

**GOLDEN
THREAD
PRODUCTIONS** **THREADS OF
SOLIDARITY**

ZSPACE

Golden Thread Productions and Z Space present

PILGRIMAGE

by Humaira Ghilzai and Bridgette Dutta Portman
directed by Michelle Talgarow
Oct 24–Nov 9, 2025 at Z Space



**From Golden Thread
Artistic Director**

Sahar Assaf

Dear Friends,

Welcome to *Pilgrimage*, the closing production of our Season of Solidarity! In 2021, shortly after I joined Golden Thread, Humaira Ghilzai reached out for coffee and sisterhood. By the end of our conversation, she mentioned a new play she was co-writing with Bridgette Dutta Portman about five Afghan women with a secret on a pilgrimage to Mecca. I was immediately hooked. Later that year, I invited them for a development workshop at Golden Thread. When we first heard *Pilgrimage*, it was only one act, but audiences responded with such excitement and insight that we knew this story had to be supported.

In 2022, we featured *Pilgrimage* in our New Threads reading series, with generously subsidized rental support from Z Space.

Both companies fell in love with the piece then, which was the seed for the collaboration you see today. Supporting this story from its earliest pages to this world premiere has been deeply rewarding, and bringing it to life with our friends at Z Space makes the process even more meaningful.

Pilgrimage embodies the courage of Afghan women who are funny, fierce, and unapologetically themselves, who live and love on their own terms. At a time when women in Afghanistan continue to face severe restrictions on their freedom, education, and self-expression, this play reminds us that Afghan women are not defined solely by their oppression, but by their multitudes and complexities. It closes our Season of Solidarity with a resounding affirmation of resilience and sisterhood. Thank you for joining us on this journey, and for continuing to hold space for stories that challenge and connect.

With gratitude and in solidarity,

A white handwritten signature on a teal background. The signature is fluid and cursive, starting with a large, sweeping 'S' and ending with a long horizontal line.

Sahar Assaf, Golden Thread Productions



GOLDEN THREAD PRODUCTIONS' STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY

Our 2025 Season aims to illuminate the interconnectedness of our struggles by amplifying Armenian, Palestinian, and Afghan stories. We recognize the recurring cycles of violence that are perpetuated by and resulting from systems of colonialism and imperial power: from the ongoing genocide, dispossession, starvation campaign, and ethnic cleansing in Palestine, to the denial of the Armenian Genocide, and the continued oppression and silencing of women in Afghanistan. It is our duty as artists and global citizens to learn from our histories, to tell our stories, and to pass them on to future generations. Our power lies in our collective voice, in the bonds we build, and in our solidarity.

Native Land Acknowledgement

Z Space wishes to acknowledge that we reside on the unceded land of the Ramaytush Ohlone people. As guests of this land, we recognize that we have the privilege to live, work, and create art here on their traditional homeland. We express gratitude to the traditional stewards and storytellers of this land and offer our respects to their elders past, present, and future.



From Z Space Co-Leaders Shafer Mazow + Nikki Meñez

Z Space is no stranger to the unique vision and artistic strength of Golden Thread Productions. Both of our organizations share a long history of resource sharing and camaraderie, evolving together through the decades to impact and amplify a breadth of storytelling in the Bay Area.

We're thrilled to continue and expand our partnership with Golden Thread by co-producing this moving story full of heart, humor, and familial bonds. When Pilgrimage graced our Z Below stage in Golden Thread's 2022 New Threads reading series, it was

apparent that there was something bright and fulfilling about seeing five women on a journey together living and laughing loudly, loving fully, and cracking open truths about themselves in a world that could diminish their light. This story is charged with themes of faith, not only in religion, but in family and sense of self and holds a candle to both equally and without compromise.

It is no secret that the non-profit arts field is in a continuing crisis—with ongoing threats to federal funding and free speech, seasons being canceled, and theaters shuttering. Authoritarian regimes encourage isolation to keep us divided and weaken our collective power. But we must remember: we are stronger when we stand united. In this co-production, we believe that the story's thematic pillar of coming together in the face of adversity is reflected in our artistic partnership—we are joining forces not only to survive our times as artists, but to grow, thrive, and learn together for a better future as a whole community.

