



Diyar Theatre Presents

# bipaf 2018

bethlehem international performing arts festival





## Bethlehem International Performing Arts Festival

October 5th - October 12th 2018

Organized by the **Diyar Theatre** of Dar Al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture, we were able to bring 100 international performers to share their work in Bethlehem at the Dar Al-Kalima University College for Arts and Culture. Sold out children shows, fierce dances that empower women, incredibly moving collaborations between local and international artists contributed to making the first Bethlehem International Performing Arts Festival a great success.

### SPECIAL FOCUS ON CHILDREN & YOUTH:

We were able to share the **bipaf performances** with youth attending governmental, private and UNRWA schools, including centers for children with disabilities. Palestinian children and youth were able to see and interactively engage with performances by international artists right here in their own community! This was a very special part of bipaf and our mission to bring hope and joy to our children and youth.



### A letter from Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb

*President of Dar al Kalima University of Arts & Culture*

We have been working for 23 years on developing connections across different cultures, religions, and backgrounds in order to exchange knowledge, develop creativity and share experiences. This festival was another milestone in our journey. Your presence here in Bethlehem defied the very nature of the wall of separation surrounding us. This festival built bridges between artists both from within and outside of Palestine. We welcomed friends from near and far - from China and Taiwan, from the U.S. and Lithuania, from Germany and Hungary - despite the physical and legal boundaries between us. We believe in a future of nurturing creativity and common humanity, not one of war and continued discrimination. In the context of rising religious, nationalistic, extremist, and xenophobic ideologies, this festival in Bethlehem, Palestine was able to send a message of hospitality, friendship, and cooperation despite all boundaries. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our sponsors who made this festival possible. Special thanks to the amazing team at Diyar Theater, and to Dar al Kalima University College. Without your relentless efforts, this would not have been possible.

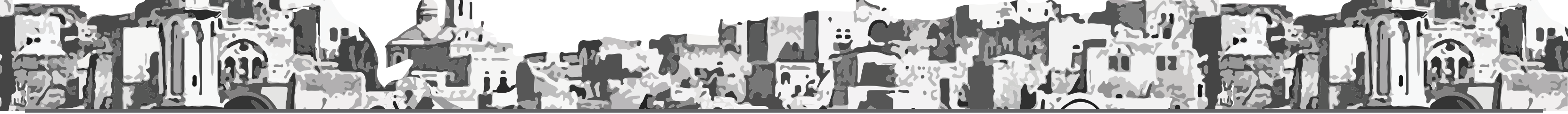


### A letter from Rami Khader

*Managing Director of Diyar Theatre*

More than empowering its own people, the Bethlehem International Performing Arts Festival of Diyar Theatre believes that nourishing culture is a way to build bridges across communities, both locally and internationally. Performing arts humanizes the other, evoking mirrored emotions between those who witness and those who perform. In this particular mode of expression, stories can be shared while ideas are exchanged and jointly experienced. Through the arts we creatively resist an occupation that believes building walls, separating communities and imprisoning hopes are justified acts to put an entire community down. Through artistic expression we breathe and, most importantly, lift up our existence. To all who came, witnessed and shared in the first BIPAF; we extend our deepest gratitude and hope of continuing to deepen our relationships through collectively creating, performing toward a better tomorrow as humans in the global community.





