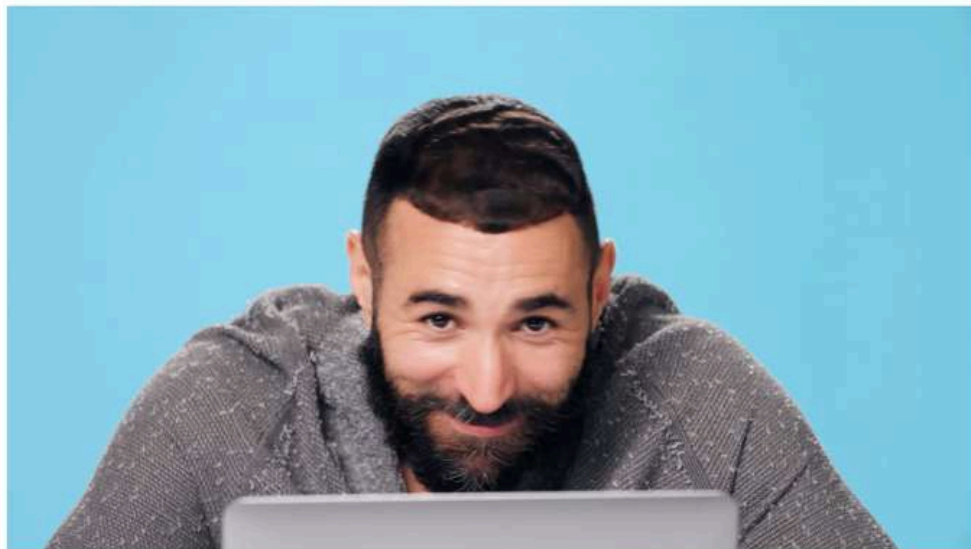
Feature

In 'Roqia', Yanis Koussim Confronts Algeria's
Haunted Past

A man wakes up with no memory after a car crash. Returning to his village, nothing feels familiar, not even his wife or children. His youngest son fears him. His neighbour makes him uneasy. At night, he hears strange and indecipherable voices.. This is Ahmed's nightmare in *Roqia*, but for writer-director Yanis Koussim, it is also the story of Algeria.

VIDEO

Saudi Pro League's Karim Benzema Replies to Fans on the Internet



His debut feature, *Roqia* (an Arabic word meaning exorcism), transforms the traumas of Algeria's 'Black Decade' (1992–2002) into cinematic dread. For Koussim, horror was the only way to tell the story.

Trained at Paris's famed Le Fémis film school, Koussim began his career with several short films including *Khouya* (2010), as well as contributing to the documentary *A Summer in Algiers: the Night*, and co-writing the screenplays of *I Still Hide to Smoke* (2016) starring Hiam Abbas and the upcoming *El Zahia*. But *Roqia* is the first time he steps fully into the horror that shaped his youth.

ARTICLES

25 August 2025

GQ Middle East (continued)

Feature

In 'Roqia', Yanis Koussim Confronts Algeria's
Haunted Past

Koussim was born in Sétif in 1977, a city relatively spared from such massacres compared to the rest of Algeria. Unable to grasp what was happening, he describes his memories of this period as a "fog of terror." He tells GQ Middle East, "For the holidays, we visited my grandparents in Algiers... Even in the middle of this terror, we carried on living, my parents continued to party with their friends, and we used to go to the beach."

Other memories cut deeper. "I have friends who used to find heads [severed] on the street on their way to school and they carried on going." The impact didn't entirely evade his own family either. His great uncle was released after being kidnapped and raped at 70 years old, and another uncle was shot dead.

Despite all of the chaos, Koussim's elders insisted that it was imperative to resume life like normal. "If you stop living, they win," they told him. "It was a matter of surviving and not letting the fear and sadness submerge you."

Having attended Islamic school and witnessed his grandmother's deep devotion, Koussim is uncompromising in the message *Roqia* delivers: "Islamic terrorism is not Islam," he says. "Islam does not tell you to put babies in the oven, slaughter people and rape pregnant women." He adds, "I couldn't imagine my grandmother sharing the same book and religion with these terrorists."

ARTICLES

25 August 2025

GQ Middle East (continued)

Feature

In 'Roqia', Yanis Koussim Confronts Algeria's Haunted Past

To make sense of the atrocities, he draws a parallel with the teachings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: man is fundamentally born good and therefore evil comes from elsewhere. This is the philosophical critique that shapes *Roqia*.



In this spirit, Koussim warns that the horrors of French colonialism were vast: "pregnant women were slaughtered and people put in gas chambers," he says. This, coupled with the 'Black Decade' of the 1990s, has left a deep scar on Algerian society, one that Koussim believes must be addressed: "When you don't fix the traumas Algerians have lived through, perhaps what caused this trauma can come back. Not as a threat, but in the background. We have to work on this trauma... *Roqia* is not a way of finding the solution, but exposing the problem."

Roqia also arrives amid a boom in Arabic horror: *The Blue Elephant* (2019), *Paranormal* (2020), *Bloodline* (2020). While *The Human* and *The Jinn* (1985) starring Adel Emam and Yousra, was an early success, the genre didn't gain as much traction until fairly recently.

For the Le-Fémis graduate, the rise is no accident. "Everyone's first memory of a movie is either a fantasy, horror or thriller. The first time I went to the theatre, I saw *Jaws* at 6 years old. We have always wanted to do these kinds of movies."

Delving deeper into the current wave, he says, firstly, "We have a very rich and strong mythology in our countries and the Islamic world, especially with Jinns, but we've never seen it on screen. We know the mythology of the Greeks and the Christians, but not ours, and now I think it's the time to do this."

Another factor he points out is the economics of filmmaking, previously in the Arab world, "there was no Egyptian ET or Algerian Vampire, because of the budget. In the past you had to see the monster or the ghost, which was expensive. Now it's cheaper to make a horror movie, with the VFX and tricks."

ARTICLES

25 August 2025

GQ Middle East (continued)

Feature

In 'Roqia', Yanis Koussim Confronts Algeria's Haunted Past

He also notes the rise of horror novels written by a new generation of Arab authors that are inspiring more on-screen adaptations such as *Khauf* (Fear) by Osamah.M Al Muslim. "If Osamah reads this interview, tell him I submit myself to direct some episodes," he says with a huge grin.

ADVERTISEMENT



Beyond horror, Koussim wants to change Algerian filmmaking itself. He's working towards setting up 'Plateau19', a collective of filmmakers advocating for independent cinema in the North African country. After getting lost at the Fox Studios during a trip to Los Angeles, he turned and saw stage 19. Koussim had a "eureka" moment, with Sétif known as the highlands of Algeria and designated by the province code 19.

When he returned to his hometown, he knew that he had to create a platform for his fellow residents, a city boasting a pedigree of great actors, directors and producers. Now organising workshops and screenings, Koussim says the aim of Plateau 19 is to "make cinema accessible for people who don't have any links in the field. If you don't live in Algiers or know people in film, it's very difficult to get into."

Koussim leaves us with a final reflection: "What makes us scared is not when you see the monster or evil, but when you hear the roaring in the night or a shadow on the empty street and can't identify the threat." *Roqia*, premiering 1 September at Venice's Settimana Internazionale Della Critica [International Critics Week], is that shadow brought to screen – a reminder that when we avoid humanity's mistakes, we risk reliving them.

ARTICLES

28 August 2025

Deadline

Teaser EXCLUSIVE

‘Roqia’: Algerian Horror Flick From Yanis Koussim

Koussim Debuts This Week In Venice - Teaser

☰

🔍

Got A Tip?

DEADLINE

Breaking Hollywood News Since 2006

FOLLOW US:

f

✕

📺

📷

📧

TV

FILM

AWARDS

BOX OFFICE

BIZ

INTERNATIONAL

POLITICS

THEATER

REVIEWS

OBITS

VIDEO

EVENTS


FESTIVALS

INSIDER

NEWS ALERTS


BREAKING NEWS

Robert Redford Dies: Hollywood Icon & Sundance Pioneer Was 89



HOME / INTERNATIONAL / NEWS

‘Roqia:’ Algerian Horror Flick From Yanis Koussim Debuts This Week In Venice — Teaser



By Zac Ntim

August 28, 2025 4:00am

f

✕

📺

📷

+

EXCLUSIVE: Algerian filmmaker Yanis Koussim debuts his first feature, *Roqia*, a horror based on the bloody history of 1990s Algeria, this week in Venice. Check out the film’s first teaser above.

The film’s synopsis reads: In 1993, after a car crash leaves Ahmed amnesiac, he returns to his village, where nothing feels familiar—not his wife, not his children. His youngest, frightened by Ahmed’s bandaged face, fears him deeply. Each night, strange visitors whisper litanies in an unknown tongue. Who are they? And why does his so-called friend, the neighbour, make him feel so uneasy?

In the present, an ageing Raqi battles Alzheimer’s. As possessed people speak in foreign tongues and violence rises, Ahmed fears regaining memory, while the disciple fears his master’s decline may unleash an ancient evil.

Koussim directs from a screenplay he wrote. The cast includes Ali Namous, Akram Djeghim, Mostefa Djadjam, Hanaa Mansour, and Lydia Hanni. Farès Ladjimi (Supernova Films) produced the film, which is a France, Algeria, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia co-production. Alpha Violet is handling sales.

Koussim studied at La Fémis. He has directed several short films, including *Khouya*, which nabbed awards at Locarno, Amiens, and was part of the Official Selection at Clermont-Ferrand. He later contributed to the documentary *A Summer in Algiers: the Night*, which premiered at the Palais de Tokyo, and co-wrote the screenplays of *I Still Hide to Smoke* by R. Obermayer as well as *El Zahia*, the next feature by Adila Bendimerad and Damien Ounouri. He is the founder of Plateau19, a collective of filmmakers advocating for independent cinema in Algeria.


Check out the teaser above.

READ MORE ABOUT: [ROQIA](#) / [VENICE](#)


ADVERTISEMENT

Presales, Opening Forecast


\$30M-\$50M - Box Office




7 / As Talks Between Disney & Jimmy Kimmel Continue, Conservative Support Around Free Speech May Tip Scale Towards Show's Return




8 / 'Jimmy Kimmel Live' Crew To Be Paid Next Week As Discussions To Bring Back Show Carry On



9 / Christopher Nolan Elected DGA President, Ron Howard Among New Officers



10 / 'Demon Slayer' & 'Him' Butting Heads For No. 1 With \$15M-\$16M, 'Big Bold Beautiful Journey' Bombs



NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)

noisefilmpr.com

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

28 August 2025

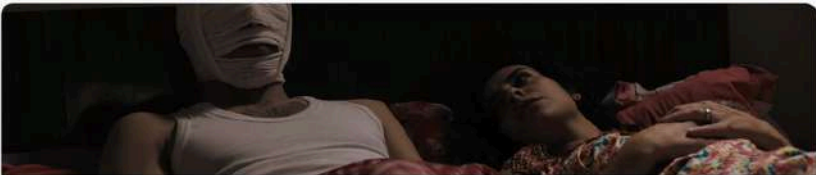
CurioAtlas

Republish of Deadline story

[‘Roqia’: Algerian Horror Flick From Yanis Koussim Debuts This Week In Venice - Teaser](#)

CurioAtlas

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE · BUSINESS & FINANCE · EDUCATION · ENTERTAINMENT · ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY · FOOD & TRAVEL · GAMING · MORE



‘Roqia:’ Algerian Horror Flick From Yanis Koussim Debuts This Week In Venice — Teaser

Short excerpt below. Click through to read at the original source.

EXCLUSIVE: Algerian filmmaker Yanis Koussim debuts his first feature, *Roqia*, a horror based on the bloody history of 1990s Algeria, this week in Venice. Check out the film's first teaser above. The film's synopsis reads: In 1993, after a car crash leaves Ahmed amnesiac, he returns to his village, where nothing feels familiar—not his wife, [...]


Read at Source

ARTICLES


29 August 2025 **Akoroko**
Mentioned as part of African line-up at Venice
[Africa’s Record Year at Venice: What I’m Watching](#)


AKOROKO

Africa’s Record Year at Venice: What I’m Watching




By [Tambay A. Obenson](#)

 [August 28, 2025](#)

 In [The Latest](#)

The [82nd Venice International Film Festival](#) opens August 27 and runs through September 6. This year marks a record presence for African cinema: more than 20 films, shorts, series, and projects across the festival’s official sections and industry programs. It is the largest African footprint Venice has ever seen.



ONE WOMAN ONE BRA

ARTICLES

29 August 2025

Akoroko (continued)

Mentioned as part of African line-up at Venice

[Africa’s Record Year at Venice: What I’m Watching](#)

Creative Highlights

In Main Competition, Tunisia’s Kaouther Ben Hania returns with “The Voice of Hind Rajab,” inspired by the story of a Palestinian child killed during the Gaza war in 2024. Morocco’s Maryam Touzani brings “Calle Malaga,” her first Spanish-language feature, set in Tangier and centered on the displacement of a Spanish immigrant family.

Beyond Competition, Libyan-American filmmaker Jihan K. presents “My Father and Qaddafi,” a documentary probing political memory and disappearance. Rachid Bouchareb’s short “Boomerang Atomic” revisits France’s nuclear testing in Algeria’s Sahara, while Werner Herzog’s “Ghost Elephants”—filmed in Angola—explores survival and conservation in a post-war landscape.

Nigeria is represented in Orizzonti Shorts with Olubunmi Omolola Ogunsola’s “Saint Simeon,” set in 1990s Enugu and streaming worldwide via Sala Web. Kenya appears in Venice Days with Damien Hauser’s “Memory of Princess Mumbi,” a speculative sci-fi feature set in an imagined future Africa.

Critics’ Week expands the map further: Suzannah Mirghani’s “Cotton Queen,” shot in Egypt and Sudan, examines ancestral stories and genetic modification in a cotton-farming village, while Algeria’s Yanis Koussim presents “Roqia,” a drama about memory loss, healing, and folklore.

At Biennale College Cinema, Kenyan-Nigerian director Vincho Nchogu debuts “One Woman One Bra,” developed with TorinoFilmLab and Gotham, about identity, belonging, and land inheritance.

ARTICLES

30 August 2025 **Variety**
Mentioned among Arab features at Venice
Female Filmmakers Lead Large Contingent of Arab Features Unspooling at the Venice Festival

FilmTVWhat To WatchMusicDocsDigital & GamingGlobalAwards CircuitVideoWhat To Hear

Got a Tip?

Newsletters

U.S. Edition

VARIETY

Subscribe


Login

Home > Film > Focus


Aug 30, 2025 10:20pm PT

Female Filmmakers Lead Large Contingent of Arab Features Unspooling at the Venice Festival


By Rafa Sales Ross




Most Popular




Barbra Streisand Pays Tribute to Robert Redford and the 'Pure Joy' of Making 'The Way We Were' Together: 'One of the Finest Actors Ever...



Robert Redford, 'Butch Cassidy' and 'All the President's Men' Icon, Dies at 89



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Biopic 'Maa Vande' Unveiled With Unni Mukundan Attached to Star (EXCLUSIVE)




'Wednesday' Season 2 Replaces 'Stranger Things' Season 3 as Netflix's No. 10 Biggest English-Language TV Title Ever With 94.5 Million Views So...

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

30 August 2025 **Variety (continued)**
Mentioned among Arab features at Venice
[Female Filmmakers Lead Large Contingent of Arab Features Unspooling at the Venice Festival](#)




Read Next: Rose Byrne and Mary Bronstein on Motherhood, Trauma and the Absurdism of 'If I Had...

Subscribe Login >


Continuing a great year for Arab cinema at major festivals — with films such as “Once Upon a Time in Gaza,” “The President’s Cake” and “The Little Sister” winning major awards in Cannes — the [Venice Film Festival](#) is packed to the brim with talent from the region. Titles include twice Oscar-nominated Kaouther Ben Hania in competition with “The Voice of Hind Rajab,” Maryam Touzani’s “Calle Malaga” and Shahad Ameen’s “Hijra” in Venice Spotlight, and Suzannah Mirghani’s “Cotton Queen” and Yanis Koussim’s “Roqia” in Critics’ Week.

Egyptian producer and distributor Mohamed Hefzy’s Film Clinic arrives on the Lido as the producer behind “Hijra” and “Cotton Queen,” and the distributor behind “Roqia.” Speaking with Variety, Hefzy recalls having to shoot “Cotton Queen” — the first-ever fiction feature film by a female Sudanese director — in Egypt due to Sudan’s ongoing civil war, in an increasingly frequent move as conflicts escalate in the region.




©2025 The LEGO Group.

Must Read



Film
COVER | Channing Tatum's 'Roofman' Reinvention



Film
Venice Film Festival Reviews

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

31 August 2025

Arab News

Mentioned in film roundup for Venice

Film AlUla Hosts Reception for Hijra Cast at Venice Film Festival

Arab News

Sunday - August 31, 2025

ARAB NEWS


SAUDI ARABIA MIDDLE EAST WORLD BUSINESS MEDIA LIFESTYLE OPINION SPORT RESEARCH & STUDIES PODCAST

ART & CULTURE FASHION OFFBEAT TRAVEL ENTERTAINMENT FOOD & HEALTH THE SIX BOOKS & GAMING

LATEST NEWS / Business & Economy Saudi non-listed corporate debt jumps over 500% as investors diversify

Home / Film AlUla hosts reception for ‘Hijra’ cast at Venice Film Festival


Film AlUla hosts reception for ‘Hijra’ cast at Venice Film Festival



Algerian director Yanis Koussim’s “Roqia” and Sudanese filmmaker Suzannah Mirghani’s “Cotton Queen” are both being screened in the Venice Critics’ Week section, offering urgent narratives that reflect the complexity of contemporary Arab identity. Completing the lineup is Damien Hauser’s “Memory of Princess Mumbi.”


Latest Updates

Bangladeshis lose 5.5 years of life to world’s most polluted air




444

Kremlin: Europe is hindering Trump’s peace efforts on Ukraine




340

Literary week engages children, families in cultural activities




265

Saudi non-listed corporate debt jumps over 500% as investors diversify



2462

Sexual harassment rampant in Rohingya camps: study



374

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)

noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

31 August 2025

Ciak Magazine (Italian)

Short feature preview

'Roqia', l'esorcismo algerino di Yanis Koussim

'Roqia', the Algerian exorcism of Yanis Koussim

Sai come fanno i rifiuti indifferenziati del tuo sacchetto



81ª MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA



82. VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

[HOME](#) [CIAKMAGAZINE.IT](#) [ARCHIVIO / ARCHIVE](#)

Roqia, l'esorcismo algerino di Yanis Koussim



ROQIA

Id., Algeria/Francia/Qatar/Arabia Saudita, 2025. Regia **Yanis Koussim**. Interpreti **Ali Namous, Akram Djeghim, Mostefa Djadjam**. Durata 1h e 29'.

«Un vero e proprio **Esorcista algerino**»: così la Delegata generale e Direttrice artistica della **Settimana Internazionale della Critica**, **Beatrice Fiorentino**, ci presenta il film in gara **Roqia** di **Yanis Koussim**. Dove si narra la storia di Ahmed, che nel 1993 ha un'amnesia causata da un incidente d'auto e nel presente è affetto dall'Alzheimer: ma una minaccia ancora più oscura sembra aleggiare su di lui. Il film, spiega Fiorentino, riflette sui conflitti in seno all'Islam contemporaneo, sulla memoria e sul «rischio di sottovalutare l'«eterno ritorno» del Male. Non c'è spazio migliore del cinema di genere per reinventare questi temi». Per il concorso di **SIC@SIC** troviamo invece il corto **Sante** di **Valeria Gaudieri**.

ARTICLES

31 August 2025

Ciak Magazine (English)

Short feature preview

'Roqia', l'esorcismo algerino di Yanis Koussim

'Roqia', the Algerian exorcism of Yanis Koussim

Sai come fanno i rifiuti indifferenziati del tuo sacchetto

CIAMAK

81ª MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA

in Mostra

SMG

DAILY

82. VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

[HOME](#)[CIAMAGAZINE.IT](#)[ARCHIVIO / ARCHIVE](#)

Roqia, the Algerian exorcism of Yanis Koussim



ROQIA

Algeria/France/Qatar/Saudi Arabia, 2025. Directed by Yanis Koussim. Starring Ali Namous, Akram Djeghim, Mostefa Djadjam. Running time 1h 29m.

"A true **Algerian exorcist**": this is how Beatrice Fiorentino, the General Delegate and Artistic Director of the **International Critics' Week**, presents the film in competition, **Roqia**, by **Yanis Koussim**. It tells the story of Ahmed, who in 1993 suffered amnesia caused by a car accident and is now suffering from Alzheimer's, but an even darker threat seems to hang over him. The film, explains Fiorentino, reflects on the conflicts within contemporary Islam, on memory and on the "risk of underestimating the 'eternal return' of Evil. There is no better place than genre cinema to reinvent these themes." For the **SIC@SIC** competition, we selected the short film "**Sante**" by **Valeria Gaudieri**.

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Ciak Magazine (Italian)

Mentioned

Memoria (e sezioni) di Venezia 82

Memories (and sections) of Venice 82

Sai come fanno i rifiuti indifferenziati del tuo sacchetto



31ª MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA **in Mostra**



82. VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

[HOME](#) [CIAKMAGAZINE.IT](#) [ARCHIVIO / ARCHIVE](#)

Memoria (e sezioni) di Venezia 82

Venditore: "Bisognano, signore, almanacchi?". **Passeggere:** "Almanacchi per l'anno nuovo? Credete che sarà felice quest'anno nuovo?". **Venditore:** "Oh illustrissimo sì, certo". **Passeggere:** "Come quest'anno passato?". **Venditore:** "Più più assai".



VELO
I SACCHETTI DI NICOTINA
MADE IN ITALY
DOVE VUOI. QUANDO VUOI.
SCOPRI VELO

Prodotto per fumatori adulti contenente nicotina, sostanza che crea un'elevata dipendenza. Uso sconsigliato ai non fumatori.

Arrivati a metà Mostra questo è già il tormentone più in voga al Lido. Ma non c'è bisogno di Giacomo Leopardi e delle sue **Operette Morali** per sapere che tanti giudizi sono inquinati dal confronto con l'anno passato. Lo spettatore tipo sentenza di fretta, in stile social e con la voracità di chi sta già passando in un'altra sala. Sono spettatore poco propenso a tranciare giudizi a caldo su un cartellone che alla fine risulterà brillante e con **almeno cinque film da portare a casa come un tesoro**. Del concorso non parlo per rispetto; estrarrò dalle altre sezioni quattro titoli che consiglio di non lasciar scolorire nel calderone di Venezia 82. Dalla **Settimana della critica** pesco **Roqia** di Yanis Koussim; dalle **Giornate degli Autori** **Memory** di Vladlena Sandu; da **Orizzonti** **Il rapimento di Arabella** di Carolina Cavalli e dall'inedita sezione **Spotlight** **Calle Malaga** di Maryam Touzani. Lingue diverse, diverse culture e anche generi che spesso si mescolano utilmente. Cosa hanno in comune oltre che la capacità di sorprendere, non annoiare, cercare un pubblico oltre il recinto festivaliero? **Il tema della memoria**, che quest'anno attraversa come un fiume carsico la creatività di tanti registi sottilmente angosciati dalla stessa, sinistra profezia: il mondo sta precipitando in una catalessi del pensiero e del ricordo, come se un oscuro morbo di Alzheimer insidiasse tutte le culture. Questi film possono piacere, inquietare, emozionare oppure potete rigettarli; ma di sicuro non ci lasciano indifferenti. "Più più assai che l'anno passato".

