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## Expired

### Islam Kamal

2015, DCP, color, 14 min., Arabic. **Producer** Mark Lotfy. **Production company** Fig Leaf Studios (Alexandria, Egypt). **Written and directed by** Islam Kamal. **Director of photography** Tamer Nady. **Production design** Sameh Nabil. **Costumes** Mohamed Hosni. **Sound** Sameh Nabil. **Music** Raef Ali. **Sound design** Raef Ali. **Editor** Islam Kamal. **With** Tamer Mahmud, Mohamed Hosni, Martina Maher, Mohamed Mamdoh, Mohamed Yehia, Ahmed Ismaeil, Rowan Saber.

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A policeman, a belly dancer, a white rabbit, a secret agent, a man hopelessly in love: the cast of characters in Islam Kamal's hyperactive comedy *Expired* is sourced directly from the tropes of Egypt's film history of the last thirty years. The film places its protagonists in stereotypical situations, ranging from courting to interrogations, using satire and humor as a vehicle for socio-political commentary. A manifesto of sorts from the young, independent film scene in Egypt.

## The emptiness that surrounds mankind

Created by human beings to be inhabited alone, visual reality is transformed into actions, reactions, frustration, failure, and happiness. A visual reality even to the blind, we see what we want to see. Your own voice sounds odd when you listen to it on a recording rather than through your own ears. In Egyptian society, a refusal to do something is a refusal to obey its nature, a much stronger statement than action.

By way of introduction, I am part of the film scene in my country, my city, Alexandria. Since my one and only way to earn my daily bread is by filmmaking, I live and work most of the time in Alexandria as one of the founders of "Fig Leaf Studios," the Mediterranean city, which is far from the film and media industry, far from the production houses and studios in Cairo, the biggest capital city in the Middle East.

Nine years ago a group of colleagues and friends started to build a small company for video and audio services in Alexandria! After finishing a non-formal education in filmmaking in Alexandria, this group gathered in the "Jesuit Cultural Center." During the first years we didn't make long-term contracts or manage to earn a stable income – we are talking about a group of people formed completely apart from the industry center. In the beginning we tried to meet the needs of the local commercial market, trying to make a modest living from a wide variety of film tasks. At the same time, as a group or individually, we were producing unconventional film formats. These films came to be far away from the Egyptian film scene in Cairo—the independent short fiction stereotype forms.

*Islam Kamal*

Islam Kamal was born in 1978 in Alexandria, Egypt, where he is also based today as a visual artist and a filmmaker. He studied painting and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Alexandria University. In 2004, he participated in workshops on filmmaking organized by SEMAT at the Jesuit Cultural Center in Alexandria. In the same year he started working as a director of photography for several films, and himself directed several short films and five documentaries. Since 2006 he has been the head of the video production department at Fig Leaf Studios, an audiovisual production house founded in 2005.

### Films

2004: *Icarus* (10 min.), *Made in Max* (10 min.), *City Report* (13 min.). 2006: *Gudranne* (9 min.). 2007: *Filmer les pierres naturelles* (9 min.). 2008: *God Creates Still Life* (15 min.), *Surface* (10 min.). 2009: *Public Domain* (24 min.), *Shali Ghali* (24 min.). 2011: *Dream 79* (10 min.). 2012: *Hayat* (16 min.). 2015: *The Visit* (43 min.), *Expired*.