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Introduction

Implanting Hope... Cultivating Transformation

ASHTAR premises in Ramallah serves as a Youth Theatre School and its branch in Gaza provides alternative life outlet for youth living under siege.

ASHTAR’s 27th years of experience is built over its three artistic pillars; Drama Training, Theatre of the Oppressed, and Professional Productions. ASHTAR aims at empowering young women and men, in cities, villages, and refugee camps - in urban and remote areas, in the West Bank and Gaza. It introduces new ideas and perspectives on social change, while developing the skills and technical capacities of young theatre students and professionals, providing them with a vital space for innovation and creativity.

Over the years ASHTAR Theatre has learned that hope is a vital seed in the spirit of youth, especially when they live in a country entangled with multi-layered problems of political division, apartheid and occupation. Hope becomes a tool that will open possibilities for them to overcome the socio-political norms and functions in our occupied country.

Theatre Training at ASHTAR has contributed to the creation of a new generation of skilled theatre artists in Palestine, who have taken ASHTAR’s drama training programs and professional productions to new heights in terms of outreach, impact, and quality.

ASHTAR’s training graduates who finished 3-5 years of theatre and drama training, went on to work as theatre professionals either with ASHTAR or with other companies, or traveled abroad to continue their theatre studies on an advanced level, and launched creative enterprises on their own. ASHTAR Theatre continue to be a minaret for many youth looking for alternative expression and emancipatory approach to life.
Through drama training and theatre productions, ASHTAR helps youth to enhance their physical skills, intellectual and creative abilities, including communication and learning skills and ability to verbally express their thoughts and emotions, allows them to develop critical thinking skills and have the ability to reflect norms and traditions by addressing social taboos and challenges, such as gender and social status. More so, through our theatre and drama work we protect our cultural identity especially in the place where the Israeli occupation is trying hard to diminish it.

ASHTAR Theatre is an active organization not only in Palestine, but also in the Arab World. Its training programs, have been in demand around the Arab World. ASHTAR worked over the years in different Arab countries, spreading the techniques of Theatre of the Oppressed – Forum Theatre as a tool for social change.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Palestine and in the Arab World were reached with ASHTAR’s performances of its newly written plays. ASHTAR is very present in the various Arab and International Festivals as well as it is constantly invited to present its work and methodology at universities and theatres around the World.

In 2018 ASHTAR Theatre produced:
8 students plays, 3 professional plays, 2 community based plays
Presented: 56 performances, locally, regionally and internationally.
Reached: 13,300 audience members.
ASHTAR For Theatre Productions and Training
Enhancing Creativity and Commitment for Change

VISION:
Towards a free and creative human being on the cultural, intellectual and social levels; and for a Palestinian society that respects pluralism, democracy and fosters openness and cultural exchange.

MISSION:
ASHTAR for Theatre Productions and Training, seeks to develop a Palestinian individual capable of expressing oneself and communicate with the surroundings and the world.
Creates cultural bridges with international theaters and drawing on the experiences of actors, directors and producers while maintaining creative exchange with them.
Contributes towards the creation of socio-cultural conditions that embraces values of freedom, justice and equality through the use of theater productions and trainings, targeting adolescents, youth and women.
Builds skills and capacities of the local and regional theater movement.
Nurtures the aesthetics and values of performing arts in Palestine.
Productions in 2018

Missirghy - Ram Allah

Missryah

Peer Gynt

إخراج
إميل سابا

تأليف: الكاتب النرويجي هنريك إبسن

إعداد وإخراج: إيمان عون وإميل سابا | بديع وملايمر، ماما كاوسشنير كارير

إدارة منصات وتقنيات: محمد علي | جميع إعداد: أورين | مقرر: عادلة وشاحي

محمد علي | علي الجمل | محمد موسى | إبراهيم عطية | باسم شثار | خالد سمير

تمثيل: أمور زينب | مونار معلم | نزار أبو شهيرة | عصام عطية

صياح بصبرة | زين ميمي | زياد عيسى | سمير، موسى | سهير معاد

محمود عيسى | جميرا قلعة
a) Training ASHTAR Students and Producing “Peer Gynt”