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Ciak Magazine (English)

Mentioned

Memoria (e sezioni) di Venezia 82

Memories (and sections) of Venice 82

Sai come fanno i rifiuti indifferenziati del tuo sacchetto



31ª MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA **in Mostra**



SMGNT DAILY 82. VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

[HOME](#) [CIAKMAGAZINE.IT](#) [ARCHIVIO / ARCHIVE](#)

Memories (and sections) of Venice 82

Seller: "Do you need almanacks, sir?" **Passersby:** "Almanacks for the new year? Do you think this new year will be a happy one?" **Seller:** "Oh, most illustrious sir, of course." **Passersby:** "Like last year?". **Seller:** "Much, much more so."



VELO
I SACCHETTI DI NICOTINA
MADE IN ITALY
DOVE VUOI. QUANDO VUOI.
SCOPRI VELO

Halfway through the Festival, this is already the most popular catchphrase at the Lido. But there is no need for Giacomo Leopardi and his *Operette Morali* to know that comparisons with last year cloud many judgments. The typical viewer makes hasty judgments, in social media style and with the voracity of someone who is already moving on to another theatre. I am not inclined to make snap judgments about a program that will ultimately prove brilliant, with at least five films to take home as treasures. Out of respect, I will not discuss the competition; instead, I will extract four titles from the other sections that I recommend not letting fade away in the cauldron of Venice 82. From **Critics' Week**, I pick *Roqia* by Yanis Koussim; from **Giornate degli Autori**, *Memory* by Vladlena Sandu; from **Orizzonti**, *Il rapimento di Arabella* by Carolina Cavalli; and from the new section **Spotlight**, *Calle Malaga* by Maryam Touzani. Different languages, cultures, and genres often blend usefully. What do they have in common besides the ability to surprise, not bore, and seek an audience beyond the festival grounds? **The theme of memory**, which this year runs like a karst river through the creativity of many directors, subtly distresses them with the same sinister prophecy: the world is falling into a catatonic state of thought and memory, as if a dark Alzheimer's disease were undermining all cultures. These films may please, disturb, or excite you, or you may reject them, but they certainly do not leave us indifferent. "Much more than last year."


ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Cineuropa
Positive review
[Review: Roqia](#)

search

Choose your language **en** | es | fr | it





Review: **Yes** (2025)

Database

Market Intelligence

News

Reviews

Interviews

Festival Reports

Services

More

previous


next

VENICE 2025 International Film Critics' Week


Review: **Roqia**

by **FABIEN LEMERCIER**

01/09/2025 - VENICE 2025: Under the guise of a dark genre film about possession and exorcism, Yanis Koussim distils an allegory about the timeless dangers of fundamentalism



Hanaa Mansour and Akram Djeghim in *Roqia*



international title: **Roqia**

original title: **Roqia**

country: **Algeria, France, Qatar, Saudi Arabia**

sales agent: **Alpha Violet**

year: **2025**

directed by: **Yanis Koussim**

screenplay: **Yanis Koussim**

cast: **Ali Namous, Akram Djeghim, Mostéfa Djadjam, Hanaa Mansour, Lydia Hanni**

main awards/selection

Venice 2025 International Film Critics'

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)

noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Cineuropa (continued)
Positive review
[Review: Roqia](#)

Q

cineuropa

Choose your language en | es | fr | it

Database

Market Intelligence

News

Reviews

Interviews

Festival Reports

Services

More

Venice 2025

International Film Critics' Week

▶

full film profile

ADVERTISEMENT

PEGASUS
AIRLINES

"The Prophet said: Satan circulates among men like blood in their veins. I therefore fear that he will sow evil in our hearts." With this hadith at the forefront of [Roqia](#) [+], unveiled in the [International Film Critics' Week](#) at the 82nd [Venice Film Festival](#), [Yanis Koussim](#) clearly sets the very dark tone of his first feature film, which plunges us straight into a deep and chaotic darkness punctuated by screams ("they're coming") in Algeria in the early 1990s. Borrowing from the codes of horror films and the paths of mystical parables, the filmmaker revisits this historical period of civil war, described by specialists as the "Black Decade", linking it to our own era because, as we all know, evil is always lurking.

"What's going on?" The question recurs like a leitmotif (deliberately echoing in the mind of the viewer, who is plunged into a story constructed in an enigmatic manner) in conversations in a large Algerian city, currently experiencing a spate of savage and senseless murders. Shot in close-up shots following [Slimane \(Akram Djeghim\)](#), the disciple of an exorcist sheikh ([Mostefa Djadjam](#)) who turns out to have Alzheimer's, the plot plays on a tone of fear, doubt and paranoia ("What if they come back? – We'll do what we have to do") fuelled by disturbing chants from elsewhere, whispered in a foreign language.

Are the two protagonists (assisted by Waffa, a young woman played by [Hanaa Mansour](#)) charlatans? Fanatics? How much of their feverish, tense anxiety is fantasy, faith, and reality? To find out, we must go back to the beginning, as the plot shifts back to 1992 with the reappearance of [Ahmed \(Ali Namous\)](#), who mysteriously disappeared after a car accident, his face covered in bandages like a mummy and suffering from total amnesia, which his wife [Selma \(Lydia Hanni\)](#) and the police are trying to dispel. Who is he? Who was he? Why are his fingers cut off? What are these voices invading his head?

Playing with the classic ingredients of horror cinema (shadows, silhouettes, contamination, sacrifice, sudden and fleeting apparitions, possessed individuals with evil grins, exorcism sessions, the Koran read backwards, desecrators, blood, frightening and imperious chants that come out of nowhere, etc.), [Roqia](#) creates a dark atmosphere conducive to visual and auditory hallucinations. An atmosphere of mental and physical confusion is recreated with effective minimalism (probably also linked to a limited budget) to lift the veil, little by little, on the true subject of a film that aims to shed light on the vampires of fundamentalism (with its former jihadist combatants who passed through Afghanistan during the conflict against the Russians), which must be remembered at all costs to prevent their return.

[Roqia](#) was produced by French company [Supernova Films](#) and co-produced by Algerian company 19, Mulholland Drive. [Alpha Violet](#) handles international sales.

(Translated from French)

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Cineuropa (continued)
Positive review
[Review: Roqia](#)



Choose your language **en** | es | fr | it

Database

Market Intelligence

News

Reviews

Interviews

Festival Reports

Services

More

Photogallery 01/09/2025: Venice 2025 - Roqia

33 pictures available. Swipe left or right to see them all.



Yanis Koussim, Ali Namous, Akram Djeghim, Mostefa Djadjam, Hanaa Mansour, Lydia Hanni

© 2025 Fabrizio de Gennaro for Cineuropa - fadege.it, @fadege.it



CINANDO

Join & Connect

Co-funded by the European Union

 Creative Europe MEDIA

Start Kijken

Murderbot op Apple TV+

Subscribe to our newsletter to receive the most important daily or weekly news on European cinema

e-mail address

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES





1 September
2025

TaxiDrivers.it (Italian)

Feature

'Roqia': trauma e spiritualità

'Roqia': Trauma and Spirituality




TAXIDRIVERS

REVIEWS · LATEST NEWS · LIVE STREAMING & ON DEMAND · SERIE TV · TRAILERS · INTERVIEWS · FESTIVAL DI CINEMA · MAGAZINE

SETTIMANA INTERNAZIONALE DELLA CRITICA


'ROQUIA': trauma e spiritualità





Il debutto di Yanis Koussim, che fonde horror e storia recente dell'Algeria



Pubblicato 2 settimane fa il 1 Settembre 2025

Scritto da **Sandra Orlando**





In concorso alla Settimana della Critica 2025 **Roquia** è un film di **Yanis Koussim**.


Algeria, Francia, Qatar, Arabia Saudita 2025. Interpreti **Ali Namous, Akram Djeghim, Mostefa Djadjam, Hanaa Mansour, Lydia Hann**

Roquia la trama

1993. A seguito di un incidente d'auto che gli ha causato un'amnesia, Ahmed torna al suo villaggio natale, dove nulla gli appare familiare, né la moglie né i figli. Il più piccolo, spaventato dal volto bendato di Ahmed, lo teme profondamente. Ogni notte, strani visitatori sussurrano litanie in una lingua sconosciuta. Chi sono? Perché il vicino di casa, un cosiddetto amico, lo inquieta? Ai giorni nostri, un Raqi ormai anziano lotta contro l'Alzheimer. Il suo discepolo di preoccupa per lui: alla tremante mano destra di Raqi manca proprio il dito indice. Mentre le persone possedute continuano a parlare in lingue misteriose e la violenza si diffonde, Ahmed ha paura di riacquistare la memoria, mentre il discepolo teme che il declino del suo maestro possa scatenare un male atavico.


[Roquia - Settimana Internazionale della Critica](#)

LATEST




MAGAZINE / 7 minuti ago

Ricordando Robert Redford: 10 film essenziali per celebrare una leggenda di Hollywood




EVENTI / 1 ora ago

I Grandi Festival: da Venezia a Roma e nel Lazio




LATEST NEWS / 1 ora ago

Addio a Robert Redford, un gigante di Hollywood



ANTICIPAZIONI / 1 ora ago

'Hacks' torna sotto i riflettori: novità sul futuro della serie HBO Max



LATEST NEWS / 2 ore ago

'Euphoria 3', svelata la data d'uscita

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)

noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

TaxiDrivers.it (Italian - continued)

Feature

'Roqia': trauma e spiritualità

'Roqia': Trauma and Spirituality

Il male e le sue forme

Dopo essersi fatto notare con il cortometraggio *Mon frère* (in concorso a Locarno nel 2010 e a Clermont-Ferrand nel 2011) e con il documentario *Algiers by Night* (2018), il regista algerino **Yanis Koussim** presenta il suo primo lungometraggio di finzione, *Roqia*.

Nel cast figurano **Ali Namous** (già apprezzato in *Algiers*), **Akram Djeghim** (*Les Terrasses*), **Mostefa Djadjam** (*Six pieds sur Terre*), **Hanaa Mansour** (*Front Row*) e **Lydia Hanni**.

Scritto dallo stesso regista, il film si sviluppa su due linee temporali.

Nel 1993, dopo un incidente d'auto che lo priva della memoria, Ahmed fa ritorno al suo villaggio. Sembra non riconoscere nulla di ciò che lo circonda. E' debole, imprigionato in un terrore fisico, distante dal contatto umano, timoroso di svelare il suo 'vero' volto ricoperto dalle bende. Solo col tempo si riavvicinerà alla sua famiglia e ai suoi figli divenendo consapevole però dei demoni che lo posseggono.

Ai giorni nostri, un Raqi (esorcista) anziano combatte l'Alzheimer. Il suo discepolo è preoccupato: mentre i posseduti parlano lingue straniere e la violenza cresce, Ahmed teme il ritorno dei ricordi, mentre il suo allievo ha paura che il declino del maestro risvegli un male antico.

Secondo **Beatrice Fiorentino**, direttrice artistica della Settimana della Critica, "il film, come un esorcismo, esplora trauma, memoria e paura, riflettendo sull'identità frammentata del mondo arabo. Un rituale di catarsi collettiva rivela la frattura tra fede e violenza, tra spiritualità e terrore. L'horror diventa uno spazio di tensione, distanza e confronto generazionale."

Esorcismo e non solo

L'esorcismo in Algeria è una pratica che esiste principalmente all'interno delle tradizioni islamiche; si basa su credenze relative alla possessione da parte di *jinn* (geni), entità soprannaturali presenti nella cosmologia islamica. Queste pratiche sono ancora oggi diffuse, specialmente nelle aree rurali, ma sono presenti anche nei contesti urbani sotto forme più "moderne" o adattate. L'esorcismo islamico viene chiamato *ruqya*, e consiste proprio nella recitazione di versetti del Corano per scacciare i *jinn* o neutralizzare l'effetto del malocchio o della magia.

Si apre in un buio spettrale *Roqia*, coniugando il terrore ancestrale del Male Oscuro con i traumi psicologici legati alla Guerra in Afghanistan negli anni '90. Nel caos di case violate famiglie terrorizzate vengono allontanate dalla loro quotidianità. Armi, violenza, paura, urla sconnesse. E' l'Inferno in terra.

Nella Parte uno, *L'Esorcista*, assistiamo ad un rito vero e proprio di liberazione dal male nel nome di Allah il Grande. Quasi contemporaneamente si sovrappongono le scene di vita quotidiana di Raqi che fa la spesa al mercato, ordina la pizza, si muove in città. Il normale e lo straordinario si fondono mostrando i due aspetti di una società costruita soprattutto su tradizione e rituali radicati e rafforzati dal clima bellico vissuto ogni giorno (le esplosioni e gli omicidi giornalieri)

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

TaxiDrivers.it (Italian - continued)

Feature

'Roqia': trauma e spiritualità

'Roqia': Trauma and Spirituality

Il male dell'anima.

Ma quello che più colpisce in questo inquietante horror è l'aver associato il Male esoterico ad un malessere molto più profondo e silente: i traumi vissuti dai soldati in guerra che generano Mostri nella mente e nel corpo difficili da debellare anche al ritorno a casa. Un ritorno segnato da cambiamenti forti e da una lotta impari che non lascia scampo. La Guerra coi suoi Fantasmi e Demoni trasforma e sfigura irrimediabilmente quello che si è stato. Un viaggio senza ritorno e una frattura insanabile tra una Fede che richiede troppo e una Volontà di lotta non sempre sufficiente per opporsi.

Roqia funge dunque da 'esorcismo cinematografico' del trauma algerino, soprattutto legato alla "Decade Nera" (1992-2002) e la strada scelta dell'horror diventa lo strumento ideale per esprimere una paura collettiva e la memoria dilaniata della società algerina.

Note

Koussim è originario di Sétif (nato nel 1977), ha studiato legge prima di intraprendere la carriera cinematografica e ha lavorato anche come sceneggiatore per altri film algerini. È fondatore di Plateau19, un collettivo per promuovere il cinema indipendente in Algeri.

Roqia è prodotto da **Farès Ladjimi** per la casa francese **Supernova Films**, in coproduzione con l'algerina **19, Mulholland Drive**. Ha ricevuto il sostegno di istituzioni come il **Doha Film Institute**, il **Red Sea Fund**, l'**Aide aux Cinémas du Monde** del CNC, la **regione Sud** francese, il **Ministero della Cultura algerino** e l'**Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC)**.

La fotografia è firmata da **Jean-Marie Delorme**, storico collaboratore del regista. I diritti per la distribuzione nella regione MENA (Medio Oriente e Nord Africa) sono stati acquisiti da **Film Clinic**, mentre le vendite internazionali sono gestite da **Alpha Violet**.

Settimana Internazionale della Critica 2025: il programma completo della 40esima edizione

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

TaxiDrivers.it (English)
Feature
[‘Roqia’: trauma e spiritualità](#)
[‘Roqia’: Trauma and Spirituality](#)

TAXIDRIVERS


REVIEWS - LATEST NEWS - LIVE STREAMING & ON DEMAND - TV SERIES - TRAILERS - INTERVIEWS - FILM FESTIVAL - MAGAZINE

Q


INTERNATIONAL CRITICS' WEEK

'ROQUIA': Trauma and Spirituality

Yanis Koussim's debut film blends horror and recent Algerian history.



Published 2 weeks ago The September 1, 2025
Written by **Sandra Orlando**



In competition at the 2025 Critics' Week, *Roquia* is a film by **Yanis Koussim**.


Algeria, France, Qatar, Saudi Arabia 2025. Performers **Ali Namous, Akram Djeghim, Mostefa Djadjam, Hanaa Mansour, Lydia Hann**

Roquia the plot

1993. Following a car accident that left him with amnesia, Ahmed returns to his home village, where nothing seems familiar, not his wife or children. His youngest, frightened by Ahmed's bandaged face, fears him deeply. Every night, strange visitors whisper litanies in an unknown language. Who are they? Why does his neighbor, a so-called friend, worry him? In the present day, an elderly Raqi is battling Alzheimer's. His disciple worries about him: Raqi's trembling right hand is missing its index finger. As possessed people continue to speak in mysterious languages and violence spreads, Ahmed fears regaining his memory, while his disciple fears that his master's decline may unleash an ancient evil.


[Roquia - International Critics' Week](#)

LATEST




MAGAZINE / 7 minutes ago

Remembering Robert Redford: 10 Essential Films Celebrating a Hollywood Legend




EVENTS / 1 hour ago

The Great Festivals: from Venice to Rome and Lazio




LATEST NEWS / 1 hour ago

Farewell to Robert Redford, a Hollywood giant



PREVIEWS / 1 hour ago

'Hacks' returns to the spotlight: news on the future of the HBO Max series



LATEST NEWS / 2 hours ago

'Euphoria 3' release date revealed

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

TaxiDrivers.it (English - continued)

Feature

'Roqia': trauma e spiritualità

'Roqia': Trauma and Spirituality

Evil and its forms

After making a name for himself with the short film *Mon frère* (in competition at Locarno in 2010 and Clermont-Ferrand in 2011) and with the documentary *Algiers by Night* (2018), the Algerian director **Yanis Koussim** presents his first feature-length fiction film, *Roqia*.

The cast includes **Ali Namous** (already appreciated in *Algiers*), **Akram Djeghim** (*Les Terrasses*), **Mostefa Djadjam** (*Six pieds sur Terre*), **Hanaa Mansour** (*Front Row*) and **Lydia Hanni** .

Written by the director himself, the film unfolds across two timelines.

In 1993, after a car accident that robs him of his memory, Ahmed returns to his village. He seems to recognize nothing of his surroundings. He is weak, trapped in physical terror, distant from human contact, afraid to reveal his "true" face covered in bandages. Only with time will he reconnect with his family and children, becoming aware of the demons possessing him. In the present day, an elderly Raqi (exorcist) is battling Alzheimer's. His disciple is worried: as the possessed speak foreign languages and the violence escalates, Ahmed fears the return of his memories, while his student fears that his master's decline will awaken an ancient evil.

According to **Beatrice Fiorentino** , artistic director of the Venice International Film Critics' Week, " *the film, like an exorcism, explores trauma, memory, and fear, reflecting on the fragmented identity of the Arab world. A ritual of collective catharsis reveals the fracture between faith and violence, between spirituality and terror. Horror becomes a space of tension, distance, and generational confrontation.* "

Exorcism and more

Exorcism in Algeria is a practice that exists primarily within Islamic traditions; it is based on beliefs related to possession by *jinn* (geni), supernatural entities present in Islamic cosmology. These practices are still widespread today, especially in rural areas, but are also present in urban contexts in more "modern" or adapted forms. Islamic exorcism is called *ruqya* , and consists precisely in the recitation of verses from the Quran to drive away *jinn* or neutralize the effects of the evil eye or magic.

It opens in a ghostly darkness, *Roquia*, combining the ancestral terror of the Dark Evil with the psychological trauma of the 1990s war in Afghanistan. In the chaos of violated homes, terrified families are torn from their daily lives. Guns, violence, fear, incoherent screams. It's hell on earth.

In Part One, *The Exorcist*, we witness a true ritual of deliverance from evil in the name of Allah the Great. Almost simultaneously, scenes of Raqi's daily life overlap, as he shops at the market, orders pizza, and moves around the city. The ordinary and the extraordinary merge, revealing the two sides of a society built primarily on tradition and rituals, rooted and reinforced by the warlike climate experienced daily (the explosions and daily murders).

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

TaxiDrivers.it (English - continued)

Feature

'Roqia': trauma e spiritualità

'Roqia': Trauma and Spirituality

The evil of the soul.

But what is most striking about this disturbing horror is the association of esoteric Evil with a much deeper and more silent malaise: the traumas experienced by soldiers at war that generate Monsters in their minds and bodies that are difficult to eradicate even upon returning home. A return marked by profound changes and an unequal struggle that leaves no escape. War, with its Ghosts and Demons, transforms and irreparably disfigures what has been. A journey of no return and an irreparable rift between a Faith that demands too much and a Will to fight that is not always sufficient to oppose it.

Roqia thus acts as a 'cinematic exorcism' of the Algerian trauma, especially linked to the "Black Decade" (1992–2002) and the chosen path of horror becomes the ideal tool to express a collective fear and the torn memory of Algerian society.

Note

Koussim is originally from Sétif (born 1977). He studied law before embarking on a career in film and has also worked as a screenwriter for other Algerian films. He is the founder of Plateau19, a collective promoting independent cinema in Algiers.

Roqia is produced by **Farès Ladjimi** for the French company **Supernova Films**, in co-production with the Algerian company **19, Mulholland Drive**. It has received support from institutions such as the **Doha Film Institute**, the **Red Sea Fund**, the **Aide aux Cinémas du Monde** of the CNC, the French **Southern Region**, the **Algerian Ministry of Culture**, and the **Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC)**.

The cinematography is by **Jean-Marie Delorme**, a long-time collaborator of the director. Distribution rights in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region were acquired by **Film Clinic**, while international sales are handled by **Alpha Violet**.

[International Film Critics' Week 2025: the complete program for the 40th edition](#)

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

IONCINEMA
Mixed review (3/5)
‘Roqia’ | 2025 Venice Film Festival Review

MENU

Search

IONCINEMA

Got A Tip?

SUBSCRIBE

Movie Reviews

Interviews

Features

FYC (Awards)

American Indie

World Cinema

Film Fests

IndieSponge TV

REVIEWS



REVIEWS

Roqia | 2025 Venice Film Festival Review

By: Nicholas Bell

Date: September 1, 2025

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

IONCINEMA (continued)

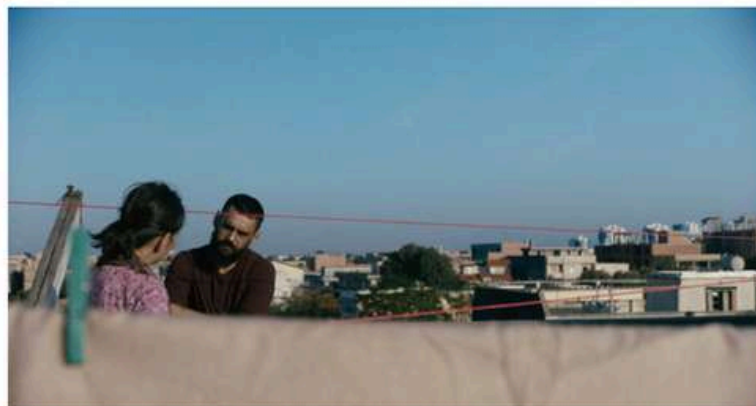
Mixed review (3/5)

['Roqia' | 2025 Venice Film Festival Review](#)

A Demon in My View: Koussim Unleashes a Djinn

A generation spanning possession is at the heart of ***Roqia***, the directorial debut from Algerian director **Yanis Koussim**, providing a novel entry in the indefatigable tradition of William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973), the eternal apogee of demonic terror which still eclipses all those who've arrived in its wake. Koussim gets kudos for not only eerily staging this familiarity in cultural specificity, but also treading into Islam, which has not been the customary religious ideation in which these pesky spiritual takeovers generally proliferate, at least cinematically. Mysteriously staged through an identity crisis scenario, Koussim keeps the audience guessing with a growing sense of dread as to what's happening and why, wisely skirting around expository devilish details.