## About Diyar Theatre

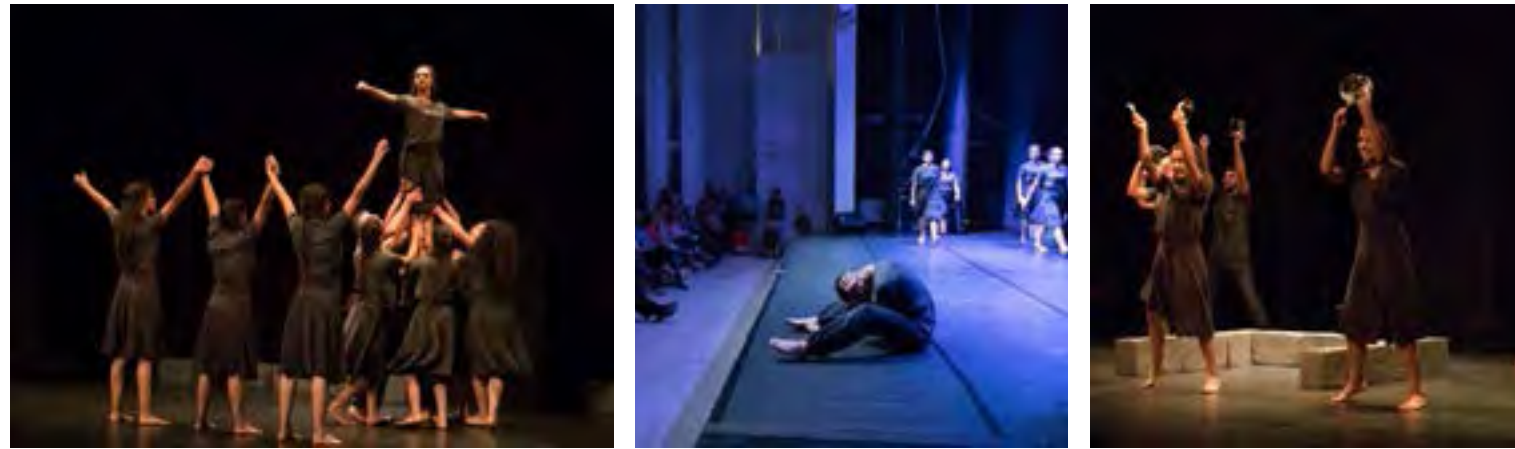
DIYAR THEATRE is an innovative space in Bethlehem whose aim is to creatively express community issues through dance & theater training, as well as valuable and professional productions manifested in interactive platforms. We specifically seek to empower our community by elevating the creative capacities of children, youth and women through dance and theatre, using the stage as a place to connect and create social change.

DIYAR THEATRE'S varied programs provide space for free thinking by transforming social issues into creative expression, empowering women to develop leadership skills, creating awareness of issues affecting Arabs and Palestinians, harnessing a culture around building rather than destroying, developing Palestinian art as a means of creative resistance and establishing local and international opportunities for exchange and networking.



## bipaf team

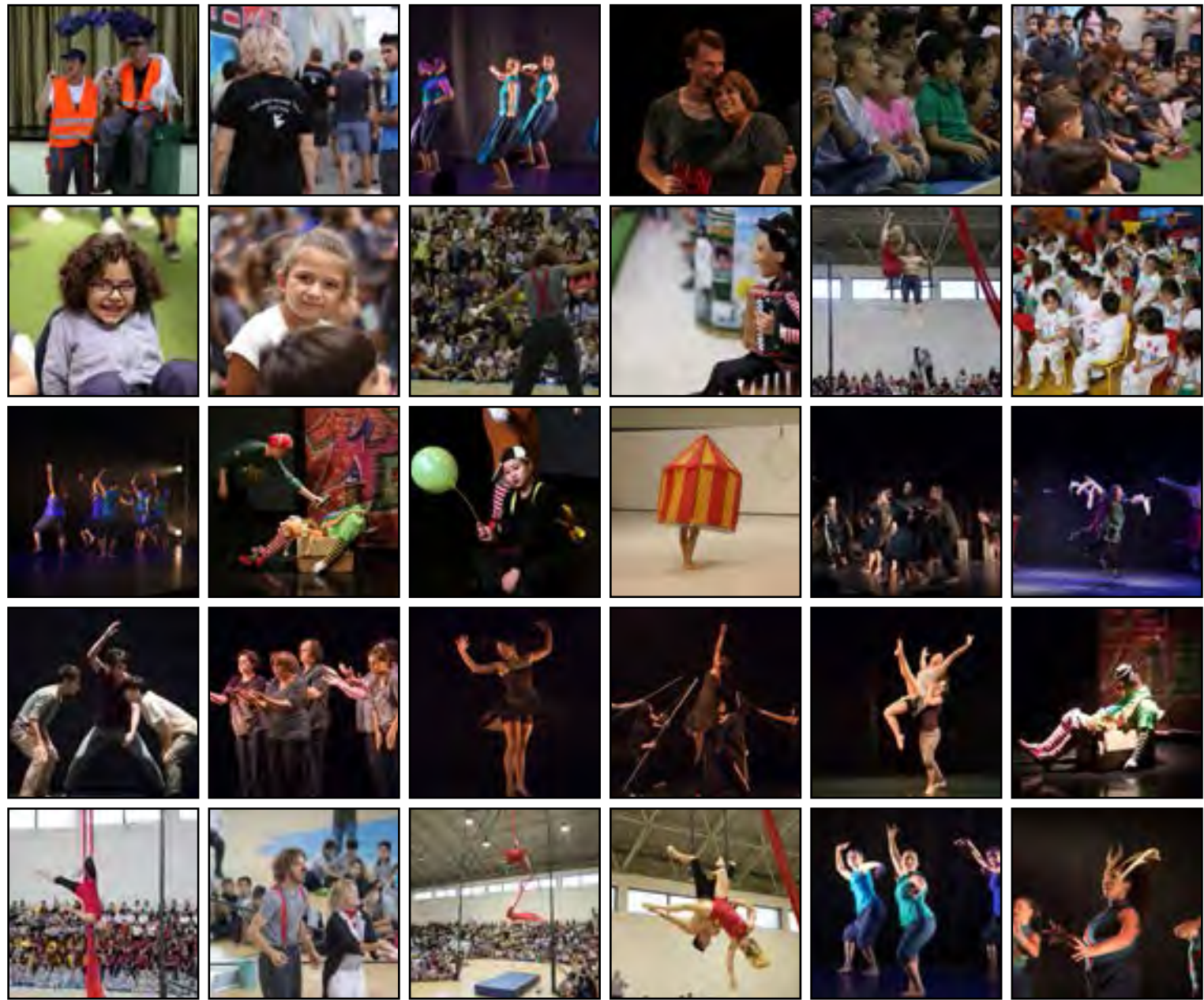
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|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Rami Khader    | Festival Director                    |
| Osama Awwad    | Festival Coordinator                 |
| Hana Hazboun   | Festival Logistics Coordinator       |
| Rana Abu Farha | Social Media & Marketing Coordinator |
| Rania Salsa'   | Events Coordinator                   |
| George Sadi    | Technical Manager                    |
| Elias Najjar   | School Performance Coordinator       |
| Tamara Musleh  | Media Coordinator                    |
| Rami Rishmawi  | Videographer / Photographer          |
| Angie Saba     | Booklet/Info Management Coordinator  |
| Natasha Baboun | Volunteer Coordinator                |



