



diwan

A Forum for the Arts

March 25 - 26, 2011

The Graduate Center, The City University of New York

365 Fifth Ave., New York, NY



**Arab American
National Museum**

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A Forum for the Arts

March 25 - 26, 2011

New York City

DIWAN: A Forum for the Arts unites Arab American artists, scholars and performers representing myriad academic fields and artistic genres. Activities include presentations of new research into Arab American arts; poetry and prose readings; film screenings; and musical performances. This weekend dialogue reinforces the Arab American National Museum's commitment to providing a place for community members and artists to meet, exchange ideas and exhibit their work. It also encourages audiences to explore the boundaries of art in addressing social issues related to Arab Americans and the community at large.

All sessions, with the exception of the Sat., March 26 performance at DROM Nightclub, are FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC and take place at The Graduate Center, The City University of New York (CUNY), 365 Fifth Ave., New York, New York.

Learn more about this year's program and interact with the presenters at www.diwanart.org.

2011 DIWAN is presented by

Arab American National Museum (AANM)

in partnership with

ALWAN for the Arts

Middle East and Middle East American Center (MEMEAC)

at The Graduate Center, The City University of New York (CUNY)

and media sponsor FEN Magazine

2011 DIWAN COMMITTEE

Holly Arida, *event coordinator*

Devon Akmon

Anan Ameri

Anny Bakalian

Ahmed Issawi

Lama Mansour

Mike Mosallam

Joe Namy

Jumana Salamey

AANM Mission

The Arab American National Museum documents, preserves, celebrates and educates the public on the history, life, culture and contributions of Arab Americans. It serves as a resource to enhance knowledge and understanding about Arab Americans and their presence in this country. The Arab American National Museum is a project of ACCESS, a Dearborn, Michigan-based nonprofit human services and cultural organization.

Learn more at www.arabamericanmuseum.org and www.accesscommunity.org.

Major funding for 2011 DIWAN comes from the Nathan Cummings Foundation.

DIWAN is also made possible in part by the Ford Foundation and the Kresge Foundation.

Schedule

Learn more about this year's event and interact with the presenters and organizers at www.diwanart.org.

FRIDAY 3.25.11

8:30 - 9 a.m.

REGISTRATION

9 - 9:30 a.m.

WELCOME (Recital Hall)

Holly Arida DIWAN coordinator, Arab American National Museum
Anan Ameri director, Arab American National Museum
Mehdi Bozorgmehr co-director, MEMEAC

9:30 - 11 a.m.

REFLECTIONS ON ELEVEN SEPTEMBER (Recital Hall)

As we approach the 10-year anniversary, Arab American visual artists and writers grapple with 9/11 in their work

Moderator Lama Mansour

Eleven Reflections on September // Andrea Assaf
Explosives Called Words – Arab American Writers Grapple
with Terrorism // Andrea Shalal-Esa
Quest to Belong // Ayad Alkadhi

9:30 - 11 a.m.

THE STORIES WE TELL (Room C198)

Arab Americans convey their truth through emerging mediums of installation art, film and the graphic novel

Moderator Devon Akmon

The Hookah Girl and Other True Stories // Marguerite Dabaie
New York Chronicles // Maymanah Farhat
Stories from Studio Haret el Yahoud:
An Egyptian-American Artist Meets her Neighbors // Nada Shalaby

11 - 11:15 a.m. • BREAK

11:15 a.m.-1 p.m.

CHANGING THE DIALOGUE (Recital Hall)

Artists use language to redirect discourse on Arab America

Moderator Mike Mosallam

Changing the National and Global Dialogue through Theatre // Noor Theatre
Becoming American, Prose, Poems and Paintings // Ibtisam Barakat
Hip Hop and Identity // Maytha Alhassen
And It Don't Stop – Hip Hop as a Means of Criticism of Global Marginalization
in Suheir Hammad's breaking poems // Katharina Motyl

11:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

EDUCATION AS ART (Room C198)

From public television to high school and university classrooms, artists shape the next generation's perceptions about Arab Americans

Moderator TBA

Representing Arabs in a Positive Light Though

Children's Entertainment // Shabnam Rezaei and Aly Jetha

Written on the Body // Randa Jarrar

Arab American High School Juniors Reflect on their Experience of Arab American

Art and Literature in their K-12 Education // Taher Dahleh,

Rami Benayad-Cherif, Deema Dahleh

12:45 - 2 p.m. • LUNCH

2 - 3:30 p.m.

