MAYERSON JCC

JEWISH & ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL

January 29 - March 5, 2022

Universal stories seen through a different lens
The Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival presents a diverse, inspiring lineup of award-winning films and engaging, educational programming that connects to the Jewish and Israeli stories. The 2022 Festival offers a full virtual lineup to view from the comfort of your home.

The festival is virtual, including film showings and special events, with 48-hour watch availability. Please note geographic regions in which virtual films are available, noted on the virtual Eventive platform for each film. Details as of 1.10.2022.

Watch trailers and buy tickets at MayersonJCC.org/Film

For technology troubleshooting and Eventive virtual platform support, please visit watch.eventive.org/help.

For Festival questions & information, please contact arts@mayersonjcc.org.

These films are not rated and are recommended for mature audiences.

Only feature film lengths noted. All times listed are Eastern Time.
For the past 35 years, this Film Festival has presented quality films engaging with a broad range of topics related to Jewish and Israeli experiences and universal themes, along with unique speakers and programming which allow for more depth and understanding. The 2022 Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival continues this tradition while responding to the reality of the pandemic, our digital world, and our communal needs. The festival is fully virtual again this year, with all films and special events available during scheduled 48-hour viewing windows.

We are encouraged by the support of this Festival from sponsors, partners, attendees, and we are inspired to continue growing and offering opportunities to be engaged, educated, and entertained while strengthening our community. Please enjoy the pages that follow as you explore this year’s film and event offerings. Enjoy the 2022 Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival!

Frances Kahan  
Cultural Arts Manager  

Stacey Schimberg  
Committee Chair  

Marc Fisher  
Mayerson JCC CEO
Persian Lessons

Opening Film

2020 · Drama · 120 minutes
LANGUAGES: German, French, Italian, English
DIRECTOR: Vadim Perelman

January 29-31
VIEWING REGION: Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window Opens at 7:30pm Jan. 29

Based on the novel by Wolfgang Kohlhaase, Gilles, a young Jewish Belgian man, narrowly survives arrest and execution in 1942 by falsely claiming to be Persian. In a German concentration camp, Gilles is assigned a seemingly implausible mission: to teach Farsi to Klaus Koch, the officer in charge of the camp’s kitchen, who dreams of opening a restaurant in Persia (Iran) once the war is over. Gilles finds himself having to invent a language he doesn’t know, word by word. One false move could expose everything.

Content Warning: violence, nudity, sexual references

Ticket includes a film festival gift! Please purchase tickets by January 21 to guarantee gift.

VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENT
Monday, January 31
7:30pm | Virtual
Join us for a discussion with film director Vadim Perelman.

Presenting Partner Nancy & David Wolf
Holocaust & Humanity Center
This is a truly universal story. It’s not about Jews, Persians, Germans, or anyone else. As in *House of Sand and Fog*, the characters could have been of any nationality, not necessarily Iranian. They could have been Russian or Chinese emigrants, but this would not have changed the situation. *Persian Lessons* is not a specific film about the Holocaust — it is a specific film about human survival. A movie about the power of the soul, will, and mind.

The film says “inspired by real events.” As a basis, our screenwriter Tsofin took Wolfgang Kohlhaase’s story *Persian for a Kapo* with a similar plot. I think such a story could well have taken place. But there is no documentary evidence. In general, there are a million real stories of survival. Every director looks for himself in his works. Gilles is a Jew who pretends to be a Persian in order to survive at the concentration camp. It was me, when I came to Canada, not knowing English, and over the first years of emigration, I was forced to pretend and constantly felt like a fake.

Everywhere I am I feel differently and alike at the same time. I was born and raised in Ukraine; then there was Italy, and I now have a Canadian passport. I have a US residence permit, and if I had a Russian passport, it would be easier with a visa. I also have an apartment in Prague, and I live there too. No need for nationalities and ties. I am a man of the world. A director. And that’s all.

Vadim Perelman
Director

Vadim Perelman made his directorial debut in 2003 with *House of Sand and Fog*. The film, starring Jennifer Connelly and Ben Kingsley, was nominated for three Academy Awards and also marked his first screenplay credit. His second feature, *The Life Before Her Eyes*, starred Uma Thurman and Evan Rachel Wood. He also established himself as an innovative director of commercials his clients included Microsoft, Panasonic, Nike and Coors as well as award-winning music videos.
2020 ∙ Drama ∙ 96 minutes
LANGUAGES: Arabic, Hebrew, English
DIRECTOR: Ameen Nayfeh

February 1-3
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window Opens at 7:30pm Feb. 1

Mustafa and his wife Salwa live 200 meters apart in villages separated by the wall. One day he gets a call every parent dreads: his son has had an accident. Rushing to cross the Israeli check point, Mustafa is denied on a technicality. But a father’s love won’t give up and he will do anything to reach his son. 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.

Short Film Screening of Paradise by Asaf Saban included.

VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENT
Thursday, February 3
7:30pm | Virtual
Join us for a discussion with Yarden Neeman, Shaliach to Cincinnati, and Jackie Congedo, Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Cincinnati.
From the Director

I carry lots of memories that I no longer have access to, or it could be that I fear to dwell back into it. Oppression does alienate you as it denies you your basic rights; especially when you start adapting to it!

A forced separation aches a lot. 200 Meters is my story and the story of thousands of Palestinians, and stories can definitely alter lives. I believe in the power of the cinema and how it touches our lives in magical ways. I need to tell this story.

Images of the wall, checkpoints and soldiers are probably what come to mind when Palestine is mentioned. Although these images are also in this film, the focus is on what such a separation does to us as human beings. And to shed more light on the invisible barriers and walls that are created as a result of the physical barrier.

Here, in Palestine, we got used to adapting to new situations, to do as we’re told and camouflage our feelings. But this should no longer be acceptable. Freedom of movement is a very basic human right that seems to be a fairytale in such a brutal reality. The main character Mustafa has obeyed the rules, endured the humiliation and did as told in order to secure a small chance to be with his family, but when the same rules that alienated his life put his family and fatherhood at stake, will he obey it any longer?

Ameen Nayfeh
Director/Writer

Yarden Neeman
Speaker

Yarden Neeman, 32, is the Shaliach to Cincinnati, Ohio. He holds a BA in Sociology-Anthropology and Management from Ben-Gurion University, and an MBA from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Most recently, Yarden has been working in the fields of human resources and organizational development, mainly for global consulting firms. Before that, he worked for the Aharai youth movement as a group facilitator, preparing them for the IDF, and for the Hebrew Scouts youth movement as a human resources specialist.

Jackie Congedo
Speaker

Jackie Congedo is the Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, the public affairs arm of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, which works to ensure Jewish security by building a more just society for all people. Before her work in Cincinnati’s Jewish community, Jackie spent eight years as a broadcast journalist, working for stations in Washington, D.C.; Lexington, Kentucky; and here in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The mission of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) is the survival and security of the Jewish people in our community and nation, in the Jewish and democratic State of Israel, and throughout the world. But we recognize that this survival and security relies on collaboration, relationship-building, advocacy, open communication, education, understanding, respect, and justice.

The mission of the JCRC is to protect Jewish security, recognizing that Jewish security depends on a just society for all. To achieve its mission, the JCRC works on a broad range of local, national, and international issues concentrating its efforts in community and government relations, Israel education and advocacy as well as combating antisemitism, discrimination and racism.
Ali, a young Palestinian, comes to Israel for a home visit after a long absence. Following a cold welcome, he decides to seek peace for a few days in the desert of Sinai, Egypt, before he will have to deal with his return to the place he has left behind. After telling one little lie on the way, Ali finds himself embroiled in an unexpected identity crisis on the beautiful beaches of Sinai.

From the Director

The idea for the film *Paradise* came to me when I was sitting alone on a beach in the Sinai desert, Egypt. I have always been fascinated by Sinai. Like many Israelis, I did not visit there for many years due to the uncertain political and security situation following the “Arab Spring” in the region. Recently I have returned to its beautiful, serene beaches, which are again full of tourists.

Life in Israel is a complicated affair. It is a life in a state of constant friction. Everyday life (especially if you do not bury your head in the sand) can become somewhat stressful and tense. This reality readily confronts you with the tension between your individual and national identity.

Sinai is the most accessible place to go to for complete disconnection, to fulfill the fantasy of peace and quiet. However, that small piece of paradise gathers many questions concerning the geographic, linguistic, cultural, and political realm in which I live.
I returned from Sinai with an idea. From the beginning it was important for me to collaborate in the creative process with someone whose own identity and life experiences are close to the story and the protagonist I had in mind. This is how I came to meet the screenwriter Nayef Hammoud. We quickly became friends. Together we wrote the story of Ali, a young Palestinian guy, who is escaping from his identity, his family, his home, and his native land.

