

Universal stories seen through a different lens

..... MAYERSON JCC

JEWISH & ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL

.....

February 3 - 29, 2024



PROGRAM BOOK

 **MAYERSON JCC**
of Cincinnati

The Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival presents a diverse, inspiring lineup of award-winning films and engaging, educational programming that connects to Jewish and Israeli stories.

The 2024 Festival provides a hybrid lineup with each film offered in-person only or virtual only to allow for viewing in community or from the comfort of your home. There are nine in-person and four virtual film offerings. The in-person only film showings and companion special features take place on the scheduled date. Please note the specific venue at which each in-person event will take place. The virtual-only film showings and companion special features have 48-hour watch availability. Please note the specific geographic regions in which each virtual film is available.

Details as of January 10, 2024.

To learn more, watch trailers, and purchase tickets, visit 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 film - not special feature - runtimes are noted. All times listed are Eastern Time.

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..... MAYERSON JCC **JEWISH & ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL**

Welcome to the 2024 Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival! We are excited to offer another year of engaging, diverse, enriching films and speakers. As we stand in solidarity with Israel, we feel it is more important than ever to uplift Jewish and Israeli voices through film.

This year we are glad to offer a lineup with both in-person and virtual events. We welcome the community to physically gather for a variety of in-person programs, and to continue to enjoy virtual offerings from the comfort of your homes.

Thank you to all the supporters of this Festival – sponsors, partners, and attendees – and all who contribute to it both professionally and personally.

We invite you to explore this year's festival through the pages of this book. Read on to learn about the films, storytellers, and speakers of the 2024 Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival!

Eowyn Garfinkle
Plymesser
Manager of Arts
& Culture

Aaron Weiner
Committee Chair

Marc Fisher
CEO



Mazel Tov to
the JCC and the
Film Festival
Committee for
another great
festival!



ROCKWERN
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Matchmaking



Saturday, February 3
7:30pm ET
In-Person at Memorial Hall

2022 · Romantic Comedy
98 minutes · Hebrew · Erez Tadmor

This sweet forbidden romance is a joyous tale about tolerance and love. Moti Bernstein is the son every mother wants, the student every Rabbi loves to teach, the ideal Yeshiva study mate, the perfect match for every bride. In search of a wife, he will meet the best girls in the Jewish Orthodox world but will fall for the one girl he can never have, and the only one he wants: Nechama. Against everything he knows and every value he holds dear, Moti will be forced to go out on a limb in the most unexpected and unusual of ways.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Ticket includes an opening night reception.

***Presenting Partners: Jewish Federation of Cincinnati -
Young Adult Division and Mayerson JCC 20s & 30s***

FILM EXTRAS

From the Director

I recently discovered the fantastic world of matchmaking in the Jewish Orthodox community. A world of rigid rules and lifelong experience. The crowded streets of Bnei Brak amazed me on Thursday nights, humming with expectation of the coming Shabbat, the smells, the flavors and visuals. A world reminiscent of Italian films of the 40s and 50s in its special realism. These cinematic dimensions are the fantastic visual side that envelops the story of the film.



Erez Tadmor
Director/Co-Writer

Born in Israel in 1974, Erez Tadmor is a writer and director from Tel-Aviv, Israel. He graduated from Camera Obscura Film School in Tel Aviv. His first short *Moosh* won over 40 international film festivals awards including: World Fest in Houston, Palm Springs and many more. His short *Strangers* (with Guy Nattiv), drama for 20th Century Fox Searchlight, was awarded the online short competition at Sundance Film Festival in 2004 and also went to the Berlin Film Festival competition. Another short *Offside* won for best short

film in the Manhattan International Short Film Festival in 2006. His first feature *Strangers*, based on the short, was accepted to the Sundance World Cinema Dramatic Competition in 2007.

A Matter of Size was his second movie, directed with Sharon Maymon, about the coming out of the closet of fat people and about their ability to accept and relate to their body through the world of sumo; it won an Audience Award at Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in 2009, Grand Prix & Special Jury Award at Alpe d'Huez International Comedy Film Festival, and Best Comedy at Traverse City Film Festival. In 2014, Tadmor made *Magic Men* (again with Guy Nattiv), which won Best Actor in the Ophir Awards (Israeli Oscar). In 2015, he made *Wounded Land*, which won Best Director and Best Actor in the Ophir Awards.

Your support of the Annual Campaign makes a meaningful impact, both in responding to urgent needs and ensuring the enduring strength of our community. Thank you for standing with us during these challenging times.



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Barren



Courtesy of Uri Ackerman

February 4 - 6
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window opens at
7pm ET on February 4
Viewing Region: Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Florida

2022 · Drama
108 minutes · Hebrew · Mordechai Vardi

A childless and young ultra-Orthodox couple faces a crisis, after a traumatic treatment for barrenness. When the difference between good and bad is unclear, the family must deal with unresolved secrets that raise fundamental questions about religion and faith.

TRIGGER WARNING: sexual violence

SPECIAL FEATURE

Monday, February 5 | 7pm ET | Virtual

Join for a recorded discussion with film director
Rabbi Mordechai Vardi.

Presenting Partner: Jewish Fertility Foundation - Cincinnati

FILM EXTRAS

From the Director

In the face of clerics, women are very vulnerable and exposed. As in Moliere's *Tartuffe*, the phenomenon also exists in Judaism. When a woman trusts a rabbi, who takes advantage of the situation to sexually exploit her, she has no defense mechanisms. In an ultra-Orthodox religious environment, the chances for this to happen are the highest. These cases raise doubts about obtaining religious authority. It is important for me to raise this issue on the agenda, and to prevent such cases in the future. This difficult conflict raises theological questions and puts the religious faith to the test. The film is based on real cases that happened, and the clergy's dealing with the phenomenon. When the religious mentality and faith conflict with the love of a man and a woman - I want to believe that love wins.



Rabbi Mordechai Vardi
Writer/Director

Mordechai Vardi graduated with a Master's degree in Film and Television from Tel Aviv University. He is an Israeli writer-director best known for his work on documentaries and feature films. He is a peace activist and a member of the "ROOTS" organization, on which he made a documentary film, *The Field*, and was the head of the Screenwriting department at the Ma'aleh Film School for 20 years. He currently serves as the rabbi of Kibbutz Rosh Zurim, and also serves as an artistic advisor to film funds in Israel. His recent documentary, *Marry Me However*, has resonated and is participating in many festivals around the world, including the 2023 Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival.

Irena's Vow



Wednesday, February 7 7pm ET In-Person at Mariemont Theatre

2023 · Historical Drama
120 minutes · English · Louise Archambault

Set in Poland during the German occupation, 19-year-old Irena Gut is promoted to housekeeper in the home of a highly-respected Nazi officer when she finds out that the Jewish ghetto is about to be liquidated. Irena uses her wit, humor, and courage to hide 12 Jews, concealing them in the midst of countless obstacles. Through the eyes of a strong-willed woman comes the remarkable true story of Irena Gut Opdyke and the triumphs of the human spirit over devastating tragedy.

CONTENT WARNING: violence, disturbing imagery

Presenting Partner: Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati - Guardians and Friends

Additional partnership support from The Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center

FILM EXTRAS

The Story of *Irena's Vow*

Inspired by the true story of Irena Gut, acclaimed Canadian Academy Award nominated screenwriter Dan Gordon wrote a play based on her life. *Irena's Vow* debuted off-Broadway in 2009, to rave reviews.

The play has reached audiences all over the United States, Canada and Israel. With Dan Gordon's illustrious screenwriting career, it was only a matter of time before he decided to adapt his play into a feature film. Such an important and international story felt like a natural fit for the screen.

Director Louise Archambault sheds light about the importance of the film: "Irena's story is universal and still topical today. More than ever, considering all the recent political, religious and racial wars throughout the world, including the #MeToo movement, we need inspiring truth-based stories like this one, extending a hand to others, regardless of their religion, culture or race."

Screenwriter Dan Gordon ties the story to current events: "It is so much more relevant today than it was ten years ago when I wrote it. That evil, which I think is a real living presence, I think it's like a cancer. I don't think it's ever gone. I think it's dormant [...] now you see what's happening in Ukraine with Russia, that cancer is being reactivated and it's unfortunately a catching cancer. It's airborne. So the relevance is more so today than when I wrote it, by a factor of a thousand."

About Production

Irena's Vow was shot across Poland, including Warsaw and Lubin, in just 29 days.

