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WELCOME

Dear Festival Supporters,

I’m delighted to welcome you to the 20th Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival – a milestone for the entire Hong Kong community!

For the past twenty years, we have endeavoured to bring the latest and best Jewish-themed features, documentaries and shorts from around the globe to Asia’s World City. Our goal is to share Jewish culture, history and art with Hong Kong’s dynamic and multi-faceted community. This year’s films embody that ethos, with thought-provoking, engaging and entertaining stories.

We would not be able to accomplish this goal without the help of many, many people: Our generous donors, who make the Film Festival possible, we thank you again for your support; our dedicated Board which provides critical oversight and ideas on every aspect of the Festival; and our hard-working volunteers who put in countless hours on the viewing committee, the brochure, the opening event, and numerous details. I’d particularly like to thank Nicole Izsak, our past Festival Producer, as well as our new producer Shani Brownstein. We also appreciate the Asia Society Hong Kong Center for its wonderful venue and support.

I look forward to seeing many of you during the Festival. Enjoy!

Best,

Eli Bitan
HKJFF Chairperson
November 2019

Dear friends,

Heartiest congratulations on the 20th anniversary of the Hong Kong Jewish Festival.

Since its inception the Festival has grown in popularity and reputation. It has become one of Hong Kong’s highlight events of the year, and definitely serves as a means of cultural exchange with the Hong Kong society.

The Festival week is a celebration of the richness of Jewish life, culture and heritage. It brings thoughtful and engaging films from Israel and all over the world to the people of Hong Kong.

The Consulate General of Israel in Hong Kong has been a supporter of the Festival and is pleased and proud to have been a part of this annual special cultural event. Special commend to Mr. Eli Bitan, Chair to the HKJFF, Festival Producer Shani Brownstein and to all supporters who contributed to this meaningful event.

We look forward to welcome and enjoy the variety of inspiring films the Festival has prepared for us this year, and our best wishes for the Festival’s further success in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Ahuva Spieler
Consul General of Israel
Message from the Israeli Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong

My heartiest congratulations on the 20th Anniversary of the Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival!

We are dedicated to promoting trade and development between Hong Kong SAR and Israel for our mutual benefit.

Our loyalties lie first and foremost with our members, acting as their voice in advising the Israeli Government in matters affecting businesses and the economy, providing members with business information and opportunities, and facilitating networking through a variety of Chamber activities.

The Jewish Community and the Chamber members have enjoyed the spectacular movies we have seen almost two decades, especially thanks for the leadership of Eli Bitan and his colleagues.

Movies are wonderful entertainment. You can express happiness, love, sorrow and harmony. I see this event as a significant culture exchange between the Jewish nation and the people of Hong Kong, Macau and China.

We couldn’t have come this far without you.

Best wishes

Dr. Rafael Aharoni, BBS
Chairman

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Cover design and artist direction: Yael Bronner Rubin
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A very big thank you and farewell to Nicole Izsak, Festival Producer.
Welcome and thank you to Shani Brownstein, our new Festival Producer.
Major thanks to Talia Bilodeau, Alex Gershon, Carla Green, Barbara Thomas and Ana Lau at Green Pagoda Press. Special thanks to Alice Mong, Stanley Kong and Sonali Laul at the Asia Society; and Neill Morgan, Daniel Tse and the whole JCC Team.

We thank our sponsors and participating organisations for their generous support

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Without the support of the following people and organizations, the Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival would just be a dream.

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*This list is correct as we go to press, apologies if your name isn’t here, it will be listed on the website.*
Sharon Ser, Samantha Gershon and their Partners at Withers are proud and delighted to support the Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival and be part of this important event.

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Taking a job way beyond his pay grade, Salam becomes a writer on the Israeli Arab hit TV show, "Tel Aviv on Fire". His career advances until he has creative differences with the show’s financial backers as to how the series will end. Told with humor and understanding of the difficulties Arabs and Israelis face living together in a small country, this film addresses the similarities and differences between the two cultures. Caught in the middle between two sets of ideas, how will Salam resolve his conflicts?

Winner of multiple film festival awards, including from Seattle, Venice, Haifa, and Tokyo, this is not to be missed. Using humor to tackle serious issues, this award winning film is a great opener for this year’s 20th anniversary Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival.

