



Encyclopedia of Arab Women Filmmakers

Rebecca Hillauer

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Arab women filmmakers: Who are they? What drives them? What are their experiences in a male-dominated profession? How do they function within the contexts - and constraints - of patriarchal societies? The answers are complex and sometimes surprising, as complex and surprising as the vastly different films these women direct. In this unprecedented book, Rebecca Hillauer assembles a comprehensive and penetrating look into the history of Arab women's filmmaking, as well as the political and social background of the countries - Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Algeria, among others - from which these artists emerged. In addition to the biographies, filmographies, and discussions of their most important works, lively, in-depth interviews allow us to hear from the filmmakers themselves. Collectively, these women, who hail from a wide range of professional, religious, and social backgrounds, provide a varied and vivid picture of what it means to work in creative and journalistic fields in the modern Arab world. For Hillauer, the subject of a film, its genesis, and the personal story of the artist who created it reveal far more than a particular approach to cinematography. Arab women filmmakers and their main characters (who are often semi-autobiographical) not only afford us a look at seldom-seen facets of Arab societies, they personify an alternative women's 'model,' one that is far removed from western clichés. Broad in scope, and rich in insight, Arab Women Filmmakers is a must read for cineastes as well as students of film, feminism, and the Middle East.

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