Director of Photography, Paul Sarossy says this about his time in Poland: "It's an incredible experience working here in Poland with the local team in this amazing place. These locations have such incredible visual potential [...] And on top of that, in a place that is so close to where this story actually took place [...] there's something kind of precious about that."



Louise Archambault
Director

Screenwriter and director, Louise Archambault made her debut with the internationally acclaimed film *Atomic Saké*, winning prizes such as the Jutra for Best Short Film. Her first feature film *Familia* gained many international sales and awards such as Best Canadian First Feature Film at TIFF. In addition to directing episodes of the TV series *La Galère* (2013), *Nouvelle Adresse* (2014), broadcast on Radio-Canada, and *This Life* (2015) for CBC, Louise launched her second film *Gabrielle* at the Locarno International Film Festival (Audience Award). In 2019, *L Pleuvait Des Oiseaux (And the Birds Rained Down)* premiered at TIFF and won various awards such as Best International Feature at the Göteborg Film Festival. Her film *Merci Pour Tout (Thanks for Everything)* was released December 25, 2019. These films both got considerable box office, ranking respectively second and third position in Canada. Louise just finished shooting the TV series *Survivre À Ses Enfants*, a comedy for Radio-Canada.



Jewish Cemeteries
of Greater Cincinnati

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A vibrant teal background featuring illustrations of various recreational activities: a blue pickleball paddle with three yellow balls, a golf club with a white ball, a tennis racket with a yellow ball, a fan of playing cards (Jack, Queen, King, Ace of Hearts), and several mah-jongg tiles. The text 'j classic' is written in a large, white, cursive font, with 'A MAYERSON JCC FUNDRAISER' in a smaller, yellow, sans-serif font below it.

Thursday, May 30, 2024
Losantiville Country Club

The J Classic is the Mayerson JCC's largest annual fundraising event. Each summer, hundreds of people gather at Losantiville Country Club for a great day of activities, including the Adams Golf Tournament, tennis, pickleball, canasta, mah-jongg, Course of Caterers Dinner, J Classic Raffle, and the Young Adult Par-Tee.



Our Biggest Fundraiser of the Year!

Register to play, eat, and support at
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JEWISH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Presented by **Seven Hills Symphony**
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Jewish music through lectures, choral music, orchestral music, chamber music, and art songs.

Yiddish Vocal Chamber Music Lecture Recital

Sunday, March 3
 1:30pm Lecture | 3pm Recital
 First Lutheran Church OTR

**Marc Lavry
 120th Anniversary
 Seven Hills Symphony**

Sunday, March 17 | 3pm
 Mayerson JCC Amberley Room

**Jewish Folk Music and Poems
 CCM Concert Orchestra**

Tuesday, March 5 | 7:30pm
 CCM Corbett Auditorium

**Piano and Violin Recital
 by Benjamin Gittens
 & Danqi Zeng**

Tuesday, March 19 | 7:30pm
 HUC Scheuer Chapel

**Music from Auschwitz
 Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra**

Thursday, March 7 | 7:30pm
 Mayerson JCC Amberley Room

**Xavier University and
 Community Choirs**

Thursday, March 21 | 7:30pm
 Xavier University Bellarmine Chapel

**Jewish Chamber Music
 by concert:nova**

Tuesday, March 12 | 7:30pm
 HUC Mayerson Hall Auditorium

Jews on Broadway Cabaret

Tuesday, March 26 | 7pm & 9pm
 Memorial Hall

**Yiddish Music
 by NKU Choir**

Thursday, March 14 | 7:30pm
 Plum Street Temple



FOR MORE
 INFORMATION
 AND BUY
 TICKETS VISIT

cincinnatiartsandculturalexchange.org

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





Jewish Home of Cincinnati is proud to be a partner of the 2024 Mayerson JCC Jewish and Israeli Film Festival and we thank the JCC 60 & Better Center for the work they do year-round to positively impact the lives of Jewish older adults!

We want to congratulate the JCC on receiving the Wilbur M. Cohen Family Annual Award to Support Senior Health and Wellness.



The mission of the Jewish Home of Cincinnati is to support Greater Cincinnati Jewish seniors by **investing in innovative services and programs.**

Children of Nobody



Thursday, February 8
7pm ET
In-Person at Mariemont Theatre

2022 · Drama
 108 minutes · Hebrew · Erez Tadmor

Living on the fringes of Israeli society, troubled boys must band together to save the shelter for at-risk youth that has kept them off the streets. For generations, an altruistic surrogate mother, Margalit, provided loving refuge to victims of neglect and violence in a shabby house on Tel Aviv's outskirts. When tragedy strikes, it's up to right-hand man Jackie to keep the home. Inspired by a true story, this compassionate drama gives voice to those on the periphery, often unnoticed and uncared for.

TRIGGER WARNING: suicidal references, self harm
CONTENT WARNING: drug usage, sexual references

Presenting Partner: Jewish Home of Cincinnati

FILM EXTRAS

See page 6 for the director's bio.

Jerry's Last Mission



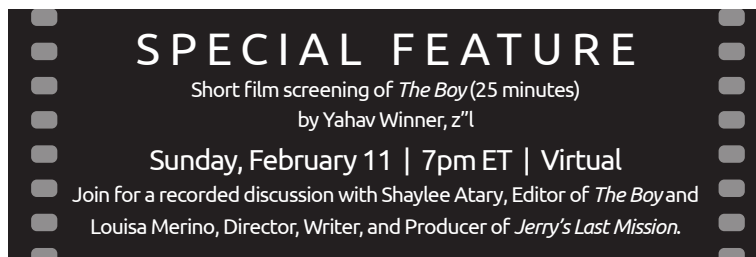
OFFICIAL SELECTION
2023 GLOBAL PEACE
FILM FESTIVAL

February 10 - 12
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window opens at
7pm ET on February 10
Viewing Region: Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Florida

2021 · Documentary
58 minutes · English · Louisa Merino

P-51 fighter pilot Jerry Yellin flew combat missions on Iwo Jima and over Japan, including the last combat mission of World War II. As he confronts his decades-old fear and hatred, Yellin overcomes his PTSD as he was forced to face his enemy once again when his youngest son moved to Japan and married the daughter of a Kamikaze pilot. This documentary tells the story of Jerry's reconciliation with the enemy and healing from the wounds of war.

TRIGGER WARNING: suicidal references
CONTENT WARNING: graphic archival imagery



Presenting Partner: Jewish Federation of Cincinnati - Jewish Community Relations Council

FILM EXTRAS

About Jerry Yellin

Jerome "Jerry" Yellin (February 15, 1924 – December 21, 2017) was a United States Army Air Forces World War II fighter pilot who fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima and who flew 19 Very Long Range (VLR) combat missions over Japan. He has been credited with flying the final combat mission of World War II in a North American P-51 Mustang against a military airfield near Tokyo on August 14, 1945. In his later years, he became well known for his reconciliation with the Japanese and for his work in helping veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He was the author of four books, including *Jerry's Last Mission* (originally entitled *Of War and Weddings*), an autobiography. On January 29, 2014, Texas Governor Rick Perry honored Yellin's military service and commitment to help veterans by making him an honorary Texan.



Louisa Merino
Director/Writer/Producer

Louisa studied documentary filmmaking at the New York Film Academy where her thesis film, *Lifeline*, attracted subjects that ranged from an Oscar-winning

writer and director team, to Harry Potter-star Daniel Radcliffe. Soon after graduating, she won a 6,000 Euro grant through an international film contest and became the representative of the US, making a film about sustainability in New York City. In this project, she was mentored by Oscar-winning director Davis Guggenheim. Her film *Families like Me* was selected as part of Mexico's Women in Film and Television showcase for 2013, among other festivals worldwide; and her film *Lifeline* was part of the official selection of the Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival for 2013. Louisa taught film editing in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's "Art and Film" course in New York City and has worked with the David Lynch Foundation for the past ten years as Senior Editor, Story Producer and Consultant.



Rabbi Ari Jun
Moderator

Director, Jewish Community Relations Council
Jewish Federation of Cincinnati

SHORT FILM: **The Boy**

Courtesy of Ben Peled

2023 · Short Drama
25 minutes · Hebrew · Yahav Winner, z"l

Avinoam and Barak, father and son from a Kibbutz near Gaza strip, are each facing another round of combat in their own way. While Avinoam insists on continuing his routine and his work in the field, Barak finds it difficult to close his eyes and continue as usual. One night, Barak reaches a boiling point and Avinoam is forced to absorb the flames.

