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FORMERLY INCARCERATED BLACK MOTHERS PERFORM AT THE KENNEDY CENTER IN EXPRESSION OF BLACK-PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY

Washington, D.C – The GildaPapoose Collective is honored to join The Kennedy Center’s 17th Annual Page-to-Stage festival on Sept. 3rd at 7:30pm with a staged reading of "There Is A Field." This performance will be led by four DC Black mothers who were bailed out of jail by the GildaPapoose Collective as part of the national Black Mama’s Bail Out initiative.

This performance comes out of a year-long community effort to raise funds with staged readings of “There Is A Field” across D.C. Following the bail out of six local mothers, several of those women have joined the GildaPapoose Collective’s theater fellowship, which uses performance-based education to highlight the impacts of racism, state violence, and mass incarceration on Palestinian and Black communities.

“There Is A Field,” tells the story of a 17-year old Palestinian boy and citizen of Israel named Aseel Asleh, who was shot point blank by Israeli police during a protest. The play’s writer Jen Marlowe says, “Through the process of writing the play, I began to understand the deep connections between Aseel’s story as a Palestinian child killed by Israeli police and the state violence that plays out on Black and Brown bodies in the U.S.”

Using the Black Mama’s Bail Out to highlight these parallels, “There Is A Field” director and GildaPapoose Collective founder Je Naé Taylor emphasizes the significance of rooting the play locally. “In D.C. alone, Terrence Sterling, Alonzo Smith, Javon Hall, Bobby Gross, Raphael Briscoe, Mariam Carey, Relisha Rudd, and so many more lives have been stolen from us by police violence,” says Taylor. “The play talks about Palestine, but the injustices don't look so different from here at home.”

As a concrete example of solidarity in action, the upcoming performance at the Kennedy Center will demonstrate the power of storytelling as a means of direct support. With pride, Aseel Asleh’s family stated, “There is no greater gift to us as a family and to Aseel’s memory than the Black-Palestinian solidarity work happening around ‘There Is A Field.’ Aseel always fought for Palestinian freedom, and we are happy to see his fight is continuing to expand people's ideas of freedom.”
GildaPapoose Collective is a DC-based direct action and arts collective that seeks black liberation through the abolishment of prisons, police and all forms of detention through intersections of Black girlhood/Black creation through visual and performative storytelling.

Performance stills from “There is a Field” staged reading on February 1, 2018, in NW DC.
Photos taken by Alli Jarrar