*Photos from Taken - A collaboration between Diyar Theatre and Royston Maldoom*

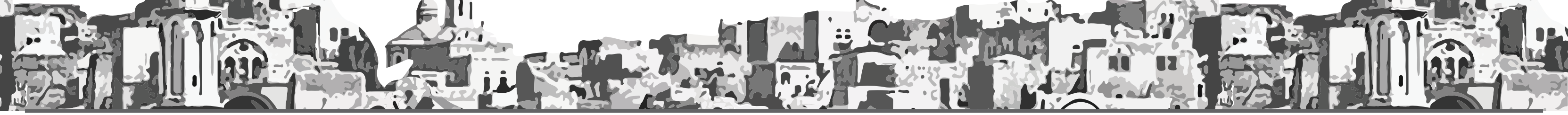






**bipaf 2018**  
**PERFORMERS**





Artists' Name	Performance	Country
Ananya Dance Theatre	Shaatranga	USA
Chang Dance Theatre	BOUT	Taiwan
Dansema Dance Theatre	Colorful Games	Lithuania
Diyar Theatre	Dances of Hope / Taken	Palestine
Folk Dance Ensemble RASA	Rasa	Lithuania
InSite Drama and Round Table	The Giant's Embrace	Hungary
Tanzmoto Dance Company	Crossing the Lines	Germany
Theatre El Hamra	The Raff	Tunis
Theatre of Silence	The Magical World of Toys	China
Salida Circus	Two Clowns Build a Circus & Ariel Auro	USA

## Struggles of hosting a performing arts festival while living under occupation:

We were thrilled to have invited Theatre El Hamra to perform at bipaf. Their performance, 'The Raff', was widely anticipated for many reasons, one being that this group from Tunis was the only group of artists who were to attend from another Arab country. Another reason was 'The Raff' is a timely and relevant piece for our audience. Developed by Ezzeddine Gannoun, this work is about refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa to Europe and was created by bringing together graduates from the Afro-Arab center. However, within the days leading up to the performance, the artists were not granted visas.

Not only do we deal with physical walls denying us free movement and creative exchange, but we also deal with logistical barriers. Of course, we are grateful to have visitors from Europe, Asia, and the United States. However, it is equally important for exchange between Arab artists living in different countries and on different continents. This is a huge and consistent obstacle that illuminates the discriminatory practices related to who does and who does not receive the required documents from Israel to enter Palestine.

In the future, we hope that we will be able to include more Arab voices from the Middle East, and from North Africa in our programming without having to struggle with these sorts of obstacles.