Yahav Winner's final film is a poignant meditation on empathy across borders, as told through the eyes of a young man living in a Kibbutz on the Gaza border, whose compassion for his neighbors on the other side of the fence sets him apart from his family and community.

CONTENT WARNING: violence

FILM EXTRAS

From the Director

I was born in Kibbutz Kfar Gaza in 1986. The eldest son of two urban parents who chose to come to Kibbutz to fulfill the dream of a house with a garden. My father, a handsome, strong and tough man, decided to give me the name Yahav - security, hope. From the moment I was born, I felt the yoke of God on my shoulders, because in my head there were dreams, reflections and high sensitivities that made me cry from almost every situation. I grew up in the Kibbutz as an alpha male blessed with blue eyes and an athletic body, one who was prophesied to be an elite officer or even, if he really succeeded, a pilot. But I, for as long as I can remember, have felt split. A boy who fails to grow up. Trying to be serious and concentrate on the "important" things in life like cars, business and money, but I couldn't. Instead, I grabbed a guitar and sang. Or I told stories. Life in the Kibbutz as a child I remember as heaven on earth: green lawns, a pool, paths you can walk on barefoot. I only remember the nights as scary. I sleep in a bunk bed with my little brother under me, unable to fall asleep because of the sounds of the muezzin coming from Gaza. My father was angry with me for not falling asleep. In 2006, Paradise started to become less magical. Israel-Gaza relations began to heat up and souvenirs from Gaza in the shape of exploding pipes began to fall on the Kibbutz. One day, an exploding pipe fell on my neighbor Jimmy, my best friend's father, and I was the first to see him.

This event carved a hole in my heart and from that moment I embarked on a path from which the return was long. Shortly after the incident, I left the army on my own accord. My father, my beacon, took it very hard. His child went crazy, and the whole Kibbutz knew. Chronic knee pain began to develop for him. But instead of being angry with me, he internalized it and did an act of his that I will cherish to this day - he took me to work with him in the field, so that I would be close to him. We would drive in silence, father and son on the tractor, yellow wheat fields to our left, Gaza to our right. We didn't talk much, but in those days it was a lifeline for me. He was my hero. I remember that somewhere I developed an awareness of wars, as absurd as they are but inevitable. The tanks and jeeps that used to travel in our fields, trampling the farmers' work without recognition because everything is kosher when it comes to a military operation, would travel on the way to small and cunning Gaza, "to show them what it is" and who knows what kind of life they will harvest there. There were days when I couldn't digest the thought that whole families were being wiped out three kilometers from me and we have another cooking show on TV. In my film, I try to capture a tragic and human triangle of the therapist, the patient and the absurd. My father - the therapist, I - the patient and the impossible, and endless situation of the envelope and the Gaza Strip - the absurdity.



Yahav Winner, z"l
Director/Writer

Yahav Winner graduated from the Nissan Nativ Acting Studio in 2014. He was also a graduate of the film department at Minshar School of Art. In 2020, Winner and his wife, Shaylee Atary, collaborated on *Neurim*, a short film that Winner produced and was later screened at the Cannes Film Festival's Cinefondation. As he processed his own trauma, Winner wrote and directed *The Boy*. Winner was working on a feature film about Kibbutz stories before his death.

Shaylee Atary
Editor

Shaylee Atary is a graduate of the Nissan Nativ Tel Aviv Acting Studio and Ruth Dytsches Acting for Camera school. Shaylee specializes in video editing and gradually paves her way as a filmmaker in the world of cinema. Shaylee Atary is known for *Neurim* (2020), *Single Light* (2023) and *Johnny and the Knights of Galilee* (2015).

IN MEMORY: On Saturday, October 7, 2023, in the early morning, Hamas terrorists burst into Yahav's family bedroom in Kibbutz Kfar Aza in the south of Israel. Yahav tried with all his strength to block the terrorists, allowing his wife, Shaylee, and their one-month-old daughter, Shaya, to escape. Shortly afterward, Yahav was murdered in cold blood. Shaylee defended baby Shaya, with no food or water, for 27 hours until they were rescued.

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The Catskills



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Music Division

Tuesday, February 13

7pm ET

**In-Person at The Schiff Center at
The Seven Hills School**

2024 • Documentary

84 minutes • English • Lex Gillespie

As bungalow colony proprietors, guests, waiters, comedians, hoteliers, and beauticians share colorful tales of Catskill farms, boarding houses, and luxury resorts, they paint a picture of vibrant American Jewish life and culture in the 20th century. With a trove of lost-and-found archival footage and a cast of characters endowed with the gift of gab, this documentary journeys into the storied mountain getaway north of New York City.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Short documentary film screening of *Kinderland* (25 minutes)

by Amy Grappell

Join for a discussion with Jennifer Caplan, Associate Professor and Jewish
Foundation of Cincinnati Chair in Judaic Studies, University of Cincinnati.

Presenting Partner: Camp Livingston

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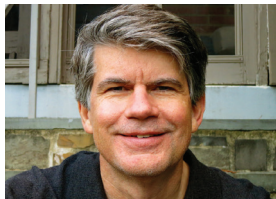


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FILM EXTRAS

From the Director

I got the idea for my film when I was screening *The Mamboniks* in 2019. At nearly each of the film festivals, someone would raise their hand during the Q&A session and ask a question about the Catskills. I realized there was a demand for a movie about this storied vacation land that so many people recall fondly.



Lex Gillespie
Director

Lex Gillespie is a three-time Peabody Award winner and the shared winner of a silver baton from the duPont-Columbia Journalism Awards at New York's Columbia School of Journalism. For the past 25 years, he's produced documentaries on music, history, culture and the arts. His credits include *Let the Good Times Roll*, a 26-hour history of African-American music from the blues to Motown; *Songs in the Wind*, the story of the indigenous music of the Andes Mountains; and *Seoul House*, about a hip hop opera set in a Korean mom-and-pop corner store in Washington, DC.



Jennifer Caplan
Speaker

Jennifer Caplan is the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Chair in Judaic Studies at the University of Cincinnati. She received her PhD in religious studies from Syracuse University after a dual BA in religion and theatre studies from Wellesley College and an MTS from Harvard Divinity School. Her first book, *Funny, You Don't Look Funny: Judaism and Humor from the Silent Generation to Millennials* was published by Wayne State University Press in 2023. She is currently working on her new book, *Unmasked: Judaism in DC and Marvel*. She has published widely on topics about Judaism and popular culture.

SHORT FILM: Kinderland



2021 · Short Documentary
25 minutes · English · Amy Grappell

Kinderland tells the story of two secular Jewish summer camps in upstate New York that have cultivated social activists for almost a century and are still in existence today. Both camps were founded by secular working-class Jews on either side of the leftist political divide. Kinderland was communist; Kinder Ring (The Workmen's Circle) socialist. Despite numerous commonalities, they enjoyed a legendary feud from opposite ends of Sylvan Lake. In response to the devastating impact of the Trump era and the accompanying rise in intolerance and inequality, today's campers, a largely secular multi-ethnic group, prioritize shared values over philosophical differences and attempt to join forces in the ongoing fight for equality and justice.

What makes *Kinderland* exceptional and timely is that it presents a history of political consciousness in America, while highlighting the ongoing re-emergence of critical social issues and the ways divisiveness is a primary impediment to establishing real and permanent change.

FILM EXTRAS



Amy Grappell
Director/Producer

Amy Grappell's documentary short *Quadrangle* premiered at Sundance in 2010, where it won a Jury Prize. It went on to win Best Short Film at SXSW, AFI, Dallas International Film Festival, and had its New York premiere at New Directors/New Films, before being broadcast on HBO. Grappell returned to Sundance in 2011 with her short documentary *Kids Green the World*. She was one of the select writer/directors on Richard Linklater's *Slacker* remake (2011), and her feature documentary *Light From the East*, shot in Ukraine during the fall of Communism, premiered at SXSW and aired on PBS affiliate KLRU (2009). Grappell is the recipient of grants from The Austin Film Society, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Council for the Humanities and The Puffin Foundation.



