

“The Four Hijabs” (in Arabic and English) Feminist Interpretations of Qur’anic Verses

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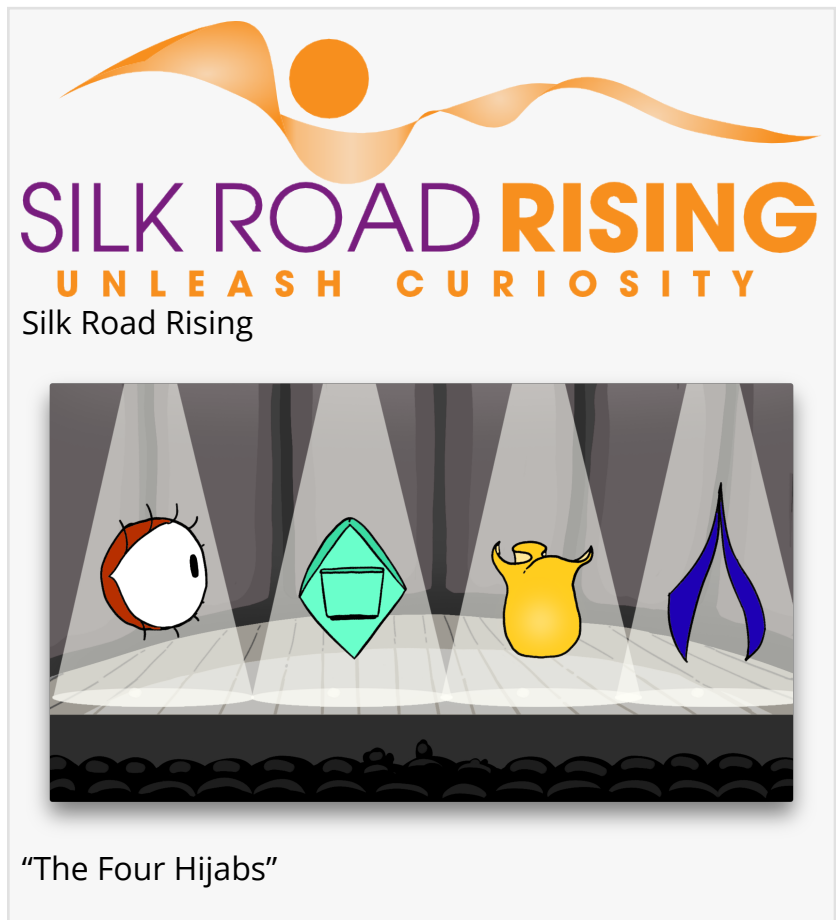
- Written by Jamil Khoury and Dr.
Manal Hamzeh

- Translated from English to Arabic by
Dr. Manal Hamzeh

- Original English-Language Version
Directed by Liz Wuerffel

- Animated by Anna Hayden-Roy

Chicago, IL – (Arab Newswire) -- [Silk Road Rising](#) (Co-Executive Artistic Directors Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury) is proud to announce that the original English-language version of their animated short film “The Four Hijabs” was dubbed into Arabic in Amman, Jordan and Damascus, Syria. The company has also released two companion video interviews, one in English and one in Arabic, featuring the film’s co-writer Dr. Manal Hamzeh.



“The Four Hijabs”

Synopsis of The Four Hijabs

Released in 2016, “The Four Hijabs” (12min 6sec) is an animated short film that explores the multiple meanings of four hijabs mentioned in 16 Qur’anic verses and interprets them through Arab-Muslim feminist lenses:

- the visual hijab (the modest dress required of both Muslim men and women)
- the spatial hijab (the separator between private and public spaces)
- the ethical hijab (the ethical values/practices required of all Muslims)
- the spiritual hijab (the barrier that inhibits deep spiritual growth and new knowledge)

“The Four Hijabs” is an entertaining and accessible opportunity to engage with the complex ideas

surrounding the hijab.

Inspired by ideas in Dr. Manal Hamzeh's book *Pedagogies of "DeVeiling: Muslim Girls and the Hijab Discourse"* (Information Age Publishing, 2012) and adapted into a screenplay by Hamzeh and Jamil Khoury, "The Four Hijabs" builds upon the groundbreaking work of the late Moroccan feminist writer and sociologist Fatima Mernissi.