In continued collaboration and with many thanks,



Shafer Mazow, Executive Director
Nikki Meñez, Curatorial Director



From Playwright Humaira Ghilzai

Writing *Pilgrimage* has been a journey that started during Covid when I was in desperate need of connection and collaboration. Bringing this story to life, with my co-playwright Bridgette, at Golden Thread Productions is a dream realized for both of us.

At its core, *Pilgrimage* explores the complexity of family, identity, truth, and our shared search for belonging. We've set out to challenge Western narratives by presenting powerful, nuanced, and deeply human female Muslim characters — far beyond the stereotypes so often seen on stage and screen.

The deliberate dissonance between the authentic teachings of Islam and some characters' interpretations reflects the complexity of faith and spiritually, which can be used to inspire goodness or justify harm.

As an Afghan-American, I present this play as homage to Afghan women, whose lives under gender apartheid showcase the devastating consequences of weaponization of religion to oppress half of a society.

Thank you Sahar Assaf for seeing the significance of this play when we only had Act 1 to share with you. We're grateful to Golden Thread Productions and Z Space for co-producing the world premiere. We couldn't imagine a better home and city for Pilgrimage to have its debut.

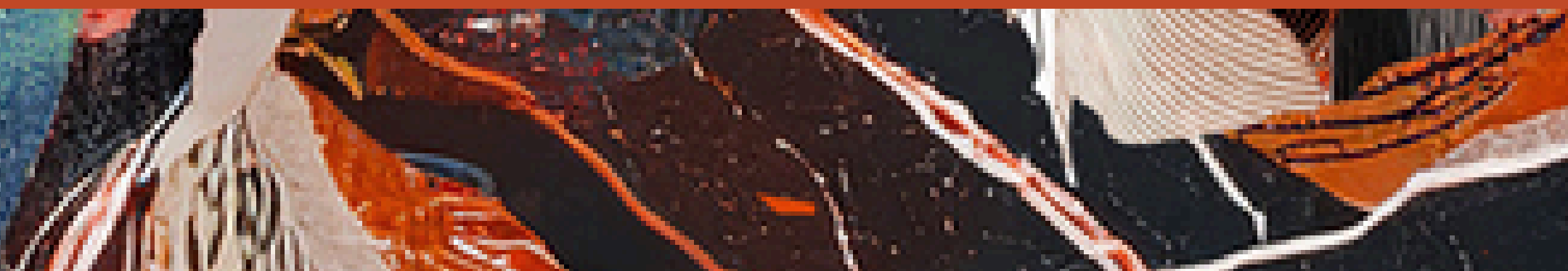




From Playwright Bridgette Dutta Portman

I was excited and honored when Humaira reached out to me during the pandemic and proposed co-writing a play inspired by her Umrah. Over the following months, we developed a productive and creative working relationship in which we both brought our talents, backgrounds, and life experiences to bear on the evolving script. Humaira has been a fantastic writing partner, and her rich cultural knowledge has given this script its heart.

Pilgrimage is a story about faith and doubt, about truth and secrets, about the quest for belonging and identity. It's a story about women and their complex relationships—as mothers and daughters, as sisters, as friends. Above all, it's a story about family, and I hope that as you watch this story play out, you will see yourself and your loved ones reflected in these characters and their strengths, flaws, and aspirations. Thank you for joining us on this journey.



*First table read of Pilgrimage at the Golden Thread Annex
– Photo by Wynne Chan, 2025*



Words from Director **Michelle Talgarow**

As a non-Muslim Asian female director, approaching this material has been a process of deep listening, rigorous research, and profound respect. My role has been to serve as a careful translator and a champion for these remarkable characters and with the help of the amazing Salim Razawi, ensure that the authenticity of their faith and culture is upheld with integrity.

My perspective, however, finds common ground in the shared experiences of daughterhood, sisterhood, identity, and

belonging. The family dynamics—the rivalry between sisters, the unspoken understanding and misunderstanding between mother and daughter, familial obligations and secrets—are universal touchstones.

We invite you to sit with us—to listen not just to the words, but to the silence, and the rhythm of this story that celebrates the resilience, humor, and intellectual richness of this world and how it reminds us how much more we are connected than divided.