Ali’s identity expresses a dual, split viewpoint of someone who is both inside and outside. This split identity and its accompanying emotional fluctuation between a sense of belonging to a sense of alienation echo questions both Nayef and I have about our own lives. It expresses our feelings about the place in which we were both born and raised.

A reality of constant political and security unrest gives way easily to suspicion toward others, to an atmosphere of fear, to stress, rifts and racism. We chose to observe life in Israel from across the border. We feel that a certain level of detachment and outsidership (emotional, but also geographical) allows us to give a clearer picture of our complex relationship with the place in which we live.

In *Paradise* we wish to portray a character who does not act within the familiar narrative of an “identity conflict” story. Instead, we chose to examine the issue of “identity” as conflict; to look at identity as an obstacle, as something with which confrontation is avoided. Ali tries to avoid attempts made by others to pigeonhole him. He refuses to be profiled and cooperate with the expectations that others have of him. Ali fights to be authentically himself. As he does so, perhaps he will also get a better idea of what that actually means.

April 2021
Tel-Aviv, Israel

Asaf Saban
Director/Producer/Co-Writer

Asaf Saban is a film director and writer. His short films were screened at major film festivals and received awards. *Outdoors/Bayit Bagalil* (2017), his debut feature film, is an indie project which he also produced. The film received rave reviews and commercial success in Israeli cinemas.
A True Sense of Community

Cedar Village provides an inspirational lifestyle designed to cater to the specialized needs and wants of our residents. Throughout our campus, you’ll find a difference in philosophy that embraces the balance between home and care — we know family comes first and we live by that. Touching every aspect of life at our community, we work together with loved ones to create a plan for enriching each day and maximizing independence as much as possible.

Simply put, life is better at Cedar Village.
Ravit spends all of her time spreading her love wherever it is needed. During the day she cooks for hundreds of Tel Aviv’s homeless. In the evenings she hugs abandoned babies in the birthing ward. Without human touch and the warmth of a hug, the abandoned babies won’t develop properly and can even die. Ravit always wanted children of her own, but life dictated otherwise. As she turns 50 years old, she decides that she, too, wants to be on the receiving end of love, but that may prove to be harder to find.

VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENT

Sunday, February 6
7:30pm | Virtual

Join us for a recorded discussion with film directors Kineret Hay-Gillor and Maya Tiberman.

Presenting Partner Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati – Guardians and Friends
**Kineret Hay-Gillor**  
Co-Director

Kineret Hay-Gillor is a film director, producer, script writer, and an editor. Her films have been screened internationally and locally in Israel and include *How Much Love* (2010), *All That Remains* (2015), *Shockwaves* (2018), *My Holiday Home* (2018), and *Alone Together* (2019). She graduated from The Sam Spiegel Film and Television School in Jerusalem, where she was the recipient of several achievement awards.

**Maya Tiberman**  
Co-Director

Maya Tiberman is a film director, designer and animator with award winning short films. Her work includes *Marbles* (2006), *Ramlod* (2010), *A Shell* (2013), and *Alone Together* (2019). She graduated with distinction from The Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem (B.Des. degree in Visual Communication) and from the Film & TV School at Tel Aviv University (MFA degree). She studied at the Ecole Nationale Superieure des Arts Decoratif in Paris as a part of a student exchange program from Bezalel. This is her first long-form documentary film.
Photo and Art Competition

Jewish Cemeteries is organizing a year-long series of events and programs to celebrate the Bicentennial

Jewish Cemeteries is announcing a Photo and Art Competition for students in our community. Students from 7th grade through high school are encouraged to submit photographic images or other visual art forms (e.g., painting, computer generated graphics, 3 dimensional art, etc.) inspired by any of the community’s 25 Jewish cemeteries. Winners will be selected by a panel of judges and works displayed at a gallery in the Cincinnati area. Prizes will be awarded. The deadline for submissions is May 31, 2022. Winners will be announced by July 15. Direct any questions to info@jcemcin.org. For more information, please visit: www.jcemcin.org/photo-art-competition/

Upcoming Programs

• Traditions that Comfort: Jewish Customs of Mourning - March 20, 2022
• Shared Grief, Different Customs: An Interfaith Look at Funeral and Mourning Customs - May 15, 2022
• Tours of Cincinnati’s Historic Jewish Cemeteries - May 22, 2022 and June 12, 2022

Sign up to receive more information about these and other upcoming programs
Simone, a Holocaust survivor’s son, rushes to the scene of a hit-and-run. But when he sees a swastika tattoo on the victim’s chest, he leaves the gravely wounded man to his fate. Wracked with guilt, the anguished doctor confronts the ethics of his choice, and bonds with the victim’s daughter, embroiling himself in greater conflict. This provocative parable poses profound questions about redemption and the paradoxes of the human soul in the face of hate.

Content Warning: violence, profanity, implied animal cruelty

Short Film Screening of *Masel Tov Cocktail* by Arkadij Khaet and Mickey Paatzsch included.

**VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENT**

**Wednesday, February 9**

7:30pm | Virtual

Join us for a discussion with Jackie Congedo, Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, Sarah L. Weiss, Chief Executive Officer of the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center, and Julie Sunderland, Program Manager of the Cincinnati Regional Coalition Against Hate, leaders in education and the fight against hate.
Italy, November 2019. Lifetime Senator Liliana Segre - 89 years old, a Holocaust survivor, 74 years after the end of World War II - is assigned an escort following the numerous threats she has received. This is just one of the last, serious news of a very long list that unfortunately is getting longer and longer, not only in Italy. Just to mention another one, in France in December of the same year, Minister Castaner announced the creation of a national office to fight anti-religious hate crimes. The decision was taken after more than 100 graves were vandalized with swastikas at a Jewish cemetery in the Alsace Region. We are facing an escalation of horrifying prospects: alarming, disturbing, dangerous proclamations.

It is not true that history repeats itself - the conditions are never identical – however experience of evil and hatred do repeat. And these noxious seeds just need a tiny vacuum to germinate. A vacuum of sense, a gap in the collective memory, a crisis of meaning and communication.

*Non odiare* (Thou Shalt Not Hate) speaks of the fact that evil, hatred produces waves that protract over time, slowly, but always implacable and violent. Waves that inevitably affect everyone, even individuals who have nothing to do with that original evil, who have only heard about that evil or have only read about it in history books. A seed of evil sown so deeply that only its evocation is enough to cross time and infect even common, mythical and honest individuals to the point of morphing them into new executioners. As it happens to [protagonist] Simone Segre, a doctor of Jewish origin, a person who would have belonged to the group of victims in the past, to those who had suffered. The same reason for which Simone, many years later, will end up somehow becoming an executioner in turn. Tragically reversing roles and turning a neo-Nazi and his children into victims.

*Non odiare* is a story about the inheritance of evil and the consequent attempt to make amends for one’s mistakes, breaking the chain of hatred that risks reducing our identities with no other way out. The surname Segre is the same as the lifetime senator, and it’s an absolute, unpredictable, and at the same time revealing coincidence showing that some prejudices may transform into ideologies and feed hatred. We are disturbed and dismayed to see how those prejudices remain today, in the twenty-first century.
Congratulations to the
JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival

AJC Cincinnati cordially invites you and your friends to experience the Ageless Ritual of Passover at our 29th Annual Community Intergroup Seder
Celebrating Freedom for All People
Wednesday, April 6, 2022 • 11:45am-1:15pm

Mayerson JCC
People of all faiths and backrounds are welcome.

For more information, email cincinnati@ajc.org or call 513.621.4020.
Mauro Mancini
Director/Co-Writer

In 2005, the Italian director Mauro Mancini, made his feature directorial debut with his first short film, Il nostro segreto, which won several awards. This was followed by many other short films, including fourteen for the Telethon Foundation and four for Rai Cinema, a mini-series, and music videos (including two for Simone Cristicchi). In 2009, he wrote and directed two segments of the collective film, Feisbum! In 2017 he wrote and directed the mini-series 4NNA quella che (non) sei and the mini-series Teddy, both for television.

His work has made the shortlist at Cannes Lions several times. My Voice (winner of a “Gold” and a “Silver” at the Clio Awards), Feel The View (winner of several awards including a “Silver” at the Clio Awards, the Webby Award, and a “Gold” at ADCI) and Safe, the commercial for the baseball world championship shot in 2009, are among the most important commercials he has shot.

Jackie Congedo
Speaker

Jackie Congedo is the Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, the public affairs arm of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, which works to ensure Jewish security by building a more just society for all people. Before her work in Cincinnati’s Jewish community, Jackie spent eight years as a broadcast journalist, working for stations in Washington, D.C.; Lexington, Kentucky; and here in Cincinnati, Ohio.

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Leaders in Light is a first-of-its kind, year-long leadership development program that will create a network of informed and influential change agents. Leaders from all sectors, backgrounds and beliefs will connect in
learning and action to build a stronger Cincinnati—one that is home to a thriving, healthy civil society where hate and extremism can’t take root.