We are the epicenter of young, Jewish life in Cincinnati — poised to meet Jewish students as they are. *Wherever they are. Wherever they come from.*



Thank you to our donors for your ongoing support, enabling us to provide a strong and vibrant community for our students.

 cincinnatihillel.org  [CincinnatiHillel](https://www.facebook.com/CincinnatiHillel)  [cincyhillel](https://www.instagram.com/cincyhillel)

Questions? Contact our Executive Director
Rachel Kaplan at rachel@hillelcincinnati.org

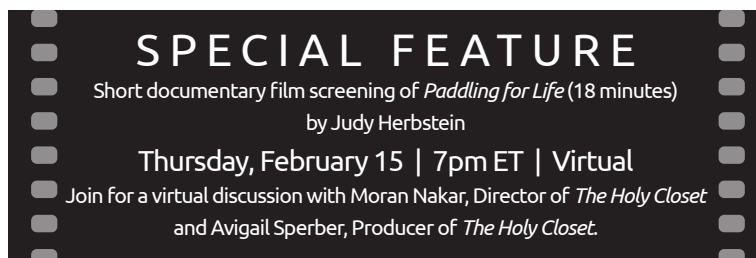
The Holy Closet



February 14 - 16
Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window opens at
7pm ET on February 14
Viewing Region: Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Florida

2022 · Documentary
 59 minutes · Hebrew · Moran Nakar

What does the wedding ceremony of two religious Jewish gay men look like? Or the pregnancy of a trans religious man? These are the stories of LGBTQ people who chose to remain religious Jews and to build their lives, relationships, families, and everyday activities according to the Jewish religion.



Presenting Partner: Cincinnati Hillel

FILM EXTRAS



Moran Nakar
 Director

Born in Israel in 1990, Moran Nakar graduated in Film Studies from Sapir College in 2018. Director and writer of the fiction short film *Cosmopolitan* (2020), featured its international premiere at POFF SHORTS, and is now screening in film festivals worldwide (*Toronto Inside Out*, *London BFI Flair*, *Boston Wicked Queer* and more). Her documentary web series *The Holy Closet* for KAN, the Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation, is successfully aired and screened all over Israel and won the Academy Award for best web series and the Documentary Forum Award in 2023.



Avigail Sperber
 Producer

Avigail Sperber graduated from the Ma'aleh Film School in 1998, where her graduation film, *Four Men Entered the Grove*, won the best film award of her graduating class. She is a director, producer, and cinematographer.



Elliot Draznin
 Moderator

Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Cincinnati Pride and co-founder of *elech: creating Queer Jewish belonging*

Elliot Draznin (they/them) is a dynamic community builder committed to creative storytelling and relationship management. They are a goal-setting specialist with a knack for helping others feel connected, motivated, and respected. They are nonbinary, transgender, Jewish, neurodivergent, an entrepreneur, an activist, and a kabbalist. They currently serve as the Development Manager at Women Helping Women, a local organization preventing gender-based violence and empowering all survivors across southwest Ohio. They volunteer their free time on the Jewish Federation Board of Trustees, as the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Cincinnati Pride, and as the co-founder and Programming Officer for *elech: creating Queer Jewish Belonging*. They play second violin for the Cincinnati Civic Orchestra and enjoy making all kinds of art.

SHORT FILM: Paddling for Life



2021 • Short Documentary
18 minutes • Hebrew • Judy Herbstein

This documentary is the story of the Pink Lionesses, Israel, a unique women's sports group, consisting of breast cancer survivors, that paddle on Dragon Boats, on the Sea of Galilee in Northern Israel. Their common goal is to recover, recuperate and combat their cancer. They have chosen optimism, action, caring for themselves despite intense difficulties and fears.

"Getting up in the morning and going to practice, knowing that the disease was a surprise in the first round, I'm responsible for trying to make sure it does not return ..."

About 200 women, between the ages of 29-79, from all walks of life, background and religions, are Pink Lionesses.

FILM EXTRAS



Judy Herbstein
Director

Judy Herbstein is a documentary film director, photographer, researcher and producer with a MFA degree from the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California and another master's degree in cinema from the Interdisciplinary Arts Program at Tel Aviv University, Israel. She has lived and made news stories and documentary films in the United States, South Africa and

Israel. She won an Emmy Award for producing a series of video pieces for *The News Hour*, PBS filmed in Hebron (1996). In recent years, she has been living in the North of Israel. She teaches filmmaking alongside continuing her work as a creative artist.



Ages 5 - 13

Saturday, March 2

6:30 - 8:45pm | Mayerson JCC

J Members & Rockwern Families: \$25 | Public: \$33

No parents allowed - cozy up with us for a movie night! Kids will discover what the J is like after hours, eat a delicious kosher dinner, and watch a movie on the big screen!

In partnership with Rockwern Academy and Camp at the J



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Jewish Federation of Cincinnati.

Remembering Gene Wilder



Sunday, February 18
3pm ET
In-Person at Mayerson JCC

2023 · Documentary
90 minutes · English · Ron Frank

This documentary, told in part through Gene Wilder's own voice, offers generous helpings of film clips from across Wilder's career. A heartfelt tribute to the beloved star, this multi-talented performer is dramatically brought to life through never-before-seen home movies and photographs, as well as the intimate insights of friends and colleagues, including Mel Brooks, Alan Alda, Carol Kane, and more.

Presenting Partners: 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 Hallie Kantor at hkantor@jfedcin.org or 513.985.1595 to RSVP.

FILM EXTRAS

"I love this film! It's a warm and wonderful tribute to my dear friend, Gene. Don't miss it!"
- Mel Brooks



Ron Frank
Director/Editor

An award-winning filmmaker, Ron Frank has earned a Peabody award and Emmy nomination, and has worked as director, writer, editor and producer. One of Frank's earlier television documentaries was a

two-hour special for History Channel; *The Hunt for Adolf Eichmann*, narrated by Gregory Peck. He was director and writer for *The Eternal Road* on PBS; the story of a lost opera by Kurt Weill that foreshadowed the fate of German Jewry. Frank produced and edited *The Lost JFK Tapes* for National Geographic Channel, a two-hour special on the JFK assassination for which he received an Emmy nomination. He is director, producer and editor of his theatrical documentary film, *When Comedy Went to School* about the birthplace of stand up comedy in the Catskill Mountains. Frank has taught documentary filmmaking at UCLA and holds a BFA from New York University's film school.

theatre AT THE J

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Spring Musical Performance
Sunday, June 2 | 2pm & 7pm
Monday, June 3 | 7pm
Children (12 & Under): \$7 | Adults: \$10

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Jewish Book Series

VIRTUAL BOOK SERIES

Picture in the Sand

by Peter Blauner

Wednesday, March 13
7pm | Virtual
FREE with RSVP

Peter Blauner's epic *Picture in the Sand* is a sweeping intergenerational saga told through a grandfather's passionate letters to his grandson. Peter Blauner will join us virtually to speak about his novel.

THE GOLEM OF BROOKLYN

A Novel
by ADAM MANSBACH

April 11 | The Golem Of Brooklyn
by Adam Mansbach

LEONARD COHEN

UNTOLD STORIES: That's How the Light Gets In, Volume 3
by MICHAEL POSNER

May 1 | Leonard Cohen, Untold Stories: That's How the Light Gets In, Volume 3
by Michael Posner

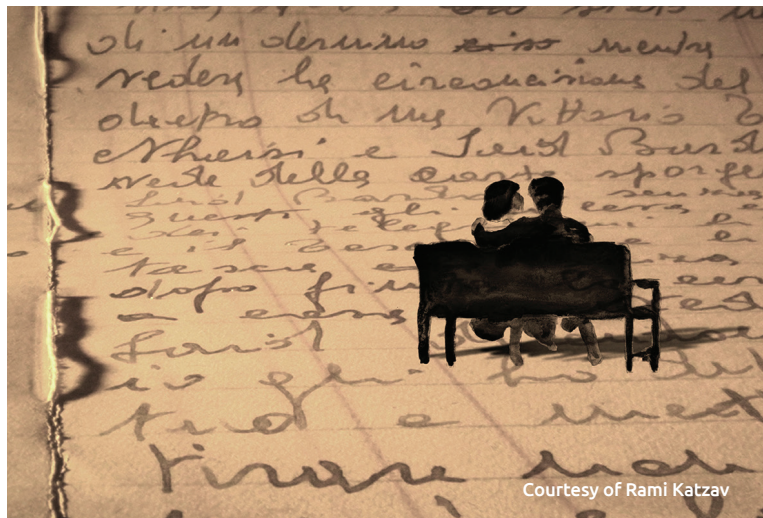
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GIADO – Holocaust in the Desert



Courtesy of Rami Katzav

February 19 - 21

Virtual 48-hr Viewing Window opens at 7pm ET on February 19

Viewing Region: Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Florida

2023 · Documentary

55 minutes · Hebrew, Italian · Sharon Ada Yaish, Golan Rise

For seven decades, Yosef Dadush concealed a private diary, securely locked away in a closet at his home. Now, this documentary grants us the precious opportunity to peer into the harrowing existence endured by the inmates of Giado - a concentration camp situated in the heart of the Libyan Desert.

