



from being a part of the set that george clooney directed, "clooney taught me that an actor has a duty to society. he implanted and pushed forward the writer, director and producer in me and made me want to be all the things that i thought maybe i could be but was very weary to bring forward. i didn't want people to think that i was conceited enough to want to have a say in everything, as they tend to put you down and make you fail if they sense you might succeed. most of us have an inferiority complex because we are arabs, i refuse to take that or abide by it. i know i might fail and i might succeed, but i enjoy trying. if you're sitting in a room full of people and george clooney

actors and friends who have not wanted me to succeed, and although jealousy can be flattering most of the time, it is also annoying. on the set of dam il gazal, there was no room for such things." waked graduated from the american university of cairo in 1995, where he majored in economics and worked as a stockbroker for four years. during his university years, waked took part in a number of theatrical productions, the first being a play called vinegar tom, a graduation project one of his university colleagues directed and produced. waked then continued working with various theatrical groups, until 1997 when his career took a turn and he started doing cinema.

i do is read the script, the role could be great, but if i don't relate to it then i don't do it. it is very important for me to establish chemistry with the character. in dam il gazal, i played the smallest role, but i could not have had it any other way as that was the one character i wanted to be, who you will be working with: the director and fellow actors, is also a very important element. i would like to work with anyone who loves his job and does it properly. anyone that makes you feel you're doing something new and innovative. all great directors have made bad movies. i want to be in one of the greats. there are times when you think it's going to be a great movie, because it has a great director and

system that we have is superficial; you walk in as an actor and enter this grinder that turns you into plastic because we have a crisis in the directing system. yes, we have improved, but i believe we still have a long way to go to actually reach the perfection we are hungry for." when asked how becoming famous has changed his life, amr says that being known makes him enjoy life more. "it is positive to see people smiling at you and know that they like you, even when your life is not as happy as you hoped it would be and you see that people like you, you want to do more for them – to live up to their expectations and make them even prouder than they already are. it does limit



walks into a room and sits next to you, pats you on the shoulder saying you can do it, it makes you realize that you need to work harder than ever and that's what i did." waked has just finished filming another movie, dam il gazal, starring nour il shereef and youssra. waked stressed what a great experience it was and how grateful he was to actor nour il shereef in particular, as he, to waked, is the god father for all actors. waked emphasized how nour takes care and keeps a trained and concerned eye on young actors, helping them make their way to the top: "working with someone like nour il shereef was very educational. he likes other actors and it is great to work on set with someone who likes you. i have come across

although waked has always loved and enjoyed acting, it has never been a life time dream or a long term goal of his to become a star: "i liked what i was doing as long as i felt it had substance and was transmitting a message to the audience, but to become a well known actor was not my goal. it was more like 'it would be cool if it happened!'" when considering a role in a movie, waked feels he has to relate to the character and not necessarily like it: "i see myself in every role i have played; that's how i work, i embrace the character and i merge my personality with his. in acting, you are bound to bring yourself along with you into the role. i turn down any role that i feel i cannot relate to. the first thing

a great cast, but the movie turns out horrible. it happened and it happens. you just decide to choose better next time and not to let whatever happened in that script happen again." waked hopes that in ten years time, he will be a better actor than he is today; and he knows that if he keeps taking his steps, slowly but surely, he will reach his goal. amr feels that although there are many stars in the middle east, there aren't many real actors. the difference between an actor and a star to waked is that "an actor is someone that is capable, through his body and voice, to transcend every kind of emotion. a star is someone who powders his nose, gels his hair, he has amazing retouched pictures and charisma, but no talent. the star

my mobility a little, and it has made me become more of a timid person, but i don't feel like my privacy has been invaded. at times i just want to hang out with my wife or my closest friends, as opposed to being around too many people, and it's hard to find peace of mind anywhere but home; but it's a price i have to pay for being who i am. i love what i'm doing and that's all that counts." amr waked has just recently finished filming a short movie for the united nations on drug abuse amongst teens. this particular movie was written, directed and produced by waked and his company and will be played in high schools to raise awareness and knowledge between teenagers on the negative effects of drug abuse.

amr waked: a rising star making giant leaps

words by: zeina lubbadeh photography: linda khoury.

young egyptian actor amr waked, 33, has taken a giant leap in his career. although waked started off his acting career on solid ground, playing such an important role in the controversial hollywood movie syriana, directed by and starring george clooney, was something he never expected. although waked was flattered to be offered a part in such a controversial movie, he was also rather reluctant

to take it as he had previously turned down another role in a political movie about the middle east which he thought represented arabs in a negative and embarrassing light. amr insists on refusing to contribute to distorting and misrepresenting arabs in the western media, but after showing some reluctance, waked was flown to dubai to meet with syriana's producer, steven gaghan, where he

learned that although he would be playing the role of an egyptian who coaches young men on becoming terrorist bombers, the picture's aim was not to portray middle easterners as terrorists but rather to make people think about the subject the picture discusses and to try to relate to it. waked then changed his mind and approved the role, "my art is not just entertainment, my job as an artist

and an actor is not to be a parasite of bad taste. my aim is to elevate taste and make my audience think and understand more about the world and themselves. it is about making people think in relation to the subject the picture discusses and relating to it in a positive and constructive manner," aside from the fact that syriana turned out to be an exceptional movie, waked admits to learning so much