

Golden Thread Productions presents

20<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary

# ReOrient

**Festival of short plays**

Seven Short Plays. One Unforgettable Evening.

October 18–November 17, 2019

[goldenthread.org](http://goldenthread.org)

Think you know the Middle East? Think Again!

# WELCOME TO REORIENT 2019!



The idea of an evening of short plays emerged from a need for our plays to include the many countries and peoples that we include in Golden Thread's broad and inclusive definition of the Middle East. This was – and continues to be – a personal mission for me, having grown up as an Armenian minority in Iran and raised both Christian and Muslim in my mixed family. I have always wanted

Golden Thread's work to reflect the many layers of our identity, perspective, and aesthetic. But of course that is impossible even for a festival of short plays. It has become clear that no amount of clever programming can fully reflect the complexities of our lives. And so, each ReOrient becomes a litmus of our collective state of mind, which is by itself an impressive purpose to serve.

This year's ReOrient is no different. What stands out most is the singular voice of women. Women playwrights and women characters speak to us about privilege, power, and the improbability of fulfillment. Veteran playwrights and newcomers alike struggle with finding the right answers. They ask, what happens when women — particularly "ethnic" women — take power? How do we gain agency and achieve personal fulfillment? What happens when we have no control? Or when our values do not reflect those of the world we live in? These are profound questions, particularly when addressing universal concerns such as health care, immigration, and war. How much control do we really have over such matters? If we understand privilege to imply access to the multitudes of choices, then how do we exercise those choices? ReOrient always leaves us with more questions than answers.

This year's 20th anniversary of ReOrient also marks a historic gathering of Middle Eastern theatre artists on November 9 and 10 to launch a national coalition. We are organizing to advocate for our work and ourselves. Join us for the working sessions, if you are a theatre artist of Middle Eastern heritage, or come to the ReOrient Forum gatherings and contribute to the conversation.

I am grateful for the tireless efforts of so many who made ReOrient 2019 possible. A big shout out to the ReOrient team, Golden Thread's Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers, and donors! We could not do our work without you! Thank you for being here and enjoy the show.

Torange Yeghiazarian, Artistic Director

Take our audience survey!  
Tell us who you are and why  
you're here:

[goldenthread.org/survey](https://goldenthread.org/survey)

JOIN THE CONVERSATION



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# ReOrient 2019 Festival of Short Plays

featuring plays by Yussef El Guindi, Rendah  
Heywood, Lameece Issaq, Mustafa Kaymak,  
Betty Shamieh, Niku Sharei & Naomi Wallace

## Ensemble

Sofia Ahmad<sup>\*†</sup>, Atosa Babaoft<sup>\*†</sup>, Ali-Moosa Mirza, Lawrence Radecker<sup>\*†</sup>,  
Amitis Rossoukh

## Production Team

Directors.....	Michael French, Rebecca Novick, Lisa Marie Rollins, Torange Yeghiazarian
Lead Dramaturg.....	Nakissa Etemad <sup>†</sup>
Research & Publications	
Dramaturgs.....	Emily DeDakis, Laura Espino, Scott Horstein, Michael Malek Najjar
Scenic Designer.....	Kate Boyd <sup>†</sup>
Lighting Designer.....	Dylan Feldman
Sound Designer.....	James Ard <sup>†</sup>
Costume Designer.....	Brooke Jennings
Properties Designer.....	Grisel GG Torres <sup>†</sup>
Makeup Designer.....	Kenan Arun <sup>†</sup>
Graphic Designer.....	Navid G. Maghami
Casting Director.....	Nakissa Etemad <sup>†</sup>
Technical Director.....	Megan Hillard
Production Manager.....	Grisel GG Torres <sup>†</sup>
Assistant Production Manager...	Tyler Miller
Stage Manager.....	Karen Runk <sup>*†</sup>
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Michelle Bank, Caitlin McFann
Box Office Associates.....	Aram Krikorian, Edie Mari
Interns.....	Tulin Chang-Maltepe, Omar Hutchins, Maya Nazzal

## Thanks to our generous sponsors of ReOrient 2019

California Arts Council, San Francisco Arts Commission, The William and  
Flora Hewlett Foundation, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, The Center for Middle  
Eastern Studies at UC Berkeley, University of San Francisco Performance &  
Social Justice Program, Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas,  
May Allam, and Artin Der Minassians.

GoldenThread is a resident company of **Potrero Stage**, operated by **PlayGround**,  
and this show is presented as part of PlayGround's Potrero Stage Presenting Program.

<sup>\*</sup>Member, Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers

<sup>†</sup>Golden Thread Resident Artist



## REORIENT 2019 LINE-UP

### THE GRIEVANCE CLUB by Rendah Heywood (*West Coast Premiere*)

directed by Lisa Marie Rollins

Woman      **Atosa Babaoiff\***      Voice      **Amitis Rossoukh**

SETTING: New York City

TIME: The present

*The Grievance Club* premiered at the Samuel French OOB Festival of Short Plays in 2018 in New York City.

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### THE BASEMENT by Mustafa Kaymak (*World Premiere*)

directed by Michael French

Lieutenant      **Lawrence Radecker\***      Ayca      **Amitis Rossoukh**  
Soldier      **Ali-Moosa Mirza**

SETTING: A Military office on the outskirts of Istanbul, Turkey

TIME: 1990s

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### AN ECHO OF LAUGHTER by Betty Shamieh (*U.S. Premiere*)

directed by Michael French

Teacher      **Sofia Ahmad\***      Hitler      **Lawrence Radecker\***

SETTING: Gaza City, Palestine

TIME: The present

*An Echo of Laughter* was commissioned by Landestheater Linz in Austria for Land Of The Lambs project, to write about the company's location, the birthplace of Hitler. It premiered in German translation with several other short plays in March 2013. In *Echo*, the Bethlehem teacher is based on Shamieh's distant cousin. Her students turned their diaries into a play called *Our Diaries Through the Wall* and performed it at Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2005.

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### NOOR AND HADI GO TO HOGWARTS

by **Lameece Issaq** (*West Coast Premiere*)

directed by Rebecca Novick | assistant director: Nakissa Etemad

Noor, 10 years old      **Sofia Ahmad\***      Hadi, 8 years old      **Ali-Moosa Mirza**

SETTING: A bombed-out house in Aleppo, Syria

TIME: The present

*Noor and Hadi Go to Hogwarts* was commissioned by Theater Breaking Through Barriers (TBTB) in NYC, a company dedicated to working with artists with disabilities. It was inspired by Bana Alabed, the seven-year-old Syrian girl in Aleppo who tweeted about the bombings and received the *Harry Potter* e-books from J.K. Rowling's agent in November 2016.



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## 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION

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### THE BOOK OF MIMA by Naomi Wallace (*World Premiere*)

directed by Rebecca Novick | assistant director: Nakissa Etemad

Voice **Lawrence Radecker\***

SETTING: An imagined Yemen

TIME: The present

*The Book of Mima* was inspired, in part, by Lamya Khalidi's essay, "The Destruction of Yemen and its Cultural Heritage," *Int. Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 49 (2017). It was part of *Imagine: Yemen*, an evening in 2018 of staged readings of nine short plays focusing on the crisis of war and hunger in Yemen, and the significant role of the U.S. in this calamity.

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### IN SPENGLIC by Niku Sharei (*World Premiere*)

directed by Lisa Marie Rollins

Meetoo	<b>Sofia Ahmad*</b>	ShelB	<b>Amitis Rossoukh</b>
Kella	<b>Atosa Babaoft*</b>		

SETTING: GloBtron Company in the country of Spenglia

TIME: 2040

An earlier version of *In Spenglic* was staged for one night at the Short+Sweet Festival in 2015 in Dubai, directed by the playwright.

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### BRASS KNUCKLES by Yussef El Guindi (*World Premiere*)

directed by Torange Yeghiazarian

Maysoon **Atosa Babaoft\***

SETTING: The Bay Area

TIME: The present

*Brass Knuckles* is a reaction to the horrific attack by a white nationalist against two young Muslim women on a Portland MAX train in 2017 which resulted in the fatal stabbing of two men and the injuring of a third who stepped in to help them.

