

ARDALAN
ESMAILI

SOHO
REZANEJAD

انسیه
THE
CHARMER

A FILM BY MILAD ALAMI

FILM MOVEMENT PRESENTS THE CHARMER STARRING ARDALAN ESMAILI, SOHO REZANEJAD, SUSAN TASLIMI, LARS BRYGMANN PRODUCTION MANAGER JACOB SVENSSON
CASTING BY GRO THERP COSTUME AND MAKE-UP CAMILLA NORDBJERG COMPOSER MARTIN DIRKOV SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR BO ASDAL ANDERSEN PRODUCTION DESIGNER SABINE HYVID
EDITOR OLIVIA NEERGAARD-HOLM DOOP SOPHIA OLSSON FSF EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS OLIVIER MULLER, GARY FARKAS, CLÉMENT LAPOUTRE & ANNI FERNANDEZ, OLE SONDBERG, VIBEKE VINDOELV
CO-PRODUCERS MIMMI SPÅNG, REBECCA LAFRENZ, TOMAS ESKILSSON PRODUCER STIINA LASSEN WRITTEN BY INGEBORG TOPSOE & MILAD ALAMI DIRECTED BY MILAD ALAMI
© GOOD COMPANY FILMS, 2017

FILM MOVEMENT GOODCO ALMA CARACOL FILM THE 4th FALA VIXENS REDRENTAL™ ACT3 FilmGEAR TV2 DDT SVT





presents

THE CHARMER

a film by
Milad Alami

Denmark, Sweden / 2017 / Drama, Thriller / 102 minutes
Danish & Persian with English subtitles
1.85:1 / 5.1 Surround Sound



**NEW DIRECTORS
FESTIVAL DE SAN SEBASTIÁN
2017
OPENING FILM**

“A topical, tightly wound slow-burner.” –*Variety*

“Cleverly balances psychological thrills with astute drama.” –*Screen Daily*

Opens December 5th in New York at Film Forum

PRESS CONTACTS

Michael Krause | Foundry Communications | tel: 212-586-7967 | mkrause@foundrycomm.com
Adam Walker | Film Forum | tel: 212.627.2035 x306 | adam@filmforum.org

FILM MOVEMENT BOOKING CONTACTS

Clemence Taillandier | Theatrical | (212) 941-7715 | theatrical@filmmovement.com
Maxwell Wolkin | Festivals & Non-Theatrical | (212) 941-7744 x211 | maxwell@filmmovement.com

SYNOPSIS

Esmail is a darkly handsome Iranian immigrant to Denmark, on the verge of being thrown out of the country if he can't find a Danish woman to marry. He dresses well and frequents posh bars, easily ingratiating himself with attractive Danes who are seduced by his good looks, gentle manners, and apparent decency. But he's a man caught between his self-interest and self-respect. Things get a lot more complicated when he meets a beautiful fellow countryman (Iranian singer Soho Rezanejad) who immediately grasps his game plan, but finds herself attracted to him nonetheless. ***The Charmer*** is a debut movie by a director who understands that a psychological thriller need not focus on violent crime. Rather it wraps its head around the notion that small, seemingly insignificant acts may cause pain and trauma to those who become players in our lives.

—Karen Cooper, Director, Film Forum



WINNER - Silver Hugo - Chicago International Film Festival

WINNER - Jury Prize for Best Screenplay - FEST International Film Festival

WINNER - Competition 1-2 Award - Warsaw International Film Festival

WINNER - Human Rights Award - Tbilisi International Film Festival

WINNER - Best Director - Tbilisi International Film Festival

WINNER - Fedeora Award - San Sebastian International Film Festival

WINNER - Grand Jury Prize - Palm Springs International Film Festival



INTERVIEW MILAD ALMI

How do you exploit curiosity and preconceptions about “the stranger” to craft an intense thriller by slowly unfolding an individual person’s inner struggles?

The film started with a character, a foreign observer that the audience might have a lot of thoughts and preconceptions about but that we never really get to know. Through Esmail, we examined themes of identity, class differences, race and powerlessness. As Esmail tries to seduce woman, he is forced to change his identity, slowly losing track of who he really is. Even if Esmail’s “fishing” for women at first glance might seem calculating and cynical, we can’t reduce him to a villainous seducer. And even if we don’t know exactly what’s behind Esmail’s actions while he may be desperate, he is essentially a good person. The exploitation works both ways: the different women he’s with get something from him too. He experiences obvious exoticism, the sexualisation of the stranger. I am very interested in exploring this existential loneliness and search for belonging. I think that the feeling of not belonging and fighting for a place in this world could be universal.

Refugees and migrants from the Middle East dominate the news cycle and the political debate in Scandinavia. But who are the people behind the headlines?

The idea wasn’t to make a political film but to point out human and psychological aspects of being a stranger in a strange land. The political undertone about class and immigration makes the story very current, and I hope to offer a bit of human perspective at times very harsh debate. The political aspects of being a refugee I think are better left to politicians to discuss. I imagine that the audience, after they see the film, will want to talk about the political issues: Are his actions right or wrong? What’s the price of the life he has chosen? But all of that is just post-rationalisation.

For the role of Esmail, you chose the Swedish-Persian actor Ardalan Esmaili.

