



Born in the Syria, **Samer Ali** is a conservatory-trained violinist and a resident physician at Mount Sinai Medical Center. He began studying Western classical music at the age of 8, and later turned to Syrian musical traditions. He co-founded the Awj Arab Music Ensemble in Damascus in 2007, and founded the New York-based musical group Takht al-Nagham in 2017. He has launched the Syrian Music Preservation Initiative to conserve and promote the music traditions of Syria, and particularly its musical capital Aleppo, through archiving, education, and performance. Photo By Fouad Salloum.

**Katty Alhayek** is a Syrian scholar-activist who is pursuing a doctorate in communication at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Her research interests include Syrian refugees, gender, media audiences, activism, and new technologies. Katty published articles in peer-reviewed journals like *International Journal of Communication; Gender, Technology and Development; Syria Studies; and Feminist Media Studies*. She worked for organizations like *The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, The Online Journal of Space Communication, and Geneva Institute for Human Rights*. A former Open Society Foundations Fellow, Katty holds a master's degrees in international affairs and media studies from Ohio University and a graduate certificate in women's, gender, and sexuality studies. She earned an undergraduate degree in media studies from Damascus University in 2008.



**Aya Aljamili**, an Open Society Foundations Civil Society Leadership Award recipient, has done extensive translation and relief work in Syria, Turkey, and the United States. While working with Chemonics International (USAID), she helped establish the Syrian White Helmets who feature in the 2017 Oscar-nominated documentary *Last Men in Aleppo*. A native of the Syrian city of Aleppo, Aya is the sole founder of the Gaziantep Syrian Women's Empowerment Initiative. She undertook graduate study in English language and literature at the University of Aleppo and is currently pursuing a master's degree in international development management at American University, where she won the Student Voice Award for advocacy. She is currently employed as a production assistant at Al Jazeera International Media Network.

**Marianna al-Tabbaa** is pursuing a master's degree in politics at New York University. After graduating from Damascus University in 2009 with a degree in English, she worked for various civil society associations in Syria, then moved to Lebanon to join humanitarian organizations. As a field researcher, Marianna contributed to reports on conflict analysis, informal justice mechanisms and needs assessments (on arts and culture) for the United Nations Development Programme, International Alert, and the British Council, among other organizations. She also served as Senior Research Officer at BBC Media Action. After a 2017 internship at Human Rights Watch, Marianna joined the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security as a Policy Research Fellow.



Syrian artist and architect **Mohamad Hafez** was born in Damascus, raised in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and educated in the United States. Using found objects, paint, and scrap metal, he creates photorealistic three-dimensional scenes that evoke the urban fabric of the Middle East and serve as backdrops for political and social expression. Mohamad's realistic—yet ironic—sculptures are architectural in appearance and political in content. Responding to the atrocities of the Syrian war, his recent work captures the magnitude of devastation and exposes the fragility of human life. It reflects his passion for street art and activism, and his desire to promote and sustain awareness of the ongoing Syrian conflict. Mohamad's art has featured in numerous critically acclaimed exhibitions and has been profiled in the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, and on *National Public Radio*. He serves as a 2018 Yale University Silliman College Fellow.

**Nour Halabi** is a PhD candidate at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, where she researches global media and politics, and teaches Arabic language and culture. She holds an Msc. in comparative political science from the London School of Economics. Nour's dissertation explores narratives of hospitality in policies and discourses on forced migration in the United States. Her research on Egyptian and Syrian media appears in *Arab Media & Society* and *Space and Culture*. She currently is co-editing (with Christa Salamandra) a special issue of *Middle East Critique*, "Politics in and of Middle Eastern Television Drama" (forthcoming). She is also co-editor (with Klaus Krippendorff) *Discourses in Action* (forthcoming from Routledge).





**Noor Hamdi** is a New York-based actor originally from Chicago. He is a second year acting student at the William Esper Studio and has participated in various projects in New York, including readings, productions, and short films. The son of Syrian immigrants, Noor particularly enjoys work that focuses on Middle Eastern peoples and their diasporas, and feels very attached to his cultural background. In addition to acting, Noor is an aerial silks artist and an ESL teacher.

**Bassam Khabieh** is freelance photojournalist working with Reuters in Syria. He studied computer science at Damascus University and worked as an IT administrator. When the war erupted, he moved to his hometown in the besieged Eastern Ghouta area outside Damascus, where he has worked with many local and international organizations like UNICEF and the WHO to documenting attacks against civilians and life under siege. Bassam's project, "A Syrian Field Hospital in Douma," won the prestigious Robert Capa Gold Medal Award for "photographic reporting from abroad requiring exceptional courage and enterprise." His photograph of a chemical attack survivor walking through a war-ravaged



Filmmaker **Maan Mousslli** holds an associate degree in e-marketing from the Syrian Virtual University, studied management information systems at the Arab International University, developing skills in film, video editing, graphic design and photograph. He has worked as a freelance photographer and filmmaker, and documented the Syrian uprising before he was forced to leave his country in 2014. Currently based in Germany, he has made four prize-winning documentary films that have been screened internationally: *Newcomers* (2018), *Love Boat* (2016), *Shakespeare in Zaatari* (2016), and *The Club* (2014).

Filmmaker, poet, playwright, screenwriter, and translator, **Liwaa Yazji** studied English literature and theater at the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus[?]. Her play *Goats* premiered in The Royal Court, London, in November 2017. In addition to *Goats*, she is the author of the play "Here in the Park" (2012), a poetry collection, "In Peace, We Leave Home" (2014), and an Arabic translation of Edward Bond's *Saved* (2014). She has scripted several television drama screenplays, including the widely-broadcast pan-Arab series *The Brothers* (2014). Liwaa served as a 2015 resident of the Poet's House in New York. Her documentary *Haunted* was released in 2014 and premiered at FID Marseilles, where it won a Mention Special in the First Film Competition. It has since been screened at numerous international festivals. Liwaa is currently co-writing HEIM, a TV series to be produced in Germany. Photo by Florian Reimann.



**Eden Zane** is an actor and singer with roots in both New York and Damascus. He debuted at 13th Street Repertory Company in a production of *Dark Play or Stories for Boys*. As an Arabic vocal soloist, he has graced the stages of Lincoln Center, Joe's Pub, and many other venues. *The New York Times* once reviewed his delivery as a "baritone [that] conveyed romance, elegance and gusto." Eden is a graduate of the William Esper Studio and Shakespeare & Company's training programs.

