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Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan’s 15th Annual Other Israel Film Festival Announces 2021 Lineup as It Goes Hybrid with Virtual and In-Person Programming

Other Israel Film Festival will take place November 4–11, 2021,
Opening with Eran Kolirin’s LET IT BE MORNING,
Closing with Ameen Nayfeh’s Venice Days Award Winner 200 METERS,
featuring a special Spotlight screening of Nadav Lapid’s Cannes Jury Prize Winner AHED’S KNEE.

New York, NY (October 6, 2021) - The Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan announces the lineup for its 15th Annual Other Israel Film Festival, which continues to highlight some of the top cinema from Israel and Palestine and provides an internationally recognized platform for meaningful discussion on the past, present, and future of the region. The week-long festival will take a hybrid format with in-person premieres and filmmaker Q+As at the freshly renovated Carole Zabar Center for Film’s Goldman-Sonnenfeldt auditorium at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan and streaming online from November 4–11, 2021. Over 14 feature length and short films will be available for ticket holders to stream during the festival, examining timely and impactful themes such as Palestinian-Israeli relations, Israel and the Diaspora, Israel and the military, leaders, and more. All films will be followed by conversations with notable guests and filmmakers along with other special events, both in-person and virtual. Tickets go on sale October 5, 2021.

The Other Israel Film Festival, founded in 2007, presents high-quality cinema that inspires conversation and takes an in-depth look into Israeli and Palestinian societies and underrepresented populations in Israel. The festival explores human stories and social issues for Israel and its neighbors through dramatic and documentary films, as well as panels and events about history, culture, and identity. With partner organizations New Israel Fund, Encounter, J-Street, and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues, the festival aims to engage the community, deepen its views, challenge its perspectives, and drive it to action.

The festival brings new perspectives on the realities of Israel and Palestine. Highlights from the 15th Annual Other Israel Film Festival include LET IT BE MORNING, Eran Kolirin’s (THE BAND’S VISIT) latest film, a sharp and timely adaptation of Sayed Kashua’s acclaimed novel of the same name, which premiered at this year’s Un Certain Regard; Rising Star Ameen Nayfeh’s Venice Days People’s Choice Award Winner 200 METERS, a powerful and searing portrait of a Palestinian father, with Ali Suliman in another out-standing performance where, desperate to see his son after an accident, he attempts to smuggle himself over the Israeli border wall; Nadav Lapid’s Cannes Jury Prize Winner AHED’S KNEE, following Y, a celebrated Israeli filmmaker, as he arrives in a remote desert village to present a film at a local library and ends up battling against
the loss of freedom in his country and the fear of losing his mother; and in collaboration with DOCNYC, Michal Weits’ fascinating expose of the Jewish National Fund’s (JNF) beloved BLUE BOX, which reveals an uncomfortable truth.

“This summer’s violent events, which spilled over from Israel and Gaza into the U.S., show us again how fractured our community is over the topic of Israel and Palestine, and how important it is to hear the other’s perspective,” says Carole Zabar, founder of the festival. “Our festival has expanded its scope of themes to include films that show brave voices of change in this torn region.”

Along with the on-demand screenings, the festival will feature Q+As with the filmmakers and panel discussions to create a welcoming dialogue about underrepresented populations, the Middle East conflict, and more.

"After last year’s record-breaking attendance in the virtual format, we are excited to bring back the communal experience of film in our newly renovated theater, while providing virtual content as well,” says Isaac Zablocki, director of the festival. “The return to in-person events allows us to highlight the most important part of our film festival: The crucial conversations between filmmakers, experts, and the community.”

The full, week-long festival pass is available for $90 and includes access to all conversations and films, which can be streamed on demand during the festival. Access to individual screenings is $15 per film. Conversations, guest speakers, and film schedule to be announced shortly. For more information about films and purchasing tickets, visit www.otherisrael.org.

FEATURES, TV SERIES, and SHORTS LINEUP

FEATURES

200 Meters
Dir. Ameen Nayfeh
Palestine/Jordan/Qatar | 2021 | 96 min | Drama
Arabic/Hebrew/English
Mustafa lives in the West Bank and his wife, Salwa, lives 200 meters away. They are separated by the Israeli border wall. One day, Mustafa gets the call every parent dreads—his son has been injured in an accident. Rushing to cross the Israeli checkpoint to see him, Mustafa is denied entry on a technicality. A 200-meter distance becomes a 200-kilometer odyssey as Mustafa, left with no choice, attempts to smuggle himself to the other side of the wall.
In person: Closing Night, Thu, Nov 11, 7 pm
Streaming: Nov 4–11

A Reel War: Shalaal
Dir. Karnit Mandel
Israel | 2021 | 60 min | Documentary
Hebrew/Arabic/English
History is written by the victors. But is it also archived by them? While researching footage for a documentary, an Israeli archive researcher comes across a box of tapes titled “Loot.” *Shalaal* is a story of a lost Palestinian film archive seized by the Israeli military. Using never-before-seen footage, the film delves into historical events captured in the footage through the POV of eyewitness accounts on both sides. It is the story of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—from a new viewpoint. The real war is not one fought with a reel war, fought not with firepower, but with the ability to control the narrative and deny people access to their own history.