Told in three chapters, we're introduced to a man named Cheikh, aka El Hadji (Mostefa Djadjam), an exorcist in early 1990s Algeria who seems to be quite adept at his calling, judging from the spirit infested children brought to his attention. In the same time frame, a young man named Ahmed (Ali Namous) survived a terrible car crash, but suffers from amnesia, which somehow has made life for his wife Selma (Lydia Hanni) more bearable. But it appears Ahmed has been possessed by an evil spirit, and with the help of his disciple (Akram Djeghim), El Hadji takes care of the problem. In the present day, El Hadji's failing health seems to have instigated the return of this entity.



Roqia refers to reciting passages from the Quran for the purposes of quelling spiritual ailments (you know, like demons), which is exactly what El Hadji (which means 'pilgrim,' an honorary title bestowed upon those who have completed the pilgrimage to Mecca) utilizes on those requiring his specific needs (albeit reciting backwards, much to the horror of several bystanders). The scenario is most effective in the first act, focusing on the early 1990s possession of Ahmed, who suffers memory loss after a debilitating car accident requiring his face to remain completely bandaged for weeks. During his recuperation with his wife and son while in this condition, there are shades of Hiroshi Teshigahara's *The Face of Another* (1966) mixed with *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1982). It's clear Ahmed is not quite himself (his son rejects him outright) but he's also gentler and kinder, leading Selma to embrace this modified husband as a positive outcome of a terrible accident. So much so she practically wills him not to revert to his old self.

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

IONCINEMA (continued)

Positive review (3/5)

['Roqia' | 2025 Venice Film Festival Review](#)

But then it's revealed Ahmed is a host for a demon he picked up while undergoing military service in Afghanistan, and the parasite he carries is eventually awakened to continue a mission of what seems like mass demonic recruitment. Until El Hadji steps in. However, it would seem whatever was inside Ahmed has remained dormant until the present day, and the failing health of the exorcist allows for the entity to regain its powers, ravaging for a new host (which the film allows us to believe its found based on the shocked musings of a detective trying to make sense of the carnage following the demon's denouement).



While horror aficionados have consumed this type of narrative countless times, from all over the globe, Koussim does maintain a consistently unnerving tone, and despite the ultimate predictability of the finale, is successful in its narrative scope—which is more than can be said for a litany of derivative possession films made in the US over the past several decades. At times, the attempt to calibrate the perfunctory 'demon' vocals veers into labored territory, sounding more like an imitation of Venom, the titular symbiote from the Marvel machine.

Koussim ends with a quote from Egyptian-American scholar Leila Ahmed, "Violent fundamentalism is not Islam but a distorted reading of its texts." It's a curious statement to end a demonic possession film with, considering it opens with a quote from Allah's prophet regarding mankind's innate vulnerability to be infiltrated by evil forces. Thus, the continued cycle connoted in the film's final moments suggests neither Satan nor fundamentalism explains our propensity for inheriting darkness, as all of us are already vessels prone to the occupation of warping ideations.

Reviewed on September 1st at the 2025 Venice Film Festival (82nd edition) – International Critics' Week.
89 Mins.

★★★☆☆☆☆

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Non Solo Cinema (Italian)

Positive review (3.5/5)

[‘Roqia’ di Yanis Koussim](#)

[‘Roqia’ by Yanis Koussim](#)

NONSOLOCINEMA



Posters groot formaat
Tot 100x140 cm
[Bestel nu](#)

CINEMA ▾ ARTE ▾ TEATRO ▾ TELEVISIONE ▾ MUSICA ▾ LETTERATURA ▾ GALLERY ▾ ENOGASTRONOMIA ▾

Home ▾ Cinema ▾ Mostra del Cinema di Venezia 2025 ▾ “Roqia” di Yanis Koussim



Cinema News Festival Film Mostra del Cinema di Venezia 2025 Settimana della Critica

“Roqia” di Yanis Koussim

Da [Ilaria Falcone](#) - 1 Settembre 2025

[f](#) [x](#) [wa](#) [in](#) [en](#) [t](#) [s](#)

Venezia 82.

All Altro ▾

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Non Solo Cinema (Italian - continued)

Positive review (3.5/5)

‘Roqia’ di Yanis Koussim

‘Roqia’ by Yanis Koussim

Il regista algerino Yanis Koussim, classe 1977, dopo diversi cortometraggi, debutta con il suo primo lungometraggio, anche sua la sceneggiatura, alla Settimana della Critica della 82. Mostra del Cinema di Venezia.

Roqia è un film sul male tentacolare sempre in agguato.a

1993. A seguito di un incidente d’auto che gli ha causato un’amnesia, Ahmed torna al suo villaggio natale, dove nulla gli appare familiare, né la moglie né i figli. Il più piccolo, spaventato dal volto bendato di Ahmed, lo teme profondamente. Ogni notte, strani visitatori tormentano Ahmed, sussurrando litanie in una lingua sconosciuta. Chi sono? Perché il vicino di casa, un cosiddetto amico, lo inquieta? Ai giorni nostri, Raqi, un ormai anziano esorcista musulmano, lotta contro l’Alzheimer. La perdita di memoria e i comportamenti erratici preoccupano il discepolo che comincia a temere il peggio, mentre la violenza si diffonde in città e le persone possedute parlano in lingue misteriose. Nel passato, Ahmed ha paura di riacquistare la memoria, mentre il discepolo teme che il declino del suo maestro possa scatenare un male atavico.

Roqia è una storia che non percorre strade sicure, ma abilmente fa suoi i codici del genere horror per esplorare e mostrare i meandri della pericolosità del fanatismo che genera terrore e guerra. Yanis Koussim riesce a ricreare un clima cupo, claustrofobico, inquietante. Attraverso i suoi protagonisti mostra l’impatto realistico con risvolti di critica sociale sugli effetti della guerra.

RASSEGNA PANORAMICA

voto	★★★★☆
Sommario	3.5
	★★★★☆ PUNTEGGIO TOTALE

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Non Solo Cinema (English)
Positive review (3.5/5)
[‘Roqia’ di Yanis Koussim](#)
[‘Roqia’ by Yanis Koussim](#)

NONSOLOCINEMA

F

FLYERALARM

love your brand

Bekijk aanbod

CINEMA

ART

THEATER

TELEVISION

MUSIC

LITERATURE

GALLERY

FOOD AND WINE

Home - Cinema - Venice Film Festival 2025 - "Roqia" by Yanis Koussim

Cinema

News

Festival

Film

Venice Film Festival 2025

Critics' Week

"Roqia" by Yanis Koussim

And **Italia Falcone** - September 1, 2025

Venice 82.

All Other

ARTICLES

1 September

2025

Non Solo Cinema (English - continued)

Positive review (3.5/5)

[‘Roqia’ di Yanis Koussim](#)

‘Roqia’ by Yanis Koussim

Algerian director Yanis Koussim, born in 1977, after several short films, debuted with his first feature film, also written by him, at the Critics' Week of the 82nd Venice Film Festival.

Roqia is a film about the ever-lurking, tentacle-like evil.

1993. Following a car accident that left him with amnesia, Ahmed returns to his home village, where nothing seems familiar, not his wife or children. His youngest, frightened by Ahmed's bandaged face, fears him deeply. Every night, strange visitors torment Ahmed, whispering litanies in an unknown language. Who are they? Why does his neighbor, a so-called friend, worry him? In the present day, Raqi, an elderly Muslim exorcist, struggles with Alzheimer's. Memory loss and erratic behavior worry the disciple, who begins to fear the worst, as violence spreads through the city and possessed people speak in mysterious languages. In the past, Ahmed fears regaining his memory, while the disciple fears that his master's decline may unleash an ancient evil.

Roqia is a story that doesn't tread safe paths, but skillfully embraces the codes of the horror genre to explore and expose the intricacies of the dangerous fanaticism that breeds terror and war.

Yanis Koussim manages to recreate a dark, claustrophobic, and disturbing atmosphere. Through his protagonists, he demonstrates the realistic impact of war, with its socially critical implications.

OVERVIEW

vote

Summary

★★★★☆

3.5


★★★★☆

TOTAL SCORE

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Nocturno (Italian)
Mixed review (3/5)
'Roqia'




Il nuovo numero di Nocturno è disponibile nello shop online

NOCTURNO.IT

[f](#)[t](#)[y](#)[e](#)

MAGAZINE ▾FILMSERIE TVDVD/BRFUMETTI LIBRISHOP 🔍

Nocturno > Movies > Roqia



Roqia 2025

REGIA: Yanis Koussim


CAST: Mostefa Djadjam (Raqi)
Dounia Chaoui (Nacera)

Il nostro giudizio

★★★★☆

CAST AND CREW +

GALLERY



>

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Nocturno (Italian - continued)

Mixed review (3/5)

'Roqia'

Roqia è un film del 2025, diretto da Yanis Koussim.

Una cosa è certa: **Roqia** tutto assomiglia fuorché a un film. Quantomeno non a un unico film. La curiosa e a suo modo affascinante opera prima dell'algerino Yanis Koussim, presentata alla Settimana Internazionale della Critica del Festival del Cinema di Venezia 2025, pare infatti una grezza medaglia le cui opposte facce – pur nei limiti e nelle imperfezioni tipiche della cesellatura di un esordiente con tuttavia parecchi corti e sceneggiature sulle spalle – comunque le si rigirino finiscono per rivelare il medesimo strato di spesso e viscerale orrore. Un orrore diviso fra due differenti racconti solo apparentemente autonomi ma in verità destinati a interconnettersi in una *Babel* degna del più ispirato e potenzialmente incubotico Iñárritu. Due superfici spazio-temporali: l'una evidentemente contemporanea – seppur permeata da un volutamente spersonalizzante minimalismo – e l'altra incastonata invece nei suggestivi e pre-digitalizzati anni Novanta. Due volti che portano le dolorose cicatrici dei traumatici e dichiaratamente sovranaturali vissuti di una coppia di anime più che mai stavolta letteralmente dannate; legate tra loro dal sangue così come da un ben poco consolatorio *The End*. Due film al prezzo di uno dunque? A prima vista parrebbe proprio di sì. Anche se, con lo scorrere dei suoi incalzanti, visceralmente disturbanti e progressivamente sempre più ansiogeni novanta minuti, **Roqia** dimostra in verità di essere un unico graffiante *corpus horrificum*; non fosse che per quelle strane e inquietanti vicissitudini che, seppur a distanza di ben tre decenni, rendono i disorientanti Raqui (Mostefa Djadjam) e Ahmed (Ali Namous) terribilmente più simili di quando la non lineare narrazione facesse inizialmente presagire.

Un anziano esorcista, ormai eroso nelle membra e nello spirito, contrapposto a un giovane sopravvissuto temporaneamente incapace di riconoscere amici e affetti, il cui perturbante bendaggio, oltre a celare le ferite di un trauma ancora fresco e pulsante, così come per l'hitchcockiano *Goodnight Mommy* della stranissima coppia Franz-Fiala e il freudiano *Il volto* di un altro del maestro Teshigahara lo renderà a sua volta spaventevole e perturbantemente estraneo agli altrui diffidenti occhioni. Costretti a fare i conti con i profondi buchi della memoria più che delle rispettive trame – il primo a causa del vorace tarlo dell'Alzheimer, il secondo per i postumi di un tragico e non poi così chiaro incidente –, i nostri due sperduti figli di Allah si ritroveranno attanagliati dalle insidiose brame di un antico e innominato Male che, come profetizzò a suo tempo il Sommo Maometto, scorre viscido e implacabile negli uomini quanto il sangue nelle loro vene. Ed è proprio attraverso la cara vecchia emoglobina che, come già il bidente d'acciaio Balagueró-Plaza ci aveva ben edotto attraverso la virulenta saga di *[REC]*, l'inferno e i suoi emissari avranno modo di venire a dimorare tra di noi; anche e soprattutto in questo non meglio specificato *possession movie* all'ombra del Corano che molto poco d'integralista e parecchio di occidentale – quantomeno nell'immaginario di riferimento – pare covare nei propri filmici lombi. Anche perché, così come lo stesso regista ha più volte voluto ripeterci, sullo schermo così come tra le mura di una casa di preghiera l'integralismo, in tutte le sue forme e sostanze, non è mai un buono e gradito affare.

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Nocturno (Italian - continued)
Mixed review (3/5)
'Roqia'

Che il chiodo fisso dell'esordiente Koussim, pur nel tradizionalismo di fondo di rituali e litanie profondamente legate alla lore islamica, sia inevitabilmente quel piccolo e mai troppo abusato gioiellino di *When Evil Lurks* – ma volendo si potrebbe pure intravedere qualche scampolo dell'ingiustamente bistrattato *Djin* del compianto Tobe Hooper così come, la butto lì, certe soffocanti atmosfere degne del raggelante *Under the Shadow* di Babak Anvari – dimostra quanto ampio, stratificato e smaccatamente cinefilo sia lo sguardo di genere adottato da un autore per il quale tenere un piede in due o più scarpe non pare poi un così cocente problema. L'unica vera criticità – se tale la si vuol chiamare – di un film bifronte come **Roqia** risiede piuttosto nella sua eccessiva volontà di essere molte e forse anche troppe cose in una, finendo inevitabilmente per non avere il tempo, i mezzi, lo spirito e soprattutto lo sguardo necessari per esaurirle tutte con la medesima forza. Se è vero tuttavia che il proverbiale Diavolo sta tutto nei dettagli, senza voler dunque sollevare inutili questioni di lana caprina possiamo affermare senza mezzi termini che, quantomeno sul versante orrorifico, il battesimo registico del buon Yanis ci consegna un'idea di *arabic terror* secca, diretta e parecchio graffiante. Un terrebis quasi neorealista che, come per l'asciutto e nervoso occhio post-Dogma 95 impiegato da David Midell ne *L'esorcismo di Emma Schmidt*, ha bisogno di ben pochi spazi o speciali effettacci per farci genuinamente tremare quel tanto che basta le beneamate vene ai polsi. Un film dedicato alle storie e, soprattutto, a coloro i quali c'insegnano come e quando raccontarle. Parola di Koussim!




Matteo Vergani

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Nocturno (English)
Mixed review (3/5)
'Roqia'




The new issue of Nocturno is available in the online shop

NOCTURNO.IT

f t y e

MAGAZINE ▾FILMTV SERIESDVD/BRCDMIC BOOKSBOOKSSHOP 🔍

Nocturno > Movies > Roqia



Roqia
2025



DIRECTOR: Yaris Koussim

CAST: Mostefa Djadjam (Raqi)
Dounia Chaoui (Nacera)

Our opinion
★★★★☆

CAST AND CREW +

GALLERY



ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Nocturno (English - continued)

Mixed review (3/5)

'Roqia'

Roqia is a 2025 film directed by Yanis Koussim.

One thing is certain: **Roqia** is anything but a film. At least not a single film. The curious and in its own way fascinating debut feature by Algerian director Yanis Koussim, presented at the 2025 Venice Film Festival's International Critics' Week, seems like a crude coin whose opposing sides—despite the limitations and imperfections typical of a debut director with several short films and screenplays under his belt—reveal the same layer of thick, visceral horror, no matter how you turn them. A horror divided between two different narratives, only seemingly autonomous but in truth destined to interconnect in a *Babel* worthy of the most inspired and potentially nightmarish *Iñárritu*. Two space-time surfaces: one evidently contemporary—albeit permeated by a deliberately depersonalizing minimalism—and the other instead embedded in the evocative, pre-digitalized 1990s. Two faces bearing the painful scars of the traumatic and admittedly supernatural experiences of a pair of souls, this time more literally damned than ever; bound together by blood as well as by a far from consoling *The End*. Two films for the price of one, then? At first glance, it would seem so. Although, as its fast-paced, viscerally disturbing, and progressively more anxiety-inducing ninety minutes unfold, **Roqia** actually proves to be a single, scathing *corpus horrificum*; if only for those strange and disturbing vicissitudes that, even after three decades, make the disorienting Raqui (Mostefa Djadjam) and Ahmed (Ali Namous) terribly more similar than the non-linear narrative initially suggests.

An elderly exorcist, now eroded in body and spirit, pitted against a young survivor temporarily incapable of recognizing friends and loved ones. His disturbing bandage, in addition to concealing the wounds of a trauma still fresh and throbbing, as in the Hitchcockian *Goodnight Mommy* by the very odd couple Franz and Fiala and the Freudian *The Face of Another* by the master Teshigahara, will make him in turn frightening and uncannily alien to the others' wary eyes. Forced to confront the deep holes in their memories rather than their respective plots—the former due to the voracious gnawing of Alzheimer's, the latter due to the after-effects of a tragic and not-so-clear accident—our two lost sons of Allah will find themselves gripped by the insidious longings of an ancient and unnamed Evil that, as the Supreme Muhammad prophesied in his time, flows as slimy and implacable through men as the blood in their veins. And it is precisely through good old hemoglobin that, as the steel bident Balagueró-Plaza had already well educated us through the virulent saga of *[REC]*, hell and its emissaries will have the opportunity to come and dwell among us; also and above all in this unspecified *possession movie* in the shadow of the Koran that very little of the fundamentalist and a lot of the Western – at least in the reference imagery – seems to smoulder in its cinematic loins. Also because, as the director himself has repeatedly wanted to repeat, on the screen as well as within the walls of a house of prayer, fundamentalism, in all its forms and substances, is never a good or welcome business.

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Nocturno (English - continued)

Mixed review (3/5)

[Roqia](#)

That debutant Koussim's obsession, despite the underlying traditionalism of rituals and litanies deeply rooted in Islamic lore, is inevitably that small and rarely overused gem of a film, *When Evil Lurks* —though one might also glimpse glimpses of the late Tobe Hooper's unfairly maligned *Djinn* , as well as, for one thing, certain suffocating atmospheres worthy of Babak Anvari's chilling *Under the Shadow* —demonstrates the broad, layered, and unabashedly cinephilic genre perspective adopted by an auteur for whom having a foot in both camps doesn't seem such a burning problem. The only real criticism—if you want to call it that—of a film as two-faced as **Roquia** lies, rather, in its excessive desire to be many, perhaps even too many things at once, inevitably ending up lacking the time, the means, the spirit, and above all, the vision necessary to exhaust them all with equal force. If it's true, however, that the proverbial devil is in the details, without wanting to raise unnecessary questions, we can state without hesitation that, at least on the horror side, Yanis' directorial debut delivers a dry, direct, and quite scathing take on *Arabic terror* . An almost neorealist terrebis that, like the dry and nervous post-Dogma 95 eye employed by David Midell in *The Exorcism of Emma Schmidt* , requires very little space or special effects to genuinely make our beloved wrists tremble just enough. A film dedicated to stories and, above all, to those who teach us how and when to tell them. Koussim's word!



Matteo Vergani

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Loud and Clear
Mixed review (3.5/5)
[‘Roqia’ Film Review: The Curse Of History](#)

LOUD AND CLEAR
LET'S TALK ABOUT MOVIES

[f](#) [@](#) [X](#) [v](#) [u](#)

[FILMS](#) [TV](#) [FILMFESTIVALS](#) [INTERVIEWS](#) [LISTS](#) [FOCUS ON](#)

FILM FESTIVALS, FILMS, VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

Roqia Film Review: The Curse Of History

 JACK WALTERS  PUBLISHED ON: SEPTEMBER 1, 2025  LAST UPDATE: AUGUST 21, 2025





ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Loud and Clear

Mixed review (3.5/5)

‘Roqia’ Film Review: The Curse Of History

***Roqia* is a bleak, arresting piece of supernatural horror that effectively blurs the line between fact and fiction with dizzying effects.**

Writer and Director: Yanis Koussim
Genre: Supernatural horror
Run Time: 89'
Venice World Premiere: August , 2025
Release Date: TBA

“Only the dead have seen the end of war” – George Santayana, 1922

There's no better basis for a frightening horror film than one that **explores the terrors of real life**, and that's exactly what *Roqia* accomplishes through its unsettling, naturalistic approach to an otherwise saturated genre of storytelling.

Instead of the large budget, special effects, and frequent jumpscares that viewers have come to expect from traditional horror movies, *Roqia* boasts a tight command of atmosphere and three-dimensional characters that bring its demons off the screen and into the real world.

Roqia takes place across **two converging timelines**. In the first, an aging Raqi (Mostefa Djadjam) – an Islamic term for exorcist – struggles to maintain his grasp of reality as Alzheimer's disease gradually tears away at his mind. Several decades earlier, a man named Ahmed (Ali Namous) is left without his memories following a devastating car crash, and begins to experience strange phenomena that he can't explain.

While *Roqia* sometimes struggles to bring these two storylines together in a way that feels seamless and natural, the film thoroughly succeeds in building a **frightening, unsettling atmosphere** that keeps the audience on the edge of their seats throughout. The way Koussim capitalizes on the film's small budget by using real sets, natural lighting, and minimal camera tricks really lures the audience into a false sense of security, tricking them with a naturalistic glimpse of the real world – before throwing them into disarray with **bloody violence, demonic possessions, and audial hallucinations**.

It's such an **efficient way of blending the natural with the supernatural**, and it creates an effect that's rarely possible with big-budget blockbusters. Where the expensive cameras and special effects of Hollywood films can often hold the audience at a distance, reminding them they're watching a movie at every turn, *Roqia* feels like a snapshot of everyday life – until it doesn't. This dizzying and unsettling result is *Roqia's* biggest strength, and it makes those frightening moments all the more effective.



A still from *Roqia* (Alpha Violet / Settimana internazionale della Critica, 2025 Venice Film Festival)

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Loud and Clear (continued)

Mixed review (3.5/5)

['Roqia' Film Review: The Curse Of History](#)

Beyond the surface-level horror of *Roqia*, what really stands out with Koussim's latest feature is the **mature, insightful subtext** that shines through his allegorical storytelling. This isn't just a film about exorcists, demons, and evil spirits – it's one about facing the horrors of history head-on and learning from them, not just shutting them out. Ahmed and the Raqi's fading memories are clear allegories for this, and the curse that they're haunted by isn't just a supernatural one, but one of **generational guilt and national trauma**.

Roqia doesn't go into too much detail about the **Algerian Civil War** that's raging in the background of Ahmed's timeline, but the impact of this conflict can be felt all throughout the bones of Koussim's film. The collective suffering of this culture is the foundation of all the supernatural tropes the filmmaker employs. The curse that's passed down through memory is (perhaps) an allegory for **our flawed relationship with history**, exploring how it can often be easier to forget the mass suffering of war – but always healthier to reckon with it, so as to prevent it happening again.

There's so much thematic density to *Roqia* that it's hard to fully comprehend upon first watch, but Koussim does an excellent job of ensuring that the surface-level story is *just* as compelling, so viewers don't need to reckon with all the subtextual implications at first glance. It's equally powerful to just sit back and get lost in a **chilling, arresting piece of modern horror**.

The **biggest flaw** with *Roqia* isn't to be found in its technical craft, nor in its powerful social commentary, but rather in the way certain details of the story come together. The decision to essentially tell two interweaving storylines is definitely an interesting one, but it ultimately leaves all three lead characters feeling quite underdeveloped and underutilized. Koussim is clearly focused on making the *overall* narrative as dense and potent as possible, but this leaves the *individual* stories lacking as a result.

Ultimately, *Roqia* is a very engaging piece of supernatural horror that certainly has its storytelling flaws, but **never fails to capture the audience's attention** and leave them with some dense ideas to chew over once the credits begin to roll. It's an important story, if not always one that displays a perfect command of its characters.

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Loud and Clear (continued)
Mixed review (3.5/5)
[‘Roqia’ Film Review: The Curse Of History](#)

ROQIA: MOVIE PLOT & RECAP

SYNOPSIS:

After a car crash leaves Ahmed unable to recall his own memories, the isolated husband begins hearing whispers in the night and seeing visions of a life he doesn't remember. Decades later, an aging exorcist struggles with a rise in demonic activity in his hometown.

