



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REORIENT THE WAY YOU SEE THE MIDDLE EAST WITH GOLDEN THREAD PRODUCTIONS SEP. 10–OCT. 4

**ReOrient Festival presents
eight fully-produced short plays in two repertory series, including
award-winning Iraqi-British playwright Hassan Abdulrazzak's U.S. debut,
new works by Middle East America winners
Yussef El Guindi and Mona Mansour,
as well as world premieres by emerging voices like Nahal Navidar.**

**ReOrient Forum (Oct. 3 & 4) includes panels and presentations featuring
artists, activists, and scholars from around the world.**

**Festival includes a Fairytale Players Double Bill:
Two family-friendly short plays inspired by Middle Eastern fables
presented in one afternoon on Oct. 4 at 2:30pm**

**Music lovers can enjoy Syrian-American soprano Saousan Jarjour's
reminiscing of Arabic folk songs on Oct. 3 at 2pm.**

"The annual cavalcade of short plays about the Middle East that has itself provided, in addition to a dependable variety of aesthetic pleasures, crucial space for public consideration and dialogue." —Rob Avila, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*

"The evening offers two hours of the profound and the abstruse, the silly and the sublime. When you're talking about the Middle East, you're talking about a multiplicity of cultures and an infinite variety of voices, opinions and styles, and ReOrient offers a bold and broad sampling that give us a taste of that." —Sam Hurwitt, *The Idiolect*

(San Francisco) July 15, 2015—Featuring plays and artists from Armenia, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the U.S., Golden Thread's **ReOrient 2015 Festival and Forum** will turn San Francisco into a mecca for innovative, spirited, and thought-provoking theatre from and about the Middle East. With plays, talkbacks, panels, roundtable conversations, a family show, and a recital for Arabic music lovers, ReOrient 2015 is an artistic

celebration and political exploration of this transforming region for curious and engaged theatre lovers and those passionate about international themes.

The ReOrient Festival presents eight remarkably eclectic short plays in two series in repertory. The playwrights featured include Middle East America Award winner and recipient of 2012 Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Circle Best New Play Award **Yussef El Guindi**; winner of Middle East America and Whiting Awards **Mona Mansour**; Iranian-American writer and recent USC graduate **Nahal Navidar**, and award-winning Israeli-American writer **Ken Kaissar**. For the first-time, the Festival also includes three British writers of Middle Eastern descent: winner of the William Saroyan Prize **Silva Semerciyan** returns to the ReOrient, and award-winning Iraqi-British playwright **Hassan Abdulrazzak** and Palestinian-Irish emerging writer **Hannah Khalil** make their U.S. debut.

The Festival culminates in a two-day **ReOrient Forum** featuring provocative conversations by artists, scholars, and activists from around the world. This year's Forum features UC Davis Professor **Sunaina Maira** as Keynote Speaker, and presents panels on ideas of home and language for Palestinian artists around the world (organized by Theatre Without Borders), the intersection of sexual identity with Middle Eastern performance (organized by Shape-Shift Arts & Saboteur Productions), a multigenerational perspective of Iranian-American theatre (organized by Diaspora Arts Connection), and a panel on the future of Bay Area's culturally-specific theatre companies (organized by Theatre Bay Area), amongst others. ReOrient Forum events are free and open to the public.

ReOrient 2015 also includes two special performances. Music lovers will get a chance to enjoy award-winning **Syrian-American soprano Saousan Jarjour**'s reimagining of Middle Eastern folk songs on Saturday, October 3, at 2pm. **Golden Thread's Fairytale Players** present two of their most popular shows for families, inspired by Iranian and Armenian fables, as a double-bill on Sunday, October 4, at 2pm.

"Nowhere else in the US, and certainly not anywhere in the Middle East, will you be able to see such a diverse collection of plays from and about the Middle East on one stage," Founding Artistic Director Torange Yeghiazarian explains. "But at the end of the day, ReOrient is more about us here in the U.S. than a changing Middle East that is thousands of miles away. Bay Area audiences of all backgrounds will find themselves reflected in these intelligent and warm plays."

