



**For Immediate Release**

**Media Contacts:** Danielle Siegler, 561.302.4730, [Danielle.h.siegler@gmail.com](mailto:Danielle.h.siegler@gmail.com)  
Torange Yeghiazarian, 510.593.4749, [torange@goldenthread.org](mailto:torange@goldenthread.org)

**ReOrient 2012 Festival and Forum Presents  
HAMID DABASHI: IN OUR OWN WORDS  
Sunday, November 17, at 9:45am at Z Space  
FREE**

**Hamid Debashi, professor of Middle East studies at Columbia University, discusses the current state of the arts, identity, alterity, and representation in the current climate of change and upheaval.**

---

**“At a time when the Middle East dominates the headlines, ReOrient aspires to forge clarity out of chaos. This timely festival incites us to look past the 24/7 media blitz to see the cycles of tragedy.” —San Jose Mercury News.**

---

**(San Francisco) October 12, 2012 — Golden Thread Productions** presents the ReOrient 2012 Forum Keynote Address, In Our Own Words by Hamid Dabashi. Professor of Middle East Studies at Columbia University, Dabashi discusses the current state of the arts, identity, alterity, and representation in the current climate of change and upheaval. In a time where the Middle East serves as the litmus of global politics, is there an emerging dichotomy between individual expression and national identity? Join us for this engaging address to kick off our [ReOrient 2012 Forum](#).

**The ReOrient 2012 Forum is free and open to the public. [RSVP](#) strongly recommended.**

Featuring voices from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Tunisia, Egypt, England, and the U.S., Golden Thread's [ReOrient 2012 Festival and Forum](#) once again promises to turn San Francisco into a Mecca for innovative, spirited, and thought-provoking theatre from and about the Middle East. The ReOrient 2012 plays are diverse in style and content from writers with remarkably different backgrounds. The playwrights include MacArthur “Genius” Award winner Naomi Wallace, Middle East America Award winner and recipient of 2012 Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Circle Best New Play Award Yussef El Guindi, leading modernist Egyptian playwright Tawfiq Al-Hakim, winner of the William Saroyan Prize Silva Semerciyan, and local writers Elizabeth Benedict and Farzam Farrokhi. ReOrient 2012 performs in two series: Series A runs November 1-18, 2012 at Noh Space (2840 Mariposa St., San Francisco) and Series B runs for only two special performances November 16 and 17, 2012, at Z Space (450 Florida Street, San Francisco). Tickets for the festival are \$20 (discounts available) and can be purchased at [goldenthread.org](http://goldenthread.org).

To add to the conversation, [ReOrient Forum](#) draws together artistic, academic, and grass roots experts to address the powerful themes brought to light by the ReOrient Festival plays. Augmenting the theatrical aspect of life in the Middle East, the ReOrient Forum promises to engage in aspects of social justice, poetic expression, politics and current events, among other topics relevant to the Middle Eastern experience. Acclaimed author and distinguished scholar of Middle Eastern studies and comparative literature, Professor Hamid Dabashi of Columbia University will kick off the Forum with a keynote address. This year's Forum features provocative panel discussions on topics such as “The Arab Spring and Its Dramatic Reverberations,” “Engaged Performance: Building Dialogue Through Artistic Exchange,” “From ‘War on



Drugs' to 'War on Terror': Parallels in Latino/Chicano and Middle Eastern American Performance," and "Comedic Counter Terrorism." Other special performances include a staged reading Yussef El Guindi's Middle East America-commissioned play MUMMY AND THE REVOLUTION (Saturday, November 17, at 2pm) and the Closing Night Concert and Reception featuring Hafez Modirzadeh & Friends (Sunday, November 18, at 7pm). Tickets are available at [goldenthread.org](http://goldenthread.org).

**Hamid Dabashi** is the Hagop Kevorkian Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Literature at Columbia University in New York, the oldest and most prestigious chair in his field. He is a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, as well as a founding member of the Center for Palestine Studies at Columbia University. In the context of his commitment to advancing transnational art and independent world cinema, Hamid Dabashi is the founder of Dreams of a Nation, a Palestinian Film Project, dedicated to preserving and safeguarding Palestinian Cinema. He is also chiefly responsible for opening up the study of Persian literature and Iranian culture at Columbia University to students of comparative literature and society. A committed teacher in the past three decades, Hamid Dabashi lives in New York with his wife and colleague, the Iranian-Swedish feminist, Golbarg Bashi.

**Golden Thread Productions** is dedicated to exploring Middle Eastern cultures and identities as expressed around the globe. We present alternative perspectives of the Middle East by developing and producing theatrical work that is aesthetically varied and politically and viscerally engaging. Our mission is to make the Middle East a potent presence on the American stage and a treasured cultural experience. Through our work, we aim to create a world where the common human experience supersedes cultural and political differences. The Middle East lives inside us: as we redefine ourselves, we redefine the Middle East.