Statement by Dr. Manal Hamzeh, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and Gender & Sexuality Studies at New Mexico State University

In the summer of 2017, one year after the launch of our animated short film "The Four Hijabs," my friend Samar Dudin introduced me to the owner of one of the most reputable dubbing companies in the Arab world, located in Amman, Jordan. Even before viewing *The Four Hijabs* in its entirety, he agreed to produce an Arabic dubbed version. I handed him the Arabic script assuming we would need to workshop it with actors before beginning the recording process. To my astonishment, within 48 hours, he asked me to visit him at the studio so that I could review the final dubbed version!

In that short window of time, the producer hired the actors and finished the actual dubbing. Adding to the complexity of it all, the actors he selected were all Syrians living in Syria. They literally emailed in their audio recordings shortly after listening to the film in English. Their cadence and tonality adhered to that of the American actors. All of this was done against the backdrop of a horrific war in Syria. Thus, the actors requested anonymity to avoid any risk of retaliation for participating in such an overtly anti-patriarchal project.

The process of dubbing "The Four Hijabs" into Arabic is an example of critical feminist translation. It adds another layer of resistance, refusal, and disobedience to both the English language version and the Arabic subtitled version. Moreover, the Arabic dubbed version gives "The Four Hijabs" another chance to speak back to oppressive patriarchal movements and regimes in Arab and Muslim-majority contexts. It also engages a substantial Arabic-speaking audience and opens the possibility of questioning and unlearning the dominant gendering discourse of the hijab.

It is worth noting that the Arabic translation intentionally used classical Arabic to reach a wider Arabic speaking audience. Simultaneously, the actors' very subtle Shami (Levantine) accent invites warmth and intimate engagement with the script, mostly for Arabs who speak and are close to this accent: Syrians, Jordanians, Palestinians, and Lebanese.

Along with the previously available version of "The Four Hijabs" subtitled in classical Arabic, it is our hope that this dubbed version will reach a broader Arabic speaking audience and generate transnational conversation and inquiry.

Statement by Jamil Khoury, Co-Founder and Co-Executive Artistic Director of Silk Road Rising

Having co-written the original English language version of “The Four Hijabs” with Dr. Manal Hamzeh, I take great pride in the fact we created an animated short that’s been described as “compelling,” “informative,” “thought-provoking,” and “eye-opening.” But the experience of hearing the piece in Arabic goes beyond interesting food for thought. Quite frankly, it feels revolutionary and subversive, dangerous even.

Listening to “The Four Hijabs” in English, I’m always struck by the critical questions the film poses, the new perspectives it dramatizes, and its relevance to conversations occurring within Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism. But when I listen to it in Arabic, the stakes are even greater. For in addition to doing important pedagogical and feminist work, it challenges gender injustice more stridently and unapologetically. It throws down the gauntlet in a hotly contested intra-Muslim debate. The patriarchs are being taken to the mat, and it is both scary and exhilarating.

Streaming Links of The Four Hijabs

All videos are available for free on YouTube and at www.fourhijabs.org:

“The Four Hijabs” (dubbed into Arabic): <https://youtu.be/XmTFE5rzghU>

“The Four Hijabs” (in English with option of Arabic subtitles): <https://youtu.be/64-29gsaVns>

Video Interviews with Dr. Manal Hamzeh

On October 12, 2019, Silk Road Rising sat down with Dr. Manal Hamzeh to discuss questions surrounding “The Four Hijabs” and to provide her a forum for contextualizing her academic and activist work. The videos below, one in English and one in Arabic, address different but related aspects of Hamzeh’s analyses and decades-long feminist journey. It was an opportunity for Hamzeh to make her work accessible to both English-speaking and Arabic-speaking audiences.

[Dr. Manal Hamzeh on Socialization of Muslim Girls](#) and the Animated Short “The Four Hijabs” (English) (12min 41sec): <https://youtu.be/ubrWU7aBZsk>

[Dr. Manal Hamzeh on Gender Justice and the Animated Short “The Four Hijabs”](#) (Arabic) (12min 5sec): <https://youtu.be/fpTgH8kDHus>

About Silk Road Rising

Silk Road Rising is a community-centered art-making and arts service organization rooted in Asian, Middle Eastern, and Muslim experiences. Through live theatre, digital media, and arts education, we challenge disinformation, cultivate new narratives, and promote a culture of continuous learning. Learn more at: <https://www.silkroadrising.org>

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