



NEWSLETTER

August – October
2021

Dear Friends,
We are pleased to inform you about our artistic and training programs in the last three months.

Training:

a. Drama Training Program

ASHTAR Theatre started the new academic year in September, with the students of the Theatre school in their second, third and fourth year. Their training is run by director Khalil Al-Batran, who is working on the production of a new play with the group, that will be shown at «ASHTAR International Youth Theatre Festival»- Sixth edition, next July 2022.



B. «Theatre of the Oppressed» Workshop

As part of the educational plan for youth, a workshop was held on techniques of Theatre of the Oppressed, led by Edward Muallem, with the participation of 12 young people. The workshop dealt with: Introduction to theatre of the oppressed, Image Theatre, character building and self-storytelling. A Forum Theatre show will be produced at a later stage, with the participation of the group to talk about bullying and the psychological wellbeing of youth.



Productions:

a. A short film - «How long is this story?!»

With the support of Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Palestine and Jordan, ASHTAR Theatre conducted a research study addressing the main problems facing Palestinian health sector in WB; It covered the workers and the beneficiaries. Based on this study, a scenario was produced, entitled «How long is this story?!» Written by Ghassan Naddaf, directed by Salim Abu Jabal, and featuring a large group of Palestinian actors.



The film was presented to a number of university students from public health departments. In addition to the general public through ASHTAR social media platforms. After each presentation a dialogue was initiated with the audience, around the problems raised, in an attempt to find practical solutions to the situation.



B. A conference on reality of the Palestinian Health Sector

ASHTAR Theatre held a conference on the health situation in the West Bank, hosting the following speakers: Mr. Anas Al-Deek, Head of Public Relations and Media Unit at the Palestinian Ministry of Health, Dr. Wael Abu Sneina, Head of the Sub-committee of the Medical Syndicate, Hebron Branch, and Dr. Nufoz Al-Maslamani, Director of Dunya Women's Center, and Director of the Specialized Medical Relief Center for Cardiovascular Diseases and Diabetes, Dr. Johny Khoury, in addition to a number of other health institutions and the general public.

The conference included a presentation of the film "How long is this story?!" as an entry point for discussion with the decision-makers and the community members, in order to reach suggestions and recommendations that might contribute to solving certain problems facing the health sector in Palestine.

Performances:

"Oranges and Stones" was performed five times for university students at Dar Al-Kalima University and Women's Technical Training Center, and for the general public on ASHTAR social media platforms. This was made possible by a grant from the Goethe-Institut International Relief Fund – 2021.

The play is directed by Mojisola Adebayo, acted by Edward Muallem and Iman Aoun, music by Rami Washaha, and technicalities by Mohammed Qundah.

Awards:

The Documentary Film «Gaza Monologues; Ten Years and the Dream Continues..» participated in various international film festivals around the world and won:

- * The Golden Award of the documentary category from The International World Film Carnival in Singapore in October.
- * The Silver Award from «Virgin Spring CineFest» which was held in Calcutta - India in September.

The film is remotely directed by Iman Aoun, assisted by Yousef Nateel from Gaza, and produced with a grant from Taawon Foundation in 2020.

Partnerships:

«Children's Theatre Everywhere»

Al-Harah Theatre, in partnership with ASHTAR Theatre, Freedom Theatre, Yes Theatre and Rasael Theatre, won the grant provided by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development through Taawon Foundation, to implement a "Children's Theatre Everywhere". The project aims to produce five children plays and organize a «Children's Festival» in the West Bank in 2022.

Part of this program, Al-Harah Theatre organized two workshops: one in playwriting for children's theatre, and the other for directing. Two students from ASHTAR Theatre participated in the workshops.



Gaza Project

In cooperation with ASHTAR Theatre, Albayader for Theatre and Arts produced the play "Feelings", directed by Ali Abu Yaseen. A group of ASHTAR graduates in Gaza participated in the project. The play was performed three times. Iman Aoun, the artistic director of ASHTAR helped the group in developing the play with a fund by "IM Foundation for Development", through AL Harah Theatre.

Stories from the street

As an answer to the call the Palestinian Performing Arts Sector initiated in the aftermath of the brutal attack on Gaza by the Israeli occupation; a group of international women theatre performers who were part of the 2020 Gilder/Coigney International Theatre Award, led by Melody Brooks from New Perspective Theatre – NYC; embarked on a pilot program that provided a platform where theatre artists were able to use their creative talents to be a voice for the people. The program started in August with the Palestinian artists curated by Iman Aoun and one week was dedicated to Lebanon. The program ended in October in India curated by Mallika Sarabhai, while in September the focus was on Venezuela curated by Lupe Gehrenbeck. The program hosted readings by local artists from the four countries, followed by a thorough dialogue with fellow artists who attended the online presentations. The aim was to compare biased political and media accounts with honest and true stories that highlight the reality of ordinary people "on the ground".

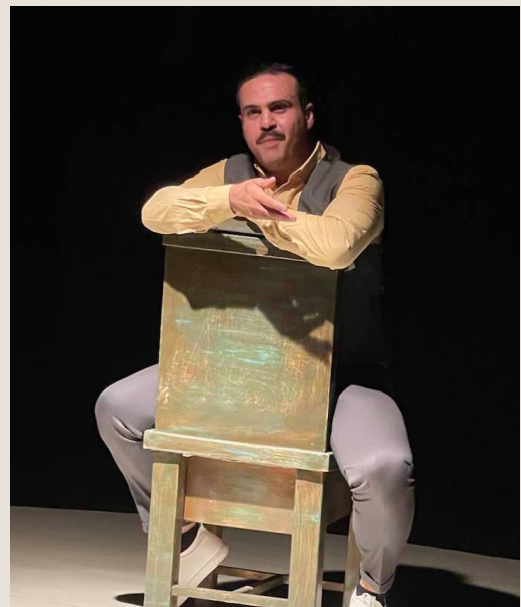
Hosted Plays:

* «At the roundabout» a stand-up comedy by Alaa Shehadeh, directed by Hassan Taha. During the Palestinian Monodrama Festival, organized by Palestinian Ministry of Culture.

* «No Cherry» a stand-up comedy by Shareehan Al Hadweh, directed by Manal Awad, produced by Al-Harah Theatre.

ASHTAR New Board of Directors:

ASHTAR General Assembly elected a new board of directors for two years 2021-2023. The positions are as follows: Dr. Samir Hulileh - Chairman of the Board, Mohannad Karajah - Vice President, Hiba Abu Libdeh - Treasurer, Ahmed Hunaiti - Secretary, Sima Al-Jallad, Khaled Shtayyeh, and Majdi Habash - members.



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