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## REORIENT 2019 HONORABLE MENTIONS

Each year, there is a wealth of worthy playwrights that we're not able to include in the festival.

**Hassan Abdulrazzak**, *The Tune is Always Better on the Other Side*

**Hannah Khalil**, *The Yellow Coat*

**William Mohammad Razavi**, *Wenceslaus Square*

**Adam Ashraf El-Sayigh**, *The Bug*

**Nabra Nelson**, *Induced Labor*

**Edessa Tailo**, *Bullseye*





# YEMENI HERITAGE, SAUDI VANDALISM

by **Lamya Khalidi**

*These are excerpts from the June 26, 2015 New York Times Op-Ed by Khalidi, an archaeologist at the French National Center for Scientific Research who has excavated mainly in Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. This author's work is one of the inspirations for The Book of Mima by Naomi Wallace.*

**S**ince March [2015], Saudi Arabia has conducted a large-scale campaign of air attacks on its neighbor with the stated purpose of driving back the Houthi rebels who have taken control of the capital Sana [sic] and large parts of the country.

These aerial bombardments have not managed to reverse the gains of the rebels, but have succeeded in devastating Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the Arab world. Thousands of civilians have been killed or injured, and hundreds of thousands have been displaced, amid severe shortages of food, fuel and medical supplies.

Less reported is that these bombardments show a pattern of targeting cultural heritage sites in a country that has made extraordinary contributions to world civilization. [...] Thought by many to be the historic home of the Queen of Sheba, Yemen is one of the great jewels of human antiquity, with a legacy of magnificent temples, water-management projects and towering cities dating back thousands of years. [...] On June 12, the historic city of Sana, itself a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was bombed by the Saudis. This city, continuously inhabited for over 2,500 years, contains some of the most beautiful traditional architecture in the world. [...]

Another is the Marib Dam, one of the most renowned monuments of Yemen. Constructed no later than the first millennium B.C. and still in operation until around the sixth century A.D., this feat of engineering genius enabled the irrigation of an estimated 24,000 acres of fields by means of an elaborate system of canals. [...] On May 31 [2015], the Marib Dam was bombed and gravely damaged by the Saudi-led coalition. There can be no legitimate reason to attack this ancient monument. It is not a military target, and lying in an uninhabited area at the edge of the Ramlat al-Sabatayn desert, it has no strategic value. [...]

The same obscurantist ideology by which the Islamic State justifies its destruction of cultural heritage sites appears to be driving the Saudis' air war against the precious physical evidence of Yemen's ancient civilizations. There is no other explanation for why the Saudi-led offensive should have laid waste to these irreplaceable world archaeological treasures. [...]



The Liberty Gate in Sana'a, Yemen. Photo: Encyclopædia Britannica

The United States itself has a deplorable record of protecting irreplaceable archaeological treasures during its occupation of Iraq from 2003. It could start to atone for that cultural catastrophe by reining in the regional and ideological ambitions of its Saudi partners. Only the United States has the capacity to stop the Saudis before their bombs rob the world of even more of its precious heritage.



# KURDISTAN: A NATION, BUT NOT A NATION STATE

compiled by Torange Yeghiazarian



Photo: The Kurdish Project

**T**he Kurds are the world's largest nation without a state. Kurdistan disappeared from the world maps after World War I - and the fall of the Ottoman Empire - when the victorious powers, Britain & France, carved up the Middle East. Inhabiting a contiguous 500,000-square-kilometer area spanning four different countries, 18 million Kurds live in Turkey, 8 million in Iran, 5 million in Iraq, and 2 million in Syria. There are significant Kurdish diaspora communities in Europe, the U.S., Canada and the former USSR.

Kurdish language, music, and open expression of Kurdish culture was banned in Turkey until 1991. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, political parties that represented Kurdish interests in Turkey were banned. Violence was widely reported against ordinary Kurdish citizens including systematic executions, torturing, and the murder or disappearance of Kurdish journalists, activists and politicians. *The Basement* by Mustafa Kaymak is imagined in this environment.

More recently, Turkey's military offensive against Kurdish forces in northern Syria has filled news headlines. Is this the legitimate response of a sovereign nation protecting its borders from insurgents? Or is Turkey taking advantage of a weak central government in Syria to eliminate the destabilizing effects of Kurdish independence on its borders?

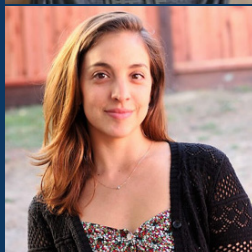




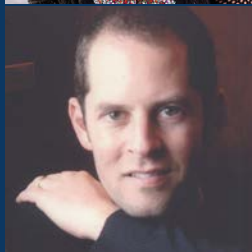
# A FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES



In the 20th Anniversary of ReOrient, Golden Thread celebrates its second partnership with **Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas**, the international service organization dedicated to the support, promotion, and advocacy of the dramaturgy field. Founded in 1985, **LMDA** holds the belief that theatre is a vital art form with the power to nourish, educate, and transform individuals and their communities, and that dramaturgy is central to the process of theater-making. Married with Golden Thread's belief in theatre's ability to transcend cultural and political boundaries and to encourage an active dialogue, the partnership provides **ReOrient** with a team of professional dramaturgs who bring their expertise in new play development, research, contextualization, and theatre writing. In return, Golden Thread offers **LMDA** collaboration with multi-national artists and access to **ReOrient**'s rich narratives and diverse perspectives from or about the Middle East.



You can read the three insightful articles by **Publications Dramaturgs** along with their bios on **Golden Thread's website** and **lmda.org**.



**ReOrient 2019 Dramaturgy Team** (from top):  
**Nakissa Etemad** (Lead Dramaturg)  
**Emily DeDakis** (Research & Publications)  
**Laura Espino** (Research)  
**Scott Horstein** (Publications)  
**Michael Malek Najjar** (Publications)





# **BUILDING A NATIONAL COALITION**

**Be part of our conversation on fostering Middle Eastern and North African narratives on the American stage!**

Golden Thread is one among a **14-member steering committee** working to increase the visibility and impact of theatrical works by Middle Eastern, North African, and Muslim (MENA) artists.

This effort builds on years of community organizing by Golden Thread, Silk Road Rising, The Lark, Noor Theatre, and Art2Action. Programmed in conjunction with the ReOrient Festival, the **two-day convening — on November 9 & 10** — comprises MENA-only work sessions as well as public ReOrient Forum panels, roundtables, and coalition-building opportunities.

All events are open to the public unless otherwise specified as a MENA-only work session for theatre artists who identify as Middle Eastern or North African. Admission is free; advanced registration is strongly encouraged.

**The National Coalition of MENA Theatre Artists Steering Committee** includes Shores Alaudini, Andrea Assaf, Leila Buck, Catherine Coray, Yussef El Guindi, Debórah Eliezer, Tracy Cameron Francis, Kathryn Haddad, Pia Haddad, Denmo Ibrahim, Taous Claire Khazem, Jamil Khoury, Michael Malek Najjar, Kate Moore Heaney, Evren Odcikin, Nora el Samahy, and Torange Yeghiazarian.

## **NATIONAL CONVENING OF MENA ARTISTS SCHEDULE**

### **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2019**

• 10 am-12 pm – **More of Our Plays on U.S. Stages.** Organized and facilitated by Torange Yeghiazarian, Golden Thread Productions, and Kate Moore Heaney, Noor Theater. (MENA-only work session)\*

A recent MENA community survey identified, “more of our plays on national stages” as the community’s top priority. In this working session, the participants will be asked to explore various strategies in groups, then report back to the full room, and then together generate a list of actionable steps and tasks.



• 12-2 pm – **Artistic and Administrative Mentorship in the MENA**

**Community.** Organized by Catherine Coray, The Lark/NYU Tisch, facilitated by Roberta Levitow, Theatre Without Borders. (MENA/public mix session; lunch provided)

Panelists: Torange Yeghiazarian, Jamil Khoury, Shoresh Alaudini, Lameece Issaq, Adam Ashraf, Raymond Bobgan, Yussef El Guindi, Evren Odcikin, Pia Haddad

This round table session will begin as an inter-generational conversation amongst artistic and administrative leaders within the MENA theater community, and will be opened to include all attendees interested in the concept of sharing skills/learning/wisdom/inspiration amongst leaders of varying experience in support of Middle Eastern American theater. Topics will include the individual experiences of Middle Eastern American artists; the ways in which the Middle Eastern American theater landscape has grown and changed; approaches to mentorship and cooperation they have found to be successful; and strategies for increased dialogue between established and emerging Middle Eastern American artists and curators.

