REFUGEE FILM OPENS MINDS
THREE QUESTIONS FOR JULIA MELTZER, DIRECTOR OF DALYA'S OTHER COUNTRY; A COMING-OF-AGE DOCUMENTARY THAT FOLLOWS 14-YEAR-OLD DALYA ZENO AND HER MOTHER, WHO LEFT WAR-TORN SYRIA FOR A NEW LIFE IN LOS ANGELES.

What inspired this story?
I got to know the people of Syria while working on a documentary in Damascus. Dalaya and her mother aren't typical in that they have American citizenship, but like all immigrants, they struggled to adjust to a new culture and the loss of their former life. And with Trump's Muslim ban, the family's challenges intensified.

Has Dalaya's story changed minds?
I know it has. The most significant feedback I've gotten has been from high school students or younger. One ninth-grader said the film changed his thinking about what it's like to be Muslim. Because Dalaya is an open book—her emotions are always right on her face—there's a pathway, especially for young people, to relate to her. And fortunately, a lot of young people will see it, through distribution to 10,000 public libraries and community groups, and a screening tour. The Girl Scouts are also showing it to their troops.

You filmed the family watching the 2016 election but chose not to show their reactions. Why?
Dalya turned 18 the day before the election and voted for the first time. Watching the returns was devastating, but I didn't want to end on that note. Instead, we see Dalaya going to the airport to protest the Muslim ban, chanting "Let them in!" It was her first protest.

Hands-On Tour of Muslim Art and Life
Introducing children to multiple perspectives at an early age can have a lasting impact on their abilities to empathize with others and resist prejudicial thinking. The exhibition America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far, created by the Children's Museum of Manhattan, seeks to do just that by highlighting the richness of Muslim culture through a meticulous display of art, architecture, music, travel, and trade. Designed as a tour of Muslim art and life throughout history, America to Zanzibar is hands-on. It includes a global market, where tiny visitors can pretend to trade spices, ceramics, and textiles; a trade route complete with a two-story boat (dhows); and a Pakistani shipping truck that children can decorate with interchangeable tiles that replicate the ornate styles seen on real-life vehicles. Especially illuminating is a 3-D exploration of dozens of mosques around the world, spotlighting how Islam's "home" adapts in different landscapes.

This year, America to Zanzibar will travel to the Creative Discovery Museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville, Kentucky.

In early 2019, the exhibition will open at the Please Touch Museum in Philadelphia.

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