In community,

Michelle



*First table read of Pilgrimage at the Golden Thread Annex
– Photo by Wynne Chan, 2025*



From Golden Thread's Artistic Producer and Cultural Consultant for *Pilgrimage*, Salim Razawi

At its heart, this play is about a journey— one that is physical, spiritual, and deeply generational. In Islam, pilgrimage (Hajj) is one of the Five Pillars of faith, a sacred obligation for those who are able to make the journey at least once in their lifetime. A second form, Umrah, is a shorter pilgrimage that can be undertaken at any time of year. Both lead to the holy city of Mecca, where Muslims encircle the Kaaba and retrace the steps of their ancestors, and many also travel to Medina, home of the Prophet's Mosque and the resting place of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Pilgrimage is more than ritual. It is a reminder of humility, renewal, and the bonds that tie believers to a community that stretches across centuries and continents.

For Afghans, the idea of journey carries an added weight. In 1979, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan sparked war, loss, and the displacement of millions. Families were scattered across the globe, and suddenly being Afghan meant holding onto a homeland that many would never see again while building new lives in unfamiliar places.

For first-generation Afghan Americans, like myself, the weight of that history is always present. The sacrifices of parents and grandparents who left everything familiar to create safety and possibility for the next generation still shape how family is understood and honored. Family, then, is not simply a unit. It is survival, memory, and identity. Respect for elders is not just tradition but an acknowledgment of all



Spacing rehearsal at Zspace. Featuring Nora el Samahy (Noor) and the cast of Pilgrimage – Photo by Wynne Chan, 2025



Spacing rehearsal at Zspace. Featuring (right to left): Isabel Alamin (Sosan), Leda Rasooli (Maryam), Jeunée Simon (Fatima) and the cast of Pilgrimage – Photo by Wynne Chan, 2025

they endured to make life possible in a new land. Sisterhood carries a special power, as women often become one another's strongest allies and sources of resilience in a culture where gender mixing is restrained.

At the core of all these dynamics are values that remain steady: loyalty, reverence, and resilience. This play lives in that space—in the tension between sacred ritual and ordinary life, between homeland and diaspora, between the embrace of tradition and the pull of independence. It invites us to see how family carries faith, how sacrifice becomes legacy, and how, even in moments of fracture, the ties of belonging endure.

Key terms

Afghan: A person of Afghan descent

Afghani: The monetary unit of Afghanistan

Dari: A dialect of the Farsi language spoken in Afghanistan

Hadith: Sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad

Namaz: Muslim prayer, traditionally done five times a day

Pilgrimage: Hajj is a mandatory religious duty for all adult Muslims who can physically and financially make the journey at least once in their lifetime as part of the five pillars of Islam

Taqsir: The act of cutting one's hair at the end of pilgrimage, a symbolic act representing the pilgrim's commitment to Allah

Tawaf: The practice of encircling the Kaaba seven times

Umrah: Translates to "to visit a populated place" and is the non-mandatory lesser pilgrimage made by Muslims to Mecca

Wal-lah: Translates to "I swear" in Arabic

Wuzu: The Islamic practice of washing specific body parts in a particular order to achieve ritual purity before prayer



SUPPORT AFGHAN WOMEN

On September 30, 2025 the Taliban imposed an internet blackout on Afghanistan that has silenced women's voices even further. This action comes on top of the already severe restrictions against women leaving their homes, working, or speaking in public, as well as a divorce ban that entraps countless women in abusive marriages. Female activists can no longer share their resistance and abuse with the world. Girls who were pursuing education online, their only remaining link to learning, can no longer access their virtual classrooms.

Pilgrimage is, in many ways, an act of resistance to that silencing. It's a celebration of women's voices and truths reclaimed. Every performance is, in a small way, a tribute to Afghan women's courage.

If you'd like to find ways to help, please get involved with and support these three important organizations:

The Khaled Hosseini Foundation

The Khaled Hosseini Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that was started by Khaled Hosseini, the award-winning author of *The Kite Runner* in 2008. TKHF funds grantees who provide humanitarian relief and shelter to families, economic opportunity for women, and healthcare and education for children in Afghanistan.

www.khaledhosseinifoundation.org



Image courtesy of The Khaled Hosseini Foundation



WOMEN FOR AFGHAN WOMEN

Women for Afghan Women (WAW) is a grassroots organization empowering Afghan women and girls in both Afghanistan and the U.S. to realize their full potential and advocate for their rights, while challenging societal norms to create lasting change and advance gender equality.

