

Asian Arts & Culture Program Series



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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WHAT: *Our Shadows* : Egyptian Puppet Theater Family Event

**WHEN: Sunday, May 6, 2007
4:00 PM Matinee**

**WHERE: Bowker Auditorium
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA**

"We, each and every one of us, cast a shadow. Can you tell by looking at that shadow who is Egyptian and who is American?"

So asks Nabil Bahgat, founder of WAMDAH (pronounced wum-duh), an ensemble of young Egyptian theatre artists who have dedicated themselves to reviving (and re-imagining) a once-popular form of street puppetry.

On Sunday, May 6 at 4pm the UMass Bowker Auditorium will host a very special performance of "Our Shadows: An Egyptian American Puppet Theater". Co-presented by the University of Massachusetts Fine Arts Center Asian Arts & Culture Program and Center Series, this will be the only New England appearance before the group's Egyptian tour.

A collaboration of WamDah artists and Pennsylvania's Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, "Our Shadows" is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Access to Artistic Excellence 2007 Grant Award. Featuring shadow and hand puppets, the traditional art form used in "Our Shadows" is almost extinct in its Egyptian homeland. The bilingual work includes not only puppetry but storytelling theatre as well. Using a colorful Bedouin tent-inspired set and decorated with multifaceted faynouz (lanterns), the performance evokes a

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traditional village moulid (festival). Our Shadows features khayyal al zill (shadow puppetry), music, stick-dancing, tannura dances from rural Upper Egypt, storytelling about Egyptian folk heroes Ali Zaybak ("Ali Quicksilver," the Egyptian "Robin Hood"), Goha (the "Wise Fool" of the fellaheen, the farmer folk), and Aragoz (the rascalion puppet) and up-to-the-minute commentary on the world we share. "Our Shadows", performed in Arabic and English, is perfect family entertainment.

Don't miss this truly unique and rare multicultural collaboration! Tickets (\$10 for adults and \$5 for students age 12 and under) are available by calling 545-2511 or 1-800-999-UMAS or online at www.fineartscenter.com.

Co-sponsored by the Asian Arts & Culture Program and Center Series.

For more information about all the events and high resolution photos visit our website at: www.fineartscenter.com or call the AACP office: (413) 577-2486.

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