ONE-WOMAN SHOW: FEMALE, FREEDOM, AND FADWA (Recital Hall)

Spotlighting successful shows that Arab American women have brought to the stage to tell their stories across the country

Moderator Leila Buck

Everyone Has Tears // Cynthia Sophiea with Zafer Tawil

I Heart Hamas and Other Things I'm Afraid to Tell You // Jennifer Jajeh

Lend me an ID // Nora Armani

2 - 3:30 p.m.

UNCONFERENCE SESSION (Room C198)

Our audience chooses topics around Arab American art for an open dialogue

Moderator Devon Akmon

3:30 - 5 p.m.

WE ARE THE EARTH:

HOME, HOMELESSNESS AND TERRAIN, A READING (Recital Hall)

Some of our finest poets contemplate frequent themes that frame the Arab American experience

Moderator Khaled Mattawa

Elmaz Abinader

Deema K. Shehabi

Hayan Charara

SATURDAY 3.26.11

9:30 - 10 a.m.

REGISTRATION & WELCOME (Recital Hall)

Anan Ameri Arab American National Museum

10 - 11:30 a.m.

CONVERGING ON ARAB AMERICAN MUSIC (Recital Hall)

How music gives voice to modern and classical Middle Eastern culture

Moderator Taoufik Ben Amor

An Arab American Voice in Film Music // Kareem Roustom

On the Convergence Liberation of Maqam, Flamenco,

and Jazz Systems // Hafez Modrizadeh

The Iraqi Maqam: Musical Structure and Cultural Synthesis // Amir ElSaffar

11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. • LUNCH

1-2 p.m.

PERFORMANCE by THE PHILADELPHIA ARAB MUSIC ENSEMBLE (Recital Hall)

Led by Music Director Hanna Khoury and formed by Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, this community ensemble of singers and instrumentalists performs a selection of music from Lebanon and Egypt by composers such as Marcel Khalife, Muhammad Abdel Wahab and Sayyed Darwish.

2 - 3:30 p.m.

ART AS INTERVENTION (Recital Hall)

Artists intervene in the reality of war and conflict through multimedia arts, sculpture and film

Moderator Holly Arida

Mapping: Un/Real Cityscapes The Beyrouth:

Baghdad Project // Youmna Chlala & Dena Al-Adeeb

Responding to the War on Gaza: From Emotion to Metaphor,
from Sentiment to Symbol // Reem Gibriel

Wounds of the Heart: An Artist and her Nation // John Halaka

3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

2011 DIWAN KEYNOTE ADDRESS by PROF. JOSEPH MASSAD (Recital Hall)

INTRODUCTION: **Ahmed Issawi** ALWAN for the Arts

Joseph Massad is associate professor of modern Arab politics and intellectual history at Columbia University. He is author of *Desiring Arabs* (2007), which was awarded the Lionel Trilling Book Award; *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinian Question* (2006), and *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (2001). Professor Massad is a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Palestine Studies, and is the book review editor for the journal. He is the author of tens of academic articles and is also columnist for the Egyptian *Al-Ahram Weekly* and for the Lebanese daily *Al-Akhbar*.

7 - 11 p.m.

TICKETED EVENT

PUBLIC PERFORMANCE by KINAN AZMEH'S CITY BAND

(DROM, 85 Ave. A between 5th & 6th Sts.)

Presented by FEN Magazine

Celebrate DIWAN's New York debut at this festive affair featuring the worldly jazz sound of Kinan Azmeh's City Band and the soulful voice of AlSarah & The Nubatones. Experience a never-before-heard collaboration between some of Arab America's finest artists.

Tickets are available in advance for \$10 at

<http://www.dromnyc.com/events/698/closing-party-for-diwan>; \$15 at the door.

