

Daratt (Dry Season)



Following an amnesty on war criminals during the aftermath of Chad's 40 year long civil war, 16 year old Atim is sent by his grandfather to hunt down and avenge his father's killer. The man he finds is not what he expected - charitable, benevolent and with a young pregnant wife. Soon Atim is working as his apprentice and is confronted with difficult moral decisions...

Daratt is the third feature from acclaimed Chadian director Mahamat-Saleh Haroun. He tells the story as a biblical parable, using a

slow, contemplative style that draws the audience into the lives of his characters and provides a space for them to engage with the moral dilemma that the Atim is faced with. Rather than using a conventional script driven narrative, the story is told through expressions, gestures and visual metaphors, with some significant events taking place off screen.

The film can also be read as a call for peace and unification in Chad and Africa as a whole. Two key characters in the film suffer from sensory disabilities. Atim's blind, vengeful grandfather could be thought of to represent Chad's inability to see a way to a peaceful resolution to the civil war, whilst reformed war criminal Nassam, who has lost his larynx, could be perceived as a futile cry for help, which continues to be unheard in the west.

Further viewing recommendations (all available on DVD):

Le Fils (The Son). Jean Pierre Dardenne / Luc Dardenne. Belgium. 2002.

A joinery instructor takes on a young apprentice, who he later finds out is the boy who killed his son five years ago. Does he forgive him or take revenge? Could be thought of as a reverse take on Daratt.

Behind the Sun (Abril Despedado). Walter Salles. Brazil. 2001.

In parched desert region of northern Brazil, a farmer's youngest son is shot by a rival family. His eldest son must fulfil his family obligations and shoot his brother's killer, so carrying on a cycle of violence that has gone on for years. Another interesting study of revenge and forgiveness.

Forthcoming films as part of our year round world cinema programme in partnership with Salisbury Arts Centre:

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly: 04/07/08 @ 7.30pm

The Band's Visit: Date TBC