



2019-2020
ANNUAL
REPORT



**Arab American
National Museum**

ABOUT AANM



Since opening its doors in 2005, the Arab American National Museum (AANM) remains the nation's only cultural institution that documents, preserves and presents the history, culture and contributions of Arab Americans. Located in Dearborn, Michigan, amid one of the largest concentrations of Arab Americans in the United States, AANM presents original exhibitions, cutting-edge art, film screenings and performances in Michigan and in major cities across the U.S., and continually documents the history and experiences of Arab Americans.

AANM is one of just six Michigan Affiliates of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. AANM is a founding member of the Detroit area arts collective CultureSource as well as the Immigration and Civil Rights Network of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and the Michigan Alliance for Cultural Accessibility, and is a member of the National Performance Network. AANM is an institution of ACCESS, the largest Arab American community nonprofit in the nation, founded in 1971.



Smithsonian Affiliate



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OCT. 1, 2019 – SEPT. 30, 2020

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* The late Irene Hirano passed away in April 2020.

FROM THE AANM DIRECTOR



Dear friends,

A little under a year ago, I wrote a letter to our supporters as part of an Arab American National Museum fundraising campaign. It was late April, and the Museum's outlook was grim as a financial crisis loomed amid a rapidly spreading pandemic. In that letter, I mentioned an Arabic saying that comes to my mind when I'm going through a particularly rough patch, and especially when things seem irreversibly dire. That saying is, *tafa'alu bil-khayr tajiduh*, which roughly translates as, "hope for good things and you will find them."

I've repeated that saying many times these past twelve months, whether in the mornings with hours of back-to-back Zoom meetings ahead of me or in the evenings after endlessly writing and rewriting grant applications. I would think of it when I entered the quiet and solemn AANM building, seeing the darkened exhibits that were once sparkling with the boundless energy of school children. I said it when we made difficult and impactful decisions, and when I walked past the offices of former colleagues. I thought of it as I read about scientists working to develop a COVID-19 vaccine while the death toll amounted, and as Black Lives Matter protests spread across the nation and the world.

The saying became this secular supplicant's prayer; each time I said it, my mind refocused on a future that I had to believe would be brighter, healthier, more just. And—eventually—it bore true. Good things were indeed found.

As you can see in the pages of this report, we slowly adjusted to the "new normal" we were thrust into, pivoting to exclusively online programs successfully, even though AANM had never attempted them before. We reached new national and international audiences. We partnered with Arab American cultural organizations nationwide and coproduced fantastic events, offering our audiences the emotional fulfillment that only the arts can give. AANM staff worked tirelessly all year with unwavering commitment to our mission, buoyed by supporters like you. And in the end, we received wonderfully good news: AANM was designated as one of America's Cultural Treasures by the Ford Foundation!

We must move forward while acknowledging the historical hardships of this past year, as well as celebrating the successes. We dare to hope that the lessons we have learned from both will carry us onward. I look forward to anticipating, with you, all the good things that are in store for the Arab American National Museum in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Diana Abouali

FROM THE NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR



Dear friends,

On December 31, 2020, I completed my final year as chair—and my 15th year as a member—of the National Advisory Board of the Arab American National Museum. Because of COVID-19, it was a difficult year for everyone concerned, but thanks to the steadfast leadership of the Museum and the dedication of its staff, the Museum adapted its practices and came through for the community.

In spite of the pandemic, the Museum's innovative practices transformed a situation of isolation to community. As we shut the doors of our galleries and moved into virtual rooms, I realized this institution's resilience is not only measured by overcoming obstacles but also in honoring these challenges as part of our story.

AANM continues to lead the way in uplifting the Arab American voice. In 2020, our virtual film screenings fostered a sense of camaraderie and the online open mics kept our spirits alive. We hosted several artists-in-residence who extended their talents past our circumstances' limitations with their beautiful work. This year we were also reminded of our institution's role in connecting the Arab American community to our allies. As discussions on racial inequity rose to the surface, the Museum honored its responsibility to listen to the Black community and host programming on accountability, education and race.

This year, my appreciation for AANM's community is heightened to an exceptional level. On behalf of the entire AANM Advisory Board, I would like to thank those who lifted the Museum through 2020 including our generous donors, Friends of the Arab American National Museum Committee and the inspiring Arab American community. I must also express my resounding gratitude to director Dr. Diana Abouali and the entire AANM staff for saving the Museum during COVID-19 with a quick pivot to virtual programming. To all of you, your generous service and our lovely memories together made my job fulfilling for many years.

My time at the Museum, especially this past year, has taught me that our community surpasses the physical walls of our institution. It is greater than that. It is our art, innovation, allyship and friendship. As I leave you in the capable hands of my successor, Leila Hilal, I am honored that you individually and together define for me my sense of a "true community."

Sincerely,

Fawwaz Ulaby

OCTOBER 2019

With various events and exhibitions planned, our fall season was in full swing by October. We welcomed visitors to engage with us through literary events with popular authors Susan Muaddi Darraj and Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha; we kicked off our SURA Arts Academy Fall semester; we partnered with the National Immigrant Integration Conference (NIIC) for a special Concert of Colors performance; and we continued to make the Museum more accessible to members of our community through My Turn: Sensory Friendly Sundays (an AANM experience designed for families affected by autism and other sensory-processing challenges). We were looking forward to the exciting events planned for the next few months as we headed into the new year.



Jeremy Dutcher

As an institution that stands on Anishinaabe land, AANM is committed to uplifting Indigenous artists and activists. So, in celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day, we were honored to present award-winning member of the Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick, Jeremy Dutcher, in live concert at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA). In addition to a beautiful performance, Dutcher was joined by AANM Curator of Public Programming Kathryn Grabowski for a scintillating talkback, addressing topics such as brutalities faced by Indigenous people, the importance of preserving all aspects of their culture and building stronger solidarity between communities.



Halloween Party

Celebrating Halloween in an educational and inclusive space with our community, we hosted 200 people at a merry-not-scary Halloween celebration featuring exhibit trick-or-treating, crafts, a story read aloud in English and Arabic, a costume contest and more.

On Exile

As part of our Fall/Winter Gallery Pop-Up Series, we featured artistic documentary film *On Exile* by Jose Carlos Teixeira, investigating the SWANA refugee experience, expanding on issues of migration, displacement and otherness, through interviews with newcomers who have settled in Cleveland, Ohio.