The recent surge of extremism in the forms of antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, and other bigoted ideologies, and the migration of that extremist ideology from the fringes towards the center of our society demand that we identify new and innovative strategies to combat these forms of hate. One need not look further than the January 2021 extremist attack on the US Capitol to understand the intensity and potential violence that characterize these intersecting modes of hate as well as the potential for extremism to harm our democracy. It is now crucial, even necessary, that we develop a network of informed and skilled stewards of democratic engagement; leaders who are equipped with contemporary understanding and modern tools designed to help them steer their respective organizations and networks, as well as our collective community through these volatile, divisive, and polarized times. Leaders in Light is an investment in developing, connecting, and empowering community change makers to immunize their networks and serve as force multipliers, capable of rallying their respective constituencies and the often silenced center against the viruses of extremism and hate.

Sarah L. Weiss
Speaker

Weiss joined the staff of the Holocaust & Humanity Center in 2004. She was appointed executive director in 2007 – working to formulate lasting partnerships with organizations and educational institutions locally, nationally, and internationally.

As the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, Weiss brings a personal connection and passion to her work. She is a graduate of a competitive course at the esteemed Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies, in addition to completing the Lerner Fellowship through the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous at Columbia University.

Weiss has impacted the community in several roles outside of her work at the Holocaust & Humanity Center. She served as director of the Jewish Community Relations Council at the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati from 2011 to 2017. Building bridges between Jewish and non-Jewish communities, Weiss advocated on behalf of the Jewish community, and Israel, during a time when antisemitism and hate-related crimes increased locally and nationwide.

She is the recipient of the 2007 Public Allies Changemaker Award, the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati’s 2011 Weston Avodah Award. She was selected as a YWCA Rising Star in 2012, and she received the FBI Director’s Leadership
Award in 2013. She serves on the Ohio Holocaust Council and as treasurer for the Association of Holocaust Organizations. She also serves on the board of Cincinnati’s Talbert House.

Most recently, in 2019, she successfully led the Holocaust & Humanity Center’s groundbreaking move to Cincinnati’s historic Union Terminal. The Center is the only Holocaust museum in the United States with a direct connection to its physical location. Opened in 1933, Union Terminal was a bustling train station before and during WWII. More than one thousand individuals—refugees and survivors of the Holocaust—arrived by train at Union Terminal to rebuild their lives in Cincinnati.

The Holocaust & Humanity Center exists to ensure the lessons of the Holocaust inspire action today. The Cincy Upstander Project aims to inspire our community to become upstanders through a city-wide art campaign, monthly programs, museum tours, and training opportunities.

Julie Sunderland
Speaker

Julie Sunderland is a community educator, teaching artist and dancer, currently serving as Program Manager for the Cincinnati Regional Coalition Against Hate. In her previous role at Cincinnati Ballet, she spent 11 years creating community programs designed to engage and diversify the ballet audience. As one of the founders of the Greater Cincinnati Access and Inclusion Network, she helped to make Cincinnati one of the most inclusive cities in the country. Julie currently teaches at Uptown Arts, the Down Syndrome Association and DANCEFIX.

The Cincinnati Regional Coalition Against Hate is a nonpartisan alliance of organizations committed to being vigilant against hate activity by supporting impacted communities and fostering acceptance, compassion, and justice for all in the Cincinnati region. Their work involves protecting our community, educating our community, and ensuring social justice by providing a voice for equality.
2020 · Short Drama · 30 minutes
LANGUAGES: German, Russian
DIRECTORS: Arkadij Khaet & Mickey Paatzsch

A Russian-Jewish teen in Germany offers a fierce comic take on modern Jewish life and the hypocritically tolerant way in which his world works.

Ingredients:
1 Jew, 12 Germans, 50 ml Culture of Remembrance, 30 ml stereotypes, 2 teaspoons of patriotism, 1 teaspoon of Israel, 1 falafel, 5 Stumbling Stones, a dash of antisemitism

Directions:
Put all ingredients into a film, bring to boil and shake vigorously. Then garnish with Klezmer music.

Consumption:
Light before serving. Enjoy at the cinema. 100% kosher.

From the Director

Excerpted from Jewish Telegraphic Agency article “Short film Masel Tov Cocktail explodes stereotypes about being young, Jewish and misunderstood in Germany” by Joe Baur on February 10, 2021.

Khaet drew from his personal experiences in writing the film, with [protagonist] Dima working through encounters from the director’s life. He compared it to a “road trip” through a small German city condensed into one day.

“One of the most common situations is people who say to me, ‘Wow, I’ve never met a Jew before,’” Khaet said. “Then without reason, after a couple of beers, they start to tell me that their grandparents or great-grandparents weren’t Nazis but actually fought in the resistance or saved Jews.” Masel Tov Cocktail
confronts claims like these, pausing the narrative of the film briefly to show the numbers. One example: 29% of Germans believe their ancestors tried to help Holocaust victims by, for example, hiding Jews. In reality, less than 0.1% did so. (The results come from a variety of sources listed in the credits.) Khaet believes that Germans, who are now in the third or even fourth generation after the Holocaust, feel the need to justify themselves without even being asked. The reason, the film argues, is that Germans only experience Jewish culture through World War II and Holocaust films, in which Jews are almost exclusively presented as victims. “On the other hand, in the United States, Jewish culture is more universal and broader in film, comedy, literature,” Khaet said. “In Germany, that simply doesn’t exist.”

Like the character of Dima, Khaet and his family were part of the Jewish immigration of the early 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Over 200,000 Soviet Jews immigrated to Germany during that period. Khaet, whose family is from Moldova, grew up primarily in Oberhausen, a city of about 211,000 in western Germany’s industrial Ruhrgebiet region. “From a Jewish perspective, it was a little lonely,” he said, noting that he started off with local Jewish connections. “But I was able to find a good structure to network with other Jews and strengthen and develop my Jewish identity.” Khaet said that one of the reasons he wanted to make this film was to give representation to the Russian-speaking Jewish community in Germany. According to the Central Council of Jews in Germany, more than half the Jews from the former Soviet Union found their way into Jewish communities in Germany, increasing their membership numbers by as much as 90%. “It’s a community that nobody knows about,” he said. “When you ask Germans where Jews come from, they think of Israel or America.”

“Jewish characters in German media are always cliches, stereotypes, and the narrative is always about the confrontation between the perpetrator and the victim,” Khaet explained. “They’re always about topics like the Shoah and anti-Semitism.” He pointed to the Jewish police commissioner on the show Tatort as a rare example of a non-cliche Jewish character in the German media. “We wanted to show a Jew who hits back and isn’t a victim,” Khaet said.

The “we” refers to his co-director Mickey Paatzsch, who is not Jewish. Khaet and Paatzsch first met in Cologne while studying film in 2010. Masel Tov Cocktail is their third project together. Paatzsch described Khaet’s vision as an “essay film,” a collection of notes he’d written over the years about his experiences with Germans and his Jewish identity.

The response to their collaboration has been overwhelmingly positive, something that surprised both filmmakers. “We thought the film would be polarizing and that non-Jewish viewers would feel too attacked to like the film,” Paatzsch said. “What really pleased me was the approval from the Jewish community,” Khaet said. Fans of the film have written, thanking them for offering a different kind of representation.
Arkadij Khaet believes this different Jewish perspective will only continue to grow in Germany because of Jews who have grown up in Germany, gone through the German school system, and are now becoming artists and using their art to explore their identity. “It’s a privilege to be able to afford to be angry,” he said, referring to his ability to write an “angry Jewish” character set in contemporary Germany. “That’s a privileged position that took years to come by.” Khaet sees the variety in which Jewish characters can be represented in the German media happening alongside the diversification of Jewish groups in the country. He points to the Ernst-Ludwig Ehrlich Studienwerk, Keshet Deutschland and the Jewish Student Union as examples of organizations younger than 10 years old that help support pluralistic Jewish life in the country. “Twenty years ago, you only had community life and one organization representing Jewish life in Germany, like the Central Council of Jews in Germany,” he said. “Today, especially in larger cities, you have multiple opportunities to network and to live your Jewishness differently than only through the roles of remembrance and religiosity.”

Arkadij Khaet
Co-Director/Writer

Arkadij Khaet was born during the final moments of the Soviet Union. A few weeks after his birth, his family left the Republic of Moldova and immigrated to Germany. After graduating high school, he lived in Israel for a while and then moved to Cologne to start his undergraduate studies in Film and Television. As a student he started to implement his own film projects. During his studies he met his co-director colleague Mickey Paatzsch, with whom he started a collaboration on several projects. In October 2016, Arkadij Khaet began studying Film Directing at the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg and living in Southern Germany.

