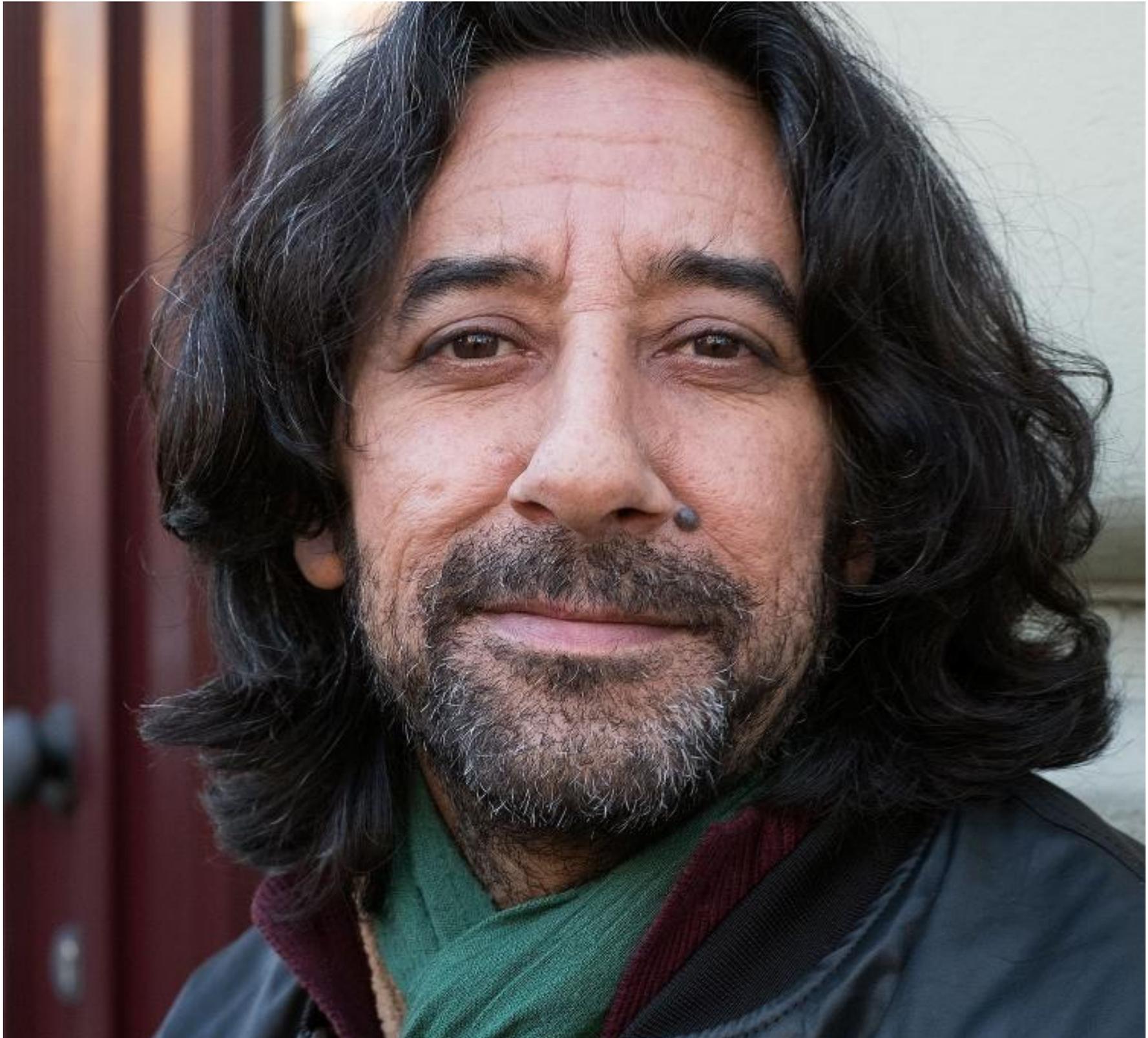




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Adnan Alaoda first ICORN writer-in-residence in Rotterdam





https://www.icorn.org/sites/default/files/field/image/adnan_alaoda_by_joop_reijngoud

Adnan Alaoda. Photo by Joop Reijngoud.

Award-winning theatre and TV- scriptwriter, Adnan Alaoda, is Rotterdam City of Refuge's first ICORN writer-in-residence.

On 25 March 2011, Syrian scriptwriter, poet and journalist Adnan Alaoda, demonstrated alongside other artists, writers and journalists in Damascus protesting against the violent response by the Syrian government directed at peaceful demonstrators all over the country. A well-known figure in the Syrian media, commenting publicly on the atrocities against civilians, Alaoda soon caught the attention of the government. Alaoda was arrested and interrogated for 24 hours and ordered to make an appearance in the media to declare his support to President Al-Assad and his government. Refusing to do so, he was left with no other choice than to flee from the country.

Originally from a small village 50 kilometers from Raqqa, in northern Syria, Alaoda and his family left for Dubai, the nearest safe place, in the hope that they could return after a few months. Sadly, the situation in Syria did not improve; ISIS has occupied his hometown and Alaoda is now also wanted by them for the secular views expressed in his works.