Reading Coffee/ Writing the Future

What does the future look like in 50 years? 100 years? 1,000 years? How will people host social gatherings in the future? What role will coffee play in those gatherings? Artist-in-residence Levon Kafafian helped attendees answer these questions and more through an informal salon-style workshop on the social and divinatory practices of reading fortunes in coffee grounds, a tradition common in SWANA (Southwest Asian/North African) cultures. The coffee grounds became a format for storytelling about the future. Through experimentation, imagination and plenty of caffeine, people generated writing prompts and shared stories imagining how our collective future will unfold.

NOVEMBER 2019

Alongside ACCESS, the Center for Arab American Philanthropy (CAAP) and the National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC), AANM was proud to co-host MOVE, the second convening of its kind bringing together over 400 Arab American artists, activists, philanthropists and their allies to discuss the most pressing issues facing our community. We were also excited to announce our JAM3A summer music and arts festival on the last day of the conference, building hype for the upcoming year. Later in the month, we also welcomed many members of the Arab American community to our Grand Gala, hosted by comedian and performer Chris Farah, where we successfully raised funds for underserved school districts to visit and tour the Museum.



MOVE

Throughout the conference, AANM presented exciting and memorable events, such as an opening night reception filled with food, music and dancing featuring a dance performance by Sheeba Entertainment, as well as the conference's signature event, a staged reading of Lameece Issaq and Jacob Kader's remarkable *Food and Fadwa*. AANM closed out MOVE on Saturday with our annual Arab American Book Awards and Open Mic, holding space for emerging and established writers to share their work.



Dancing Identities/ Defining Place:

How do our bodies carry and process ancestral embodied knowledge? In collaboration with Daring Dances, Minneapolis-based Leila Awadallah (along with performance partner Noelle Awadallah) and Detroit's own Audrey Johnson took audiences on a thought-provoking journey through identity, place and imagination, featuring incredible movement and multi-disciplinary elements as they attempted to answer this question. The artists' jaw-dropping dance performances explored the historic oppression of Black and Palestinian cultures as well as queer identity, entrancing and immersing attendees while creating a space for conversation, culminating in an informal talkback with the audience.



Once There Was and Once There Was Not

The opening line to the quintessential Armenian and Arabic folktale, artist-in-residence Levon Kafafian's exhibition, *Once There Was and Once There Was Not*, was an invitation into the speculative past, the incredibility of reality and the fantastic within the mundane. Featuring original woven tapestries and other textile works, an altar adorned with tokens and an inviting, interactive lounge area, the exhibition recreated pages from Kafafian's forthcoming graphic novel *Portal Fire*, and explored questions of cross-cultural coexistence, blurred boundaries and false borders.

DECEMBER 2019

As we were wrapping up 2019, we were preparing to celebrate 15 years as an institution with our anniversary year around the corner. While events were slowing down for the month, our planning did not. From a full residency cycle to a summer music festival, we were looking forward to the abundance of the new year. In the meantime, we hosted families for a Countdown to Christmas party featuring an exhibit scavenger hunt, seasonal crafts and more. We also welcomed Maya James as our last resident of the year. Lastly, we closed out the year with highlights from our object collections during 2019, including vintage Palestinian dolls crafted by refugees, home videos from the Khirby family, Olympian Jordyn Wieber's gymnastics leotard and more.



SURA Arts Academy Reception

In celebration of the amazing work created by SURA Arts Academy youth, AANM hosted a reception for students' families and friends where participants reflected on their experiences in the program and spoke about their approaches to the art of photography. We were honored to provide our creative youth with a platform to process their realities, discuss their work and uplift their artistic achievements. The photographs displayed during the reception remained on view in The Annex throughout the year.



Flesh Out

For our final Arab Film Series event of the year, we screened *Flesh Out*, a film that delves into themes of societal expectations, loyalty and obedience as they intersect with womanhood. Following the traditions of her Mauritanian home, Verida's arranged marriage brings with it the beginning of gavage, the ritual of over-eating to attain a fuller figure more desirable to her future husband. At first, she accepts the physical strain of gavage; but as the ritual's requirements become all-consuming, Verida begins to resist the intense expectations of both her mother and culture. The film was a visceral experience for the audience, followed by a critical conversation about the dangers of maintaining beauty standards.



Art Liberation: A Conversation with Maya James

Artist-in-residence Maya James, author and illustrator of upcoming graphic novel *LUKUMI*—a story that follows the relationships between Black women, their environment, their history, their ancestry and Afro-Atlantic faith—shared her experience as a working artist, speaking on how she retained her truth and identity while navigating art as a business. James addressed themes of resilience, Black power, feminism and intersectionality in this conversation on art for the next generation and the marginalized art community in Michigan and abroad.

JANUARY 2020

We entered the new year with excitement and a robust calendar of programming for our community, looking forward to an inaugural presentation of the JAM3A summer music festival and a new Artists + Residents cycle made possible by a generous award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. With support from the grant, AANM was to welcome a new artist each month throughout the year to live and create in Dearborn, starting with Moroccan American filmmaker Baraa Ktiri. Though news of the novel coronavirus was on the horizon, we began the year with high hopes.



The Art of Weeping

Living under occupation in Palestine is a reality best understood through a person's first-hand experiences. Through a series of drawings, Palestinian folk singer, writer and activist Mary Hazboun highlighted the multilayered traumas of women of color—including her own lived experiences—and their resistance against the intersection of oppressive systems in occupied Palestine such as the military machine, patriarchal society and forced migration.



Al Helm: Martin Luther King in Palestine

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream expands beyond the U.S. It speaks to a global struggle and demands social change in the universal march towards liberation. In honor of MLK Day, AANM partnered with the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History to screen *Al Helm*, a documentary following a Black gospel choir who provides the chorus to a Palestinian play about Dr. King as it tours the West Bank, preaching nonviolence. The audience had the opportunity to explore parallels between the U.S. Civil Rights movement and Palestinian liberation struggles, highlighting Black and Palestinian solidarity while emphasizing that no one is free unless we are all free.