Evren Odcikin, Director of Marketing and New Plays, adds: "You know and are passionate about the Middle East? Join us in celebrating and exploring this diverse region and its people. Is all you know about the Middle East from mainstream media? Join us and experience a more complex and layered Middle East, with stories, conversations, and art from the people who live its reality."

ReOrient, now produced every two years, is Golden Thread's signature program and is a hugely ambitious undertaking for this intrepid theatre company. Chosen from submissions from all around the world, the festival of eight plays, selected by a committee of artists from around the country, is the artistic centerpiece of ReOrient 2015. This year's festival will employ and feature more than 75 artists and participants and engage a large team of volunteers. The ReOrient Forum presentations are co-sponsored by many like-minded partners around the world, including Diaspora Arts Connection, Shape-Shift Arts & Saboteur Productions, Theatre Without Borders, Theatre Bay Area, and the University of San Francisco. This impressive network of artists and activists is essential in creating a unique and much-needed space for conversation and exchange with the Middle East, which is a core element of Golden Thread's mission.

The ReOrient Festival performs in two series in repertory on **September 10–October 4, 2015 at Z Below** (470 Florida Street, San Francisco). Series A performs Thursdays and Saturdays at 8pm.

Series B performs Fridays at 8pm and Sundays at 3pm. **The opening nights for the festival are Saturday, September 19, at 8pm (Series A) and Sunday, September 20, at 3pm (Series B).** ReOrient Forum features free panel discussions and presentations on **October 3–4, 2015 (9am–6pm) at Z Space** (450 Florida Street, San Francisco). The Fairytale Players Double Bill for families performs on **Sunday, October 4, at 2pm at Z Space** (470 Florida Street, San Francisco). The Arabic Folk Songs Recital by Saousan Jarjour performs on **Saturday, October 3, at 2pm at Z Space** (450 Florida Street, San Francisco).

Golden Thread offers two passes that allows audiences to immerse themselves in the ReOrient experience and save: The All-Access Pass (\$60) includes admission to all Festival and Forum events and the Series Pass (\$40) includes admission to Series A and B of the Festival. Single tickets for the Festival are \$22-\$30. Single tickets to the Fairytale Players Double-Bill are \$20 and free for children 12 and under. Single tickets to The Arabic Folk Song Recital by Saousan Jarjour are \$20. ReOrient Forum panels and presentations are free and open to the public. Registration for ReOrient Forum is recommended. All passes, tickets, and registration are available at goldenthread.org.

ReOrient Festival and Forum is made possible by generous grants from **California Arts Council, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Grants for the Arts, Walter and Elise Haas Fund, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, San Francisco Arts Commission, and San Francisco Foundation**. Golden Thread also wants to acknowledge sponsors **Adobe, BART, and La Méditerranée**.

ABOUT GOLDEN THREAD

Golden Thread Productions, founded in 1996, is the first American theatre company focused on the Middle East. We produce passionate and provocative plays from and about the region that celebrate the multiplicity of its perspectives and identities. Every play serves as an invitation to discover unexpected connections and engage in deeply moving conversations that last well beyond the life of the play. In our work, we are a developmental catalyst and vibrant artistic home to artists at various stages of their careers, and bring the Middle East to the American stage, creating treasured cultural experiences for audiences of all ages and backgrounds. goldenthread.org

REORIENT 2015 FACT SHEET:

ReOrient 2015 will turn San Francisco into a mecca for innovative, spirited, and thought-provoking theatre from and about the Middle East. Featuring plays and artists from Armenia, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the U.S., ReOrient 2015 is an artistic celebration and political exploration of this transforming region and its people.

THE REORIENT PASS:

Immerse yourself in the ReOrient experience, and save money!

