

TALES OF A CITY BY THE SEA
Bakehouse Theatre Company
Bakehouse Theatre

Until 18 Jun 2016

Review by [Tony Busch](#)

This is a tale of conflict and survival told principally through the stories of two couples during the 2008 Gaza war.

Jomana (Helen Sawires) is a Palestinian journalist in Gaza who meets American born Palestinian doctor, Rami, (Osamah Sami) who arrives on board one of small boats that breaks the Israeli blockade.

Ali (Reece Vella) and Lama (Emina Ashman) are residents of Gaza. He loves her but she's unsure whether to marry him or not.

The play traces the development of these two relationships amid the death and destruction that is everyday life in Gaza.

Samah Sabawi has created a potent narrative that brims with raw examples of the reality of living under a hostile authority. She explores relationships and family values in a place where people fight to retain some sense of normality amid the daily death toll; where "funerals and weddings have become part of daily life".

There is some very evocative writing, though some of the poetry in the script is awkward, and Sabawi captures both the vulnerability and defiance of a people who find ways to endure what we, living in peace and plenty, could not even imagine.

The simple but effective set of white curtains that slide back and forth handles the multiple scene-changes fluently, atmospherically enhanced by Aseel Tayah's Arabic vocals.

Performances in the main have a ring of truth, though that truth ebbs and flows at times, particularly in the second half.

Sabawi has created an enthralling landscape and peopled it with believable characters. It looks beyond the political to examine the effect of war on those who cannot leave the battleground. It's a gripping piece of theatre that begs to be seen and heard.

[Adelaide Theatre Guide](#)

http://www.theatreguide.com.au/current_site/reviews/reviews_detail.php?ShowID=talesofacity&ShowYear=2016