

RSIFF review: 'The Exam' is a powerful study in defying male dominance



JEDDAH: Tackling examination nerves and an unfeeling patriarchy, Kurdish auteur Shawkat Amin Koriki turns his movie, "The Exam," into a crime caper with all the thrills that go with the genre.



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Koriki, who started his journey filming life in Kurdistan with "Crossing the Dust" and "Kick Off," presented one of his most incisive accounts packaged into a neat feature at Jeddah's Red Sea International Film Festival. He has laced his work with exciting ingredients and explored the social implications of men's dictatorial attitudes and how it affects the life of young girls.



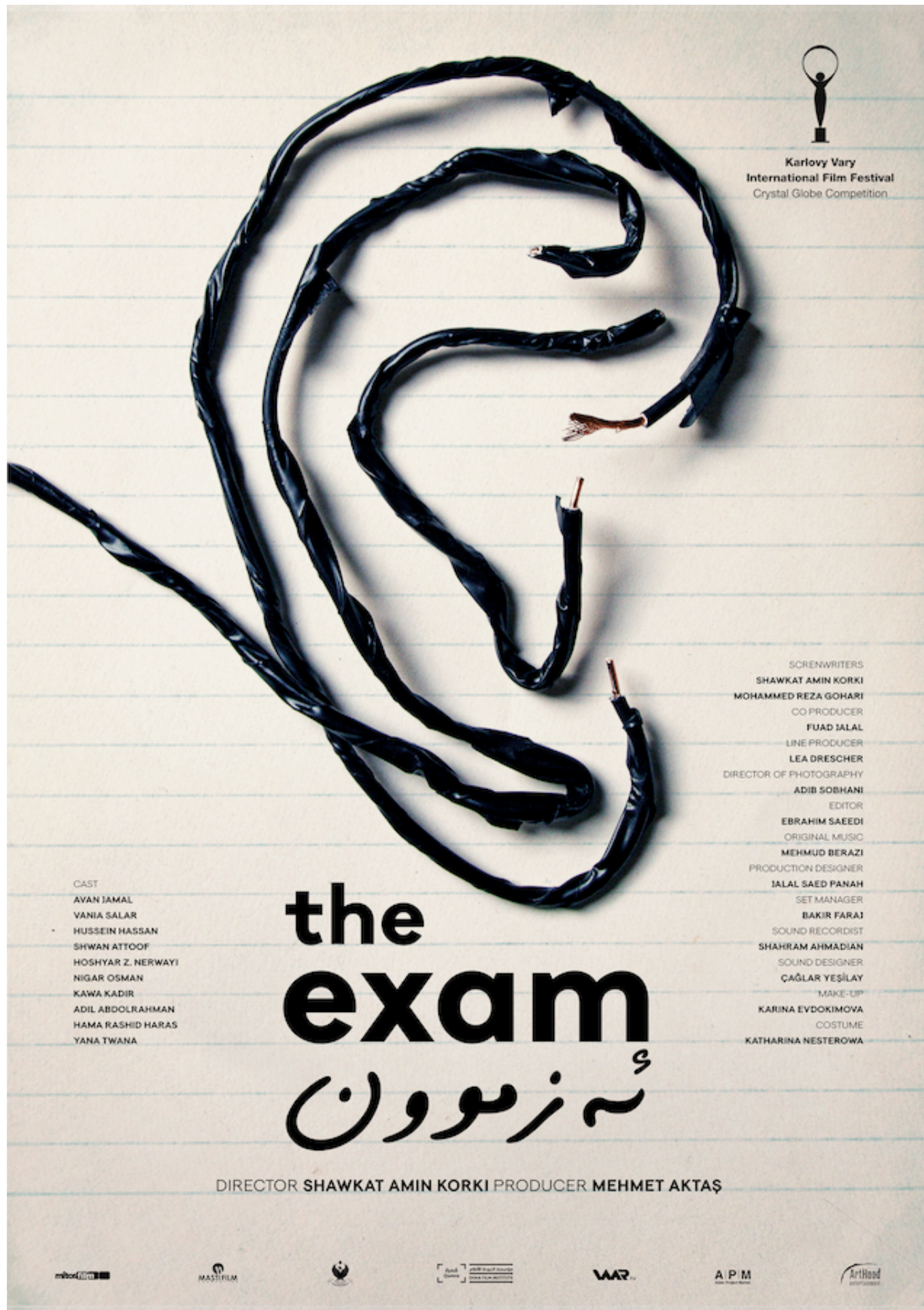
Korki presented one of his most incisive accounts packaged into a neat feature at Jeddah's Red Sea International Film Festival. (Supplied)

