



DANCE, PHYSICAL THEATRE AND CIRCUS (INTERNATIONAL/CONTEMPORARY)

Arab Arts Focus Edinburgh Showcase presents:

Dance Double Bill: Mayhkomsh / Running Away

EDINBURGH FRINGE PREMIERE

A double bill of new contemporary dance from Palestine and Egypt focusing on identity, homeland, body politics and societal pressures questioning what it means to be Arab today

Performed by Shaymaa Shoukry (*Mayhkomsh*) and Yazan Iwidat (*Running Away*)

Part of the Arab Arts Focus Edinburgh Showcase

Demonstration Room, Summerhall, 4 - 27 August 2017 (not 7, 14 or 21), 13:35 (14:20),

The first of the two contemporary dance performances, *Mayhkomsh* uses shaking to tackle social judgement and invites audiences to look beyond the skin and into the heart. The bold piece celebrates diversity and versatility and reveals the many shades and colours of one being: a woman, Sudanese, African, Arab and a dancer. This work was created with an urge to highlight that viewpoint and proximity affect perspective, and that there is more to a being than what we see at first glance.

***Running Away* is a dancer portraying what's happening inside his head: will he run away from the community that nurtured him and made him who he is or will he stay and lose his individuality?** This universally appealing performance looks at how Palestinians and Arabs cannot be labelled together and that becoming a refugee is not one's choice. This is a thought provoking piece focusing on identity, and influenced by what young Palestinians think and what they want to talk about.

Yazan Iwidat said: "*Running Away* is a piece that I created after I left Palestine to start living in Europe, I started questioning the decisions I made and whether it was a good choice to leave Palestine behind and start somewhere else.

"I created this performance to show that Palestinians are not only fighters but also real normal people who aspire to live a better future and have hopes, dreams and fears, and one of my personal fears before leaving Palestine was "would i ever fit in elsewhere?"

"I think it's really important to perform *Running Away* at the fringe to show the international public that Palestinian performers can bring up other subjects on stage and they don't have to always talk about war and them being Palestinians."

Shaymaa Shoukry said: "*Mayhkomsh* came from a need to work on the idea of social judgment and how proximity and perspective affect the way we perceive others, based on the physical action of shaking many facades of the same woman appear, through divers dance forms that reflect her character. Showing that there is more to a person than what we see at first sight.

"We are thrilled to come and share the work within the Arab arts focus at the fringe this year, looking forward to hear feedback from such an international range of audiences and programmers. And excited to have access to attending many performances which will give an amazing overview of the international performing arts scene."

Shaymaa Shoukry (*Mayhkomsh*) is from Cairo, Egypt and has a passion for choreography, performing, and creating video art. A multidisciplinary artist coming from a visual arts background, she is interested

in integrating diverse disciplines in her creations. Always motivated and inspired by working collectively, she is interested in researching the origin of the movement, repetition and transformation. Always questioning approaches to share her artistic practice with public from diverse backgrounds and various landscapes.

Shaymaa studied Visual Arts and Theatre in the American University in Cairo, and Dance at the centre of creativity, Cairo Opera House School, school of 2006. Followed the contemporary dance program at Studio Emad el Dien 2008-2011 as well as Seeds, training for dance teaching 2012-2013.

Yazan Iwidaat (*Running Away*) is from Ramallah, Palestine and is based in Brussels, Belgium. Iwidaat is a Palestinian traditional dancer (Dabke) spent 10 years dancing with a traditional dancing company. He has been involved in the contemporary dance scene from the age of 14 and has participated in multiple dance projects internationally; (*area Y*, Christophersen-Siljeholm, 2015, Norway), (*Badke, Les Ballets C de la B*, KVS, 2013, Belgium), (*Bound*, Ya Samar dance theatre, 2014, USA), (*Ordinary Madness*, Sarreyet Ramallah Dance Company, 2012, Palestine), (*Keffeyieh/made in China*, KVS, 2012, Belgium), (*Sandwichet Labaneh*, Sarreyet Ramallah Dance Company, 2011, Palestine).

Iwidaat has choreographed two pieces, *Empty Head* (2014, Eye on Palestine, Belgium) which has toured in Brussels, Tunis, Edinburgh and Ramallah, and *Running Away* (2016, Ra Festival, Palestine) which is now touring following its premiere in Haifa, Palestine.

Company

Dancers: Nagham Salah (*Mayhkomsh*) and Hamza Damra (*Running Away*)

Web and social media links: @ArabArtsFocus | www.aaf.orientproductions.org | www.shaymaashoukry.com | #AAFE | #Mayhkomsh | #RunningAway | #ArabDance

Running times: *Running Way* (18 mins) | *Mayhkomsh* (25 mins)

Trailer: *Mayhkomsh* - <https://vimeo.com/212751760>

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Arab Arts Focus Edinburgh is the first showcase of contemporary Arab theatre, performance and visual art at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Presented by D-CAF Festival (Cairo), the Tamasi collective for the performing arts and Orient productions (Egypt) in collaboration with Kenmure Productions (Scotland), the showcase will feature theatre, contemporary art, dance, talks and late night cabaret Chill Habibi with the aim to increase the visibility of Arab artists (especially those not residing in Europe), evolve different, non-reductive discourses on the Arab world and change stereotypes about the region; opening the door for mutual understanding at a time when it is needed most.

With the support of Ford Foundation, Studio Emad Eddin Foundation, British Council Egypt, Qattan Foundation and Swedish International Development Agency. In collaboration with Sundance Theatre institute and with special thanks to Lorne Campbell and Northern Stage (Newcastle).

Listings information

Arab Arts Focus: Dance Double Bill

Mayhkomsh / Running Away

Demonstration Room, Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, EH9 1PL

4 - 27 August 2017 (not 7, 14 or 21) | 13:35 (14:20) | £12 (£10)

Previews: 2 - 3 August 2017 | 13:35 (14:20) | £8

Box office: 0131 560 1581 | www.summerhall.co.uk

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