www.womenforafghanwomen.org



Sahar

In the face of adversity, Sahar Education stands as one of the few remaining non-profits and beacons of hope for women and young girls in Afghanistan. As the Taliban's reign threatens their futures, we remain dedicated to providing grassroots, underground education, empowering them to dream, learn, and thrive. Join us in our mission to support and uplift Afghan women and girls. Your donation can make a world of difference. Together, we can create everlasting change that ripples for generations.

www.sahareducation.org/who-we-are

Developmental History



Pilgrimage was first developed at **Golden Thread Productions** in **2021** as part of the company's Research and Development Residencies. During that residency, the playwrights workshopped the first act of the play with dramaturg Kim Euell and director Roneet Aliza Rahamim, culminating in an informal reading for friends of Golden Thread and of the artists.

In August 2022, *Pilgrimage* received its first public staged reading as part of Golden Thread's New Threads Reading Series at Z Below, directed by Aidaa Peerzada and supported through Z Space's Subspace Program.

In April 2023, the playwrights were invited by Crowded Fire Theater for a workshop and public reading as part of the Matchbox Reading Series, directed by Peter J. Kuo.

In November 2023, *Pilgrimage* was presented in staged readings at Stanford University and San José State University through a collaboration between the two universities and Golden Thread Productions. The project was made possible through a generous grant from the College of Humanities & Arts' Artistic Excellence Programming Grants at San José State University, with additional support from Golden Thread Productions, the Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies, and the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies at Stanford University. The readings were directed by Marina Johnson, produced by Karishma Bhagani, with dramaturgical support from Nabra Nelson and Noelle Gibbs, and producing support from Matthew Spangler and the Department of Film, Theatre, and Dance at SJSU.





CAST

Isabel Alamin as Sosan
Nora el Samahy* as Noor
Fatemeh Mehraban as Maryam
Leda Rasooli as Nadia
Jeunée Simon* as Fatima

* Member, **Actors' Equity Association**, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

CREATIVE TEAM

Playwrights: **Humaira Ghilzai &
Bridgette Dutta Portman**

Director: **Michelle Talgarow**

Associate Director, Dramaturg,

Cultural Consultant & Casting:

Salim Razawi

Scenic Designer: **Mikiko Uesugi[^]**

Light Designer: **Ray Oppenheimer**

Costume Designer: **Fatima Yahyaa**

Sound Designer: **James Ard[^]**

Properties Designer: **Amy Benjamin**

Dialect Coach: **Humaira Ghilzai**

Intimacy Coordinator: **Bessie Zolno**

PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager: **Sarah Phykitt**

Stage Manager: **Karen Runk***

Assistant Stage Manager:

Tina Mosier

Technical Director: **Colm McNally**

Master Electrician:

Mary Clare Blake-Booth

House Technician: **Lance Mindell**

Wardrobe/Backstage Crew:

Trinity Wicklund

Production Associate: **Wendy Reyes**

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^ **United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, IATSE**, is a labor union and professional association of Designers, Artists, Craftspeople, and Department Coordinators, organized to protect craft standards, working conditions and wages for the entertainment and decorative arts industries.

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BIOGRAPHIES

PLAYWRIGHTS



Bridgette Dutta Portman is a playwright and novelist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. More than two dozen of her plays have been produced locally, nationally, and internationally. She is a member of the Pear Theatre board of directors, the Pear Playwrights' Guild, the PlayGround SF writers pool and resident playwrights' program, and the Dramatists' Guild. She received the 2023 June Anne Baker Prize from PlayGround, and has been a finalist for the Bay Area Playwrights' Festival, the Theatre Bay Area TITAN award, the PlayPenn Conference, the Kentucky Women's Theatre Conference Prize for Women Writers, the New Dramatists playwrights' residency, and more. She holds an MFA in creative writing (Spalding University, 2018) and teaches composition and dramatic writing at UC Berkeley's College Writing Programs.

