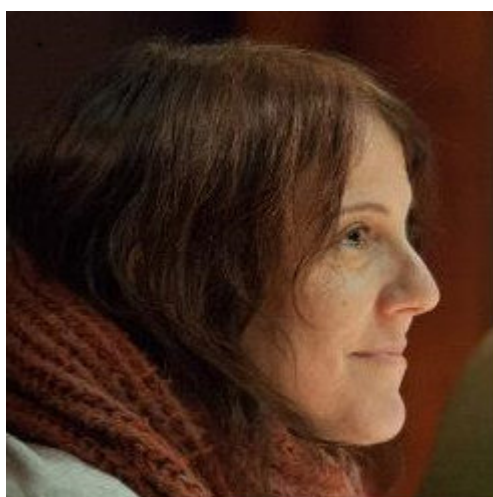


Hello & First Name>>, stories help us understand each other - which is why today's announcement is so exciting!
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MONA MANSOUR ANNOUNCED AS 2014 MIDDLE EAST AMERICA DISTINGUISHED PLAYWRIGHT



Silk Road Rising, [Golden Thread Productions](#), and [Lark Play Development Center](#) are proud to announce that Mona Mansour, author of *Urge for Going*, *The Hour of Feeling* and *The Way West*, has been chosen to receive the *2014 Middle East America Distinguished Playwright Award*. Honorable mentions went to playwrights Bianca Bagatourian, Ismail Khalidi, Daria Polatin, Mishael Shulman and Zohar Tirosh-Polk.

For us at Silk Road Rising, Mona Mansour exemplifies the spirit of the award both in her extraordinary talent as a playwright and her commitment to deepening and expanding representation of Arab Americans. As her body of work so beautifully demonstrates, hers is

a unique and refreshing voice in the American theatre. Beholden neither to the orthodoxies of identity politics nor to the fallacies of "post-racialism," Mona writes to discover and subvert, to uncover and disrupt. "Authenticity" and "hybridity" and "citizenship" will be defined on her terms, and in her words, always with an eye towards reinvention and change.

Mansour's play [The Way West](#) opens in April at [Steppenwolf Theatre Company](#). Mansour says of receiving the MEA fellowship "I am thrilled to receive this year's Middle East America award. In the years since I first applied for this award, I have come to see how important the Lark, Golden Thread, and Silk Road Rising are to the Middle Eastern theater community, and I am grateful that I will have the chance to do work that involves all three entities." To learn more about Mona, visit: [monamansour.com](#)

The fellowship award is part of **Middle East America: A National New Plays Initiative**, a first-of-its-kind tri-coastal collaboration designed to encourage and support the development of Middle Eastern American playwrights and plays of the highest artistic caliber and to enrich the canon of American dramatic literature. The program aims to challenge both the lack of representation and the one-dimensional stereotypical representation of persons of Middle Eastern descent on America's stages.

The prize, which is granted every three years to an American writer of a Middle Eastern background by a consortium composed of Chicago's Silk Road Rising, San Francisco's Golden Thread Productions, and New York's Lark Play Development Center, comes with a \$10,000 fellowship to write a new play of the author's choice, artistic development support for three years and possible productions at both Silk Road Rising and Golden Thread. During the play's development and production arc, representatives of each partner organization, along with Mansour, will travel to each city—Chicago, New York, and San Francisco—to observe the play's creative process and to engage in public conversations and panel events about Middle Eastern American voices.



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Silk Road Rising
6 E Monroe St
801
Chicago, IL 60603

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