• 2:30-4 pm – **Public Opening - Welcome, & Overview of Our Efforts to Build a MENA Theatre Artists National Coalition.** Torange Yeghiazarian and the MENA Theatre Artists Steering Committee. This session is open to the public, and will be livestreamed by HowlRound.

Golden Thread's Founding Artistic Director will contextualize current efforts to organize, and with the support of MENA Steering Committee members, present highlights from the MENA Theatre Artist Community Survey, the community's top priorities, and current goals.

• 4:30-6 pm – **MENA in the Academy: How Can Academics and Practitioners Partner to Increase MENA Productions and Publications in Academia?**

Organized by Malek Michael Najjar, University of Oregon, and Catherine Coray, The Lark/NYU Tisch. Facilitated by Roberto Gutierrez Varea, Professor, Performing Arts and Social Justice, University of San Francisco. This session is open to the public, and will be livestreamed by HowlRound.

Panelists: Leila Buck (NYU Gallatin), Natalya Handal (Columbia University), Leyla Modirzadeh (UC Berkeley), Zeina Salame (PhD(c), University of Oregon), Babak Rahimi (UC San Diego).

This panel examines the role of the academy in relation to MENA theatrical education, production, training, and publication. In the traditional university theatre system, there has been little room for MENA playwrights in the American theatre canon, leading to a paucity of representation of MENA writers, directors, actors, and designers. The panel will focus on the following questions: Why aren't MENA playwrights regularly taught in university/college curricula? Why aren't more academic theatre programs including MENA works in their



seasons? How can theatre and performance studies scholars create more books, essays, dissertations, and other publications focused on MENA work?

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2019

- 10-11:30 am – **Naming & Defining Our Coalition.** Organized by Jamil Khoury, Silk Road Rising. Facilitated by Khoury and Andrea Assaf, Art2Action. (MENA-only work session)\*

Building upon past convenings and the Middle Eastern American Theatre Artists Bill of Rights, participants in this working session will help define a broader vision of our MENA coalition. We will explore what it means to be a collective of theatre artists amplifying our voices within the American theatre, and grapple with such questions as: What should we name our coalition? What are our values and goals? How do we support one another and hold each other accountable? Where do we see our coalition ten years from now?

- 12-2 pm – **Coalition-Building & Networks.** Organized and moderated by Andrea Assaf, Artistic Director of Art2Action, Inc. This session is open to the public, and will be video livestreamed by HowlRound.

What does it take to build a movement? What's the difference between a network, coalition, or commons? How do we shift the center, to create a more equitable arts and culture field? This session invites leaders of theatres of color and national arts networks to share perspectives and models for coalition-building, exploring how we can better work together, and support each other across identity groups.

- 5:30-8 pm – **Closing reception at the Annex** with light refreshments and appetizers. Join ReOrient artists and Convening participants to celebrate our accomplishments over this weekend and be among the first to learn what we decide to call our national coalition.

Lawrence Radecker,  
Denmo Ibrahim,  
Adam Roy, and  
Emily Keyishian in  
*Turning Tricks* by  
Silva Semerciyan in  
ReOrient 2015. For  
history and photos  
from past festivals,  
see pages 16-18.





# TAKE FLIGHT WITH FAIRYTALE PLAYERS!

When the optometrist shatters little Leila's dream of becoming a pilot, a menagerie of mythic birds gather to help her accomplish her goal. Drawn from beloved Palestinian folktales,

***Leila's Quest for Flight*** incorporates music, dance, and physical comedy. **Golden Thread Fairytale Players** offer a dynamic repertoire of performances for young audiences, with plays based on traditions and folklore from across the Middle East.



## UPCOMING PUBLIC PERFORMANCES

***Potrero Hill Festival*** - Saturday, October 19, 2019

***SF Sunday Streets (Excelsior)*** - Sunday, October 20, 2019

***San Leandro Community Library*** - Wednesday, November 20, 2019 - 7:00pm

For more information and booking, email [education@goldenthread.org](mailto:education@goldenthread.org)

## ***Sneak Peak of our 2020 Season Opener***

Catch a staged reading of ***AT THE PERIPHERY***, presented by Crowded Fire Theater Company as part of their Matchbox Series 2019. In 2020, this play will be co-produced by Golden Thread Productions and Crowded Fire Theater, their first artistic partnership.

***AT THE PERIPHERY*** by Sedef Ecer

translated to English by Evren Odcikin, directed by Erin Gilley

**Nov. 8, 7:30 pm at Potrero Stage**

Set in Istanbul and Paris, *At the Periphery* is a new play that focuses on the rarely-told stories of migrants in Istanbul's urban slums. Ecer's new play takes a lyrical, funny, and deeply human look at hope and home against all odds. For more information, visit [crowdedfire.org](http://crowdedfire.org).



• **Six Plays en Short | August 4 to 28, 1999 at EXIT Theatre** • *Rimm, the Gazelle* by Torange Yeghiazarian • *Publicly Resting* by Torange Yeghiazarian, directed by Mani  
 • *The Revolution Never Ended* by Tina Ehsanipour, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *Grapes* by Torange Yeghiazarian, performed by Emily Shihadeh • **ReOrient 2000 | July 13 - August 19, 2000 at EXIT Theatre**  
 by Torange Yeghiazarian • *Min El Alb Lilalb (From my heart to yours)* by Tom Coash, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • original musical score by Drew Khalouf, directed by Laura Hope Owen • **ReOrient 2001 | September 15 to October 1, 2001 at EXIT Theatre**  
 by Ana Bayat, Hal Gelb and Lucy Williamson, directed by Hal Gelb • *Ukimwi* by Tom Coash, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *Three Stops* by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *ABAGA* by Torange Yeghiazarian, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian  
 • **ReOrient 2002 | August 8 to 25, 2000 at New Langton Arts** • *Sewing in Syria* by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Hal Gelb • *Waves* by Torange Yeghiazarian, directed by Mark Mezadourian • *Use* by Victoria Stewart, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *From the Courtyard* by Catherine Fleury, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian  
 • *Tamam* by Betty Shamieh, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • **ReOrient 2003 | October 1 to October 18, 2003 at EXIT Theatre** • *Comedies* by Hanna Eady, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *Muscle* by Erik Ehn, directed by Hal Gelb • *Comedies* by Hal Gelb • *The Terrorists* by Jim Brightwolf, directed by Don Cate • *Baggage* by Fateh Samih Azzam, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian  
 by Salwa Bakr, directed by Arlene Hood • **ReOrient 2004 | September 16 to October 4, 2004 at EXIT Theatre** • *America* by Betty Shamieh • *Disheartened* by Melis Bilgin, directed by Hal Gelb • *Between the Breath and You* by Arlene Hood • *Taziye* by Novid Parsi, directed by Arlene Hood (25 min) • *Don't Eat the Tomatoes* by Fawaz, directed by Laura Hope • *Dinner/ Khnamakhos* by Lilly Thomassian, directed by Meredith Weiss Fawaz • *Parable for a Dark Time* by George Crowe, directed by William Selig • *Sniper* by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Shahe Mankerian, directed by Laura Hope • *Call Me Mehdi* by Torange Yeghiazarian, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian  
**ReOrient 2006 | At the Thick House** • *The Donkey Market* by Tawfiq al Hakim, directed by Martin Russell, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *The Error* by Adania Shibli, directed by Jayne Wenger • **ReOrient 2008 | January 10 to February 3 at the Magic Theatre** • *The Monologist Suffers Her Monologue* by Simin Behbehani, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *The Monologist Suffers Her Monologue* by Mark Routhier • *Between this Breath and You* by Naomi Wallace, directed by Amy Mueller • **ReOrient 2010 | At the Thick House | ReOrient Forum at Z Space** • *No Such Cold Thing* by Naomi Wallace • *Marriage Proposal* by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Hafiz Karmali • *Coming Home* by Motti Lerner • *I'm Not a Serial Killer* by Kaveh Zahedi, directed by Matthew Graham Smith • *Abaga* by Torange Yeghiazarian, directed by Mark Routhier • *The Review* by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Hafiz Karmali (in San Francisco) and Torange Yeghiazarian  
**ReOrient 2012 | At the Thick House and Z Space | ReOrient Forum at Z Space | ReOrient Camp at USF** • *War and Peace* by Evren Odcikin • *The Letter* by Mona Mansour and Tala Manassah, directed by Sara Razavi • *Follow* by Jen Silverman, directed by Christine Young • *2012* by Farzam Farrokhi, directed by Sara Razavi • *Benedict*, directed by Evren Odcikin • *Stuck* by Amir al-Azraqi, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • **ReOrient 2014 | September 10 to October 4, 2015 at Z Below and Z Space | ReOrient Forum at Z Space** • *Turning Tricks* by Silva Semerciyan, directed Erin Gilley • *Bitterenders* by Haideh, directed by Erin Gilley • *Lost Kingdom* by Hassan Abdulrazzak, directed by Michael French • *Realities* by Evren Odcikin • *Songs of Our Childhood* by Nahal Navidar, directed by Sara Razavi • **ReOrient 2016 | November 17 to December 10, 2017 at Potrero Stage | ReOrient Forum at Potrero Stage** • *A is For Ali* by Sevan K. Greene, directed by Sara Razavi • *Manar* by Melis Aksoy, directed by Susannah Martin, dramaturgy by Nakissa Etemad • *The Rehearsal* by Hannah Khalil, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian, directed by Susannah Martin, dramaturgy by Nakissa Etemad • **ReOrient 2018 | Potrero Stage | ReOrient Forum at Potrero Stage | ReOrient Camp at USF** • *Brass Knuckles* by Heywood, directed by Lisa Marie Rollins • *Noor and Hadi Go to Hogwarts* by Lameece Issaq, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *Echo of Laughter* by Betty Shamieh, directed by Michael French • *In Spenglic* by Niku Sharei, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian

by Fatima Gallaire, directed by Laura Chakravarty Box • *I Am Not A Serial Killer* by Caveh Zahedi, Mehdi Mohamedi • *The Gangrene*, text developed by Laura Chakravarty Box, directed by Carl Eye • *And Figs Are In Season, A Palestinian Woman's Story* (selections) written with Victoria Rue and

**Theatre** • *The Myth of Creation* by Sadeqh Hedayat, translated by M. Ghanoonparvar, directed by Arlene Denise Hood • *Voices* by Ghazi Rabihaoui, directed by Hal Gelb • *The Muse*, text and

**September 27-October 14, 2001 at Noh Space** • *Stoning* by Ghazi Rabihaoui, translated by Arlene Hood • *A Marriage Proposal* adapted by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Ana Bayat • *Armenian*, directed by Zara Houshmand • *Expatriates* by Myles Weber, directed by Armen Dilanchian • *My Mother's House* by Elizabeth Marquis, performed by Pamela Marsh • *Such a Beautiful Voice Is Sayeda* by Yussef El-Ghazal • *A Friendly Face* by Laura McPherson, directed by Mark Mezadourian Hughes • *Dual-Track*, directed by Arlene Hood • *A Tunnel in Palestine* by Don Monaco, directed by Arlene Hood

**October 30 to November 23, 2003 at New Langton Arts** • *Sahmatah* by Edward Mast & Motti Lerner, directed by Amy Mueller • *Security* by Israel Horowitz, directed by Hal Gelb • *My Mother's House*, directed by Christopher Morrison • *Karima's City* by Yussef El Guindi, adapted from a short story by Dina Amin

**November 10, 2004 at Noh Space and Ashby Stage** • *Chocolate in Heat: Growing Up Arab in Los Angeles* by Naomi Wallace, directed by Amy Mueller • *Falling* by William Borden, directed by Arlene Hood • *My Mother's House*, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *Compression of a Casualty* by Kevin Doyle, directed by Friedman

**ReOrient 2005 | November 11 to December 4, at the Magic Theatre** • *My Mother's House*, directed by Hal Gelb • *Learn to be Latina* by Enrique Uruéta, directed by Mary Guzmán • *Worms* by Meg Patterson • *A State of Innocence* by Naomi Wallace, directed by Isis Saratiah Misdary • *My Mother's House*, directed by Hal Gelb • *Orhan* by E.H. Benedict, directed by Arlene Hood • *The Weddings at Mukaradeeb* by Evren Odcikin, dramaturgy by John Fiscella • *Pistachio Stories* by Laura Shamas, directed by Friedman

**ReOrient 2009 – 10th Anniversary | November 19 to December 13, 2009 at Noh Space** • *22 Minutes Remaining* by Ignacio Zulueta, directed by Evren Odcikin • *I Sell Souls*, poem by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Arlene Hood • *Pistachio Stories* by Laura Shamas, directed by Friedman

**ReOrient 2009 – 10th Anniversary | November 19 to December 13, 2009 at Noh Space** • *My Mother's House*, directed by Bella Warda • *Tamam* by Betty Shamieh, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *My Mother's House*, directed by Mark Routhier • *Call Me Mehdi* by Torange Yeghiazarian, directed by Arlene Hood • *My Mother's House*, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian, directed by Hafiz Karmali • *Compression of a Casualty* by Kevin Doyle, directed by Friedman and Dina Amin (in Cairo)

**ReOrient 2012 | November 1 to 18, 2012 at Noh Space** • *My Mother's House*, directed by Tawfiq al-Hakim, directed by Hafiz Karmali • *The Birds Flew In* by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Tawfiq al-Hakim • *Stalemate* by Silva Semerciyan, directed by Desdemona Chiang • *In the Days That Follow* by Tawfiq al-Hakim • *City of Grubs* by Naomi Wallace, directed by Desdemona Chiang • *Orhan* by Elizabeth Marquis • *The Voice Room* by Reza Soroor, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • **ReOrient 2015 | November 1 to 18, 2015 at Z Space | ReOrient Camp at USF** • *Picking Up the Scent* by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Friedman • *My Mother's House*, directed by Manijeh Mohamedi • *Counting in Sha'ab* by Emma Goldman-Sherman, directed by Friedman • *My Mother's House*, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *Ceasefire* by Ken Kaissar, directed by Friedman • *The House* by Tala Manassah and Mona Mansour, directed by Sara Razavi • **ReOrient 2017 | November 1 to 18, 2017 at Potrero Stage | ReOrient Camp at USF** • *War on Terror* by E.H. Benedict, directed by Friedman • *My Mother's House*, directed by Erin Gilley, dramaturgy by Anna Woodruff • *Make No Mistake* by Betty Shamieh, directed by Friedman • *My Mother's House*, directed by Evren Odcikin • *Shelter* by Junichi P. Semitsu • *Thanksgiving at Khodabakhshian's* by Friedman • **ReOrient 2019 – 20th Anniversary | October 18 to November 17, 2019 at Potrero Stage** • *My Mother's House*, directed by Yussef El Guindi, directed by Torange Yeghiazarian • *The Grievance Club* by Rendah Friedman • *My Mother's House*, directed by Rebecca Novick • *The Basement* by Mustafa Kaymak, directed by Michael French • *My Mother's House*, directed by Lisa Marie Rollins • *The Book of Mima* by Naomi Wallace, directed by Rebecca Novick •



## **ReOrient Festival of Short Plays: 20 Years of Celebrating Diversity & Dialogue**

**W**hen Golden Thread first began, we produced only one or two mainstage productions a year. There was no way for us to reflect the diversity of the Middle East that way. Geographic, cultural, religious... but also aesthetic diversity; that has always been an important part of ReOrient. Then there is the audience. Our mainstage audience was insular. Iranians would attend the Iranian play, and Egyptians would support the Egyptian playwright. However, the two would rarely intermingle. We wanted a way for various segments of the Middle Eastern community – many of whom rarely attended the same cultural event – to share each other's narrative. ReOrient is about experiencing many stories on one stage. It's an opportunity to recognize yourself in someone else's story.

