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RUTGERS JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL GOES VIRTUAL, NOVEMBER 8–22

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – Tickets are now on sale for the 21st annual Rutgers Jewish Film Festival, which will be presented entirely online from November 8 through 22. This year's festival features a curated slate of award-winning dramatic and documentary films from Israel, the United States, and Germany that explore and illuminate Jewish history, culture, and identity. The virtual festival offers a user-friendly platform that will make it easy to view inspiring and entertaining films from the comfort and safety of one's home. Many films will also include a Q&A component with filmmakers, scholars, and special guests on the Zoom platform. The festival is sponsored by Rutgers' Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life and is made possible by a generous grant from the Karma Foundation.

The festival kicks-off on Sunday, November 8, with the opening film *Aulcie*, the inspiring story of basketball legend Aulcie Perry. A Newark native turned Israeli citizen, Perry put Israel on the map as a member of the Maccabi Tel Aviv team in the 1970s. Opening night will feature a Q&A with Dani Menkin, director of this new documentary film, at 5:30 PM. Sponsors of the festival are invited to a private cocktail reception prior to the Q&A.

The festival will feature several New Jersey premieres. The Israeli documentary *Angelica*, which explores the tragic relationship between the artist Boris Schatz, who founded the Israel Museum, and his secret daughter, will include a Q&A with the film's director Daniel Peer, who is also Angelica's great grandson. The Israeli romantic comedy *Honeymoon*, which premiered to great acclaim at the Tribeca Film Festival this year, takes the newly married couple on a hilarious and moving one-night odyssey through the streets of Jerusalem. *My Name is Sara*, a riveting drama based on a true story, follows a 13-year-old Polish Jewish girl who escapes to

the Ukrainian countryside and must manage to survive after her family is killed by Nazis during World War II.

The festival will feature discussions with filmmakers and special guests who enrich and enhance the way the audience encounters the films. Erez Tadmor, director of the heartwarming Israeli dramedy *The Art of Waiting*, will speak from personal experience on the sensitive topic of modern pregnancy. The film was nominated for four Israeli Academy Awards, including Best Director. Chef Einat Admony (*Balaboosta*) will engage with director Beth Elise Hawk about her delicious documentary *Breaking Bread*, which follows the culinary journeys and collaborations of Arab and Jewish chefs at the annual A-Sham Food Festival in Haifa. Codirectors Amy Geller and Gerald Peary will discuss their fascinating documentary *The Rabbi Goes West*, featuring a Brooklyn rabbi who ventures to Montana, with his family, setting up the first Chabad Center in the state.

Oscar-winning German filmmaker Caroline Link will be the guest speaker for a special event featuring two of her films that focus on refugees. Her award-winning 2019 dramatic film *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* centers on a German-Jewish girl who is taking her first steps into adulthood at the same time as world events intrude on her happy, carefree existence. This family drama is based on Judith Kerr's semi-autobiographical bestselling children's novel. *Nowhere in Africa*, Link's 2002 Academy Award-winning film, follows a Jewish family in Kenya who fled Germany, and is a returning festival favorite.

For ticket information, speaker schedule, and instructions on the new virtual format, visit the website **BildnerCenter.Rutgers.edu/film**. Festival staff can also be reached by email at rujff@sas.rutgers.edu. This year, all tickets for individual films are \$10. An all access pass is available for \$90.

Following is a full list of films and Q&A dates during the festival. Please check the website for updates on speakers and viewing details for each film.

NEW JERSEY PREMIERE

Angelica (Israel, 2019, 75 minutes)

Hebrew with English subtitles • Director: Dan Peer

Artist Boris Schatz left an extraordinary legacy: an endless collection of his seminal works of art and two of Israel's most important institutions—the Israel Museum and the Bezalel Art Academy. Yet, how is it that no one knew about the existence of his first daughter, Angelica? Abandoned in Bulgaria with her mother, who had fallen in love with one of Schatz's students, Angelica's art surfaces years later in an attic in Tel Aviv. This discovery sends the film's

director—Angelica’s great grandson—on a journey to uncover the tragic relationship between Boris and Angelica.

Friday, November 13, Noon

Q&A with Dan Peer, Director

The Art of Waiting (Israel, 2019, 90 minutes)

Hebrew with English subtitles • Director: Erez Tadmor

In this heartwarming, romantic dramedy, a happily married Israeli couple develops baby fever, putting their relationship to the test in a frenzy to get pregnant. Facing pressure from family, friends, and each other, they embark on a physical and emotional rollercoaster of medical procedures and regimented lovemaking. It soon becomes clear that the road to parenthood is no walk in the park. Tackling a sensitive topic with earnest performances by Roy Assaf and Nelly Tagar, this frank portrayal of modern pregnancy landed four Israeli Academy Award nominations, including Best Director.

