

La MaMa

Experimental Theatre Club

in association with GOH Productions

presents

The Horse of Jenin

Written and performed by Alaa Shehada

Part of Under the Radar

Originally produced by Troupe Courage (Amsterdam)

GOH Productions is collaborating with 55B Productions on the production



The Club

74a East 4th Street, NYC, 10003

Jan 9-12, 2025

The Horse of Jenin

Written and Performed by **Alaa Shehada**

Directors: **Katrien van Beurden, Thomas van Ouwerkerk**

Co-Writer & Stand-up Comedy Consultant: **Sam Beale**

Masks: **Den Durand**

Music: **Remy van Kesteren, Khalil Al Batran**

Film Clip: **Thomas Kilpper**

Dramaturgy: **Maarten Bos**

Designer/Tech: **Roderick Bredenoord**

Lighting Supervisor: **Daisy Long** (NYC/La MaMa)

Master Electrician: **Rodney Perez** (La MaMa)

Artistic Associate: **Sacha Muller**

Production Support and Business Direction: **Monique Bos**

Publicity (Troupe Courage): **Sarah Milo, Blyde**

Publicity (New York): **The PR Social**

Production Photography: **Kamerich & Budwilowitz**

Photography: **Dario&Misja**

Promo Trailer: **David Koster** (Amsterdam) & **Theo Cote** (NY/La MaMa)

*Saturday, Jan 11 talkback moderated by
Fouad Dakwar immediately following the show

Performance is 70 minutes no intermission

THE HORSE OF JENIN, written and performed by Palestinian actor and comedian Alaa Shehada, tells a universal story. A story about the resilience that imagination brings, it is centered on a boy growing up in occupied Jenin, but like every child in the world, all he wants is to play and have fun.

In April 2002, a major invasion took place in Jenin. In the aftermath, a German artist travelled to the city for an art workshop. After four weeks, with the help of 15 Palestinians, he unveiled the result. He had built a horse 15 feet tall, out of metal fragments and debris from the bombing. They rode the horse through the city in an uplifting display to the people.

The horse is an Arabic symbol of freedom, but this statue was also a symbol of peaceful resistance, and became a symbol of resilience. In November 2023, an Israeli bulldozer entered the camp and the horse was removed.

In this solo show, Shehada builds a “new” horse, constructed from the fragments of his memories and supplemented with a dose of humor and fantasy. A theatrical symbol of resistance and creativity, the performance is an ode to the power of imagination and the value of playing freely.

The Horse of Jenin was originally produced by and created in collaboration with Troupe Courage in the Netherlands.

TROUPE COURAGE is an international acting collective that produces performances and conducts workshops worldwide. They create a very virtuoso theater, using archetypal masks to play characters from all walks of life, such as the old woman, the dictator, the playing child and the refugee. In a completely empty space with live music, the actors manage to enchant the audience with their transformations and bring collected stories to life in the imagination of the viewer. Stories about how everyone tries to survive in today's world, which can be both tragic and primal. Troupe Courage creates high-level popular theater in which the actor's drive and ingenuity flourish and where the energy and enjoyment of acting shine through. <https://www.troupecourage.com/en/>

ALAA SHEHADA (Writer/Performer) is an actor and comedian educated at The Freedom Theatre Acting School in Jenin, Palestine, a company nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in February 2024. Since graduating in 2014 from The Freedom Theatre, he has been involved in many international projects, as well as returning to Jenin to teach and lead workshops. Alaa is a co-founder of The Palestine Comedy Club, a core member of Troupe Courage in Amsterdam since 2011, and a “Doctor-Clown” with Red Noses International. He toured extensively in the USA and Australia with Amir Nizar Zuabi's Grey Rock (UTR 2020, La MaMa 2019), a play about love and dreams in Palestine in which he played Jawad, the jealous fiancé. Alaa has performed on stages around the world, from the US to Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and the UK, and has worked with other renowned directors, Di Trevis and Katrien Van Beurden. He is a recipient of a number of awards for his performance and creative work, including the Jury Award at the International Festival of Liberal Theatre in Jordan, Best Show at the Palestinian National Theatre Festival 2018, and Best Script Co-Writer 2019 for London Jenin. Alaa Shehada claims to be one of the few Palestinian men who is still unmarried.