**In-person:** Mon, Nov 8, 6:15PM  
**Streaming:** Nov 4-11

**Ahed’s Knee**  
Dir. Nadav Lapid  
109 min | Israel | 2021 | Drama/Comedy  
Hebrew  
Y, a celebrated Israeli filmmaker, arrives in a remote desert village to present a film at a local library. Struggling to cope with the recent news of his mother’s fatal illness, he is pushed into a spiral of rage when a government employee asks him to sign a form placing restrictions on what he can say at the film’s Q&A. Told over the course of one day, Y battles against the loss of freedom in his country and the fear of losing his mother. This masterfully detailed, complex drama offers a sharp critique of the censorship, hypocrisy, and violence instigated by Israel and repressive governments everywhere. Winner of Cannes Film Festival Jury Prize.  
**In-person:** Spotlight Screening: Sat, Nov 6, 7:30PM

**And I Was There**  
Dir. Eran Paz  
65 min | Israel | 2020 | Documentary  
Hebrew  
As a young soldier, director Eran Paz documented himself and the members of his unit taking over Palestinian homes in the West Bank and locking families in rooms in order to maintain military control. Eighteen years later, he decides to confront his past and his personal responsibility within systems of power.  
**In-person:** Wed, Nov 10, 8:30PM  
**Streaming:** Nov 4-11

**Blue Box**  
Dir. Michal Weits  
82 min | Israel | 2021 | Documentary  
Hebrew  
The Jewish National Fund’s (JNF) beloved Blue Box campaign was internationally successful in raising support for the purchase and forestation of land in Palestine and later Israel. The trees have since spread their roots, but evidence remains of the Palestinian communities displaced by the once-fragile seedlings. Joseph Weits, filmmaker Michal Weits’ great-grandfather was a key figure in the organization, his private diaries reveal the story of the massive land takeover that led
to the creation of the state of Israel. In conversations with her family, she questions his actions which result in an exploration of a nation’s past and an uncomfortable truth.

Presented in collaboration with DOCNYC.

In person: Sun, Nov 7, 4:30PM
Streaming: Nov 4–11

Cinema Sabaya
Dir. Orit Fouks Rotem
Israel | 2021 | 90 min | Drama
Actress Dana Ivgy leads a cast of non-actors in this dramatic narrative. Nine women, Arab and Jewish, take part in a video workshop to learn how to document their lives, hosted by a young film director named Rona. As the women begin to film their lives and share the raw, homemade footage with the rest of the group, the group dynamic shifts, forcing each of them to challenge their views and beliefs as they get to know one another and themselves better.

In person: Tue, Nov 9, 6 pm

Let It Be Morning
Dir. Eran Kolirin
101 min | Israel, France | 2021 | Drama
Sami lives in Jerusalem with his wife and child. An invitation to his brother’s wedding forces him to return to the Arab village where he grew up. After the wedding, with no warning or explanation, the village is put under a military lockdown by Israeli soldiers and cut off from the outside world. Chaos rises overnight amongst those stuck within the walls. Director Eran Kolirin (The Band’s Visit) brings Sayed Kashua’s best selling novel to life, exposing the absurdist world of Palestinian reality while highlighting human stories of being trapped in an unexpected situation.

In-person: Opening Night, Thurs, Nov 4, 7:00pm

Skies Above Hebron
Dir. Paul King, Esther Hertog
55 min | Netherlands | 2020 | Documentary
Filmed over the course of five years, the lives of three Palestinian boys, Amer (16), Anas (12) and Marwaan (16) are documented as they growing up in the ancient city center of the West Bank city Hebron. Hebron is the only major Palestinian city with a growing Jewish settlement built in its heart. Here 800 settlers live amongst Israeli soldiers who ‘protect’ them from 200.000 Palestinians.

In-person: Sat, Nov 6, 4:30PM
Streaming: Nov 4-11

The First 54 Years: An Abbreviated Manual for Military Occupation
Dir. Avi Mograbi
110 min | France, Finland, Israel, Germany | 2021 | Documentary
Through the testimonies of the soldiers who implemented the 54-year Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, director Avi Mograbi provides a “Manual for Military Occupation” with insights on how a colonialist occupation works and the logic at work behind those practices.
Special Preview: The Fourth Window
Dir. Yair Qedar
88 min | Israel | 2020 | Documentary
English, Hebrew
Behind the international success story of Amos Oz, a writer translated into 45 languages and a symbol of the Israeli conscience, lurked a tumultuous personal life. When he was 12 years old, his mother died by suicide. Several years before his death, his daughter ended all communication with him after accusing him of being physically and mentally violent. In a series of conversations with his latest biographer and a tapestry of biographical passages, literature, and conversations with the main people in his life, Amos Oz tells his last story.
In-person: Tue, Wed, Nov 10, 6PM
Streaming: Nov 4-11