PROS:

- Strong, atmospheric storytelling that subverts expectations and uses horror tropes sparingly.
- Technical proficiency that keeps the audience on the edge of their seat with sharp camerawork and dark imagery.
- Powerful subtext about the necessity of reckoning with trauma instead of ignoring history.

CONS:

- Partially messy character work that leaves the audience impartial to certain emotional beats.
- An inability to justify the split-perspective story, making certain moments unnecessarily confusing.

Roqia had its World Premiere at the [Venice Film Festival](#) on **September 1, 2025**, as part of the Settimana internazionale della Critica, and will be screened again on September 2.

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Sentieri Selvaggi (Italian)
Positive review
‘Roqia’, di Yanis Koussim
‘Roqia’, by Yanis Koussim

SHOP ONLINE | SENTIERISELVAGGI21ST | AREA EVENTI | SSMAGAZINE | EBOOK | SCUOLA DI CINEMA

Cerca nel sito...

cerca su ss | cerca con GOOGLE

Aggiornato a martedì 16 Settembre 2025 alle 15:48

Professione CINEMA

OPEN DAY OPERATIVO
SUI PERCORSI UNICINEMA - TRIENNALE - SPECIALIZZAZIONI

SEGUICI SU:
f t s
ISCRIVITI ALLA NEWSLETTER

MENU | ARENE DI ROMA 2025 | VENEZIA 82 | 21ST CENTURY | AI CINEMA | ATTUALITÀ | BLOG | COMMENTI

DOCUMENTARIO | DOCUSFERA | EVENTI | FESTIVAL | FILM CINEMA | FILM STREAMING | PERSONAGGI

SENTIERISELVAGGI21ST | SERIE TV

Acting on Camera – Laboratorio di Recitazione cinematografica



ACTING ON CAMERA
CORSO IN PRESENZA
DAL 7 OTTOBRE 2025

CORSO DI REGIA CINEMATOGRAFICA
IN PRESENZA, DAL 6 OTTOBRE



REGIA CINEMATOGRAFICA
corso autunnale
dal 6 ottobre al 5 novembre 2025

CORSO DI RIPRESA E FOTOGRAFIA
IN PRESENZA, DAL 6 OTTOBRE!



RIPIRESA
E FOTOGRAFIA
DAL 6 OTTOBRE AL 5 NOVEMBRE 2025
CORSO IN PRESENZA A ROMA

CORSO DI SCENEGGIATURA, A ROMA
DAL 7 OTTOBRE



SCENEGGIATURA
corso autunnale in presenza a Roma
o in diretta Zoom
dal 7 ottobre al 6 novembre 2025

Roqia, di Yanis Koussim

Non riesce quasi mai a risultare viscerale nel disvelamento dell'orrore ma si ammira lo spirito polemico e l'ostinazione con cui connota le grammatiche del cinema esorcistico. VENEZIA82. SIC

1 Settembre 2025 | di Daniele D'Orsi





LA SCUOLA DI DOCUMENTARIO di SENTIERI SELVAGGI

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Sentieri Selvaggi (Italian - continued)

Positive review

'Roqia', di Yanis Koussim

'Roqia', by Yanis Koussim

Se c'è un elemento che *L'esorcista* e i suoi *sequel* hanno reso dogmatico nell'universo del cinema horror, quello lo potremmo rintracciare nella configurazione, della teologia cattolica, come un viatico di purificazione da tutto ciò che è considerato diverso o impuro. Nella magnum opus di William Friedkin – e negli innumerevoli testi che ne sono derivati, si pensi alla saga de *Il presagio* – le grammatiche, le liturgie e i rituali di connotazione cristiana sono stati di volta in volta strumentalizzati sì per catechizzare l'altro o per instillare un paradigma di "buone e sane virtù" nei cuori di coloro che si erano improvvisamente inabissati nell'oblio dell'amoralità/mostruosità: ma in particolare hanno tracciato una linea di demarcazione *etica* tra chi si caricava del compito di espellere il maligno dai corpi altrui (i "giusti" e retti) e i personaggi/mostri che si erano ritrovati, per migliaia di ragioni diverse, ad abbracciare il male, per poi rimanerne irreversibilmente trasformati. E per quanto il cinema horror abbia proposto una costante variazione sul tema, è pur vero che le istanze appena presentate sono state quasi sempre rievocate con fedeltà dalle varie narrazioni. Ma a questo punto, viene da chiedersi, cosa succede se l'esorcismo non riguarda più il mondo cristiano, ma quello islamico? La strenua opposizione al "non-consacrato" deve necessariamente cambiare di segno? È a queste domande che *Roqia* sembrerebbe voler dare una risposta.

Considerati tali assunti, l'opera prima di Yanis Koussim, presentata in Concorso alla 40ª edizione della Settimana della Critica, non guarda più verso l'esterno, in direzione di un elemento demoniaco che nasce e si sviluppa al di fuori del proprio perimetro religioso, ma lancia lo sguardo al suo stesso universo di riferimento. In *Roqia*, infatti, che ci si muova agli inizi degli anni '90 o al tempo presente, la generazione – e la successiva estirpazione – del male avviene nel cuore della sola cornice teologica dell'Islam: non c'è confronto né opposizione a figure culturalmente anomale appartenenti ad altri emisferi religiosi. L'amnesia che, nel 1993, colpisce l'indifeso Ahmed dopo un misterioso incidente che non gli consente più di riconoscere i suoi cari o l'Alzheimer che, ai giorni nostri, offusca la mente di un anziano Raqi (forse già vittima di un atavico esorcismo?) è il frutto di un'unica "maledizione" dalla matrice non anti-musulmana, ma puramente islamica. E se i due personaggi risultano circondati da figure cultistiche che recitano i precetti del Corano in lingue ignote o che agiscono diabolicamente alle spalle dei fedeli in modo da trasfigurarli in ossessi, tutti questi eventi "devianti" non possono che trovare la loro origine in un fenomeno specifico e attinente alla (loro) realtà: vale a dire il fondamentalismo.



La propagazione degli elementi demoniaci, diversamente dagli horror a tema biblico, è perciò un fatto interno: proprio perché, agli occhi del regista di *Roqia*, il male che i musulmani – quelli veri e retti – devono quotidianamente affrontare non è il cristianesimo o qualsiasi altra religione di stampo monoteistico, ma sono le attività di coloro che professano una lettura profondamente distorta dei testi sacri. Ed ecco che Koussim, in maniera assolutamente lucida, si serve qui dei codici dell'horror esorcistico per stigmatizzare le logiche alla base del fondamentalismo, da lui considerato il vero elemento "impuro" da neutralizzare a tutti i costi. E malgrado il film non riesca quasi mai a risultare viscerale nel disvelamento dell'orrore – ovvero nelle sequenze che dovrebbero repellere lo spettatore – né a restituire incisività alle varie scene di possessione, non si può al tempo stesso che ammirare lo spirito polemico del regista, e l'ostinazione con cui connota le grammatiche del cinema esorcistico di valenze propriamente specifiche della cultura islamica.

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Sentieri Selvaggi (English)
Positive review
‘Roqia’, di Yanis Koussim
‘Roqia’, by Yanis Koussim

SHOP ONLINE | SENTIERISELVAGGI21ST | EVENTS AREA | SS MAGAZINE | EBOOK | FILM SCHOOL

Search the site..

search on ss | search with GOOGLE

Updated Tuesday, September 16, 2025, at 3:48 PM

SENTIERI SELVAGGI

A ROMA 13 E 14 SETTEMBRE 2025
PARTECIPAZIONE GRATUITA

FOLLOW US ON:
f t s
SUBSCRIBE TO THE NEWSLETTER


SENTIERI SELVAGGI
EDUCATIONAL

MENU | ARENAS OF ROME 2025 | VENICE 82 | 21ST CENTURY | AI CINEMA | ACTUALITY | BLOG | COMMENTS

DOCUMENTARY | DOCUSPHERE | EVENTS | FESTIVAL | FILM CINEMA | FILM STREAMING | PERSONAGES


SENTIERISELVAGGI21ST | TV SERIES

Acting on Camera – Film Acting Workshop



ACTING ON CAMERA
CORSO IN PRESENZA
DAL 7 OTTOBRE 2025

IN-PERSON FILM DIRECTING COURSE, STARTING OCTOBER 6TH





REGIA CINEMATOGRAFICA
corso autunnale
dal 6 ottobre al 5 novembre 2025

Roqia, by Yanis Koussim

It almost never manages to be visceral in the unveiling of horror, but one admires the polemical spirit and the obstinacy with which it characterizes the grammar of exorcistic cinema. VENICE 82. SIC


September 1, 2025 | by Daniele D'Orsi






THE SENTIERI SELVAGGI DOCUMENTARY SCHOOL

IN-PERSON SHOOTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY COURSE, STARTING OCTOBER 6TH!



RIPRESA E FOTOGRAFIA
DAL 6 OTTOBRE AL 5 NOVEMBRE 2025
CORSO IN PRESENZA A ROMA

SCREENWRITING COURSE, IN ROME STARTING OCTOBER 7TH



SCENEGGIATURA
corso autunnale in presenza a Roma
o in diretta Zoom
dal 7 ottobre al 6 novembre 2025

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Sentieri Selvaggi (English)

Positive review

'Roqia', di Yanis Koussim

'Roqia', by Yanis Koussim

If there's one element that [The Exorcist](#) and its [sequels](#) have made dogmatic in the universe of horror cinema, it could be found in the configuration of Catholic theology as a viaticum of purification from everything considered different or impure. In William Friedkin's magnum opus – and in the countless texts that derived from it, think of the saga [The Omen](#) – the grammars, liturgies, and rituals of Christian connotation have been exploited at times to catechize others or to instill a paradigm of "good and wholesome virtues" in the hearts of those who had suddenly sunk into the oblivion of amorality/monstrosity. But in particular, they have drawn a line of *ethical* demarcation between those who took on the task of expelling evil from the bodies of others (the "just" and upright) and the characters/monsters who had found themselves, for a thousand different reasons, embracing evil, only to be irreversibly transfigured by it. And while horror cinema has consistently offered variations on the theme, it's also true that the issues just presented have almost always been faithfully evoked by various narratives. But at this point, one wonders: what happens if exorcism no longer concerns the Christian world, but the Islamic one? Must the staunch opposition to the "unconsecrated" necessarily change direction? These are the questions *Roqia* seems to want to answer.

Given these assumptions, Yanis Koussim's debut feature, presented in competition at the 40th edition of the Venice Film Critics' Week, no longer looks outward, toward a demonic element that arises and develops outside its own religious perimeter, but instead casts its gaze within its own universe of reference. In *Roqia*, in fact, whether we move to the early 1990s or the present, the generation—and subsequent eradication—of evil occurs within the sole theological framework of Islam: there is no comparison or opposition to culturally anomalous figures belonging to other religious hemispheres. The amnesia that afflicts the defenseless Ahmed in 1993 after a mysterious accident that leaves him unable to recognize his loved ones, or the Alzheimer's disease that currently clouds the mind of an elderly Raqi (perhaps already the victim of an ancestral exorcism?), are the result of a single "curse" that is not anti-Muslim, but purely Islamic. And if the two characters are surrounded by cult figures who recite the precepts of the Quran in unknown languages or who devilishly act behind the faithful's backs to transform them into obsessed people, all these "deviant" events can only find their origin in a phenomenon specific to their reality: namely, fundamentalism.



The propagation of demonic elements, unlike in biblical horror films, is therefore an internal phenomenon: precisely because, in the eyes of the director of *Roqia*, the evil that Muslims—the true and upright ones—must face daily is not Christianity or any other monotheistic religion, but the activities of those who profess a profoundly distorted reading of the sacred texts. And so Koussim, with absolute clarity, here uses the codes of exorcistic horror to stigmatize the logic underlying fundamentalism, which he considers the true "impure" element to be neutralized at all costs. And although the film almost never manages to be visceral in its unveiling of the horror—that is, in the sequences that are meant to repel the viewer—nor to restore incisiveness to the various scenes of possession, one cannot help but admire the director's polemical spirit and the obstinacy with which he imbues the grammar of exorcistic cinema with values specifically specific to Islamic culture.


ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Whitlock And Pope
Positive review (4/5)
[‘Roqia’ – Venice Review](#)

WHITLOCK & POPE

ROQIA IS ON TWITTERHOMEABOUTMOVIE REVIEWSHORROR



September 1, 2025 by Andrew Pope

ROQIA – VENICE REVIEW

Search...

ARTICLES

1 September
2025

Whitlock And Pope (continued)

Positive review (4/5)

'Roqia' – Venice Review

September 1, 2025 by Andrew Pope

ROQIA – VENICE REVIEW

Yanis Koussim's brutal exorcism horror fractures faith and history, in a visceral reckoning with Algeria's Black Decade.

★★★★

Roqia begins with chaos: a sickle-wielding mob moving through the night in a blur of rage, banging on a door in a Algerian city, pulling women and children out into the street, ready for slaughter. The only context is the inter-title that dates the killings to the 90s.

The massacre has the feel of a wound in history, and from this rupture the story divides into two. In one, an elderly raqi (a Muslim exorcist) slips into Alzheimer's while his disciple fears for his safety and a series of killings plague the city. Years earlier, in 1993, a man named Ahmed emerges from a car crash without memory, returning to his family only to find himself estranged. His wife and children recoil; his youngest is terrified of his bandaged face. At night, strange presences chant in incomprehensible tongues. The two strands eventually collide, forcing the audience to reckon with how a hidden evil will lead back toward the violence that opened the film. The dread is less about jump scares than about waiting: when and why will the massacre erupt again?

What makes *Roqia* distinctive is how it links possession horror to Algeria's "Black Decade," the brutal Algerian civil war of the 1990s whose clashes between the military and Islamist insurgents left around 200,000 people dead and everyday life shrouded in fear. Koussim grew up in Sétif, a city he has says that had a "fog of terror" that settled over daily life. That lived memory shapes the film: exorcism is not just ritual but metaphor for reckoning with political and spiritual fractures. The film refuses to equate faith with fanaticism, insisting instead on Islam as a resource for resistance to terror. Horror, here, is the vessel for national trauma, a form that allows the unspeakable to be articulated.

Cinematographer Jean-Marie Delorme leans on a handheld camera and natural light, to give a tactile, immersive quality to this battle with darkness. The choice is effective, visceral, and immediate, though it also means some crucial scenes sink into darkness, their meaning partly obscured. That aesthetic strategy reinforces the theme – truth and evil alike being hidden dangers – but it may risks testing some viewers' patience.

Horror lovers will also notice Koussim's reference points. The narrative design, with its investigative pacing and elliptical hauntings, recalls *The Exorcist III*. It is a sharp choice: if you are going to pay homage to an Exorcist film, choose the best. That's right, I said it – *The Exorcist III* aka *Legion* is the greatest there is. Like Blatty's cult classic, *Roqia* finds horror in the erosion of memory and the return of what should remain buried.

This feature debut signals a filmmaker determined to bend horror to his own ends. *Roqia* lands like a gut punch; it is a film of fractured timelines, haunted voices, and erupting violence, one that will leave you deeply unsettled long after it ends. Koussim has created a possession film that is grounded, visceral, and furious, a work that insists horror can and must lay bare the wounds of a nation.

Credits: Directed by Yanis Koussim. Starring Ali Namous, Akram Djeghim, Mostefa Djadjam, and Hanaa Mansour. Cinematography by Jean-Marie Delorme. Produced by Supernova Films and Algeria's 19, with support from Doha Film Institute, Red Sea Fund, CNC, and AFAC. Premiered at Venice International Critics' Week 2025.

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

1 September
2025

Cinephilia (English)

Positive review

‘Rogia’

(Σ) Σινεφιλία
Cinephilia.Gr

Werken bij de Rechterpraak

Door IT, wordt het digitaal

[Meer informatie](#)

[HOME](#)

[MOVIES](#)

[FACES](#)

[TEXTS](#)

[PICTURES](#)

[TIMELINESS](#)

You are here: [Home page](#) • [Movies](#) • [Cosmos](#) • [Roqia](#)

Roqia

by Yanis Koussim

(review: Dimitris Babas)

The opening credits of the film are a saying of Allah about "Satan who moves like blood in the veins among people".

Algeria. Early 90s. A group of disenchanted gunmen invade a village at night. Screams of terror. Carnage and bloodshed....

Two parts make up the narrative of this film from Algeria. Both take place in different times. The first part, entitled "The Exorcist", takes place in the present day. Two men, one, the sheikh, an elderly priest, and the other in his 40s, perform a religious exorcism ceremony: the infected is a young woman.

The narrative focuses on the relationship between the two men, with the younger one taking care of the elderly man, who suffers from Alzheimer's – a relationship between teacher and student. This relationship is presented in an environment of widespread violence in society. There is a connection between the incidents of violence and the elderly priest: it seems as if these outbursts of gratuitous violence are an expression of Evil.

The second part, entitled "Ahmed", takes place in the early 90s – a turbulent time for Algeria. It is an underground civil war that results in extreme and blind religious violence by Islamic extremists. The return of a man suffering from amnesia to his home after an accident. His face covered by gauze. Confused and full of questions and interrogatives about who he is, what he did, what his past is. In this part, the narrative focuses on the amnesiac's relationship with his young wife, on the construction of a new marital relationship.

Verses from the Quran recited in reverse. Evil here has a religious origin. Undoubtedly original in its conception, the entire narrative is placed within a religious-Muslim theological framework – at first glance it constitutes a Muslim version of the exorcist genre. Using elements from thrillers and horror films, but always with strong socio-religious elements, the film is characterized by a powerful narrative in which the viewer is called upon to place the pieces in the right places, to create the connections, to fill in the gaps in order to form the complete picture. What the direction notes - and we think is decisive in the final image of the film - is that there is an interconnected relationship between violence and Evil, as if it comes from the violent expression, from the manifestation of violence. Violent fundamentalism does not exist in the sacred texts: it is a misunderstanding of fanatics, it is what gives birth to Evil....

La Biennale di Venezia 2025/ Settimana Internazionale della Critica

GREEK CINEMA

- Renos Charalambidis' Night Announcer
- Requiem in Salt by Sylvia Nikolaidou & Nikolas Iordanos
- Gorgonā by Evi Kalogriropoulou
- They come out of Margo by Alexandros Voulgaris
- Here they talk about the worship of Byron Kritzas
- Sculpted Souls by Stavros Psyllakis
- Return to the Homeland by Akis Kersanidis & Chrysa Tzilepi
- Dimitris Koutsiambasakou's August goals
- The heart of the bull by Eva Stefani
- Kaiti Drosou: Athanasia Drakopoulou's memory box
- Our Wild Days by Vasilius Kekatos
- Meat by Dimitris Nakos
- I Exist by George Tsemberopoulos
- With dignity by Dimitris Katsimiris
- He loved flowers more by Yannis Vesleme
- The river by Haris Raftogiannis
- The True Life of Panos Koutiras
- Quiet life by Alexandros Avranas
- 400 Cassettes by Thelgeia Petraki

TELEVISION SERIES

- Department Q by Scott Frank & Chandni Lakhani
- Little Disasters by Philip Barantini (I)
- Black Mirror, Season 7 by Charlie Brooker
- Paradise by Dan Fogelman
- Adolescence by Philip Barantini (II)
- Adolescence by Philip Barantini (III)
- På villspor (The Wrong Path) by Hallvar Witza
- Åremorden (The Åre Murders) by Joakim Eliasson & Alain Darbo

ARTICLES

1-2 September
2025

A Shot Magazine

Positive review

'Roqia': Allegorical Horror With Purely Middle Eastern Lore And Themes

a shot

[Home](#) [Interviews](#) [Reviews](#)

Roqia: Allegorical Horror With Purely Middle Eastern Lore And Themes

REVIEWS

Alaa Tamer
9/2/2025



Arabic horror movies are rare, and Arabic horror movies that are legitimately creepy, made with artistry, and are not laughable, are even rarer.

That's why Yanis Koussim's feature length debut: 'Roqia' is a very pleasant surprise, an effective and original horror film that tries interesting things. Furthermore, in a year that redefined horror cinema with many classics, 'Roqia' could still stand out as part of the conversation.

It finally turned a dream of mine into reality, as it's a horror film that has its opening citation be a Hadith (a saying by Islam's prophet Muhammad) and later incorporates said Hadith into its supernatural lore (like what decades of Western Horror Cinema did with Christianity). The closest thing this film has to a protagonist is arguably an old Exorcist, a Sheikh who uses Quran against evil forces.


ARTICLES

1-2 September
2025

A Shot Magazine (continued)

Positive review

'Roqia': Allegorical Horror With Purely Middle Eastern Lore And Themes

Home Interviews Reviews

That Sheikh is getting old, and his grip on his small world and his memory start to weaken, to the point where he starts to forget where he left his Quran, and this makes him more dependant on his protege and on their neighbor housemaid that cooks and cleans for them both.

And for a while, it isn't really a horror film, but a domestic drama about aging, dementia and dying, with the horror cleverly in the background. (And this is not the only instance where the film acts like a domestic drama about dementia, as the film's best moments incorporate does interesting things with the concept), using a non linear, multiple protagonist structure to maintain tension and intrigue and widen the scope of the story.

"Scope" is a keyword here, as this film treats demonic possession as something of a spreadable disease or virus, linking it into the kind of violent instances you could see when scrolling social media, where a man kills his wife or another kills his victims after robbing them, the sort of violence and chaos that makes you feel the world has gone mad, that you are surrounded by sickness on your everyday life.

This approach keeps the film grounded to everyday horrors, suiting the film's grounded, Dardennes like visual style. Yes, when the possessed show up, they make monstrous shrieks and creepy sounds, with make-up and sound effects (which feel very much like "stock horror sounds" hindering the film's ability to have unique tone and atmosphere), but they look human, with no physical mutations, deformities or changes, they look even more human than the similar rage virus infected from the '28 Days Later' franchise.

The tone of 'Roqia' is more similar to Festival slower dramas than what you expected from a traditional horror, and the non-linear structure makes it build up to a different kind of tension, it is a patient film, aiming for something more existential and societal, to portray a certain feeling of unease, non-safety, and a sense of confusion and being lost in life, surrounded by forces stronger than you, slowly approaching. The closest thing to what Yanis Koussim is trying to do is Kurasawa's 'Cure', though it doesn't have as much of a tight grip on the audience as that film.

That is not to say it doesn't have the big horror moments, the visceral moments of pay off that all good horror films build towards, and it does built to a very effectively creepy and uncomfortable finale.

Like the powerful Tunisian horror film from last year, 'Where do I belong', **The Horror of 'Roqia' is a uniquely middle eastern one, of War-torn countries, of militia violence and terrorist fundamentalists.**

Turning this violence, this brutality that spreads from soul to soul, rotting and corrupting them, into a disease, a spreadable outbreak is how you use the allegoric power of horror cinema.

Like how the '28 later' franchise is about the rot of British society, 'Weapons' is about the gap between parents and offspring in Western countries, and "Sinners" is about the vampirism of cultural appropriation, and (apparently, from early reviews) Radu Jude's 'Dracula' is about the vampirism of AI Art.

So, 'Roqia' fits perfectly in a year of allegorically rich and socially aware horror cinema.

ARTICLES

1-2 September
2025

A Shot Magazine
Instagram post
[‘Roqia’: Allegorical Horror With Purely Middle Eastern Lore](#)

 ashotmagazine



REVIEW

**ROQIA: ALLEGORICAL
HORROR WITH PURELY
MIDDLE EASTERN LORE**

READ THE FULL REVIEW | WWW.ASHOTMAGAZINE.COM

 1 

Liked by fran_bandi25 and others


ashotmagazine Arabic horror movies are rare, and Arabic horror movies that are legitimately creepy, made with artistry, and are not laughable, are even rarer.

