



## **Arab & Israeli Women in Film & TV Unite for an Unprecedented Evening, Proving That Art Can Transcend Religion and Politics, at 'Stand Up 4 Her' Event, LA Post-Event Press Release.**

**LOS ANGELES** - (December 2, 2019), **Women Creating Change's (WCC)** Founder Lee Broda, along with members of her founding team Inbal-Rotem Sagiv, Natasha Kermani, Shelly Skandrani, Natalie Marciano, Reem Edan, Eliya Reis, Micky Levy and Reem Kadem as well as dozens of other WCC members, presented an awe-inspiring event, which featured powerful performances by renowned female comedians, poets, storytellers, artists, performers, and musicians from Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Morocco, Palestine, and Israel.

The sold-out, star-studded event, with patrons such as Yael Grobglas (*Jane the Virgin*), Alon Aboutboul (*The Dark Knight Rises*), and Sarah Idan (*Miss Universe, Iraq 2017*) had the audience laughing, crying and cheering.

The evening began with authentic Middle Eastern hors d'oeuvres and a hosted cocktail reception, sponsored by Stella Artois, Dulce Vida and Kyla Kombucha. Guests mingled and took pictures on the red carpet, then enjoyed the stunning art exhibition, featuring original artwork by Fadia Afashe (Syria), Pooneh Rafsha (Iran), Tasneem Rahman (Pakistan) and Ilanit Maghen (Israel), curated by Lauren Annette Schoth.

Lee Broda opened the show with a moving introduction of the WCC's mission - to bring together women of different beliefs, religions and political views from the Middle East. "We seek to inspire change and bridge cultural divides, we believe that together we are stronger because our similarities are greater than our differences" - Lee Broda.

"Stand Up 4 Her" kicked off with Muslim-Iraqi Comedian Reem Edan and Jewish-Israeli actress Gal Macadar "arguing" over who would serve as host. "Let's settle this like men. Meet me outside in five," Edan said. "Or we can settle this like women and talk about it," replied Macadar. (The women decided to co-host.)

The show featured outstanding comedians Crystal Marie Denha, Melissa Shoshahi, Noam Shuster, Nina Kharoufeh, Natalie Marciano, Zain Shami and Mona Shaikh, who shared saucy insights into being a modern Middle Eastern woman, revealing through humor that they all share the same plights.

Crystal Marie Denha made the audience blush with her jokes about sexuality, Natalie Marciano had them ululating loudly saying "if Gwyneth Paltrow doesn't know what it is, it must be some messed up shit!", "I see you undressing me with your eyes," says hijab-wearing Zain Shami, "do you want to make me your second wife?"

To balance out the evening, poets and storytellers entered the stage with emotionally provoking performances, reading original and borrowed work.

Nawal Bengholam read a poem by Salma El-Wardany, Lee Broda shared her poem *The Vow*, from her poetry book “Whispers from the Moon”, “I promise to honor the woman in me... water her with light, feed her kindness, kiss her scars, bathe her with love.” Shelly Skandrani performed her poem *Social Reconditioning*, “Too busy convincing me that I don’t know my own desires, and the world admires your strength and conviction. My smile and submission.”

Inbar Lavi (*Lucifer*) spoke of how women create the feeling of home, and what connects the WCC members is that they’ve left their homes behind and built new ones in Los Angeles. Storyteller Ayser Salman shared moments about her childhood as an immigrant from her book “The Wrong End of the Table: A Mostly Comic Memoir of a Muslim Arab American Woman Just Trying to Fit in”.

Guests also enjoyed a special musical performance by Inbar Starr, and beats from DJ Karina Kay.

The event was wrapped up with a dessert reception hosted by The Baklava Factory and Mamilla Restaurant, and the VIP guests even received gift bags with Converse Shoes and other goodies.

All proceeds raised from the evening will benefit WCC programs for female filmmakers. WCC is fiscally sponsored by the organization Women’s Voices Now. The event was held in partnership with **Saddle Ranch Pictures, Tunnel Post, LB Entertainment, Tal Orion Conceptual Events**, Women In Film, Alliance of Women Directors, New Filmmakers LA, Film Fatales and Women In Media.

“Women Creating Change was founded by female filmmakers and artists from across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)” - stated WCC Founder, Lee Broda. “I was excited to help celebrate these talented female storytellers at this year’s event, Stand Up 4 Her, as we continue to strive to create a space for peaceful co-existence and honest substantive dialogue around today’s issues.”

In a time when women are fighting for or against something, and rightly so, it is refreshing to come together for an evening and celebrate each other.

Attendees revelled in the evening’s ambitious program. WCC Executive Director, Inbal-Rotem Sagiv, concluded: “Stand Up 4 Her has truly been a culmination of our efforts to shine a spotlight on talented yet often marginalized artists. This evening’s success is a significant win for WCC, and it’s only the beginning!”

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#### About Women Creating Change

Women Creating Change (WCC) is an organization that envisions an empowered and diverse female community, rooted in creative collaborative dialogue with the mission to advance and unite women in Film and TV from the Middle East and North Africa. [www.womencreatingchange.com](http://www.womencreatingchange.com)

#### **Link to pictures from Stand Up 4 Her event:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6c0c7cjleh5nodj/AACsWvFkzyfoz64bygtL2kJBa?dl=0>