STORIES OF DEARBORN’S ARAB AMERICAN COMMUNITY
TOLD BY THE WOMEN WHO LIVED THEM

8 P.M. FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, MAY 11-12, 2018
ALIYA HASSAN AUDITORIUM, ARAB AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM
UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS/DEARBORN
STORIES OF DEARBORN’S ARAB AMERICAN COMMUNITY TOLD BY THE WOMEN WHO LIVED THEM

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
Sara Zatz and Sherrine Azab

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE PERFORMERS
Salam Aboulhassan
Rasha Ahmed Almulaiki
Shahad Atiya
Layla Elabed
Nuzmeya Bader Elder, PhD
Mary Kamal Gagnon

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER Jessie Balaka
PROJECTION DESIGNER Jake Hooker
LIGHTING DESIGNER Chantel Gaidica
SOUND TECHNICIAN Kris Truzzi
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PING CHONG + COMPANY Bruce Allardice
HUMANITIES PROGRAMMING COORDINATOR, AANM Kathryn Grabowski
CURATOR OF EDUCATION + PUBLIC PROGRAMMING, AANM Ryah Aqel
DIRECTOR, AANM Devon Akmon

PLEASE NOTE

Undesirable Elements/Dearborn is performed by real people, not actors. Although not explicit, the production contains references to sexual abuse, domestic violence, mental health issues and suicide, war and displacement.

ABOUT PING CHONG + COMPANY

Ping Chong + Company was founded in 1975 by leading theatrical innovator and National Medal of Arts Recipient Ping Chong. The New York City-based company is known as a leader in the performing arts field for its collaborative artistic partnerships, and is at the forefront of the community-engaged arts movement. Since 1975, the company has produced over 100 productions at theatrical venues and festivals around the country and the world, striving to reach the widest audiences with the greatest level of artistic innovation and social integrity. For more info about Ping Chong + Company visit www.pingchong.org or follow on social media @pingchongco

ABOUT THIS PERFORMANCE

Undesirable Elements/Dearborn is part of Ping Chong + Company’s ongoing series of community-specific, interview-based theater works known as the Undesirable Elements series. Created in 1992 by Ping Chong, each production is made with local partner organizations and participants sharing their own life stories on stage. Since 1992, over 50 productions have been created around the U.S., focusing on the experiences of people with disabilities, refugees in the U.S., LGBTQ youth of color, and survivors of sexual abuse. Ping Chong + Company has created documentaries, toolkits, and training workshops and arts education programs to accompany and expand the reach of the theatrical programs. This production is part of Ping Chong + Company’s Beyond Sacred National Initiative, to use theater and art to foster dialogue and understanding around Muslim identity in the United States. The Beyond Sacred initiative is supported by the Building Bridges Program, the grant-making arm of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, which is an extension of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

ABOUT GLOBAL FRIDAYS AND ARAB AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

AANM’s Global Fridays multicultural performance series – a sister to the annual Concert of Colors world music festival – has offered high-quality presentations for fans of traditional and modern global performing arts and those with adventurous cultural appetites since 2005.

Since opening its doors in 2005, the Arab American National Museum (AANM) has remained the nation’s only cultural institution to document, preserve and present the history, culture and contributions of Arab Americans. Located in Dearborn, Michigan, amid one of the largest concentrations of Arab Americans in the United States, AANM presents exhibitions and a wide range of public programs in Michigan and in major cities across the United States. AANM is one of just four Michigan Affiliates of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. AANM is an institution of ACCESS, the Dearborn, Michigan-based human service agency founded in 1971.
CAST

SALAM ABOULHASSAN is a PhD candidate in the department of Sociology at Wayne State University. The Dearborn Heights resident is currently completing her dissertation on Muslim women’s experiences in the workforce. “In the last year, I have been more vocal about my experiences as an Arab American and Muslim woman, both in my own research and in my personal life/social circle. So, when this project started, individuals who saw it forwarded it to me because they had heard my story in some capacity. I had also been thinking about a new medium through which I can tell my story. It really was just great timing.”

RASHA AHMED ALMULAIKI is a program director at Global Ties Detroit, a non-profit that hosts U.S.-State Dept.-sponsored international delegates for professional and cultural exchange programs. “Being part of this project means embracing and sharing ownership of my lived experience without being filtered through other people’s instinctual categorization of who I am, where I’ve been and where I want to go.”