NOMINEE: 4 Israeli Academy Awards, 2019, including Best Director and Best Actress

WINNER: Best Editing, Haifa International Film Festival, 2019

Q&A with Erez Tadmor, Director

Date and time: TBD. Check back for details.

Asia (Israel, 2020, 85 minutes)

Hebrew and Russian with English subtitles • Director: Ruthy Pribar

Shira Haas (*Unorthodox*) stars in this emotionally powerful drama about Asia and Vika, Russian immigrants to Israel who are more like sisters than mother and daughter. Young mom Asia hides nothing about her work-hard, play-hard lifestyle, and expects the same openness and honesty from her teenage daughter. But Vika inevitably begins to rebel, seeking privacy and independence, all while experiencing the onset of a debilitating degenerative disease that makes her increasingly dependent. In her debut film, Israeli filmmaker Ruthy Pribar candidly explores the challenges of motherhood and the power of love.

WINNER: 3 Tribeca Film Festival Awards, 2020, including Best Actress

NOMINEE: 13 Ophir Awards, 2020, including Best Picture

OPENING NIGHT

Aulcie (USA, 2020, 74 minutes)

English • Director: Dani Menkin

Recruited from the basketball courts of Harlem, Newark native Aulcie Perry joined Maccabi Tel Aviv in 1976. He quickly established himself as a leader, and helped defeat the heavily favored Soviets to give Team Israel its first European championship. He adopted a Hebrew name, converted to Judaism, and became an Israeli citizen; But the dark side of fame led to a stunning

downfall. *Aulcie* shares his story of redemption, while electrifying game footage and insightful interviews complete this emotional profile of a superstar athlete who put Israel on the map.

Sunday, November 8, 5:30PM
Q&A with Dani Menkin, Director

ISRAELI TV SERIES—BINGE WATCH ALL 4 EPISODES!

Autonomies (Israel, 2019, 210 minutes)

Hebrew and Yiddish with English subtitles • Director: Yehonatan Indursky

The creators of the international hit TV series *Shtisel* return with this gripping dystopian thriller series. Set in the present day, the film imagines an alternative reality where Israel is split into two separate entities: the secular State of Israel, whose capital is Tel Aviv, and, on the other side of a dividing wall, an ultra-orthodox autonomy based in Jerusalem. A tentative peace between the two regions is put into jeopardy by a heated custody battle over a young girl born into a Haredi family, but raised by secular parents.

Monday, November 16, 4:00PM
Q&A with Yaacov Yadgar, Stanley Lewis Professor of Israel Studies, Oxford University

Breaking Bread (Israel, 2019, 85 minutes)

English and Hebrew with English subtitles • Director: Beth Elise Hawk

Exotic cuisine and a side of politics are on the menu in this delightful and inspiring documentary. Dr. Nof Atamna-Ismaeel is on a quest to effect social change through food. The first Muslim Arab to win Israel's *MasterChef*, she founded the A-Sham Food Festival in Haifa where Arab and Jewish chefs collaborate on local dishes. As the chefs work side-by-side to transform and preserve traditional recipes, they draw tens of thousands of food lovers into the city. *Breaking Bread* follows the chefs of A-Sham on their unique culinary journeys as they celebrate their respective cultural heritages and their passion for food.

WINNER: Audience Award for Favorite Culinary Cinema Film, Napa Valley Film Festival, 2019

Tuesday, November 17, 7:00PM
Q&A with Beth Elise Hawk, Director, and Chef Einat Admony, (Balaboosta, Kish-Kash, Taïm)

NEW JERSEY PREMIERE

Honeymoon (Israel, 2020, 90 minutes)

Hebrew with English subtitles • Director: Talya Lavie

This romantic comedy, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival, begins where most films of its kind end—after the wedding. Arriving at their lavish honeymoon suite on their wedding night, a surprise gift to the groom from an ex-girlfriend ignites a knock-out fight. An all-night odyssey

through the streets of Jerusalem ensues in an effort to return the gift. Over the course of a single night, the couple is forced to confront past lovers, repressed doubts, and the lives they've chosen to leave behind.

Friday, November 13

Q&A with Talya Lavie, Director

Date and time: TBD. Check back for details.

ENCORE PRESENTATION

Latter Day Jew (USA, 2019, 85 minutes)

English • Director: Aliza Rosen

With a poignant mix of hilarity and seriousness, *Latter Day Jew* follows H. Alan Scott, a gay writer-comedian, cancer survivor, and former Mormon who becomes a Jew by choice. His family embraces his new spiritual path as he visits Israel and prepares for his Bar Mitzvah.