Chang Dance Theatre

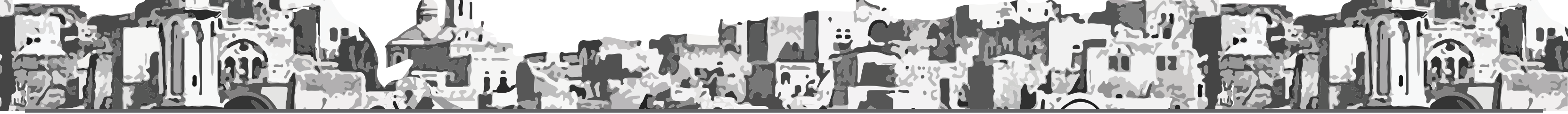


Diyar Theatre



Ananya Dance Theatre





## Creative Resistance

We embrace a philosophy of creative resistance where making and sharing performance art is a positive tool that opens up our thoughts and deepens our cultural engagement in the Palestinian community. Our creative resistance focuses on building bridges of connection between self-expression and our broader community. This philosophy creates space for hope and imagination to overpower feelings of isolation and despair that negatively impact youth. At Diyar theatre, our commitment to artistic investment in youth brings light into our daily lives, nurtures our cultural connections, and awakens our shared humanity in liberation.

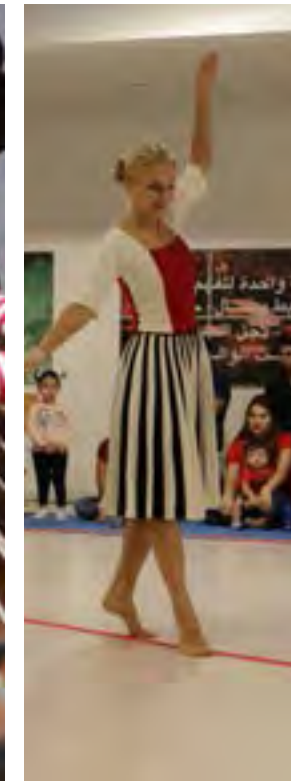
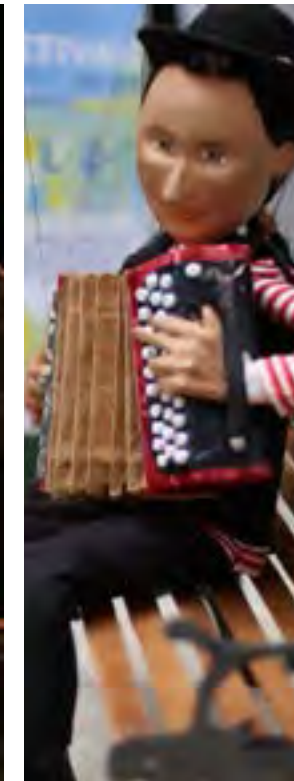
bipaf activates creative resistance in a multitude of ways. The Palestinian community receives the opportunity to witness creative expression through performances from many countries as they share a wide variety including folk dances, contemporary dance, circus, puppetry, theatre, and more. The international visitors have a chance to learn about the beauty of Palestinian culture and history while gaining a deeper clarity the meaning of life under occupation.

Through shared engagement and connection, our collective work of creative resistance can flourish.

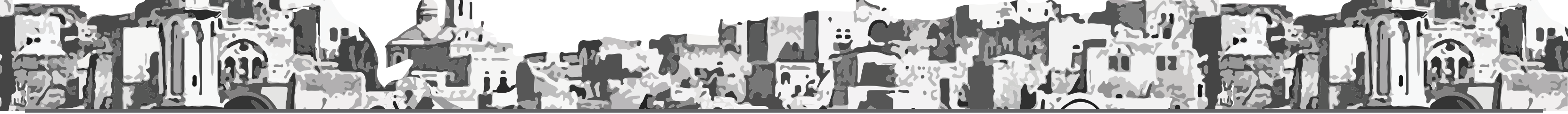


## Overview of Festival Activities & Community Building

1. Performances every evening (8 days)
2. Three community meals each day for all international and local performers
3. Cultural/Historical tours of Bethlehem area
4. Political tours of Bethlehem area
5. Live music gatherings
6. Collaborations between local community and international choreographers







## more on bipaf's Cultural & Political Tours

### Historic Bethlehem Walking Tour

Walking through the narrow streets of the old city of Bethlehem, our guests had the chance to learn about the rich cultural and religious history that can be found around every corner. We were given a glance into a small street shop to see the beautiful Palestinian olive wood carvings, a tradition which began in the 4th century BC and continues today as a thriving and flourishing art form. We visited the Icon School where we learned about the revival of Christian iconography (or Byzantine iconography) that makes up many of the timeless, historic religious paintings in Bethlehem. We were welcomed into a traditional Palestinian home complete with vibrant fruit trees and even more vibrant personalities of the women living there who shared beautiful stories! Of course, we finished at the Church of the Nativity where our guests had the chance to see the sacred place where Jesus Christ was born.