BIOGRAPHIES



Humaira Ghilzai is a writer, producer, cultural dramaturg, and dialect coach. She has worked on Broadway, the West End, and with national and regional theaters. Credits include Generative Cultural Advisor and Dialect Coach for Matthew Spangler's *The Kite Runner* (World Premiere, UK Tour, Broadway production, and U.S. tour) and Cultural Advisor for Ursula Rani Sarma's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (World Premiere at A.C.T San Francisco and West Coast tour). She also worked on the world premiere of Sheila Silver's *A Thousand Splendid Suns Opera* at Seattle Opera. Additional theater credits include *Blood and Gifts* by Tony-winner J.T. Rogers (La Jolla Playhouse), Gabriel Jason Dean's *Heartland* (rolling world premieres and off-Broadway), Sylvia Khoury's *Selling Kabul* (Seattle Rep, Northern Stage, Interact Theatre, Signature Theatre), Kevin Artigue's *The Most Dangerous Highway in the World* (Golden Thread Productions), and *Zealot* (South Coast Repertory). Film & TV credits include: *Little America*, *Whiskey Tango Foxtrot*, *Merry Friggin' Christmas*, and *Away and Together*.

Humaira is also a speaker and educator, serving as a faculty member for The Immigration Experience in California Through Literature and History at San Jose State University's 2024/25 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute. She serves on the Board of Trustees for Golden Thread Productions.

BIOGRAPHIES

CAST



Isabel Alamin (Sosan) is so thrilled to be a part of *Pilgrimage*. Some favorite credits include: *How to Defend Yourself* (Snails on a Bike Productions), *Antigone* (Redtwist Theatre), and independent feature film *The Becomers*, as well as several projects in post-production. Outside of acting, Isabel loves to dance and is also a visual artist. She was born and raised in the Bay Area, but now lives and works (mostly) in Chicago. Much love to the *Pilgrimage* team, and to Mom!



Nora el Samahy (Noor) is an Affiliated Artist with Golden Thread Productions and a company member of Campo Santo. She has worked at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage, Aurora Theatre, Berkeley Repertory, Crowded Fire, Magic Theatre, foolsFURY, A Traveling Jewish Theatre, Theatre Rhinoceros, Shotgun Players, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, African American Shakespeare Company, among others. In 2013, Nora founded a performance company called Affinity Project with Atosa Babaoff, Beatrice Basso, and Emily Hoffman. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees for Golden Thread.

BIOGRAPHIES



Fatemeh Mehraban (Maryam) is a queer Iranian performing artist and environmental scientist. She was most recently in *A Distinct Society* (Weston Theatre Company), *Working for Crumbs* (B Street Theatre New Comedies Festival), *Oriental* (ReOrient: Golden Thread), *English* (Capital Stage), and *Georgiana & Kitty* (Capital Stage). Fatemeh divides her time between Sacramento, the Bay Area, and Los Angeles, where she works in theater, film, and voiceover. What's important to her: that her work combines her passion for performance with her passion for advocacy! Instagram: [@fatemeow](https://www.instagram.com/fatemeow)



Leda Rasooli (Nadia) is an Afghan-American artist, based in California. She's had the privilege of participating in *English* (Capital Stage), and is excited to continue her journey with Golden Thread Productions!



Jeunée Simon (Fatima) (she/her) is a bicoastal actor, director, and consent educator. Recent acting credits include: *Les Blancs* (Oakland Theater Project), *The Ripple*, *The Wave That Carried Me Home* u/s (World Premiere, Berkeley Repertory Theatre), *Intimate Apparel* (Lorraine Hansberry Theatre), *La Ronde* (Cutting Ball Theater), *Men On Boats* u/s, performed* (American Conservatory Theater)—as well as the one person shows: *Tasha* (3Girls Theatre) and *Stoop Stories* (Aurora Theatre Company). Simon is a proud recipient of the 2017 RHE Artistic Fellowship. jeunesimon.com

BIOGRAPHIES

CREATIVE TEAM



Michelle Talgarow (Director) (she/hers) is a Kalmyk/Pinay performance maker in the Bay Area for over 25 years. She's grateful and honored to be working on her first production with Golden Thread and with these amazing group of artists. Her most recent credits are directing SFBATCO's, *Cuckoo Edible Magic* by Reed Flores, Shotgun Player's production of *Thirty-six* by Leah Nanako Winkler which won this year's Will Glickman Award, and Bindlestiff Studio's immersive rock production of *Darkheart: A Concert Narrative* by Golda Sargento. Michelle is a proud member of Shotgun Players' artistic company and is currently an adjunct professor at University of San Francisco.



