

## **IMAGE MATTERS**

**A film directed and produced by Rozy Sarkis**

*“The two women talking about shopping in the midst of war—there are so many layers of contemporary culture captured here simultaneously, such as a distracting investment in the surface, a solution to anxiety.”*

*Virginia Blum, Director of Graduate Studies, University of Kentucky Department of English and Author of ‘Flesh Wounds: The Culture of Cosmetic Surgery’*

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In the midst of crises, a group of women are busy getting their hair done. In the midst of war, they indulge in a shopping spree. And in between all of this, they always make time for a visit to the plastic surgeon. *Image Matters* is a thought provoking feature documentary directed and produced by Rozy Sarkis inspired by the bizarre world she has witnessed around her while growing up in a wealthy village in war-torn Lebanon. Completed in July 2012, the film is about to make a highly anticipated worldwide premiere in London this coming autumn.

With the spotlight on Marinelle, a popular Lebanese soap-opera actress, Sarkis follows the story of a 40-year-old woman with an insatiable desire to transform her face in an attempt to regain the lost beauty of youth. As she struggles with the dangers of her operation and various complications that ensue in the build up to the big day, the background features a hub of female family members, each riddled with their own anxieties and worries about how they look and what needs to be done in order to fix their faltering appearance. Standing as a stark backdrop to the family drama, is a country that is going through its own upheaval with a wider picture of instability and uncertainty rearing its ugly head.

While cosmetic surgery, much like the war in Lebanon, is a subject that has been overtly exploited in the world of film today, this is a documentary that goes a step beyond the norm, interlinking the two subject matters in such a way that pokes at the true meaning of escapism. From must-have designer bags to a good bit of nip and tuck, this is about a group of women who manage their internal anxieties by attempting to mask any physical imperfections that manifest on their bodies. And with this, the director manages to shed invaluable light on a number of intricacies in contemporary culture today as a fixation on images of perfect beauty, the cult of celebrity and just how much ‘image matters’ becomes all the more apparent through the telling eyes of the camera.

### **About the Director**

Rozy Sarkis is a producer/director that has traveled across the globe with an anthropological interest in different cultures. She studied in London and has specialized in creative media projects since 2004, including award-winning feature film *Tangled Up in Blue* by Haider Rashid and documentary short *The Newspaper House* by Sumer Ereik featured on The Guardian.

Before 2004 she collaborated on video art projects including *'Garcia Lorca esta Vivo?'*, a film by award-winning Dutch filmmaker Eef De Graaf which was selected for the Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw and Film festival Cannes-Short film Corner.

*Image Matters* stands as her first feature documentary, exploring the culture of cosmetic surgery in Lebanon which was selected for the Dubai Film Market. Her short art video *Retouche* is currently being exhibited at Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Ethnological Museum in Cyprus.