Luxembourg / Belgium / Israel
France | 2018 | Dramatic Comedy
Arabic / Hebrew with English subtitles | 100 mins
Director: Sameh Zoabi

OPENING NIGHT

NOV. 2
SATURDAY @ 7:30 PM
Followed By Rooftop Cocktail Party

Awards
2018 Haifa International Film Festival
2019 Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival
2019 Sarasota Film Festival
2019 Seattle International Film Festival
2018 Venice Film Festival

Sponsored by withers 衛達仕律師事務所
Through the heroic story of a rabbi known as “The Admor of Sanz-Klausenburg,” this documentary presents the complex relationship between ultra-Orthodox Jews and the memory of the Holocaust. Through rare archival footage and interviews it reveals the ways we experience the revival and spiritual victory over the Nazis and pass it on to the ensuing generations, while dealing with the biggest question of all: where was God during the Holocaust?

DOUBLE FEATURE with “The Light of Fire”

A touching film that tells the story of Yoram Raanan, an American-Israeli artist, as he rebuilds following a sudden fire that destroyed forty years of work. It’s a story about resolve in the face of loss, but also about faith, family and searching for a sense of place.

**Special Guest - Q & A with Director Bentzi Avtzon**

Director Bentzi Avtzon was born and raised in Hong Kong, and now lives in Philadelphia.
MIRIAM

Israel | 2018 | Short, Comedy
Hebrew with English subtitles
6 mins
Director: Shulamit Lifshitz

One man’s attempt to marry off his daughter—the Jerusalem way.

REFUGE

Austria | 2019 | Short, Drama
English/German with English subtitles | 19 mins
Director: Sara Logan Hofstein

A Jewish American woman and an Ethiopian refugee reconcile Austria’s past with its present.

SAD SACHS

Australia | 2019 | Short, Drama
English | 10 mins
Director: Joel Pearl gut

The Sachs are running late to their cousin’s wedding when their driver lets loose a bizarre, anti-Semitic rant.
Michael is a charismatic and much-admired Rabbi at a Jerusalem yeshiva. A revealing confession by Gadi, his favorite student, will shake the Rabbi’s familiar and secure world.

Before leaving for Germany where he will undergo irreversible surgery, Liam reflects on his previous female identity.

Sometimes a girl’s in-laws can be much too loving and supportive.
Congratulations to the Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival on its 20th Year!

Penina and Avi Naqar
IMPACT PURPOSE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS this and much more....

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Set in the Hasidic enclave of Borough Park, Brooklyn, “93Queen” follows a group of tenacious Hasidic women who create the first all-female volunteer ambulance corps in New York City. With unprecedented insider access, “93Queen” offers a unique portrayal of a group of women who are taking matters into their own hands to change their community from within.
Avenging Evil is kindly sponsored by Nealy and Seth Fischer.
AVENGING EVIL

UK / USA | 2018
Historical Documentary
English, Hebrew with
English subtitles | 79 mins
Director: Nick Green

A documentary featuring a seldom-told, thought-provoking story of revenge. 6 million Jews are dead, but by 1946, just a handful of Nazis face trial. Most of the guilty will never face justice. For many of Hitler’s victims, this is not enough. Based on previously unheard recordings and exclusive interviews with those involved—all of whom are over 90—this film tells the story of a secret organization of Holocaust survivors who decide to take matters into their own hands. Assembled by the warrior-poet Abba Kovner, their aim is “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life.”

Sponsored by
Nealy & Seth Fischer
I am so proud to sponsor this important film. Congratulations on The Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival's 20th Year.

Robert L. Meyer
“King Bibi” explores Benjamin Netanyahu’s rise to power, relying solely on archival footage of his media performances over the years: from his days as a popular guest expert on American TV, through his public confession of adultery, and his mastery of the art of social media. From one studio to another, “Bibi” evolved from Israel’s great political hope, to a controversial figure whom some perceive as Israel’s savior, and others – as a cynical politician who will stop at nothing to retain his power.

Israel | 2018
Documentary
Hebrew with English subtitles
87 mins
Director: Dan Shadur

Sponsored by
Robert L. Meyer
The HKHTC is delighted to support the 20th Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival, and will be screening selected Holocaust-themed films at schools across Hong Kong.

For further information about our past and upcoming events and workshops visit www.hkhtc.org

Please make donations payable to:
The Hong Kong Holocaust and Tolerance Resource Centre Limited
HKHTC, 460 Shau Kei Wan Road, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong.