Recommended Accommodations

St. Giles Hotel, The Court

130 E. 39th St.

New York, NY 10016

212.685.1100

<http://court.stgilesnewyork.com>

For further information on 2011 DIWAN, email diwan@accesscommunity.org or call **313.582.2266**.

ALL DIWAN presentations will be available **FREE** on the Arab American National Museum's **iTunes U** page by June 1, 2011 (*iTunes software required; free download at www.apple.com/itunes/download*).

BIOGRAPHIES

READ MORE ABOUT AND INTERACT WITH 2011 DIWAN PRESENTERS, MODERATORS AND SPEAKERS AT WWW.DIWANART.ORG

Elmaz Abinader is the author of a memoir, *Children of the Roojme*; an award-winning collection of poetry, *In The Country of My Dreams*; and performances, including *Country of Origin*. She is a co-founder of the VONA Voices Workshop for writers of color and teaches at Mills College.

Devon Akmon is deputy director of the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. He has a strong interest in collective memory and new media initiatives. Akmon earned degrees from Michigan State University and Eastern Michigan University and has worked as a photojournalist and a curator.

Dena Al-Adeeb is an artist/scholar born in Baghdad, Iraq. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Culture and Representation Track, at New York University. Her work is transdisciplinary, utilizing a variety of media including installation, performance, painting, sculpting, video, photography, sound, and writing.

Maytha Alhassen is a University of Southern California Provost Ph.D. Fellow in American Studies and Ethnicity and a NewGround Fellow. She is also a Program Assistant for USC's Middle East Studies Program, an Arab Film Festival Los Angeles steering committee member, and a performer in the international touring production, *Hijabi Monologues*.

Ayad Alkadhi's work employs traditional and stylized forms of Arabic calligraphy as a platform to present current social and political issues of Iraq and the Middle East. The Iraqi artist's recent exhibits include the Queens Museum and Station Museum in the U.S. as well as exhibits in Europe and the UAE.

Anan Ameri PhD is the founding director of the Arab American National Museum (AANM), the only museum of its kind in the world. A Palestinian American who emigrated to the U.S. from Amman, Jordan, Ameri is a widely respected sociologist, scholar and author. She earned her PhD in sociology at Wayne State University.

Nora Armani is an award-winning actress who has interpreted lead roles in American, French, Czech, Armenian, Lebanese and Egyptian film, stage and television productions and performed on four continents. She holds degrees from the University of London, American University Cairo and UCLA.

Holly Arida is event coordinator for 2011 DIWAN and an AANM advisor. She has co-edited two books with Dr. Anan Ameri, *Etching Our Own Image: Voices from Within the Arab American Art Movement* and *Daily Life of Arab Americans in the 21st Century*. She is on faculty at Cranbrook Kingswood Upper School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Andrea Assaf, founder/artistic director of Art2Action, is a performer, writer, director and cultural organizer. She holds an MA in Performance Studies from New York University. Recent honors include Princess Grace Award –Theater and an NPN Creation Fund commission. Memberships: CAATA Board of Directors; Alternate ROOTS; RAWI.

Anny Bakalian PhD is associate director of MEMEAC at the Graduate Center, CUNY. She is the author of *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond* with Mehdi Bozorgmehr (University of California Press, 2009), and serves on the boards of ALWAN and the Arab American Family Support Center.

Ibtisam Barakat is a bilingual author and poet. Her acclaimed memoir, *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood* (FSG, 2007), won more than 20 awards and honors and is available in six languages. Her new book in Arabic, *Al-Ta' Al-Marboutah Tateer*, won a 2010 Reading Here, There & Everywhere Award.

Taufik Ben Amor is Gordon Gray Jr. Senior Lecturer in Arabic Studies at Columbia University. His research combines his interests in music, language and identity in the Arab World through the study of lyrics. Ben Amor is also an active musician and music producer.

Rami Benayad-Cherif was born in Cambridge, MA and raised in Lexington, MA. He is an American citizen as well as an Algerian citizen. He is 16 years old and a junior at Lexington High School.

Mehdi Bozorgmehr is associate professor of sociology and co-director of the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC) at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He is co-author, with Anny Bakalian, of *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond*, published by UC Press in 2009.