Esmail has sensitivity but also darkness. There's something unpredictable about him. It's important that the character has this duality. He exists in a limbo between two worlds in his search for a new identity and home. Because of his hidden identity, he almost lives as an alien in his own life. The many empty villas and fancy apartments are a symbol of the mental labyrinth he is lost in. Leila and Sara's house is like a hidden Persian world in Denmark who reminds Esmail of the home he has left, and the memories will be both comforting and painful for him.

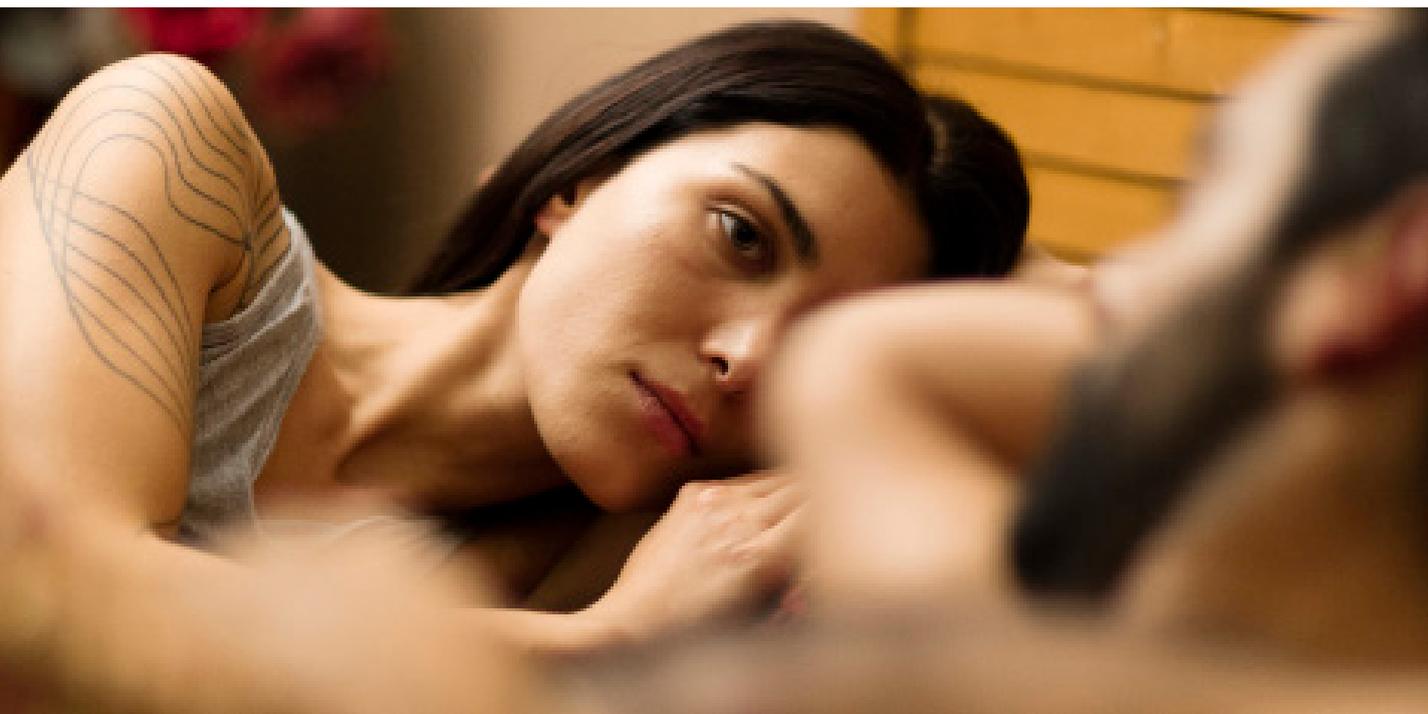
Directing Ardalan was one of my biggest challenges. The entire film is on his shoulders in terms of how "secretive" he can be as a character while remaining interesting to the audience. Ardalan went beyond my expectations, he is such a rare talent. We worked with the acting a lot to create the intensity and paranoid mood I wanted to bring out.

Do you feel close to the character of Esmail ?

It's not important for me to be able to identify with a character, and that wasn't the focus of the film, either. I'm more concerned with whether the character is interesting, I don't feel like an outsider, and Esmail is nothing like myself. But being Iranian-born, I know what does it mean to have an identity that's split between two cultures. However, my story and Esmail's story are extremely different. I moved to Sweden when I was six years old and had a fine childhood. Esmail is a product of fascination more than identification, and I hope that the audience will see him that way too.

In your short films, you were also concerned with depicting the psychological universe of outsider characters and people who carry secrets.

I was always fascinated by people you can't pin down or pigeonhole. That's why all my films are about outsiders. When I come into a room, I'm always interested in the people who look like they want to be there the least. I think they have a different view of the world and we can learn something from it.



A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a white tank top, is seen from behind, looking out a large window. The window has sheer curtains and shows a sunset or sunrise scene with warm light. The man's hand is near his face, possibly holding a phone. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

CAST

Esmail
Sara
Lars
Leila

Ardalan ESMAILI
Soho REZANEJAD
Lars BRYGMANN
Susan TASLIMI

CREW

Director
Screenplay
Photography
Editor
Music
Sound Designer
Production Designer
Produced by
Co-Production

Milad ALAMI
Ingeborg TOPSØE and Milad ALAMI
Sophia OLSSON
Olivia NEERGAARD-HOLM
Martin DIRKOV
Bo ASDAL
Sabine HVIID
Stinna Lassen, GOOD COMPANY FILMS
GARAGEFILM INTERNATIONAL & Film i Väst