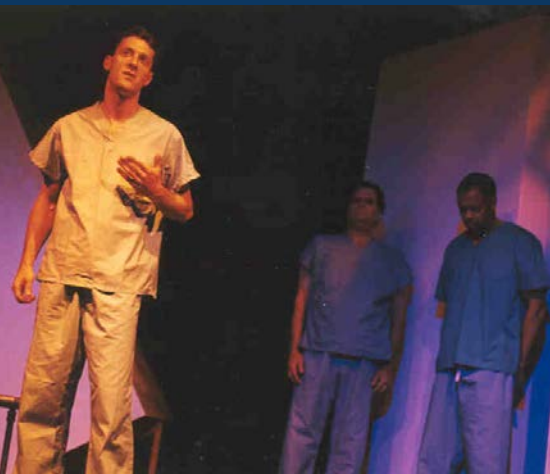
After the success of the first festival of short plays in 1999, we knew we wanted it to become an annual event, an ongoing program. We came up with the name, ReOrient in 2000. It is inspired by a passage in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* by Salman Rushdie, where he describes "disorientation" as having lost one's East. In a world dominated by western values and priorities, ReOrient is our attempt at finding our East; finding that balance of perspectives, narratives, and values that refocus our shared humanity.

In 2001, the festival was slated for October. But in the aftermath of 9/11, most Middle Eastern cultural events were cancelled. We held a company meeting to decide if the festival should go on. This is an excerpt from the statement we issued: "...we feel as a company that now more than ever it is crucial to go forward with a cultural event that we hope will foster a deeper understanding of our shared humanity and shatter the commonly held stereotypes associated with the Middle East. We hope this open exchange will contribute to ending the vicious cycle of retaliation and intolerance."

The years following 2001 were a period of struggling to cope with the reality of U.S. military engagement in the Middle East, the impacts of the PATRIOT Act at home, and a burning need to bring Middle Eastern perspectives to American audiences. During this time, ReOrient short plays served as calling cards that we toured as a group, An Evening of Palestinian Plays in Washington, D.C., or individually, *Karima's City* by Youssef El Guindi in Cairo, Egypt.

In 2009, we celebrated the festival's tenth anniversary and launched ReOrient Forum, a gathering of artists, activists, and academics aimed at expanding the dialogue on theatre, the Middle East, and current topics that illuminate the region's relationship with the U.S. Programming included panels, music and dance concerts, and performances for youth and families. To allow more planning and fundraising time for the expanded Festival & Forum, we changed ReOrient to a three-year cycle.





Top, Julian Lopez-Morillas and Garth Petal in *I Sell Souls* by Simin Behbehani in ReOrient 2008. Left, Adam Chipkin in *The Gangrene*, developed by Laura Chakravarty Box and Carl Eye in Six Plays en Short in 1999. Bottom left, Ahou Tabibzadeh and George Psarras in *Call Me Mehdi* by Torange Yeghiazarian in ReOrient 2009. Below, Claudia Rosa and Shaudy Danaye Elmi in *Tamam* by Betty Shamieh in ReOrient 2002.





Top, Shores Alaudini in *Orhan* by E.H. Benedict in ReOrient 2012. Above, Bernadette Quattrone in *Karima's City* by Yussef El Guindi in ReOrient 2003. Below, Carolyn Zola and Valerie Weak in *Parable for a Dark Time* by George Crowe in ReOrient 2005.



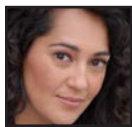
In 2012, we launched ReOrient Camp, a play-development retreat hosted by the Performance and Social Justice program at University of San Francisco. By 2015, our community complained that once every three years was too infrequent for ReOrient, our most popular program. By this time, the programming was too demanding for us to execute annually, so we reached a middle ground and landed on a biennial festival. In 2017, we launched our partnership with the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA) to add a team of professional dramaturgs to the festival.

The seven short plays in ReOrient 2019 were selected from 108 submissions from 13 countries. The selection committee met in 2018 and included Nora el Samahy (Actor), Rebecca Novick (Director), Handan Ozbilgin (Associate Artistic Director, LaGuardia Performing Arts Center), and Roberto Gutierrez Varea (Professor, University of San Francisco, Performing Arts and Social Justice Program). Golden Thread Founding Artistic Director Torange Yeghiazarian, (past) Director of New Plays Evren Odcikin, and Literary Associate Hala Baki were also part of the committee.

In the past twenty years, we have staged 96 short plays at ReOrient Festival helping launch the careers of numerous emerging playwrights and providing a home for established artists to return to year after year. ReOrient has helped us realign, reimagine, and reorganize as artists and as a community. We continue to search for our East.

– Golden Thread Founder, Torange Yeghiazarian

## CAST



**Sofia Ahmad\*** (Teacher, *An Echo of Laughter*; Noor, *Noor and Hadi Go to Hogwarts*; Meettoo,

*In Spenglic*) is a resident artist with Golden Thread. Previous collaborations with GTP: *The Most Dangerous Highway in the World*, *Isfahan Blues* and *Love Missile*. Other local acting credits include SF Shakespeare Festival, Magic Theatre, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Those Women Productions, Arabian Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Stage, Pacific Repertory Theater, Bay Area Playwrights Festival and New Conservatory Theatre. Upcoming: *At the Periphery*, a GTP/Crowded Fire co-production and *1001 Nights: A Retelling* with Cal Shakes. Sofia is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and a proud member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA.



**Atosa Babaoff\*** (Woman, *The Grievance Club*; Kella, *In Spenglic*; Maysoon, *Brass Knuckles*)

is very happy to be reunited with her beloved Golden Thread-ers and honored to be a resident artist with them. She has performed in theaters all over the Bay Area including A.C.T, Berkeley Rep, Magic Theater and many more. She is a graduate of the MFA program at The American Conservatory Theater. She would like to dedicate the night to her family and her favorite artistic collaborators, Affinity Project and SCOTUS Theater.



**Ali-Moosa Mirza** (Soldier, *The Basement*; Hadi, *Noor and Hadi Go to Hogwarts*) is a graduate

of UC Santa Cruz where he studied biology and theater arts. There he worked with the Cultural Arts and Diversity Resource Center to help bring theater of color to

campus while acting in shows including: *A Record of Light* and *Love and Information*. Since graduating he has performed with Inferno Theater in: *The Conference of the Birds* and *Othello*. He is grateful and honored to be working with Golden Thread Productions for ReOrient 2019!



**Lawrence Radecker\*** (Lieutenant, *The Basement*; Hitler, *An Echo of Laughter*; The Voice,

*The Book of Mima*) is a resident artist with Golden Thread Productions and feels fortunate to have been cast in numerous ReOrient Festivals as well as in GTP productions of *Scenes from 71\* Years*, *Night Over Erzinga* and *Isfahan Blues*. He is also a resident artist with Crowded Fire Theater where he has developed and debuted roles in many of their world premieres. He has performed with Aurora Theatre, San Jose Stage, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Thick Description, Brava! For Women in the Arts, New Conservatory Theatre Company and Impact Theatre among others.



**Amitis Rossoukh** (Voice, *The Grievance Club*; Ayca, *The Basement*; ShelB, *In Spenglic*) is

a Bay-Area based actor who is very excited to be making her Golden Thread debut. She thrives in new-works settings and has made herself in a home in SF's bustling creative scene. Previous theater credits include Savannah Reich's *Caveman Play* with FaultLine Theater, *Barry Eitel's Champagne* with 6NewPlays, and Ariel Craft's and Oren Stevens' *MacBitch* with Breadbox Theater.

## PLAYWRIGHTS

**Yussef El Guindi's** (*Brass Knuckles*) recent productions include *Hostages* at Radial Theater Project; *The Talented Ones*





at Artists Repertory Theatre in Portland (Santa Barbara Independent Indy Award); *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat* at Golden Thread Productions (American Theatre Critics Association's M. Elizabeth Osborn Award); and *Threesome* at Portland Center Stage, ACT, and at 59E59 (Portland Drammy for Best Original Script). Bloomsbury will publish *Selected Works by Yussef El Guindi* in January 2019. He is a 2018 Core Company playwright member at ACT in Seattle and a Resident Artist at Golden Thread Productions.

