

Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival 2016 Danstory April 11–26

In confrontation with the death, destruction, and exile witnessed by the world today and in the midst of the Palestinian current popular uprising against the Israeli occupation, a military occupation that has been stripping Palestinians of the simplest of human rights for the last 68 years, the Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival 2016 presents its 11th edition under the theme “Danstory,” underscoring the passion of Palestinians for joyfulness and their tight grip on hopefulness and life.

Every year we produce performances that address our people's concerns. Palestinian dancers integrate with their peers in Arabic and international productions, and our dancers and dance companies present their local and international work, which has gained popularity among the Palestinian audience. In fact, Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival has become one of the most acknowledged festivals in Palestine and the region.

This year, we bring you a program filled with local and international productions, and we are proud to have a strong presence of local performances as an indicator of Palestinian dancers' interest in contemporary dance. We take performances to the streets, for each family member, and the festival's span widens through the activities and performances organized in various cities. Given the festival's role in facilitating conversation, cooperation, cultural exchange, capacity building, and collaboration, there are dance workshops, extensive training courses, and chances for local dancers to participate in co-productions and cultural exchange programs. Moreover, we are hosting a dance conference that focuses this year on the issues of the relationship between art and the community, and between cultural organizations and donors. Palestinian cultural organizations are concerned with the independence of the intellectual, the need for establishing an independent culture fund, and cultural normalization. In addition, this year, Sareyyet Ramallah will organize the first Performing Arts Marketing Day, which will give each group or artist the space to present their art and build a network with the festival's guests.

We have always been keen on involving children and have organized children performances in the past. This year, we take a step forward and host a group of Norwegian children to share everyday life with a group of Palestinian children. They will meet every day in a workshop that concludes with a production to be performed during the festival.

We continue to target people with disabilities to facilitate their integration in the community since we first launched the initiative in 2012, through hosting dance companies that feature disabled dancers, organizing workshops for people with disabilities, and organizing Teachers of Tomorrow workshops for those who want to work with the disabled.

Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival 2016 is organized in partnership with Ramallah Municipality and with the sponsorship of the European Union, as part of the EU-sponsored project “Palestinian Festivals Towards Cooperation and Community Inclusion,” which combines Sareyyet Ramallah, The Popular Art Centre, and Al-Rozana Association for the Development of Architectural Heritage. The festival also receives support from the Representative Office of Norway, A.M. Qattan Foundation, Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, Muna and Basem Hishmeh Foundation, and The National Beverage Co., with the cooperation of the French Consulate General in Jerusalem, the Representative Office of Tunisia, Goethe Institute, the British Council, Yabous Cultural Center, and the Palestinian National Theater – Jerusalem, and in partnership with Al-Falastinia Satellite Channel, Palestine TV, Raya FM, Zoom, and Intertech.

Sareyyet Ramallah would like to take this opportunity to express our genuine gratitude to every official and civil organization that helped organize this year's festival, and our sincere appreciation to our festival crew and volunteers.

Courtesy of Sareyyet Ramallah

