



Art2Action Inc.



****For Immediate Release****

**LA MAMA IN ASSOCIATION WITH ART2ACTION PRESENTS
THE NYC PREMIERE OF 'ELEVEN REFLECTIONS ON SEPTEMBER'
WITH EVENTS AT HI-ARTS**

A Diverse Collective of Women Artists Explore Post-9/11 New York and Middle Eastern American Experience through Poetry, Live Music, Transnational Dance, and Multimedia Arts

Written, Directed & Performed by Andrea Assaf; Choreography by Donna Mejia; Video Art by Pramila Vasudevan; Live Music by Aida Shahghasemi, Eylem Basaldi, and more!

- La MaMa April 30 - May 17, 2015 -

- Hi-ARTS April 23 - May 22, 2015 -

New York, NY (April 2015) – *Eleven Reflections on September* is a Spoken Word and multimedia performance on Arab American experience, Wars on/of Terror, and the "constant, quiet rain of death amidst beauty" that each autumn brings in a post-9/11 world. Based on a poetry series Andrea Assaf (Writer, Director & Performer) has been writing since 2001, its journey spans the fall of the Twin Towers, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the revolutions and conflicts now sweeping through the Middle East. Aesthetically, it explores the disintegration of language in the face of violence, and the possibility of reconstructing hope. The witnessing of autumn becomes a metaphor for the fallen – soldiers and civilians.

Eleven Reflections on September is created and performed by a powerful and diverse collective of women artists with global roots -- including Iran, Turkey, India, Lebanon, the U.S. and more. In addition to the performance at the La MaMa First Floor Theatre, the citywide project includes an interactive installation at the Hi-ARTS Gallery in East Harlem, by Alice Mizrahi, that asks New Yorkers "What changed?" after 9/11. Associated events include community dialogues, a DJ party, and a showcase at the Apollo Theater Soundstage as part of the Women of the World Festival.

"Sometimes as a poet you're simply compelled to write," says Andrea Assaf, Founder and Artistic Director of Art2Action. "In September 2001, I lived in Manhattan. In addition to mourning with the city, my experience of identity as an Arab American dramatically shifted, overnight. Through collaboration with these extraordinary artists, the project has evolved into an embodied manifesto on the devastation and empowerment of women in the face of war. We offer this not only as a reflection, but also as an invitation. Art helps us have a dialogue based in shared experience, so that we can arrive at new understandings together."

The New York City premiere of [*Eleven Reflections on September*](#), written and directed by Andrea Assaf, featuring transnational dance artist Donna Mejia and vocalist/Daf player Aida Shahghasemi, runs from Thursday, April 30 through Sunday, May 17 at The First Floor Theatre of La MaMa. *Eleven Reflections on September* is an Art2Action production, originally commissioned by the Pangea World Theater, and made possible by the generous support of the Princess Grace Foundation-USA.

Listing Info:

Eleven Reflections on September

April 30 - May 17, 2015, Thurs-Sat 7:30pm, Sun 2pm

La MaMa, First Floor Theatre

General Admission \$18 | Students/Seniors \$13

T: 646.430.5374 | <http://lamama.org>

74 East 4th St. NY, NY 10003

Box Office Hours: Monday-Sunday 12-6pm

Reflections of NYC: Gallery Installation

Opening Reception April 23, 2015 at 7-9pm; through May 22

Hi-ARTS Gallery

RSVP Only: RSVP@pitchcontrolpr.com

T: 718.497.4282 | <http://www.hi-artsnyc.org>

304 East 100 St. NY, NY 10018

Gallery Hours: Mondays and Fridays 2-5pm



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Listing Info (continued):

Art & Peace: A Community Dialogue

May 6, 2015, 6-9pm

Hi-ARTS Gallery

RSVP Only: RSVP@pitchcontrolpr.com

T: 718.497.4282 | <http://www.hi-artsnyc.org>

304 East 100 St. NY, NY 10018

The Apollo presents: Women of the World Festival

Excerpts from *Eleven Reflections on September*

June 14, 2015, 2-4pm

Apollo Theater Soundstage

T: (212) 531-5305 | <http://www.wowapollo.com>

253 West 125th Street, NY, NY 10027

About the Artists:

Andrea Assaf is a writer, performer, director and cultural organizer. She's the founding Artistic Director of Art2Action Inc. Her performance work ranges from interdisciplinary collaborations, to solo performances, to community-based theatre, to spoken word. She has created and toured work all over the U.S., and internationally in Mexico, Poland, Nicaragua, and Tanzania. Andrea is a two-time recipient of Princess Grace Awards, including a 2010 Fellowship for Directing/Gant Gaither Theatre Award, and a 2014 Special Projects Award. She has also received grants, residencies and commissions from the National Performance Network, Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Hedgebrook, and more. Andrea has a Masters degree in Performance Studies and a BFA in acting, both from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She serves on the Board of the Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists (CAATA), Alternate ROOTS, and the International Management Committee of Women Playwrights International (WPI); she is a member of RAWI (Radius of Arab American Writers).

Donna Mejia is a choreographer, scholar, instructor, and performer specializing in contemporary dance, traditions of the African and Arab Diaspora, and emerging fusion traditions in Transnational Electronica. She is also an authorized instructor of the Brazilian Silvestre Modern Dance Technique. Donna received her MFA from Smith College, and is currently an Assistant Professor of Dance at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She is the first professor of tribal/transnational fusion globally. Donna tours globally, and has headlined over 27 international festivals since 2012. Her choreographic commissions and performances continue to generate outstanding critical reviews from print and digital media.

Aida Shahghasemi, being fortunate enough to travel back and forth between Iran and the States, became acquainted with Persian classical music with the generosity and kindness of Amir Samadi (Daf, Tombak) and Madame Parissa (voice). She has a Masters degree from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where she taught a course on Iran's arts activism. Aida is soon to release her first solo album, and has previously toured internationally with Marketa Irglova, and has the popular U.S. roots band, Iron & Wine.

Additional Collaborating Artists Include - Video Art by Pramila Vasudevan, the artistic director of Aniccha Arts; Sound Design by Owen Henry & Keegan Fraley; Lighting Design by G.B. Stephens; Pre-show Video by James Scruggs; and Installation Artist Alice Mizrahi, artist, teacher and co-founder of YOUNITY for women street artists.

About Art2Action Inc. - Art2Action Inc. creates, develops and produces new and devised theater work, interdisciplinary performances, performative acts and progressive cultural organizing. We support women artists, artists of color, queer or trans-identified artists, and creative allies. We are dedicated to cultural equity and innovation, artistic quality and community value, performativity and impact. For more information, visit: <http://art2action.org/eleven-reflections-on-september>

About Hi-ARTS - Hi-ARTS (formerly known solely as the Hip-Hop Theater Festival) is a leading organization within the urban arts movement: developing and producing new works of performance and visual art, providing a platform for artists; and creating educational and community programs that connect to and expand the audience for urban arts. For more information, visit: <http://www.hi-artsnyc.org/>

About La MaMa - An integral part of New York City's cultural landscape, La MaMa has a worldwide reputation for producing daring work in theatre, dance, performance art, and music that defies form and transcends boundaries of language, race, and culture. Founded in 1961 by theatre pioneer and legend Ellen Stewart, La MaMa is a global organization with creative partners and dedicated audiences around the world. La MaMa presents an average of 60-70 productions annually, most of which are world premieres. To date, over 3,500 productions have been presented at La MaMa with artists from more than 70 nations. Honored with more than 30 OBIE Awards, dozens of Drama Desk and Bessie Awards, La MaMa's programming is culturally diverse, cross-disciplinary and draws audiences from all walks of life. For the second consecutive year, La MaMa will offer its 10@\$10 program whereby 10 tickets are made available for every performance in every theatre in advance for only \$10. For more information, visit: <http://lamama.org/>

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To learn more about Art2Action Inc., *Eleven Reflections of September*, to speak to Andrea Assaf or one of the artists involved, please contact Lindsay Hall (lhall@pitchcontrolpr.com) or Sarah Cirkiel Gladstone (sarah@pitchcontrolpr.com), Pitch Control Public Relations, 212.475.4919.