Mickey Paatzsch
Co-Director

After studying Fiction Direction at the Macromedia Colon, Mickey Paatzsch gathered experience as a freelance filmmaker and directed his own shorts. He studied philosophy at the University of Colon and completed his master’s degree in 2019. In his films, he tries to portray misfits and their habitats in a fun and creative way. With his friend from university, Arkadij Khaet, he realizes movies in co-direction.
Kiss Me Kosher

2020 · Romantic Comedy · 101 minutes
LANGUAGES: English, German, Hebrew, Arabic
DIRECTOR: Shirel Peleg

February 10-12
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window Opens at 7:30pm Feb. 10

Sparks fly in this subversive love story between clashing cultures and wildly different families. When two generations of Israeli women fall, the granddaughter for a German woman and the grandmother for a Palestinian man, chaos follows. This romantic misadventure crosses all borders and finds comedy in unkosher ways playing with common clichés. What happens with lovers who don’t fit but do belong together?

Short Film Screening of With Slight Steps by Guy Hodes included.

Presenting Partner Cincinnati Hillel

FILM EXTRAS

From the Director

Excerpted from The Jewish Chronicle article “Kiss My Culture” by Linda Marric on November 4, 2021.

When Israeli filmmaker Shirel Peleg met and fell in love with the woman she was to later marry, she was faced with a series of obstacles from her nearest and dearest — and not just because she was a gay woman in a country where same sex marriage is still unlawful. Peleg’s partner was not only not Jewish, but also German-born. The situation inspired Shirel’s brilliant debut feature as writer-director, the screwball comedy Kiss Me Kosher.
“It is just interesting for me to see how, in our everyday life as Israelis, our past defines our present. It comes down to the way you make the most personal choices, even about who you want to marry. But in Israel it’s not just a personal issue — it’s a political issue, it’s a religious issue and historic issue. And I’m like, ‘Damn! I just fell in love, that’s basically all I did.’

Of her upbringing, she is insistent that her Jewish experience is very different from that of anyone who wasn’t brought up in the state of Israel, something that can confuse those who assume that being Jewish is the same for everyone. “The Israeli and the German take are very different on these subjects. I get a lot of requests, from sensitivity reading to directing and writing offers — things that have to do with the Jewish community in Germany and I have to explain to them that I am an Israeli. I’m not a Jewish German, I’m not a Russian Jewish German. There are many categories to that — to them we’re all just Jews but it’s a lot more complicated than that.”

_Kiss Me Kosher_ deals with, amongst other things, inherited trauma, the past and the future. “I had the feeling that it’s a topic that’s being discussed all the time and never at the same time,” she replies. “We’re walking around it all the time, but not really touching it, and when we touch it we have a very specific way of doing so. At one point all of these issues became very relevant to me in my private life, and the absurdity of this…I found it mind-boggling. It’s something that we talk about all the time, but we’re going nowhere. I definitely don’t think we need another film that has the same structures of the victims and victimizers, I can’t see that anymore.”

**Shirel Peleg**
**Director/Writer**

Shirel Peleg was born in Venezuela, raised in Israel and is now based in Berlin where she lives with her wife and son. After completing her B.F.A in film directing from Sapir College in Sderot, Israel, she worked as a news desk producer for the Israeli broadcaster Channel 2 and for the Israeli daily newspaper _Haaretz_. In 2012, Peleg moved to Germany with her partner, where she began studying at the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg. As part of her studies, she made several short films that were screened at international festivals. She completed her studies in the department of script writing. Parallel to her studies she developed her first full-length feature film as director and writer, _Kiss Me Kosher_.

Shirel is currently developing an 8-episode comedy series for the southwest German broadcasters, has the next romantic drama in development together with one of Germany’s leading production companies, and is about to embark on her very first journey directing a feature she didn’t write by herself.
SAVE THE DATE
SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 2022

We are thrilled to honor Lauren Shmalo Berg this year to thank her for her years of dedication and help with our show.

Cincinnati Hillel is the epicenter of pluralistic Jewish life for college students in Cincinnati. Thank you to our donors for your ongoing support so we can provide a strong and vibrant community for our students.

cincinnatihiellel.org/campussuperstar
97-year-old Tirza Hodes, the high-priestess of Israeli folk dancing, has for years been jetting between Israel and her home in Germany, where she continues to teach Israeli folk dancing. A phone call to her grandson Guy, on his way to pick her up from the airport as she visits from Germany, sets the two of them on a journey to the loss of her “Israeli Dream.”

Guy Hodes
Director/Writer

Guy Hodes is an Israeli film director and producer. Guy graduated from the Open University with a BA Honors degree in humanities and film studies. In 2019, Guy graduated from the Sam Spiegel Film & Television School in Jerusalem with honors. His graduation film, *With Slight Steps*, is a documentary film based on his previous work for which he won the first prize in Docaviv International Film Festival’s pitching competition.
Aharon has devoted his life to raising his differently-abled son Uri. They live together in a gentle routine. Their cocooned, codependent situation is upended when Uri’s mother insists he enter a specialized facility to attain independence. They escape on an adventure-filled, often humorous trek. Will time catch up to them in this film suffused with the triumphs, sadness, and quiet moments of tenderness that make up so much of our lives?

**Content Warning:** brief nudity, brief violence

**VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENT**

**Tuesday, February 15**

7:30pm | Virtual

Join us for a recorded discussion with film director Nir Bergman.

*Presenting Partner Jewish Family Service*
From the Director

Excerpted from *The Jewish Chronicle* article “I’m trying to do something different … I don’t want to bore my audience” by Stephen Applebaum on July 26, 2021.

Nir Bergman has often returned to the themes of broken families and people in mental distress, and this has led him to try out alternative, if not always popular, ways of presenting them on the big screen. “My two last films were not a big success, not in festivals or with audiences,” he recently acknowledged during an online interview. “I was trying to go to different places,” he says now, “not just telling the simple story of a hero going through an arc. But, actually, these are the films that I love to watch.”

Dana Idisis’s long-gestating script for *Here We Are* brought him back to the place that he “loves to see on screen,” he says enthusiastically. “It’s about relationships, it’s based on characters, and it’s driven by them.” By way of qualification, he adds: “It’s not that I don’t like the films that I’ve done between *Broken Wings* and this one, but there’s something about sharing the responsibility with a screenplay writer (*Here We Are* is the first time he has worked with a writer on a feature) that can make you watch your work with less criticism. And so I really am happy with this film.”

Idisis co-created the smash TV comedy show *On the Spectrum* (currently being given a US makeover by Amazon), which drew on her experience of growing up with her brother, Guy, who has autism. However close Bergman felt to the character Aharon, it was Idisis’s story, and, having made a film derived from his own life, Bergman was conscious of the responsibility that came with the screenplay. He didn’t want to let down his co-creator or her family and was “totally scared” he’d ruin the script. “Also, I didn’t know how I would direct the autistic spectrum without people thinking, ‘Okay, that’s amazing the way that this actor did an autistic character.’ I wanted them to suspend their disbelief altogether and I was afraid that I would not be able to do that.”

Casting someone on the spectrum as Uri would possibly have been the easiest way, and Bergman agrees it “would have been amazing” if he could have done that. But, as Idisis had discovered when *On the Spectrum* was cast less than a year earlier, “and they’d really tried to find actors that could really do these performances, in Israel it’s not that common, yet, to have people on the autistic spectrum learning how to act.” To play Uri, it wasn’t enough for someone just to be autistic; they needed to be able to become him in all his complexity.

Bergman hopes that the film will help more people to understand the complexities of living as and living with someone with autism, and therefore be more empathetic, less “judgmental.”
Nir Bergman
Director

Nir Bergman is one of Israel’s leading film and TV writer/directors. Born in 1969 in Haifa (Israel), he graduated with honors from the Sam Spiegel Film and Television School in Jerusalem in June 1998. Released in 2002, his debut film, *Broken Wings*, was a major success that won several international awards and was distributed by Sony Classics in the US. Since then, he has written and directed several award-winning feature films and internationally acclaimed TV series. He co-created the original Israeli series *In Therapy*, later adapted by HBO as *In Treatment*.

Dana Idisis
Writer

Dana Idisis wrote and co-created the award-winning Israeli series *On the Spectrum* with Yuval Shafferman, about a group of young adults with developmental disabilities ("Friends with a twist"). Dana Idisis was born in New York in 1986. A screenwriter and playwright who started out in theater, she wrote several award-winning plays, one of which was a German-Israeli co-production, part of a collaboration between the National Habima Theater and the Schauspielhaus Theater in Düsseldorf, Germany. She filmed and directed a documentary film, depicting the lives of her autistic brother and their family. Dana is a mother to Mori and currently lives in Berlin.
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2021 ∙ Drama ∙ 98 minutes

LANGUAGE: English
DIRECTOR: Rafal Zielinski

February 16-18
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window Opens at 7:30pm Feb. 16

Casey, a runaway teenager, meets Samuel, an elderly Holocaust survivor, who despite her ignorant and offensive views, remembers an old promise he made and decides to help her. They develop an unlikely bond, which sparks larger questions about ignorance, fear, family, forgiveness, and our divided world at large. Starring multiple Emmy Award-winning actor Ed Asner in one of his final, on-screen roles.