For Covered Girls

Women who choose to wear hijab often find themselves in a position where their personal decisions become a topic of public discourse. Artist-in-residence Baraa Ktiri aimed to change that by hosting a filmed discussion with Muslim women and girls of all ages and backgrounds that gave them a seat at the table. Participants unpacked themes of patriarchy, misogyny, community and Islamophobia while centering their own complex, personal, professional and political relationships with hijab. This discussion will be included in Ktiri's documentary series, *For Covered Girls*, a larger work dedicated to showcasing the diverse practice of hijab while proving that Muslim women are not a monolith.

Photo courtesy of Robin Buckson, *The Detroit News*.

FEBRUARY 2020

This month, we focused on sharing our stories and giving a platform for others to share their own. Partnering with folks from our neighboring city of Cleveland, we welcomed Masrah Cleveland Al-Arabi's cast members into our Museum and community to tell their immigration stories through a powerful play that left not a dry eye in the house. With the help of artist-in-residence Alia Taqieddin, we expanded our oral history collection, accessible to the public at any time. We were also excited to feature the performance art piece *As Far As My Fingertips Will Take Me*, the last of our Fall/Winter Gallery Pop-Up Series.



As Far As My Fingertips Will Take Me

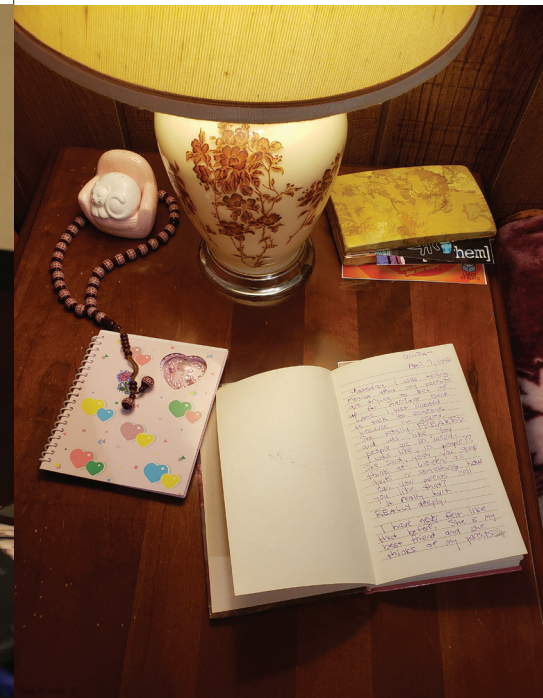
Through a gallery wall, song, paint and ink, Basel Zarea tells the migration story of his sisters' journey from Syria to Sweden as they escaped conflict. Commissioned by Tania El Khoury and presented in collaboration with the Institute for the Humanities, UMS and The Hinterlands, this performance art piece relied solely on touch, sound and trust between performer and audience member to explore empathy and whether we need to literally "feel" a refugee in order to understand the effect of border discrimination on peoples' lives.

Photo courtesy of UMS.



Futures, Archived

Dearborn's demographic landscape has changed plenty over time, yet there are still many stories untold. February artist-in-residence Alia Taqieddin asked the important question: what voices are left unheard? Through an open conversation with historically marginalized community members, Taqieddin captured narratives of Dearborn that will become part of the collective memory of the city. Presented as part of Taqieddin's curated audio showcase at the reception of *And Then We Met...*, these narratives also form part of AANM's permanent oral history collection and will continue to shape the future of the Dearborn community.



soft powers

Two beds, a telephone, a television set, a diary and posters of famous stars from the 90s. These are some of the items on display in March artist-in-residence Yasmine Nasser Diaz's solo exhibition, *soft powers*. The exhibition includes never-before-seen fiber etchings based on photographs collected by Diaz that reflect on Yemeni American girlhood while addressing subjects familiar to many children of immigrants, including code-switching, plural identities and conflicting loyalties. Unfortunately, the exhibition's public opening remains suspended due to COVID restrictions; however, AANM worked with the artist to produce a video preview of the exhibition with behind-the-scenes shots and commentary by Diaz.

MARCH 2020

COVID-19 was spreading across the nation, yet Governor of Michigan Gretchen Whitmer's decision to issue a stay-at-home order mid-March still came as a surprise. The pandemic shook our world and quickly shaped our programming, forcing us to make the difficult decision to close the Museum to the public. Though it was the right choice, it was not an easy one, especially when our institution serves as a local community space. With the safety and health of our guests, staff and volunteers a top priority, we spent the month assessing the best way to engage with our community and continue to be a safe space for people to process, escape and connect during such an isolating time. Our goal was to be virtually welcomed into the homes of our community and provide relief, joy and comfort.



Food Distribution

As schools closed, AANM partnered with ACCESS to supplement food distribution services and provide free grab-and-go meals to children 18 years and under. The Museum was one of the locations to serve meals, helping families meet basic needs in this uncertain and difficult time.



SURA Arts Academy Spring Semester

AANM's SURA Arts Academy, in partnership with Wayne State University, invited immigrant and refugee students for its Spring semester that infused photography lessons with art therapy, empowering them to explore their new homes, make sense of new and foreign experiences and share their stories through photography. This semester met a unique challenge halfway through: COVID-19. Our team successfully navigated a shift to online instruction—our first public program to shift online—ending with an online exhibition that featured students' documented experiences with resettlement in the U.S., allowing audiences to see through the students' unique lens.

Brooklyn Inshallah

Being in a presidential election year, AANM turned the spotlight on voter suppression in the U.S. while emphasizing the importance of mobilizing under-represented communities. In partnership with ACCESS' Campaign to TAKE ON HATE (TOH), AANM hosted the Michigan premiere of the documentary *Brooklyn Inshallah*. Our last event to take place inside the Museum prior to the stay-at-home order, AANM welcomed over 100 attendees to the screening, which was followed by a lively discussion with director Ahmad Mansour and a panel of advocacy leaders in metro Detroit.

APRIL 2020

In early April, Governor Whitmer suspended in-person learning for the rest of the school year and extended stay-at-home orders to the end of the month. Despite being physically closed, AANM shifted all programming to exclusively online platforms. We were venturing into unfamiliar territory, and unsure of how successful our virtual events would be. But, in the name of Arab American Heritage Month, AANM found innovative ways to celebrate and connect with the community, keeping programming free and accessible. While our physical doors were closed for an indefinite amount of time, we opened many virtual ones for people who otherwise would not have visited the Museum in person, expanding our reach to national and international audiences. To better understand and document what our community was going through, AANM also put out a call for stories, asking community members to share their experiences living through the pandemic.