What If? Ehud Barak on War and Peace
Dir. Ran Tal
85 min | Israel | 2020 | Documentary
Hebrew
Can a leader succeed in influencing the world? 78-year-old Ehud Barak is a controversial former prime minister, decorated and criticized commander on the battlefield, and one of the leading figures of the Zionist movement. He is also the initiator of Israel’s assassination plan of Yasser Arafat. In this remarkable film, Barak observes with disillusioned clarity his own history and the history of the State of Israel. An outstanding philosophical essay, and proposes a deep cinematic reflection on history and decision-making, while trying to figure it all out - "What if?"
In-person: Sun, Nov 7, 2PM
Streaming: Nov 4-11

Sneak Preview: With No Land
Dir. Aalam-Warqe Davidian, Kobi Davidian
Israel | 82 min | 2021 | Documentary
Amharic/Hebrew/English
Thirty years ago, Operation Solomon brought 15,000 Jews from Ethiopia to Israel in under 24 hours, and was hailed as a magnificent military operation that only Israel could have pulled off. Discover the untold history, silenced and kept in the dark for decades, and learn about the dangerous but necessary actions that were taken across three continents by the Jewish Ethiopian activists fighting for justice for their community. With firsthand testimonies and unique archive footage, the film retells the history leading up to Operation Solomon and follows the current efforts to bring those who were left behind in Ethiopia to Israel.
In person: Tue, Nov 9, 8:15 pm
Streaming: Nov 4–11, only in Tri-State area (NJ, NY, CT)

TV SERIES
**Nafas**
Dir. and creator: Maysaloun Hamoud
35 min x 2 episodes |
Warda, Kayes and Salah, three Palestinian students, fled their upbringings in the conservative Arab society for the heart of Tel-Aviv. At the center of the Jewish, liberal, hipster bubble, they reinvent themselves. Vivid, wild and taboo-breaking, Nafas is a groundbreaking series, the first of its kind in Israel: a show in Arabic about Arabs, the likes of which viewers have never seen before in Maysaloun Hamoud’s (*In Between*) debut television project.
In-person: Fri, Nov 5, 6PM

**SHORTS**

**Mission Hebron**
Dir. Rona Segal
22 min | Israel | 2020 | Documentary
Six Israeli men who served in the army give an account of their mission in Hebron, a Palestinian city in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. The young soldiers were tasked with protecting a compact community of Jewish settlers from the city’s predominantly Palestinian population. Barely adults, these young men were given complete control of public life in the area. Based on the duties defined in their military handbook, the six ex-soldiers describe their mission, both official and unofficial.

**Paradise**
(Israel, 2021)
32 min, Hebrew and Arabic
Director: Asaf Saban
After years of living in Berlin, Ali, a young Palestinian, lands in Israel for a home visit. Following a cold welcome at the airport, Ali decides to seek some peace and quiet on a short vacation in the desert of Sinai, Egypt. When a group of young Israeli Jewish tourists mistakes him for one of them, Ali is forced to reflect on his identity.

**Polygraph**
Dir. Samira Saraya
20 min | Israel | 2020 | Drama
Arabic, Hebrew
Yasmine, an openly lesbian Arab nurse, finds out that her lover, Or, an intelligence officer in the Israeli army, has been reporting on their relationship. Yasmine’s sister arrives for a visit from the West Bank, not knowing that she is going to meet the occupying enemy at her own sister’s house.

**About the Other Israel Film Festival**
The Other Israel Film Festival, founded in 2007, presents high-quality cinema that inspires conversation and takes an in-depth look into Israeli and Palestinian societies and underrepresented populations in Israel. The festival explores human stories and social issues for Israel and its neighbors. Other Israel presents dramatic and documentary films, as well as panels and events about history, culture, and identity. With partner organizations, the festival aims to engage the community, deepen its views, challenge its perspectives, and drive it to action. Learn more at otherisrael.org.

About the Israel Film Center
The Israel Film Center of the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan is the leading resource for Israeli films in America, with the goal of expanding Israel's emerging film industry and promoting Israeli culture in America. The center, a program of The Carole Zabar Center for Film, serves as an exhibitor, promoter, educator, funder, distributor, producer, network organizer, advisor, and festival producer, and includes a viewing library and online database of Israeli cinema and the leading Israeli film streaming site.

About the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan
Together with its community, the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan creates opportunities for people to connect, grow, and learn within an ever-changing Jewish landscape. Located on 76th Street and Amsterdam Avenue, the JCC is a vibrant non-profit community center on the Upper West Side. It also presents a robust slate of virtual programming, serving an even wider community. The JCC serves over 55,000 people annually through 1,200 programs each season that educate, inspire, and transform participants' minds, bodies, and spirits. Throughout COVID-19, the JCC has pivoted to meet the community online, exceeding 102,000 registrations to over 3,000 virtual classes and programs in the earliest part of the pandemic. Since its inception, the JCC has been committed to serving the community by offering programs, classes, and events that reach beyond neighborhood boundaries, reaching people at all stages of their lives. Learn more at mmjccm.org.

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