SHAHAD ATIYA was born in Baghdad, Iraq, and currently resides in Detroit. She works as an immigration and criminal defense attorney. “I am interested in sharing stories of immigrant communities because there are so many different generations in America. Each experience is one thread making up the cloth of the American dream.”

LAYLA ELABED was born in Wyandotte, Mich., and currently resides in Dearborn. She is a program coordinator in the Sexual Assault Prevention Program at ACCESS. “I was inspired to audition for Undesirable Elements/Dearborn after participating in AANM’s Hikayat storytelling series and seeing other young Muslim/Arab American women relating to my story as a survivor.”

NUZMEYA BADER ELDER, PHD is an educator and mental health counselor living in Dearborn. “As a private person, naturally I was cautious about sharing publicly. Yet, I felt the importance to share my experiences of historical moments for others to gain insight into many defining sacrifices and contributions made by those before us that continue to benefit us today and beyond. History holds the truth.”

MARY KAMAL GAGNON is a visual artist and educator born in Pontiac, Mich., and currently residing in Dearborn. “I was really captivated by the idea of giving a first-hand narrative of life in Dearborn that maybe a lot of people are not familiar with or can’t conceive because of the misrepresentation that occurs in the media. I also felt this project aligned with my own healing and could be cathartic.”

CREATIVE TEAM

SARA ZATZ (co-writer/director) is the associate director of Ping Chong + Company where she oversees the company’s community engagement and training programs, and the Undesirable Elements series. Since 2002, she has overseen the creation of dozens of original works in the series, working with partner organizations ranging from large regional theaters to local community arts organizations. She is the writer and director of Secret Survivors, which explores the experiences of survivors of child sexual abuse. Other recent projects include Undesirable Elements: Generation NYZ (New Victory), South of the Eight (La Jolla Playhouse) and Beyond Sacred: Voices of Muslim Identity (national touring). Zatz holds a BA from Bryn Mawr College and an M.Phil in Irish Theatre Studies from Trinity College Dublin. She has spoken and presented workshops on community-engaged theater at many conferences and universities.

SHERRINE AZAB (co-writer/director) is the co-director of Detroit-based theater company A Host of People. In addition to directing she is also a producer, performance curator and educator. She holds a BFA from Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle where she founded the critically acclaimed company Strike Anywhere Productions before moving to New York City. There she served as the associate producer for The Foundry Theatre (NYC) during its 2011 and 2012 seasons and is a proud associate artist with Target Margin Theater (NYC). She holds a postgraduate certificate from the Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance at Wesleyan University and was a member of the 2008 Lincoln Center Director’s Lab. She is currently the Engagement Manager for the Network of Ensemble Theaters, a 2018 UMS Artist in Residence, and occasionally teaches storytelling workshops for the Arab American National Museum.

JESSIE BALAKA (stage manager) is a recent graduate of University of Michigan -Ann Arbor, where she earned a BFA Theatre Design and Production with a concentration in Stage Management. She has worked on various plays, musicals, and operas at UM during her time there. Over the past few summers, she has worked as an intern at Des Moines Metro Opera and The Glimmerglass Festival, as well as stage managing Spring Awakening with Ann Arbor in Concert. Balaka is a Dearborn native, graduating from Dearborn High School in 2013.
CHANTEL GAIDICA (lighting designer) is a production professional, focusing on producing new work, production management and lighting design. She moved to the Detroit area from New York, where she served as artistic director for Te Ilum Theatre & Arts for two seasons, as well as working with companies and venues including Red Bull Theater, On The Rocks, Dixon’s Place, Joe’s Pub, and Playwrights Horizons. In Michigan she has worked extensively at the University of Michigan, Tipping Point Theater, the RUMPUSroom and others; and is a proud company member and the producer of A Host of People. Gaidica is a graduate of New York University, Tisch School of the Arts. www.chantelgaidica.com.

JAKE HOOKER (projection designer) is a writer, director, projection designer, educator and co-director of A Host of People. In Detroit, his work has been seen at ArtlabJ, Detroit Contemporary, the Play House, Jam Handy and the Sidewalk Festival, as well as at many found spaces, both public and private. He holds a BFA from Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle and an MA from the University of Wales. He is currently writing his dissertation in support of a PhD in Theater from CUNY Grad Center and teaches theater at Oakland University.

THANKS


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