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**University of Virginia Department of Drama  
To Present Heather Raffo's *9 Parts of Desire***

**OPENS MARCH 25TH IN THE HELMS THEATER**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – March 13, 2015 – The University of Virginia's Department of Drama presents Heather Raffo's acclaimed Off-Broadway play, *9 Parts of Desire*, which will run March 25 through March 29 with 8:00 p.m. performances March 25-28 and 2:00 p.m. matinees on March 28 and 29. The show will be performed in the Helms Theater located in the U.Va. Drama Building. The playwright, Heather Raffo, will be in residency at the university during the week of performances and will participate in a talk-back with audience members after every show except for the Saturday matinee – when she will instead be participating in an hour-long panel discussion, "Staging Trauma," directly following that afternoon performance.

*9 Parts of Desire* dives into the world of nine Iraqi and Iraqi-American women and spans the time between the first and second Gulf Wars and occupation. Director Kate Burke describes the play as "a series of snapshots" of different Iraqi women in different walks of life – each with their own desires and struggles, each with their own story to tell. Burke says that these women "have great freedoms and yet they are greatly bound by their daily existences; we shouldn't be tempted to see them as victims or to think that they are suffering because they are not enjoying an American life." The play deals deeply with cross-cultural themes of longing, womanhood, and identity; it asks audience members to open their ears and hearts to the powerful storytelling of these colorful women and to reconsider the way one might view what it means to be an Iraqi woman.

On creating *9 Parts of Desire*, Raffo states: "I intended to write a piece about the Iraqi psyche, something that would inform and enlighten the images we see on T.V. However, the play is equally about the American psyche. It is a dialogue between east and west... I wanted the audience to see these women not as the 'other' but much more like themselves than they would have initially thought."

**Heather Raffo Residency**

The Department of Drama is privileged to have playwright and actor Heather Raffo in residency March 23 – 29, 2015. Ms. Raffo is the solo performer and writer of the Off Broadway hit *9 Parts of Desire*. For her creation and performance of *9 Parts* and its national and international tour,

she garnered many awards including the Lucille Lortel Award and the prestigious Susan Smith Blackburn and Marian Seldes-Garson Kanin playwriting awards.

Following each performance at U.Va. except for the Saturday matinee, Ms. Raffo will participate in a 20-minute talk back with our audiences. She will be part of an hour-long panel discussion, "Staging Trauma," following the Saturday, March 28 2:00pm matinee. Joining Ms. Raffo on the panel will be Hanadi Al-Samman, Associate Professor, U.Va. Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures; Kate Burke, Associate Professor, Voice, Text and Acting, U.Va. Department of Drama; Hanan Hameed, Founder of Hoos for Refugees; and moderator, Colleen Kelly, Associate Professor and Director of the M.F.A Acting Program, U.Va. Department of Drama. In addition to her discussions of her work with our audiences during her week-long residency, she will be working in the classroom with our undergraduate and graduate students in playwriting, directing, and acting classes.

Ticket prices for *9 Parts of Desire* are \$14 for adults, \$12 for seniors, U.Va. faculty/staff and alumni association members, and \$8 for students. Full-time U.Va. students may receive one free ticket if reserved at least 24 hours in advance of their desired show date. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu](http://www.artsboxoffice.virginia.edu) or by calling 434-924-3376. Tickets can also be purchased in person at the U.Va. Arts Box Office which is located in the lobby of the Drama Education Building, open Monday through Friday from noon until 5:00 p.m.

Free parking for all U.Va. Drama performances and events is available at the Culbreth Road Parking Garage, conveniently located alongside the Drama Building.

For more information on the 2014-2015 U.Va. Department of Drama season, visit us online at [www.drama.virginia.edu](http://www.drama.virginia.edu).