**Rendah Heywood** (*The Grievance Club*) is an actor and a new playwright. In the U.S., she has performed in *Refugia* at the Guthrie Theater, *King Lear* at BAM, *This Time* at The Sheen Center, and in *Cuddles* for Brits Off-Broadway at 59E59. She has recently participated in workshops for Atlantic Theater Company, Noor Theatre, and The Lark. On TV, Rendah has appeared in *Doctors*, *EastEnders*, and *Holby City* for the BBC. *The Grievance Club* is her first playwrighting endeavor, and was selected to be part of last year's Samuel French OOB Festival of Short Plays in New York City.

**Lameece Issaq** (*Noor and Hadi Go to Hogwarts*) is an actor and writer, and the Founding Artistic Director of the Obie Award-winning company Noor Theatre, dedicated to the work of theatre artists of Middle Eastern descent. Writing credits include *Noor and Hadi Go to Hogwarts* (Theater Breaking Through Barriers); *Nooha's List* (Hartford Stage, The Geffen, and Primary Stages); and *Food and Fadwa* (Noor Theatre and NYTW co-production, Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award); and the film *Abe*, co-written with Jacob Kader and starring *Stranger Things* actor Noah Schnapp (post-production). Acting credits include *Food and Fadwa* and *The Black*

*Eyed* (NYTW); *The Fever Chart* and *Stuff Happens* (Public Theater). Lameece is a member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA. 2016 NYFA Finalist in Playwriting/Screenwriting.

**Mustafa Kaymak** (*The Basement*) was born in Ankara, Turkey. He is a producer, playwright, and screenwriter who received his B.A. in Journalism from Ankara University, Turkey. He holds two M.F.A. degrees from Columbia University — one in Playwriting and another in Creative Film Producing. His short movie *Green* has appeared in San Diego International Film Festival, Vancouver International Film Festival, Galway International Film Festival, and NBC Universal Short Film Festival. Recently, he was awarded a Caucus Foundation Award and an Annenberg Foundation Award.

**Betty Shamieh** (*An Echo of Laughter*) is the author of fifteen plays. Productions include *The Strangest* (The Semitic Root), *Fit For a Queen* (Classical Theatre of Harlem), *The Machine* (Naked Angels) *The Black Eyed* (NYTW and Magic Theatre), *Territories* (Magic Theatre), and *Roar* (The New Group). Her works have been translated into seven languages, and her international productions include *Again and Against* (Playhouse Theater, Stockholm), *The Black Eyed* (Fournos Theatre, Athens), and *Territories* (Landestheater Linz, Austria). 2016 Guggenheim Fellowship in Drama and Performance Art; Clifton Visiting Artist at Harvard College; Playwriting Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies; 2011 UNESCO Young Artist for Intercultural Dialogue in 2011. B.A., Harvard College; M.F.A., Yale School of Drama. [bettyshamieh.com]

**Niku Sharei** (*In Spenglic*) has intermittently interned and worked for Golden Thread since 2011. She is





delighted to collaborate with Golden Thread as a playwright. She attended writing classes at College of Marin and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Niku was the script supervisor for *Go On Then*, second place winner of 48 Hour Film Project. She wrote and directed *In Spenglic* and *Fury of Teuton* for Short+Sweet Festival in Dubai. She also performed as a stand-up comic in the UAE. Her poem “Boxes Into Circles” was published in Dubai Poetics. Niku is a UC Berkeley alumna with a BA in Development Studies and is pursuing her MSc in Sociology at The University of Manchester, UK. She is also a member of Manchester Universities Gilbert and Sullivan Society (MUGSS).

**Naomi Wallace’s** (*The Book of Mima*) plays — produced in the United States, the United Kingdom and the Middle East — include *One Flea Spare*, *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, *Things of Dry Hours*, *The Fever Chart*, *And I and Silence*, *Night is a Room*, and *Returning to Haifa* (adapted with Ismail Khalidi). In 2009, *One Flea Spare* was incorporated into the permanent repertoire of the French National Theatre, the Comédie-Française. Only two American playwrights have been added to the Comédie’s repertoire in 300 years. Awards: MacArthur Fellowship, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, Fellowship of Southern Writers Drama Award, Obie Award, the Horton Foote Prize and Ubu Award (Italy). Wallace received the inaugural Windham-Campbell Prize in drama and an Arts and Letters Award in Literature.

## PRODUCTION

**James Ard (Sound Designer)** is a local San Francisco designer, noisemaker, mechanic, and theatre vagrant, who composes soundscapes & music for humans, dogs, parrots, and bicycles. Ard’s

sound design has been heard at the Public Theater in New York, the Getty Villa in Los Angeles, and most importantly: here at home in San Francisco, at the Potrero Stage, in collaborations with both Golden Thread Productions and Crowded Fire. Recent Golden Thread credits include adaptation for *Shelter* (alongside Torange Yeghiazarian), sound design for *The Most Dangerous Highway in the World*, and sound design for various plays presented at ReOrient Festivals 2015 and 2017. Ard is a co-founder of SoundPlay.media, and is currently producing short plays for podcast at BareWireTheatre.com.

### **Kenan Arun (Makeup Designer)**

is a makeup artist for FX makeup for a decade, and has been working with Golden Thread Productions since 2014. Some of his credits include *The Maids* by Jean Genet (Stage on the Run, One-Act Festival, Heidelberg, Germany, 2011), *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner (Stage on the Run, Ankara, Turkey, 2012), *Rendezvous* by Rob Cantor (Music Video, Los Angeles, 2014), ReOrient 2015 and 2017 Festivals (Golden Thread Productions, San Francisco), *The Colored Museum* by George C. Wolfe (The African-American Shakespeare Company, San Francisco, 2016), *The Most Dangerous Highway in the World* by Kevin Artigue (Golden Thread Productions, San Francisco, 2016), *Seven Minutes to Closing* by Kim Nunley (Short Movie, Oakland, 2016), *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat* by Yussef El Guindi (Golden Thread Productions, San Francisco, 2017). He also serves as Wig & Makeup Consultant at Drunk Drag Broadway.

**Kate Boyd (Scenic Designer)** designed sets for the last ReOrient Festival and this set marks her third! She recently designed the scenery for NCTC’s *This Side of Crazy* and *Late Company*, Aurora Theater’s *Exit*



*Strategy* and *Everything is Illuminated*, and *We Swim, We Talk, We Go to War* with Golden Thread. She is a resident designer at Golden Thread Productions and is very proud to have designed both sets and lights for *Isfahan Blues*. Kate teaches stagecraft and design at Lick-Wilmerding High School. She has also worked with Magic Theatre, Merola Opera, the SF Conservatory of Music, Company C Ballet, Marin Theater, TheatreWorks and BRAVA! and was a recipient of the Gerbode Design Fellowship.

**Nakissa Etemad (Festival Lead Dramaturg; Casting Director; Assistant Director to Rebecca Novick)** is thrilled to return for her second ReOrient Festival. She is a dramaturg, producer, director, French translator, Resident Artist with Golden Thread Productions, and LMDA's Regional VP Metro Bay Area. She is recipient of the Elliott Hayes Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dramaturgy for The Lark's four-city premieres of *the road weeps*, *the well runs dry* by Marcus Gardley. Previous Golden Thread credits include dramaturg for *On Behalf of All Muslims: A Comedy Special* by Zahra Noorbakhsh, *Make No Mistake* by Betty Shamieh and *Thanksgiving at Khodabakhshian's* by Torange Yeghiazarian (ReOrient 2017), and Dramaturg, Creative Collaborator, and Casting Director for *Isfahan Blues* by Torange Yeghiazarian, with music by Marcus Shelby. Former dramaturg and literary manager for The Wilma Theater, San Jose Repertory Theatre, and San Diego Repertory Theatre, Nakissa has specialized in new plays and musicals for over 25 years. M.F.A. in Dramaturgy, UC San Diego.

**Michael French (Director, *The Basement & An Echo of Laughter*)** is a writer, actor, teacher, and director.

Originally from London, England, he is an artistic associate for the Ubuntu Theatre Project, a resident director at Playground, and the Artistic Director of Theatre Aluminous. Mr. French is currently directing Gina Harris' musical memoir *The Magic of Ordinary Things*, and adapting the Heinrich Von Kleist novel *Betrothal in Santo Domingo* for the stage.

