

Hello Friend, we engage our audience through conversation. [View Online](#) Or [Forward](#) to a friend.



From Panel Discussions to Plays: Engaging Audiences Through Conversation

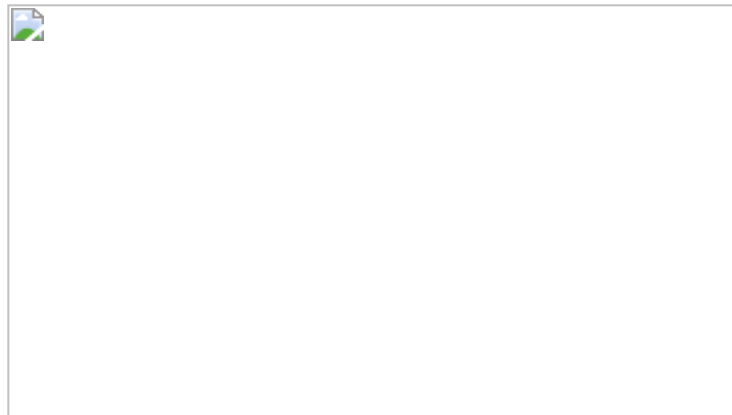


In addition to producing plays, ours is a theatre company that places great emphasis on engaging with local and global challenges through curated public conversations. We at Silk Road Rising not only provide context for the worlds in which our work exists, we also create awareness of the conditions and conflicts that fuel our work. Change begins with dynamic conversation, no matter how difficult that might be. If we are going to help shape narratives and challenge mainstream representations, we must engage our communities in thoughtful dialogue and allow for honest, unfiltered reflection.

In 2015, we hosted two major panels: "**Muslim American Artists: Reshaping the Narrative**" (March 9, 2015) and "**Eastern Christians: Commemorating Genocide, Confronting the Future**" (August 6th, 2015). Both panels are now available to watch online. We encourage you to do so.

Muslim American Artists: Reshaping the Narrative

How does representation shape our perceptions and policies? This was one of many questions explored in Silk Road Rising's panel discussion, "Muslim American Artists: Reshaping the Narrative," held on March 9, 2015. In the tradition of reclaiming, dissecting, and subverting representation, this conversation proceeded from the assumption that there is no "correct" answer to any of these questions.



In a program moderated by Artistic Director Jamil Khoury, five passionate Chicago-based artists joined us to discuss what it means to be both Muslim American and artists, how art can be a form of activism, and what their hopes are for the future of Muslim American arts.



In a discussion about how American perceptions of Muslims are shaped by the acts of terrorist groups, filmmaker Rashid Ghazi pointed out that there aren't really any Muslim heroes portrayed in the mainstream. "The media, it's not that they're necessarily cruel; it's that they know that fear, and especially Islam and things that people don't understand, sell well," he says. Part of why he became a filmmaker is to change how Muslim Americans are perceived by presenting images of who they really are. Ghazi says: "We can't really rely on third-parties to do that." You can watch clips from the panel discussion [here >>](#)

Eastern Christians: Commemorating Genocide, Confronting the Future

Silk Road Rising's panel discussion on August 6th, 2015 entitled, "Eastern Christians:

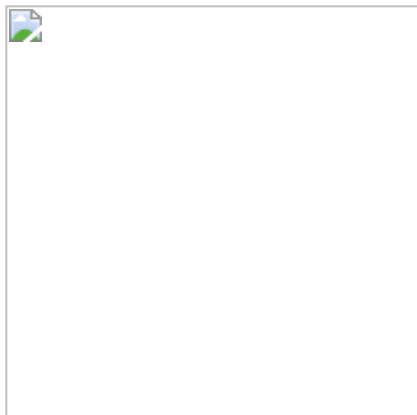
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brought together panelists from different Christian and Muslim backgrounds to reflect on the centennial of the Armenian, Aramean/Assyrian, and Greek Genocides, and to discuss present day challenges confronting Christians in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and beyond.



The panel discussion, moderated by Artistic Director Jamil Khoury, was preceded by scenes from Adriana Sevahn Nichols' play *Night Over Erzinga*. Poignant performances by five talented actors provided the capacity crowd at Silk Road Rising a glimpse into the horrors of the Armenian Genocide.

In a discussion about pluralism and building greater Christian - Muslim cooperation, panelists looked to the past and the present for answers. Jamil said: "For those of us who believe in a Middle East defined by pluralism and rich cultural mosaics, for those of us who demand religious freedom for all communities, then meaningful solidarity with the victims of this onslaught must be realized. Our hope with this program is to generate awareness and plant seeds for collective action." You can watch the entire panel discussion [here >>](#)

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