English-Arabic Storytime Online

Recognizing that many educational experiences were taken away from children due to COVID-19, our staff explored ways to supplement children's learning with fun, light-hearted content. As such, AANM's popular English-Arabic Storytime quickly made a transition to YouTube in April. Over 650 children ages 2-6 and their parents tuned in for April's Storytime, featuring Young People's Poet Laureate Naomi Shihab Nye reading her 1994 children's book *Sitti's Secrets*, a story about Mona, a young girl who travels to a Palestinian village to meet her grandmother who, despite not speaking the same language, teaches Mona about her homeland.



Yalla Eat! Chef Series

With many individuals experimenting in their home kitchens during COVID-19 lockdowns, AANM established a Yalla Eat! series in the form of Instagram takeovers by Arab American chefs, quickly becoming one of AANM's most popular initiatives. This program supported small restaurant and business owners by raising awareness of their brands.

Virtual Open Mic

As stay-at-home orders took effect and a global panic took hold, AANM recognized the need to continue providing quality arts and cultural programming to the public. With staff adapting quickly to meet the demand, AANM held its first ever Virtual Open Mic Night in honor of National Poetry Month, hosted by teaching artist and poet Yasmine Rukia, ushering in a new era of exclusively online programming that garnered audiences of unprecedented numbers from around the world.



Life is Waiting + When Monaliza Smiled

Bringing communities together despite physical distancing, the Arab Film Series shifted to an online platform, with monthly film screenings in partnership with ArteEast, the Arab Film and Media Institute and Cinetopia Film Festival. The series quickly garnered an international following, kicking off with *Life is Waiting*, a documentary about the Western Sahara's struggle for freedom, and *When Monaliza Smiled*, a romantic comedy full of nosy and quirky characters set in present-day Amman. Hundreds of viewers tuned in for both screenings and engaged with the respective directors Lara Lee and Fadi Haddad via talkbacks.

MAY 2020

Entering the month of our 15th anniversary, AANM strived to keep the community connected through our monthly programs such as the Arab Film Series, Yalla Eat! Chef Series and English-Arabic Storytime Online. Stay-at-home orders were extended once again, and Dearborn was struggling as community members observed the month of Ramadan, normally a time for families and friends to gather and share meals and blessings, in isolation. AANM staff had to make the difficult decision to cancel or postpone all major events—including the annual Museum gala and the JAM3A music festival. Nonetheless, we did not allow these difficult circumstances to hinder our ability to create powerful programming. Our new virtual reality certainly had a learning curve, and we were committed to mastering it.



Two-part Short Film Program + Cairo Drive

Showcasing work by Arab and Arab American filmmakers, the Arab Film Series Online presented a two-part shorts program that gave audiences a glimpse into the complex problems and interesting situations people can find themselves in, connecting audience members tuning in from across the world through shared experiences. Later in the month, we introduced our audience to contemporary Egypt via the film *Cairo Drive*, which followed diverse residents of the massive city and displayed how differences of race, faith and social status are often erased when having to share Cairo's congested roads.



Virtual Book Club

AANM launched a Virtual Book Club opening with *Bitter Almonds* by Lilas Taha, a work touching on displacement and exile, family duty and honor, and the universal feelings of love and loss. In a live discussion between Taha and Syracuse University professor Carol Fadda, Taha shared her journey as a writer, her experience as a Syrian Palestinian raised in Kuwait who then immigrated to the U.S., and the significance of humanizing the Palestinian narrative through fiction.

Virtual Open Mic Pt. 2

Celebrating our 15th anniversary, AANM held a second Virtual Open Mic, welcoming seasoned and emerging writers of poetry, prose, music and more hosted by Communications Specialist and writer Lujine Nasralla. At a time when we would have celebrated together in person, we gave the stage to community members locally and across the country who help shape our institution and the Arab American story.



What's On Your Plate? Virtual Iftar + Discussion

Presented in partnership with TOH, founder of Dearborn's Ramadan Suhoor Festival Hassan Chami, community organizer Hanan Yahya, City of Dearborn's Deputy Director of Economic & Community Development Hassan Sheikh and host, ACCESS Communications Manager Linda Samarah asked, "what's on your plate?" in both literal and figurative ways during a discussion leading into Iftar. Food demos and conversations about Ramadan, togetherness despite isolation and the ways "community" has evolved during the pandemic filled the evening as speakers and attendees broke their fast together.

JUNE 2020

At a time when the Black community is already suffering disproportionately during the pandemic, we were—and still are—outraged by the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery. Standing in solidarity with our Black allies nationwide, we demanded justice and accountability for those and many other senseless deaths as we reckoned with our nation’s history of systemic racism and white supremacy. AANM is, among other things, a gathering place to discuss important, difficult and uncomfortable issues facing the Arab American community as well as other marginalized communities. Recognizing our critical role in helping to dismantle anti-Blackness in the Arab American community, AANM curated a series of programs that answered the demand for intentional anti-racist work and continued to ask tough questions, unpack historical legacies and amplify voices calling for a just and equitable society.



Creating a Culture of Change: Race and Community Series

Recognizing the need for Arab American leadership in unpacking the recent protests supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, AANM partnered with Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture and NNAAC to host a series of virtual conversations around racism and social justice. Topics included race education, documenting community through poetry and film, leading with faith in the face of adversity and unpacking queer experiences in BIPOC communities.

