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### KST PRESENTS: Hind Benali/Fleur D’Orange reveals complexities of Moroccan life in new work **IDENTITY** at The Alloy Studios

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#### *KSTmoves Fall 2014 Dance*

PITTSBURGH PREMIERE — Moroccan-based choreographer and dancer **Hind Benali** explores her personal past and African roots while addressing the culture, history, and gender politics of Morocco in her new work **IDENTITY** at 8 p.m. on Friday, October 10 and Saturday, October 11 at The Alloy Studios. A post-show discussion follows the Friday night performance. *IDENTITY* is the second presentation in the KSTmoves series this fall.

A native of Casablanca, Hind Benali is a performer, choreographer, dance teacher, and the artistic director of her contemporary dance company **Fleur d’Orange**. Benali began classic ballet training at the age of six and later studied at Ballet Theater Zinoun in Casablanca and at Choreographic National Center of Montpellier in France.

Benali and Fleur d’Orange perform the new work as part of a tour with Center Stage, an initiative of the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The exchange program creates cultural connections between American and international communities through the performing arts.

Benali invites several artists to collaborate with her on *IDENTITY*, including Moroccan-based hip hop dancer, Soufiane Karim who performs and helped create the piece. Lyrical calligraphy by Moroccan artist Yacine Fadhil will be projected on the stage and dancers. The piece’s soundscape is composed of live and recorded music by multi-instrumentalist Mohcine Imrharn, interwoven with found sounds.

Layering these sounds and striking imagery with dramatic movements, *IDENTITY* retraces Benali’s origins, experiences, and the obstacles she faces. Inspired by the interactions with other artists and the women that influenced her, Benali hopes to encourage cultural exchange and participation. The project pushes the boundaries between Morocco’s traditional and contemporary culture and creates an intimate space to examine the complexities, stereotypes, and paradoxes of her identity.

“As a theater rooted in East Liberty — one of Pittsburgh’s most diverse neighborhoods — we are proud to showcase international talent,” says Janera Solomon, executive director of KST. “Our programs examine the questions that define and inspire us as individuals and communities. We hope Benali’s new work sparks conversations about art and social change.”

In the past six years, KST has demonstrated its ability to bring the world to Pittsburgh. The KST stage has hosted productions from more than 11 countries and a multitude of American projects with interna-



Photo © Alice Dufour-Feronce





tional themes and connections.

Join us for a pre-show mixer both nights at 7 p.m.

**PLEASE BE ADVISED: NO LATE SEATING FOR THIS EVENT**

*Part of KST's World Stage international performance series. Made possible by the generous support of the Benter Foundation.*

*The presentation of Fleur d'Orange is part of Center Stage, an initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, produced by the New England Foundation for the Arts in cooperation with the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations, with additional support from the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation and the Asian Cultural Council. General Management for Center Stage is provided by Lisa Booth Management, Inc.*

### **Master Class with Hind Benali - Contemporary Dance and the Traditional Lens**

Thursday, October 9, 10–11:30 AM :: The Alloy Studios :: \$5

Join Moroccan dance makers Hind Benali and Soufiane Karim for a class that focuses on the incorporation of traditional motifs and structures as a means to developing a bold and articulate personal kinetic vocabulary.

Class is limited to 20 students. Registration is required. A free lunch for all participants follows from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Register online at [kelly-strayhorn.org](http://kelly-strayhorn.org)

### **About the Kelly Strayhorn Theater**

As the last of nine theaters from the 1950s heyday of East Liberty, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater uses the arts as a catalyst for continuing community revitalization. The theater, in its 12th season, continues to play a key role in the transformation of Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood. An intimate, professionally equipped, 349-seat multiple-use performance venue, the theater demonstrates its commitment to Pittsburgh artists and audiences. The KST is a favorite venue of emerging local artists, regional artists and arts organizations who take risks and present new work. Noted Pittsburghers Gene Kelly and Billy Strayhorn, the namesakes, are among the 80 area artists honored on the theater's Gallery of Stars. The building, opening in 1914, is the former Regent Theatre, which served the East End as a movie house for eight decades.

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