

Film review: 'Parkour(s)' takes obstacle course through class conflict



- Fatma Zohra Zamoum's "Parkour(s)" is set in a small city in Algeria
- It screened at the recent Cairo International Film Festival

CHENNAI: The fast-paced sport of parkour — or negotiating obstacles in an urban environment by running, jumping and climbing — forms the backdrop of this Algerian film.

Fatma Zohra Zamoum's "Parkour(s)" is set in a small city in Algeria, and it seems that the director has used the title to convey the kind of histrionics her characters indulge in. Take, for instance, Youcef (Nazim Halladja) — a sportsman playing parkour — literally cartwheeling through the urban landscape. His reckless antics also include threatening people with a gun and pleading with would-be bride Kamila (Adila Bendimered) to ditch her future husband, Khaled, (Mohamed Bounoughaz).

The movie, which screened at the recent Cairo International Film Festival, unfolds during a day and takes us to the wedding and the assorted group of men and women gathered there. As we see these people making their way toward the occasion, we get to see that they are all motivated by different pulls and pressures.



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Youcef is there to try to persuade Kamila from walking up the aisle. The kitchen help is set to make an extra buck. However, other characters have not been written with much conviction.

Zamoun says in a note: “The multi-character drama shows how a normal situation turns into major clashes reflecting the conflict between classes, ideas and generations in Algerian society, whose youth try to take control of their lives. But they are surrounded by those who try to handcuff them.”

The movie is not convincing on this count. For example, how is the bride — who willingly prepares for the wedding (that was my impression, anyway) — “handcuffed?” The same can be said for other characters we encounter.

What comes across loud and clear, however, is the class difference. No clarity is lost when Khaled gives money to Youcef to buy a “decent” suit for the wedding and he is offended by Khaled’s arrogance. Youcef makes no bones about this to his friend — and perhaps he is taking his revenge when he tries to sow discord among his fellow characters. Also worthy of note is the performance by the young daughter of the kitchen help, Nedjma (Lali Mansour), who gives one of the most moving and natural sequences in “Parkour(s).”

The cinematography is nothing to rave about and Youcef’s parkour antics are rather intrusive and add little to the narrative.