Artists + Residents

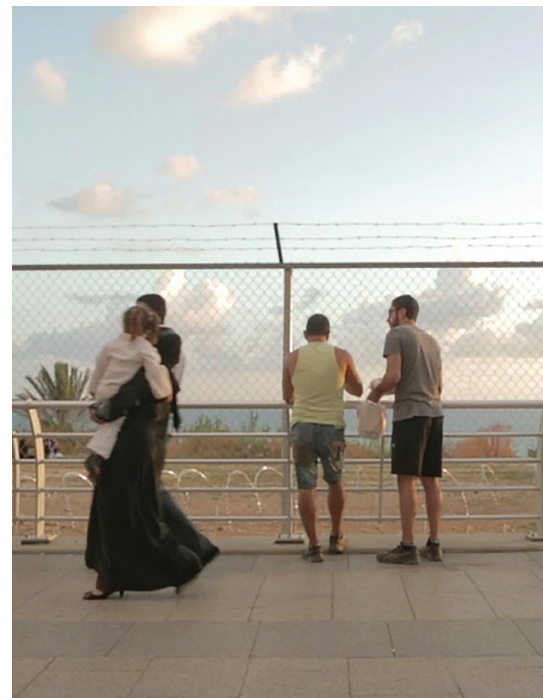
After a two-month hiatus, AANM welcomed artists-in-residence once again, leading with Mariam Bazeed and Kamelya Omayma Youssef. Recognizing that COVID had a significant economic impact on many, especially artists, the decision to continue our residency program helped uplift artists’ work and provided compensation during a difficult time. Maintaining social distancing and following COVID-19 regulations, our “pandemic residents” found creative ways to virtually facilitate community engagement.

New Website Launch

AANM launched its new website in June, a project that increased accessibility to our programming as well as streamlined the way our community and researchers could access and view our comprehensive collections about Arab American history and culture.

Windows/Shababeek: A Suqoon Virtual Reading

After spending several weeks observing life through our windows, AANM gathered the writing community for a live bilingual reading hosted and curated by Rewa Zeinati, founder/editor of literary magazine *Suqoon*. Arab writers and poets George Abraham, Zeyn Joukhadar, Zeina Hashem Beck, Philip Metres, Sahar Mustafa, Zeina Azzam and Farah Chamma shared work reflecting on our collective time apart. Attendees were encouraged to join in fundraising for The Bail Project in solidarity with the Black community’s demand for justice and accountability for the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd.



Eccomi... Eccoti

Across the globe, the LGBTQIA+ community continues to break barriers and challenge the status quo despite facing discrimination. In celebration of Pride Month, AANM presented *Eccomi... Eccoti (Here I Am... Here You Are)*, a film that explores what it means to be gay in contemporary Beirut, and the existential discomfort that blocks one from living as their truest self. The film was followed by an open and honest talkback with director Raed Rafei, a Lebanese filmmaker, writer and multimedia journalist, and audience members as they unpacked the personal struggles and injustice faced by the LGBTQIA+ community.

JULY 2020

The month began with the good news that the state reported no new deaths from COVID-19 for the first time since March 17. While the information offered some reprieve, AANM remained closed to the public, continuing with virtual programming and “Museum from home” initiatives. Daily protests in support of the Black Lives Matter Movement continued across the nation, including in our neighboring city of Detroit. AANM continued its commitment to fighting anti-Blackness on the home front by centering programming that demonstrated solidarity and offered tools for tackling and healing from white supremacy.



Virtual Book Club: Me and White Supremacy

AANM’s Virtual Book Club brought community together for timely and crucial discussions about white supremacy and racism within each of ourselves and the Arab American community. AANM artists-in-residence Kamelya Omayma Youssef and Mariam Bazeed (pictured) guided participants through exercises from the book, *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla F. Saad and engaged readers in dialogue over two sessions. The ultimate intention of the program was to mobilize non-Black Arabs to fight anti-Blackness at home in Arab and Arab American communities.



The Bleaching Syndrome

Continuing our commitment to fighting anti-Blackness in the Arab and Arab American community, AANM hosted a screening of the short film, *The Bleaching Syndrome*. During the talkback with Sudanese Egyptian filmmaker Eiman Mirghani and special guest Sudanese American spoken word artist, activist and community organizer Khadega Mohammed, attendees unpacked the film’s themes of beauty standards and social norms. Everyone was moved by the panelists’ vulnerability as they spoke on their experiences with anti-Blackness and colorism, even within their own families. All donations collected were dedicated to the Detroit Justice Center and their work in transforming the U.S. justice system.



Protest/Protect: A Suqoon Live Reading

As national demonstrations continued in response to long-standing issues of systemic racism and injustice, AANM collaborated again with *Suqoon* for Protest/Protect, a live reading honoring the global uprisings of the Black Lives Matter Movement. Through this event, AANM and *Suqoon* created a platform for writers and activists to express the struggles, experiences and victories of the ongoing protests in the fight for freedom. Co-curated and hosted by *Suqoon* founder/editor Rewa Zeinati, the event included performers Aja Monet, Chaun Ballard, Safia Elhillo, Layla Azmi Goushey and music from Ian Fink (pictured).

AUGUST 2020

This month, we were excited to announce the 2020 honorees of our 14th annual Arab American Book Awards, which included a graphic memoir, a genre awarded for the first time in competition history, and eight women authors. Also in August, our monthly Arab Film Series, Yalla Eat! Chef Series and English-Arabic Storytime Online continued to engage community members of all ages. We welcomed Mona Kareem as a remote artist-in-residence while our current in-person resident, Ibi Ibrahim, completed a second month with us. Finally, after five thought-provoking and insightful sessions, AANM wrapped up the Creating a Culture of Change series in partnership with Al-Bustan and NNAAC.



Live Reading + Workshop with Mona Kareem

A speaker of multiple languages, poet and translator Mona Kareem's work explores the loneliness that comes with immigrating alone to another country. As an AANM artist-in-residence, Kareem worked on *Crossover*, a poetry collection touching on themes particular to Arab experiences in the U.S., sharing works-in-progress during a live bilingual reading and discussion with AANM Director Dr. Diana Abouali. Kareem also led a poetry workshop, inviting writers to explore and intertwine the personal with the political and contemplate what bi- and multilingual writers lose—and gain—during the translation process.



English-Arabic Storytime Online

The social uprising of 2020 emphasized the critical need for honest discussions about racism and anti-Blackness in all of our circles, especially at home and with our children. To provide parents with resources on talking to their children about these systemic issues, storyteller Sari Mira presented songs, educational worksheets and the story *Something Happened in Our Town* by Drs. Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins and Ann Hazzard. The story follows two families—one white, one Black—as they discuss a police shooting of a Black man in their community, aiming to answer children's questions about such traumatic events, and to help them identify and counter racial injustice in their own lives.