Content Warning: sexual references, profanity

Presenting Partner Nancy & David Wolf
Holocaust & Humanity Center
FILM EXTRAS

From the Director

Many wise men have said, we are like droplets of water from one big sea of water, and after we die, we will return to the same sea (the pool of light, energy and love, that the universe/god is). Buddhist masters such as Dogen Zenji (1200-1253) believe that in forgiving we have to just as much forgive ourselves as others – it is a form of unburdening ourselves from the pain of the past – and we are able to become light and free and to move on… I intuitively feel that the theme of this film relates globally and timelessly – even more today than ever, as the world seems to be in an ever more precarious state. The more we can make it relate, the more power it will have to illuminate, enlighten, transmute and whatever else it can do (if you believe, as I do, that cinema has such a power). I feel that I am both an outsider and an insider, which gives me a unique and more objective point-of-view, which I feel is necessary for this film to work on the highest level possible.

I was fortunate to leave Poland at a very early age and travel the world – my father working as a Ford Foundation consultant, with projects all over Asia and the Middle East. I spent most of my youth in many countries in the region, the longest residency being in India, and I was exposed to many Eastern religions. Following in the footsteps of my mother, I became fascinated with various mystical practices and systems, which gave me a global perspective and enabled me to break out of the confines of simply the Judeo-Christian systems of thinking and explore many other ways of thought and belief. My high school years were spent in Europe, primarily England focusing mainly on Art and History, eventually leading to a degree from MIT, where I explored how technology can be harnessed towards art and media — and that is where I discovered film, at first documentary, then drama.

I don’t feel a filmmaker should be a spokesman for any particular point of view – more a mirror for the audience to reflect their thoughts and in the process – hopefully provoke, inspire, and illuminate, but I do feel the power of forgiveness and faith embodied in all religions of the world can serve as a healing force with the potential to bring all of us closer together and make the world a more peaceful place… Showing hate and division against the other is a war against oneself, because water is at war with water! One of the biggest tragedies in the misuse of love, the most powerful force there is. Loving oneself, family, group, race, country (narcissism) and being incapable of loving the other, equally, as oneself is the misuse of love, it breeds hate. That is the message I feel in this film – Samuel overcomes hate for this girl and shows her unconditional love. It’s the greatest gift anyone can receive on this earth, and he keeps his promise he once made to his wife – “to forgive all before he dies.”
Rafal Zielinski
Director

Rafal Zielinski, director, producer and writer, is best known for directing several award-winning independent films such as Fun (Sundance Film Festival Special Jury Award), Ginger Ale Afternoon (Sundance), Hey Babe! (Toronto), Downtown: A Street Tale (AFI Fest), Hangman’s Curse, National Lampoon’s Last Resort, and the Roger Corman produced Screwballs and its several sequels. Born in Poland, his childhood was spent in Europe, Far East, and Canada, and he attended high school at Stowe School in England. He graduated from MIT with a degree in Art and Design where he concentrated on documentary film and was mentored by Richard Leacock, one of the pioneers of Cinéma Vérité.
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HOLOCAUSTANDHUMANITY.ORG
A Starry Sky Above the Roman Ghetto

2020 · Drama · 100 minutes
LANGUAGE: Italian
DIRECTOR: Giulio Base

February 19-21 · VIEWING REGION: Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window Opens at 7:30pm Feb. 19

When Sofia finds an old photograph and letter in a neglected suitcase, she is determined she will uncover the truth and tell the little girl’s story, bringing together an interfaith group of teenagers. The past interlaces with the present as they undertake this journey through the history of Rome’s Jewish ghetto and the fate of a little girl, in this story about the importance of memory and coexistence.

Content Warning: brief nudity, violence

VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENT
Monday, February 21
12pm | Virtual

Presenting Partner Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Other partnership support by Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center
UPCOMING HUC-JIR EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2
HUC-JIR/Mayerson JCC Strong Women of the Bible Lecture Series
The Women of Avel, Samuel 2:20
with Rabbi Rachel Adler, Ph.D., HUC-JIR

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10
A Collage of Customs opens at Skirball Museum
Artist Mark Podwal creates imaginative and inventive interpretations of woodcuts from a 16th-century Sefer Minhagim (Book of Customs)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24
From Darkness to Light: Mosaics Inspired by Tragedy opens at Skirball Museum
Artist Susan Ribnick brings together 36 mosaic artists from around the world to create works that react and respond to the Tree of Life massacre in Pittsburgh, PA.

SUNDAY, MARCH 6
HUC-JIR/Mayerson JCC
Strong Women of the Bible Lecture Series
Avigail, Samuel 1:25 with Provost Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Ph.D., Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost and Associate Professor of Bible, HUC-JIR

TUESDAY, APRIL 5
HUC-JIR/Mayerson JCC Strong Women of the Bible Lecture Series
Dvora the Prophetess with Rabbi Karen Thomashow, Associate Rabbi, Wise Temple, Adjunct Lecturer, HUC-JIR

THURSDAY, MAY 19
Holy Sparks: Celebrating 50 Years of Women in the Rabbinate in partnership with The Braid and the HUC-JIR
Dr. Bernard Heller Museum
24 Jewish women artists celebrate the achievements of 24 women rabbis for the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Rabbi Sally J. Priesand as the first woman rabbi in North America.
From the Director


My training is as a radical cinephile, radical in the sense that I had a hunger for cinema. While growing up, at 14 or 15 years old, before becoming an actor or a director, the first way to connect with cinema was to write reviews for a small magazine in Turin where I lived. My training there came from the classical standards of Cahiers du Cinéma. And when I’d observe those filmmakers and those reviewers I liked the fact that they were one and the same. Truffaut, Rivette, Rohmer, in his way Godard, Tavernier, you couldn’t tell where the cineast began or the reviewer ended — it was all one thing. Personally, and perhaps alone although I don’t feel like a hero, I continued this tradition. I still haven’t decided if I like to make movies or to watch them more. Or write them or study them. With Vittorio Gassman who was my teacher I had a wonderful happy rapport. We went around 360 degrees together, across all phases. My first love was the theater, and actually, before that it was acting. When as a child I dreamt of making cinema or being in the theater, I didn’t imagine there were script writers and directors, it only meant one thing, being an actor. I wanted to be an actor. Then I started to understand and follow where my talent lay but I still love to act.

What attracts me is if a project doesn’t talk about things that are tangible and concrete. If I can somehow move into a different dimension from the immanent, what is strictly realistic and concrete, and can make the audience dream. But not just that, also allow people to reflect on what is transcendental. What is outside of us, away from the materialistic — dealing with the spiritual, if you want to call it that. Even the religious, for those who wish to address that. That touches me. Man questioning himself about what exists above, or beyond him.

In my films I would never want to give a defined thesis — actually I would want everyone to see a different movie within my film. Or even better, their own movie, where to find their own answers or even discover an enigma — have an opinion or not.

Israel Cesare Moscati the late, well-respected member of the Roman Jewish community, writer and sometime documentarian who was the author of the subject and the motor of this story, had wonderful ideas but wasn’t a filmmaker per se. He did so much in life and in the last few years he started to make documentaries, but the documentary form doesn’t need the same technical knowledge that a narrative feature film requires. He was 70 years old and it would have been a challenge for him to become a first time filmmaker. A Catholic point of view was also necessary to tell both sides of the story. The Jewish point of view is there but also the alternate side was needed. Since
producers Rai Cinema and Altre Storie were familiar with my filmography they thought I would be able to tell this story with care, since the subject is thorny — conflicts, parents, schools.

I immediately thought I wanted to make this film since I find it a prestigious subject. I mean, anytime you tell such important events in our human history, even if tragic, you are honored to work on them. And yet you also hold the responsibility of doing it well. Be true to the events. I really love to study and document myself before a film and this project provided that opportunity.

We also wanted to lower the fences between Jews and Christians if there are any. And to tap into the mutual understanding of those atrocious facts that happened and should never happen again. In recounting those facts I was very careful not to weaponize them in their violence but also not sugarcoat them. I tried to be dry in my story and I was truly lucky to be helped in that by the head Rabbi of Rome, whom I had on my side for this project. He was a consultant on the film and the Jewish Community of Rome made it possible for us to be the first film ever to be filmed almost entirely within the Roman Ghetto, in the Synagogue and throughout the community.

I think apart from the project coming from an eminent member of their community, they also understood that I wanted to do things right. Righteously, that’s such an important word for the community. I now feel like a real friend, them to me and I to them.