CONTENT WARNING: violence

SPECIAL FEATURE

Short film screening of *ANNE* (10 minutes) by
Desirée Abeyta and Adi Eshman

Tuesday, February 20 | 7pm ET | Virtual

Join us for a recorded discussion with the directors and producers of
GIADO, Sharon Ada Yaish and Golan Rise, and Livia Tagliacozzo, PhD
student at the department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry
at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Presenting Partner: Holocaust Education Fund, History Department, Miami University

Additional partnership support from The Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center

FILM EXTRAS

About the Production

In an endeavor to bring this compelling story to life on the screen, a unique model of the camp was constructed and photographed. Using animations, this model serves as a visual bridge, connecting the haunting texts of the diary with the stark reality of the camp. The resulting film merges historical accuracy with a distinctive cinematic language, offering a powerful and immersive exploration of Yosef's profound journey and the dark legacy he left behind.

From Director Sharon Ada Yaish

For a considerable period, I carried this family story, yet I remained distant from it, unwilling to fully engage. Growing up in a family that refrained from acknowledging trauma, I was repeatedly urged to "move on" and avoid dwelling on painful experiences. This perspective, undoubtedly empowering and fostering resilience, allowed me to navigate life actively and persevere. However, while adhering to this mindset, I unknowingly concealed parts of myself—parts that would occasionally emerge unexpectedly, catching me off guard and deviating from my intended path.

One such concealed aspect is my second name, Ada. I never truly delved into the reasons behind this name, choosing instead to hide it as it felt unfamiliar and outdated. But today, after completing this film and discovering that I was named after a baby girl who tragically perished in the Holocaust, I proudly embrace it.

In this introspective journey, I made another profound observation: by erasing significant portions of our past, we inadvertently grant others permission to do the same. When we fail to acknowledge and confront our personal history, others may follow suit, perpetuating a cycle of forgetting and detachment.

Through the process of uncovering my grandfather's journal, I realized the significance of reconnecting with our personal history. It is through this connection that we can truly understand ourselves, find strength in our roots, and honor the resilience of those who came before us.

From Director Golan Rise

My mother was born in Libya and, during the war, she was enslaved and taken to a labor camp in Libya. I have heard many stories about this period, but for us as well the main message was to continue to be happy. There was no place in the family narrative for what my mother's family went through. I personally feel a huge mission to tell the story of the Holocaust of Libyan Jews. A holocaust that has not been told to this day.

From the Filmmakers

We as documentary filmmakers believe that we should not only make films as documentation but also bring about social change. This film will hopefully shed light on a holocaust that was denied and was never told - the Holocaust of North African Jewry.

We believe it is important to shed light on the myriad victims affected by the Holocaust and by Nazi ideology. Sephardic Jews, disabled people,

Roma, homosexuals, communists, and artists were all persecuted under the Nazi regime. These are global Holocaust histories which are crucial to document in order to illuminate the global and diverse nature of the Holocaust, which transpired in continental Europe but also in European colonies and satellite states, imprisoning Jews in North Africa and sending shockwaves as far away as Iraq. We hope to illuminate the truly transnational nature of history through film and archival work.

The film creates another way to reach out to the Arab countries, which were once the home of many Jews. The story may bring hearts together between enemy countries since the Holocaust happened on their soil.



Sharon Yaish
Director/Producer

Sharon Yaish is an Israeli director and editor. She wrote and co-directed the Israeli documentary film *A Whore Like Me*, which was praised by critics as "one of the most important films ever made about prostitution." The film won an Israeli Academy Award for Best Mid-length Documentary. She has been working as a director and editor for more than 25 years. Among her notable projects: *Lost Angeles* (Best Cinematography, Docaviv 2022 & Best Screenplay,

AGIFF Toronto 2023), *Love It Was Not* (Best Israeli Documentary, Docaviv 2020) *How to Say Silence* (Best Debut Film, Docaviv 2021), and *Elish's Notebooks* (Editing Award, Docaviv 2017).



Golan Rise
Director/Producer

An Israeli director and screenwriter, Rise is a graduate of the Ma'aleh Film School in Jerusalem. His graduation films *Blockages* and the documentary *Breakfast Parliament* have won many festivals in Israel and around the world. Among his notable works: *Elish's Notebooks* (Editing Award, Docaviv 2017), *Blind Spot* (2021), and *Lost Angeles* (Best Cinematography, Docaviv 2022 & Best Screenplay, AGIFF Toronto 2023).



Livia Tagliacozzo
Speaker

Livia Tagliacozzo is currently a PhD student at the department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her doctoral research revolves around the topic of Italian Fascist Concentration Camps in Libya (1929-1943). Her dissertation is being supervised by Prof. Manuela Consonni from the Hebrew University and Prof. Ethan Katz from

UC Berkeley.

Prior to her doctoral studies, Livia earned a Bachelor's degree in the Multidisciplinary Program in the Humanities from Tel Aviv University. She further pursued her education with a Master's degree in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her academic excellence was recognized with the President's Fellowship for Academic Excellence from the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School for Advanced Study in the Humanities. In 2018, she was honored with the Felix Posen Scholarship and was a fellow at the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism. Additionally, she has received research grants from the European Forum at the Hebrew University and

the Ben Zvi Institute for the study of Jewish communities in the east.

This year Livia is teaching a course at the Hebrew University, focusing on Italian history and cinema. Her previous teaching experience includes courses on genocide and Italian history. She has also contributed to a number of publications, including a work titled "Solidarity Among Colonial Subjects in Wartime Libya, 1940-1943," published in *Quest, Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* in 2022.

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SHORT FILM: ANNE



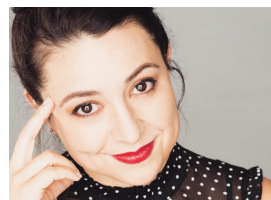
2022 · Short Film
10 minutes · English · Desirée Abeyta, Adi Eshman

Two actresses have made it to the final callbacks for the role of a lifetime: to play Anne Frank in an upcoming staged production. But as the topic of color-blind casting makes its way into the audition room, the controversial question emerges: who is best suited to portray Anne Frank?

ANNE is a film that aims to explore the nuances within cultural representation, in addition to the importance of why stories like Anne Frank's continue to be told. Is it more important to accurately "be" something, or to accurately "represent" something? Is "authenticity" synonymous with perception? And, as storytellers, how do we define the difference between empathy and appropriation? These are the questions raised through the eyes of two women both "right" for the role.

ANNE was in consideration for the 2023 Academy Awards for Best Live Action Short and has been selected at over 30 film festivals in the US and Canada.

FILM EXTRAS



Desirée Abeyta
Director

Desirée Abeyta is a Telly Award winning actor, filmmaker, and producer, known for exploring social and feminist themes through a hopeful lens. Her debut short film, *An Invitation to Tea*, was one of 5 recipients of the "Inwood Artworks Filmmaker Grant" in 2019 and has since received several awards including: multiple Audience Choice, Best New Director, and Excellence in Filmmaking awards at various festivals. She has been described as a strong visual artist, drawn to diverse and engaging storytelling. She currently moonlights as a creative producer with Vox Media.



Adi Eshman
Writer

Adi Eshman is an American Jewish playwright, screenwriter and producer who recently got his MFA in Dramatic Writing from the USC School of Dramatic Arts. His works have been read at NYU Gallatin, Columbia University, The Tank, Jewish Women's Theatre, Los Angeles Theatre Center, Bowery Poetry Club, Nuyorican Poets Café and Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre. In 2019, his play *King Lesbian* was a finalist for the Jewish Plays Contest. He worked as a writer's assistant on Steven Soderbergh's experimental HBO drama, *MOSAIC*. BA: NYU Gallatin.

The History Department of Miami University is proud to be a Presenting Partner of the 2024 Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival.



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CURRENT AND UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS



**THROUGH DECEMBER 2024
JEWISH-AMERICAN HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE
SOLOMON NUNES CARVALHO**

In the lobby of Mayerson Hall, learn about the life and legacy of the official photographer on the Frémont Expedition to find the best path for a planned transcontinental railroad. Carvalho also painted portraits of Mormon leader Brigham Young, Indian Chief Wacara, and President Abraham Lincoln.

