In This Place
Reels of Beirut

Hady Zaccak

June 11 - July 20, 2022
Tue to Sat 11AM - 7PM
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في هذا المكان
شرائط لوسط بيروت
When I went to film Beirut after the August 4th, 2020 port blast, I found destroyed places that I had previously filmed in the post-war 1990s. I thought of those places – their residents and memories –, how they disappear again and again, and how our images quickly become archives.

I became obsessed with documentation and archiving at an early age, maybe because I was born in a city that was disappeared. I started to look for it in films. I worked on chronicling the history of cinema in Lebanon, precisely in search of that city.

I treated feature films as archival material that would help me recapture the place and its atmosphere, even if watching them was often difficult.

“In this Place: Reels of Beirut” takes us back to the area extending from the port to the hotels, passing through the central business district, through five short films consisting of a montage of scenes assembled from 50 Lebanese, Arab and foreign fiction films made between 1935 and 1975.

Welcome to Beirut, The Port, Downtown, The Hotel, The Cabaret. Text, moving and still images, posters – all in a small space that recalls the wider place.

Hady Zaccak
المحطة الأولى: أهلاً بكم في بيروت
7 دقائق ونصف مبنيّة على 19 فيلم روائي طويل
تختلف النظرة إلى بيروت بين الأفلام اللبنانية والمصريّة والأجنبيّة وتبدو المدينة في حوار مستمرّ بين حاضرها وماضيها، بين الخيال والواقع.
أهلاً بكم في بيروت في رحلة في الزمان والمكان.

1st place: “Welcome to Beirut”
7’30s based on 18 feature narrative films

Beirut is perceived differently depending on whether the film is Lebanese, Egyptian, foreign... The city appears to be in constant conversation between its present and its past, between fiction and reality.
Welcome to the heart of Beirut, on a journey through space and time.
The port of Beirut was a site for business or immigration in Lebanese films, meanwhile welcoming tourists in several Egyptian and foreign features. But it was also the scene of suspicious activity, namely smuggling, especially in foreign crime and spy films. The port – and its concealed goods and outlaws – became the source of the danger menacing the city of Beirut, until fiction and fact converged.
Al Balad (i.e., Downtown) is the bustling epicenter of the city, a miniature representation of Beirut as a whole, where squares, markets, shopping centers, banks and cinemas are plentiful, and people from all social classes rub shoulders. While public space is dealt with differently – ranging from a local perspective to an Orientalist attitude – the memory of a place that no longer exists is preserved on film.
Hotel Beirut - 4th place: “Hotel Beirut”

The hotel district was a central backdrop to foreign features filmed in Lebanon, especially European espionage films, where it seemed as though Beirut was a den of spies during the Cold War period. This wave of films flourished in the wake of true events that took place in Lebanon, notably the case of British-Soviet double agent Kim Philby who fled from Beirut to Moscow in 1963 after he was unmasked.
The cabaret became synonymous with the city’s image, and took on many incarnations – bars, discos, nightclubs – with a variety of entertainment shows on offer, ranging from oriental to international. Afterhours establishments proliferated around the hotel district, most prominently the temple to nightlife Les Caves du Roy and the nightclub Epi Club where several movies were filmed. Between real locations and film sets, Beirut became Sin City, where sexual innuendo paved the way for the taboo.
Filmography

