

PRESS RELEASE

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SAN
FRANCISCO
JEWISH
FILM
FESTIVAL

The Jewish Film Institute
presenters of the
San Francisco Jewish Film Festival
announces highlights of the
41st SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL
July 22 - August 1, 2021

June 21, 2021 - The San Francisco Jewish Film Festival is the world's largest and oldest Jewish Film Festival in the world. On July 22 – August 1 we are proud to present over 50 films from over 20 countries with an unprecedented number of shorts and special guests from around the globe, celebrating and broadening the discussion around Jewish life and identity.

This year's festival has "something for everyone." Those who are comfortable viewing from home can do so, and people who are excited to gather in the community will be able to enjoy some screenings in theaters, including the Castro in San Francisco and an East Bay venue.

The complete lineup will be announced on June 24. Ticket sales and registration will be available at that time. Visit sfjff.org for updates and announcements.

Highlights include:

Opening Night

MISHA AND THE WOLVES

The dramatic tale of a woman whose Holocaust memoir took the world by storm, but a fallout with her publisher – who turned detective – revealed an audacious deception created to hide a darker truth.

Closing Night

PLAN A

1945. A group of Jewish Holocaust survivors planned to poison the water system in Germany, killing millions of Germans in an ultimate act of revenge. The bold and deadly operation was called - PLAN A. Based on a true story.

Freedom of Expression Award

Agnieszka Holland with her new film CHARLATAN

Legendary Polish filmmaker and recipient of **SFJFF's 2021 Freedom of Expression Award**, Agnieszka Holland's newest film is a richly drawn biopic of Czech healer Jan Mikolášek who rose to fame through his uncanny ability to diagnose disease with a mere glance at the patient's urine. *The Freedom of Express Award, presented annually at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival since 2005, honors the unfettered imagination, which is the cornerstone of a just, free and open society. Past recipients include Norman Lear, Kirk Douglas, Liz Garbus and Lee Grant.*

Centerpiece Narrative

200 METERS

On a technicality, a desperate Palestinian father is denied entry at an Israeli checkpoint to see his injured son. It's just 200 meters across the border wall, but to Mustafa it might as well be a world away. Taking matters into his own hands he makes the dangerous decision to smuggle himself across.

Centerpiece Documentary

THE CONDUCTOR

Internationally renowned conductor Marin Alsop smashed the glass ceiling when she became the first woman to serve as music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra, and the Vienna Radio Symphony

Orchestra. *The Conductor* takes the audience backstage to the artistry and energy that rewards her audiences and inspires her students.

Take Action Spotlight

NOT GOING QUIETLY

A rising star in progressive politics and new father, 32-year old Ady Barkan's life is upended when he is diagnosed with ALS. After a chance encounter with a powerful senator on an airplane catapults him to national fame, Ady and a motley crew of activists ignite a once-in-a-generation movement for universal healthcare, in a journey that transforms his belief in what is possible for the country and for his family. Q&A hosted by the Teen Social Change Fellowship youth jury. *SFJFF's annual Take Action programming features impactful documentaries exemplifying the Jewish values embodied in tikkun olam, which inspire us to repair the world with our actions.*

Song and Dance

A KADDISH FOR BERNIE MADOFF

An artistic excommunication set on Wall Street in 2008. *A Kaddish For Bernie Madoff* is a mystical meta-musical about the greatest financial fraud in history, as seen through the eyes of musician/poet Alicia Jo Rabins.

Next Wave Spotlight

WET DOG

When 15 year old Soheil moves to Wedding, kids listen to hip hop and are proud of their Turkish, Muslim roots. Being Iranian-Jewish, he hides his origins to fit in. Until one day, he realizes that the stakes are much higher, and he begins fighting for his own truth, hoping that love, friendship and acceptance will reward him.

Local Spotlight

PROGNOSIS: NOTES ON LIVING

When maverick Oscar-winning Bay Area documentary filmmaker Debra Chasnoff is diagnosed with stage-4 breast cancer, she faces injustice as always, with her camera. In-person screening with the filmmaking team.

TV Spotlight

LABYRINTH OF PEACE

A compelling portrait of an industrial family dynasty, inspired by true yet little-known events in post-WWII “neutral” Switzerland. From the producers of European box-office hit *Heidi*. This is a six episode television series, presented in two halves.

Other Highlights

THE ADVENTURES OF SAUL BELLOW

For most of his adult life, Saul Bellow was the most acclaimed novelist in America and winner of, among other awards, the Nobel Prize in Literature, three National Book Awards, and the Pulitzer Prize. *The Adventures of Saul Bellow* is the first-ever documentary film on Bellow, the man described by critic James Wood as the "greatest of American prose stylists in the 20th century."

THE BINDING OF ITZIK (short)

In his online search for bookbinding materials, a middle aged Hasidic bookbinder stumbles across a Craigslist ad offering ‘binding lessons for submissive women.’ He responds to it, becoming entangled in an emotionally intense BDSM relationship with a stranger on the internet. Funded by the inaugural JFI Completion Grants Program.

BORN IN AUSCHWITZ

Back by popular demand, this is the untold story of the only Jewish baby who was born in the death camp before the liberation and survived. An extraordinary journey of the second and third generation breaking the cycle of trauma to free themselves from Auschwitz forever.

THE LIGHT AHEAD

Arguably the finest of the four Yiddish films directed by Edgar G. Ulmer. David Opatoshu (*Exodus, Torn Curtain*) made his film debut as Fishke, a lame young man hopelessly in love with a blind orphan girl (Helen Beverley) in cholera-obsessed Glubsk (e.g. Foolstown). Descendents of Ulmer live in the Bay Area. New 4K digital restoration.

MY FATHER AND ME

Acclaimed documentary filmmaker Nick Broomfield takes a distinctly personal look at his relationship with his humanist-pacifist father, Maurice Broomfield, a factory worker turned photographer of vivid images of postwar England.

THOSE WHO HEARD AND THOSE WHO SAW

An experimental essay film about a network of internment camps that were built in eastern Canada in 1940, with British funding, to imprison 2,000 Jewish refugees who had fled Europe during the lead up to the Second World War. Funded by the inaugural JFI Completion Grants Program.

TIGER WITHIN

Starring Ed Asner, this is the story of the unlikely friendship between Samuel, an elderly, lonely Holocaust survivor, and Casey, an angry 14-year-old runaway.

WHO'S AFRAID OF ALICE MILLER

Martin is rejected by his cold, uncaring mother and beaten by his father: a childhood without love. It sounds like a case right out of the book "The Drama of the Gifted Child" by world-renowned Swiss psychoanalyst Alice Miller. Except Martin is the son of Alice Miller

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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 based 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. Throughout the year JFI screens films in the community including at WinterFest, a mini-festival in February, in senior communities, JCC's and at San Quentin Prison.

Additionally, JFI provides a number of Filmmaker Services to 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 has provided

office space and support for independent producers, the JFI Completion Grant program, which in its inaugural year provided a total of 75 K to six projects, and the JFI Social Justice Teen Fellowship with participants crafting and promoting a series of screenings and conversations around JFI's social justice films for other teens in the Bay Area.

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 1,800 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.

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