That’s why Yanis Koussim’s feature length debut: ‘Roqia’ is a very pleasant surprise, an effective and original horror film that tries interesting things. Furthermore, in a year that redefined horror cinema with many classics, ‘Roqia’ could still stand out as part of the conversation.

ARTICLES

2 September
2025

The National
Interview with director Yanis Koussim
Horror Film ‘Roqia’ About Exorcist With
Alzheimer’s, Blends Age-Old Tradition With
Algeria’s 1990s Turmoil



RegisterSign in

Culture **Film & TV**


Horror film Roqia, about exorcist with Alzheimer’s, blends age-old tradition with Algeria’s 1990s turmoil

Debut film by director Yanis Koussim had its premiere at Venice Film Festival





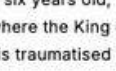
The exorcism scenes are raw and unnerving in Roqia. Photo: Supernova Films

James Mottram
September 02, 2025



Horror Film ‘Rogja’ About Exorcist With Alzheimer’s, Blends Age-Old Tradition With Algeria’s 1990s Turmoil



[Register](#)
[Sign in](#)


Algerian filmmaker Yanis Koussim can still recall the first time he was truly frightened when watching something. He was six years old, and it was [Michael Jackson's](#) ghoulish [music video for Thriller](#), where the King of Pop transforms into a werewolf. "I'd never been very scared, but this traumatised me. I didn't sleep for two weeks."

Directed by John Landis, the landmark *Thriller* music video was one of the contributing factors for Koussim becoming a director, alongside watching [Steven Spielberg](#) films. Not just the classics he made, but also others he was involved in, such as *Poltergeist* and [The Goonies](#). "People can say: 'Oh, it's a popcorn movie.' But one of my first emotional links with cinema was *The Goonies*. It was a communion."

Subconsciously, Koussim has ploughed all of this into his feature debut *Roqia*, a supremely effective Algerian horror that has just been unveiled in the Critics' Week strand at [Venice Film Festival](#).


Roqia is the Arabic expression for exorcism. The film deals with an ageing raqi (a healer who fights evil through religious recitations), who is battling Alzheimer's, and the concern that this may unleash an unspeakable evil.

The exorcism scenes are raw and unnerving, something Koussim studied carefully.


Live Q&A

**Palestinian statehood:
Virtue signal or pivotal moment?**

Live from the
United Nations
General Assembly
September 18 [Sign up now](#)



ARTICLES

2 September
2025

The National (continued)

Interview with Yanis Koussim

Horror Film ‘Roqia’ About Exorcist With
Alzheimer’s, Blends Age-Old Tradition With
Algeria’s 1990s Turmoil

The National


RegisterSign in

“Roqia not only means an exorcism against demons, but also when you feel sad or depressed; you can go to an imam and he will do a roqia on you,” he explains. He even met with a raqi for research purposes, asking to see an exorcism against a demon, but was told that it was serious stuff. Instead, he was given advice that he applied to the making of the film.

Roqia is partly set in the early 1990s, a period of great turmoil in [Algeria](#), when the civil war pitted the government against Islamist rebel groups. “We were like a laboratory,” Koussim says. “The first time we had this kind of terrorist was in Algeria. After that, there was Al Qaeda and AQIM and Daesh. They came after. But during the 1990s, we experienced it first.”

Now 47, Koussim remembers being in his mid-teens during that era, a time that proved formative not only for his budding interest in cinema, but also for the harsh realities around him. “Some of the terrorists in Algeria, I knew them,” he says. “They were my neighbours. I played football with them when we were teenagers.”

After directing shorts and contributing to scripts for others – including *Algeria My Love* by Lotfi Bouchouchi – Koussim didn’t plan on writing a horror for his debut, but *Roqia* morphed into one. “I realised that it was a horror movie I was writing, because we lived horror. And I answered a question I had with *Roqia*: How do people like you and me suddenly turn into real monsters and commit such horrible crimes?”



Roqia concludes with the quote: “Violent fundamentalism is not [Islam](#) but a distorted reading of its texts.” Expanding on this, Koussim speaks about his devout Muslim grandmother. “Islam, it’s a religion that fits in your life as you decide to welcome it as a person or as a believer,” he says. “It was not a religion that imposed itself on you. You choose how you welcome this religion.”

It really hit home when he heard that terrorists in Algeria claimed to be Muslims. “For me, no, it’s impossible that [extremists] share the same religion as my grandmother. And that’s why I made *Roqia*. Islam doesn’t need me to defend Islam, but I want to defend my grandmother and her beliefs.”

He wasn’t the only one in the family quietly battling fundamentalism. Koussim recalls his mother as being “very anxious”, but says that during the holidays in the 1990s, despite the danger, she’d let him go outside.

ARTICLES

2 September
2025

The National (continued)

Interview with Yanis Koussim

Horror Film ‘Roqia’ About Exorcist With
Alzheimer’s, Blends Age-Old Tradition With
Algeria’s 1990s Turmoil

Register

Sign in

"At the time, there were a lot of car bombs in Algiers. And I said: 'Why did you let us go out? You were afraid of everything.' And she said: 'I don't know, but if I didn't let you go out, it means that they have won.' The will to fight the terrorists was stronger than her uncertainty about her children."

Although *Roqia* is among the first horror films to be made in Algeria, Koussim believes it will resonate with audiences. He notes that Algerians have long embraced the genre, recalling how horror titles dominated VHS rentals in the 1980s.

Still, the pull of Hollywood remains strong. Koussim admits it would be hard to resist the allure of making a movie there. "My inner child would jump for joy."

And how would he feel if an American producer wanted to remake *Roqia*? Koussim says he would sell the rights, but only if he could co-write it, perhaps to shake things up. "Producers used to take more risks with movies," he concludes. "I think Hollywood has to take more risks."

Updated: September 02, 2025, 5:20 AM

Venice Film Festival

Algeria

Film

ARTICLES

2 September
2025

Screen International / Nikki Baughan

Positive review

[Roqia Review: Atmospheric Algerian Debut](#)
[Filters Civil War Through a Genre Lens](#)

SCREENDAILY

NOISE FILM & TV

Search our site

NEWS

REVIEWS

FEATURES

FESTIVALS

BOX OFFICE

AWARDS

GLOBAL PRODUCTION

SCREEN SUMMIT 2025

30 SEPTEMBER 2025 | BFI SOUTHBANK

HEAR FROM THE UK'S LEADING VOICES IN FILM PRODUCTION, FUNDING & DISTRIBUTION

REVIEWS

'Roqia' review: Atmospheric Algerian debut filters civil war through a genre lens

BY NIKKI BAUGHAN | 2 SEPTEMBER 2025


f

✕

in

e


Writer/director Yanis Koussim turns Algeria's Black Decade into an effective possession narrative



SOURCE: VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
'ROQIA'

Dir/scr: Yanis Koussim. France/Algeria/Qatar/Saudi Arabia. 2025. 89mins


ADVERT




AFRICANA

Watch on an AFRICANA Screen €12.50


MOST POPULAR



'Couture' review: Angelina Jolie is a tour de force in Alice Winocour's Paris fashion drama



UK mystery thriller 'Black Church Bay' starring Tom Cullen and Joe Locke wraps Wales shoot



'Winter Of The Crow' review: Lesley Manville propels gripping Polish

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)

noisefilmpr.com








ARTICLES

2 September
2025

Screen International / Nikki Baughan
(continued)

Positive review

[Roqia Review: Atmospheric Algerian Debut
Filters Civil War Through a Genre Lens](#)

[NEWS](#) [REVIEWS](#) [FEATURES](#) [FESTIVALS](#) [BOX OFFICE](#) [AWARDS](#) [GLOBAL PRODUCTION](#)


In modern-day Algeria an ageing Muslim priest struggles with Alzheimer's, to the increasing concern of his faithful disciple. In the early 1990s, another man is left with amnesia following a car crash, and returns home to find everything disturbingly off-kilter. Through these two interlinking stories, debut filmmaker Yanis Koussim effectively explores issues of memory, faith and violence, filtering the enduring horrors of civil war – specifically Algeria's Black Decade (1992-2002) – through an enigmatic genre lens.

A disquieting soundscape amps up the growing sense of unease


Premiering in Venice Critics Week, it's the first feature from Algerian filmmaker Koussim, who has previously made shorts such as *Burners* (2011) and *My Brother* (2010), which won awards at festivals including Locarno. He is also the founder of Plateau19, a collective of independent Algerian filmmakers, and now joins a cohort of interesting new Algerian talent including Damien Onouri and Chakib Talen-Bendia. *Roqia* seems destined for further festival play and could well attract interest from an arthouse distributor or streamer.

Roqia begins with an on-screen Hadith from Islamic tradition: 'Satan flows through man as blood flows through his veins.' Blood will be a key leitmotif of the film, both literally – there are some gory moments – and figuratively, as a symbol of the essence of what connects us, and what so easily can be corrupted. A short, sharp 90s-set opening segment provides a disorienting cacophony of darkness, demonic voices, soldiers and hooded men; there is a massacre, much blood is shed. This interplay of faith and brutality will become the film's dramatic impetus.


Part one, 'The Exorcist', then moves the action forward to modern-day Algeria. An elderly Muslim exorcist, known as a Raqi (played by Mostefa Djadjam), seems to be losing his touch; his unnamed disciple (an excellent Akram Djeghim) is concerned that his Alzheimer's is beginning to weaken his connection to God – their only real defence, he believes, against the encroaching darkness. Their young, pregnant neighbour Wafaa (Hanaa Mansour) tries to help as much as she can; with her military husband away, she is also grateful for the company.




propels gripping Polish Cold War thriller




'Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale' tops UK-Ireland box office with £4.4m; 'Demon Slayer: Infinity Castle' opens second



'The Long Walk' review: Powerful Stephen King adaptation journeys through bleak dystopian America




Which films are US buyers targeting as slow Toronto enters second week?



Euro indie producers call for greater recognition at festivals and awards

ADVERT



ARTICLES

2 September
2025

Screen International / Nikki Baughan
(continued)

Positive review

[Roqia Review: Atmospheric Algerian Debut
Filters Civil War Through a Genre Lens](#)

🏠

NEWS ▾

REVIEWS ▾

FEATURES ▾

FESTIVALS ▾

BOX OFFICE ▾

AWARDS ▾

GLOBAL PRODUCTION

For the second storyline, we are back in the early 1990s with family man and former soldier Ahmed (Ali Namous), who we meet as he returns home after an accident, his face fully bandaged. (It will stay wrapped for a while, turning Ahmed into something of a faceless everyman.) While his wife Selma (Lydia Hanni) is pleased to see him, his youngest son is terrified of his father's appearance. Ahmed has lost his memory, and his sense of displacement is worsened by disturbing nightly visitors who whisper in a strange language. As former soldier Ahmed learns more about the man he was – controlling, aggressive, hard-line – he becomes increasingly reluctant to regain his memories.

That Koussim's screenplay never directly references the Algerian civil war, which raged from 1992 to 2002, makes *Roqia* all the more powerful a study of it. A conflict between the country's government and various Islamist rebel groups, the war saw Algerian terrorists turning on their countrymen and resulted in hundreds of thousands of casualties. While Koussim grew up in Setif, a city that was largely spared the worst of the violence, the event cast a shadow across his consciousness – and the entire country.

That idea is reflected in cinematographer Jean-Marie Delorme's atmospheric visuals, which contrast the simple warmth of Ahmed's home with the shadows that move in the night, whispering to Ahmed in a strange tongue. Namous's restrained, vulnerable performances suggests that something monumental has happened to Ahmed, even if he can't remember – the suggestion is that if he lets the memories back in, he will be entirely lost.

This is an Islamic exorcism story of sorts. but aside from some well-handled moments, and a disquieting soundscape which amps up the growing sense of unease, the supernatural horror is understated. *Roqia* is more about the attempted possession of an entire faith, the ongoing war between religion and fundamentalism. Men are not born with evil, Koussim theorises, but are infected with it; that's a resonant, universal message.

Production company: Supernova Films

International sales: Alpha Violet, Virginie Devesa virginie@alphaviolet.com

Producer: Fares Ladjimi


Cinematography: Jean-Marie Delorme

Production design: Saad Ouled Bachir


Editing: Sarah Zaanoun, Maxime Pozzi-Garcia

Main cast: Mostefa Djadjam, Akram Djeghim, Ali Namous, Lydia Hanni

ADVERT

BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL 2025
JOIN THE
INDUSTRY FORUM
THIS OCTOBER

ADVERT

World of
Locations
Bringing you by
SCREEN GLOBAL
PRODUCTION
The essential guide to
the world's best film
and TV locations

ARTICLES

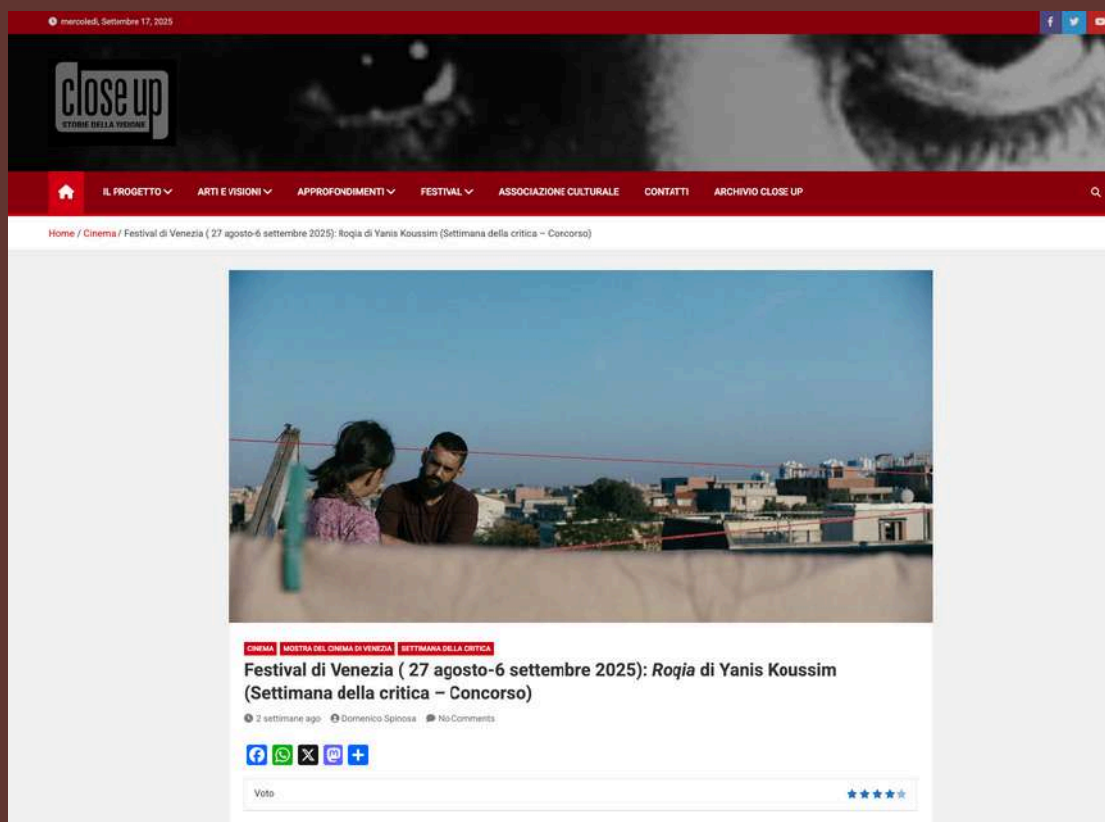
2 September
2025

CloseUp (Storie della Visione) (Italian)

Positive review (4/5)

Festival di Venezia (27 agosto-6 settembre 2025): 'Roqia' di Yanis Koussim (Settimana della critica – Concorso)

Venice Film Festival (August 27-September 6, 2025): 'Roqia' by Yanis Koussim (Critics' Week – Competition)



ARTICLES


2 September
2025


CloseUp (Storie della Visione) (Italian - continued)

Positive review (4/5)

Festival di Venezia (27 agosto-6 settembre 2025): ‘Roqia’ di Yanis Koussim (Settimana della critica – Concorso)

Venice Film Festival (August 27-September 6, 2025): ‘Roqia’ by Yanis Koussim (Critics' Week – Competition)

 IL PROGETTO ▾ ARTI E VISIONI ▾ APPROFONDIMENTI ▾ FESTIVAL ▾ ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE CONTATTI ARCHIVIO CLOSE UP



Noto, in particolare, per il cortometraggio *Khouya* (Mon frère – Mio fratello, in Concorso a Locarno nel 2010 e a Clermont-Ferrand nel 2011) e il documentario *Algiers by Night* (2018), il regista algerino Yanis Koussim presenta *Roqia* (il suo primo lungometraggio di finzione) nel Concorso della SIC veneziana. Scritta dallo stesso regista, la sceneggiatura si sviluppa in due periodi storici: nel 1993, dopo un incidente d'auto che lo ha lasciato con l'amnesia, Ahmed torna al suo villaggio dove nulla gli sembra familiare, né sua moglie né i suoi figli. Il più giovane di loro, spaventato dal volto bendato dell'uomo, lo teme profondamente. Ogni notte, strani visitatori gli sussurrano litanie in una lingua sconosciuta. Chi sono? Perché il suo vicino lo disturba? Nel tempo invece a noi presente un anziano Raqi (un esorcista musulmano) sta combattendo contro l'Alzheimer. Il suo discepolo è preoccupato. Le storie s'intrecciano e così, mentre i posseduti parlano lingue straniere e la violenza si intensifica, Ahmed teme di recuperare la memoria e il discepolo paventa che il regresso del suo maestro scatenerà un male antico.

L'ambientazione multi-temporale è sicuramente affascinante e coinvolgente, in particolare per quanto riguarda quella durante il decennio nero algerino che coincide col periodo di guerra civile nel paese. Sembrerebbe che il fine dell'opera sia quello di offrire allo spettatore l'opportunità di rivisitare il passato e di saperne di più su quel momento storico. Da più parti il film si è stato letto come un "esorcismo" che esplora traumi, ricordi e paure, riflettendo sull'identità frammentata del mondo arabo. Un rituale di catarsi collettiva rivela il divario che separa la fede dalla violenza, la spiritualità dal terrore. E quindi le scelte di girare quasi tutte le scene con la macchina a mano genera un senso di claustrofobia che funziona e così l'opera diventa uno spazio di tensione, di alienazione ma anche di confronto tra generazioni diverse. Davvero molto riusciti sono soprattutto i primi dieci minuti che aprono il film. Si entra come in tunnel senza luce dove grida, sequenze d'immagini "che non si vedono" tanto è il buio che ci assale e rumori assordanti di armi e di inseguimenti (chissà poi verso dove) s'intessono in un mix audio-visivo davvero potente ed efficace. Ecco: come uscire dalla galleria delle circostanze del passato? Da quello della memoria di eventi che hanno sconvolto e alterato le vite dei protagonisti come quelle dei loro figli e nipoti. Si può provare ad affrancarsi dalla storia? Domande che il film di Koussim, in punta di piedi, si e ci pone raccontando pezzi di esistenza credibili. Di recente ha affermato: "Sono cresciuto durante i sanguinosi anni '90 in Algeria, e il trauma e la paura di quel periodo persistono ancora sotto la superficie della vita quotidiana.

Con *Roqia*, si usa l'horror, radicato nel realismo e nella memoria, come strumento per affrontare quel passato, preservarlo e garantire che non venga mai dimenticato". Dunque, si può dire che tutto il film consiste in un tentativo di scongiuro contro la diavoleria di chi, mai stanco, prova sempre e nuovamente a ergersi "guida" di e per gli altri, senza essere semmai capace di controllare nemmeno se stesso. La storia ne è piena, ma non sembra essere stanca. È sempre gravida di questi personaggi che con indifferenza s'agitano nei cunicoli delle interpretazioni tralasciando volutamente fatti e loro oggettivazioni.

Ben vengano allora i film come questo che consigliamo vivamente di andare a vedere se mai potranno uscire anche nelle nostre sale.

Roqia, Regia e sceneggiatura: Yanis Koussim; fotografia: Jean-Marie Delorme; montaggio: Sarah Zaïnoun, Maxime Pozzi-Garcia; scenografia: Saad Ouled Bachir; interpreti: Ali Namous (Ahmed), Akram Djeghim (discepolo), Mostefa Djadjam (Raqi), Hanaa Mansour (Waffa), Lydia Hanni (Selma), Abdelkrim Derradji (Abdelkrim). **Produttore:** Fares Ladjimi per Supernova Films; **co-produzione:** 19, Mulholland Drive Production; **origine:** Algeria/ Francia/ Qatar/ Arabia Saudita, 2025; **durata:** 89 minuti.

Tags: Festival di Venezia, recensioni, recensioni festival

ARTICLES

2 September
2025

CloseUp (Storie della Visione) (English)
Positive review (4/5)
Festival di Venezia (27 agosto-6 settembre 2025): ‘Roqia’ di Yanis Koussim (Settimana della critica – Concorso)
Venice Film Festival (August 27-September 6, 2025): ‘Roqia’ by Yanis Koussim (Critics' Week – Competition)

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

close up

STORIE DELLA VISIONE

THE PROJECT

ARTS AND VISIONS

FURTHER INFORMATION

FESTIVAL

CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

CONTACTS

CLOSE UP ARCHIVE

Home / Cinema / Venice Film Festival (August 27-September 6, 2025): Roqia by Yanis Koussim (Critics' Week – Competition)



CINEMA

VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

CRITICS' WEEK

Venice Film Festival (August 27-September 6, 2025): *Roqia* by Yanis Koussim (Critics' Week – Competition)

2 weeks ago · Dominic Spinosa · No Comments

Facebook

WhatsApp

Telegram

Twitter

Instagram

YouTube

More

Vote

★★★★☆

ARTICLES


2 September
2025


CloseUp (Storie della Visione) (English - continued)

Positive review (4/5)

[Festival di Venezia \(27 agosto-6 settembre 2025\): ‘Roqia’ di Yanis Koussim \(Settimana della critica – Concorso\)](#)

[Venice Film Festival \(August 27-September 6, 2025\): ‘Roqia’ by Yanis Koussim \(Critics' Week – Competition\)](#)

[THE PROJECT](#) [ARTS AND VISIONS](#) [FURTHER INFORMATION](#) [FESTIVAL](#) [CULTURAL ASSOCIATION](#) [CONTACTS](#) [CLOSE UP ARCHIVE](#)



Known in particular for the short film *Khouda* (Mon frère – My Brother, in Competition at Locarno in 2010 and Clermont-Ferrand in 2011) and the documentary *Algiers by Night* (2018), Algerian director Yanis Koussim presents *Roqia* (his first feature-length fiction film) in Competition at the Venice Film Festival. Written by the director himself, the screenplay unfolds across two historical periods: in 1993, after a car accident that left him with amnesia, Ahmed returns to his village where nothing seems familiar, not his wife or his children. The youngest of them, frightened by the man's bandaged face, fears him deeply. Every night, strange visitors whisper litanies to him in an unknown language. Who are they? Why is his neighbor bothering him? In the present time, an elderly Raqi (a Muslim exorcist) is battling Alzheimer's. His disciple is worried. The stories intertwine, and so, as the possessed speak foreign languages and the violence intensifies, Ahmed fears regaining his memory, and the disciple fears that his master's regression will unleash an ancient evil.

