



PAPICHA

22nd
Year!

Autumn
Season
2020

Release: 2019

Cert (UK): 15

Country: Algeria

Language: In French and Arabic with English subtitles

Runtime: 1 hour 48 mins

Director: Mounia Madour

Written by: Mounia Madour, Fadette Drouard

Cinematographer: Léo Lefèvre

Cast: Lyna Khoudri, Shirine Boutella, Amira Hilda Douaouda



Where 'The Perfect Candidate' gave us a fairly lightweight view of the problems of life for a woman in Saudi Arabia, 'Papicha' takes a much hard-hitting look at Algeria in the 1990s, when the Islamic revolution forced women in hijabs. Basing the film on her own experiences, Mounia Madour places Nedjma, nicknamed Papicha – Algerian slang for 'cool girl' – at the centre of the whirlpool: she wants to be a fashion designer and refusing to accept the changes that are happening, she decides to put on a fashion show in the university.

'What Papicha so brilliantly captures is the instability of women's experiences. Rather than being relentlessly brutal, the film's structure better captures the ups and downs of the characters' lives. There are periods of fun that intercut the more challenging moments...It's the greatest asset of Papicha that it condemns without being dogmatic, showing its central conflict to be more complicated than Western audiences might otherwise believe' Lillian Crawford, Little White Lies.

'Meddour makes great cinematic choices, particularly the use of clothing design to specify the profound effect that the struggle between liberal and fundamentalist forces within Islam has on women. Women were killed during the civil war for not covering up, and it is quite possible that they could be again' – Amy Taubin, Film Comment.