Korki and co-writer Mohamed Rezi Gohari use two young women to narrate a story of desperate woe that pushes the pair into unlawful ways. Teenager Rojin (Vania Salar) has been given an ultimatum by her widowed father, Aziz (Hama Rashid Haras) — she either gets through a crucial examination which will qualify her for a scholarship to study further or get married to a man she hates. Having already attempted suicide after the disappearance of her boyfriend, she resigns herself to the impending doom that will follow Aziz's own plans to take a wife. There is a pre-condition: Rojin must be married off before that.

Her elder sister, Shilan (Avan Jamal), leads a life of suffocated misery, having been married to Sardar (Hussein Hassan Ali), who is suspicious and possessive to the core. Shilan does not want a similar fate to befall Rojin and sets out to help her get through the test, adopting the most unscrupulous of methods to achieve this.

The film gives us a lucid look at gender issues, economic inequity and social distress in a region that has seen conflict and intense suffering over many years. The story is set in the eastern city of Sulaymaniyah, and it seems to have taken place around 2017 with

the ouster of Daesh from Mosul. We are never shown any war, but are privy to it through radio broadcasts and fleeting conversations.



Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival
Crystal Globe Competition

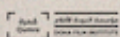
CAST

AVAN JAMAL
VANIA SALAR
HUSSEIN HASSAN
SHWAN ATTOOF
HOSHYAR Z. NERWAYI
NIGAR OSMAN
KAWA KADIR
ADIL ABDOLRAHMAN
HAMA RASHID HARAS
YANA TWANA

the
exam
سے زموون

SCREENWRITERS
SHAWKAT AMIN KORKI
MOHAMMED REZA GOHARI
CO PRODUCER
FUAD JALAL
LINE PRODUCER
LEA DRESCHER
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
ADIB SOBHANI
EDITOR
EBRAHIM SAEEDI
ORIGINAL MUSIC
MEHMUD BERAZI
PRODUCTION DESIGNER
JALAL SAED PANAH
SET MANAGER
BAKIR FARAJ
SOUND RECORDIST
SHAHRAM AHMADIAN
SOUND DESIGNER
ÇAĞLAR YEŞİLAY
MAKE-UP
KARINA EVDOKIMOVA
COSTUME
KATHARINA NESTEROWA

DIRECTOR SHAWKAT AMIN KORKI PRODUCER MEHMET AKTAŞ



The film gives us a lucid look at gender issues, economic inequity and social distress in a region that has seen conflict and intense suffering over many years. (Supplied)

The film is a strong addition to the growing basket of works which underline female emancipation, and how young women are fighting oppressive male tendencies in societies ruled and dominated by them.

“The Exam” boasts a series of tense, pulse-pounding moments when it looks like Rojin’s misdeeds will be exposed. Running parallel to this suspense is black humor and the question whether women like Rojin have the right to choose their own paths, even if comes packaged with unethical practices. Performed with delightful alacrity and captured by Director of Photography Adib Sobhani , who takes recourse to long shots and moody lighting to get the feel of uncertainty and tension, “The Exam” is a powerful study of how brutish behavior provokes rebelliousness.