10 Days Before the Wedding

Imagine trying to plan your dream wedding during a war. This was the reality for Rasha and Ma'moon, a young Yemeni couple and the subjects of director Amr Gamal's film, *10 Days Before the Wedding*. Presented in partnership with Romooz Foundation, the film was followed by a talkback with Gamal moderated by Romooz Foundation director and AANM artist-in-residence Ibi Ibrahim. Gamal and Ibrahim discussed the process of funding a film, highlighting the obstacles of the war, and the need to share Yemeni stories that shatter stereotypes in Western media. All donations collected went to Yemen Aid.



Naomi Shihab Nye + Simon Shaheen in Concert

One of the biggest voids left unfilled by the closing of our doors was access to live music and concerts. Though the experience of an in-person concert could not be replicated exactly in a virtual setting, AANM brought Young People's Poet Laureate Naomi Shihab Nye and world-renowned virtuoso Simon Shaheen together for an enchanting night of exclusive live poetry and musical performances. With more than 1,000 viewers present from across the globe, Nye and Shaheen graciously reminded audiences of the healing power that art has on the soul.

SEPTEMBER 2020

In the last month of the fiscal year, we received wonderful news that AANM was among 20 national arts organizations chosen as one of America's Cultural Treasures by the Ford Foundation in recognition of our crucial work promoting the history and cultures of Arab Americans. Also in September, with the presidential election a mere two months away, AANM presented programming that mobilized the community around voter engagement, including a second screening of *Brooklyn Inshallah*, a documentary following Khader El-Yateem, a Palestinian American and Lutheran pastor, as he runs for New York City Council with the support of political activist Linda Sarsour. As we collectively faced a year of difficulties and loss, AANM—just like everyone else—had to learn to survive given the circumstances of the pandemic. However, no matter what came our way, our staff were committed to growing their skills to adapt for and stay connected to our special and beloved community.



Solidarity Town Hall: The Blame Game

COVID-19 has been traumatic in many ways and its impact will be felt for years to come, especially in BIPOC communities. In partnership with TOH, MuslimARC and the Detroit Equity Action Lab (DEAL), this year's Solidarity Town Hall—formerly the 9/11 Anniversary Town Hall—themed *The Blame Game*, invited panelists to share their experiences and perspectives on how these communities, particularly Asian and Black communities, have faced racism and blame for the spread of COVID. Creating a safe space for communities to engage in dialogue about the harmful prejudices that Arab, Muslim and numerous communities of color face on both individual and systemic levels, audiences came together to reflect, remember and build solidarity.



Lost In Translation Launch Party

Omar Offendum became our personal dragoman, along with his "partner-in-thyme" Thanks Joey, as they took audience members on a musical journey through *Los Shamgeles* (a nickname for the Syrian and Arab community in Los Angeles) for the release of their new album, *Lost In Translation*. Describing it as a celebratory love letter to their community, the artists held a talkback, discussing the inception and inspiration for the album with moderator Arij Mikati, the Managing Director of Leadership & Culture at Pillars Fund.

ARTISTS + RESIDENTS

OCT. 1, 2019 – SEPT. 30, 2020



Levon Kafafian

Once There Was and Once There Was Not (multimedia)

Levon Kafafian creates tactile and sensory works on the threshold of transition, applying the process of weaving beyond thread into visual, performative and social practice. Kafafian practices in the Detroit community and is co-creative director of Fringe Society, an artist collective that creates experimental works toward a more just and equitable future. During their residency, Kafafian used AANM's historical archives to research ways of life across Southwest Asia during the late Ottoman era in conjunction with the Museum's Library & Resource Center to research future-facing narratives for a new graphic novel, *Portal Fire*.



Maya James

LUKUMI (visual art/comics)

Maya James is a storyteller, spoken word poet, organizing activist and political multimedia artist. She regularly organizes and delivers speeches at community organizations about all forms of social injustice, but particularly the #BlackLivesMatter movement. During her residency, James worked on art for her forthcoming graphic novel, *LUKUMI* (Maamoul Press, 2021), which explores the relationships between Black women and their environment, history and ancestry, and Afro-Atlantic faith.



Baraa Ktiri

For Covered Girls (documentary series)

Baraa Ktiri, a Moroccan American photographer, writer and filmmaker, often shares her personal work through a vérité, and conversational style, centering on religion, immigration and identity. Ktiri spent her residency working on a documentary series, *For Covered Girls*, which explores the way hijab operates and exists within the metro Detroit area, specifically from a commercial perspective. Through a filmed roundtable discussion at AANM, Ktiri centered Muslim women's experiences and their complex, personal, professional and political relationships with hijab.



Alia Taqieddin

Futures, Archived: Dearborn's Memory Through Curated Audio (oral history/music)

Alia Taqieddin, a Seattle-based facilitator and DJ of mixed Shami and western European descent, explores alternative archival methods as tools for narrating individual and collective ownership of change. Her residency focused on the curation of a collective memory of Dearborn by those who are most intimately tethered to its past, present and future. Through a series of facilitated and recorded conversations, this project explored the complexity of immortalizing a collective imagination with the intention to create and solidify a narrative for Dearborn.



Yasmine Nasser Diaz

soft powers (multimedia)

Yasmine Nasser Diaz, a Chicago-born child of Yemeni immigrants, navigates overlapping tensions around religion, gender and third-culture identity using personal archives, found imagery and various media on paper as well as installation. During her residency, Diaz worked on *soft powers*, a solo exhibition that reflected on coming-of-age nostalgia and Yemeni American girlhood, featuring fiber etchings and a site-specific installation that is part of her "Teenage Bedroom" series. The exhibition addresses subjects familiar to many children of immigrants including code-switching, plural identities and conflicting loyalties.



Mariam Bazeed & Kamelya Omayma Youssef

Kilo Batra (scriptwriting/theatre)

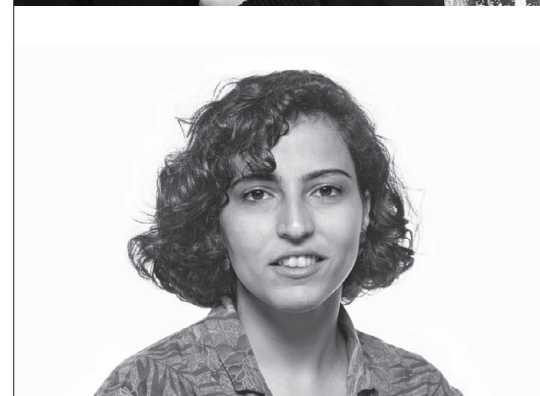
Mariam Bazeed is a nonbinary Egyptian immigrant, writer and performer living in Brooklyn. Kamelya Omayma Youssef is a writer from Dearborn, Michigan who works in various literary forms. Together, they are co-writing a play titled *Kilo Batra*, in collaboration with Detroit-based theater ensemble A Host of People and its co-director Sherrine Azab. This work is being reimagined from the world in and around Egyptian poet and playwright Ahmed Shawki's 1927 play *The Death of Cleopatra*, putting it directly in conversation with issues of contemporary Arab culture and beyond.