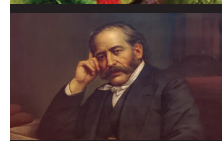
**THROUGH MARCH 17
SPOTLIGHT ON ROMAN VISHNIAC**

In the second-floor lobby of Mayerson Hall, photographs, books, posters, and documents from the collections of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and Klau Library amplify the life and work of this versatile and innovative photographer.



**THROUGH JUNE 2024
MODERN ISRAELI ART, MARK PODWAL PRINTS,
AND RECENT GIFTS**

The Mayerson Auditorium gallery features works by such Israeli modernists as Mordecai Ardon and Reuven Rubin; prints by Mark Podwal "drawn" from ritual objects in the Skirball's collection; and recent gifts including works by Marc Chagall and Cincinnati artist Wolfgang Ritschel.



**THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 11AM, SCHEUER CHAPEL
HUC-JIR CINCINNATI FOUNDERS DAY**

Join us as we celebrate the enduring vision of our founders, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise.

**APRIL 11–JULY 28, 2024
THE GUIDING HAND: THE BARR FOUNDATION
COLLECTION OF TORAH POINTERS**

Be dazzled by over 100 antique and contemporary Torah pointers, known by the Hebrew word for "hand," yad. Created by artists from different ages and cultures and made of diverse materials including wood, precious metals, jewels, ceramics, and paper, these yads chronicle the timeless, universal aesthetic guide in reading the Torah. Transcending religious iconography, this exhibition appeals to all who appreciate the beauty and craftsmanship of fine art.



RSVP and event information: awheeler@huc.edu/513.487.3231



Gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley

Thursday, February 22

7pm ET

In-Person at Cincinnati Skirball Museum

2023 • Documentary

93 minutes • English, German • Laura Bialis

Executive Producers: Nancy Spielberg, Ori Eisen, Mirit Eisen, Taube Philanthropies, Maimonides Fund

He was difficult, flamboyant, and brilliant. Photographer and scientist Roman Vishniac captured iconic images of Jewish life – from the cafes of pre-war Berlin to the shtetls of Eastern Europe – all before fleeing Nazi Germany to reinvent himself in America. Told through the eyes of his daughter Mara, this documentary reconstructs his dramatic life, complicated relationships, and breathtaking legacy.

SPECIAL FEATURE

February 20 - March 17 | Cincinnati Skirball Museum

Spotlight on Roman Vishniac

In the second-floor lobby of Mayerson Hall, photographs, books, posters, and documents from the collections of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives and Klau Library amplify the life and work of this versatile and innovative photographer.

Presenting Partner: Cincinnati Skirball Museum and Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

FILM EXTRAS

From the Director

I met Roman Vishniac's daughter, Mara Vishniac Kohn, over twenty years ago at a lecture of Elie Wiesel in Santa Barbara, my hometown. Mara recounted the story of her childhood in Berlin and her family's frantic, eleventh-hour escape from Nazi Germany. Her vivid description, through a child's eyes, was as enthralling as the story itself. She invited me to her home, a mid-century modern museum of treasures from a distant time and continent, perched atop Santa Barbara and a huge expanse of the Pacific. Her father's photographs, hung on the walls, were vaguely familiar to me from the coffee table book in my father's den. When she opened a closet of prints and negatives, a large portfolio case fell out, with photographs of Albert Einstein. This was my first real introduction to Roman Vishniac. As a creator of black-and-white photographs, I was blown away by the images: the emotional response they elicited; the feeling of peering into a sacred time capsule, a visceral portal into Jewish history to marvel at faces and places that are long gone.

There had not been a comprehensive film made about Vishniac. Mara, his sole heir, was not interested. "It's complicated. I don't want to get into all of that," she said. After many meetings, I convinced her that this would be a way to bring the photographs to many more people, another generation, and that it would be possible and worthwhile to tell the story of a man who was both gifted and complicated. He didn't need to be a hero.

Mara and I worked together over three years until her passing at the age of 92. We developed a close friendship. What emerged was a fascinating portrait of a gifted artist and his family navigating the storm of 20th century Europe and their own family saga; a complex and flawed persona who made incredibly significant contributions to the collective memory of our history and culture; and a daughter who gracefully overcame challenges with her father in order to embrace her inheritance and preserve his legacy.

As I pored over a hard drive of prints and negatives of Vishniac's work – over 23,000 items – I began to grasp what set him apart. Vishniac was passionate about finding beauty through careful observation of individuals and communities. It could be boys studying in a cheder in Mukachevo, a dragonfly on a leaf, or plankton he found in pond water, but there is a unifying fascination about all living things coupled with a complete passion for his subjects. He was in love. It is easy to see how this passion colored not just his art but his life where he was often dramatic, grandiose, overexaggerated.

Vishniac's singular obsession with the microscopic world guided how he approached all of his subjects: "The closer you get, the more beautiful it is," he often told Mara. This closeness and affection can be seen in the faces he captured for posterity. In many of these photos, the subject peers directly at Vishniac.

There is a rapport, a connection, a momentary intimacy between photographer and subject that

somehow captures their human essence. This is the magic of Vishniac and what I hope to bring to the screen – the beauty, majesty and wonder of a world Vishniac spent his life seeking out and documenting on film.



Laura Bialis
Director/Producer

Laura Bialis is an award-winning documentary filmmaker. Her most recent film, *Rock in the Red Zone* (2015) is a personal view from the ground in Sderot, Israel, and an exploration into the lives of musicians creating in a conflict zone. The film was screened in over 80 cities worldwide. Bialis directed and produced the critically acclaimed documentary *Refusenik* (2007) a seminal film about the movement to free Soviet Jews, which was released theatrically in fifteen cities, broadcast on Israeli television, and was released on Netflix. Other projects include *View From the Bridge: Stories From Kosovo* (2008) and *Tak For Alt* (1998), the story of Holocaust survivor turned Civil Rights activist Judy Meisel, which was honored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, broadcast on PBS, and has been used extensively in high schools across the United States for Holocaust education. Laura holds a B.A. in History from Stanford University,

and an M.F.A. in Production from the USC School of Cinema Arts.



Nancy Spielberg
Executive Producer

Producer Nancy Spielberg grew up immersed in filmmaking, working on her brother's early films as cast and crew. She attended Arizona State University and UCLA and, after moving to New York in 1978, studied film at Sarah Lawrence College and the New School. An accomplished businesswoman and philanthropist, she has turned her energy and talents to producing documentary and feature films. One of her priorities is to help preserve stories and make them into educational tools for the benefit of younger generations.

Nancy Spielberg is founder and co-founder of several charities including "Children of Chernobyl," "Project Sunshine" and the American branch of The Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. She is also involved in charities that help victims of terror and support soup kitchens.

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TAM PHOTOS

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Sunday, February 25
3pm ET
In-Person at Mariemont Theatre

2022 • Comedy
 93 minutes • French • Gad Elmaleh

After failing to hide his desire to convert to Catholicism, Gad's family strives to convince him that he should not abandon Judaism. Inspired by the director's own fraught relationship to the Jewish faith and starring Gad Elmaleh's real-life family, this is a heart-warming and charming story about faith, family and acceptance.

Presenting Partner: Jewish Family Service

FILM EXTRAS

From the Director

Excerpted from an interview with Gad Elmaleh

Q: The film is about your relationship with the Jewish faith and your deep affection for Mary, but it is also a film about identity, and yours is definitely multiple—

A: Yes, it's a film about identity in the broadest sense. In it, I am asking myself and with great sincerity, about my place, as a 50-year-old man, in society, in my family, in the world, in geography, in history, in my history, in my relationship to Jewishness. As I said, I've been talking about the same things for thirty years, except that now I think I'm talking about them with more courage, without hiding behind an artifice. It's like returning to my first love. If you only knew how much I took out during editing: the gags, the grimace! There is humor in the film, but the humor arises naturally from situations, it's not forced. I use the situation, but not so much for the comic effect as for the reflection it can provoke in everyone.

Q: What did you enjoy most?

A: Getting the non-actors to act was the most overwhelming and most rewarding aspect. I didn't want to make characters out of my mother, my sister, the priests, or the rabbis. I wanted us to be above clichés. I wanted to involve people who are themselves, whereas in the film I don't really know who I am anymore.

Q: Your emotion is evident.

A: Yes, because it's the film I'm most proud of. The film has a path and I too have a path. I think the film will start a discussion, and I'm happy to be able to start a discussion with the audience members who want it. I think it's quite an unsettling film, and I realize that it's a huge luxury to tackle the subjects you really want to talk about. I want to learn, and we learn a lot from others and from the faith of others. The sentence of Monsignor Lustiger that I put at the end of the film sums up my path as well: to go and see very far, to go and look very far in order to embrace what one is deeply.



