

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact:

Jamie Cohen at jcohen@jfi.org

Vince Johnson at VJohnson@tcdm-associates.com



jewish film institute



JEWISH FILM INSTITUTE'S LIGHT LUNCH AND NOT-SO-LIGHT CONVERSATION AT THE 2020 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

An Intimate Conversation with the Filmmaker Team from SOME KIND OF HEAVEN

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - January 16, 2020 - The Jewish Film Institute (JFI) returns to the Sundance Film Festival for its second annual **Light Lunch and Not-So-Light Conversation** to expand their understanding of Jewish experience through film, media and dialogue. The event will kick off a banner year for the organization that will include the 40th anniversary of the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, the Jewish Film Institute's flagship event, and the launching of a new Completion Funding Program.

Continuing a strategic partnership with the Sundance Institute that began in 2019, JFI will present an intimate conversation with the team from **SOME KIND OF HEAVEN** directed by **Lance Oppenheim**. Oppenheim will be joined on stage with editor **Daniel Garber**, producer **Melissa Oppenheim Lano** (Head of Global Content Development at Facebook), and **Kathleen Lingo** (Editorial Director for *New York Times* Film and Television). **Meredith Lavitt**, Director of Sundance Ignite, will moderate the discussion on Friday, January 24th from Noon to 2:00PM at the Kimball Art Center in Park City, Utah.

Lance Oppenheim:

Lance Oppenheim is a filmmaker from South Florida. His films explore the lives of people who create homes in unconventional places and circumstances. He was a 2019 Sundance Ignite *Fellow*, was one of *Filmmaker Magazine's* 2019 "25 New Faces of Independent Film," and is the youngest contributor to the *New York Times: Op-Docs*. Oppenheim graduated from Harvard University's visual and environmental studies program in 2019. **SOME KIND OF HEAVEN** is his first feature film.

Daniel Garber:

Daniel Garber works as an editor of documentary and narrative films in Brooklyn, NY. Most recently, he edited Lance Oppenheim's *SOME KIND OF HEAVEN*, premiering at Sundance 2020. Previously, he edited and co-produced Daniel Goldhaber & Isa Mazzei's techno-thriller *CAM* and received a Cinema Eye Honors nomination for his work as an editor on Pacho Velez & Sierra Pettengill's all-archival feature documentary *THE REAGAN SHOW*.

Melissa Oppenheim Lano:

Mel Oppenheim Lano is the Head of Global Content Development at Facebook, and the company's newest creative channel @curatedbyfb. As a Creative Producer, Mel has produced three Op-Docs with The New York Times, *HAPPIEST GUY IN THE WORLD* (Tribeca Film Festival 2018), and *NO JAIL TIME: THE MOVIE*. Melissa's first feature film *SOME KIND OF HEAVEN*, co-produced with Darren Aronofsky and The New York Times, is premiering at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival (NEXT). Outside of work, Mel enjoys spending her time with her husband and dog in Brooklyn and creating mixed media artwork and digital illustrations (@art_by_mel).

Kathleen Lingo:

Kathleen Lingo is the Editorial Director for *New York Times* Film and Television and is the former Executive Producer of the Op-Docs series. Since joining Op-Docs in 2013, the series published nearly 250 short films, virtual reality and interactive documentaries by filmmakers such as Errol Morris, Laura Poitras, Alex Gibney, Casey Neistat, Lucy Walker, Roger Ross Williams, Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady. Honors for Op-Docs include two Oscar nominations, nine Emmy nominations, three News and Documentary Emmy Awards, two Peabody Awards and official selections at top film festivals, including Sundance, the New York Film Festival, Telluride, Toronto and IDFA.

Meredith Lavitt:

Meredith Lavitt has over 25 years of experience working in the independent film arena. Lavitt is the director of Sundance Institute's Sundance Ignite program, which cultivates and supports a new generation of filmmakers. Prior to that, Lavitt was the director of the Sundance Film Forward Initiative, an international touring program as well as the Documentary Film Program. She was also instrumental in creating many of the Institute's student programs and community programs. In 2004 she founded Swirl Productions and produced the critically acclaimed *HOME FRONT*, which premiered at the 2006 Tribeca Film Festival and on Showtime and has worked with award-winning filmmakers including Richard Hankin and Eddie Schmidt, among others. Her last film *THE GRAND RESCUE* premiered at the Mountain Film Festival in Spring 2014 and premiered on PBS spring 2016. She currently sits on the Board of Directors of Spy Hop Productions, Utah Film Commission Advisory Committee. Meredith holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Brown University and lives in Park City, Utah with her family.

About the Jewish Film Institute

The Jewish Film Institute (JFI) is the premier curatorial voice for Jewish film and media and a leading arts and culture organization in the Bay Area. JFI catalyzes and inspires communities in San Francisco and around the world to expand their understanding of Jewish life and culture through film, media, and dialogue. JFI each year produces their signature summer Festival, the **San Francisco Jewish Film Festival**, in four Bay Area counties, the largest Jewish cultural event in Northern California and the first and largest festival of its kind worldwide. The annual festival provides a suite of awards, some with cash prizes, including: the Freedom of Expression Award (recent recipients include Norman Lear, Lee Grant, Kirk Douglas and documentary filmmakers Joe Berlinger and Liz Garbus); Audience Award for Best Narrative and Best Documentary; the Film Movement Award for Best Narrative Short; a juried award for Best Documentary Short (the winner is eligible for the Oscars); and the SF Film Critics Award for best international fiction feature.

Additionally, JFI provides a number of Filmmaker Services to help provide support for emerging and established filmmakers working with Jewish themes and create a continuum of support for filmmakers at various stages in their careers. This support is provided through JFI's Filmmaker Residency Program which since 2012 as provided office space and support for independent producers (current filmmakers in residence include documentary filmmakers: Nora Mariana, Theo Rigby, Eva Ilona Brzeski, Yoav Potash, and Charene Zalis), and the Jerusalem Film Workshop a program in which JFI sends two emerging documentary student filmmakers to a 6-week documentary film workshop in Jerusalem to make films that will screen at the Jerusalem International Film Festival.

Finally, JFI provides a number of online programs including:the JFI Film Archive, the largest database of Jewish cinema online today, with almost 40 years of curatorial history and more than 1800 films to investigate, this archive is the largest online resource for Jewish film and media in the World; through JFI On Demand, more than 350 films of its greatest hits can be accessed anytime, anywhere; and the Monthly Online Shorts, in which every month JFI releases films for free to a global audience of 2.3 million since 2009.

Facebook: [facebook.com/sfjewishfilm/](https://www.facebook.com/sfjewishfilm/)
Twitter: @SFJewishFilm
Instagram: @SFJewishFilm
YouTube: [youtube.com/sfjewishfilm](https://www.youtube.com/sfjewishfilm)
Website: www.jfi.org / www.sfjff.org