Donations are tax-deductible in Hong Kong.
In November 1940, days after the Nazis sealed 450,000 Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, a secret band of journalists, scholars and community leaders decided to fight back. Led by historian Emanuel Ringelblum and known by the code name Oyneg Shabes, this clandestine group vowed to defeat Nazi lies and propaganda not with guns or fists but with pen and paper. Now, for the first time, their story is told as a feature documentary. "Who Will Write Our History" mixes the writings of the Oyneg Shabes archive with new interviews, rarely seen footage and stunning dramatizations to transport us inside the Ghetto and the lives of these courageous resistance fighters.
SCREENING SCHEDULE
All films at Asia Society Hong Kong Center
9 Justice Drive, Admiralty, Hong Kong
Book now on www.hkjff.org

2 NOVEMBER SATURDAY
7:30 PM OPENING NIGHT AND ROOFTOP PARTY
Tel Aviv on Fire

3 NOVEMBER SUNDAY
12:30 PM Hidden Face
The Light of Fire

2:45 PM Miriam + Refuge +
Sad Sachs + The Rabbi +
Almost Liam +
Sushi, Meatballs and Everything

4:30 PM 93Queen

6:15 PM Avenging Evil

8:00 PM King Bibi

4 NOVEMBER MONDAY
7:00 PM Who Will Write Our History

8:45 PM Esau

5 NOVEMBER TUESDAY
7:00 PM The Unorthodox

8:45 PM Redemption
6 NOVEMBER WEDNESDAY
7:00 PM  Cairo to the Cloud
9:15 PM  Fig Tree

7 NOVEMBER THURSDAY
11:30 AM  93Queen
7:00 PM  Bye Bye Germany
9:00 PM  Laces

9 NOVEMBER SATURDAY
8:00 PM  The Rabbi from Hezbollah
9:30 PM  Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles

10 NOVEMBER SUNDAY
1:30 PM  Golda’s Balcony, the Film
3:15 PM  Travelogue Tel Aviv +
          How to Swim +
          Shabbos Kallah +
          The Youngest + Shmil + Terror
5:00 PM  A Mirror for the Sun
6:45 PM  Back to Maracana
8:30 PM  Noble Savage
Congratulations to the Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival on its 20th Anniversary from Jewish Times Asia

Jewish Times Asia
Asia’s first community newspaper for the region
www.jewishtimesasia.org

Celebrating 13 years of Jewish news in Asia
Adapted from the novel of the same name by Israeli author Meir Shalev, “Esau” follows a 40-year-old writer who returns to his family home after half a lifetime to face the brother who stole both his love and livelihood. The story is a modern twist on the biblical story of Jacob and Esau in the book of Genesis. Featuring acclaimed actor Harvey Keitel.

ESAU

Russia / Israel / UK | 2019
Drama | English | 100 mins
Director: Pavel Lungin

NOV. 4
MONDAY @ 8:45 PM
When Yakov Cohen’s daughter is expelled from school due to ethnic discrimination, he decides to fight back. It’s 1983 and Yakov, a printer in Jerusalem, is just a regular guy. He has no knowledge, no money, no connections and no political experience. But he does have the will and the passion to take action, and a belief that he and other Sephardic Jews should be able to hold their heads up high. Yakov and his friends start the first ethnic political group in Jerusalem. An Israeli dark comedy inspired by real-life events.
Menachem, a former frontman for a rock band, is now religious, and a father to a six-year-old. When his daughter is diagnosed with cancer, he must find a creative solution to fund the expensive treatments. He reunites his band for one last tour. The journey to save his daughter exposes old wounds and allows him to reconnect with his secular past, paving the road to his own redemption. This Israeli drama is a poignant and probing story of religion and rock and roll.
“From Cairo to the Cloud” tells the gripping story of the discovery and significance of the Cairo Geniza, a vast treasure trove of manuscripts hidden for centuries in the “geniza,” or sacred storeroom, of an ancient synagogue in Old Cairo. The Cairo Geniza is the largest cache of Jewish history ever found, illuminating over a thousand years of Jewish, Christian and Moslem life in the heart of the Islamic world.

Special Guest – Q&A with Director Michelle Paymar

Michelle Paymar is an award-winning filmmaker currently based in Vancouver, British Columbia. Her independent work has screened at festivals around the world and she has extensive credits as a director and writer of documentary and non-fiction television programs for NBC, ABC, CBS, PBS, CBC, MTV, CTV, Travel, Discovery, History, and other major broadcasters.
16 year old Jewish Mina, is trying to navigate between a surreal routine dictated by the civil war in Ethiopia and her last days of youth with her Christian boyfriend Eli. When she discovers that her family is planning to immigrate to Israel and escape the war, she weaves an alternate plan in order to save Eli. But in times of war, plans tend to go wrong. This is Director Davidian's debut film based on her childhood memories of a civil war-torn Ethiopia.

