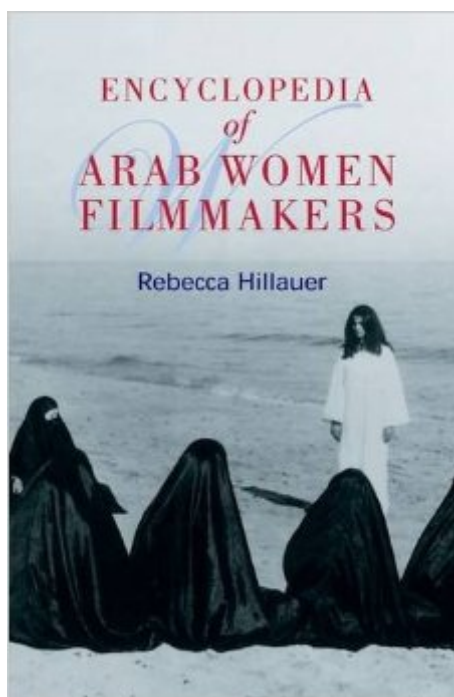


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Encyclopedia Of Arab Women Filmmakers



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: The American University in Cairo Press; 1 edition (February 2, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9774249437

ISBN-13: 978-9774249433

Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 1.5 x 6.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,821,779 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #111 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Dramas & Plays > Regional & Cultural > Middle Eastern](#) #121 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > Reference](#) #310 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > Encyclopedias](#)

Customer Reviews

"Encyclopedia" connotes the comprehensiveness of the material, but not the kinds or variety nor the formatting. The material which exceeds what anyone could be looking for in this subject area and is more informative for the way it is formatted is arranged country by country. Not only are the Arab women filmmakers grouped by country, but there is an introduction to each group which is an overview of the Arab country's film industry noting the particular challenges and advances for its women filmmakers. As for additional material not ordinarily associated with an "encyclopedia," there is an interview with each of the women. And in the section on each is a filmography and also separate "film reviews" of each major film. With this formatting rather than the standard alphabetical arrangement with a reference titled an encyclopedia, the distinctive talent and accomplishments of each filmmaker is presented cogently with accompanying photographs so each one stands out with nearby references to her body of films. Not a conventional type of reference despite its title, this work on this category of filmmaker of rising interest from current international affairs as well as the long-standing special interest in women's accomplishments is really more like a text for use in courses or individual study.

College-level holdings strong in film history or Middle East history will both find plenty of depth, detail and description in Encyclopedia of Arab Women Filmmakers, a survey of how these women produce films in a male-dominated profession and world. The history of Arab women's filmmaking and the political and social background of Arab nations are mingled in a blend of biographical sketches, critical film reviews, and discussions that include interviews from the filmmakers themselves. Diane C. Donovan California Bookwatch

This was a valuable resource for my research on women in the Arab media. Rather than using it as an encyclopedia, I found the issues, discussions with the filmmakers most revealing. I had to leave my copy in the Gulf and will buy another now that I'm back home.

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