Adnan Alaoda applied to ICORN and was invited to Rotterdam City of Refuge, where he will be living and working with base in the Verhalenhuis Belvédère (City Stories Centre). During his stay, Alaoda plans to continue writing plays for the theatre, making films and TV series about the past and present of Syria, and to pursue a career in journalism. He would like to work with Dutch writers and filmmakers, and bring together Syrian refugees and the Dutch through film, poetry, music and food from his new residence.





Welcome speech at Adnans welcome reception in the Verhalenhuis Belvédère, by Vera Bauman from the City of Rotterdam

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Exploring identity in the Syrian Culture

With two bachelor degrees, one in Journalism from the University of Damascus and another in Theatre Criticism and Literature from the same university (2000), Alaoda has worked for many years with script writing for TV and theatre in Syria and the United Arab Emirates. He also writes scripts for documentaries and short films as well as lyrics for many popular songs, in collaboration with famous bands and singers such as Lena Chamamyan.

In his work as a poet and as a scriptwriter, Alaoda has explored the concept of identity in Syrian culture, in particular national, ethnic and religious identity. In his works, which have been described by critics as sensitive, sincere and original, Alaoda depicts the values and life style of the Bedouin communities in an in-depth realistic manner. He tends to write in the accents and dialects of different cultural groups in Syria, as well as the different dialects of Bedouin tribes, which add a sense of intimacy to his work.

Publications

Between 2003 and 2011 Alaoda published three plays in colloquial Arabic, one of which was *Couplets*, which won the Syrian National Theatre Award in 2003. *Lost Horses (Khail Tayha)* published in 2008 was performed theatrically by the Palestinian Naam (YES) company in 2014 and won the Sultan Al-Qasimi (Ruler of Sharjah-UAE) award for Best Arabic Play in The Festival of Arabic Theatre in Rabat-Morocco, in January 2016.

Sukran Al-Mjaneen, which can roughly be translated as “*The Drunkenness of the Mad*” was a book of poetry in colloquial Arabic, published in 2012 and received a lot of public attention as well as positive critical reviews.

Scripts for TV series

Between 2002 and 2013, Alaoda wrote the scripts for many popular TV series, among them *Blood Cup*, an Arabic Bedouin drama, which was produced by Sama Production in Syria and featured in 2008 on the Saudi-owned MBC network, the biggest TV network in the Arab world. *Doors for the Clouds* is a dramatic adaptation of the story and poetry of Prince Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoom, vice president, Prime Minister of UAE and Emir of Dubai. It was produced by Sama Dubai, and featured on Sama Dubai channel in 2010. *Yarning-Tawq* is based on a novel by Prince Bader Al-Saud, prince of the Saudi Arabian royal family, who is also a poet and a novelist. The series was produced by Farah Media and featured on Saudi-owned TV networks MBC and Rotana.

Alaoda also wrote the script for the well-known TV series -*What Happened in Damascus*- , which was produced by the Syrian state-owned “The Institution of TV Productions”, and featured on Abu Dhabi/UAE TV in 2013.

Between 2002 and 2005, he wrote the scripts of several episodes of Arabic TV series such as *Spotlight* and *Mirrors*.

Media work

In 2005 Alaoda worked for Al-Jazeera Children’s Channel in Qatar as a script writer. In 2006, he worked as a consultant for Mamdouh Adwan Publishing House in Damascus, Syria, and he was the producer and presenter of a programme featured on Sky News Arabic called “Book World” in which he featured selected books and hosted famous writers to talk about their books in the UAE 2014.

Rotterdam City of Refuge and the City Stories Centre
Belvédère

In 2016, the City Stories Centre Belvédère (<http://www.belvedererotterdam.nl/>) became a member of the ICORN on behalf of the city of Rotterdam. They joined ICORN at an on-stage signing ceremony at the ICORN General Assembly and 10 years Anniversary at the city hall of Paris in March 2016. They accompany Amsterdam, a member since the foundation of the network, as the second Dutch city in the network.

City Stories Centre Belvédère is the first of its kind in the Netherlands. It makes people and communities in the contemporary city visible through the arts, culture and personal stories and enables (positive) encounters and new connections between people. The aim is to improve mutual understanding and respect regardless of cultural or ethnic background and to contribute to a more committed and engaged city. The activities vary from photoexhibitions, listening performances, to eat- and encounterprogrammes and more, the approach is always positive, personal and open.

Al Rewaq – monthly cultural evening



Adnan Alaoda at an Al-Rewaq at the Verhalenhuis Belvédère.

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In cooperation with a group of volunteers, Adnan Alaoda will organise a monthly cultural evening in Belvédère, called Al Rewaq (<http://www.belvedererotterdam.nl/zo-26-feb-al-rewaq-rotterdam/>). Various cultural activities will take place such as watching movies, making music, singing, reciting poems and theatre pieces. Every evening will have its own theme and character, there are a lot of ways to shape these evenings. The third edition will take place on Sunday, May 6th.

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