From the initial phone call to the first take it took a year. I was aided immensely by their archivist Claudio Procaccia and the care that he took in making sure the real events in the film were told fairly and precisely as they happened. Those first five minutes in the film took months to study. Every suitcase looks like a suitcase carried in real life. Some have a piece of paper in their hands — the Germans didn’t speak Italian and carried with them a leaflet that said “In the next 20 minutes gather all your things and leave your home.” So even just seeing that piece of paper in the film, people who know their history can realize how much care went into the telling of this story.

If I could wish something, the audience I’m addressing are the interpreters of the film — the youth. I would like the younger generations to come out of the cinema with a desire to do something good. The kids in the film do things, many, many things.
Giulio Base was born in Turin, Italy in 1964. He has received two doctorates, one in Literature and Philosophy, specifically in the History of Cinema, and another in Theology, and has been a member of Mensa International since 1996. He started as an actor studying in Florence at the School for Dramatic Art under the great Italian actor Vittorio Gassman. After many years working as an actor, he made his strong directorial debut with Crack (1991), based on a theatre piece that he had already directed and performed on stage. The film was shown at the Venice Film Festival in Italy and won the best first opera prize at the San Sebastián International Film Festival in Spain. Since then he has continued his acting career and has directed 29 titles and won several international awards.

Jewish Home of Cincinnati is proud to be a sponsor of the 2022 Mayerson JCC Jewish and Israeli Film Festival and we thank the JCC for the work they do year round to positively impact the lives of Jewish seniors.
Micaela Pavoncello
Speaker

Micaela Pavoncello is a proud member of the Jewish Community of Rome, born in Rome to a Jewish Roman father and Libyan Jewish Sephardic mother. Traveling has given her the opportunity to meet other Jews, share her story with them, and compare her community with theirs and other communities. She founded Jewish Roma Walking Tours in 2003 after completing her studies in Art History and a year of research at the central Archive of Rome where she was looking for documents about her family during the ghetto times. At that time she was also working at MACRO, Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome, where she was responsible for the exhibitions department and had the opportunity to meet artists, collectors, curators, and visitors from all over the world.

Throughout her time as a guide, while meeting people along her journey, Micaela has come to realize how miraculous the existence of the Jewish Community of Rome really is. The Jewish Community of Rome’s history of resilience, culinary traditions, different minhag (musical-liturgical traditions), Jewish-Roman dialect, and continuous presence in the same place, makes them the most ancient citizens of Rome and unique contributors to the fabric of the Eternal City. They have been witnesses of the grandeur of the Roman Empire, and to its fall, the beginning of Christianity, the Barbarians, the Inquisition, The Popes, the ghettos, and the final Emancipation. They went through World War Two and the Shoah and still they thrive today.

Micaela’s Jewish family in Rome goes back over 2,000 years, and she absolutely loves and knows the Piazza (Ghetto) – its people, stories, and spirit. She knows everyone from the Chief Rabbi to the humble shopkeepers and leading chefs. And as an art historian, she is uniquely able to illustrate the journey of a community from ancient times to today.
2021 · Documentary · 83 minutes
**LANGUAGES:** Amharic, Hebrew, English
**DIRECTORS:** Aalam-Warqe Davidian & Kobi Davidian

**February 22-24**
**VIEWING REGION:** Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window Opens at 7:30pm Feb. 22

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, 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 archival 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.

**VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENT**
**Thursday, February 24**
7:30pm | Virtual
Join us for a recorded discussion with film directors and producers Aalam-Warqe Davidian and Kobi Davidian.

*Presenting Partner Jewish National Fund - USA*
FILM EXTRAS

From the Directors

As Israelis, one a son of immigrants from Iran and the US and the other an immigrant herself, we have always believed in the multinationalism of our country, Israel. The melting pot of this crazy little country leads us to a stubborn struggle with acceptance of the other, containing and sometimes to unity. This is what makes us a complex and special state.

About 7 years ago, during our work on the testimonial archive “Memories of Ethiopia,” I was surprised when some of the interviewees talked about their arrival from Ethiopia to Israel despite the official opposition of the State of Israel. As a native Israeli, I was raised on the stories in which Israel went out of its way to save Beta Israel in daring military operations.

With the understanding that the immigration of Beta Israel is one of the founding events in the revival of Israel, we set out to conduct an in-depth investigation of events that preceded the famous “Operation Solomon.” We have discovered that the narrative that is being told about the history and immigration of the Beta Israel to this day is incorrect.

For us as creators it was important to bring the side erased from the history books: The faith of a 2000 year old community, struggling and holding its Jewish identity and their activities to reach Jerusalem to this day.

Aalam-Warqe Davidian
Director/Producer

Award- winning script writer and director, born in 1979 in Awash, Ethiopia, Aalam-Warqe Davidian moved to Israel in 1991. She graduated from Sam Spiegel Film & Television School. In 2012, Aalam-Warqe along with Kobi Davidian co-founded Black and White Films. In 2016 her short fiction film Facing The Wall won Best Short Film at the 33rd Jerusalem International Film Festival. Her other short fiction film Transitions has screened in festivals around the world. Aalam-Warqe’s 2018 debut feature length drama Fig Tree screened at the Toronto International Film Festival, where it won the Eurimages Audentia Award for Best Female Director. Honey Trap is her current documentary film in production.
Kobi Davidian, director and producer, was born in 1980 in Jerusalem, Israel. He graduated from the Arts and Cinema program at Tel Aviv University in 2006. Kobi has worked as a researcher and a producer for different TV shows and documentary films before starting his career as an independent filmmaker. In 2012 he co-founded Black and White Films along with Aalam-Warqe Davidian. His documentary *Turbulence* (2011, 83 min, YesDocu) and short fiction *Transitions* (2016) films were screened and won prizes in festivals around the world. In 2018, he produced and directed a testimonial archive, Memories Of Ethiopia, for the Israeli national archive. *Honey Trap* is his current documentary film in production.
Visionary

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Save the Date
JNF-USA Breakfast for Israel
Wednesday, May 18, 2022
Featured Speaker, Noah Tishby

Join us.
Contact Eric Goldstein
Executive Director, Ohio Valley
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Miriam is a South African born Jew raising her seventeen-year-old daughter Eliza in 1994 Toronto. Nelson Mandela’s upcoming election triggers a manic episode in the bipolar Miriam, who has spent years fighting apartheid. Fueled by the introduction of Mike, Eliza’s Black boyfriend, Miriam’s mania escalates as she navigates politics, religion, the mental health care system, and parenting. **Content Warning:** sexual references, nudity

**VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENT**

**Sunday, February 27**

7:30pm | Virtual

Join us for a discussion with film co-director Arturo Pérez Torres and Paul E. Keck, Jr., MD, Psychiatrist in Chief and Founding President and CEO - Emeritus, Lindner Center of HOPE and Professor of Psychiatry & Behavioral Neuroscience, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine.

*Presenting Partner Jewish Federation of Cincinnati - Silver Circle Society and Create Your Jewish Legacy*

FREE tickets available for Create Your Jewish Legacy and Jewish Federation Silver Circle Society donors. Please contact Emma Chaney at echaney@jfedcin.org / 513.985.1526 for more info and to RSVP
From the Director

I was extremely close with my father. He was my primary caregiver, a rare position for a man in the 1980s. He moved me from Montreal to his hometown of Johannesburg where we would take road trips out of our white suburbity into the Black townships. I saw how the other half lived, my father preaching against the injustices of apartheid.

He was a relatively quiet man. And then he’d have “an episode,” which I only later learned to classify as mania. It was in these states he was most political. He would rage and rant and rally and cry, always an advocate for the oppressed. His mania would trump his message, and his best intentions were swept away by an arrest, an institution, some pills, and eventually quietness would return.

Lune is an examining of mental illness. It speaks to the flaws in our mental health care system, and comments on the cycles of racism that we have yet to overcome. Ultimately, this film is an homage to my father: his ideas, his politics, his illness, his passion for humanity, and his parenthood.

Aviva Armour-Ostroff
Co-Director/Co-Writer/Actor

Aviva Armour-Ostroff was born in Montreal, raised in South Africa, and has called Toronto home for over thirty years. Since graduating from George Brown Theatre School, Aviva has made a name for herself as an accomplished stage actor and director, having seven Dora nominations and one win to her credit.

Aviva founded and produced The Lab Cab Festival, an annual multi-arts festival of new works that she ran for thirteen years. Aviva was heavily involved in new play development, combining her skills as an actor, director, dramaturg and playwright.

With experience being in front of the camera, Aviva first got behind the lens in 2016, when she and partner Arturo Pérez Torres directed and produced *The Drawer Boy*. The film, based on the play by the
same name, won fourteen international film festival awards. Finding her home behind the lens, Aviva has since directed a short film, webseries, and completed a feature titled *Lune*, which premiered at Cinequest in the Spring of 2021. Drawing inspiration from stagecraft, Aviva incorporates theatrical ideologies into her filmmaking.

