

Hello Friend, Meet the playwrights of "Semitic Commonwealth!" [View Online](#) Or [Forward](#) to a friend.



## Get Your Tickets for "Semitic Commonwealth" Today

February 10th through February 26th at Silk Road Rising  
(77 W. Washington St., Lower Level, Chicago, IL 60602)

A staged reading series comprised of six plays by Arab and Jewish playwrights exploring the human toll of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Rather than strive to achieve balance and moral equivalency between "competing" narratives, these works investigate themes of identity, justice, occupation, exile, history, and homeland with remarkable honesty and integrity.

[Purchase your tickets online](#) or by calling our box office at 312.857.1234 extension 201.



## Meet the Playwrights

"Semitic Commonwealth" features three Arab playwrights and three Jewish playwrights. [Learn more](#) about the playwrights' work below.

### Week 1 (February 10th - 12th)



#### [Hannah Khalil](#), *Scenes from 69\* Years*

A London based award-winning Palestinian-Irish writer, Hannah's stage plays include the critically acclaimed *Scenes from 69\* Years*, *Bitterenders*, *Plan D*, *Leaving Home*, *The Worst Cook in the West Bank*, and *Ring*. The Daily Telegraph wrote that her play *Scenes from 69\* Years* "confirms Khalil as a dramatist of compelling potential." Hannah's radio plays include *Last of the Pearl Fishers* and *The Deportation Room*, both for BBC Radio 4.



#### [Motti Lerner](#), *The Admission*

Motti is a Tel Aviv based Israeli playwright and screenwriter who writes mostly about political issues. His work, written in Hebrew, has been widely translated into English and other languages. Among his plays are *The Admission*, *Kastner*, *Pangs of the Messiah*, *Pollard*, *Exile in Jerusalem*, *Passing The Love of Women*, *Autumn*, *Hard Love*, and *The Hastening of The End*. In 1985 his play *Kastner* won a Best Play Award. In 1995, Motti was awarded the Prime Minister of Israel Award for Writers, and in 2002 he won a Best One-Act Play award for *Coming*

*Home*.

### Week 2 (February 17th - 19th)

include *Pieces*, *Land/Holy*, *Home/Front*, *The Zionists*, *Theo's Dream*, *Waltz*, *Fog* and *Six*. In 2012, she won the Jewish Play Project's new play competition for her play, *Six*. She is the recipient of the Foundation for Jewish Culture's Theatre grant, and in 2014 received Honorable Mention from the Middle East America fellowship. She earned her B.A. from Columbia University, and her MFA from Brooklyn College.



#### [Ismail Khalidi](#), *Tennis in Nablus*

Born in Beirut to Palestinian parents, raised in the U.S., and currently living in Valparaiso, Chile, Ismail Khalidi's plays include *Truth Serum Blues*, *Tennis in Nablus*, *Foot*, *Sabra Falling*, and the co-adaptation of Ghassan Kanafani's novella *Returning to Haifa* for the stage, commissioned by the Public Theater. Khalidi has previously been a Many Voices Fellow at the Playwrights Center in Minneapolis, as well as an Emerging Writers Fellow at the New York Theater Workshop. His writing has appeared in *The Nation*, *Mizna*, *Guernica*, *The Daily Beast*, *American Theatre Magazine*, *Remezcla*, and *Words Without Borders*.



### Week 3 (February 24th - 26th)

#### [Ken Kaissar](#), *The Victims*

Ken Kaissar was born in Ramat Gan, Israel of Yemenite Jewish heritage, raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, and is currently based in Philadelphia. His plays include *The Victims*, *A Modest Suggestion*, *A Leg Up* and *Nude Study*. His adaptation of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* was commissioned by Columbia University in 2008. His ten-minute play *Ceasefire* was an official selection in the 2012 New Works Festival at the Fusion Theatre Company in Albuquerque, and the 2015 ReOrient Festival at Golden Thread Productions in San Francisco. He holds a BFA in directing from Carnegie Mellon University and an MFA in playwriting from



Columbia University.

#### [Mona Mansour](#), *Urge for Going*

Mona Mansour is a New York based playwright of Lebanese heritage whose plays include *Across the Water*, *The Hour of Feeling*, *The Way West*, and *Urge for Going*. She was the recipient of a Whiting Writers' Award in 2012 and Middle East America Playwright Award in 2014. Mona was a member of the Public Theater's Emerging Writers Group and a Core Writer at Minneapolis' Playwrights' Center. Her plays have been produced at the Humana Festival at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Steppenwolf Theatre, and the Goodman. Her play *Unseen* will



premiere in 2017 at the Gift Theater in Chicago.

## Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams in Damascus

**evanston** public library



**Wednesday, February 1st @ 7pm**  
**Community Meeting Room**  
**Evanston Public Library**

It may be surprising to many that the two great pillars of 20th century American playwriting, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, were enormously popular in the Damascus theatre scene, and the Arab World in general, when their plays were translated and adapted into Arabic. Riad Ismat, a well-known Syrian playwright and director, shares his thoughts and recollections about interpreting Miller and Williams for Arab audiences. Co-sponsored by Silk Road Rising. **Registration available [online](#). [Learn More](#)**

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