Awards
2019 Atlanta Jewish Film Festival
2018 Awards of the Israeli Film Academy
2018 Toronto International Film Festival
Set in the Hasidic enclave of Borough Park, Brooklyn, "93Queen" follows a group of tenacious Hasidic women who create the first all-female volunteer ambulance corps in New York City. With unprecedented insider access, "93Queen" offers a unique portrayal of a group of women who are taking matters into their own hands to change their community from within.
Frankfurt, 1946. David Bermann and his friends have survived the Holocaust, escaped the Nazi regime and are now dreaming of leaving for America. But how will they get the money in these tough post-war times? The smooth-talking businessman focuses on what the Germans now need most: fine bed linens nicely wrapped in amusing stories! The six talented entertainers go from home to home, praising German housewives with chutzpah. Business flourishes and a bright new future can be seen in the horizon. But questions about Bermann’s past catch up with him. Why does he have two passports? What about his visit to Hitler’s mountain retreat? Could he have collaborated with the Nazis?

**BYE BYE GERMANY**

Germany / Luxembourg
Belgium / France | 2018
Comedy / Drama / War | German
English with English subtitles
102 mins
Director: Sam Garbarski

**NOV. 7**
**THURSDAY @ 7:00 PM**

**Awards**
2019 Magritte Awards, Belgium
2018 RiverRun International Film Festival

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"Laces" tells the story of a complicated relationship between an aging father and his special-needs son, whom he abandoned while he was still a young boy. Reuben’s kidneys are failing and his son Gadi wants to donate one of his own kidneys to help save his father’s life. However, the transplant committee objects to the procedure claiming that Reuben, acting as Gadi’s sole legal guardian, does not have the right to authorize such an invasive procedure. Gadi, who recently lost his mother, is afraid of losing his father as well. He feels he finally has the chance to do something meaningful; to become a man and stand on his own.

**FILM & SYNOPSIS**

LACES  

NOV. 7  
THURSDAY @ 9:00 PM

Israel | 2018 | Drama  
Hebrew with English subtitles  
98 mins  
Director: Jacob Goldwasser

**Awards**

2019 Atlanta Jewish Film Festival  
2018 Awards of the Israeli Film Academy

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THE RABBI FROM HEZBOLLAH

Who would believe that Avraham Sinai, an ultra-Orthodox Jew living in Israel, is also Ibrahim Yassin – one of Israel’s top international spies with a turbulent association to Hezbollah? What sounds like the plot of an action movie is in fact the subject of this documentary by award-winning Director Itamar Chen.
For the first time, intimate interviews with the show’s creators reveal how the tremendous success and worldwide impact of “Fiddler on the Roof” is most appropriately viewed through the lens of social upheaval and change in mid-20th century America. As the film shows, the true wonder of wonders and miracle of Fiddler is that audiences around the world have, for the last half century, claimed the story as their own. This remarkable documentary explores a variety of international productions of the show, detailing how individuals of many cultures see themselves represented as residents of Anatevka.
GOLDA’S BALCONY, THE FILM

Asian Premiere

Tovah Feldshuh recreates her Tony Award-nominated performance as Golda Meir in this masterpiece—which has won the “Audience Award” in all ten of the competitive film festivals in which it has been screened. The rise of Golda Meir from Russian schoolgirl to Prime Minister of Israel is one of the most thrilling and amazing stories of the 20th Century.

USA | 2019 | Biography / Theater
English | 86 mins
Director: Scott Schwartz

NOV. 10
SUNDAY @ 1:30 PM

Awards

Winner of the 2019 Audience Choice Awards for:
- Los Angeles Jewish Film Festival
- Pittsburgh Jewish Film Festival
- Charlotte Jewish Film Festival
- Honolulu Jewish Film Festival
- New Hampshire Jewish Film Festival
- Palm Beach Jewish Film Festival
- New Jersey Jewish Film Festival
- Winnipeg Jewish Film Festival
- Dayton Jewish Film Festival

In honour of the Directors of UIA HK

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**TRAVELOGUE TEL AVIV**

Switzerland | 2017
Short / Documentary / Animation
Silent | 6 mins
Director: Samuel Patthey

A young art student from Switzerland arrives for six months in Tel Aviv. Through drawing he will learn to analyze, understand and free himself to this contrasted environment.