**Arturo Pérez Torres**
Co-Director

Arturo Pérez Torres was born and raised in Mexico City, studied film at San Francisco State University and completed a Master’s degree in sociology at the University of Amsterdam. After working five years in advertising as Art Director in Amsterdam and Austin, Texas, Arturo moved to Toronto where he directed his first documentary film in 2003.

In 2009, two years after becoming a Canadian citizen, Arturo was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship, making him the only Canadian to win the prestigious award that year. In 2010 he received an Honorable Mention by the Freedom to Create Organization, in 2011 he was inducted into the Mexican Hall of Creators and in 2015 he was awarded the Chalmers Fellowship.

Arturo has directed five feature documentary films and has received over 20 awards from national and international major festivals. His films have screened at the MoMA in New York City, on the National Geographic Channel, CBC and the Sundance Channel. *The Drawer Boy*, his first narrative film, won 10 awards in the international festival circuit. *Lune* is his second feature film and second collaboration with co-director Aviva Armour-Ostroff.

**Paul E. Keck, Jr., MD**
Speaker

Paul E. Keck, Jr., MD, is Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience at the University of Cincinnati (UC) College of Medicine. He is also Psychiatrist-in-Chief and Founding President-CEO
Emeritus of the Lindner Center of HOPE, a state-of-the-science, UC-affiliated comprehensive mental health center in Mason, Ohio. Dr. Keck has conducted extensive research in bipolar disorder, depression and clinical psychopharmacology, supported by grants from the NIMH, NARSAD, the Stanley Foundation, the Marriott Foundation, and industry. Since 1996, he has been in the top 20 of the most cited scientists in the world publishing in the fields of psychology and psychiatry.

A magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Dartmouth College, Dr. Keck received his MD with honors from the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, NY. He served his internship in Internal Medicine at the Beth Israel Medical Center in New York and completed his residency training in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital, Belmont, MA. Dr. Keck remained on faculty at McLean and Harvard before joining the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Cincinnati in 1991.

Dr. Keck is the author of over 400 scientific papers in leading medical journals. He has also contributed over 200 reviews and chapters to major psychiatric textbooks, and is the editor or author of 6 scientific books.

Dr. Keck is the recipient of numerous honors, including the Gerald Klerman Young Investigator Award from the National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association (NDMDA); the Gerald Klerman Senior Investigator Award from the Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA); the Exemplary Psychiatrist Award from the National Alliance of the Mentally Ill (NAMI); the Philip Isenberg Teaching Award from Harvard Medical School; the Nancy C A Roeske Certificate for medical student education from the American Psychiatric Association; Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association; the Wyeth-Ayerst AADPRT Mentorship Award; two Communicator Awards for Continuing Medical Education; the Outstanding Physician Partner Award of the Postgraduate Institute for Medicine; and two Golden Apple Teaching Awards from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. He is listed as one of the Best Doctors by Cincinnati Magazine; The Best Doctors in America, a directory of the top one percent of physicians in the United States as rated by their peers; and is listed among The World’s Most Influential Scientific Minds by ScienceWatch® (Reuters).
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Questions?
Josh Rosen
847-345-1616
jrosen@jfedcin.org
2019 ∙ Comedy ∙ 104 minutes
LANGUAGE: Hebrew
DIRECTORS: Hanan Savyon & Guy Amir

February 28-March 2
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window Opens at 7:30pm Feb. 28

In this uproarious buddy caper film, Nissan and Shaul are two bumbling thieves whose failed attempt to rob a bank lands Shaul in jail. Released from prison just before the Jewish New Year, Shaul tries to regain the trust of his wife and daughter but his plans go awry when Nissan, now a Hasidic Jew, re-enters his life seeking forgiveness. When the two reformed criminals find themselves in need of money, their adventures begin anew. 

Content Warning: violence

Presenting Partner Jewish Fertility Foundation
FILM EXTRAS

Hanan Savyon
Co-Director/Co-Writer/Actor

Hanan Savyon is a passionate storyteller. He has worked in television and film as a creator, writer, and star. He is best known for Asfur (2010); Scarred (2013); Maktub (2017), one of the most commercially successful movies in Israeli history; Chateau Ein Karem (2017); and Forgiveness (2019), his feature film directorial debut.

Guy Amir
Co-Director/Co-Writer/Actor

Guy Amir is a passionate storyteller. He has worked in television and film as a creator, writer, and star. He is best known for Munich (2005); Asfur (2010); Scarred (2013); Maktub (2017), one of the most commercially successful movies in Israeli history; Chateau Ein Karem (2017); and Forgiveness (2019), his feature film directorial debut.

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Providing financial assistance, emotional support, and educational programming to families and individuals with medical fertility challenges.

www.jewishfertilityfoundation.org
2020 · Documentary · 52 minutes
LANGUAGES: Hebrew, Arabic, English
DIRECTOR: Shuki Guzik

March 3-5 VIEWING REGION: Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Florida
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window Opens at 7:30pm Mar. 3

In 2019 the Israeli National Soccer Team prepares for the Euro 2020 Qualifying Tournament, and for the first time in the club’s history, almost half of the players are Muslim. This dynamic documentary shadows three players featured in the starting lineup – Striker Moanes Dabbur, Captain Bibras Natcho (the first and only Muslim to hold that honor), and Central Midfielder Beram Kayal. The diversity of the players causes controversy, provoked by rabid fans and biased media. With candor, the players share their challenges, tremendous perseverance, and passion for a game that has the potential to bridge cultures.

VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENT
Saturday, March 5
7:30pm | Virtual
Join us for a recorded discussion with film director Shuki Guzik and Erica Shaps, Program and Resources Manager at the Inter Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues.

Presenting Partner YAD (Young Adult Division) - Jewish Federation of Cincinnati. Other partnership support by Mayerson JCC Young Adults.
From the Director

Football has always been one of my greatest loves, since the day my father took me to my first match as a child, until these days when I take my children with me to watch matches every weekend. This sport succeeds in being a place of great love, of acceptance, a place where minorities and lower social classes can unite and dream together. However, it can be a place of hatred, with appalling manifestations of racism and violence. It always fascinated me how both sides, the beautiful and ugly, co-exist in every match, every moment, similar to real life. Just more extroverted, louder and bigger.

The day I saw the summonses for the Israeli national team and the unprecedented number of Muslim players, it was clear to me that I must make a film about it. This conflict of racism versus acceptance reached a climax and finally had names and faces, Muslim players, that at the end of the day, just want to play football but found themselves almost reluctantly as representatives of something greater than themselves.

I chose to tell the bigger story through the eyes of the media and the personal stories through the eyes of the players and so the film constantly moves between the greater national perspective and the personal, the family home. I am a big believer in dialogue through sports and I am very hopeful that I have made a modest contribution to this dialogue.

Shuki Guzik
Director

Shuki Guzik is a director and cinematographer who specializes mostly in the documentary field. His credits as a director include Exhausting the Angel of Death, Dream Architects, From the “Kerem” to “Ceasarea,” Tonight at Tzavta, and A Common Goal. His cinematographer credits include the Heymann Brothers’ documentary feature films Jonathan Agassi Saved My Life (Ophir Award Winner) and Who’s
"Gonna Love Me Now? and documentary series Family, and Tommy Lang’s feature film Peter the Third. He is a graduate of the School of Film and Television at Sapir College. In his over twenty-year career, Guzik has had experience in almost every genre related to the film and television industry. His true passion will always be documentary filmmaking.

Erica Shaps
Speaker

Erica Shaps is the Program and Resources Manager at the Inter Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues. In this capacity, she develops educational opportunities and written resources for Task Force Members. Erica has spent most of her career in Israel and has consulted and conducted research for diverse local and international organizations. She worked as a Middle East Program Coordinator for Encounter where she planned programs to help cultivate more informed and constructive Jewish leadership on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Previously, as a Fellow at the Joint Distribution Committee, Erica supported employment programs for vulnerable communities in Israel, including Arab citizens of Israel. She is a trained facilitator and mediator. Erica received her BA from Brandeis University in Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies and an MA from the Fletcher School at Tufts University in International Law and Diplomacy as a Wexner Fellow.
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Stacey Schimberg - Chair
I love everything about film! I love selecting different films to enjoy. I love the excitement and anticipation leading up to viewing a film. I love learning new things and opening up my mind to something new that a film has to offer. I love talking about it afterwards and remembering my favorite parts. These are all reasons why it is my honor and pleasure to chair the Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival. It is always so special for me when we gather as a community on opening and closing nights to experience Jewish and Israeli culture, enjoy a fabulous film and mingle with our friends. I love when we have amazing speakers and experts on topics that can enhance our experience after some of the films that we have at the festival. Most of all, I love how the film festival brings the community together to share a common experience. I hope you enjoy the films that we have curated for you this season. I know it will be a fantastic festival! See you at the movies!