ASHTAR marked its 26th year of continuous training of acting for youngsters 18 – 14 years old. This year a group of 12 students from different training levels took part in the summer production of “Peer Gynt” by Norwegian author Henrik Ibsen. The play was adapted into Arabic by Iman Aoun and Emile Saba and directed by Emile Saba. Sets, costumes and movements were designed by Masha Kapustina from Russia. The play was presented at the opening ceremony of the fourth edition of ASHTAR Theater International Youth Festival on July 21st, followed by four successful performances at ASHTAR Theater. A number of 700 audience members attended the performances.
b) Drama Training in Six Schools in Jerusalem and One in Ramallah

ASHTAR’s drama training for school students was launched in six private and government schools in Jerusalem with the support of the Pontifical Mission. 80 students of both gender participated in the program. By the end of the school year the students presented six plays directed by: Edward Muallem, Iman Aoun and Mohammad Eid. The plays were performed twice once on the stage of the participating schools and once together at Terra Sancta School in the Old City of Jerusalem, reaching 850 audience members from students and families. Furthermore, at the request of St. Joseph school in Ramallah, Emile Saba trained and directed “Macbeth” in English for a group of 26 female students form the school. The play was presented twice to an audience of to 500 people.
Part of the ongoing cooperation with the Governorate of Trondheim and Charlottenlund School, a group from ASHTAR comprising two trainers and two students, traveled to Trondheim for two weeks. ASHTAR trainers lead the annual training of the Norwegian students on the techniques of Theater of the Oppressed. As result a Forum Play was produced and called “Tomorrow is the show”. Six Swedish students alongside the two Palestinian students took part in the play that was performed in Trondheim, Ramallah and Jerusalem. Attended by 1050 students and teachers in both countries.
d) A Lighting Design Workshop by Eivind Myren from Norway

In cooperation with Trondheim Municipality and Ramallah Municipality, a lighting design workshop took place for a whole week, at the beginning of July, on the margins of ASHTAR Youth Festival. A group of technicians from Ramallah Municipal theaters, the Popular Theater and ASHTAR Theatre participated in the workshop. The training of Eivind was designed and implemented on the play “Peer Gynt”.

![Image of workshop participants discussing]

![Image of lighting design demonstration]

![Image of stage setup with lighting effects]
e) ASHTAR Theatre International Youth Festival - ATiYF and the Graduation of the Sixteenth Class

In partnership with Ramallah Municipality, ASHTAR Theatre organized the fourth edition of ATiYF from July 21 to 29. This theatre festival takes place once every two years and is dedicated towards youth. Thereby, the graduating class from ASHTAR Drama Program, participate in the design and implementation of the festival as part of their graduation project.

The students chose “Ascension” as theme for this year’s festival. 42 young theatre students and 8 teachers participated in this year’s festival. They came from Rassia, Britain, Germany, Poland, USA and Palestine.

Six local plays and one from the US were presented in Ramallah, Birzeit, Hebron and Bethlehem.

In addition, four specialized workshops organized over the period of nine days, were presented on stage by all the participants at the closing ceremony. Dr. Ihab Bseiso, Palestinian Minister of Culture, presided the graduation of this year’s class. The festival was able to reach a sum of 1500 audience members.
f) Drama Training for School Teachers

For the second consecutive year, Drama Training for School Teachers was carried out in six schools in Jerusalem as part of “Bridges”, a program supported by the Pontifical Mission. Training evolved around the establishment of theater clubs in schools. 8 teachers participated in the training and initiated its application at the beginning of the current school year 2019-2018.
a) “Oh my Heart” A Forum Play in Gaza

Funded by Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Palestine, ASHTAR in Gaza organized a new performance tour for the Forum Play “Oh my Heart”, written and directed by Ali Abu Yaseen and staged by ASHTAR group in Gaza. The play focused the attention on the sanitary conditions and the bureaucracy that dominates the health sector in Gaza. It was performed 15 times in a number of educational and social centers to a diverse audience that reached 1500 member.
b) “Abu Keileh’s Family” A Community Forum Play in Jiftlik

