

Crowded Fire Theater

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Crowded Fire Theater presents Jonas Hassen Khemiri's
I CALL MY BROTHERS
A kaleidoscopic perspective of a Muslim American's Experience

March 31-April 23, 2016
at the THICK HOUSE
1695 18th St, San Francisco

San Francisco - Crowded Fire Theater (CFT) Continuing Crowded Fire's 2016 mainstage season is the West Coast premiere of award-winning Tunisian-Swedish novelist and playwright Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *I CALL MY BROTHERS*. Translated into English by Rachel Willson-Broyles and directed by Evren Odcikin, *I CALL MY BROTHERS* is a funny and fierce showdown with paranoia that takes us on an intense 24-hour journey inside one young man's head in the aftermath of a terrorist attack in a major American city. The four-person ensemble features Bay Area talent: Shoresh Alaudini, Denmo Ibrahim, Olivia Rosaldo, and Mohammad Shehata.

Jonas Hassen Khemiri is one of the most important writers of his generation in Sweden beginning with his 2003 award-winning debut novel, *One Eye Red*. His subsequent novels have been met with international critical acclaim, and in 2015 he was awarded Sweden's highest literary prize, The August Award for his most recent novel *Everything I Don't Remember*. He is also a celebrated playwright, whose six plays have been performed by over fifty international companies on stages from Stockholm to Berlin to New York to London. He was awarded a 2011 Village Voice Obie Award for the New York production of *INVASION!*, his first play. In 2013, Khemiri's open letter to the Swedish Minister of Justice in response to a controversial Swedish racial profiling police project became one of the most shared articles on social media in Swedish history, was published in newspapers around the world, including in [The New York Times](#).

Like much of Khemiri's work, *I CALL MY BROTHERS* investigates the insidious nature of racial profiling and what happens when the lines between reality and fantasy, as well as criminal and victim, are increasingly blurred. How does one act 'normal' when

nothing is normal anymore? Written in response to the 2010 Stockholm suicide bombing, Crowded Fire had selected the piece prior to the 2015 attacks in Paris, Baghdad, and Beirut *“The theme of internalizing the Western gaze is what first drew me to this piece,”* says Artistic Director Mina Morita. *“Then our season announcement fell the day after the Paris attacks last November. It became clear in the moments of discord, hate, and confusion following that carnage, how deeply relevant this work remains. And now, in the wake of the recent attacks in Turkey and Belgium, I am reminded how art gives us a chance to examine the beauty of our humanity even in times of darkness. There are ways through the menace of hate. Let’s reflect on what is happening in our world by coming together and talking about it through art.”*

Evren Odcikin returns to Crowded Fire to direct I CALL MY BROTHERS. This marks the second Odcikin-Khemiri collaboration following the highly successful production of INVASION! with Crowded Fire in 2012. Odcikin said: *“I am always thrilled to get a chance to work on a Khemiri play. His writing is artistically challenging, giving a great deal of leeway to his collaborators, and asking us to balance comedy and tragedy in a unique and modern way. As a Muslim-American artist, it’s satisfying to find a complex and accurate reflection of my thoughts and feelings, especially as American mainstream rhetoric becomes more xenophobic around Islam every day. I’m looking forward to unpacking and challenging the immigrant insider/outsider narratives in this production.”* Designers include Adeline Smith (scenic), Beth Hersh (lighting), Michelle Mullholland (costume), Sara Huddleston (sound), and Devon LaBelle (props). I CALL MY BROTHERS runs March 31 through April 23 (press opening Monday, April 4).

BIOS

Jonas Hassen Khemiri (playwright), born in Sweden in 1978, is the author of three novels and six plays. His first novel, One Eye Red, received the Borås Tidning award for best literary debut. His second novel, Montecore, (published by Knopf in 2011) won several literary awards including the Swedish Radio Award for best novel of the year. Khemiri’s work has been translated into more than fifteen languages and his plays have been performed by over 40 international companies. In 2011, Invasion! received its US premiere in New York and Khemiri was awarded a Village Voice Obie Award for playwriting. In 2015, Khemiri received Sweden’s illustrious August Prize for his most recent novel *All I Don’t Remember*.

Literary awards include: Borås Prize for best Swedish Literary Debut (2004); Per Olov Enquist Prize for young authors facing the future (2006); VI Magazine Literary Prize (2006); Colombine scholarship (2006); Tidningen CITY’s literary award (2006); Swedish

Radio's Novel Prize (2006); The Bellman Award (2007); Swedish Radio's Prize for best Swedish Short Story (2008); Shortlisted for the August Prize (2006); HEDDA Award for best play (Norway, 2010); John Fante Literary Prize (Italy, 2010); OBIE Award for playwriting (US, 2011); Ibsen Prize (Norway, 2011); Henning Mankell scholarship (2011).

International residencies include: Ledig House, Hudson, New York (2004); International Residency for Emerging Playwrights at Royal Court, London (2006); Berliner Künstlerprogramm, DAAD, Berlin (2009); Ledig House, Hudson, New York (2011).

EVREN ODCIKIN (director) is a San Francisco-based new play director and the Director of New Plays and Marketing at Golden Thread Productions. Credits include West Coast premieres of Yussef El Guindi's LANGUAGE ROOMS (in San Francisco and Los Angeles, *Los Angeles Times* critic's pick) and Mona Mansour's URGE FOR GOING (Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle nomination for best new play) for Golden Thread; the world premiere of Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig's *410[GONE]* (*American Theatre Magazine* Production Notebook feature) and the West Coast premiere of Jonas Hassen Khemiri's INVASION! for Crowded Fire; the world premiere of Christopher Chen's MUTT for Impact Theatre and Ferocious Lotus (Top 10 Plays of 2014, *Theater Dogs*); his adaptation of Plautus's THE BRAGGART SOLDIER for Custom Made (TBA Awards Recommended, four BATCC nominations, including best director); THE OLDEST PROFESSION (two BATCC nominations) and MACHINAL (three BATCC nominations, including best director) for Brava!; and RHINO for Boxcar ("Most Inventive Staging of 2010" from *SF Weekly*, "Best Play of 2010" from *SF Bay Times*). He has developed plays at South Coast Rep, the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, the Lark Play Development Center, National New Plays Network Showcase, Magic Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, and Bay Area Playwrights Festival with such writers as Kevin Artigue, Eugenie Chan, Prince Gomolvilas, David Jacobi, Michael Lew, Mona Mansour, Nick Nanna Mwaluko, and Torange Yeghiazarian. Born and raised in Turkey and a graduate of Princeton University, Evren is a 2015 National Directors Fellow for the O'Neill, NNPN, the Kennedy Center, and SDCF. Evren was selected as an Emerging Theatre Leader by Theatre Communications Group for the American Express Leadership Bootcamp with Golden Thread Productions Founding Artistic Director Torange Yeghiazarian as his mentor. He is also the recipient of a 2013 TITAN Award for Directors from Theatre Bay Area. odcikin.com

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For Calendar Editors:

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translated by Rachel Willson-Broyles
directed by Evren Odcikin

A funny and fierce showdown with paranoia

March 31-April 23 (Press Opening April 4)

Thick House, 1695 18th St., SF

PERFORMANCES:

Wed-Saturdays 8 PM with Special Opening Night Performances on Mondays, 8PM

Tickets: Prices range from \$10-\$35 progressively during the course of the run.

We offer Pay-What-You-Can Preview performances and student/senior/group rates.

Tickets: Visit www.crowdedfire.org for more information and to purchase tickets.

Box Office by phone (415) 523-0034 ext 1

www.crowdedfire.org or (415) 523-0034 ext 0