

Our friends Sami Ismat and Michael Malek Najjar have been very busy!
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From the Creative Force Known as Sami Ismat

Sami Ismat is an interdisciplinary artist from Damascus, Syria who works in theatre, performance, and film. He creates work that unpacks, investigates, and interrogates the ongoing Syrian crisis, and its effects on the global community. Sami's work challenges mainstream ideas about refugees, Muslims, and the Middle East through his own personal experiences.



Sami's projects are very process-oriented. His rehearsals are grounded in experimentation and collaborative research and analysis. His solo video work aims to provoke complicated emotional and intellectual responses from the viewer.

Sami's credits at Silk Road Rising include: directing the staged readings of *Uzbek* by Talgat Batalov and Yekaterina Bondarenko and *Pure Land* by Mehdi Moradpour, acting in the staged readings of *The Admission* by Motti Lerner and *The Victims* by Ken Kaissar, and appearing as Mohammad in Jamil Khoury's video play *Obstacle Course*.

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Lemon & Oil

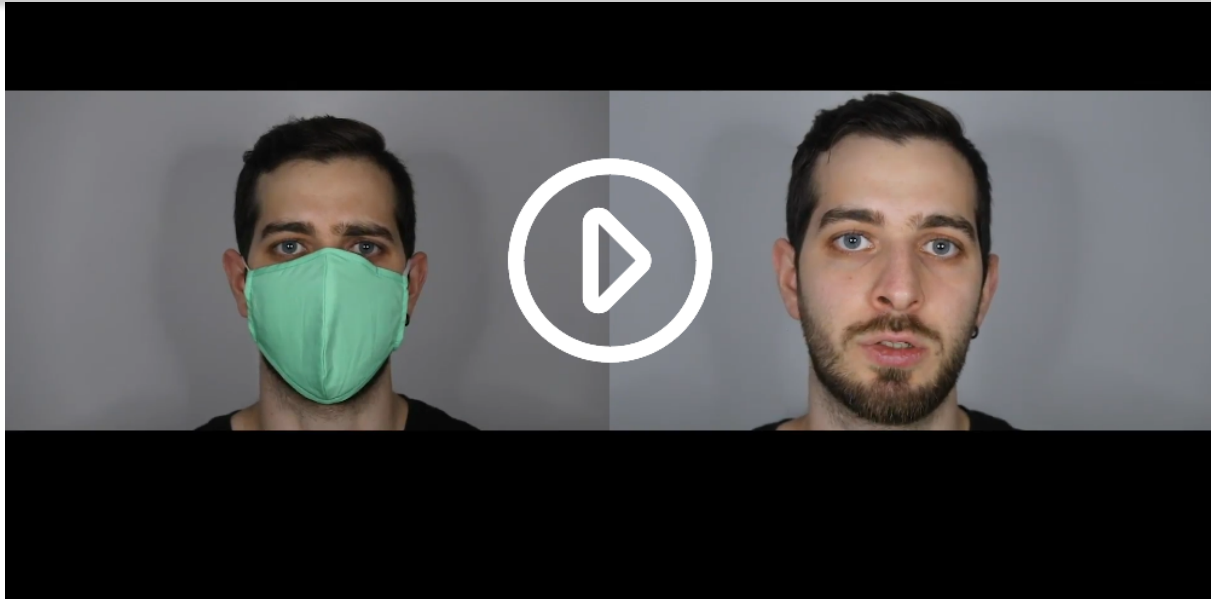
Created by Sami Ismat



Lemon & Oil explores immigrants' nostalgic and identity-affirming experiences of shopping at ethnic food stores in the United States. *Lemon & Oil* premiered at *Pivot Arts Festival: Re-imagining Utopia* that took place in Chicago in May & June 2021.

Transfixed

A Performance by Sami Ismat

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The artist relives experiences as a Syrian asylum seeker in Chicago and as a son mourning the loss of his father, an influential cultural figure in Syria and the Arab world, due to COVID-19. *Transfixed* was created for Collaboration's *Peacebook 2020: Essential Perspectives* and later screened for *Is It A Good Time?* hosted by Mana Contemporary.

[Learn More About Sami Ismat and His Work](#)

From the Scholarly Wonder Dr. Michael Malek Najjar

Congratulations to our dear friend and collaborator, Dr. Michael Malek Najjar, on the publication of his latest book, *Middle Eastern American Theatre: Communities, Cultures and Artists*.

Malek is an Associate Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of Oregon and a working director, playwright, and adapter.



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MIDDLE EASTERN
AMERICAN THEATRE
COMMUNITIES, CULTURES
AND ARTISTS
Michael Malek Najjar

Communities, Cultures and Artists explores the burgeoning Middle Eastern American theatre movement with a focus on American theater-makers of Arab, Armenian, Jewish, Iranian, and Turkish backgrounds. By exploring the rich cultural and religious heritage of these diverse groups, Najjar interrogates the paradoxical nature of Middle Eastern American identities through plays written and performed by Middle Eastern Americans.

Purchase the Book

[Learn More About Dr. Michael Malek Najjar](#)

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