Marcie Bachrach
I care deeply about our community and I am an avid volunteer. Working with Film Festival Committee is one of my favorites. It is thought provoking and educational, and I enjoy viewing and critiquing so many films. My favorite film this year is 200 Meters, a bold film about a Palestinian husband and wife who live 200 meters apart, separated by the Israeli border wall. While this movie and many others are complicated, volunteering for JIFF is pure joy!

Lauren Bowen
Serving on this committee is a huge blessing and highlight. As a Christian Zionist, I became involved with the Festival four years ago to build friendships and celebrate the Jewish community in Cincinnati. Mission accomplished. These members are the most sweet dear people. And now I hope to be engaged for another four and beyond.

Alison Caller
With a background in social work and writing, I find being on the Film Committee to be incredibly interesting and educational. As supporters of the JCC and many other Jewish agencies, our family is happy to do our part in sponsoring this successful Film Festival.

Evan Gildenblatt
I’ve attended the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival since I was a kid, so it seemed only natural to join the Film Festival Committee when an opportunity arose. Films can be such wonderful windows into other worlds and I love seeing the rich variety of stories that we have the chance to introduce to our community. I hope you’ll enjoy these films as much as I did!
Sam Greene
It has been exciting to serve for the first time on the Film Festival Committee and get more involved in our community. I have loved getting to know the team, and learning about how the festival comes together every year. It has been a ton of fun having the opportunity to preview this year’s films, especially as my wife Karen, and I welcomed our first baby. I really enjoyed the range of films we previewed this year and the variety of perspectives on the Jewish experience they showcased, from the extremely subtle to the worldwide events that bind us.

Scott Joseph
I served on the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee from 2014-2016. I returned to the committee last year after realizing how much I missed being a part of this amazing team. What an extremely challenging past two years this has been. Watching movies at home has joined the long list of cultural events offered virtually. I especially enjoyed the wide range of movies we had the pleasure to preview. The documentaries are enlightening, the comedies are funny, the dramas are intriguing, and the shorts are entertaining. The accompanying speakers and programs are certain to be extremely worthwhile. This year’s virtual festival will definitely exceed your expectations. It’s great to be back!

Cantor Alane Katzew
This year, while readying for our daughter’s wedding in Israel, I screened a movie that was filmed in and around Tel Aviv. The movie, Sublet, about a New York Times journalist discovering Tel Aviv and also LGBTQ life in Israel, unfortunately, did not make the cut this year for the festival. You can watch this film using a paid subscription service or online rental. When my husband and I were swept along with the thousands of attendees experiencing the gay pride parade in Tel Aviv the day after the wedding, it felt like my life was imitating art!

Margie Kessel
This is my first year serving on the Film Festival Committee. I have found the potential films entertaining, compelling, educational and thought provoking. We are excited to share such an exciting lineup of films this year!

Amy Klein
As a Film Festival Committee member, I get to spend each summer watching and reviewing tons of movies many of which are great, while some are real duds! That said, I really miss regularly getting to see the films as a community and in a theater. I love the feeling of sharing a film that meant so much to me with my Cincinnati Jewish community.
Sharon Spiegel
I am very excited to be a part of this important community endeavor. For many years, as a professional in the Israel Team at the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, I often worked with Mayerson JCC professionals and volunteers on Israel related programming. Now, as a volunteer, I look forward to bringing “Israel” alive to our community in this unique way - through film. I have always enjoyed seeing the diversity of those who enjoy the enriching experiences brought by the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival. I am honored to be on this committee that works diligently to bring a broad variety of the best films to our community. Enjoy the films!

Paul Spitz
I enjoy serving on the Film Festival Committee because I love movies and going to the movies. The committee gives me a chance to see movies before the general community, and to have a say in which ones are included in the Festival.

Terry Stransky
This is my fourth year on the committee, and I look forward to another great Festival. We have a varied and exciting lineup of films this year, and it was a challenge for the committee since we had so many excellent films to choose from. My personal favorite this year is *A Starry Sky Above the Roman Ghetto*. Having personally visited the ghetto and the Grand Synagogue in Rome, I found this film especially meaningful.

Brian Sugerman
Films have always been an important part of my life. I remember fondly watching movies as a family growing up with my parents and siblings, and sharing such emotions as happiness, sadness, fear, and even some anger. Forrest Gump once said, from one of my all-time favorite films, “Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get.” So get your popcorn and favorite snack and relax, because there are some amazing films in this year’s festival that I am honored for you all to watch! I am blessed to be able to serve on this wonderful committee, as it has allowed me to share my passion for cinematography and bring incredible films to this wonderful Festival.

Aaron Weiner
I have been an avid supporter of the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival for many years and am thrilled to be on the committee again this season. It is particularly rewarding to serve the Jewish community during this challenging time. Now more than ever, we need ways to connect and be entertained. I always appreciate the diverse and enriching content that the Festival affords. This year will be no exception! When I’m not previewing films, I am a full-time realtor, and serve on the National Board of Governors with The Human Rights Campaign. I am a native Cincinnatian and live in Clifton with my dog, Findlay.
Tara Vigran
I am thrilled to be involved with this year’s Film Festival Committee. I have attended this event in years past and feel fortunate to be among my peers to help select an array of diverse film options for the 2022 Festival. I consider myself a huge movie buff and have enjoyed the “work” that goes into the selection process. This year’s event should provide its viewers many thought provoking conversations and highlight now more than ever the need for inclusion within our own community and the world at large. I hope you enjoy this year’s community-wide event!
Thank you to our generous sponsors!

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- Dabby Blatt
- Jennifer & Eric Dauer
- Beth & Louis Guttman
- David C. Harris
- Cindy Jarnicki
- Cantor Alane & Rabbi Jan Katzew
- Amy Klein

- Alana & Ari Levi
- Cynthia & Bob Rosen
- Anna & Craig Sarembock
- Rachel & Steven Schild
- Sarah Weiss & Todd Schild
- Holly & Josh Wolfson
This year's Film Festival speakers are supported by the Roslyn W. and Jule Gildenblatt Memorial Endowment as a living legacy to their commitment to the Jewish community and to the heritage of pluralistic Jewish study.
JCC STAFF CREDITS

Frances Kahan - Cultural Arts Manager & Film Festival Director
Rick Lefton - Development Director
Holly Wolfson - Programming Director
Ellen Daniel - Marketing Director
Scott Gellen - Senior Graphic Designer
Jessyca Lary - Marketing Project Manager
Lizzie Kibler - Content Marketing Specialist

The full festival is virtual, including film showings and special events, with 48-hour watch availability. Please note geographic regions in which virtual films are available, noted on the virtual Eventive platform for each film. Details as of 1.10.2022.

TICKET PRICES

Virtual tickets sold separately, where applicable. See festival details. Additional processing fees apply.

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<th>Opening and Closing Ticket</th>
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TECHNOLOGY QUESTIONS

For technology troubleshooting and Eventive virtual platform support, please visit watch.eventive.org/help.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

For Festival questions and information, please contact arts@mayersonjcc.org.

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Mazel Tov to the JCC and the Film Festival Committee for another great festival!
Mazel Tov to Stacey Schimberg, Frances Kahan And the entire Film Festival Committee for an amazing Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival

Evelyn & Marc Fisher

Thank you to the JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee and the JCC staff for all you do producing this wonderful Film Festival!

Suzette & Michael Fisher
Mazel Tov to the JCC staff and Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee for 35 Years of great films!

Aimee & Ian Guttman

In Loving Memory of Lucille “Twink” Carothers (1924 - 2018) ...a longtime supporter of the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival
Congratulations to the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee and the Mayerson JCC staff for an amazing Film Festival.

Patricia & Scott Joseph

The Film Festival brings our community together like no other event. We laugh; we cry; we learn; we eat tons of popcorn. A huge thank you to the entire committee, staff and all our sponsors for putting together this amazing Festival and a special thanks to our entire community for supporting the Festival and giving us a chance to be together virtually in 2022.

Lara & Ronnen Isakov and family
# Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival 2022

## 2022 Calendar

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<th>SUNDAY</th>
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<td>16 Tiger Within Starts 7:30pm Virtual</td>
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<td>3 A Common Goal Starts 7:30pm Virtual</td>
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<td>5 A Common Goal Ends 7:30pm</td>
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**Watch Trailers & Buy Tickets**

MayersonJCC.org/Film

Mayerson JCC of Cincinnati

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**OPENING FILM**

Persian Lessons

Starts 7:30pm

**SPECIAL EVENT**

7:30pm Virtual

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**Closing Film**

A Common Goal

Starts 7:30pm Virtual

**SPECIAL EVENT**

7:30pm Virtual

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**Endings**

All films end 7:30pm Virtual