KATRIEN VAN BEURDEN (Director) is the founder of Troupe Courage and studied at the acting school of the School of Arts Utrecht (HKU), then at The University of Montana Fine Arts Dept in the USA, where she studied under Carol O'Connor. She also specialized in commedia dell'arte with renowned masters such as Antonio Fava in Italy. She has shared her unique acting style worldwide at venues such as The Freedom Theatre in Jenin, Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, Act Fit Change in Ghana, Amsterdam's Drama and Contemporary Music Theatre (ATKA), the Netherlands Film Academy and the Drama Department of the University of Bombay. Besides her work in theatre, Van Beurden has also worked as a music director. Among others, with Remy van Kesteren at the Concertgebouw, Dominique Vleeshouwers, and Arend Bruijn. As an actress, she starred in films such as 'De Wederopstanding van een Klootzak' and 'Zomer zonder Mamma', and on television in the Golden Calf-winning series 'Rampvlucht'. In 2017, she was invited by Routledge Publishers to write the concluding chapter in a book on masters of commedia dell'arte. Her contribution, praising her as a visionary and innovator, has gained international acclaim. A highlight of her career was organizing a major festival in Italy in 2010, bringing together icons such as Dario Fo, the Sartori and LeCoq families, and Mummenschanz. In 2023, Katrien van Beurden was knighted in the Order of Orange-Nassau, in recognition of her social commitment and her years of work with Troupe Courage, with which she has made an impression worldwide.

THOMAS VAN OUWERKERK (Director) graduated acting from the School of Arts Utrecht (HKU) 2011. Since then, he has specialized in physical acting. He studied clowning at L'Ecole Philippe Gaulier in Paris and attended workshops at École internationale de théâtre Jacques Lecoq, among others. In addition to his role as artistic core member of Troupe Courage, he works as an actor and theatre maker with several companies. Since 2012, he has been associated with Jakop Ahlbom Company and was in the original cast of the show Horror, performing worldwide at venues such as the Sydney Opera House and Théâtre Paris-Villette. Since 2016, he has worked with the international theatre company Famille Flöz in Teatro Delusio (2016) and FESTE (2021), performing in over 400 theatres across Europe and beyond, including in Milan, Naples, Santiago and Beijing. He also forms the collective 'Thomas, Sacha and Jos' with Jos Nargy and Sacha Muller, in performing Toon Tellegen's work in theatres and festivals in the Netherlands since 2013.

SAM BEALE (Co-Writer and Stand-Up Comedy Consultant) is a comedy director, researcher, writer and teacher who works with comedians, solo performers and theatre/circus companies to develop comedy material, direct comic performances and script shows. For over 25 years she has taught comedy and solo performance practices in Higher Education in the UK and facilitated collaborative socially engaged comedy projects in a range of international contexts. She is director of Funny Side Collective (<https://funnyside.co.uk/>), co-founder/co-artistic director of Palestine Comedy Club (PalCom: <https://www.palestinecomedyclub.com/>), and has worked with Alaa Shehada since 2017, creating and touring comedy shows in Palestine and the UK. Sam also researches and writes about the history and practice of comedy for academic publications and speaks about comedy and social change at international conferences. She is the author of *The Comedy & Legacy of Music Hall Women 1880-1920: Brazen Impudence and Boisterous Vulgarity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020) and is currently working on a book about socially engaged comedy projects around the world (Routledge, 2026).

DEN DURAND (Maskmaker) has been designing and making leather theater masks since 1980, after graduating from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Appliqués et des métiers d'Art in Paris. Since 1985, he has worked professionally in this endeavor. Durand collaborates with numerous conservatories and theater schools worldwide and manufactures masks for various theater companies. He maintains a fruitful collaboration with the Amsterdam company Troupe Courage. In addition to his work as a maker, Den Durand performs as a masked actor and practices the art of acting with masks.