Salim Razawi (Assistant Director, Dramaturg, Cultural Consultant and Casting) is an Afghan American Bay Area theater director, actor, and casting director dedicated to uplifting diverse voices and building collaborative artistic communities. He is committed to inspiring and creating opportunities for fellow theater makers. With a background in Theater Arts and international acclaim as a competitive public speaker, Salim was last seen at Marin Shakes as Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*. His extensive experience includes acting, casting, producing, consulting, and directing throughout the Bay Area.

www.salimrazawi.com

BIOGRAPHIES



Mikiko Uesugi (Scenic Designer) has designed several productions for Golden Thread Productions, including *Drowning in Cairo*, *Our Enemies*, *444 Days*, *Language Room*, and *Night Over Erzinga*. Other theater credits include *Cuckoo Edible Magic* and *Sign My Name to Freedom* for San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company, *The Strange Library*, *Stories By Tobias Wolff*, *Immortal Heart*, and *Four Adverbs* for Word for Word, *Fallen Angels*, *Wives*, *The Children*, *Detroit*, *Our Practical Heaven*, *Fat Pig*, and *Salome* for Aurora Theatre Company, *Monument*, or *Four Sisters (A Sloth Play)*, and *A Common Vision* for Magic Theatre, *Elevata*, and *Kill the Debbie Downers! Kill Them! Kill Them! Kill Them Off!*, for Shotgun Players, and *This Lingering Life* for Theater of Yugen. She has also designed for Marin Theatre, Crowded Fire, TheatreWorks, A.C.T. MFA Program, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Chanticleer, among others. She is a resident artist at Golden Thread Productions, a recipient of SF Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle awards, the NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Designers, and The Isadora Duncan Dance Award.



Ray Oppenheimer (Lighting Designer) is a San Francisco Bay Area based lighting designer, educator, and creator who has been bringing his boundless curiosity, chimerical aesthetic, and Sisyphean perseverance to lighting design and education since 2005. He is excited to be working with Golden Thread and Z Space on *Pilgrimage*.

BIOGRAPHIES



Fatima Yahyaa (Costume Designer) (she/hers) is a filmmaker and artist from the Bay Area, who is passionate about spirituality and the subconscious. Fatima grew up in Yemen, in the valley of Tarim, where she discovered her interest in storytelling. In addition to personal creative goals, Fatima is eager about supporting others in their work, and passing on the knowledge to the next generation. She recently started dabbling in theater as a costume designer. Fatima has collaborated on *Collective Rage: A Play in Five Betties* at Shotgun Players, *Azad, the Rabbit and the Wolf* at Golden Thread Productions, and *Do You Feel Anger?* at Marin Theatre.



James Ard (Sound Designer) is a noisemaker who specializes in new works, live experiences, interactive media, and immersive stage productions. His work includes sound design for Golden Thread's productions of *The Return*, *The Most Dangerous Highway in the World*, *Scenes From 71* Years*, *On The Periphery*, and various ReOrient short play festivals. Nationally, his work has been featured in collaborations with Under the Radar at The Public Theater, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Guthrie Theater, American Repertory Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ensemble Theatre Company, and Portland Center Stage. Internationally, his designs have appeared at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Sibiu International Theatre Festival. In the San Francisco Bay Area, he has collaborated with American

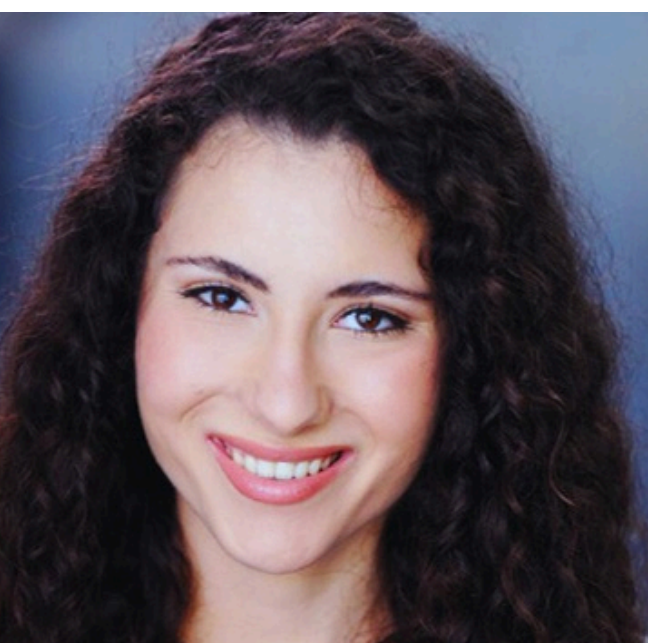
BIOGRAPHIES

Conservatory Theater, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Aurora Theatre Company, San Francisco Playhouse, Shotgun Players, Cutting Ball Theater, CenterREP, and the Joe Goode Performance Group. He has taught, mentored, or collaborated with students at institutions such as Stanford University, UC Berkeley, Atlantic Theater Company, and Saint Mary's College of California. Ard is a Resident Artist with both Golden Thread and Crowded Fire Theater, where he frequently contributes to innovative and socially engaged performances.



