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JEWISH FILM INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES JFI FILM COMPLETION FUNDING PROGRAM

The Nation's Only Grant Program Specifically Aimed at Completing Jewish-Content Films of any genre. Call for Entries announced January 24th at JFI's Sundance 2020 Panel

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - January 24, 2020 - The Jewish Film Institute (JFI) announced today the launch of the JFI Film Completion Funding program which will support both emerging and established filmmakers telling original, contemporary stories that promote thoughtful consideration of Jewish history, life, culture, and identity. Filmmakers can visit the Jewish Film Institute website at JFI.org/grants now through April 3rd to apply and to see complete details and eligibility requirements.

Since the shuttering of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture in 2015, there are currently no film and media grant programs specifically aimed at completing Jewish-content films. With anti-Semitism on the rise, and an increasing divisiveness in public discourse, there has never been a more critical time for work that builds empathy and understanding. This new funding program will help secure the future of Jewish storytelling by expanding understanding of Jewish experience, celebrating multiple perspectives on Jewish culture, and building connections within and beyond diverse Jewish communities.

Call for entries will open January 24th at JFI's official Sundance Partner Event at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. Projects may be in any format including feature narratives, documentaries, shorts, episodic programs and web series. Eligible films must be in post-production and the filmmaker must submit a cut of the final film as part of the application process. Grants ranging from \$5,000- \$50,000 (depending on project needs) will be awarded. Awards will be announced at the 40th San Francisco Jewish Film Festival in July.

"We know that film has unparalleled power to open hearts and bridge differences," states Jewish Film Institute Executive Director Lexi Leban. "We are excited to be able to provide this much needed resource to the diverse and talented body of filmmakers working with Jewish themes."

In addition to the completion funding program, JFI announced today a new National Advisory Committee. This prestigious committee, comprised of filmmakers, actors and producers, will help provide guidance for this growing suite of filmmaker services. The group includes: Alan Berliner, Bonni Cohen, Rob Epstein, Amos Gitai, Elliott Gould, Lee Grant, Roberta Grossman, Judith Helfand, Sayed Kashua, Gideon Raff, Lacey Schwartz and Jon Shenk.

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 creates 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 JFI sends two emerging documentary student filmmakers to the Jerusalem Film Workshop, a 6-week program in which students from all over the world make short documentaries that screen at the Jerusalem International Film Festival and the San Francisco Jewish 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 most comprehensive online resource for Jewish film and media in the world; JFI On Demand, provides online access to over 350 films from the archive that can be accessed anytime, anywhere; and a free Monthly Online Shorts program. These films have garnered 2.3 million views since 2009.

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