REMY VAN KESTEREN (Musician/Composer) was admitted to the Utrecht Conservatoire at the age of ten, where he studied with Erika Waardenburg and in 2010, graduated with high distinction. He continued his education at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris, studying with renowned harpist Isabelle Moretti. In 2012, he received his master's degree 'summa cum laude' from the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. Praised by The New York Times as a 'brilliant harpist', Remy built an international, award-winning career, performing in concert halls around the world, winning a worldwide major international harp competition in 2013. At the age of 25, Remy experienced restlessness, and a sense that something was not quite right. The lure of the harp pulled him in a new direction. After winning the Dutch Music Prize in 2016 with his cross-genre album 'Tomorrow Eyes', he went from playing with world-renowned orchestras to performing in clubs and pop festivals, both solo and with his band Analogue Robot Orchestra, exploring and stretching the limits of his instrument. Whether collaborating on dance (Het Nationale Ballet in 2014 & 2017), film (with Oscar-winning director Michael Dudok De Wit), or mixing genres with singer-songwriters, producers and DJs, Remy continues to find fresh and creative ways to push the boundaries of his harp playing. His own music has generated more than 12 million streams on Spotify alone in 182 different countries.

KHALIL AL BATRAN (Composer/Musician) is a Palestinian theater director, actor, and musician with a degree in Drama and Theater from the Academy of Theatre and Drama in Ramallah and Folkwang University of the Arts in Germany. He began as an actor, later integrating music into theater and transitioning to directing in 2019. In 2021, he co-founded Athar Group for Independent Theater Production. Khalil is a certified theater trainer, in voice, movement, and performance techniques and has taught at The Freedom Theater school in Jenin. His recent acting work includes *Corpse Under the Rubble*, and directing projects include *I Will Betray My Country*, *Brainwashers*, *Bridge*, *Strange Identity*, *Fulana*, and *Still Waiting*.

MAARTEN BOS (Dramaturg) graduated from the Master Dramaturgy at the University of Amsterdam in 2018. As a dramaturge, he has since worked for several national and international theatre makers and companies, including: Werkplaats van de Woestijne, De Jonge Honden, Troupe Courage and Tryater. As a core team teacher at the Amsterdam's Drama and Contemporary Music Theatre (ATKA), he teaches dramaturgy. In addition, Maarten is active as a writer of short stories, with which he gives read-aloud performances on stages across the country. In 2019, he made the successful podcast *Talking about Depression* for which he talked to professionals and experts about their experiences with mental health.

RODERICK BREDENOORD (Designer/Tech) is a multifaceted professional in the performing arts, with extensive experience in acting, directing, theater education, production, and stage technology. His broad background seamlessly combines artistic expertise with organizational skills, making him a versatile force in the theater world. He pursued his studies in acting at MBO Artiest, directing and acting in Amsterdam, and theater education in Maastricht. This diverse educational foundation has equipped him for a career where he effectively integrates his artistic vision with his organizational capabilities. Roderick is currently affiliated with Theaterfestival de Parade, Het Nationale Theater, and Troupe Courage. As of January 2025, he will be production manager for *Schuldig Kind* by Het Nationale Theater and executive producer for Theaterfestival de Parade.

MONIQUE BOS (Business Manager) was an account manager in the advertising industry and editorial coordinator and editor-in-chief at two major Dutch magazines to the world of environmentalism, sustainability, and nature, where she worked as a project manager at two public benefit organizations (Milieubende and Gezond Natuur Wandelen). At Milieubende, she developed interactive theater projects and workshops in which a group of actors playfully raised awareness among younger generations about environmental issues such as climate change, waste, and sustainability. Since January 2022, she has been the Business Manager at Troupe Courage.

SACHA MULLER (Artistic Associate) is an actor and theatremaker with a great love for physical, visual and musical theater. Since the founding of Troupe Courage, he has been a permanent part of the artistic team, with whom he creates and performs shows at home and abroad. He also performs with several theater companies in the Netherlands including: Theatergroep Aluin, Het Filiaal Theatermakers, Bonte Hond, MaaSTD and Ulrique Quade Company. Together with Thomas van Ouwerkerk and Jos Nargy he forms the makers collective 'Thomas, Sacha and Jos', with whom he made last season the successful productions 'Twee oude vrouwtjes', after the book of the same name by Toon Tellegen.

