

# LIGHTS, CAMERA, LEBANON

The cast and crew of Beirut's film industry expose the highs and lows of movie-making.

**1 Claudine Choueiry, Make-up Artist**

I love the freedom of creation that comes with working on a film set, especially because I get to do both natural and special effects make-up. My job is to bring out the beauty or, depending on the script, ugliness in a person, all while keeping their unique traits. It's not always easy to figure out what's in the director's head.

**2 Alexi Chemaly, Film Music Composer**

Music is as important an element as everything that goes into a film: it doesn't just add value, it completes it. When you're watching a movie, it's your fifth sense the music will hit. People don't realise that film composers have to be with the filmmaker from A to Z. First you have to understand the concept and the script, and then work step by step to see it through.

**3 Cynthia Zahar, Set Designer/ Production Designer**

Set design is constructing a director's vision in 3D. The most challenging part is combining the artistic side with logistics like budget, time and space. I'm often surprised when I can't find what I'm looking for, like a traditional Lebanese house. Things we think exist are disappearing. So we rebuild them, make them real again and take them apart a few weeks later. But we get to live in the fantasy for a little while.

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**4 Jean Mansour, Caterer**

With most people, it only takes me five minutes to scan them and figure out their tastes. It comes from experience. And because I know how filmmaking works, I know when it's unacceptable to interrupt and what times the crew will be hungry or need coffee.

**5 Alissar Caracalla, Choreographer at Caracalla Dance Theater/ Artistic Director of Studio Alissar Caracalla**

When you're creating a theatre production the audience has complete liberty to see every angle of the stage. In film, the camera becomes the eye for what the audience will see. You can cheat a bit. But choreography is the process of creating an art form – much of my work is done on a piece of paper. A two-minute dance sequence can take two months to develop.





**6 Youssef Haddad, Actor**

My job is to be a different person every day. What people don't realise is that actors don't just memorise scripts and recite them, they have to study the character and people in general. We absorb the small details that tend to fly under the radar. It's always a challenge to make sure I never play the same kind of character twice.

**7 Jihad Hojelly, Scriptwriter**

Scriptwriting requires discipline and patience, waiting for the idea to pop into my head. Inspiration depends on the mood of the day. And it's sometimes challenging to find a resolution for a plot or scene. But I love to see the actors embody the characters that I've made. I just wish I could explain to people better how we weave together a story for a script.

**8 Nagham Abboud, Casting Coordinator**

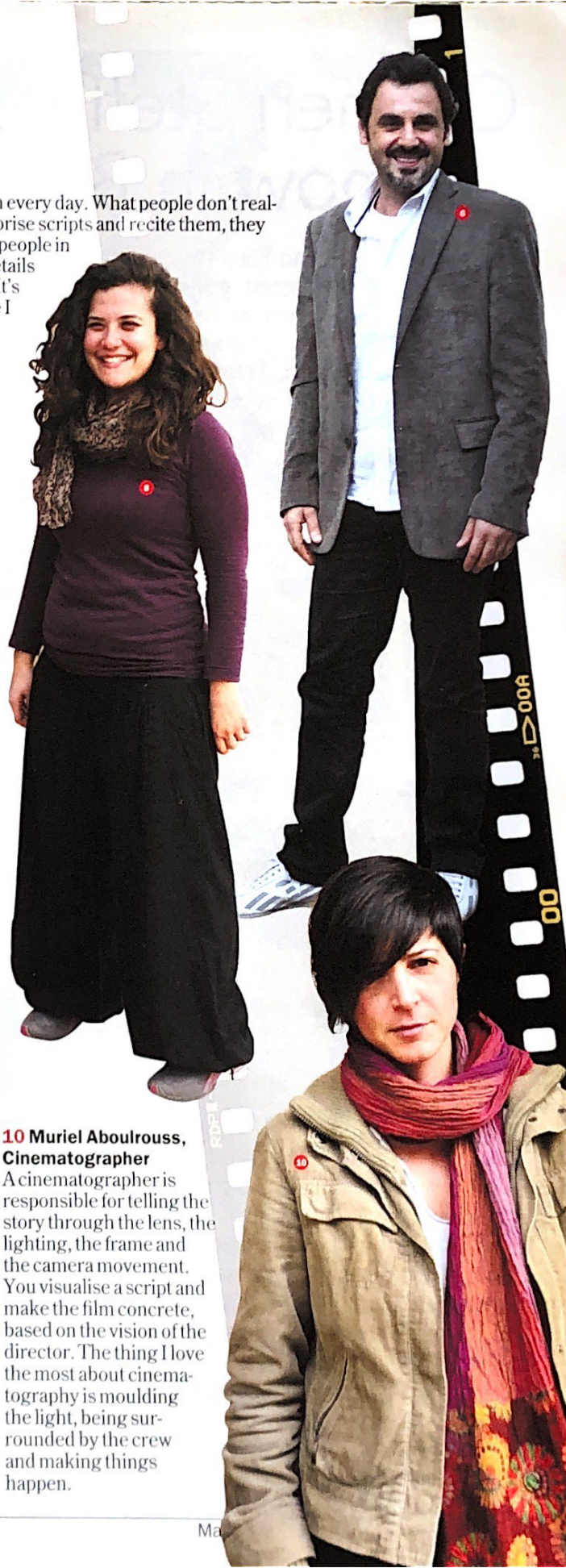
We work for four or five months before the shoot starts. In total we meet about 6,000 men and women from across Lebanon. Some people are keen and others run away. In the past, about 60 to 70% of casting was done from the street. The challenge is how to deal with people once we've found them and want to use them.



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**9 Antoine Khalife, Producer**

Reading scripts is the most rewarding part of my job, but it's only one part. Besides dealing with the finances and distribution of the project, I locate and hire the talent; this always proves to be challenging. One extra task that people don't really know about is that I have to thoroughly inspect the script for any censorship-sensitive material.



**10 Muriel Aboulrouss, Cinematographer**

A cinematographer is responsible for telling the story through the lens, the lighting, the frame and the camera movement. You visualise a script and make the film concrete, based on the vision of the director. The thing I love the most about cinematography is moulding the light, being surrounded by the crew and making things happen.