- **ALL-ACCESS PASS: \$60**
Includes admission to all ReOrient performances and Forum events
- **SERIES PASS: \$40**
Includes admission to Series A and B of the Festival performances

REORIENT 2015 FESTIVAL PROGRAM

WHAT: Short plays exploring the Middle East presented in two repertory series

WHEN: Sep. 10–Oct. 4, 2015
Series A: Thu & Sat at 8pm; Series B: Fri at 8pm & Sun at 3pm
Opening nights: Saturday, September 19, at 8pm (Series A); Sunday, September 20, at 3pm (Series B)

WHERE: Z Below (470 Florida St, San Francisco)

TICKETS: \$22–\$30 for each series
goldenthread.org

THE PLAYS: U.S. Premiere
Lost Kingdom by Hassan Abdulrazzak, directed by Michael French
When a Lebanese-American FBI agent is called in to interrogate a fallen dictator, a twisted tango ensues that complicates black and white notions of good and evil.

World Premiere
Picking Up the Scent by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Evren Odcikin
Hisham, an archeologist, discovers an ancient perfume bottle in a war zone. As he digs deeper, his poet wife Nisrin questions if it's worth risking his life for history.

World Premiere
Counting in Sha'ab by Emma Goldman-Sherman, directed by Erin Gilley
Life goes on for Mr. Hattab and a colorful cast of characters from his bustling Baghdad neighborhood despite a bomb going off in front of his grocery store.

World Premiere
Bitterenders by Hannah Khalil, directed by Manijeh Mohamedi
Maha's Palestinian family shares their East Jerusalem apartment with an Israeli family, until a surprising letter changes everything—or does it?

West Coast Premiere
Ceasefire by Ken Kaissar, directed by Evren Odcikin

Can a ceasefire allow Israeli and Lebanese soldiers patrolling the border to see each other as something other than enemy?

World Premiere

The House by Tala Manassah and Mona Mansour, directed by Sara Razavi
Kamal, a Palestinian-American scientist, and his philosopher daughter Alia put on a play and take an imaginary trip to his childhood home.

World Premiere

Songs of Our Childhood by Nahal Navidar, directed by Sara Razavi
Childhood friends, Mira and Sanaz, work as triage nurses during the Iran-Iraq War. But it's their ideological battles that threaten the peace inside the hospital.

U.S. Premiere

Turning Tricks by Silva Semerciyan, directed by Erin Gilley
Even slavery has evolved in wealthy and genteel Europe. But the players are not who you would expect.

ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCES:

FOR FAMILIES

The Fairytale Players Double-Bill

WHAT: *Princess Tamar Rescues Nazar the Brave* and *21 Days That Change the Year*. Two beloved family-friendly productions, inspired by Iranian and Armenian fairytales will be presented in one afternoon.

WHEN: Sun, Oct 4, 2015, at 2pm

WHERE: Z Space (450 Florida St, San Francisco)

TICKETS: Tickets: \$20 (Free for children 12 and under)
goldenthread.org

FOR MUSIC LOVERS

Arabic Folk Song Recital by Saousan Jarjour

WHAT: Acclaimed Syrian-American soprano presents a repertoire of Middle Eastern folk songs, reimagined with jazzy arrangements.

WHEN: Sat, Oct 3, 2015, at 2pm

WHERE: Z Space (450 Florida St, San Francisco)

TICKETS: \$20
goldenthread.org

REORIENT 2015 FORUM

WHAT: Join us for provocative conversations by artists, scholars, and activists from around the world. This year's Forum features UC Davis Professor Sunaina Maira as Keynote Speakers and presents panels on ideas of home and language for

Palestinian artists around the world (organized by Theatre Without Borders), the intersection of sexual identity with Middle Eastern performance (organized by Shape-Shift Arts & Saboteur Productions), a multigenerational perspective of Iranian-American theatre (organized by Diaspora Arts Connection), and a panel on the future of Bay Area's culturally-specific theatre companies (organized by Theatre Bay Area), amongst others.

- WHEN: Sat, Oct 3 & Sun, Oct 4
Panels and presentations will take place 9am–6pm each day.
- WHERE: Z Space (450 Florida St, San Francisco)
- TICKETS: FREE and open to the public
To register and for details, please visit goldenthread.org/forum.