### Political Walking Tour

To visit Palestine, we believe that engaging with the politics of the land is just as important as with the beautiful cultural history, especially for artists who have a power of expression that can influence social change. We invited our guests to walk with us outside the 'tourist' hot spots to areas where they could witness the vastly different realities of Palestinians living under occupation. We visited Aida Camp where refugees who were exiled from their homes and villages in 1948 have lived for 70 years. Aida Camp is overcrowded due to the apartheid wall immediately situated along the boundaries of the camp. We heard stories about the ongoing struggle for water, as well as repeated militarized attacks involving tear gas and violent weapons that have led to countless deaths among all ages, children to elderly. We absorbed the history painted throughout the camp by silently expressive Palestinian voices through graffiti, as well as the names of martyrs written on the walls. We walked along the apartheid wall on our way to the Banksy 'Walled Off Hotel', a hotel with the most scenic view in the West Bank; the apartheid wall.



## reflections from our visiting artists

"The Palestinian audience responded very positively to the mixed International programme of dance, theatre, clowning, storytelling, puppetry and trapeze. Participants felt well cared for, despite the enormous pressure on the organizers. For performers and public the whole event ran extremely smoothly. One must pay tribute to all the professional staff and volunteers who worked long hours to make visitors feel comfortable and welcome, and to the local sponsors for whom it was an enormous leap of faith and without whom the festival would not have been possible.

The inclusion of a 'Political Tour' for international artists that included 'walking the wall and visiting refugee camps, combined with the actual experience of being in Palestine and interacting with local people, raised awareness of the situation in the occupied territories which they carry with them on their return home and which, through conversations with friends and colleagues, can do much to bring a new understanding of the realities of life faced by Palestinians under occupation."

### ROYSTON MALDOOM (Germany)

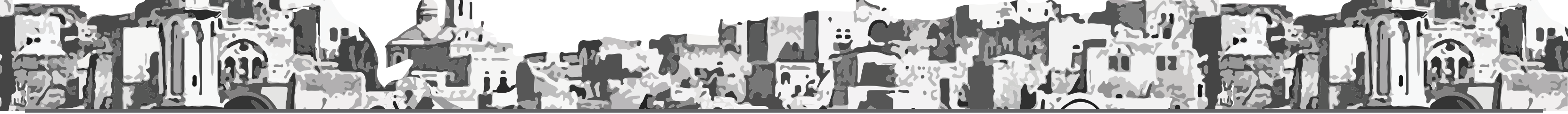
"As a Palestinian-American artist born in the U.S.; Diyar Dance has become one of the families that welcomed me home with my first visit to Palestine summer of 2018. Finding such a blossoming, nurturing space in Palestine where young people, dance, creativity and resistance breathe and grow together is unique and powerful. After my first solo visit where I was able to connect with family, Diyar Dance, and the land of my ancestors, I was invited to return for BIPAF with my Minnesota (USA) dance family Ananya Dance Theatre. Worlds collided and communities grew through this exchange. Ananya Dance Theatre is a company of women of color who create work rooted in Social Justice based choreographies. We were deeply moved as an ensemble by what we witnessed and learned from visiting Palestine and connecting with the Diyar artists and Palestinian community through this platform. For myself, I had the powerful and transformative experience of performing and sharing with my ancestral homeland.



We know performance and the arts are powerful. When we use our artistry to harness very real energy, activate resistance, and call for justice, we can contribute to the fight for change. We can physically show up in our solidarities. We can defy what the occupation wants; to separate, destroy and block. We can share with each other and grow stronger together. We can demand, imagine and activate a world we wish to live and create for."

### LEILA AWADALLAH (USA)





# bipaf 2020

Coming soon!

We are returning to Bethlehem for the second edition of bipaf October 2nd-9th, 2020, coinciding with Bethlehem having been chosen as the Capital of Arab Culture for 2020.

We invite all artists who want to donate their time to perform individually and/or provide workshops for children, youth and/or adults to apply for bipaf 2020! Applications are due October 31st, 2019. Come join us!



# big thanks! شكرا جزيلا

to all of our of our amazing volunteers, donors & supporters who truly made bipaf happen!

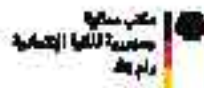
to all the performers, creators, managers & backstage technicians involved!

to our audiences who attended the first edition of bipaf!



*We cannot wait to share with you again in bipaf 2020!*





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