THOMAS KILPPER | Visual Artist (film clip) In 2003, German artist Thomas Kilpper, with a group of young people in the West Bank, welded a horse from scrap metal. The materials came from destroyed houses and cars, remnants of the ongoing conflict in the region. Kilpper works site-specifically across media including installation, sculpture, graphics, photography, and video. He is known for transforming floors of mostly empty buildings into large-scale printing blocks and installations. His work, including projects like *Al Hissan - The Jenin Horse* and *Tumult*, addresses social issues and calls for transformation. He collaborates with communities, drawing on local stories to present a more nuanced view of history than official accounts. His works are in the collections of the Tate Gallery, London, Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt, British Library, London and South London Gallery amongst others. The horse sculpture included a fragment of an ambulance door that read "Red Crescent Society". The film clip at the end of today's performance is from then *Al Hissan - The Jenin Horse*.

New York City Premiere

BONNIE SUE STEIN (Co-Producer GOH Productions), is the Executive Director and Producer of GOH Productions, a nonprofit arts services organization that has been creating, producing and managing performing arts projects since 1982. Based in New York City, its dance, theater, puppetry, visual and youth programs reach across continents and borders. GOH is dedicated to the work of artists and artworks that are not easily categorized, with projects that have reached over 20 countries worldwide. From 2018-2020, GOH co-produced *Grey Rock* (La MaMa 2019, UTR 2020) a play by Palestinian writer/director, Amir Nizar Zuabi, in which Alaa Shehada performed a major role. Most recently, she produced and assistant directed *FOWL PLAY: Conference of the Birds* at La MaMa Ellen Stewart Theatre. gohproductions.org

JENNY TIBBELS (Co-Producer 55B Productions) is a producer of live arts and events with a background in theatre. Jenny founded 55B to create, produce, and manage live arts and events that foster intercultural exchange. Named after the region of the brain that is activated when we hear stories, 55B cultivates new, multidisciplinary projects that expand our thinking and inspire social change. Partnering with artists, 55B develops a strategic context in which a production or event can thrive, generating connections that amplify a story and its impact. Frequent collaborators include Caborca, Danielle Russo Performance Project, the American Vicarious, and Tate Strategy. 55b.org

KIMBERLY GIANNELLI (Public Relations NYC) is a PR professional and former ballet dancer with a deep commitment to the performing arts as a catalyst for meaningful conversations and social impact. As founder of The PR Social, she partners with clients across dance, theater, opera, classical music, and wellness to craft campaigns that amplify cultural voices and champion narratives of education, equity, and community. Kimberly co-founded iHeartDance during the COVID-19 pandemic, producing over 15 sold-out performances that raised more than \$120,000 for the dance community. Most recently, she organized a fundraiser to support humanitarian aid in Ukraine and produced a northeast tour featuring young actors from a Lviv bomb shelter, shedding light on the impact of war on children. Her work reflects a dedication to fostering dialogue, driving awareness, and connecting communities through the power of the arts.

FOUAD DAKWAR (Talkback Moderator) is a Palestinian musical theater writer whom Playbill aptly describes as “a darkly comic pop-punk composer on the rise.” His semi-autobiographical musical, ‘Fouad of Nazareth,’ was developed in Berklee NYC’s Writing and Production for Musical Theater Master’s program and premiered to two sold-out concert fundraisers at Joe’s Pub followed by a 29-hour reading in Noor Theatre’s Highlight Reading Series. The piece is set to make its world premiere in New York in Fall of 2025.

SUPPORT

AMSTERDAM *The Horse of Jenin* is made possible with financial support to Troupe Courage from Amsterdam Fund for the Arts (AFK), Fonds 21, Performing Arts Fund NL (FPK), Cultuurfonds, Norma Fund and crowdfunding platform voordekunst.