The multi-temporal setting is certainly fascinating and engaging, particularly the one during Algeria's dark decade, which coincides with the country's civil war. The film's purpose seems to be to offer the viewer the opportunity to revisit the past and learn more about that historical moment. The film has been widely interpreted as an "exorcism" that explores trauma, memories, and fears, reflecting on the fragmented identity of the Arab world. A ritual of collective catharsis reveals the gulf between faith and violence, spirituality and terror. Thus, the decision to shoot almost all the scenes with a handheld camera generates a sense of claustrophobia that works, and thus the film becomes a space of tension, alienation, but also of confrontation between different generations. The first ten minutes of the film are particularly successful. It's like entering a dark tunnel where screams, sequences of images "that can't be seen" due to the darkness that assails us, and the deafening sounds of weapons and chases (who knows where) are woven into a truly powerful and effective audio-visual mix. So: how do we escape the tunnel of past circumstances? From the memory of events that have shocked and altered the lives of the protagonists as well as those of their children and grandchildren. Can we try to free ourselves from history? These are questions that Koussim's film, quietly, asks itself and us by recounting credible slices of existence. He recently stated: "I grew up during the bloody 1990s in Algeria, and the trauma and fear of that period still linger beneath the surface of daily life."

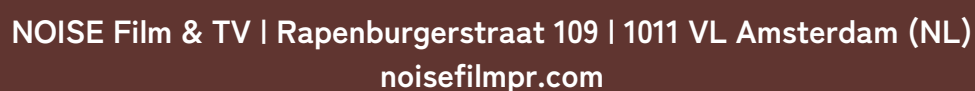
With *Roqia*, horror, rooted in realism and memory, is used as a tool to confront that past, preserve it, and ensure it is never forgotten. Therefore, one could say that the entire film consists of an attempt to exorcise the devilry of those who, never tiring, try again and again to set themselves up as "guides" of and for others, without, if anything, being able to control even themselves. History is full of them, but it doesn't seem to be tired. It is always pregnant with these characters who indifferently wander through the tunnels of interpretation, deliberately leaving out facts and their objectifications.

So let's welcome films like this one, which we highly recommend seeing if they ever get released in our theaters.

Roqia ; **Director and screenplay** : Yanis Koussim; **cinematography** : Jean-Marie Delorme; **editing** : Sarah Zaanoun, Maxime Pozzi-Garcia; **production design** : Saad Ouled Bachir; **cast** : Ali Namous (Ahmed), Akram Djeghim (disciple), Mostefa Djadjam (Raqi), Hanaa Mansour (Waffa), Lydia Hanni (Selma), Abdelkrim Derradji (Abdelkrim); **Producer** : Fares Ladjimi for Supernova Films; **co-production** : 19, Mulholland Drive Production; **origin** : Algeria/France/Qatar/Saudi Arabia, 2025; **running time** : 89 minutes.

Tags: [Venice Film Festival](#), [reviews](#), [festival reviews](#)

Yanis Koussim • Director of Rogia



ARTICLES

2 September
2025

Cineuropa

Interview with director Yanis Koussim

[Yanis Koussim • Director of Roqia](#)


Choose your language **en** | es | fr | it

[Database](#)
[Market Intelligence](#)
[News](#)
[Reviews](#)
[Interviews](#)
[Festival Reports](#)
[Services](#)
[More](#)

Shown in [Venice's International Film Critics' Week](#), Algerian director **Yanis Koussim's** *Roqia* [\[+\]](#) moves in between timelines and genres – from the Algerian Civil War in the 1990s, when his protagonist Ahmed is struggling with amnesia, to the present-day struggles of an ageing exorcist. In this universe, evil is always close.

Cineuropa: You play with horror tropes quite a bit in *Roqia*: it's drenched in terror. Is it something you also enjoy as a viewer?
Yanis Koussim: I'm a big fan of horror movies. I grew up in the 1980s: it was the golden age of these movies. *Poltergeist*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*... When I decided to write about the 1990s, which was a bloody decade in Algeria, after reading the first draft, I realised I was working on a horror movie. This genre imposed itself on me, in a way. It was a revelation.

You've lived through these events, too. Why did you want to go back to all that trauma?
 As a filmmaker, I write about my wounds. We all knew these terrorists. Every Algerian had one terrorist in the neighbourhood, at school, in the family. It was a man or a woman – because there were women, too – and they would disappear one day and become real monsters. I was wondering: how do people like you and me suddenly start committing horrible crimes?

I was a teenager at that time – this question has been following me all my life. I don't think I answer everything with *Roqia*, but at least I've answered it for myself. I resolved it. I just hope that all the Algerians, and all the people who face absolute evil, can eventually find peace.

Yours is a very claustrophobic story. You like to be with these people in dark rooms: it feels like there's no air and no escape.
 So many parts of this film were completely instinctive. When it comes to the claustrophobic aspect... I figured it out during the editing. I thought: "There are a lot of interiors!" I think I was doing it in some subconscious way because this kind of trauma is intimate. It's kept inside. You know, when you walk the streets in Algeria, you can't see how traumatised we really are. We hide this secret within our walls.

What happened in Algeria in the 1990s was really the first time: it felt like our country was a laboratory of terrorism. Before that, we didn't know this kind of fear. The world eventually found out about [terrorist group] Daesh, about Al-Qaeda, but it came much later. At the beginning, Raqi – the exorcist – and Ahmed were actually the same character. It changed after I worked with a great script editor, **Ruth Atkinson**, trying to figure out how to address all of the aspects of our Algerian tragedy. You can't talk about the past without actually showing that past. We needed to know about it. Later, I added Alzheimer's disease and amnesia because when you try to erase a memory, evil comes back. I read about terrorists, and that's what happens to them: they completely forget who they were. They forget their family, their studies – they forget everything. Just imagine – you have a neighbour you've known since childhood. You played football with him. Then he's gone, and someone tells you he's been killing people – in a horrible manner. You don't know this person any more! That's why Ahmed is covered up in all these bandages at the beginning. He's faceless. It could happen to anyone.

It really could. Things like these make your story much more universal than one expects. Was that your goal, somehow?
 When you discover that perhaps you've succeeded in making something universal, it's a gift. Then again, I talk about good and evil. It's not related to just one religion or just one nation. It concerns all of humanity. There's the evil we called Nazism, the evil we called colonialism, the evil we called slavery. There's the evil that's happening in Gaza right now. Throughout our entire history, we've always had to face it.

There's this actress, **Adila Bendimerad**: she makes a cameo in the film. We are writing her next movie right now because she also directs, and it happens during the French conquest of Algeria. She told me that if we look at all the massacres that happened in the 1990s and compare them with the massacres during colonisation, there's a big overlap. Most of them happened in the exact same spots. Evil likes to return to the same place.

Co-funded by the European Union  **Creative Europe MEDIA**

[Start Kijken](#) **Severance** op Apple TV+

Subscribe to our newsletter to receive the most important daily or weekly news on European cinema

e-mail address

GoCritic!

DISTRIBUTOR OF THE MONTH

PAOLO SORENTINO LAB. 1—11.Dic.2025 Patagonia, Argentina
 FILMING YOUR WONDER 

THE ULTIMATE PRODUCTION HUB FEATURING EUROPE'S MOST AVANT-GARDE IMMERSIVE STUDIO 

ARTICLES

3 September
2025

Awards Watch

Mixed review (grade B)

‘Roqia’ Review: [B] Venice

Tue, Sep 16th, 2025

X @ f y

AWARDSWATCH

OSCAR PREDICTIONS HQ ▾NEWS ▾AWARDS ▾PREDICTIONS ▾PODCASTS ▾REVIEWS ▾INTERVIEWS ▾OTHER ▾

FILM REVIEWS · VENICE FILM FESTIVAL


Search ...


SEARCH

‘Roqia’ Review: [B] Venice

Mina TaklaSeptember 3, 2025

Xfbtsw





Sign up for the
AW newsletter!

Because awards season is 365 days a year

SUBSCRIBE HERE

ARTICLES

3 September
2025

Awards Watch (continued)

Mixed review (grade B)

'Roqia' Review: [B] Venice

Playing in competition at this year's Venice Critics' Week, Yanis Koussim's *Roqia* is a rare Middle Eastern genre film that takes narrative risks that mostly pay off, even if some of its segments needed slightly better execution. A challenging film that will have its fans among the arthouse audience internationally, *Roqia* draws several parallels between fiction and reality, inviting us to unpack its symbolism and ponder about a future in which hate trumps compassion, and radicalization runs rampant, diminishing any hope for co-existence and mutual understanding.

A unique blend of body horror and exorcism, it is to the film's credit that it is uncompromising in its vision, with several sequences leaving enough mystery and ambiguity to make it one of those films you need to sit with a bit once the lights go on, connecting the dots and making your own conclusions rather than being exactly sure about what you've just seen. At a time when financing is scarce and indie filmmakers – especially from the Middle East which is a region that has always been turbulent politically – face increasingly tough conditions to get their films made, it is wonderful to witness films like *Roqia* grace the screen, offering something that feels fresh and new even if not entirely accomplished in execution.

Taking place in three chapters, the film opens with a harrowing sequence in which we witness a group of blood-thirsty men storming through an Algerian village in the 1990s. Loud screams are heard before we witness bloodshed, torture and acts that reek of revenge and spite. This unforgettable sequence, crucial to the film, is a direct reference to the civil war that took place in Algeria in 1992 in which the government battled a rising radicalized Islamist movement that took the souls of thousands of innocent victims. The war continued until 2002 and there was always a possibility that another civil war could erupt at any time. The war back then might have been over, but there are no guarantees that the country had moved on from radicalization.

The first chapter introduces us to an elderly exorcist, a religious Sheikh who, along with his loyal disciple, spends his day visiting the homes of those cursed with evil spirits much to the horror of their loving families. In one visit, an evil spirit seems to have made a connection, in the form of a conversation in undecipherable language, with the Sheikh, rendering him a ghost of the man he once was. Strange occurrences soon start to unfold, in the Sheikh's home as well as on the streets. A series of violent crimes hit the city and the disciple starts to question his master's involvement in them. Meanwhile, the Sheikh starts to exhibit signs of Alzheimer's, waking up at night and wandering aimlessly inside the house and forgetting key pieces of info. If he forgets who he is, how does that impact the future of the city? The disciple seems to wonder whether a looming threat has a direct connection with the Sheikh's fading memory amidst an atmosphere of dread that has spread all over the city.

Chapter two takes us to the present, as we follow a young man who had vanished some time back in a car accident, only to suddenly return with no trace of the car itself. He has no memory of who he is, and when his family welcomes him back to the house, his youngest son seems convinced he is not his father. It doesn't help that his head is entirely wrapped in bandages. The man's loss of memory scares him, but he is soon even more scared of getting it back as memories of atrocities he had once committed come back to haunt him.

The final chapter, taking place in the present, shows us the aftermath of what happened to the Sheikh's neighbor who seems to have been possessed. The mysterious men, seen in the film's opening sequence, return to devour her, leading up to a bloody and pulpy climax.

Roqia draws parallels between exorcism and radicalization in sometimes brilliant, sometimes clunky ways. Koussim uses evil spirits, inhibiting the souls of once-peaceful citizens, as an allegory for what it's like to lose one's humanity and succumb to darker thoughts of revenge, hate and exclusion of the other. His characters lose their essence to a much stronger power that blinds them and uses them as weapons of destruction of their own communities, neighbors, and their own families. While some sequences are well filmed, others lack some polishing, veering on exaggeration at times. Still, the film manages to effectively provoke its audiences, leaving them highly uncomfortable as they witness the atrocities on screen. It is an urgent reminder that the greatest loss of all is that of our own humanity, in a world where tolerance and acceptance seem to be fading away.

Grade: B

This review is from the 2025 Venice Film Festival where *Roqia* had its world premiere. There is no U.S. distribution at this time.

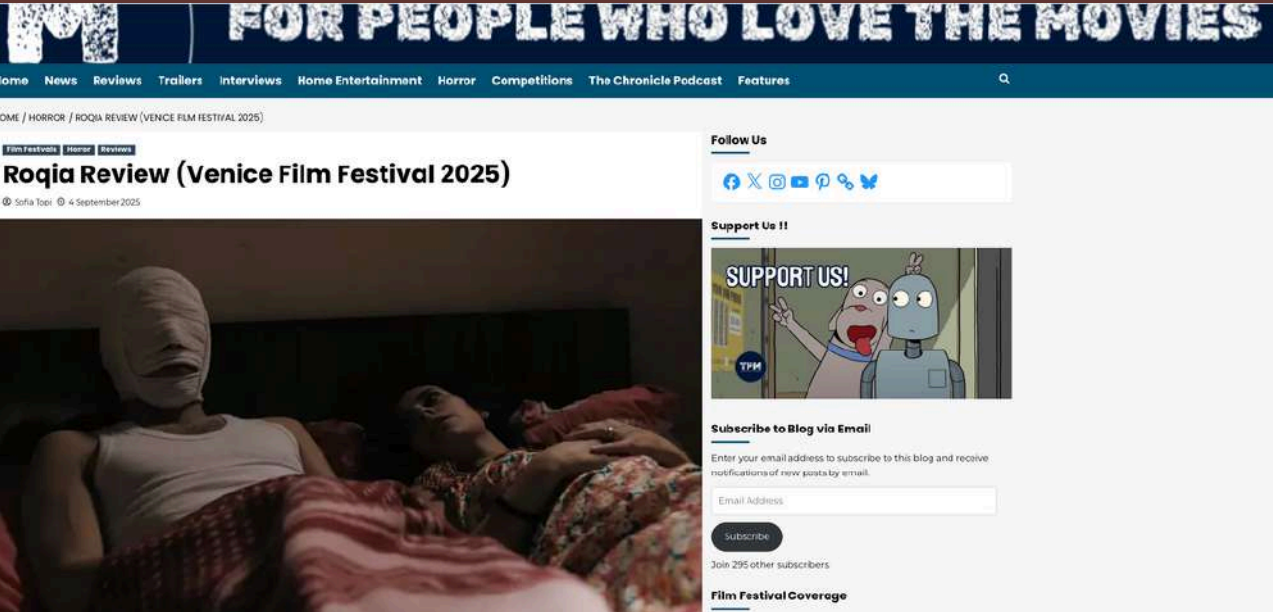
ARTICLES

4 September
2025

The People’s Movies

Positive review

‘Roqia’ Review (Venice Film Festival 2025)



ARTICLES

4 September
2025

The People's Movies

Positive review

'Roqia' Review (Venice Film Festival 2025)

Fans of the genre would agree: horror films are at their best when they stay true to intention rather than chasing sensation. When they set aside image sophistication and tidiness in favour of naturalism. When, in other words, they keep it real. All the more so when they respond to sensitive, concealed, yet dominant and deeply potent, affective affairs.

Such is the new film by Algerian filmmaker [Yanis Koussim](#), **Roqia**. Koussim, a key figure in independent filmmaking in his country, stands for a rising generation of stormy makers willing to do the hard yards and break through traditional gestures of cinema, but also to address the undercurrents that shape collective memory and national identity. Not an easy feat, especially within a political landscape regularly exposed to polarising conflicts and a society veiled by religious impressions and commanding doctrines.

Roqia spans the last 30 years of [Algeria's](#) plunge into violence and the contaminating fear that has infected households and neighbourhoods to this day. The film throws us into a free fall at the core of the unthinkable brutality unleashed during Algeria's dark decade of civil war, armed men against civilians. Soon after, we land in contemporary times, in a scene of exorcism so daunting and persistent it feels like a salute to the cinematic phenomenon that established the grounds for religious explorations of archetypical evil. **Koussim** goes a step further, keeping his shots wide enough for us to witness rather than imagine the gruesome succession of evil acts. He reveals the incarnation of the devil without hiding behind tight framing or the familiar tricks of gimmick-driven representation.

As for us, we stay in dark rooms with the devil, left with echoes of fear alongside the few faces that guide us back and forth through the years of proximate and distant war. And although we follow three main characters confronted with possession, the devil in **Roqia** is not confined to a single body but spreads through small groups, like a virus with expansive politics, finding with confidence its openings in vulnerable or wounded individuals to take hold of peace.

Evil manifested through the perpetual and cross-religious figure of the devil alongside the horrors of war is precisely what Koussim exposes in conjunction. The backdrop is Algeria, and the title specifies the religious environment (**Roqia** is an Islamic practice of reciting verses of the Koran to manifest the need for protection and to reinforce one's faith). Yet the reference to volunteer soldiers (Afghan Arabs) who fought in the 1980s anti-Soviet Afghan jihad elevates the story to a universal landscape, with enduring implications for those who fight wars. I am convinced the examination of veterans was not the epicentre of Koussim's interest, but the juxtaposition of devil and soldier offers a new perspective on post-war psychology, shifting the focus from individual mental frailty back to the responsibility of those in power. The devil here is not a supernatural entity but the bloodshed of war itself. A metaphor that draws on genre (and God) to articulate injustice. A reminder, too, that politics cannot exist without religion, and that religion, beyond moral ideology, functions as a political trope.

That said, many scenes will make a casual viewer uncomfortable with their gory tendencies and unfiltered violence. **Koussim** is not seeking empathy, but uses realism to speak of horrors. An experience that renders **Roqia** a rediscovery of the power of script and camera, relying not on the high-end polish of the image but on the dexterous unfolding of characters and events, with pitch-perfect pacing that balances tension with moments to breathe and reflect.

Roqia comes as an argumentative force in international cinema, declaring how stories and the medium can bind complexities with emotional gravity and visual assertion. It may feel intuitive, but I saw it as a bold act of filmmaking.

Roqia premiered at Settimana Internazionale della Critica (Critics Week), Venice Film Festival 2025.

Roqia, 94' / Dir. & screenplay: Yanis Koussim / With: Ali Namous, Hicham Abdelfah, Mostapha Achour, Abdellah Aggoune / Production: Supernova Films / Co-production: 19, Mulholland Drive / International Sales: Alpha Violet / France, Algeria

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

Culture 24 (Italian)
Positive short review
Duse, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi splende nei
panni della Divina
Duse, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi shines as the
Divina

Cultura Cinema e media

In Evidenza Criptovalute Spread BTP-Bund FTSE-MIB Petrolio

24+ Abbonati Accedi

AMERICAN EXPRESS

GEEN
BETROUWEN
ZONDER

Nu 50.000 Miles
+ 40 XP cadeau

Flying Blue – American Express
Platinum Card

VRAAG NU AAN

*Actie geldt van 03-09 t/m 14-10-2025.
Voorwaarden en minimale besteding van toepassing.

La formazione al centro
della 21esima Giornata del
Contemporaneo

Addio a 89 anni a Robert
Redford: due Oscar, il
Sundance e l'ambiente


È morto Robert Redford:
attore romantico e di
impegno civile

Servizio Mostra del Cinema di Venezia

“Duse”, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi splende
nei panni della Divina

In concorso il nuovo film di Pietro Marcello sulla celebre attrice teatrale rappresentata negli
ultimi anni della sua vita

di Andrea Chimento
4 settembre 2025



THERE'S A
REASON FOR
EVERY
CANADIAN
SEASON

 AIR CANADA

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

Culture 24 (Italian - continued)

Positive short review

Duse, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi splende nei
panni della Divina

Duse, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi shines as the
Divina

Roqia

Una delle più interessanti sorprese viste al Lido quest'anno arriva dalla SIC – Settimana Internazionale della Critica, dove è stato proiettato "Roqia", film algerino firmato dall'esordiente al lungometraggio Yanis Koussim.



Ambientato nel 1993, il film racconta di Ahmed che, a seguito di un incidente d'auto che gli ha causato un'amnesia, torna al suo villaggio natale dove nulla gli appare familiare, né la moglie, né i figli: il più piccolo addirittura lo teme, spaventato dal suo volto bendato, mentre ogni notte strani visitatori tormentano Ahmed, sussurrando litanie in una lingua sconosciuta.

Non sono molti i film di genere presenti nel cartellone veneziano e questo titolo si fa notare per essere uno degli horror più inquietanti e intelligenti visti durante questa intera annata.

Oltre alle emozioni forti che il film sa provocare, "Roqia" è anche un potente lungometraggio politico, capace di utilizzare il tema della possessione come metafora dei fondamentalismi religiosi.

Davvero impressionante che si tratti di un'opera prima ed ennesima conferma dell'ottima programmazione di una sezione di cui si parla sempre troppo poco.

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

Culture 24 (English)
Positive short review
Duse, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi splende nei
panni della Divina
Duse, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi shines as the
Divina

Culture

Cinema and media

Hot Topics

Criptovalute

Spread BTP-Bund

FTSE-MIB

Petrolio

24+

Subscribe

Sign in

PEGASUS

AIRLINES

Servizio

Venice Film Festival

'Duse', Valeria Bruni Tedeschi shines
as the Divina

In competition, the new film by Pietro Marcello on the famous theatre actress performed in
the last years of her life

by Andrea Chimento
4 September 2025

PEGASUS

AIRLINES

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

Culture 24 (English - continued)

Positive short review

Duse, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi splende nei
panni della Divina

Duse, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi shines as the
Divina

Roqia

One of the most interesting surprises seen on the Lido this year came from SIC - International Critics' Week, where 'Roqia', an Algerian film by feature debutant Yanis Koussim, was screened.



Set in 1993, the film tells of Ahmed who, following a car accident that caused him amnesia, returns to his home village where nothing seems familiar to him, neither his wife nor his children: the youngest even fears him, frightened by his bandaged face, while every night strange visitors torment Ahmed, whispering litanies in an unknown language.

There are not many genre films on the Venetian bill, and this title stands out as one of the most disturbing and intelligent horror films seen this entire year.

In addition to the strong emotions that the film provokes, 'Roqia' is also a powerful political feature, capable of using the theme of possession as a metaphor for religious fundamentalism.

Very impressive that this is a first work and yet another confirmation of the excellent programming of a section that is always too little talked about.

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

FRED Film Radio (French)
Radio piece with director Yanis Koussim and actors Ali Namous and Akram Djeghim
‘Roqia’, interview avec le réalisateur Yanis Koussim et les acteurs Ali Namous et Akram Djeghim
‘Roqia’, Interview with Director Yanis Koussim and Actors Ali Namous and Akram Djeghim

Global Critics Venice Voice
GLOBAL CRITICS VENICE VOICE

FRED

00:00

LISTEN TO ALL OUR RADIO CHANNELS

Venice Film F. Giornate degli Autori Critics Week About Fred Our Team Contact Us All radio channels INCinema

FRED
THE FESTIVAL INSIDER

Homepages + Radio Channels + News Interviews Programs + Galleries Festivals

PLAY

POP-UP PLAYER

CRITICS WEEK - VENICE

“Roqia”, interview avec le réalisateur Yanis Koussim et les acteurs Ali Namous et Akram Djeghim

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

**Yanis Koussim, réalisateur. Ali Namous, Akram Djegim acteurs .
"Roqia". Un thriller zombie politique captivant de l'Algérie.**


"Roqia", interview avec le réalisateur Yanis Koussim et les acteurs Ali Namous et Akram Djeghim
Angela Acerbi

Podcast | Download

SEARCH

SEARCH

TOP POPULAR



Hollywood Legend Robert Redford Dies at 89

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

FRED Film Radio (French)

Radio piece with director Yanis Koussim and actors Ali Namous and Akram Djeghim

[‘Roqia’, interview avec le réalisateur Yanis
Koussim et les acteurs Ali Namous et Akram
Djeghim](#)

[‘Roqia’, Interview with Director Yanis Koussim
and Actors Ali Namous and Akram Djeghim](#)

▶ Global Critics Venice Voice
GLOBAL CRITICS VENICE VOICE

FRED

◀ ▶ ⏮ ⏭ ⏯

00:00

☰ 🔊

FRED
THE FESTIVAL INSIDER

Homopages + Radio Channels + News + Interviews + Programs + Galleries + Festivals

🔍 ▶ PLAY POP-UP PLAYER

“Roqia”, de Yanis Koussim a été présenté dans la sélection de la **Semaine de la Critique**, au Festival de Venise. On a rencontré le réalisateur et ses deux acteurs principaux, Ali Namous et Akram Djeghim pour mieux parler d’un des titres plus bouleversants et politiques, et de genre horreur, du festival. Un film zombie mêlé à une critique sociale acerbe, “Roqia” se démarque par sa vision dystopique originale et ses enjeux politiques.

