



ISRAEL FILM CENTER

The ICC in Manhattan The Samuel Priest Rose Building 334 Amsterdam Ave at 76th St

Israel Film Center Newsletter #12 July 2011

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Off-White Lies

Jerusalem Film Festival Notes

For the past 28 years, the Jerusalem Film Festival had been the leading presenting platform for the new crops of the Israeli film industry each year. The Israel Film Center team attended the festival - the world's leading platform for Israeli films. We are happy to share our experience and review some of the many Israeli films we saw.

The 11 narrative features were not as strong as past years, but it was one of the strongest years for documentaries. It is possible to identify some common threads in the themes of the premiering documentaries: reflections on Gaza, second and third generations to the holocaust embarking on journeys to un-solve holocaust mysteries, and exploration of minority populations in Israel.

The Haggiag Award for Best Full-Length Feature Film went to director Joseph Madmoni and producer Chaim Sharir for *Restoration*, a drama about a family's effort to save their ailing antique restoration business. The film, starring Sasson Gabai, also won World Cinema Screenwriting Award at the

2011 Sundance Film Festival, and top prize at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.

A festival favorite for Isaac Zablacki, director the Israel Film Center, was *Off-White Lies* - a small and quirky drama about a father who, along with his daughter, pretends to be from a war stricken area of the north in order to receive hospitality from a family in Jerusalem - but ultimately it was a sweet father daughter story that was very approachable. Sadly, it has some sexual content towards the end that makes it less family friendly. Gur Bentwich, playing the father, received best actor award for his role.

Several of the narrative feature films explored life in the Kibbutz and the struggle of the movement in recent years. *My Australia* is a beautiful production about two wild Polish boys in the 1950's who are shocked to find out they are Jewish. They are brought to Israel and placed in a kibbutz. Great performances and beautifully shot, though the story line is a bit underdeveloped. In *Beautiful Valley*, eighty-year-old Hanna Mendelssohn's is forced into retirement by her kibbutz after years of devotion and hard work. The film has a very slow pace and captures the demise of the old kibbutznik.

The experience of Sephardi (Mizrahi) life in Israel is brought forth in *My Lovely Sister* and *Obsession*. *My Lovely Sister* is a sweet story of a superstitious Moroccan family, dealing with ghosts of the past, starring Moshe Ivgy. *Obsession* takes place in an old Sephardic neighborhood in Jerusalem and tells the story of a poor family's struggles with an abusive patriarch.

Man Without a Cell Phone and *Lipstikka* deal with the Arab experience in Israel. The first, which played at the New Directors New Films festival, is a sweet story with some political undertones, which are mostly overlooked by the comedy.

Lipstikka is a controversial suspense film which premiered at the Berlin Film Festival. It has great performances starring Natalie Attia and Clara Khoury as two childhood friends dealing with actions of the past and conflicting narratives.

Some of the best documentaries this year in the festival were:

The Flat - Great story of a son cleaning up his grandmother's apartment and finding evidence of a mysterious relationship

between his grandparents and a Nazi. Great story and well made.

Dolphin Boy - Follows a boy's rehab with dolphins in a beautiful story that is stranger than fiction, and makes an anti-violence statement. Superb.

The Lost Love Diaries - A story of a woman in search of her lost love after being separated during the Holocaust. Great character and nice story... Very amusing.

Incessant Visions - Brilliantly made documentary about architect Erich Mendelson that also captures the pre-war period in Germany.

Ameer Got His Gun - Beautifully made documentary about an Arab who joins the Israeli army. Thrilling.

The Law in These Parts - Winner of the Best Documentary Award, that brilliantly analyzes the military court over of the occupied territories through conversations with lawyers and judges, as well as fascinating archival footage.

Luxuries - An ironic inspection of what foods are allowed into gaza and why... David Ofek does his classic great job.

Demons and Madness - A mocumentary about superstition in the family of an Arab filmmaker.



Israel Film Center - Upcoming Screening

(at The JCC in Manhattan, 334 Amsterdam Ave, New York)

The Queen Has No Crown

Directed by Tomar Heymann
(85min, Israel, 2011)

In what is possibly his most intimate and affecting work, Tomer Heymann (Paper Dolls) assembles his new film out of old 8mm home movies from his father and grandfather. Through his own videos documenting his recent life, Heymann documents his time growing up gay, rootless, at home in Israel while his brothers moved to America. Most poignant is Heymann's portrayal of his relationship with his mother -- for whom he can never decide his feelings.

Tue, Jun 26, 7:30pm

[Tickets & More Information](#)



Job Opening - Film Program Associate

The JCC in Manhattan's Film department currently has an opening for a Program Associate. The Program Associate will provide administrative, production, and outreach support for all film programs including the assistance in the establishment of the Israel Film Center. The Program Associate will be responsible for supporting the programs and logistics of the department. The Program Associate will be active in the planning and execution of events and festivals as well as overseeing the library and database.

For full details, and to apply, [click here](#).



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