Ibi Ibrahim

Reclaiming Realities: The Yemeni American 2.0 (multimedia)

Ibi Ibrahim is a Yemeni American visual artist, filmmaker and art practitioner currently living and working between the U.S. and Yemen. During his residency, Ibrahim sought to examine the Yemeni American experience through interactive activities with young Yemeni Americans currently living and working in Dearborn. Working with photography and multimedia components, Ibrahim collaborated with Yemeni American women to control how they wanted to be portrayed in a photography and video series where each woman relayed the struggles of reclaiming her reality.



Mona Kareem

Crossover (poetry)

Mona Kareem's remote residency was spent finalizing *Crossover*, a poetry collection that touches on themes particular to Arab experiences in the United States: the loss or gain of language, the weight of a marked body passing through airports, the lingua of immigration and bureaucratic violence, and the fetishization of Arab sexuality in visual culture and the colonial imaginary.



Leila Awadallah; LeilAwa

TERRANEA: hakawati of the sea (dance)

A Palestinian American artist, Leila Awadallah spent her residency working on weaving together stories centering Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA) bodies in relation to the sea while developing *TERRANEA*, in collaboration with the community. Along with dancers Anurima Kumar and Elisandra Mairym Rosario, Awadallah conceived and performed in *Body Watani: soul speak*, a drive-in dance performance that took place in the parking lot behind AANM.

WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE TO OUR DONORS

OCT. 1, 2019 – SEPT. 30, 2020

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A2 Tech Film Showcase, Ann Arbor, Mich.
A Host of People, Detroit, Mich.
ACCESS, Dearborn, Mich.
ACCESS of WNY, Lackawanna, N.Y.
Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, Philadelphia, Pa.
ALIF Institute, Atlanta, Ga.
American Black Journal, Detroit, Mich.
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Detroit, Mich.
Arab America, Washington, D.C.
Arab American Civic Council, Los Angeles, Calif.
Arab American Cultural & Community Center, Houston, Texas
Arab American Heritage Council, Flint, Mich.
Arab American Studies Association, Dearborn, Mich.
Arab and Muslim American Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Arab Film and Media Institute, San Francisco, Calif.
Arab Student Association, University of Michigan—Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Art X Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
ArteEast, N.Y.
Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote—Michigan, Hamtramck, Mich.
Avokado Artists, New Mexico
Beit Zatoun, Toronto, Canada
Blue Hands United, Dearborn, Mich.
Caroline Kennedy Library of Dearborn Heights, Dearborn Heights, Mich.
Center for Arab American Philanthropy (CAAP), Dearborn, Mich.
Center for Arab American Studies, University of Michigan—Dearborn, Dearborn, Mich.
Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS), University of Michigan—Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Center for Middle Eastern Studies at The University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
Chamber Music Society of Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, Mich.
Cinema Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
Cinema Lamont, Detroit, Mich.
Cinetopia Film Festival, Ann Arbor, Mich.
City Hall Artspace Lofts, Dearborn, Mich.
Cleveland Public Theatre, Cleveland, Ohio
Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs (CMEAA), Detroit, Mich.
Concert of Colors, Detroit, Mich.
Consulado de México en Detroit, MI, Detroit, Mich.
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Farmington Hills, Mich.
The Crofoot, Pontiac, Mich.
CultureSource, Detroit, Mich.
Daring Dances, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Dearborn Fresh Supermarket, Dearborn, Mich.

Dearborn Historical Museum, Dearborn, Mich.
Dearborn Public Library, Dearborn, Mich.
Detroit Area Library Network (DALNET), Detroit, Mich.
Detroit Black Film Festival, Detroit, Mich.
Detroit Equity Action Lab (DEAL), Detroit, Mich.
The Detroit Film Theatre at DIA, Detroit, Mich.
Detroit Free Press, Detroit, Mich.
Detroit Historical Society, Detroit, Mich.
Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), Detroit, Mich.
Detroit Justice League, Detroit, Mich.
The Detroit News, Detroit, Mich.
Detroit Performs, Detroit, Mich.
Detroit Public Television, Detroit, Mich.
Detroit Trinity International Film Festival, Detroit, Mich.
Disco Riot, San Diego, Calif.
Doha Film Institute, Doha, Qatar
Downtown Dearborn Development Authority, Dearborn, Mich.
East Downtown Dearborn Development Authority, Dearborn, Mich.
Emgage, Pasadena, Calif.
EmpowerMe Project, Detroit, Mich.
Equality Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
Faculty for Palestine, Canada
The Film Lab, Hamtramck, Mich.
FOX 2 Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
Freep Film Festival, Detroit, Mich.
Gathering All Muslim Artists (GAMA), Calif.
Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at NYU, N.Y.
The Henry Ford, Dearborn, Mich.
Henry Ford College, Dearborn, Mich.
Hollingsworth Logistics, Dearborn, Mich.
Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills, Mich.
Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), Washington, D.C.
Islamic Center of Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
Keiga Foundation, Roseville, Mich.
Kulture City, Birmingham, Ala.
League of Women Voters – Dearborn/Dearborn Heights, Mich.
Maamoul Press, Dearborn, Mich.
Melvindale Public Schools, Melvindale, Mich.
Michigan.com, Detroit, Mich.
Michigan Alliance for Cultural Accessibility (MACA), Mich.
Michigan Department of Education, Mich.
Michigan Humanities, Mich.
Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion, Detroit, Mich.
Michigan Theater, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Mizna, St. Paul, Minn.
Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, N.C.
Motor City Freedom Riders, Detroit, Mich.
Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative, Detroit, Mich.