Une œuvre audacieuse sous le signe du genre

“Roqia”, à première vue, pourrait ressembler à un simple film d’horreur, cependant, derrière ses apparences sanglantes et ses scènes effrayantes se cache une critique politique acerbe. Selon Yanis Koussim, “le film manifeste un rapport entre le genre zombie et notre réalité”. Le film évoque des scènes de massacres et des figures de zombies qui, loin d’être de simples créatures horribles, deviennent le symbole d’une société en crise. Les dialogues et les images fortes illustrent une inquisition des femmes, dépeintes comme des figures intelligentes et résistantes dans un contexte oppressant.

Une esthétique captivante et innovante

Visuellement, “Roqia” impressionne par sa mise en scène sombre et angoissante. Les images sont à la fois effrayantes et poétiques, avec une atmosphère oppressante qui maintient le spectateur en haleine. Ce film, qui mélange horreur et critique sociale avec brio, s’adresse à un public qui recherche un cinéma réfléchi tout en étant immersif. La capacité du réalisateur à faire du genre horreur un vecteur d’idées politiques témoigne de son talent et de son originalité. “Roqia” n’est pas seulement un film d’épouvante : c’est un pamphlet visuel et culturel qui ne laisse personne indifférent.

PLOT

En 1993, après un accident de voiture qui lui cause une amnésie, Ahmed retourne dans son village où rien ne lui semble familier, ni sa femme, ni ses enfants. Son plus jeune enfant, perturbé par le visage entièrement bandé d’Ahmed, éprouve une profonde peur à son égard. Chaque nuit, des visiteurs mystérieux tourmentent Ahmed en lui murmurant des litanies dans une langue incompréhensible. Qui sont ces étranges personnages ? Et pourquoi son soi-disant ami, le voisin, le met-il si mal à l’aise ? De nos jours, Raqi (un exorciste musulman) vieillissant est atteint de la maladie d’Alzheimer. Ses oublis et son comportement erratique inquiètent son disciple, qui commence à craindre le pire alors que la violence s’intensifie dans la ville et que les possédés partent dans une langue inconnue. Alors qu’Ahmed, dans le passé, redoute de retrouver la mémoire, le disciple, dans le présent, craint que le déclin de son maître ne libère un mal ancien.

WRITTEN BY: ANGELO ACERBI

QUEST

AKRAM DIEGIM ALI NAMOUS YANNIS KOUSSIM

FILM

ROQIA

FESTIVAL

CRITICS WEEK - VENICE


📌


📱


📧


📧

RATE IT ⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐

**Festa del Cinema di Roma 2025: omaggio a Franco Pinna**

**82nd Venice International Film Festival: all the official awards**

**Venice 82: Collateral Awards at the 2025 Film Festival**

**“The Souffleur”, interview with the director Gaston Solnicki and the actor Willem Dafoe**

Recent Posts

La Leggenda di Hollywood Robert Redford Muore a 89 Anni

Hollywood Legend Robert Redford Dies at 89

Fai Foundation Collateral Award ‘Persona, Lavoro, Ambiente’ (6th edition)

A Sea of Emotions in 160 Years of History – The Two Short Films About the Italian Coast Guard

Le vie dell’acqua – Film Preview

FESTIVAL

27 TMES CINEMA - MOSTRA DEL CINEMA DI VENEZIA

28 TMES CINEMA - MOSTRA DEL CINEMA DI VENEZIA


ALICE NELLA CITTA - ROMA - PERLINALE


BFI LONDON FILM FEST - BOLZANO FILM FESTIVAL


CRITICS WEEK - VENICE - FESTA DEL CINEMA DI ROMA

FESTIVAL DE CANNES - FOCUS LONDON

GIORNATE DEGLI AUTORI - VENEZIA

**82nd Venice International Film Festival: all the official awards**

**Venice 82: Collateral Awards at the 2025 Film Festival**

**“The Souffleur”, interview with the director Gaston Solnicki and the actor Willem Dafoe**

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

FRED Film Radio (English)
Radio piece with director Yanis Koussim and actors Ali Namous and Akram Djeghim
‘Roqia’, interview avec le réalisateur Yanis Koussim et les acteurs Ali Namous et Akram Djeghim
‘Roqia’, Interview with Director Yanis Koussim and Actors Ali Namous and Akram Djeghim

Global Critics Venice Voice
GLOBAL CRITICS VENICE VOICE

FRED

00:00

LISTEN TO ALL OUR RADIO CHANNELS

Venice Film F. Giornate degli Autori Critics Week About Fred Our Team Contact Us All radio channels INCinema

FRED
THE FESTIVAL INSIDER

Homepages + Radio Channels + News Interviews Programs + Galleries Festivals

PLAY

POP-UP PLAYER

CRITICS WEEK - VENICE

“Roqia”, interview avec le réalisateur Yanis Koussim et les acteurs Ali Namous et Akram Djeghim

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

**Yanis Koussim, réalisateur. Ali Namous, Akram Djegim acteurs .
"Roqia". Un thriller zombie politique captivant de l'Algérie.**


▶ "Roqia", interview avec le réalisateur Yanis Koussim et les acteurs Ali Namous et Akram Djeghim
Angelo Acerbi

Podcast | Download

SEARCH

SEARCH

TOP POPULAR



Hollywood Legend Robert Redford Dies at 89

4 September
2025

FRED Film Radio (English - continued)
Radio piece with director Yanis Koussim and
actors Ali Namous and Akram Djeghim
‘Roqja’, interview avec le réalisateur Yanis
Koussim et les acteurs Ali Namous et Akram
Djeghim
 ‘Roqja’, Interview with Director Yanis Koussim
 and Actors Ali Namous and Akram Djeghim

Global Critics Venice Voice

GLOBAL CRITICS VENICE VOICE

FRED THE FESTIVAL INSIDER

0000

Homepages + Radio Channels + News Interviews Programs + Galleries Festivals

Q

PLAY

POP-UP PLAYER

"Roqia" by Yanis Koussim was presented in the **Critics' Week** selection at the Venice Film Festival. We met with the director and his two main actors, Ali Namous and Akram Djegim, to discuss one of the festival's most moving and political horror films. A zombie film mixed with a harsh social critique, "Roqia" stands out for its original dystopian vision and political stakes.

A bold work under the sign of genre

"Roqia" might at first glance seem like a simple horror film; however, behind its bloody appearance and frightening scenes lies a harsh political critique. According to Yanis Koussim, "*the film demonstrates a connection between the zombie genre and our reality.*" The film evokes scenes of massacres and zombie figures that, far from being simple horrific creatures, become the symbol of a society in crisis. The dialogues and powerful images illustrate an inquisition of women, portrayed as intelligent and resilient figures in an oppressive context.

A captivating and innovative aesthetic

Visually, "Roqia" impresses with its dark and disturbing mise-en-scène. The images are both frightening and poetic, with an oppressive atmosphere that keeps the viewer on the edge of their seats. This film, which brilliantly blends horror and social criticism, is aimed at an audience seeking thoughtful yet immersive cinema. The director's ability to turn the horror genre into a vehicle for political ideas is a testament to his talent and originality. "Roqia" is not just a horror film; it is a visual and cultural pamphlet that leaves no one indifferent.

PLOT

In 1993, after a car accident that causes him amnesia, Ahmed returns to his village where nothing seems familiar to him, not his wife, not his children. His youngest child, disturbed by Ahmed's fully bandaged face, feels a deep fear of him. Every night, mysterious visitors torment Ahmed by whispering litanies in an incomprehensible language. Who are these strange figures? And why does his so-called friend, the neighbor, make him so uncomfortable? In the present day, aging Raqi (a Muslim exorcist) suffers from Alzheimer's disease. His forgetfulness and erratic behavior worry his disciple, who begins to fear the worst as violence escalates in the town and the possessed speak in an unknown language. While Ahmed, in the past, fears regaining his memory, the disciple, in the present, worries that his master's decline will unleash an ancient evil.

WRITER BY: ANGELO ACERBI

GUEST

AKRAM DJEGIMALI NAMOUSYANIS KOUSSIM

FILM

ROQIA

FESTIVAL

CRITICS WEEK - VENICE

RATE IT ★★★★★

Rome Film Fest 2025: A Tribute to Franco Pinna

82nd Venice International Film Festival: all the official awards

Venice 82: Collateral Awards at the 2025 Film Festival

"The Souffleur", interview with the director Gaston Solnicki and the actor Willem Dafoe

Recent Posts

Hollywood Legerd Robert Redford Dies at 89
Hollywood Legerd Robert Redford Dies at 89
Fai Foundation Collateral Award "Person, Work, Environment" (6th edition)
A Sea of Emotions in 160 Years of History – The Two Short Films About the Italian Coast Guard
The Ways of Water – Film Preview

FESTIVAL

27 TIMES CINEMA - VENICE FILM FESTIVAL
28 TIMES CINEMA - VENICE FILM FESTIVAL
ALICE IN THE CITY - ROME BERLINALE
BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL BOLZANO FILM FESTIVAL
CRITICS WEEK - VENICEROME FILM FESTIVAL
CANNES FILM FESTIVALFOCUS LONDON

Venice 82: Collateral Awards at the 2025 Film Festival

"The Souffleur", interview with the director Gaston Solnicki and the actor Willem Dafoe

Recent Posts

Hollywood Legend Robert Redford Dies at 89

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

Abus de ciné (French)
Mixed review (3/5)
[‘Roqia’](#)
[‘Roqia’](#)

ABUS DE CINÉ

RETROUVEZ LES FILMS, NOS CHRONIQUES QUOTIDIENNES ET NOS PREMIÈRES CRITIQUES

82

MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
27.08 — 06.09 2025

HOME FILMS GALERIE PHOTOS ENTRETIENS NEWS FESTIVALS DOSSIERS CONCOURS

ROQIA

Un film de Yanis Koussim

Avec Ali Namous, Akram Djeghim, Mostéfa Djadjam, Hanaa Mansour, Lydia Hanni...

★★★★☆

Le fondamentalisme comme mal qui se propage

Synopsis du film

Slimane est l'assistant d'un raqi vieillissant, El Hadj, atteint de la maladie d'Alzheimer. Alors que ce dernier pratique un exorcisme, le jeune homme auquel il a affaire, emmené par ses parents, prétend d'une voix sombre, qu'ils se sont déjà rencontrés. Slimane, lui, est perturbé par l'augmentation, autour de lui, des histoires où la violence explose sans raison apparente. Il a peur que la perte de mémoire de son mentor ne risque de laisser dominer le mal...



RECHERCHER



© SIC Venezia

Genre : **Drame**

Durée : **1h34**

A participé à :
Venise 2025

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

Abus de ciné (French - continued)

Mixed review (3/5)

'Roqia'

'Roqia'

ABUS DE CINÉ

RETROUVEZ LES FILMS, NOS CHRONIQUES QUOTIDIENNES ET NOS PREMIÈRES CRITIQUES



82
MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
27.08 — 06.09 2025

[HOME](#) [FILMS](#) [GALERIE PHOTOS](#) [ENTRETIENS](#) [NEWS](#) [FESTIVALS](#) [DOSSIERS](#) [CONCOURS](#) 

Critique du film ROQIA

En mettant en scène un exorciste musulman (Raqi), Yanis Koussim s'est engagé naturellement sur le terrain du film de genre, la dimension politique du film, liée au fondamentalisme religieux et aux égorgements perpétrés durant une décennie noire en Algérie, ajoutant à la réussite formelle du film. Dans une structure en deux parties, consacrées d'un côté au déclin de l'exorciste (El Hadj ou Cheick), aujourd'hui, et de l'autre à un certain Ahmed, dans le passé, il développe dans un premier temps l'inquiétude de Slimane, son assistant, face à une violence qui semble se répandre, avant de s'intéresser à un homme blessé rentrant chez lui, au début des années 90, et ayant perdu la mémoire.

La première partie joue ainsi sur deux leviers : augmenter l'inquiétude par la prolifération d'éléments violents dans l'environnement des personnages (cris de femmes suite à l'égorgement d'un homme en pleine rue, histoire d'une femme brûlée vive ou d'un oncle à la tête fracassée suite à une affaire d'héritage, vidéo YouTube d'un témoin d'égorgement d'enfant...), ce qui permet de rendre suspect de petits accidents quotidiens (une soudaine coupure d'électricité...) et utiliser les codes classiques des exorcismes (voix d'outre tombe, regard de fou, convulsions, lecture de textes religieux à l'envers...). Elle réussit en soi à mettre le spectateur en condition. La seconde donnera plus dans la suggestion, autour du passé du blessé à la tête entièrement bandée, entouré de personnes qui ont intérêt ou non à ce qu'il retrouve la mémoire.

Bénéficiant d'un énorme travail sur le son, mêlant à la musique et aux voix des bruits gutturaux ou sons étranges, "Roqia" ménage ses effets, comme lors de la scène du hammam où une prière se mélange à d'insistants bruits de gouttes. Faisant le lien dans la seconde partie avec les personnages de la première, plus jeunes, "Roqia" insiste discrètement sur la non prise de position des imams face aux fondamentalistes et aux massacres (la seule arme étant « les mots de Dieu »), tout comme l'impuissance de la police, malgré enquêtes et constats. Un film d'épouvante plutôt efficace, dont la lecture politique le place sur le haut du panier des productions algériennes.

Olivier Bachelard



Ressortie 2025 :
FRENCH CONNECTION de W. Friedkin



Ressortie 2025 :
PALOMBELLA ROSSA de N. Moretti

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

Abus de ciné (English)
Mixed review (3/5)
[‘Roqia’](#)
[‘Roqia’](#)

ABUS DE CINÉ



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
27.08 — 06.09 2025

RETROUVEZ LES FILMS, NOS CHRONIQUES QUOTIDIENNES ET NOS PREMIÈRES CRITIQUES

HOME MOVIES PHOTO GALLERY INTERVIEWS NEWS FESTIVALS FILES COMPETITION

ROQIA

A film by Yanis Koussim

With Ali Namous , Akram Djeghim , Mostéfa Djadjam , Hanaa Mansour , Lydia Hanni ...

★★★★☆

Fundamentalism as a spreading evil

Film Synopsis

Slimane is the assistant to an aging raqi, El Hadj, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. While the latter is performing an exorcism, the young man he is dealing with, taken by his parents, claims in a somber voice that they have already met. Slimane, for his part, is disturbed by the increase in stories around him where violence explodes for no apparent reason. He fears that his mentor's memory loss risks letting evil dominate...





© SIC Venezia
Genre: **Drama**
Duration: **1h34**
Participated in:
Venice 2025

TO RESEARCH

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)
noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

Abus de ciné (English)
Mixed review (3/5)
[‘Roqia’](#)
[‘Roqia’](#)

ABUS DE CINÉ

RETROUVEZ LES FILMS, NOS CHRONIQUES QUOTIDIENNES ET NOS PREMIERES CRITIQUES

82

MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
27.08 — 06.09 2025

HOME MOVIES PHOTO GALLERY INTERVIEWS NEWS FESTIVALS FILES COMPETITION


ROQIA Movie Review

By portraying a Muslim exorcist (Raqi), Yanis Koussim has naturally entered the genre film genre, the political dimension of the film, linked to religious fundamentalism and the throat-slittings perpetrated during a dark decade in Algeria, adding to the formal success of the film. In a two-part structure, devoted on one side to the decline of the exorcist (El Hadj or Cheick), today, and on the other to a certain Ahmed, in the past, he first develops the concern of Slimane, his assistant, in the face of a violence that seems to be spreading, before focusing on an injured man returning home, in the early 90s, and having lost his memory.

The first part thus plays on two levers: increasing the anxiety by the proliferation of violent elements in the characters' environment (women's screams following the slitting of a man's throat in the middle of the street, the story of a woman burned alive or an uncle whose head was smashed following an inheritance affair, a YouTube video of a witness to a child's throat being slit, etc.), which makes it possible to make small everyday accidents (a sudden power cut, etc.) suspicious and to use the classic codes of exorcisms (voices from beyond the grave, madman's gaze, convulsions, reading religious texts backwards, etc.). It succeeds in itself in putting the spectator in the mood. The second part will give more in the suggestion, around the past of the injured man with his head completely bandaged, surrounded by people who may or may not have an interest in his regaining his memory.


Benefiting from a huge amount of work on the sound, mixing guttural noises or strange sounds with the music and voices, " Roqia " manages its effects, as in the hammam scene where a prayer mixes with insistent sounds of drops. Making the link in the second part with the younger characters of the first, " Roqia " discreetly insists on the imams' failure to take a position against fundamentalists and massacres (the only weapon being "the words of God"), as well as the impotence of the police, despite investigations and reports. A rather effective horror film, whose political reading places it at the top of the basket of Algerian productions.

Olivier Bachelard



Release date 2025:

FRENCH CONNECTION by W. Friedkin



Release date 2025:

PALOMBELLA ROSSA by N. Moretti

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)

noisefilmpr.com

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

Hyphen

Roundup of Muslim directors in Venice by Leila Latif


[Venice Film Festival: the Movies That Matter
Are Those That Refuse to Look Away.](#)

hyphen.

News **Culture** Lifestyle Voices About


FILM AND TV

Venice film festival: the movies that matter are those that refuse to look away



Roqia, the debut feature film from Algerian director Yanis Koussim. Photograph courtesy of Venice international film festival

Our columnist picks the top films by Muslim directors at an event where cinema collides with politics



Leila Latif
Columnist
4 September 2025

ARTICLES

4 September
2025

Hyphen (continued)

Roundup of Muslim directors in Venice by

Leila Latif

[Venice Film Festival: the Movies That Matter](#)

[Are Those That Refuse to Look Away](#)

There are ghosts among the yachts, Aperol spritzes and designer gowns in Venice. Founded as a fascist vanity project for Italian dictator Benito Mussolini in 1932, the world's [oldest film festival](#) has become an event where cinema collides with politics in ways that can feel combustible. At its best, Venice doesn't just show films, it forces us to reckon with them.

This year, the ghosts felt closer than ever. The screenings were inseparable from [the protests outside](#). Film-makers dedicated premieres to Palestine; there were red-carpet demonstrations and marches against genocide snaking across the city.

At times, the glamour felt grotesque against the backdrop of such suffering and, yet, when the right films are shown, the juxtaposition can also be electrifying. That's what happened in 2025. Muslim film-makers in particular brought work that refused to flatter, distract or console. They offered stories that were as urgent as the news.

Three films stood apart, not simply because they were beautifully made, but because they demanded something from us.

The first was [Roqia](#), a debut horror feature by director Yanis Koussim that trades jump scares for something altogether more unsettling. It drifts between 1992 and present-day Algeria, where memory itself is under siege. Ahmed, disfigured and amnesiac after a car crash, returns to a family he no longer recognises. His youngest child recoils from his bandaged face and shadowy figures whisper in languages that no one can place. Decades later, an ageing raqi, a Muslim exorcist, finds his Alzheimer's disease worsening, slowly weakening his connection to God just as his city of Setif is torn apart by violence and inexplicable possessions.

Koussim builds a mood of creeping dread not with monsters, but with silence and the horror of forgetting. The film feels like a dark parable about what happens when memory — personal, communal, historical — is lost. It's slow, hypnotic and at times unbearable, precisely because it asks the question: can you really claim to be the same person if you no longer remember your own life?

ARTICLES

8 September
2025

Dread Central


Positive review


'Roqia' Review: A Crucial Exorcism Movie
[Venice Film Festival 2025]


DREAD CENTRAL

NEWSREVIEWSFEATURES ▼STREAMING GUIDES ▼PODCASTS ▼DREAD TV & VIDEOS ▼STORE

'Roqia' Review: A Crucial Exorcism Movie [Venice Film Festival 2025]

 **Sharai Bohannon** | Sep 8, 2025





The possession subgenre has been in a rut for a minute. We still show up to watch these movies, but they're no longer scary. At least not in America, where franchises have lost the recipes to what made their first one or two entries great. Most of the films follow the same rhythm and narrative, so we find ourselves laughing more often than being frightened. This is one of the many reasons I am happy *Roqia* (the Arabic term for exorcism) made its way to my screen.

ARTICLES

8 September
2025

Dread Central (continued)

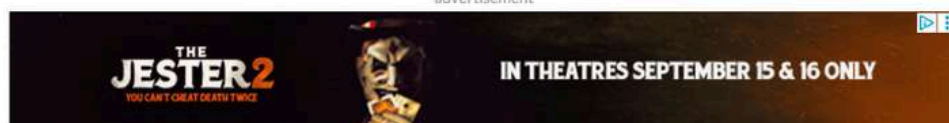
Positive review

['Roqia' Review: A Crucial Exorcism Movie](#)
[\[Venice Film Festival 2025\]](#)

Roqia has none of the American need to insert Christian propaganda into its narrative. It's also not here to give us another tidy paint-by-the-number story of a good family being tormented by a possessed child. The film sets its sights on something more urgent and important. Writer-director Yanis Koussim's script remembers that the exorcism should be a vehicle for an idea. That leads to some impactful cinema that rattles the audience. It reminds us of the power of storytelling, instead of allowing us to take it for granted as we roll our eyes at fan service and cash grabs.

Roqia utilizes two points in time to accomplish its goals. In 1992, Ahmed (Ali Namous) is left bandaged and with amnesia after a car crash. He returns to his village even though he doesn't even remember his wife and kids. Ahmed is haunted by mysterious figures whispering at him. He also doesn't know why a man—who is supposedly his friend—makes him uneasy. Meanwhile, in the present day, an elderly Raqi (a Muslim exorcist) is beginning to lose a battle with Alzheimer's disease. This is alarming to his disciple (Akram Djeghim), who is also watching the violence in their city escalate.

advertisement



Roqia is, at turns, jarring and heartbreaking. Hearts will go out for Ahmed's wife, Selma (Lydia Hanni), and their kids. It's also hard not to sympathize with Raqi (Mostefa Djadjam) as a man whose memory is starting to fail him. However, his pregnant neighbor and helper, Waffa (Hanaa Mansour), might have the saddest arc of all. We don't get her full story, but she mentions that she was possessed before and would rather die than experience it again. So, the impending bad times in the present timeline feel extra mean.

Also Read: 'Jimmy & Stiggs' FrightFest 2025 Review: An Aggressively Hilarious Alien Invasion Comedy

This is not your typical possession movie. *Roqia* is not here to regurgitate the usual good versus evil conversation that leans towards religious propaganda. The filmmaker instead uses the subgenre to explore the aftereffects of seemingly never-ending cycles of violence. It uses a small cast of characters to make its point. However, it's actually focused on exorcising extremist beliefs that lead to people claiming terrorism is part of their supposed religion. The film uses two timelines to explore how these atrocities impact multiple generations. It's a hard watch because the blood we come to horror for represents this idea that we carry the traumas of what came before us. We have no say in being infected, but are we doing our part to cure the disease so we don't pass it down?

