

Speaking Art – Quietly

The 7th Annual Speaking Arts Conference brought Jewish, Muslim and Christians artists together, and gave them the freedom to create and to dream.



Thanks to the continuing support of the Dear Foundation of Switzerland, the conference was held in November, and for the first time, included workshops and events at the Paley Arts Center in east Jerusalem, The Lab, and the studios of the Vertigo Dance Troupe.

Seventy two performing artists in the fields of music, dance and theater participated. They came from all over – north, center, east and west Jerusalem, and even Nablus. "This is the first time I've heard Hebrew in a conversation, rather than from a soldier at a military checkpoint," said one participant from Nablus.

Participants enjoyed 2 days of workshops led by acclaimed actress Salwa Nakara, internationally renowned musician and teacher Sameer Makhoul, and dancer/choreographers Ilanit Tadmor and Rabaa Mourkous. Many were so enthusiastic about their experience they expressed a desire to continue to work together throughout the year.

The theme of the conference, *Quiet*, refers to a state of mind that "can help us to look inward, [giving us] the freedom to create, to dream, as artists without borders," said Hanan Ohana, conference coordinator.

Movement artist Noam Carmeli led a workshop on improvisation through movement. Shmulik Hadjes, of the Psik Theater in Jerusalem, led

a special session on masks and characterization. Raida Sa'adeh, Director of the Paley Arts Center in east Jerusalem explained the arts situation in east Jerusalem.

Dancer and choreographer Arkadi Zeides and Eyal Danon, curator at the Israeli Center for Digital Art, showed how art effectuates change. Zeides discussed his show *Quiet*,

where 2 Jews and 2 Arabs use movement and touch to express aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Danon discussed his project *Liminal Spaces*, which uses art to advance issues where politics failed. Prominent musicians Mira Awad and Shlomi Shaban closed the conference, performing in Hebrew, Arabic and English to a full house, their first time sharing a stage.

"When we look for the humanity in Jews and Arabs, we discover treasures and richness that bring more satisfaction than agreements signed behind closed doors," said Nadim Sheiban, the Jerusalem Foundation's Director of the Projects Department.

The Jerusalem Intercultural Center is instrumental in the Speaking Art conference every year.