**HOW TO SWIM**

Israel | 2018 | Short / Comedy / Drama
Hebrew with English subtitles
15 mins
Director: Noa Gusakov

In the last few days of her pregnancy, a terrified mother-to-be kidnaps a maternal stranger for an afternoon of high jinks.

**SHABBOS KALLAH**

Israel | 2018 | Short, Drama
Hebrew with English subtitles
17 mins
Director: Aleeza Chanowitz

Elka tries to prove that her best friend Daniela will still need her once she’s married, especially for her great knowledge about sex.
FILM & SYNOPSIS

Leah, an ultra-Orthodox woman who works in her widowed mother’s store, is ready for love, but her mother seems unwilling to let her go.

When Shmil is expelled from a prestigious ultra-Orthodox Yeshiva, he will do anything in his power to be allowed to return.

Dan, who suffers from PTSD after being wounded in a terrorist attack, finds himself thrown together with his Arab co-workers when multiple terror attacks hit Jerusalem.
Looking forward to
the 21st Maccabiah Games in 2021
*World’s 3rd Largest International Sports Event*

Maccabi World Union has enjoyed a year of excellent mass events infused with Jewish and Zionist motivation, all working towards the Maccabi answer to the difficult times that we live in.

In 1932, when the Jews were not welcome to join the International Olympics, we, the Jews decided to open our own games.

In 2017, we had celebrated the 20th Maccabiah games in Israel with 10,000 athletes worldwide, approximately 30,000 participants in the opening ceremony in Jerusalem including a terrific delegation from Hong Kong, Macau, China, and we even brought some lovely medals.

There is no doubt that the 20th Maccabiah was not only symbolic of being 85 years old and the 20th Games, but it was also being 50 years since Jerusalem united, 100 years since the Balfour Declaration and 120 years since the establishment of the Zionist Movement.

I am proud to say Maccabi is very active in Hong Kong. We are looking forward the 21st Maccabiah Games in 2021 with the bigger, stronger and higher delegation from Hong Kong, Macau and China.

I wish you another successful film festival, especially thanks for the leadership of Eli Bitan and his colleagues.

**CHAZAK CHAZAK V'NITCHAZEK!**

Dr. Rafael Aharoni, BBS
Chairman
"A Mirror for the Sun" documents a harrowing adventure of the IDF's first-ever Orthodox combat navigator, Tamar Ariel. After her military service, Ariel wishes to broaden her experiences and understanding of the world. She joins a multinational group of hikers who have decided to brave the mountain ranges of Nepal. After reaching the summit, the group is hit with an unexpected snowstorm and is forced into a struggle for survival in one of the world’s harshest climates. This documentary is a captivating story of exceptional achievement and a testament to the power of humanity.

Special Guest - Q & A with Director Neta Ariel

Neta Ariel is the writer and director of the film "A Mirror for the Sun". She is also the director of the Ma'ale School for Film and Television in Jerusalem. She was named Woman of the Year in 2015 by Emunah, the social welfare organization in Israel.
A heartfelt and funny intergenerational road trip drama from a veteran Israeli-Argentinean filmmaker. When divorced Israeli dad Roberto finds himself on a spontaneous family trip from Israel to Brazil for the World Cup, with his Brazilian father, a soccer fanatic possibly, and his disinterested 12-year old son, what could possibly go wrong?

Israel | 2018 | Comedy / Drama
Hebrew / Portuguese / English with English Subtitles
90 mins
Director: Jorge Gurcvich

NOV. 10
SUNDAY @ 6:45 PM

Supported by
Consulate General of Israel
NOBLE SAVAGE

A troubled teen’s desperate efforts to unite his broken family spin out of control in this modern Greek tragedy nominated for ten Israeli Academy Awards including Best Film. Almost everything in 15-year-old Eli’s life is on the brink of disaster. Overweight and dealing with an eating disorder, he lives in a seedy Tel Aviv neighborhood with his mother and her possessive husband, two ex-junkies preoccupied with living a normative life, while his alcoholic father is an unemployed artist and street philosopher. Eli tries to escape his parents’ fate and be a responsible adult. A beautifully acted examination of anguished characters fighting to overcome their circumstances.

Parent Advisory: Disturbing content and nudity
TICKET INFORMATION

HOW TO GET YOUR TICKETS
All films will be screened at Asia Society Hong Kong Center.

Tickets are available through our website www.hkjff.org

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS
Adults: HK$100
Students and seniors (over 60): HK$80

OPENING NIGHT TICKETS
Adults: HK$380
Students and seniors (over 60): HK$350
Opening Night tickets include post-screening party.

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