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From the Desk of Founding Artistic Director Jamil Khoury

Silk Road Rising is dedicating calendar years 2019 and 2020 to American Muslim stories. We're calling this journey *Crescent and Star*.

An enormous honor has been bestowed upon us by the Building Bridges Program of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art. Along with fourteen other U.S.-based organizations, Silk Road Rising was awarded a grant "to cultivate stronger relationships among Muslims and their non-Muslim neighbors through revelatory experiences."



The grant will help us support American Muslim playwrights in developing new plays. On so many levels, this two year commitment represents a full-circle return to our founding story.

As many of you know, the catalyst for Silk Road Rising was the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The ensuing and ongoing backlash against Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Americans has informed our efforts ever since.



The stories we tell, the art and the discourse we create, respond both to the scapegoating of American Muslims and to the Jihadist ideologies that inspired the attacks.

The artists we've committed to for *Crescent and Star* define Muslimness on their own terms. They may be observant Muslims; they may be Muslim-by-heritage; they may be culturally Muslim; they may feel ambivalent toward Islam, toward religion in general, and yet identify strongly with a Muslim-majority country of origin. However they may identify, these playwrights embrace a Muslimness that is pluralistic, inclusive, adaptive, multiracial and multicultural.



Crescent and Star kicks off with Karim Nagi's *Detour Guide*, directed by Anna Bahow, in March and April of 2019. Stay tuned as our seasons unfold.

From Silk Road Rising's very inception, we have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our American Muslim brothers and sisters in fighting Islamophobia and defending civil rights. We have aligned ourselves with Muslim progressives, Muslim feminists, and Muslim queers, and we strive to build coalitions between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Crescent and Star—the plays we'll be producing in 2019 and 2020—builds on our history of producing timely, provocative, and revelatory work.

Our mission embraces stories of the East Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern Diasporas. For the next two years, Muslimness becomes the essence that animates this global Silk Road. Each individual story promises to enrich and expand our understanding of each other.



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