



Abir Kopty



Hagit Ra'anan



Wejdan Jaber

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WHAT**

The Santa Fe Art Institute’s Visiting Artist Lecture and Workshop Series, “Comfortzone” presents

**The Jerusalem Woman Speak Tour**

**WHEN**

Tuesday, November 6

**WHERE**

Tipton Hall

**HOURS**

6 pm

**HOW MUCH**

Free Admission

The Jerusalem Women Speak tours were designed from the very beginning to bring the voices of women from the Jerusalem area and from the two national communities and three religious groups directly to Americans in their own home towns. Since the Jerusalem Women Speak project began, there have been 12 tours with 28 different women from Palestine and Israel. There have been more than 250 tour events and 300 media interviews and press conferences in hundreds of diverse communities across the United States. Tour participants bring a range of experience and knowledge in the everyday work of peacemaking. Their voices need to be heard and we provide them with the forums and the media coverage necessary to reach the maximum number of people.

The speakers for Santa Fe are:

**Wejdan Jaber (Age 39)**

A Muslim Palestinian from Gaza, Ms. Jaber was awarded a USAID “Clinton Scholarship,” in 2000 and in 2002 a Master’s in Public Administration and International Management from the Monterey Institute for International Studies, Monterey, California. During the 1948 war, Ms. Jaber’s parents, carrying her one-month-old brother, fled Al-Maghar village, leaving behind their two houses and farms where her ancestors had lived for generations. They were sheltered in UNRWA’s Al Buraij refugee camp (south of Gaza City) until the war in 1967, when they moved to Gaza City in search of a safer place to live. Ms. Jaber underwent five operations during childhood to correct her hips, which had dislocated at birth. Her experience of growing up with a disability, she says, helped her recognize that, as she needed help, she was also able to help others. She volunteered with the General Union of Disabled Palestinians and in 1998 became a board member of this organization. During the past two years, Ms. Jaber worked as an Academic Counselor on the USAID Presidential Scholarship Program for the Academy for Educational Development (AED).† She was formerly employed in the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Gaza, and the UN Special Coordinator’s Office (UNSCO). Ms. Jaber currently lives in Ramallah, where she serves on the board of Filastiniyat, an organization which advocates for the greater inclusion of women and youth in all aspects of Palestinian society through media and political monitoring programs. As a human rights and women’s rights activist she believes that all human beings are equal and have the right to live their lives in peace and with dignity.



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**Abir Kopty (Age 32)**

A Christian Palestinian citizen of Israel, Ms. Kopty was nominated as one of twelve "People of the Year" in Israel in 2005. She was the first Arab woman participant in a prime time socio-political reality TV show, "Leader Required," on Israel's Commercial Channel 2. Ms. Kopty, formerly the Media Coordinator and Spokeswoman for Mossawa, the Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel, Haifa, has been a commentator on various Israeli TV and radio programs and a columnist for "Ynet," an Israeli online news website. A British Council "Chevening Scholar," Ms. Kopty recently finished a Master's in Political Communication from the City University of London and now plans to earn a doctoral degree in film production. She was born and raised in the city of Nazareth where her family has lived for generations. Since the creation of the state of Israel, members of the Arab community in Israel have been treated as second-class citizens and denied national minority status. Ms. Kopty is active in several political movements and social change organizations focused on feminism, human rights, and Arab-Jewish relations. She is involved in the struggle to end the occupation, the fight to gain full and equal rights for Arab citizens in Israel, and the women's liberation movement, particularly focusing on Arab women's status in Israel. She approaches activism with the belief that a lasting peace will be achieved only when political, moral, social and economic justice are secured for all people in Israel and the Occupied†Palestinian Territories, and when all walls dividing them both physical and psychological - are removed.

**Hagit Ra'anan (Age 57)**

A Jewish Israeli born in Tel Aviv, Ms. Ra'anan now lives in Kiryat Ono, a city in the Tel Aviv district. Her grandparents, Zionists from Lithuania (Poland at that time) and the Ukraine, left for Palestine in the 1920's, fearing that Europe was on the verge of a catastrophe. Her grandfather's sister chose to remain in Poland and perished in the Holocaust. Both Ms. Ra'nan's parents were members of the Jewish underground movement to end the British Mandate and create the State of Israel in the late 1940's. At age 18, she completed her compulsory military service in the Gaza Strip. During the first week of the war in Lebanon in 1982, Ms. Ra'anan's husband was killed in combat near Beirut while serving with the Israeli military. For the last seven years, she has been a member of the Bereaved Families Forum, an organization that brings together bereaved Palestinians and Israelis to promote reconciliation and a political solution that will put an end to violence and further bereavement. Ms. Ra'anan is the founder of Bridges of Peace, an organization which works on many projects, including visiting children and adults in Israeli hospitals, visiting Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, and coordinating permits for Palestinians to enter Israel. She also works with children in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim schools within Israel to help create a culture of peace and build bridges between these three communities, now largely separate and isolated from one another. Ms. Ra'anan, a spiritual healer, believes that dialogue and compassionate listening are necessary first steps toward the healing that must take place between Palestinians and Israelis.

Under the theme "Comfort Zone" SFAI brings to Santa Fe an outstanding group of artists and writers whose practice focuses on the role of the arts in activism: social, cultural, and environmental. For more information please visit SFAI's website at [www.sfai.org](http://www.sfai.org) or call 505 424-5050.

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