Gad Elmaleh

Director/Writer/Lead Actor

Actor and comedian Gad Elmaleh headed to France via Canada from his native Morocco to launch his career. Starting off performing one-man shows, Elmaleh became an international star who was able to crossover to American films. His first English-language special, *Gad Elmaleh: American Dream*, is available on Netflix.



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Less Than Kosher



Tuesday, February 27

7pm ET

In-Person at Esquire Theatre



2023 • Musical Comedy

65 minutes • English • Daniel AM Rosenberg

At 20, Viv was a promising young singer. At 30, her failing music career has forced her back into her mother's basement. But when this self-proclaimed "Bad Jew" lands into a job as a Cantor at her family's synagogue, she's thrown into a wild ride of illicit affairs, tense family drama, and self discovery.

CONTENT WARNING: drug usage, language, sexual references

Presenting Partner: Department of Judaic Studies, University of Cincinnati

FILM EXTRAS



Daniel AM Rosenberg
Director

Daniel AM Rosenberg is an award-winning director from Toronto, Canada. With a passion for creative storytelling, Daniel has directed programming airing on CBC, A+E Networks (UK), FYI, HGTV, MTV, Much Music, and BET. Daniel co-created and directed the CBC short-form comedy series *The Ninth* (12 series awards and nominations) as well as developed & directed the comedy series *Cam_Girlfriend* (20+ series awards and nominations). Daniel will also be directing season 2 of *Cam_Girlfriend*, currently in pre-production. Daniel has acted as creative director on multiple projects including the *Heritage Minute: "Kensington Market"* and *The Strumbellas Live* at the JUNO Awards. He got his start directing music videos, where he won an iHeartRadio MMVA for Rock Video of The Year, as well as a JUNO nomination for Video of The Year, and multiple MMVA nominations.



Shaina Silver-Baird
Co-Creator/Actor/Singer/
Executive Producer

Shaina is an actor, musician, producer, writer and songwriter based in Toronto/Tkaronto. Shaina is currently touring North America as Chaya/Violinist in the award-winning theatre-music hybrid *Old Stock: A Refugee Love Story* with 2b Theatre (6 Drama Desk nominations & multiple other awards). She holds a BFA from the Acting Conservatory at York University.

Shaina is also the lead singer/songwriter for electro-pop band Ghost Caravan. Her single *Damn You* was Song of the Week on CBC Radio 1, and 3 of her songs were featured in season 3 of *Kim's Convenience* (CBC, Netflix). She has also sung regularly as a wedding cantor with Habonim Synagogue in Toronto. As a singer, she's performed at many festivals and venues including Hillside Music Festival, CMW, NXNE, TIFF, The Mod Club, Burdock Tavern, Drake Underground and Taste of the Danforth, and was shortlisted as "Best of the Fest" with Ghost Caravan for IndieWeek 2018.

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UNION TERMINAL.**

HOLOCAUSTANDHUMANITY.ORG

The Story of Annette Zelman



Thursday, February 29
7pm ET
In-Person at Union Terminal

2023 · Drama
93 minutes · French · Philippe Le Guay

Annette Zelman, an art student living in Paris in the early 1940s, and her Catholic classmate, Jean, fall in love and dream of the life they could build together. What follows is a tale of love and resistance that plumbs the depths of human passion, prejudice, and betrayal.

The film is based on actual events told in the book *Dénoncer les Juifs Sous l'Occupation (Informing on Jews during the Occupation)* by Laurent Joly.

CONTENT WARNING: sexual references, hateful language

SPECIAL FEATURE

Ticket includes a closing night reception.
The Holocaust & Humanity Center will be open from 5 - 7pm
for closing night ticket holders.

**Presenting Partner: The Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust &
Humanity Center**

FILM EXTRAS



Philippe Le Guay
Director

Philippe Le Guay was born in Paris in 1956. He studied film at the Parisian film school IDHEC where he now teaches. He began his career as a screenwriter in 1984, he made his directorial debut in 1989 and in the early 1990s began occasionally appearing in front of the camera as an actor. His film *Les femmes du Gême etage*, was out of competition at the 2011 Berlinale.

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MEET THE FILM FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Aaron Weiner - Chair

It is an honor to serve as the Chair of the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival again this year. I have been an avid supporter of the festival for many years and was thrilled to be invited on the committee in 2020. Planning a film festival during a global pandemic in the 2021 and 2022 seasons presented some challenges along the way; however, with the dedication of the committee and the amazing support from our JCC staff we delivered. I am so excited to be in person again and also afford virtual options. I always appreciate the diverse and enriching content the festival offers and how it connects our community by honoring our past and providing hope for the future through the art of film. This year will be no exception! This year is particularly poignant and impactful to me as we stand in solidarity with Israel and combat rampant anti-semitism. As a child of a Holocaust survivor, I am particularly keyed into our Holocaust themed films which are always an important and integral aspect of the festival. When I am not reviewing films, I am a full-time realtor as my profession. I am a native Cincinnati and reside in Clifton with my dogs Findlay and Gigi.

Marcie Bachrach

I care deeply about our community and I am an avid volunteer. Working with the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee is one of my favorites. It is thought provoking and educational, and I enjoy viewing and critiquing so many films. This year, two of my favorite fun movies are *Matchmaking* and *The Catskills*. See you at the movies!

Lauren Bowen

Israel and Jerusalem are home to the Jewish people. God has promised this will be true forever. Jewish heritage and tradition is protected and secured by God Almighty. In these dark times there is no better way to demonstrate this heartfelt belief as a Christian than to be involved with this delightful festival, with all of you precious people. I am full of pride and joy to participate in this meaningful community event that magnifies the positivity and light Jewish families bring to our city.

Alison Caller

It has been my pleasure to serve on the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee for the last six years. 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. My favorite film this year was *Matchmaking*, a tender and delightful take on the Orthodox shidduch process.

Martha Geller

For more than fifty years, I have taught in the greater Cincinnati community, and I'm still going strong. In my role as a teacher, I have instilled in many of my students the belief that learning should never cease. As a first-time member of the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee, WOW have I learned! My knowledge of foreign films was almost nil, so watching and critiquing films from Poland to France to everything in between had been incredibly insightful. I've learned what comprises a "good" film: a piece of art. Also, because my Jewish background was somewhat limited, through the film reviews to which I was assigned, I have learned way more about how others have experienced Judaism as a religion or as a way of life. And my hat off to the committee chairs; they have worked tirelessly behind the scenes and on stage to make your experiences as film watchers unique and memorable.

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 a pleasure to serve on the Film Festival Committee for a third year, and being a part of an event that brings the entire community together to celebrate our shared experience. My favorite film this year has been *Vishniac*.

Erik Jensen

I am excited to be serving on the Film Festival Committee for the very first time. A professor of modern Europe history at Miami University and a lifelong cinema-goer, I have especially enjoyed screening a wide variety of movies—from documentaries to rom-coms to psychological dramas—and then talking about them with the other committee members. Among this year's terrific lineup, the two films that have really stayed with me, and that I highly recommend, are *GIADO: Holocaust in the Desert* and *Barren*.

Margie Kessel

This is my third year serving on the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee. I have found this year's films compelling, educational, and thought-provoking. One of my favorites is a short documentary, *Paddling For Life*, about a group of Israeli women, all breast cancer survivors, who channel their recovery through a survivor group who participate and compete in Dragon boat paddling. The film was inspiring as many Jewish women carry the BRCA gene for breast cancer. I'm sure you will enjoy this year's lineup of films. I look forward to seeing you there.

Amy Klein

I'm so excited to share another great season of films with the Cincinnati Jewish Community (and friends)!

Stacey Schimberg

I have loved being a part of the Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival for many years. The shared experience of screening a film together that has been carefully curated by our talented selection committee is always a thrill! I love the possibility of learning something new in the process, hearing from experts during the discussions, and being part of this film-loving community.

Dr. David Schmerler

This is my second year on the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee, and being able to watch such a wide selection of films to pick favorites for the community has been a great privilege. There were too many excellent films this year, from *Matchmaking* and *Less than Kosher*, to *Vishniac* and *The Story of Annette Zelman*, the movies have something for everyone. Of course not all movies screened can be shown, but if you find yourself with the opportunity, I'd recommend seeing *March '68*. I hope you enjoy this year's selection, we certainly did!

