

## Sara Abou Rashed's *A Map of Myself*

*Debuting in Columbus, Ohio, Fall 2018*

*“Sara Abou Rashed is a powerful voice, an inspiration.”*

—Marian Wright Edelman, President, The Children's Defense Fund

Sara Abou Rashed is one of the most exciting young voices in America. This fall Larry Smith, creator of the Six-Word Memoir project and *Six In the City: Columbus*, directs Sara in her first full-length theatrical production, *A Map of Myself: A 60-Minute, One-Woman Revolution on War, Immigration, Language, Home, History, and Everything in Between*.

### ***Fall, 2018 performances***

- *October 3, 7pm, Denison University's Herrick Performance Hall*
- *October 20, 7pm, Lincoln Theatre*
- *November 7 & 10, 2pm, Columbus Museum of Art (the November 7 show is free as part of its Wednesdays @2 series))*

In a 60-minute performance that combines acting, classic storytelling in the tradition of Spalding Gray, and dynamic spoken-word poetry, Sara recounts her journey from war-torn Damascus, Syria to welcoming Columbus, Ohio. The daughter of Syrian-born parents and the granddaughter of Palestinian-born grandparents, Sara early on grew up with the fascination of



“belonging.” In Syria, Sara’s family lived in an area designated for descendants of Palestinian refugees. Although Sara and her parents were born and spent their entire lives in Syria, they were never given citizenship in either Syria or Palestine. Her confusion over her homeland and the immigration she experienced to escape the Syrian civil war unleashed her creativity at a young age. In her poetry and her prose, Sara addresses issues of identity, diaspora, politics, war, and what it means to find “home.”

In 2013, Sara was the new kid at school in Columbus, Ohio—a 13-year-old girl who spoke no English. She learned the language by translating every word of her textbooks, most notably *The Odyssey*. Within months, she was writing poetry in English and performing on stages across Columbus, including headlining a “Six In the City” show at Shadowbox and giving a talk at TEDxColumbus.

*A Map of Myself* is Sara's way of exploring the outer world of displacement and her inner reflections on identity, as she offers a humane understanding of the immigrant experience. Ultimately, in *A Map of Myself*, Sara asks the most singular and yet universal of questions of us all: How does where we come from shape who we are? And what does it mean to find "home"?

*"For some this show will be a window; for others a mirror."*

—Stella Villalba, educator

### **About Sara Abou Rashed**

Called "an inspiration" by Children's Defense Fund President Marian Wright Edelman, at the age of 8, Sara Abou Rashed wrote her first poem in Arabic and has been writing since. Born and raised in Damascus, Syria, in 2013, she moved with her family to Columbus, Ohio to escape the war. In 2015, just two years after learning English, Sara won the Ohio Poetry Association High School Contest. Sara is the 2015 Columbus District Poetry Slam Champion and the 2016 1st runner up. Her art and poetry have won several contests and have appeared in several books and magazines including: *Clover*, *Common Threads*, *The Voice of Youth Advocates*, *Celebrating Art*, and the *America Library of Poetry*. At the age of 16, Sara gave a TEDxTalk and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She was awarded the 2016 Denison Book Award, and is currently a sophomore at Denison University, where is pursuing International Studies and Narrative Nonfiction. Now 19, Sara is an "Arts Make Columbus" artist.

### **About Larry Smith**

Called on "a quest to spark the creativity of aspiring writers" by *Oprah Magazine*, Larry Smith is the creator of Six-Word Memoir® project, and editor of 11 books of true, personal storytelling. Larry has produced and directed more than 70 live storytelling shows, and has spoken on the power of personal storytelling in conferences, schools, and inside companies around the world. His most recent book is *Six Words Fresh Off the Boat: Stories of Immigration, Identity, and Coming to America*, a collaboration with the ABC television show, *Fresh Off the Boat*. He is an "Arts Makes Columbus" artist, who lives with his wife, Piper Kerman, and their son in the Short North.

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