Leila Buck is an award-winning actress, writer, and teaching artist who has performed and taught across the U.S., Europe, and Asia. She is a member of New York Theatre Workshop's Usual Suspects, the Public Theater's Emerging Writers Group, a U.S. State Department Cultural Envoy, and a recipient of the Middle East America Special Jury Prize.

Hayan Charara's books are *The Alchemist's Diary* (2001) and *The Sadness of Others* (2006). He edited *Inclined to Speak: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Poetry* (2008) and is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship and the Lucille Joy Prize for Poetry.

Youmna Chlala is an artist and writer born in Beirut. She investigates fate and architecture through drawing, video, books and performance. She received her MFA at the California College of the Arts and has exhibited internationally. She is currently on faculty at the Pratt Institute in New York.

Deema Dahleh is an eleventh grade student at Milton Academy in Milton, Massachusetts. She is a lifelong resident of Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she resides on campus at her parents' employer, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is of Palestinian and Moroccan descent.

Taher Dahleh was born in Santa Barbara, California. He attended the Montessori School of Goleta through the fourth grade and currently lives in Lexington, Massachusetts, where he is a junior at Lexington High School. Dahleh is of Palestinian origin; his family currently lives in Amman, Jordan.

Marguerite Dabaie has received two grants to publish her ongoing graphic novel, *The Hookah Girl*. Based in Brooklyn, she is currently in the MFA Illustration program at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, while teaching art workshops and working at a Manhattan museum.

Amir ElSaffar, an Iraqi-American trumpeter, santour player, vocalist and composer, is on the forefront of a wave of musicians who are incorporating the traditional musical styles of their cultural backgrounds with modern sensibilities, blurring the lines and conventions that differentiate styles.

Maymanah Farhat is an art historian specializing in modern and contemporary Arab art. She is based in New York.

Reem Gibril received her BFA in ceramics from Al-Fateh University in Tripoli, Libya, and her MFA from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She has exhibited her work in several solo and group exhibits in Libya, Egypt and the U.S.

John Halaka is an activist artist whose creative work serves as a vehicle for meditation on personal, cultural and political concerns. His recent work in both painting and documentary filmmaking investigates issues of identity construction from personal, familial and political perspectives.

Ahmed Issawi is cofounder/executive director of ALWAN for the Arts, a New York, NY-based nonprofit that promotes and advances Arab arts and culture by presenting a wide range of public events. Issawi earned a BA in Philosophy and Comparative Literature at Northwestern University and an MA at the New School.

Jennifer Jajeh has appeared in dozens of film, television, commercial and theater productions and produced/directed award-winning film/video projects. Trained at New York's Lee Strasberg Theatre Conservatory and the American Conservatory Theatre, San Francisco-based Jajeh is currently touring the U.S. with her acclaimed solo show, *I Heart Hamas*.

Aly Jetha, president, Big Bad Boo Studios/oznoz.com, is producer of *Babak & Friends*, *Mixed Nutz* (PBS), and *1001 Nights*. He holds a BA in International Relations from University of British Columbia and a JD from Berkeley Law. Born in Zambia and raised in Vancouver, Jetha has launched several companies, including a semiconductor business and a telecommunications firm.

Randa Jarrar's novel *A Map of Home* was published in six languages and won the Hopwood Award and Arab American Book Award. Her work has appeared in *The Oxford American*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *The Utne Reader*. She was selected for Beirut39, celebrating the most gifted Arab writers under age 40.

Lama Mansour chaired the 2007 and 2009 DIWANs during her years in education and public programming at the Arab American National Museum; she is an advisor to this year's event. Mansour is a speech language pathologist who holds a BA from Mount Holyoke College and an MA from Wayne State University.

Joseph Massad PhD is associate professor of Middle East, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia University. He is the author of *Desiring Arabs* (2007), which was awarded the Lionel Trilling Book Award; and *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinian Question* (2006).

Khaled Mattawa is the author of four books of poetry, most recently *Tocqueville* (2010), and the translator of nine volumes of contemporary Arabic poetry. He is the recipient of the 2010 Academy of American Poets Fellowship Prize and a Ford/United States Artist for 2011.