**Brooke Jennings (Costume Designer)** is an award-winning costume designer and educator thriving in the Bay Area. She is thrilled to return for her third ReOrient Festival! Her recent credits include *Scenes from 71\* Years* (Golden Thread Productions), *Hairspray*, *Violet*, *Crazy For You*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Bay Area Musicals), *You Mean To Do Me Harm*, *Barbecue* (San Francisco Playhouse); *Undiscovered Country*, *Caesar Maximus*, *Roman Women*, *Ondine* (We Players), *Arcadia* (Shotgun Players), *Phèdre* (Cutting Ball Theater), *A Lie of the Mind*, *Bad Jews* (Magic Theatre, asst. designer), *#bros*, *Where All Good Rabbits Go*, *Every 28 Hours*, *Maggie's Riff* (FaultLine Theater). She gives many, many thanks to her partner, Cole, for his unwavering support and love.

**Michelle Mullholland (Managing Director)** has more than 17 years of non-profit management experience from some of San Francisco's finest arts and environmental justice organizations, including Theater Artaud, Beach Blanket Babylon, Brava Theater, the Commonwealth Club of California, The Coral Reef Alliance and Forests Forever. Since joining Golden Thread in 2012, Michelle has been enhancing day-to-day operations, enabling the company's exponential growth by professionalizing policies and procedures, implementing a fully integrated patron management system and establishing a donor focused



individual giving protocol. A freelance costume designer since 2008, she has designed for numerous Bay Area companies, including Crowded Fire Theater, New Conservatory Theatre Center, Golden Thread Productions, Word for Word, African-American Shakespeare Company, Z Space, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Cutting Ball Theater, and Brava Theater. She has also worked with Teatro Zinzanni, A.C.T. and the SFMOMA.

**Rebecca Novick (Director, *Noor and Hadi Go to Hogwarts & The Book of Mima*)** is a theater-maker and writer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She was the founding artistic director of Crowded Fire Theater Company and led the company for ten years. She also served as associate artistic director at California Shakespeare Theater where she created and led the community engagement department. Recent directing projects include *Electra* for Ten Thousand Things in Minneapolis, *Ghost Town*, a world premiere by Juliette Carrillo, for Cornerstone Theater in Los Angeles, and *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.* by Alice Birch at Crowded Fire in San Francisco. She is currently developing *Storybank for the Resistance*, a set of projects using first-person stories to influence political decision-makers. She has also worked with the Magic Theatre, the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, the Aurora Theatre, the EXIT Theatre, Shotgun Players, Berkeley Opera, Playground, and Woman's Will among others. Her directing has been recognized with the SF Bay Guardian's Goldie Award for Outstanding Local Artists. [www.rebeccanovick.org]

**Lisa Marie Rollins (Director, *The Grievance Club & In Spenglic*)** is a freelance director, writer, and new play developer. She is a Sundance Institute Theatre Lab Fellow, a member of Directors

Lab West, and an Associate Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers. Regional directing work includes Crowded Fire Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Shotgun Players, Playwrights Foundation, TheatreFIRST, The Custom Made Theatre Co., Magic Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse and more. She's worked on new plays by Lauren Gunderson, Geetha Reddy, Idris Goodwin, Tarrance A. Chisholm, and has creative collaborations with comedic artists W. Kamau Bell and Zahra Noorbakhsh. Lisa Marie has been a writing fellow with Djerassi Resident Artists Program, Callaloo (London), VONA Foundation, and Joshua Tree Highlands Residency. She is currently developing new plays *Token* and *Love is Another Country*. She is a Resident Artist of Crowded Fire Theater. [lisamarierollins.wordpress.com/about]

**Karen Runk\* (Stage Manager)** moved to SF with the intention of only staying for a few months... Over two decades later she's still here! This is largely due to the talented folks at the SF Mime Troupe, where Runk is the resident Production Stage Manager, and thanks to Golden Thread Productions where she is a Resident Artist as of 2018, but mostly due to rent control! Runk has also stage managed with Word for Word, Magic Theatre, SFShakes, Intersection for the Arts, and African-American Shakespeare Company.

**Grisel GG Torres (Production Manager; Properties Designer)** studied Light Design, Technical Theatre, Stage Management, and Props Design at SFSU's School of Theatre and Dance. She is the staff Production Manager for Golden Thread Productions. GG is also the Venue Manager at the Joe Goode Annex. At the moment, GG primarily designs



lights for movement-based productions and companies such as PUSH Dance Company, Keith Hennessy/CircoZero, and Sara Shelton Mann/Mixed Bag Production. When not in production mode, GG likes to write melodies, paint, and create movement based performance art herself and sees these art forms as a vantage point for self-healing. She is extremely grateful to have a hand in making some of the Bay Area's best radical art.

**Torange Yeghiazarian (Founding Artistic Director; Director, *Brass Knuckles*)** launched such visionary programs at Golden Thread as ReOrient Festival & Forum, Middle East America, Islam 101, New Threads, and the Fairytale Players. A playwright, director, and translator, Torange's short play *Call Me Mehdi* is published in *Salaam. Peace: An Anthology of Middle Eastern-American Drama*, TCG 2009. Her translation and stage adaptation of Nizami's *Layla & Majnun* is published on Gleeditions.com. Torange contributed a case study chapter to *Casting a Movement*, Routledge, 2019, and has been published in *The Drama Review*, *American Theatre* magazine, *Amerasia Journal*, and contributed to

*Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures* and *Cambridge World Encyclopedia of Stage Actors*. Torange is one of Theatre Communication Group's Legacy Leaders of Color; was honored by the Cairo International Theatre Festival and the Symposium on Equity in the Entertainment Industry at Stanford University. Born in Iran and of Armenian heritage, Torange holds a Master's degree in Theatre Arts from San Francisco State University.



**Potrero Stage** is a 99-seat state-of-the-art performance space located in the heart of San Francisco's Potrero Hill neighborhood, operated by PlayGround, and serving as home to some of the Bay

Area's leading new play developers and producers, including PlayGround, Crowded Fire, Golden Thread, and Playwrights Foundation, among others. For more information or to inquire about rentals, email [info@potrerostage.org](mailto:info@potrerostage.org) or call 415.992.6677.



**\*Actors' Equity Association (AEA)**, founded in 1913, represents more than 49,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre

as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. [actorsequity.org](http://actorsequity.org)

## **A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO...**

**Roberto Varea** for hosting ReOrient Camp since 2012, making it possible for our artists to dive deeply into the creative process inspired, unencumbered, and well-fed. Many thanks to **Nakissa Etemad** for your caring support of the dramatic process and the playwright's voice.

**Ayla Yarkut & Dean Koya**

**Azita Sayyah & Yasmeen Daifallah**

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# MIDDLE EAST CENTER STAGE

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Golden Thread Productions, founded in 1996, is the first American theatre company devoted to the Middle East. We produce passionate and provocative plays from or about the Middle East that celebrate the multiplicity of its perspectives and identities. We are a developmental catalyst and vibrant artistic home to artists at various stages of their career. We bring the Middle East to the American stage, creating treasured cultural experiences for audiences of all ages and backgrounds.