Amy Benjamin (Properties Designer) draws from an extensive background in multidisciplinary art to create theater magic. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Design Studies from San Jose State University and has been mentored in scenic design by Nina Ball. She's most recently designed properties for *My Fair Lady*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, and *Fat Ham* for San Francisco Playhouse, along with Word for Word's adaptations of *Annunciation* and *The Strange Library*.

BIOGRAPHIES



Bessie Zolno (Intimacy Coordinator) is a mental health-informed violence and intimacy choreographer and mental health coordinator for theater and film. She thoughtfully cultivates collaborative and consent-driven environments, an approach deeply rooted in her certification in Mental Health Coordination (Association of Mental Health Coordinators). Her expertise is dedicated to facilitating the safe and impactful execution of heightened moments on stage and screen for performers of all ages, across both professional productions and educational settings. This fall, you can see her work across the Bay Area in: *The Art of Murder* (The Pear), *Frankenstein* (Theater Lunatico), and *The Addams Family* (Berkeley Playhouse). For more information, please visit: bessiezolno.com

PRODUCTION TEAM



Sarah Phykitt (Production Manager) (she/her) has been managing productions around the Bay Area for the past 17 years and is thrilled to have made a permanent home at Z Space as Associate Director of Technical & Production. She has worked with a variety of companies including A Traveling Jewish Theatre, Custom Made Theatre Company, American Conservatory Theater, Oasis SF, and several others. Sarah also works as a Scenic and Video designer and her work could most recently be seen on Z Space's Steindler Stage for *The Day the Sky Turned Orange*.

BIOGRAPHIES



Karen Runk (Stage Manager) moved to SF with the intention of only staying for a few months... Well nearly three decades later she's still here! This is largely due to the talented folks at the SF Mime Troupe, Word for Word (where she recently became a Core Company member!!!) and Golden Thread Productions where she has been a Resident Artist since 2018 (aka the before times) - but mostly it's due to rent control! Runk has also stage managed with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, Word for Word, Magic Theatre, SFShakes, Intersection for the Arts, and African American Shakespeare Company.



Tina Mosier (Assistant Stage Manager) is thrilled to join Golden Thread Productions for this performance! She discovered her love for working “behind the scenes” in theater during her time at CSUEB. After a brief hiatus, and a few refresher courses at Chabot College, she returned to the world of live performance. She previously was the Assistant Stage Manager for Word for Word productions of *The Strange Library* and *Annunciation*.

BIOGRAPHIES



Colm McNally (Technical Director) is an Irish designer based in San Francisco. He is the Director of Technical & Production at Z Space, where his design credits include *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* alongside Oliver di Cicco; *Baba: The Life and Death of Stana*; and *Ripped*. MFA from The Lir Academy, Trinity College; Chief Electrician at Gate Theatre, Dublin. New York credits include The Irish Rep's *The Beacon*; *Outlying Islands* (The Connolly Theater; Samuel Beckett Theatre, Dublin); and the inaugural production of *Last Night in Inwood* by Alix Sobler (Signature Theatre). His work has been described as "exceptional use of space" — Irish Theatre Magazine, "too beautiful" — The Irish Times, "Draws patrons in...sensorially, almost hypnotically" — SF Examiner, and "gives life to everything" — Charles Passy.



Wendy Reyes (Production Associate) (she/ella) is proudly from the city of St. Louis, Missouri, Wendy is a Mexican-American multimedia artist with a Bachelor's degree in Media Studies from the University of San Francisco. With her skills in video and audio production, Wendy is passionate about creating engaging stories that raise awareness about social injustices while promoting a healthier, more just path for marginalized communities. Currently based in the Bay Area, Wendy brings her technical expertise to Golden Thread's team, contributing to the realization of their artistic endeavors. Additionally, she is a participant of KALW Public Media's year-long Beat Reporting Fellowship, further expanding her impact within the realm of multimedia storytelling.