As part of the “Arts and Culture and Social Development” program, supported by Qattan Foundation and SDC; ASHTAR continued its work at the village of Jiftlik in the Jordan Valley for the second year. The focus of this year was to fight the increasing number of students dropping out after primary school and going into cheap labor at the surrounding Israeli colonies. ASHTAR worked with a group of youth from the village who faced similar experience and produced a forum play with them. “Abu Keileh’s Family” raised the awareness of students and their parents of the social, economic and political problems attached to the issue raised. The play was performed 7 times for an audience of 460 members. In addition and in order to raise the voices of the people to the decision makers, ASHTAR organized a conference with the performance in Ramallah, whereby issues regarding the educational and working conditions in Jiftlik were raised. The conference was attended by representatives of different ministries and community organizations, and resulted in a number of recommendations and suggestions to ameliorate conditions of the village, especially its transportation and education. Imtiaz Al Moghrabi followed and documented the process in a short film.
The conference &
Theatre activities at Jiftlik schools
c) “A Right Move” A Play in Ramallah

Upon the request of the Palestinian National Bureau of Statistics with a grant from the Norwegian Representative Office in Ramallah, ASHTAR produced the play “A Right Move”, written by Ghassan Naddaf and directed by Mohammad Eid and performed by a group of professional actors.

The play tackled the problems of women in the Palestinian labor market and the obstacles in their professional development. The play was performed ten times in different Palestinian cities, and attended by a number of 2600 audience members. It took part at ASHTAR Theatre International Youth Festival, Wadi El Sha’ir Festival in Tulkarm, Palestinian National Theater Festival in Ramallah and the closing ceremony of the campaign denouncing violence against women “Me Too - Voices Against Violence”.

![Image of the play in performance]
d) “The Downfall” A Play in Ramallah

Part of the long term partnership with Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Palestine, ASHTAR Theatre produced a Forum Play that tackles both organizations’ main focus for this year around ‘Emancipatory Education’. “The Downfall” is an adaptation of the play “Inherit the Wind” by Jerome Lawrence and Robert Lee. The new version is written by Ghassan Naddaf and directed by Mohammad Eid and performed with 6 professional actors Yasime Shalaldeh, Maryiam Basha, Shibli Al Baw, Khalil Batran, Rizeq Ibrahim and Massad Hani. The play was launched in December with four performances to a general audience and students of a number of universities and colleges in the Ramallah. A sum of 300 audience members had seen the play so far.
a) «Oranges and Stones»

«Oranges and Stones», is a visual play with no words that presents the gradual loss of Palestine since the Balfour Declaration until present time. This play was first produced in 2010, but ASHTAR Theatre saw that it is important to retake it, for the centennial of the Balfour Declaration.

«Oranges and Stones» Directed by Mojisola Adebayo, performed by Edward Muallem and Iman Aoun and music by Rami Washaha.
‘Oranges and Stones’ participated at local, Arab and International Festivals during 2018:

- Palestinian Cultural Week organized by the Palestine Embassy and the Palestinian Ministry of Culture. Performances took place in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.
- A tour of 10 performances at local universities in the West Bank. Reaching to 1200 students and teachers.
- Resistance Festival at The Freedom Theatre in Jenin.
- Spring Festival in Mi’ilya Village - Upper Galilee. 500 people attended the show.
- The Human Mosaic Festival at Brama Theatre in Poland.
- Al Zarqa Theater Festival in Jordan. The play won Best Music award.
- Qalandia International Festival at The Palestinian National Theater in Jerusalem.
- The Show Case organized by The Palestinian Performing Arts Network. Performed at ASHTAR Theatre in Ramallah.
- The Majaz Cultural Festival at The Small Circus in Nablus.
• ‘And Here I Am’ a play by Ahmad Toubasi from Jenin.
• ‘Miramiyeh’ a play by Al Hara Theatre from Beit Jala.
• ‘Two Lady Bugs’ as part of The Palestinian Cultural Festival Activities organized by Qattan Foundation.
• ‘Ansar’ a play by Tantoura Theatre in Ramallah.
• Celebrating ‘World Theater Day’ on the 27th of March with a panel about academic theater education in Palestine, and launching the book of Radi Shehadeh, “Biography of a storyteller from Palestine”.
• ‘Don’t be an Extra’ a play by Rassael Group from Nablus, in cooperation with the Palestinian Performing Arts Network.
• ‘Last Day in Spring’ a play by Fida’ Zeidan from the Golan Heights.
• A Musical Performance by Bashar Murad and Polish singer Lena Witkowska.
a) **Palestine International Book Fair:** ASHTAR exhibited at the Performing Arts wing its specialized theatre books and publications.