Thursday, November 12, 7:00PM

Q&A with H. Alan Scott

Presented in partnership with the JCC of Central New Jersey

Mrs. G (Israel, 2019, 55 minutes)

English, Hebrew, and Hungarian with English subtitles • Director: Dalit Kimor

The Gottex swimwear empire was founded by legendary designer, Holocaust survivor, and larger-than-life character Lea Gottlieb. She started the company in her tiny Tel Aviv apartment, and navigated her way to the top of the fashion world. She spent her fortune extravagantly and lived her life like there was no tomorrow—often at the expense of those closest to her. This inspiring documentary examines her meteoric rise, her creative vision, her gorgeous fashion sense, and her complicated relationship with her daughters.

NEW JERSEY PREMIERE

My Name is Sara (USA, 2019, 111 minutes)

English • Director: Steven Oritt

A gripping drama, *My Name is Sara* is based on the true story of Sara Goralnik, a 13-year-old Polish Jew who escaped to the Ukrainian countryside after her family was killed by Nazis during World War II. Taking on the identity of her Christian best friend, Sara finds refuge in a small village, working for a farmer and his young wife. She soon discovers her employers' dark secrets, compounding fears about protecting her own greatest secret—her true identity.

RETURNING FESTIVAL FAVORITE

Nowhere in Africa (Germany, 2002, 135 minutes)

English and Swahili with English subtitles • Director: Caroline Link

A love story spanning two continents, *Nowhere in Africa* is the extraordinary true tale of a Jewish family who flees the Nazi regime in 1938 to live and work on a remote farm in Kenya. Abandoning their once-comfortable existence in Germany, Walter Redlich, his wife Jettel, and their five-year-old daughter Regina must deal with the harsh realities of their new lives as Jewish refugees in Africa. As the war rages on the other side of the world, the family's relationships to their new environment become increasingly more complicated. This beautiful film is based on the autobiographical novel of the same name by Stefanie Zweig.

WINNER: Best Foreign Language Film, Academy Awards, 2002

Sunday, November 15, Noon

Q&A with Caroline Link, Director

The Rabbi Goes West (USA, 2019, 75 minutes)

English • Directors: Amy Geller and Gerald Peary

Rabbi Chaim Bruk and his large family left the bustle of Brooklyn for a new life in Bozeman, Montana. Founding the state's first Chabad Center, he set out to affix a mezuzah on the doorpost of every Jewish home he can find. But his outsized personality and proselytizing tactics are openly challenged by Jewish neighbors and fellow rabbis. When the specter of neo-Nazism threatens the community, ideological differences come to the fore. Spectacular Montana landscapes provide a scenic backdrop to this engaging, funny, and balanced profile of religious pioneers in the American West.

Monday, November 16, 7:00PM

Q&A with Amy Geller and Gerald Peary, Directors

Shared Legacies (USA, 2020, 95 minutes)

English • Director: Dr. Shari Rogers

The modern alliance between African-Americans and Jewish Americans dates to the NAACP founding in 1909. Since then, both groups have endured segregation and racism—from the codified bigotry of southern Jim Crow laws, to blatant bias in real estate, employment, higher education, and politics. Common cause was found in the turbulent 1960s Civil Rights era, as Jewish leaders backed Dr. Martin Luther King's efforts in support of racial equality and harmony. Yet, the relationship has frayed in recent years, as a once mighty bond of support and respect has seemingly faded, or been forgotten or ignored. This potent, inspiring story of unity, empathy, and partnership, shows how freedom and equality for all can be achieved only when people come together.

Q&A with Dr. Shari Rogers, Director

Date and time: TBD. Check back for details.

DOUBLE FEATURE FILM PACKAGE

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit (Germany, 2019, 119 minutes)

German, Swiss German, and French with English subtitles • Director: Caroline Link

In this beautifully rendered historical family drama, a German-Jewish girl takes her first steps into adulthood, as world events intrude on her happy, carefree existence. When her father suddenly vanishes, nine-year-old Anna must flee Berlin with her family leaving everything behind, including her beloved pink rabbit. What follows is a courageous adventure full of fear and uncertainty, as Anna and her family move from country to country navigating the challenges of life as refugees. Oscar-winning filmmaker Caroline Link (*Nowhere in Africa*) directs this adaptation of Judith Kerr's semi-autobiographical bestselling children's novel.

WINNER: Best Youth Film, Bavarian Film Awards, 2020

NOMINEE: Best Children's Film, German Film Critics Association Awards, 2020

Sunday, November 15, Noon

Q&A with Caroline Link, Director

And

Tree #3 (USA, 2020, 19 minutes)

Hebrew and English with English subtitles • Director: Omer Ben-Shachar

Itai, an Israeli boy living in America, dreams of being cast as the lead in the annual school play. When he discovers that once again he is assigned to play one of the trees, he rallies the other tree performers —also immigrants from other countries— to give livelier interpretations of their roles. Itai gives an unforgettable performance in this charming short film that challenges stereotypes and brings people together.

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