



265 S. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Admin. Phone: 215.893.9456  
Box-Office: 215.546.7824

**Press Contact:**

Canary Promotion, 215.242.6393  
Megan Wendell, [megan@canarypromo.com](mailto:megan@canarypromo.com)

**High-resolution images available upon request and online at:**

[www.canarypromo.com/wilma](http://www.canarypromo.com/wilma)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 2010**

**The Wilma Theater Examines Arab-American Identity & American Foreign Policy in Two March Symposia  
in conjunction with the World Premiere production of *Language Rooms***

PHILADELPHIA – In conjunction with the World Premiere production of Yussef El Guindi's *Language Rooms*, The Wilma Theater will welcome two distinguished panels of artists, scholars, and writers to discuss American foreign policy and Arab-American identity. **Good Vibrations and Stress Positions: The Legacy of "Enhanced Interrogation"** will occur on **Sunday, March 14 at 4:30 pm**, and **A Land of Sour Milk and Honey: the (Arab-) American Dream Today** will take place the following **Sunday, March 28 at 4:30 pm**. These symposia will present insightful and wide-ranging debates exploring political and personal issues central to *Language Rooms* and to understanding the effects of American power not only abroad but in our own country.

**Good Vibrations and Stress Positions: The Legacy of "Enhanced Interrogation"** will examine the profound effect America's War on Terror has had on the country's values and standing in the world, and the way it has changed our perceptions of our enemies. Wilma Dramaturg and Literary Manager **Walter Bilderback** will moderate a panel including **Petra Bartosiewicz** (author of the forthcoming *The Best Terrorists We Could Find*), **Ian Lustick** (author of *Trapped in the War on Terror*), **Fathali M. Moghaddam** (author of *How Globalization Spurs Terrorism*), and **Jonathan Moreno** (author of *Mind Wars: Brain Research and National Defense*).

**A Land of Sour Milk and Honey: the (Arab-) American Dream Today**, moderated by **John Timpane** of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, will feature panelists including **Toufic El Rassi**, author of the graphic novel *Arab in America*, **Mustapha Tlili**, founder and director of NYU's Center for Dialogues, and **Dr. James Zogby** of the Arab-American Institute, in a discussion of the state of the American Dream for Arab-Americans in the post 9/11 world.

A recipient of the prestigious Edgerton Award for New American Plays, *Language Rooms* follows Ahmed, a shining example of the American Dream, through a day in his big-time position as a translator at a top-secret detainment facility. But things are not what they seem in this twisted

workplace, as he soon finds himself dodging shifty video cameras and absurd interoffice mind games. Brilliantly shifting between comedy and political suspense with surprising twists along the way, *Language Rooms* is a riveting dark comedy about the abuses of patriotism and loyalty. The Wilma's World Premiere production, directed by Blanka Zizka, runs from March 3 through April 4, 2010.

Symposia tickets are free for all *Language Rooms* ticket-holders, otherwise \$10. Seating is limited. For tickets, call the Wilma Box Office at (215) 546-7824 or email [tickets@wilmatheater.org](mailto:tickets@wilmatheater.org). The Wilma Theater is located at 265 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia. For more information, visit [www.wilmatheater.org](http://www.wilmatheater.org).

### **About the Panelists**

**Petra Bartosiewicz** is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in *The Nation*, *Mother Jones*, *The New York Times*, Salon.com and *Hustler*, and has worked in radio for the weekly program, *This American Life*, where her 2005 piece, "The Arms Trader," was a finalist for the Livingston Awards and Scripps Howard Awards. She began her career with the *New York Observer*, and her forthcoming book *The Best Terrorists We Could Find*, an investigation of terrorism trials in the U.S. since 9/11, will be published by Nation Books in 2010.

**Ian Lustick**, the Bess W. Heyman chair of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania, focuses on applications of agent-based modeling in the social sciences, techniques of disciplined counterfactual analysis, and the problem of modeling political violence in his work. Dr. Lustick has published widely on the politics of the Middle East, and is author of the recent *Trapped in the War on Terror*.

**Fathali M. Moghaddam** examines the cultural identity crisis that he sees at the root of recent Islamic terrorism; in recent books like *From the Terrorists' Point of View: What They Experience and Why They Come to Destroy* and *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context*, he examines the complex social and political dynamics that lead to terror. In 2007, the American Psychological Association's Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence awarded Dr. Moghaddam its Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Jonathan Moreno** is the David and Lyn Silfen Professor and Professor of Medical Ethics and the History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania, and also serves as a Senior Fellow at both the University of Pennsylvania Center for Bioethics and at the Center for American Progress. He has been a senior staff member for two presidential commissions and has published 17 books, monographs, anthologies and textbooks; his most recent book is *Mind Wars: Brain Research and National Defense*.

**Toufic El Rassi** was born in Beirut and immigrated to the Chicago area with his family in 1979; in his graphic novel *Arab in America*, he sets an autobiographical story against recent history. Mr. El

Rassi is an adjunct instructor at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Ill., where he teaches history and political science.

**Mustapha Tlili** founded and serves as director of the Center for Dialogues. A former senior UN official, he was director for communications policy in the United Nations Department of Public Information. Tunisian-born and Sorbonne-educated, Mr. Tlili is an established novelist and a Knight of the French Order of Arts and Letters.

**Dr. James Zogby**, founder and President of the Arab-American Institute, has authored several books, including *What Ethnic Americans Really Think* and *What Arabs Think: Values, Beliefs and Concerns*. He serves on the Human Rights Watch Middle East Advisory Committee and on the national advisory board of the American Civil Liberties Union and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Since 1992, his column “Washington Watch” has appeared in major newspapers in 14 Middle Eastern and South Asian countries.

Moderator **John Timpane** is the Commentary Page editor for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Among his many awards are the James K. Batten Award for Excellence in Civic Journalism from the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 2000, and the Association of Opinion Page Editors Award for Best Series, 2004.

*The Wilma Theater's Symposium Series is supported by The Wallace Foundation Excellence Award grant. The Wallace Foundation Excellence Awards were created to support exemplary arts organizations to pioneer effective practices to engage more people in high-value arts activities.*

*Language Rooms is supported by DoubleTree Hotel Philadelphia as Artistic Lead Sponsor and the National Endowment for the Arts as Production Sponsor. Language Rooms is a recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New American Plays Award.*

# # #