Sharon Spiegel

The Jewish & Israel Film Festival is an amazing opportunity within our community to bring Israel alive and introduce important topics of Jewish interest to our community. Making connections and opening discussion through the common experience of film is exceptionally important in these times. I am excited to be a part of this committee that works diligently to bring a broad variety of the best films to our community. Enjoy the films!

Paul Spitz

I joined the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee because a friend who is on the committee asked me, and since I love movies, I thought it would be a good experience. I enjoy getting to see a lot of movies before anyone else, and many of them are really good. Of course, some of them aren't very good at all, but we won't show those to you. My favorite film in this year's lineup is *Less than Kosher*, with *Remembering Gene Wilder* coming in second.

Brian Sugerman

Being a part of the committee has been a rewarding experience for me. I find immense joy in curating a diverse lineup of high-quality films that cater to our community's diverse tastes. Being able to contribute to the success of our amazing film festival and witnessing the audience's enjoyment makes the committee's involvement truly fulfilling.

Tara Vigran

Watching movies has always been one of my favorite pastimes. It's a great activity to share with friends and family and in this case our community. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to be a part of the Jewish & Israeli Film Festival Committee for the last three years. I find both the movie viewing and selecting process educational and exciting. I hope you love the films we have chosen and enjoy some of our new venues to elevate your experience!

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Lauren Bowen
Alison Caller
Martha Geller
Evan Gildenblatt
Sam Greene
Erik Jensen
Margie Kessel
Amy Klein
Stacey Schimberg
Dr. David Schmerler
Sharon Spiegel
Paul Spitz
Brian Sugerman
Tara Vigran

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."



MAYERSON JCC
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INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY



JEWISH
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VENUE AND PARKING INFORMATION

Memorial Hall 1225 Elm St. Cincinnati, OH 45202

Historic Memorial Hall is located in the heart of the revitalized arts district of Over-the-Rhine, sitting directly across the street from the recently renovated Washington Park and just blocks away from OTR's bustling entertainment district.

Due to other events in the neighborhood, we expect the Washington Park Garage, the Towne Center Garage, and the surface lot surrounding Memorial Hall to have limited or no parking available for this event. Please allow yourself extra time to park and consider other secure parking options:

- Mercer Commons: 5 Mercer Street
- YMCA lot: 1119 Elm Street
- Court and Walnut: 107 E Central Parkway
- 1400 Vine Surface Lot: 1400 Vine Street
- Liberty and Race Lot: 1545 Race Street

Mariemont Theatre 6906 Wooster Pike Cincinnati, OH 45227

There is a small parking lot in front of the building. Additional parking is located behind the theatre. Across the street in the Comey & Shepherd Realtors lot after 5pm parking is available, courtesy of Comey & Shepherd Realtors.

The Schiff Center at The Seven Hills School 5400 Red Bank Rd. Cincinnati, OH 45227

Cincinnati Skirball Museum Mayerson Hall HUC-JIR 3101 Clifton Avenue Cincinnati, OH 45220

On-campus parking is available across from and behind Mayerson Hall, in the circle and lot in front of Herman Learning, and behind Sisterhood Building and Klau Library.

Esquire Theatre 320 Ludlow Ave Cincinnati, OH 45220

On-street parking is often available on or near Ludlow Avenue. The Esquire validates tickets for moviegoers for two hours of parking in the "Merchant Lot" on Howell, located one block from Ludlow Avenue (side street off Clifton Avenue—behind the former IGA Grocery Store). Howell Avenue is parallel to Ludlow Avenue.

Mayerson JCC Amberley Room 8485 Ridge Road Cincinnati, OH 45236

Parking is available in front of the facility. Accessible parking is indicated in the front and side of the building.

Union Terminal Reakirt Auditorium 1301 Western Avenue Cincinnati, OH 45203

Parking at Union Terminal is \$6 per vehicle after 4:30pm and free for Museum Members.

The 2024 Festival presents a hybrid lineup with each film offered in-person only or virtual only to allow for viewing in community or from the comfort of your home. There are nine in-person and four virtual film offerings. The festival offers in-person only film showings and companion special features. Please note the specific venue at which each in-person event will take place. The festival offers virtual only film showings and companion special features with 48-hour watch availability. Please note the specific geographic regions in which each virtual film is available. Film ticket includes access to film screening and companion special feature, if scheduled.

TICKET PRICES

Additional processing fees apply.

Opening Night Ticket

J Member: \$36 | Public: \$43

Individual Ticket

J Member: \$10 | Public: \$13

Closing Night Ticket

J Member: \$18 | Public: \$21

Festival Pass

J Member: \$140 | Public: \$170

Admission to all festival events, including in-person and virtual offerings, opening and closing nights. Non-transferable.

Limited tickets and passes available. Purchase early! First come, first served based on availability.

WATCH TRAILERS & BUY TICKETS

MayersonJCC.org/Film

TECHNOLOGY QUESTIONS

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

GENERAL QUESTIONS

For Festival questions and information, please contact Arts@MayersonJCC.org

We strive to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals to engage fully. To request an accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact Inclusion@MayersonJCC.org

The Mayerson JCC offers need-based financial assistance in an effort to make JCC programming accessible. Contact Membership@MayersonJCC.org to apply.

The mission of the Mayerson JCC Jewish & Israeli Film Festival is to educate, engage, and create connections within the Jewish community and beyond with the broader Cincinnati community. The Festival presents quality films that broaden and challenge perspectives, entertain, and appeal to a wide audience base. The views and opinions expressed in the films and special features in the Festival are those of the filmmakers, speakers, or creators. They do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Mayerson JCC, Festival Committee, staff, board, sponsors, or volunteers.

JCC STAFF CREDITS

Eowyn Garfinkle Plymesser - Manager of Arts & Culture

Frances Kahan - Programming Director

Rick Lefton - Director of Development

Holly Wolfson - Chief Program Officer

Ellen Daniel - Marketing Director

David Bushle - Senior Graphic Designer

Melissa Meisman - Graphic Designer

Madeline Driban - Marketing Project Manager

Lizzie Kibler - Content Marketing Specialist

Julia Fowler - Jlive Manager

thank you

Frannie,
Thank you for all of your guidance throughout the last year! Your mentorship has been such a gift during my first Film Festival, and I am so immensely grateful for all of your support. It has been a privilege to be able to learn from and with you.

-Wyn



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MAYERSON JCC
of Cincinnati

Many thanks to the JCC's Film Festival Committee and staff who make this amazing event possible every year!
It's great to be together enjoying some wonderful films!

Jen & John Stein

Mazel Tov to Aaron Weiner,
Eowyn Garfinkle Plymesser,
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 37 years of great films!

Aimee & Ian Guttman

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JEWISH & ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL

..... 2024 CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				FEB 1	FEB 2	FEB 3 OPENING NIGHT Matchmaking 7:30pm Memorial Hall
FEB 4 Barren VIRTUAL Starts 7pm	FEB 5 RECORDED DISCUSSION 7pm	FEB 6 Ends 7PM	FEB 7 Irena's Vow 7pm Mariemont Theatre	FEB 8 Children of Nobody 7pm Mariemont Theatre	FEB 9	FEB 10 Jerry's Last Mission + SHORT FILM The Boy VIRTUAL Starts 7pm
FEB 11 RECORDED DISCUSSION 7pm	FEB 12 Ends 7pm	FEB 13 The Catskills + SHORT FILM Kinderland 7pm The Seven Hills School	FEB 14 The Holy Closet + SHORT FILM Paddling for Life VIRTUAL Starts 7pm	FEB 15 VIRTUAL DISCUSSION 7pm	FEB 16 Ends 7pm	FEB 17
FEB 18 Remembering Gene Wilder 3pm Mayerson JCC	FEB 19 GIADO + SHORT FILM ANNE VIRTUAL Starts 7pm	FEB 20 RECORDED DISCUSSION 7pm	FEB 21 Ends 7pm	FEB 22 Vishniac + EXHIBIT 7pm Cincinnati Skirball Museum	FEB 23	FEB 24
FEB 25 Stay With Us 3pm Mariemont Theatre	FEB 26	FEB 27 Less Than Kosher 7pm Esquire Theatre	FEB 28	FEB 29 CLOSING NIGHT The Story of Annette Zelman 7pm Union Terminal		

Details as of January 10, 2024.
For the most updated information,
please visit MayersonJCC.org/Film

 In-Person Screening  Virtual Screening

WATCH TRAILERS & BUY TICKETS
MayersonJCC.org/Film

 **MAYERSON JCC**
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