Hafez Modirzadeh is a professor of World Cultures in Music at San Francisco State University, two-time NEA Jazz Fellow, Senior Fulbright Scholar, and saxophonist/theorist, who has performed, recorded and published internationally on original cross-cultural concepts spanning Iranian, Andalusian and African American musical traditions.

Mike Mosallam, director of film initiatives for Wayne County (MI), performs in studio and independent stage, film and television projects. Recent appearances include Comedy Central's *The Watch List* and 2010 Edinburgh Fringe Festival; his one-man show, *MUSLIM: The Musical!*, will soon tour nationally. Mosallam earned a BFA in Musical Theatre at the University of Michigan.

Katharina Motyl is a PhD candidate at the Graduate School of North American Studies of John F. Kennedy Institute of Freie Universitaet Berlin, Germany; her dissertation topic is Arab American Literature and Film since 9/11.

Joe Namy aka El-Iqaa uses documentary practices, music videos, sound and drawings to explore aspects of identity, memory, power, and community. His work is situated somewhere between Detroit and Beirut. He received an MFA from NYU; he learned to play the derbekah from his parents.

Noor Theatre responds to the imperative for authentic representations of Middle Easterners. As company-in-residence at the acclaimed New York Theatre Workshop, Noor Theatre supports, develops and presents the work of theatre artists of Middle Eastern descent, bringing their dynamic, seldom-heard voices to the fore—and eventually into the mainstream.

Shabnam Rezaei, president, Big Bad Boo Studios/oznoz.com, is producer of *Babak & Friends*, *Mixed Nutz* (PBS), and *1001 Nights*. She launched PersianMirror.com and has also worked in finance. Born in Iran and raised in Austria, Rezaei has a BS in Computer Science and a BA in German Literature from University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from New York University.

Kareem Roustom is an Emmy-nominated composer who has composed music for film, television, the concert hall and album projects. Roustom, a Syrian American, is a musically bilingual composer who has collaborated with a wide variety of artists ranging from the Philadelphia Orchestra to Shakira.

Jumana Salamey was curator of education at the Arab American National Museum from 2007-09, where she developed educational programs including cultural competency workshops. She holds a BA from the University of Michigan in Psychology and is currently working on a doctorate degree in Audiology at Wayne State University.

Nada Shalaby is an interdisciplinary artist engaged in social art practice. Born in Cairo, she completed graduate studies at the American University in Cairo and Northwestern University. Her work has been exhibited in the U.S. and Egypt. She currently lives and works in Chicago.

Andrea Shalal-Esa, defense industry correspondent for Reuters, contributed to *Books and Beyond: The Greenwood Encyclopedia of New American Reading* (2008) and *Etching Our Own Image: Voices From Within the Arab American Art Movement* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007). She also teaches classes on race and ethnicity.

Deema K. Shehabi is the author of *Thirteen Departures from the Moon*, a full-length poetry collection forthcoming from Press 53 in March 2011. Her poems have appeared widely in literary journals including *The Kenyon Review*, *New Letters*, and *Literary Imagination*. She resides in Northern California.

Cynthia Sophiea is an actress whose Broadway credits include *Victor Victoria*, with Julie Andrews; *Zorba*, with Anthony Quinn; *My Fair Lady*, with Rex Harrison; *She Loves Me*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; and *The Scarlet Pimpernel*; she toured nationally in *Mamma Mia*. TV appearances include *Without a Trace*; *The Closer*; *Malcolm in the Middle*, *Raising the Bar*.

Zafer Tawil is a virtuoso on oud, violin and qanoun and a master Arabic percussionist. He has performed with such musicians as pop star Sting, avant-garde composer Elliot Sharpe, and Arabic music masters Simon Shaheen, Cheb Mami, Bassam Saba, and George Ziadeh. Films: *Rachel Getting Married* and *Until When* (documentary).

ALL DIWAN presentations will be available **FREE** on the Arab American National Museum's **iTunes U** page by June 1, 2011 (*iTunes software required; free download at www.apple.com/itunes/download*).



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