Foundations & Sponsors

Golden Thread and Z Space would like to thank the **California Arts Council**, the **Sam Mazza Foundation**, and the **National Endowment for the Arts** for their support of *Pilgrimage*.

Additional support provided by the **Fleishhacker Foundation**, the **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation**, the **San Francisco Arts Commission** and **San Francisco Grants for the Arts**.



Special Thanks

We're proud to collaborate with community partners and organizations that are actively advocating for Afghani liberation and justice: **The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, Women for Afghan Women (WAW), Sahar Education, Afghan Bazaar, Ariana Sweets, and Aviva Arts.**

Thank you to former Board Member **May Allam** and current Board Member **Nancy Chemaly** for championing this production and for opening their homes to host fundraising gatherings in support of Golden Thread.

The Playwrights would like to thank
Matthew Spangler
Omaira Faizyar
Arzo Mehdavi
Sepideh Khosrowjah



GOLDEN THREAD

PRODUCTIONS



Founded in 1996, **Golden Thread Productions** is the first American theatre company devoted to the Middle East. Golden Thread produces passionate and provocative plays from and about the Middle East that celebrate the multiplicity of its perspectives and identities. Golden Thread is a developmental catalyst and vibrant artistic home to artists at various stages of their career. Golden Thread brings the Middle East to the American stage, creating treasured cultural experiences for audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Our headquarters are located on the ancestral home of the Ramaytush Ohlone. www.goldenthread.org



JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

Website | FB/IG: @goldenthreadplays

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Managing Director

Salim Razawi
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Production Associate

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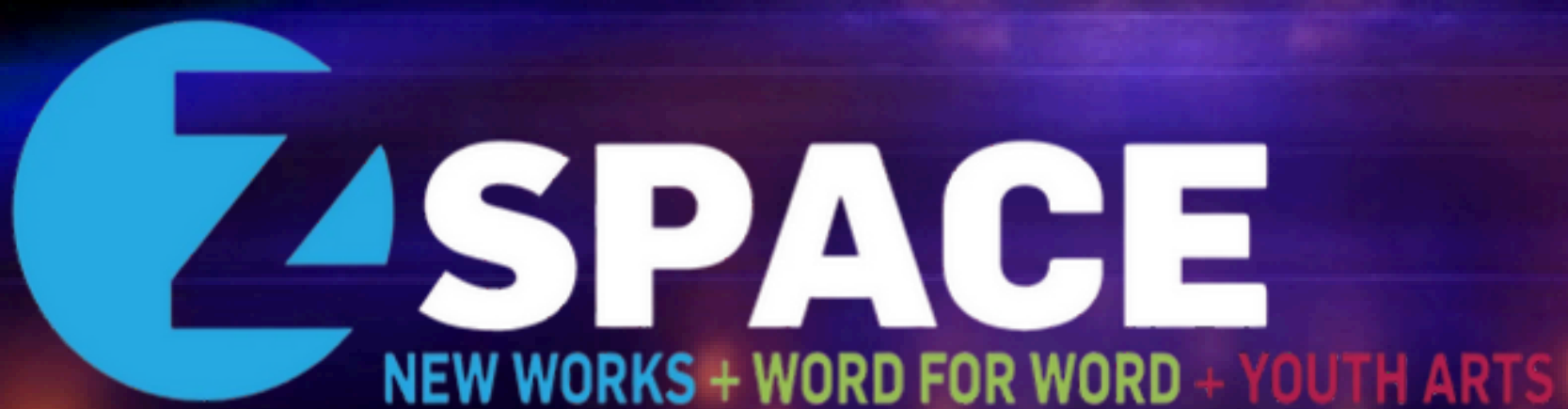
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Z Space empowers artistic risk, collaboration, and camaraderie amongst artists, audience, and community in the service of creating, developing, and presenting new work. Operating out of an old can factory in the Mission District of San Francisco, Z Space activates two venues, an 85-seat intimate theater and a 236-seat flexible performance space, with a warehouse aesthetic and an adventurous edge. Eschewing traditional theater models with fixed seasons and a singular artistic vision, Z Space strives to embrace a multitude of artistic voices through a variety of programs and partnerships.



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