



HOLY SPIDER

24th
Year!

Spring
Season
2023

Release: 2022

Cert: 18

Country: Denmark, filmed in Jordan

Language: Persian

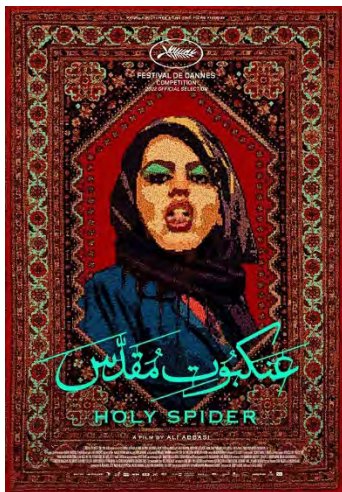
Runtime: 1 hour 56 mins

Directed by: Ali Abbasi

Written by: Ali Abbasi, Afshin Kamran Bahrami

Cinematography: Nadim Carlsen

Cast: Mehdi Bajestani, Zar Amir-Ebrahimi, Arash Ashtiani



Ali Abbasi was born in Iran but educated and works in Denmark. His third film here is about Iran, but was made in Jordan as he was not allowed to film in Iran. It is a crime thriller, based on a real serial killer in the early 2000s who targeted female sex workers in Mashad, but the reason we thought we should show it is that it portrays how hard it is for women in Iran. With the recent murder of Mahsa Amini, and the resulting women-led protests, this becomes doubly relevant.

'The film dramatizes the true story of a serial killer who murdered 16 prostitutes in 2000-2001. Saeed Hanaei was a labourer and Iran-Iraq War veteran who reportedly began his crime spree when someone mistook his wife for a prostitute. During and after his rampage, he claimed he had God on his side, saying he was on a jihad to rid Mashhad's streets of its most corrupt elements. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of his story was that the killer became a hero to some before his execution...Abbasi constructs his narrative in three main strands, one following Saeed not just on his murderous crusade but also in the mundane day-to-day of his family life; another observing some of his victims (most of the women are poor and drug-addicted) before their murders, and a third following Rahimi[a journalist] as she tries to investigate the killings, which at times puts her in harm's way.' – Godfrey Cheshire, RogerEbert.com.

This may be a hard-watch in places, but should give us a lot to discuss. It is also the Danish entry for the Oscars and was nominated for the Palme d'Or at Cannes, where Zar Amir-Ebrahimi won best actress for her portrayal of Rahimi.