1. Doumou’ Al-Hub (Tears of Love) (1935) - Egypt - by Mohammed Karim.
5. Lubnan Fil-Layl (Lebanon by Night) (1963) - Lebanon - by Muhammad Selman.
7. FBI Operazione Baalbeck (Last Plane to Baalbeck) (1964) - Italy, France, Lebanon - produced by Enrico Bomba - directed by Hugo Fregonese - Marcello Gianini.
11. Liqa’ Fi Tadmur (Meeting in Palmyra) (1965) - Syria - by Youssef Maalouf.
12. 24 hours to kill (1965) - Great Britain - Germany - produced by Harry Alan Towers - directed by Peter Bezencenet.
13. Le Spie uccidono a Beirut (Secret Agent Fireball) (1965) - Italy, France - produced by Filmes Cinematografica (Italy)/Estela Films S.A (Spain)/ Terra Films (Italy) - directed by Mario Caiano.
14. Where the spies are (Passport pour l’oubli) (1966) - Great Britain - produced and directed by Val Guest.
18. Farewell to Lebanon (1966) - Lebanon - by Hikmat Labib.
21- Al-Tarid (The Fugitive) (1967) - Lebanon - by Sayed Tantawi.
22- Ahlan Bil-Hub (Welcome Love) - Lebanon - by Muhammad Selman.
23- La Grande Sauterelle (1967) - France-Germany- Italy- produced by Sneg-Paris, eichberg film-munich, Franca Film (Rome) -directed by Georges Lautner.
25- Il Cobra (The Cobra) (1967)- Italy- Spain- produced by Italian International Film (Rome)-Productores Exhibidores Films (Madrid)- directed by Mario Sequi.
28- Only when I larf (1968)- Great Britain- produced by Len Deighton, Brian Duffy- directed by Basil Dearden.
30- Afrah (Celebrations) (1968) - Egypt- by Ahmed Badrakhan.
31- Thalath Nisa’ (Three Women) (1968) - Egypt- by Mahmoud Zulfikar, Salah Abu Seif, Henri Barakat.
32- Al-Hub Al-Kabir (The Great Love) - Egypt-Lebanon- by Henri Barakat.
34- Sariq Al-Malayin (The Thief of Millions) (1968) - Lebanon- by Niazi Mustapha.
35- Tariq Bila Nihaya (Road without End) (1968) - Lebanon-Turkey by Sayfuddin Shawkat.
36- Rebus (1968)- Italy- Spain- Germany-produced by Tecisa (Madrid), P.E.A., Rapid Film (Munich), Euro American Film (Buenos Aires) - Alberto Grimaldi- directed by Nino Zanchin.
40- Saydat Al-Aqmar Al-Sawda’ (Lady of the Black Moons) (1971) - Lebanon- by Samir Khoury.
41- Banat Akher Zaman (Modern Girls) - Syria- by Rida Myassar.
42- Ajmal Ayyam Hayati (Best Days of My Life)- Egypt- Lebanon by Henri Barakat.
43- Zaman Ya Hub (1973) - Egypt- by Atef Salem.
44- Si puo essere piu bastardi dell’ispettore Cliff (Mafia Junction) (1973)- Italy- GB (Clodio Cinematografica-Rome, Italian International Film-Rome, Monymosk productions- London) directed by Massimo Dallamano.

45- Nagham Fi Hayati (Melody in My Life) (1974) by Henri Barakat.

46- Nisa’ Lil Shita’ (Women for Winter) – Syria- Lebanon by Samir el Ghoussayni.


48- Al Malika Wa Ana (The Queen and Myself) (1975)- Egypt- by Atef Salem.

49- Beirut Ya Beirut (Beirut Oh Beirut) - Lebanon- by Maroun Baghdadi.

مراجع الصور
Source of the photos

Arab Image Foundation
المؤسسة العربية للصورة

Hady Zaccak Collection
مجموعة هادي زكاك

Telko Sport

مراجع الملصقات
Source of the posters

Abboudi Abou Jaoude Collection
مجموعة عبودي أبو جودة
HADY ZACCAK – Short Biography

Hady Zaccak is a Lebanese award-winning filmmaker and a professor-researcher at IESAV film School, Saint-Joseph University, Beirut.


In addition to his films, Zaccak is the author of two books on cinema: “The Last Film Screening, a biography of Cilama Tripoli” (2021) and “Lebanese Cinema, an itinerary of a cinema heading towards the unknown (1929-1996)” (1997).

Zaccak seeks through his work to document the traces of the past in the present and to preserve memory.

In This Place: Reels of Beirut
The crew

- Research, curating and editing: Hady Zaccak
- Artistic director: Awad Awad
- Artistic supervision: Manal Khader
- Technical setup: Bilal Dahboura & Zico
- Coordination & Communication: Marilyn Ghosn - Joelle Adem - Roben Jbeily
- Organised by Beirut DC
- In collaboration with mina image centre
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