



thirteen
WNET NEW YORK

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press information

WIDE ANGLE PRESENTS AN EXCLUSIVE REPORT ON THE GROUND-BREAKING ALL-FEMALE TALK SHOW THAT IS SHAKING UP THE MIDDLE EAST

Dishing Democracy Premieres Tuesday, July 31 At 9 P.M. As **WIDE ANGLE** Continues Its Sixth Season On PBS

While the United States has been striving to promote democracy in the Arab world, a home-grown revolution is already taking place. Every Sunday night in living rooms throughout the Middle East, tens of millions of viewers are tuning in to a fearless all-female talk show whose four hosts discuss controversial subjects, shatter stereotypes and provoke debate. Originally inspired by ABC's hit *The View*, *Kalam Nawaem (Sweet Talk)* is taped in studios all over the Middle East and broadcast each week from Dubai. Five years after its premiere, the show is one of the highest rated programs on MBC, the first privately owned Arab satellite television channels.

With exclusive access to both the private and the professional lives of *Kalam Nawaem's* hosts and producers, **WIDE ANGLE: Dishing Democracy** provides a nuanced portrait of Arab women harnessing the power of transnational satellite television to boldly and effectively push social reform. **Dishing Democracy** premieres Tuesday, July 31 at 9 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings).

The show is hosted by four women of different ages, nationalities and points of view who have become household names and role models across the Muslim world. Muna AbuSulayman, the very first Saudi woman to appear on Arab satellite television; Farah Bseiso, a Palestinian actress; Fawzia Salama, an Egyptian newspaper columnist; and Rania Barghout, a liberal Lebanese, meet in the production studio to discuss – and disagree on – a wide range of news,



entertainment and social issues with invited guests. *WIDE ANGLE*'s cameras capture censorship discussions in editorial meetings, tension and camaraderie in the dressing room, and viewer reaction on the Arab street.

All four hosts are working mothers with strong family values, but when it comes to dishing it out, no subject matter is taboo. They were among the first in the Arab media to openly discuss homosexuality, and have been repeatedly outspoken on sensitive issues like polygamy, masturbation, wife battering, and equality between the sexes. The show is not without its enemies, as Rania Barghout explains: "The day before yesterday we had a letter, saying ...we're terrible women. We are corrupting Arab societies. We are the devil!"

Before the advent of satellite dishes, most Arab viewers depended on terrestrial state television, which meant few channels and some form of government oversight of everything that went to air. *Dishing Democracy* explores how Muslim women are utilizing satellite television to modernize Islam in living rooms throughout the Arab world.

The director, Amsterdam-based Bregtje van der Haak, has made numerous documentaries on social, political and cultural topics around the world, including *Saudi Solutions* and *Femmes Fatales* about the lives of working women in Saudi Arabia and Morocco.

For additional information and photography, visit thirteen.org/pressroom/wideangle or pbs.org/pressroom.

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WIDE ANGLE is a production of Thirteen/WNET New York for PBS. Stephen Segaller is executive producer. Pamela Hogan is series producer. Andy Halper is senior producer.

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Thirteen/WNET New York is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *Charlie Rose*, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*, *Wide Angle*, *Secrets of the Dead*, *NOW With David Brancaccio*, and *Cyberchase* - as well as the work of Bill Moyers - to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public broadcaster in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area, Thirteen reaches millions of viewers each week, airing the best of American public television along with its own local productions such as *The Ethnic Heritage Specials*, *The Thirteen Walking Tours*, *New York Voices*, and *Reel New York*. Thirteen extends the impact of its television productions through educational and community outreach projects - including the *Celebration of Teaching and Learning* - as well as Web sites and other digital media platforms. More information can be found at: www.thirteen.org.

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