ARTICLES

8 September
2025

Dread Central (continued)

Positive review

['Roqia' Review: A Crucial Exorcism Movie](#)
[\[Venice Film Festival 2025\]](#)

Roqia is a prime example of why we have to get away from American possession movies steeped in Catholicism. This film unsettles, as it educates, while forcing viewers to think and feel. While there are some disturbing moments, Koussim's is more interested in using real-life horror and its lasting effects rather than jump scares. How does a society heal from a shared trauma? Is that even possible in a world that never slows down long enough for individuals to grieve and process? This question is at the forefront of this film. We see the ripple effects of what happened in 1992 haunting characters in the present day. We also see them meet tragic endings as they cannot escape the lingering shadows of the past.

Also Read: '213 Bones' FrightFest 2025 Review: An Impressive Take On The College Slasher



All of these questions, thoughts, and scares are captured in interesting ways by Director of Photography Jean-Marie Delorme. While many audience members have thoughts about handheld cameras, I find them to be an intimate way into a story. Here, we're forced to feel for Selma as we see her hurt by her bandaged husband's lack of interest in her advances. We're also basically in the action as Ahmed runs from the truth to his family, with the camera shaking behind him. These choices are also highlighted in the color schemes used to separate 1992 from the present day. Colorist Marine Lepoutre also reminds the audience that the present is still haunted by making things colder. *Roqia* forces the audience to be a witness, and the visual language forces us to feel it on various levels.

ARTICLES

8 September
2025

Dread Central (continued)
Positive review
‘Roqia’ Review: A Crucial Exorcism Movie
[Venice Film Festival 2025]

This is the exorcism movie we need right now. *Roqia* is a hard watch that makes the audience look head-on at completely avoidable and unspeakable evils. It’s focused on the atrocities of Algeria’s civil war during the 1990s and how it haunts people to this day. However, extremism, violence, and terrorism are sadly cyclical. Refusing to acknowledge the horrors that came before is how society finds itself doomed to repeat itself. In most countries, we can already see generational trauma being passed down to the kids who are interviewed on the news after tragedy strikes (again). *Roqia* puts pain, fear, and devastation on display and asks why humans refuse to do better.

Roqia premiered at Settimana Internazionale della Critica (Critics Week) in Venice.

Are you one of the lucky few who have seen *Roqia*? Then let’s talk about it on [Bluesky](#).



Roqia

★★★★★

4.0

★★★★★

advertisement



Summary

This is the exorcism movie we need right now. ‘Roqia’ is a hard watch that makes the audience look head-on at completely avoidable and unspeakable evils

ARTICLES

10 September
2025

Arabian Moda

Interview with director Yanis Koussim

Venice Film Festival: Algeria's Past and Present on Screen in 'Roqia'

arabian
MODA



HOME

PEOPLE ▾

LIFESTYLE ▾

CULTURE ▾

FASHION ▾

EDITORIAL ▾

TV ▾

MAN ▾

MODA



Venice Film Festival: Algeria's Past and Present on Screen in ROQIA



At the crossroads of memory, trauma, and the supernatural, Algerian filmmaker Yanis Koussim brings a haunting vision to the screen with Roqia. Selected for the Settimana Internazionale della Critica at the Venice Film Festival, the film unfolds across two intertwined timelines, blurring the lines between personal amnesia and collective forgetting.





ARTICLES

10 September
2025

Arabian Moda (continued)

Interview with director Yanis Koussim

Venice Film Festival: Algeria's Past and Present on Screen in 'Roqia'



HOME PEOPLE ▾ LIFESTYLE ▾ CULTURE ▾ FASHION ▾ EDITORIAL ▾ TV ▾ MAN ▾

Roqia follows Ahmed, who in 1993 survives a car crash only to awaken with no memory of his family or village. Shrouded in bandages and alienated from his own children, he becomes plagued by unsettling nightly visits and the unease of a neighbor who seems more threatening than familiar. In the present, an ageing Raqi, a Muslim exorcist, battles Alzheimer's, his fading memory raising fears that his decline could unleash a long-dormant evil, as violence once again looms over the city.

Through this dual narrative, Koussim weaves a story that is as much about Algeria's painful recent history as it is about the universal struggle against fear and the persistence of evil. Yanis Koussim reflects on the film's layered structure, the role of religious ritual, and the resonance of bringing Roqia from Algeria's memory to the world stage in Venice.

AM: Roqia intertwines two timelines, Ahmed in the 1990s and the ageing exorcist in the present day. What inspired you to create this dual narrative structure, and how do the two stories speak to each other?

Yanis Koussim: Actually, it wasn't inspiration but necessity. I initially struggled to keep the script within a single timeline, the present, but the weight of the backstory was too important to remain outside the narrative. It needed to be treated inside the story itself. On the surface, the two timelines seem different, but they are intimately connected from the very beginning. They converge at the end, and that's precisely when we realize they were linked all along.

AM: The film touches on themes of memory, trauma, and the supernatural. How do you see the relationship between personal amnesia and collective forgetting in Algeria's recent history?

Yanis Koussim: The forgetting is collective, not individual. The characters' memory loss, whether caused by amnesia or illness, functions as an allegory for this collective forgetting. And when we forget evil, it comes back. In that sense, memory, or the lack of it, becomes central to the return of violence.





ARTICLES

10 September
2025

Arabian Moda (continued)

Interview with director Yanis Koussim

Venice Film Festival: Algeria's Past and Present on Screen in 'Roqia'



HOME PEOPLE ▼ LIFESTYLE ▼ CULTURE ▼ FASHION ▼ EDITORIAL ▼ TV ▼ MAN ▼ MODA Q ≡

AM: Religious rituals and the figure of the Raqi are central to the story. What drew you to explore the world of exorcism, and how did you approach portraying it without falling into sensationalism or cliché?

Yanis Koussim: It was very important to me to respect, to the extreme, the ritual of Roqia el char3ia while staying grounded in reality. I believe that's what allowed me to avoid sensationalism or cliché. The more realistic a horror film is, the truer the fear becomes. Reality is always scarier than the supernatural.

AM: Violence seems to hover in the background of Roqia. How did you use the horror and mystery elements of the film to comment on deeper social or political realities?

Yanis Koussim: Honestly, I didn't approach it consciously. At times, the story almost started writing itself. The connections between real violence and the horror and mystery genre imposed themselves naturally during the writing process. I embraced that, and the result is the film you see. In this case, horror and reality intertwined on their own terms.

AM: Fear plays a key role. What did you want to say about fear as both a personal and collective experience?

Yanis Koussim: For me, fear is instinct. I wouldn't know how to theorize it. In the 1990s, Algeria lived through fear. To tell that period is to tell fear itself. The characters in Roqia, whether in the past or present, are afraid in the same way Algerians were and still are. Afraid of evil, of violence, of its return. But fear is also survival. Evolutionary theory tells us: fear equals vigilance equals flight equals survival. Fear isn't weakness; it's strength. It keeps you alive.


AM: What does it mean to you to bring Roqia to the Venice Film Festival, and how do you hope international audiences will connect with a story so deeply rooted in Algerian memory and culture?







Yanis Koussim: If Roqia is an Algerian story, the fight against evil is universal. Humanity has always fought evil, through religion, shamanism, or secular rituals. Evil is a destructive force that has struck humankind throughout history. The evil faced in Roqia and in Algeria in the 1990s is the same humanity has fought before: absolute evil. Terrorism, Nazism, colonialism, slavery, the Inquisition, and today, Zionism with the ongoing genocide in Ghazza, it is all the same malevolent energy. Whether in Venice, Algiers, or elsewhere, unfortunately, we all recognize this absolute evil.

ARTICLES

10 September
2025

DMovies
Positive review
‘Roqia’





DIRTY MOVIES

DMovies - Your platform for thought-provoking cinema

HOME REVIEWS ARTICLES PROFILES ABOUT OUR SERVICES

Film review search

Director

Year of release

Country of origin

Actor

Rating
Any


Search






The fields "country of origin" and "actor" were created in May 2023, and the results are limited to after this date.

« PREVIOUS

NEXT »

Roqia






Yanis Koussim creates an eerie, uncomfortable atmosphere within an Algeria that has seen more than its fair share of horrors - from the 82nd edition of the Venice International Film Festival


THE YEAR OF THE SOUL

directed by Werner Schumann



now on Prime Video

The Bad Patriots - first teaser



ARTICLES

10 September
2025

DMovies
Positive review
‘Roqia’

Yanis Koussim creates an eerie, uncomfortable atmosphere within an Algeria that has seen more than its fair share of horrors - from the 82nd edition of the Venice International Film Festival

Director(s)

Yanis Koussim

Year of release

2025

Country of origin

Algeria

Starring

Hicham Abdelfah
Mostapha Achour
Abdellah Aggoune
farida Aouka

Rating



Dirty message

Man-made evil
outweighs supernatural
horror

The movies sets an unnerving tone from the very first frame. A particularly unsettling and horrifying opening sequence, interestingly, doesn't exactly establish the film's core content, but does serve to inject a heavy sense of dread into the proceedings.

Written and directed by Yanis Koussim, *Roqia* is a work that doesn't necessarily revel in violence but is nonetheless quite comfortable in it, used to it in a way. The violence is generally scarce but effective; it's the kind of gruesomeness that has one shifting in their seat, trying to grapple with what they're seeing. But *Roqia* doesn't allow the viewer to escape from the moment so easily. It's not gratuitous, but it is visceral.

The plot hops around in time but stays guided by two main threads: one taking place in 1992 during the Algerian Civil War and the other in present-day Algeria. The worlds of both threads feature home lives that hint at deeper complications. While it could be argued that the characters of *Roqia*, portrayed by actors including Ali Namous, Lydia Hanni, Mostefa Djadjam, and Hanaa Mansour, don't have elaborate or dramatic character arcs, their worlds feel authentic, lived-in, and oftentimes dangerous. These actors carry the weight of their worlds effectively and with subtlety. These feel like real people. There is a supernatural element to *Roqia* that is vital to the story's thrust but doesn't detract from the human feeling. *Roqia* is effective because of this careful balance.

An uneasy tension simmers just below the surface at all times, and it's a credit to Koussim that it's difficult to predict the direction the story will take at any given moment. It's minimalist in terms of cinematography and relies heavily on shadows and darkness to mostly successful effect. Several sequences of flashing lights - often literally from glances of flashlights - create a sense of panic as the eye struggles to put the images together into a cohesive sequence, though admittedly, a few actions happen in such a quick flash that it takes a moment or two to register what exactly one just saw. The sequences that do not employ heavy shadows or darkness - namely, the daytime sequences - are a welcome reprieve, lulling the viewer into a brief sense of security that quickly dissipates when night falls once more. It's a fascinating relationship between light and dark.

ARTICLES

10 September
2025

DMovies

Positive review

'Roqia'

There are quotes at the beginning and the end of the film that hint at the deeper significance beneath *Roqia*. Historical, political, and social contexts shed different light on the film and the story, as well as the sequences within. The beginning of the Algerian Civil War, specifically, provides the appropriate context to thoroughly understand the film's message. The conflict - a war between the Algerian government and several Islamist rebel groups - saw 150,000 casualties, many of whom were civilians in **what has been termed a "dirty war"**. It can't be overstated the impact the war has on the film. The supernatural elements are placed effectively throughout the movie by Koussim to convey that the acts that human beings are capable of are far more horrifying than the otherworldly horrors depicted in many horror films.


There's a lot to like about *Roqia*. It's a **grounded, human-driven horror film** that houses a few sequences that are genuinely discomfoting and grim. It's cynical in a way that feels earned, framed by **events** that left an indescribably huge mark on Algeria, a way that can be understood by the viewer based on what's shown and, perhaps more importantly, what's implied.

Roqia premiered in the 82nd edition of the Venice International Film Festival.

ARTICLES

12 September
2025

The New Arab
Feature
Algeria's Black Decade Reimagined as Horror in
Yanis Koussim's ‘Roqia’




NEWSANALYSISOPINIONFEATURESINVESTIGATIONSPODCASTVIDEO

Search

q

Features > Culture



Algeria's Black Decade reimagined as horror in Yanis Koussim's Roqia

Film Review: 'Roqia' uses horror to confront Algeria's Black Decade, blending memory, trauma and possession in a haunting debut at Venice's Critics' Week

Culture6 min read

Read Mode

0:00 / 8:44


English

Agnese Albertini | 12 September, 2025

ARTICLES

12 September
2025

The New Arab (continued)
Feature
Algeria's Black Decade Reimagined as Horror in
Yanis Koussim’s ‘Roqia’



NEWSANALYSISOPINIONFEATURESINVESTIGATIONSPODCASTVIDEO

Algerian filmmaker Yanis Koussim's debut feature, *Roqia*, arrives at Venice's International Film Critics' Week like a wound reopened.


At once intimate and epic, the film confronts the spectres of Algeria's 'Black Decade' (1992–2002), when extremist violence engulfed the country and left traumas still felt today.

Rather than treat this history as sober drama, Koussim frames it through the prism of horror, where memory loss, possession, and blood rituals echo a society struggling to confront its past.

The result is a work that refuses to look away, insisting that only by naming and showing violence can healing begin.

A story in fragments

Roqia, Arabic for "exorcism," unfolds across three interwoven parts, spanning the 1990s and the present day.



Betaalbare opklapbedden voor kleine ruimtes – bekijk ze nu!
Inquired Mind

advertisement

The first chapter introduces us to an ageing Muslim exorcist, or raqi, who performs rituals on possessed women. His authority, however, is undercut by Alzheimer's: he forgets prayers, mixes words, and terrifies his disciple, who fears that his master's decline might unleash forces long suppressed.


ARTICLES

12 September
2025

The New Arab (continued)

Feature

Algeria's Black Decade Reimagined as Horror in Yanis Koussim's 'Roqia'

THE NEW ARAB

NEWS ANALYSIS OPINION FEATURES INVESTIGATIONS PODCAST VIDEO

"You can feel the evil inside you, but you remember nothing," whispers a woman undergoing an exorcism, capturing the film's central motif of memory distorted by violence.


The second strand flashes back to 1992, where Ahmed, a man wrapped in bandages after a car accident, returns to his village with total amnesia. Neither his wife nor his children feels familiar, and his youngest recoils from him in fear.

At night, strange figures gather around his bed, chanting litanies in an unknown tongue. His neighbour, ostensibly a friend, radiates menace.

As Algeria descends into bloodshed, Ahmed's erasure of identity mirrors the way ordinary men vanished into the ranks of terrorists, leaving loved ones bewildered at how familiar faces became executioners.

The final chapter follows Waffa, a pregnant woman navigating a present scarred by fundamentalist violence. For her, survival depends on resisting a distorted reading of Islam weaponised by extremists.

Koussim makes clear: terrorism is not Islam, but an appropriation of its texts, twisted to justify atrocities. Together, these three narratives form a tapestry of past and present, personal and political, bound by a terror that refuses to be fully exorcised.



Roqia turns Algeria's Black Decade into a chilling horror tale of memory, trauma, and survival


ARTICLES

12 September
2025

The New Arab (continued)

Feature

Algeria's Black Decade Reimagined as Horror in Yanis Koussim's 'Roqia'


 NEWS ANALYSIS OPINION **FEATURES** INVESTIGATIONS PODCAST VIDEO

Horror as a necessary language

Koussim is explicit about why he chose horror: "The genre imposed itself on me. It was the only way my imagination could attempt to make sense of such violence," he explained.

Growing up in Sétif in the 1980s and 1990s, he recalls both the normality of beach trips and family gatherings and the horrors that intruded on daily life.

A great-uncle was kidnapped and raped at 70; another uncle was shot dead. Friends walked to school past severed heads left on the pavement. The oscillation between ordinary childhood and unthinkable brutality demanded a cinematic form that could embrace the uncanny.



Betaalbare opklapbedden voor kleine ruimtes – bekijk ze nu!

Inquired Mind

advertisement

Horror, with its capacity to turn neighbours into monsters and familiar homes into claustrophobic traps, became the only adequate grammar.

Indeed, *Roqia* sidesteps conventional horror imagery. There are no levitating bodies, spinning heads, or goat-hooved demons.

Instead, evil manifests in whispers, in blood that carries corruption rather than life, in faceless men who could be anyone. The true monsters are terrorists, often

Horror, with its capacity to turn neighbours into monsters and familiar homes into claustrophobic traps, became the only adequate grammar.

Indeed, *Roqia* sidesteps conventional horror imagery. There are no levitating bodies, spinning heads, or goat-hooved demons.

Instead, evil manifests in whispers, in blood that carries corruption rather than life, in faceless men who could be anyone. The true monsters are terrorists, often unseen but ever-present, infiltrating the fabric of society like a contagion.

By grounding the supernatural in rigorous realism, Koussim refuses the comfort of metaphor: the horror is real, its perpetrators human, its consequences ongoing.

ARTICLES

12 September
2025

The New Arab (continued)

Feature

Algeria's Black Decade Reimagined as Horror in
Yanis Koussim's 'Roqia'



NEWS

ANALYSIS

OPINION

FEATURES

INVESTIGATIONS

PODCAST

VIDEO



Through possession and amnesia, Roqia exposes the enduring wounds of extremist violence in Algeria

Memory, amnesia, and the return of violence

Central to *Roqia* is the tension between remembering and forgetting. Ahmed's amnesia and the exorcist's Alzheimer's serve as metaphors for a society caught between erasing trauma and confronting it. In both timelines, forgetting proves perilous.

"When you try to erase a memory, evil comes back," Koussim notes. This diagnosis resonates beyond Algeria, suggesting that unacknowledged violence — be it colonial massacres, slavery, Nazism, or more recent wars — mutates and resurfaces if left unexamined.

The film's structure reinforces this — the past and present bleed into one another, with images of blood as the connective tissue. Once a symbol of kinship, here blood becomes the conduit of evil, passed from one body to another.

Koussim films violence head-on, refusing stylisation. Gunshots, massacres, and executions appear with brutal clarity. For him, only truth — however unbearable — can offer the possibility of peace. It is a radical commitment to representation: the camera must not look away.

An Algerian tragedy with universal echoes


While deeply rooted in Algeria's civil war, *Roqia* speaks to global experiences of terror. The country, Koussim argues, was a "laboratory of terrorism," experiencing in the 1990s the violence that would later spread across the world with al-Qaeda and Daesh (the Islamic State group).

His film thus resonates with audiences far beyond North Africa, not only as testimony but as a warning: evil returns to the same places, to the same wounds, unless confronted.

ARTICLES


12 September
2025

The New Arab (continued)
Feature
[Algeria’s Black Decade Reimagined as Horror in
Yanis Koussim’s ‘Roqia’](#)

NEWSANALYSISOPINIONFEATURESINVESTIGATIONSPODCASTVIDEO

At the same time, *Roqia* insists on distinguishing between Islam and its distortion. Having grown up in an Islamic household and witnessed his grandmother’s devotion, Koussim is adamant: “Islam does not tell you to put babies in the oven, slaughter people and rape pregnant women.”

By depicting the zawiya (religious school) transformed into a site of exorcism and terror, the film underscores how sacred spaces can be perverted. The message is urgent: violent fundamentalism is not Islam, but its betrayal.



Yanis Koussim’s debut blends history and horror, forcing audiences to face unhealed societal trauma

The rise of Arab horror

Roqia also enters into a broader wave of Arabic horror cinema, from Egyptian hits like *The Blue Elephant* to series such as *Paranormal*.

Koussim sees this resurgence as both cultural and practical. Arab societies are rich with mythologies of jinns and spirits rarely explored on screen, while advances in digital effects make horror more affordable.

“We know the mythology of the Greeks and the Christians, but not ours,” he observes. By reclaiming this imaginative terrain, filmmakers can both honour their traditions and address contemporary fears.

For Koussim, the genre is also deeply personal. His first cinematic memory was seeing *Jaws* at six years old. Horror, fantasy, and thrillers are, in his view, the gateways to cinema for most children. By embracing horror, he not only processes Algeria’s traumas but reconnects with his own earliest cinematic awe.

RELATED

[A history of Algerian cinema’s creative complications](#)

Algeria Youcef Khallil


ARTICLES

12 September
2025

The New Arab (continued)

Feature

Algeria's Black Decade Reimagined as Horror in Yanis Koussim's 'Roqia'

 NEWS ANALYSIS OPINION **FEATURES** INVESTIGATIONS PODCAST VIDEO

A claustrophobic realism

Formally, *Roqia* is marked by its claustrophobic interiors and dimly lit spaces. Much of the action unfolds in rooms where characters whisper, hide, or pray, their fear pressing against the walls.

Koussim admits he realised only in editing how interior the film had become.

Yet this suffocation mirrors the intimacy of trauma, the secrecy of violence endured behind closed doors. It is not spectacle but proximity that unsettles: we breathe with these characters, feel their dread seep into the fabric of everyday life.

Exorcising the unhealed wound

Ultimately, *Roqia* is less an attempt to resolve Algeria's trauma than to expose it.

The title evokes ritual purification, but the film offers no easy deliverance. Instead, it stages the persistence of violence, the impossibility of forgetting, and the necessity of facing evil directly. In doing so, Koussim offers both Algerians and global audiences a mirror: to deny the past is to risk repeating it.

In one of the film's most chilling lines, a character pleads, "I'd rather die than be possessed again." The possession here is not just demonic but historical — the haunting of an entire society by atrocities unexorcised.

By daring to merge horror and history, Koussim makes visible what many would prefer to leave unspoken.

Roqia is not just a film about evil: it is a cinematic exorcism of Algeria's haunted past, one whose resonance will linger long after the credits fade.

ARTICLES

12 September
2025

BFI

Featured among discoveries at Venice

6 Discoveries from Venice Film Festival 2025

BFI

Watch and discover

Learning and training

Funding and industry

Become a Member

Shop

Watch and discover

Features and reviews

Lists


6 discoveries from Venice Film Festival 2025

Six critics pick the discovery films that bowled them over from the international selection at this year’s Biennale.

12 September 2025

Gorgonà

Director: Evi Kalogiropoulou



By John Bleasdale,

Rory Doherty,

Joseph Fahim,

Savina Petkova,

Rafa Sales Ross,

Blake Simons

Discoveries

NOISE Film & TV | Rapenburgerstraat 109 | 1011 VL Amsterdam (NL)

noisefilmpr.com


ARTICLES

12 September
2025

BFI (continued)

Featured among discoveries at Venice


[6 Discoveries from Venice Film Festival 2025](#)

 [Watch and discover](#) [Learning and training](#) [Funding and industry](#) [Become a Member](#) [Shop](#)

Roqia

Director: Yanis Koussim

Roqia (2025)



A mysterious car accident leaves a young father with amnesia as he returns to his home village with a bandaged face at the peak of Algeria's civil war in 1993. In the present day, an elderly Muslim exorcist is thrust into a losing battle with Alzheimer's disease as his disciple begins to fear that his demise may unleash long latent terror on their dwelling. Linking this diptych are shadowy visitors wreaking havoc with a gibberish language they whisper to the ears of the uninitiated.

This strikingly unsettling debut feature from Algerian filmmaker Yanis Koussim is one of the most accomplished Arab horrors ever made: a nightmarish vision of the lingering fears of the Algerian civil war (known as the Black Decade) that is part *The Exorcist* (1973) and part Hiroshi Teshigahara's *The Face of Another* (1966). Realised with remarkable panache, the thematically rich *Roqia* is a foreboding treatise on collective trauma, repressed guilt and the lurking violence of the everyday.

– Joseph Fahim