b) **Creative Spaces:** ASHTAR participated in two specialized workshops organized by Al Hara Theater within the realm of its Creative Spaces project with Malta Cultural Capital.

c) **Arts Management Program:** Events Manager Lina Ghanem, participated in the Arts Management program organized by Sabrine Institute in cooperation with Columbia University at Bethlehem University.

d) **Palestine National Theater Festival:** ASHTAR participated in the first edition of Palestine National Theater Festival, organized by the Palestinian Ministry of Culture in cooperation with The Arab Theater Institute in Sharjah. ASHTAR performed the play ‘A Right Move’, as well as a number of its employees volunteered in the different festival committees.

e) **Palestinian Performing Arts Network:** Being an active member of PPAN, ASHTAR participated this year in a number of its organized workshops and activities:
   - Building a national advocacy plan.
   - A forum meeting with the Minister of Culture to discuss the Taxation Law imposed on artists, the international touring of Palestinian performing arts groups, and the intellectual property rights.
   - The Performing Arts Show Case, that hosted 60 international guests of cultural programmers,
festival directors, and managers of performing arts networks.

F) Projects Planning and Development course: The workshop held with the Ministry of Education to study means of sustainable cooperation of introducing and teaching Performing Arts at National Schools.

g) Ariadne Network Meeting: Iman Aoun and Yasmin Shalaldeh participated in the planning session of future projects held by Ariadne Network in Belgrade, Serbia in December.
ASHTAR Theatre Board Members in 2018

1. Mr. Nawwaf Hamed - Chairman
2. Mr. Fayez Dumeiri - Treasurer
3. Mr. Yousef Aoun - Secretary
4. Ms. Mayyar Rantissi - Member
5. Ms. Hiba Abu Libdeh - Member
6. Mr. Muhannad Karaja - Member
7. Mr. Ahmad Huneiti - Member

ASHTAR Team in Ramallah and Gaza in 2018

1. Edward Muallem – General Manager
2. Iman Aoun – Artistic Director
3. Lina Ganim – Executive Director
4. Nael Bisharia – Accountant
5. Emile Saba – Director and Trainer
6. Mohammad Eid – Director and Trainer
7. Ali Abu Yaseen - Director and Trainer
8. Isleen Attallah - Assistant trainer
9. Shahd Yaseen- Feild coordinator
10. Mohammad Ali – Technician
11. Masha Kapustina - Scenographer
**Networks**

* Palestinian Performing Arts Network (PPAN).
* Anna Lindh Foundation Network.
* ARIADNE Network.

**ASHTAR Main Partners in 2018**

- Ramallah Municipality
- Palestinian Ministry of Culture
- PPAN - Palestinian Performing Arts Network
- Jordan Valley Solidarity Campaign
- Freedom Theatre - Jenin
- Universities and Colleges in Ramallah
- Charlottenlund school- Trondheim, Norway
- Jericho Municipality
- UNRWA
### ASHTAR Donors and Supporters in 2018

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<th>Donor/Subscriber</th>
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<td>SIDA- Sweden, as part of PPAN project - Ramallah</td>
<td>$98,129</td>
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<td>Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung - Germany</td>
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<td>Pontifical Mission - Jerusalem</td>
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<td>Local donations and Income from show</td>
<td>$11,519</td>
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<td>Global Giving Foundation</td>
<td>$5,923</td>
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**TOTAL:** $344,907
EIGHTH:
Artistic Plan
For 2019

- Producing and performing 4 small interactive plays with 3 Schools and 1 University in Gaza
- Local tour of the forum play “Right Move”.
- Local and international tour of “Oranges and Stones”.
- Producing of a new Experimental play in Ramallah.
- Producing a forum theatre play with Charlottenlund School students and ASHTAR students in Trondheim- Norway and touring the play in Trondheim and Ramallah.
- Continue the training of ASHTAR Students in Ramallah and producing 2 plays with them in summer 2019.
- Third year drama training program (Jussur) with 5 schools in Jerusalem and producing 5 short plays with them.
- Local tour of the Forum play “The Down Fall”.
- Local tour of Enheduanna” production.
ASHTAR
For Theatre Productions & Training

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