



Polybe + Seats
presents
an immersive theatrical experience at Beit Jeddo Hookah Lounge

Anna Asli Suriyah (I Come from Syria)

Created by Sarah Badiyah Sakaan with Jessica Silsby Brater

**Performances begin
August 9, 2014**

Brooklyn theater company **Polybe + Seats** announces its new immersive theatrical production ***Anna Asli Suriyah (I Come from Syria)***. **Conceived by** company member **Sarah Badiyah Sakaan** and **directed by** Artistic Director **Jessica Silsby Brater**, the show will have a limited engagement of 12 performances only at **Beit Jeddo Hookah Lounge**, located at **6917 5th Avenue** in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Directions can be found at the end of this press release.

Performances begin **Saturday, August 9th**, and will play **SATURDAY THROUGH TUESDAY** evenings at **7pm** until **Tuesday, August 26th**.

Tickets, which are priced at **\$18**, are available through Smarttix online at **www.smarttix.com** or by calling **212.868.4444**.

Sakaan, Brater, and the creative team will bring audiences an immersive night of theater, blending scenes drawn from personal stories and news reports with elements of fantasy and Arabic folktales. Beit Jeddo will be transformed into a Syrian banquet hall, with the action moving from Aleppo to a refugee camp on the Turkish border to the U.S. and back. Our multi-national, multi-lingual cast presents a show that highlights the difficult choices Syrian and Syrian-American people must make as they grapple with the current crisis, and celebrates the drive to stay connected over great distances and barriers.

“The inspiration for creating this piece,” says Sakaan, “is that I realized that as a theater artist I have an opportunity to tell a story that’s not being told, of people who are actually experiencing this crisis from the inside out. Creating this show with my theater company is a celebration of the power and the freedom I have to tell this story. Instead of denying what’s going on, or disengaging from the conversation, I consider it my responsibility to make this play as an American and

as the daughter of an immigrant who left his homeland to gain access to freedoms he couldn't have in Syria.”

“Collaborating with Sarah on this production is thrilling,” says Brater. “Her vision combines personal experience and family history with traditional Arabic storytelling, music and ritual to bring an international humanitarian crisis to our attention. Our fantastic production team is making work that is moving, funny, surprising and exciting. We look forward to welcoming audiences.”

This will be the 6th collaboration between Sakaan and Brater. **Brater**, the founding artistic director of Polybe + Seats, holds a doctorate in Theater Studies from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and begins an appointment as Visiting Assistant Professor and Theater Program Director at the University of New Haven this fall. **Sakaan** holds a B.F.A. in Acting from Emerson College and has performed with many New York companies in addition to Polybe + Seats, including the Queens Players, Impulse Initiative, Balloon Heaven Productions, Dixon Place, and with The Bats, resident acting company of The Flea Theater.

Anna Asli Suriyah (I Come from Syria) is sponsored, in part, by: the Greater New York Arts Development Fund of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the Decentralization Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, administered by the Brooklyn Arts Council, Inc. (BAC) and by The Nancy Quinn Fund, a project of the Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York (A.R.T./New York). The show is produced by **Katie Naka** and features performers **Ayse Eldek, Tom Giordano, Nuah Oryzel, Sarah Badiyah Sakaan** and **Pascale Seigneurie**, set and object design by **Daniel Soule**, lighting design by **Natalie Robin**, costume design by **Karen Boyer and Bevan Dunbar**, sound design and composition by **Soraya Odishoo**, and stage management/assistant direction by **Naomi Boyce**. This production will operate under the Actors Equity Showcase Code.

About Polybe + Seats

Polybe + Seats, founded in 2001, creates plays and projects that experiment with language, structure, visual imagery, and storytelling. ***Anna Asli Suriyah (I Come from Syria)*** continues Polybe + Seats' commitment to performing in non-traditional performance venues and to storytelling that embraces multiple points of view. It follows 2012-2013's production of *A History of Launching Ships (Somewhat After Washington Irving)* at BLDG 92 at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, which *NYTheatre.com* called “not merely a play, but a theatrical experience,” and 2011's production of Pixerecourt's *Alice, or the Scottish Gravediggers* at the Old Stone House of Brooklyn, which *New York Theater Review* called “artistically ambitious and intellectually and emotionally engaging.” Prior to *Alice* was *A Thousand Thousand Slimy Things*, presented in residence at the Waterfront Barge Museum in Red Hook, Brooklyn. *Slimy Things* was featured on *Gothamist*,

the *Huffington Post*, the *Brooklyn Rail*, and *Paper* magazine. *NYTheatre.com* called it “fascinatingly dramatic.” The company was selected to premiere a week of plays as part of Suzan Lori- Parks’ *365 Days/365 Plays* and has produced new works by writers including Sylvan Oswald, Avi Glickstein, and Jordan Harrison. 2006’s *The Charlotte Salomon Project: Life? Or Theater?* was a Foundation for Jewish Culture Commission developed in residency at Mabou Mines/Suite and presented by the University of Michigan at the Walgreen Drama Center in Ann Arbor.

For more information, please visit www.polybeandseats.org.

CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR POLYBE AND SEATS

"Not merely a play, but a theatrical experience."
- NYTheater.com on *A History of Launching Ships*

"A smart and ambitious company"
- Alexis Soloski, on *Alice, or the Scottish Gravediggers*, in *The Village Voice*

“[A]n engaging fiction ... reminds you of the power of the organic over the artificial.”
- Risa Shoup, on *A Thousand Thousand Slimy Things* in *The Huffington Post*

“Exhilarating”
- Gwen Orel, on *Granada* in *The Forward*

Directions to Beit Jeddo Hookah Lounge

6917 5th Ave, 2nd Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11209
Between Ovington Avenue & Bay Ridge Avenue

Recommended Public Transit: R to Bay Ridge Avenue (Bay Ridge Avenue and 4th Avenue)