NEW YORK Special thanks to Mia Yoo, Bev Petty, Sarah Murphy, Mark Tambella and all of the staff at La MaMa; and Mark Russell and the staff at Under the Radar, and to Matthew Covey, Dinky and Terry, Felice Gelman, Purple Scarf Productions, Vit Horejs, Sarazina Stein, Marsha Gildin, Noelle Ghossaini, Noor Theater, Radical Evolution, Carrie Beehan, Brazen Light, Al Limite, Remote Theater Project, Wagner University, Kufiya, The Freedom Theatre, The Friends of The Freedom Theatre, and additional individuals and friends who have made this NY premiere possible.

The Freedom Theatre, where Alaa Shehada trained, is a theatre and cultural center in Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank. They stage professional theatre productions, hold theatre workshops in the refugee camp, Jenin town and villages, offer training in acting, pedagogy and photography, and publish books, exhibitions, and short films. Since opening their doors in 2006, they have made theatre and visual art available to the entire youth community living in Jenin refugee camp. Freedom Theatre was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in February, 2024.

The Friends of The Freedom Theatre (USA) is a volunteer organization dedicated to supporting The Freedom Theatre since its inception in 2006. Through fundraising, outreach, touring and advocacy - we raise awareness about and support for the mission and vision of The Freedom Theatre.

Artistic Freedom Initiative (AFI) is a Brooklyn-based nonprofit founded by human rights and immigration attorneys. Their mission is to provide pro bono legal, resettlement, and advocacy support for international artists who have experienced restrictions on their free expression. AFI provided support for the GOH Productions visa petition for Alaa Shehada. For information on how to donate or get involved, contact AFI at: info@artisticfreedominitiative.org



**TROUPE
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**ARTISTIC
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Part of Under The Radar, the annual festival of experimental theater.

Under the Radar is the United States' premier festival of experimental theater and performance art. As a long-time New York City-based platform for cutting-edge work hailing from around the globe. Produced by ArKtype with Festival Director Mark Russell, UTR has been reimagined in its 20th annual season as a city-wide celebration that incisively speaks to our moment. Rather than being tied to a single host institution, Under the Radar's current iteration is curated collaboratively with an array of renowned arts organizations and curators, each harnessing the connective nature of the festival format to introduce some of the world's most innovative multidisciplinary voices to wider audiences. The 2025 edition of UTR will include over 33 distinct programs at 24 theater spaces, presenting more than 250 performances in only 16 days from January 4 to 19. The depth, breadth and excellence of this year's festival serves as proof that collaboration can power the American theater through this era of existential crisis into a reinvigorated future of conjoined artists ready to embrace diversity, challenge and reinvention.

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A full program with information on this production can be found on the *The Horse of Jenin* page of the La MaMa website.

In addition you can scan the QR code Poster located in the theatre lobby for access to the digital program.



LA MAMA



RESTORE A BUILDING REMAKE A WORLD



Rendering: 74 East 4th St.

La MaMa's historic, landmark building at 74 East 4th Street underwent an urgently needed complete renovation and restoration to preserve the historic façade, create building-wide ADA accessibility, and provide much needed performance, exhibition and community space for decades to come.

La MaMa, founded by Ellen Stewart in 1961, has been on east 4th Street since 1967. La MaMa embraces every person in its community and is legendary as the place where new artists of all nations, cultures, races, and identities are given opportunities. It is the place where art begins.

To learn more about the renovation, or to make a donation please visit www.lamama.org/remakeaworld

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Ellen Stewart Theatre

The Horse of Jenin
Jan 9-12, 2025
The Club

The Things Around Us
Jan 9-12, 2025
The Downstairs

In a Grove
Jan 16-19, 2025
Ellen Stewart Theatre

The Mulberry Tree
Jan 16-19, 2024
The Club

Seagull Fu*ker
Jan 17 - 19, 2025
The Downstairs

COMING SOON

Building My Casa
Jan 23-Feb 2, 2025
The Downstairs

H.T. Chen & Dancers
Jan 24- 26, 2025
Ellen Stewart Theatre

La MaMa Kids:
The Great Zodiac Animal Race
Feb 1-2, 2025
Community Arts Space

Had Enuf of the Blues: Cabaret on the Verge
Feb 6-9, 2025
The Club

No Resevation
Feb 6-23, 2025
The Downstairs

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Feb 14- March 2, 2025
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