My Turn, Ann Arbor, Mich.
National Building Museum, Washington, D.C.
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC), Dearborn, Mich.
National Performance Network, New Orleans, La.
Next Gen Michigan, Mich.
New American Leaders, N.Y.
New Detroit, Inc., Detroit, Mich.
NEW: Solutions for Nonprofits, Ann Arbor, Mich.
New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), N.Y.
Northville Public Schools, Northville, Mich.
Oakland Community College, Auburn Hills, Mich.
Padzieski Art Gallery, Dearborn, Mich.
Pages Bookshop, Detroit, Mich.
Palestinian American Community Center (PACC), Clifton, N.J.
Pleasure Dome, Toronto, Canada
Poetic Societies, Detroit, Mich.
Qatar Foundation International, Washington, D.C.
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Rackham Program in Public Scholarship, University of Michigan—Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Romooz Foundation, Sana'a, Yemen
Sabeel Media, Rutland Township, Mich.
Senate Theater, Detroit, Mich.
The Seventh Art Stand, Seattle, Wash.
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Social Care Administrators, Detroit, Mich.
Source Booksellers, Detroit, Mich.
Southwest Solutions, Detroit, Mich.
Spring Arbor University, Spring Arbor, Mich.
St. Clair County Public Library, Port Huron, Mich.
Sudan Film Factory, Khartoum, Sudan
Sukoon
TAKE ON HATE, Dearborn, Mich.
Ti'dad: Counting Our Community, Philadelphia, Pa.
Toronto Palestine Film Festival, Toronto, Canada
Trinity Square Video, Toronto, Canada
University Musical Society (UMS), Ann Arbor, Mich.
University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
University of Detroit Mercy, Detroit, Mich.
University of Michigan—Detroit Center, Detroit, Mich.
University of Michigan—Flint, Flint, Mich.
Voters Not Politicians, Lansing, Mich.
Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich.
WDET 101.9FM, Detroit, Mich.
WDIV-TV Local 4, Detroit, Mich.
WFMT, Chicago, Ill.
WXYZ Detroit, Detroit, Mich.
Yemeni American News, Dearborn, Mich.

AANM BY THE NUMBERS

OCT. 1, 2019 – SEPT. 30, 2020

Schedule of Revenue & Expenses (Unaudited)

Contributions & Grants

Individuals, Memberships and Special Events Net	\$566,006
Corporations	\$15,000
Foundations	\$380,242
Government	\$154,346
Subtotal: Contributions & Grants	\$1,115,594

Earned Revenue

Program Fees, Gift Shop, Rentals and Admissions	\$87,041
AANM Endowment Fund - Distribution	\$159,637
Subtotal: Earned Revenue	\$246,678

Total Revenue **\$1,362,272**

Operational Expenses

Admin and Operations Salary and Benefits	\$391,510
Facility Operations	\$294,166
Exhibits, Education and Public Programming	\$675,319

Total Operational Expenses **\$1,360,995**

AANM Endowment Fund

The AANM Endowment Fund consists of six funds, three are invested with Charles Schwab and three are maintained by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM). As of Sept. 30, 2020, the market value of the fund reported as an asset on the ACCESS balance sheet consists of the following:

Funds maintained at CFSEM	\$1,132,815
Funds invested at Charles Schwab	\$2,900,895
Total	\$4,033,710

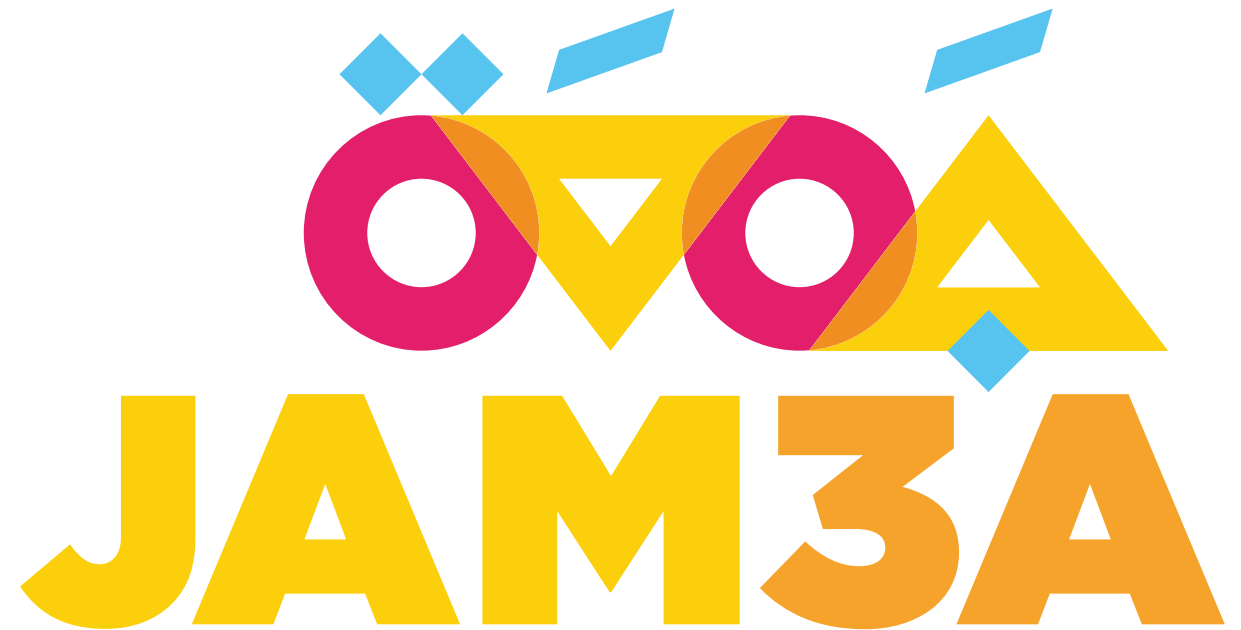
The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM) has also accepted gifts from unrelated donors for the benefit of ACCESS. These assets are not reported on the balance sheet since CFSEM maintains variance power with respect to the assets contributed to them for our benefit. The total value of these assets as of Sept. 30, 2020 is \$2,489,069.

Attendance & Usage

Objects Added to the Collection	119
Online Collections page views (CONTENTdm)	20,089
Hours of virtual programming	26,539
Virtual program attendees	32,788



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