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## "Semitic Commonwealth" - The Series

**February 10 - 26, 2017**

Silk Road Rising (77 W. Washington St., Lower Level)

A staged reading series comprised of six plays by Arab and Jewish playwrights exploring the human toll of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. These works investigate themes of identity, occupation, exile, and home with remarkable honesty. [Learn More »](#)

Tickets and more Information at [www.SemiticCommonwealth.org](http://www.SemiticCommonwealth.org)



## "Semitic Commonwealth" - The Plays

### "Scenes from 69\* Years" by Hannah Khalil, Directed by Jess McLeod

- Friday, February 10, 2017 at 8:00pm
- Saturday, February 11, 2017 at 4:00pm



A picnic interrupted by soldiers. Sunbathing in the shadow of a tank. Life can be unpredictable under occupation. Told with typical Palestinian black humour, "Scenes from 69\* Years" is an epic snapshot of life in Palestine, then and now. Forget suicide belts and stone-hurling youths—here the real human story is revealed: the dreams, humor, sadness, and obstacles of daily life in the shadow of the 'separation wall'. [Buy Tickets »](#)

### "The Admission" by Motti Lerner, Directed by Michael Malek Najjar

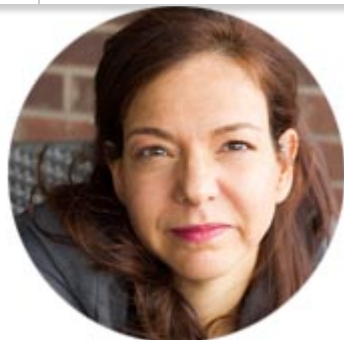
- Saturday, February 11, 2017 at 8:00pm
- Sunday, February 12, 2017 at 4:00pm

"The Admission" is a political drama about the conflicting narratives of the 1948 war. Some called it a war of independence and some called it a catastrophe. Forty years later, a proposal to build on the site of a battle digs up family secrets and stirs tensions between two families, one Jewish and one Palestinian. This work of historical fiction asks how we can move forward toward peace while still wrestling with the ghosts of war. [Buy Tickets »](#)



### "The Zionists" by Zohar Tirosh-Polk, Directed by Jonathan L. Green

- Friday, February 17, 2017 at 8:00pm
- Saturday, February 18, 2017 at 4:00pm



generations. Interspersed with songs from a hard rock band, this play gives voice to a host of expressive characters who are unafraid to speak their minds. [Buy Tickets »](#)

**“Tennis in Nablus” by Ismail Khalidi, Directed by Michael Malek Najjar**

- Saturday, February 18, 2017 at 8:00pm
- Sunday, February 19, 2017 at 4:00pm

Set in Nablus in the spring of 1939, "Tennis in Nablus" brings to life the last days of the Arab Revolt as the people of Palestine attempt for one last time to drive out the British. With both deep passion and bold humor, it is a genre-bending look at Palestine's embattled status through the eyes of an unflagging rebel, a tireless polemicist and an ambitious entrepreneur. With their world igniting around them, this divided family faces their own demons as they seek to achieve peace, freedom, and dignity. [Buy Tickets »](#)



**“Urge for Going” by Mona Mansour, Directed by Anna C. Bahow**

- Friday, February 24, 2017 at 8:00pm
- Saturday, February 25, 2017 at 4:00pm



What do you do when the only way to live is to leave? Jamila, a studious 17-year-old Palestinian girl growing up in a refugee camp in southern Lebanon, feverishly prepares for the university exam that is her only way out of the impoverished world she calls home. "Urge for Going" offers a variety of personalities and perspectives in this searing and funny family story. [Buy Tickets »](#)

**“The Victims” by Ken Kaissar, Directed by Michael Malek Najjar**

- Saturday, February 25, 2017 at 8:00pm
- Sunday, February 26, 2017 at 4:00pm

Jadi and Basseer live peacefully in an idyllic garden, if not for the fact that the alleged owner of the garden comes to beat them every day. Jewish American writer David travels to Israel to better understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and is soon mired in the cycles of violence and compassion that haunt everyday life. "The Victims" weaves these two disparate styles and stories to dig into the parallel and often contradictory narratives of Palestinian and Israeli histories. [Buy Tickets »](#)



**"Semitic Commonwealth" Featured in Forward**



Recently, The Forward featured an article about "Semitic Commonwealth," titled **"In Chicago Theatre, The Play's the Thing for Both Sides in Israel-Palestinian Conflict."** The piece, written by Aimee Leavitt, offers a look at the goals and development of the series, as well as interviews with curator Jamil Khoury, director Michael Malek Najjar, and playwrights Ken Kaissar and Zohar Tirosh-Polk.

"The festival's creators don't think it's too idealistic to expect plays to have an effect on policy. **'Artists can fill in for the failings of politicians and diplomats,'** said Khoury. **'Cultural change and cultural transition are most powerfully propelled through stories.'**

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-Aimee Leavitt, *The Forward*  
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