

CLASH (Eshtebak)

Egypt (2016) 98 minutes

Director: Mohamed Diab

Cast: Nelly Karim (Nagwa), Hani Adwel (Adam), El Sebaï Mohamed (Zein), Ahmed Abdelhamid Hefny (Awad)



Screening 4 October 2017 at Swindon Arts Centre

Synopsis

Two years after the Egyptian revolution, *Clash* is set in Cairo in the summer of 2013. After the removal of Islamist President Morsi and following a day of violent riots, members of the Muslim Brotherhood, pro-military supporters and bystanders are detained in a police truck. Set entirely within its confines the film portrays the mounting tensions both amongst the detainees and in the surrounding streets where violence and confusion escalate.

Reviews



"Here is ... a rather amazing New Wave-style drama that combines claustrophobic intimacy with some logistically epic scene-setting ...

... At first, it looks like a no-budget movie with about a dozen people shot in a single location, but the director, Mohamed Diab, stages some spectacular riot scenes outside, which are all the more staggering for intruding on this enclosed space so unexpectedly.

The movie stunningly replicates that sense of inside and outside that must be felt by witnesses to any historic moment: the private debate, the enclosed conflict, and the theatre of confrontation unfolding beyond. What a dynamic piece of cinema."

Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

"We open in the gloom of that mobile prison cell (a location that the camera will mostly be confined to for the film's 98-minute running time) and establishing text informs us that this is an unspecified day in June 2013, when supporters of the pro-regime Muslim Brotherhood and those in favour of the coup-launching military clashed all over Egypt. In the violent confusion, a pair of American-Egyptian journalists are hurled unceremoniously into the truck. Next, others are tossed in too — Muslim Brotherhood loyalists, their bitter army-backing rivals, fearful families, old men caught up in the mêlée — and from there on in *Clash* becomes a tale of survival in a stifling space where fresh air is in as short supply as ideological understanding ...

What's more, what initially looks like a politically flavoured chamber piece soon morphs into an effectively damning satire. Despite the heavy subject matter, Diab routinely deploys all-out comic absurdity ("No, it's forbidden to be touched by a woman," says a bleeding Muslim Brotherhood detainee as a fellow captive who happens to be a nurse offers him treatment) to present the truck as a microcosm of Egypt and, in a wider sense, the world. Some of these sitcom flourishes and nakedly allegorical touches may be a bit much for some, but you're never very far from a sharp dose of authentically grisly reality. And while the pace sags somewhat around the hour mark, it doesn't detract from a powerful finale and a lasting message about tolerance, humanity and the corrupting forces of chaos and paranoia."

Jimi Famurewa, Empire

Film Facts



- Egypt's official submission for the 'Best Foreign Language Film' category of the 89th Academy Awards in 2017.
- Mohamed Diab had wanted to make a film about the Egyptian revolution. It was his brother's idea to put different people in one van spending the day together.
- The film was shot over 26 days with all actors present.