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King Choi  
Ron Dudum  
The Fleishhacker Family Foundation  
Elizabeth Jasny  
Ray and Carla Kaliski  
Middle East Children's Alliance  
Rebecca Novick & Jeff Prucher  
Sara Razavi  
Martha Richards  
Jane Swinerton  
UC Berkeley Center for Middle Eastern Studies  
WomenArts  
Torange Yeghiazarian

#### \$500 to \$999

Anonymous (x2)  
Anna & Amer Budayr  
Linda Chang & Emin Maltepe  
Syan & Kayden Davis  
Rasha Dessouki  
Richard Dudum  
Rami el Samahy & Kelly Hutzell  
Hassan Fouda  
Jennifer Grady  
Lila Shadloo & Terry Griffith  
Rita Hovakimian

James Lucas  
Sana Makhoul  
Sami & Leila Masri  
Kia Mousavi  
Duraid Musleh  
Jumana Muwafi  
John O'Farrell  
Jeffrey Prucher  
Bothaina Salama  
Jane Swinerton

#### \$250 to \$499

Anonymous, Fatma Abdelhalim, Selma Abinader, Caroline Barnard, Jaleh Besharat, Dr. Kian Beyzavi, Farah Bullara, Creative Capacity Fund, Earthbody Day Spa in honor of Evren Odcikin & Jack Choi, Nelly



Der Kiureghian, Paky Elhossamy, Keith Goldstein, Alexa Hauser in memory of Terry Lamb, Iranian Diaspora Studies Program at SFSU, Evan Jernagan, Hulya Koc, Karnig Mikaelian, Jane & Rick Nahass Charitable Fund, Richard Nahass, Evren Odcikin, Guenet Sebsibe, Maha Selim, Diane Shortleeve, Gae Shulman, David Tateosian, Theatre Communications Group, Arman Toorians, Paul Von Stamwitz, Joanne Chow Winship, Anush Yeghazarian & Oliver Rist in memory of Mali V. Ghahremani

### **\$100 to \$249**

Anonymous (x3), Ahmad Abdulkader, Paul Ajlouny, Nagwa Allam, Zahwa Amad, Marine Arakelians, Jack & Mary Aslanian Fund, Reda Athanasios, Kathleen Atwood, Cynthia Avakian, Basil Ayish, Valerie Barth, Nora Bayani, Jeff Becerra, Maziar Behrooz, Elizabeth H. Benedict, Raymond Bobgan, Peter Boiger, Elaine Brown, Melissa Cefkin & Mazyar Lotfalian, Linda Chapman, Meta Chessin, Winnie Chu, Lee Collins, Jeanette Cool, Tiffany Cothran in honor of Evren Odcikin & Jack Choi, George Crowe, Ebby Dabiri, Afshin Daghi, Omar M. Dajani, Mike Dinning, Laila El Dafashy, Ganzeer, Inc., Yussef El Guindi, Tarek & Sara Eletr, Afshin Gharachedaghi, Ron Goldstein & Judith Love, Anne & Conn Hallinan, Beverly Hansen, Judy Helfand, Paul Heller, Armineh Hovanesian, Cynthia Hurst, Arzhang Kalbali, Kathy Saade Kenny, Gaguik Khachatourian, Fady Khalil, J. Arcadia Kim, Athena Kyle, Lori Laqua, Marya Levenson, Alex & Travis in honor of Evren Odcikin & King Choi, Pam MacKinnon, Ken Mahru, Lynn Mari, Marita Mayer, Masood Mokhtary, Henry Norr, Fatima Osman, Evelyn Jean Pine & Doug Peckler, Haiganoush Preisler, Lawrence Radecker on behalf of Evren & Jack, Muhammad Ramadan & Timothy Palmer, Bella Warda, Niusha Ramazan-Nia, Donald Raphael, Hazem Rashed, Mike Richey & Chris Winslow, Elizabeth Robinson, Pepi Ross, Ziad Saba, Shekufeh Samii, John & Rania Sanford, Armen Sedrakian & Ruth Alahydoian, Scott Seiffer, Dipita Shah, Ileana Soto, Roswell Spafford in honor of Anne & Ringo Hallinan, Basil Stamos on behalf of Mona Masri, Eric Ting, Roberto Varea, Allyson Washburn, Iraj & Fariba Zolnasr, Lorene Zarou-Zouzounis

### **\$99 and under**

Anonymous (x4), Elmaz Abinader, Deborah Adabachi, David Ahle, Rami Alayan, Omar Ali, Louise Anderson, Dena Aslanian-Williams, Ahmed Ayish, Linda Ayres-Frederick, Zeina Babetty, Hala Baki, Mehdi Banijamaly, Ramin Barghi, Janelle & Joseph Becerra, Jean Bogiages, Amanda and Nicholas Brandes in honor of the wedding of Evren Odcikin & Jack Choi, Ellen Brotsky, Dina Bseiso, Laura Maria Censabella, Maria Dichov, Sally Doane, Carol Dorf, Suzanne El Gamal, Claire Epperly, Lisa Esherick, Howard Fallon, Geoffrey Fletcher, Mary Foley, Arturo Galvan-Alarcon, Alejandro Garcia, Joseph Glatzer, Judy Goddess, Miriam Grant, Valerie Gutwirth, Mazen Haddad, Howard Harawitz, Raymond Harb, Sarah Hayon, Donald Hesse, Nan Hohenstein, Naomi Horowitz, Susan Hutner, Ross Johnson, Bruce Johnson, Shahrzad Junblat, Zaven Kennean & Janet Yeghissian, Persis Karim, Nancy Kho, Matt Lai, Eleanor Levine, Sherman Lew, Audra Lindsey, Nancy Loewen, Linda Lucero, Elizabeth Macken, Tonia Macneil, Zahra Mahloutji & Michael Goldbach, Sophia Majeed, Betty Marcon, Whitney McAniff in honor of King Choi & Evren Odcikin, Daniel Michaelson, Katya Miller, Martha & Donald Missirlian, Morvarid Moayeri, Jean Moran, Michelle Mulholland, Debra Murov, Omid Niroumandzadeh, Thomas Nolan, Omoniye Omotoso, Rana Orangi, Mokhtar Paki, Anu Patil, Lesley Pierce, Ali Pour Issa, Bassam Qasem, Jean Rabovsky, Roneet Rahamim, Nasser Rahmaninejad, Kamini Ramani, Nima Reyhani, Margarete Reynolds, Connie Robinson, Bluestone Imports, Leigh Rondon-Davis, Kathy Rucker, Karen Runk, Fadi Saba, Josh Saboorizadeh, Margaret Salimi, Elizabeth Slavit, Marcia Smolens, Annie Stenzel, Steve Susoyev, Danielle Svetcov, Lucie Sweda, Liz Sweet, Richard Taylor, Lydia Mattar Titcomb, Lida Tohidi, Ruby & Alan Unger, Carolyn Uno, Marzieh Vali, Steve Vinga, Kathy Voss-Jensen, Karen Walter, Joanne Winter, Adonay Jacob, Marjan Zand, Kathy Zarur, Victoria Zhang

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May Allam, Wes Burwell, Artin Der Minassians, Nora el Samahy, Rita Hovakimian, Murrey E. Nelson, Babak Sani, Armen Sedrakian & Ruth Alahydoian

*If you have a correction or questions, or would like to find out more about ways to support Golden Thread Productions, please contact Michelle Mulholland at [michelle@goldenthread.org](mailto:michelle@goldenthread.org)*

# 2020 Season

## Celebrating the Centennial of U.S. Women's Right to Vote

With an all-women lineup of international playwrights & directors, Golden Thread extends the multifaceted discourse and unique stories of the evolving agency of Middle East women.

*February 23 to April 4 | U.S. Premiere | Potrero Stage*



### **AT THE PERIPHERY** by Sedef Ecer

*Translated from the Turkish by Evren Odcikin and directed by Erin Gilley.*

Turkish playwright Ecer's lyrical play set in Istanbul and Paris is a magical tale of hope and home against all odds. This is Golden Thread's first co-production with Crowded Fire Theater Company.

*May 2 | One Night Only | Brava Theater Center*



### **JOGGING** by Hanane Hajj Ali

Acclaimed Lebanese writer and performer, Ali brings her one-woman show to the Bay Area following her celebrated performances at The Kennedy Center and the Guthrie Theater. The show is performed in Arabic with English supertitles.

*October 16 to November 15 | U.S. Premiere | Potrero Stage*



### **THE LANGUAGE OF WILD BERRIES** by Naghmeh Samini

*Translated from the Persian and directed by Torange Yeghiazarian.*

Award-winning Iranian playwright Samini finds the sublime in an ordinary couple's annual road trips to the Caspian Sea on their wedding anniversary.

*March 8 | Brava Theater Center*

### **WHAT DO THE WOMEN SAY?**

Our annual celebration of International Women's Day.

*August | Brava Theater Center*

### **New Threads 2020 Staged Reading Series**

Four New Plays. Four Singular Voices.

## **PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH GOLDEN THREAD**

*January 9 to February 2*

**Marin Theatre Company** presents **Noura**

written by Heather Raffo, directed by Kate Bergstrom

*August 19 - September 6*

**California Shakespeare Theater** presents **1001 NIGHTS (A Retelling)**

written by Lelia Buck & Evren Odcikin, directed by Evren Odcikin

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