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BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION
CALGARY JEWISH
FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 4-19, 2023



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CALGARY JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

November 4 - 19, 2023



Welcome to the 23rd Annual Beth Tzedec Calgary Jewish Film Festival!

We're very excited to be back in-person this year, for the first time since the pandemic. We know that our audience is as eager as we are to come together again and experience the energy and sense of community that have always been such an integral part of our film festival.

We're thrilled to have renowned Israeli film director **Avi Nesher** here with us in-person as our special guest on Opening Night. We have screened many of his films at our festival over the years, and we feel incredibly honored and privileged to have a filmmaker of his stature in attendance at our festival to present his newest film, the heartwarming comedy/drama *The Monkey House*.

We're delighted to have Calgary Jewish Federation join us as co-sponsors of the screening of the inspiring documentary *Four Winters: A Story of Jewish Partisan Resistance and Bravery in WW2*, as part of the CJF's community-wide Kristallnacht commemoration. We're thrilled to have filmmaker **Julia Mintz**, director, writer and producer of the film, as our special guest that evening. This event is open to the entire community, at no charge.

Another special guest that you won't want to miss is award-winning Israeli filmmaker **Tal Inbar**, director of the engrossing documentary *Closed Circuit*.

Among the other highlights of our festival, this year's "Dr. Ralph Gurevitch Tikkun Olam Screening" will feature the inspiring documentary *Hope Without Boundaries*, and this year's "Dr. Martha Cohen Memorial Screening" will feature our Closing Night film, the captivating documentary *Without Precedent: The Supreme Life of Rosalie Abella*.

We're excited to partner with PJ Library to bring you a special movie event for the whole family! Come with your children and grandchildren to see the charming animated short film *Something from Nothing*, and then join us for a fun, hands-on crafting activity following the film. This event is free of charge.

And we're delighted to have JAC- Jewish Adult Calgary partner with us in presenting the comedy/drama *Perfect Strangers*, as well as the poignant drama *March '68*.

We feel honored by the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta's choice of our film festival, once again, as the venue for their annual Jay Joffe Memorial Program. JHSSA will be co-sponsoring the screening of the documentary *Vishniac*, which explores the remarkable career and dramatic life of renowned photographer Roman Vishniac.

As always, we would like to express our deepest thanks to all our sponsors, without whom this festival would not be possible. It is their generosity, community-mindedness and commitment to Jewish culture that enables us to offer this event to the community.

And a special thank you to the members of our dedicated Film Festival Committee who have spent months previewing films in order to bring you a diverse selection of engaging films that we hope will move and inspire you, entertain and delight you, enlighten and challenge you.

Harvey Cyngiser

FILM FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Harvey Cyngiser

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Henny Bassin
Milton Bogoch
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David Busheikin
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We wish to thank all of our sponsors for their generous support of the 2023 Film Festival

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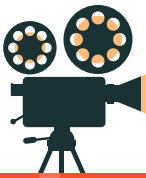
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THE MONKEY HOUSE

Israel 2023

Director: Avi Nesher

Hebrew & Italian with English subtitles

128 minutes

Comedy/Drama

Nominated for 11 Israeli Academy Awards, this heartwarming comedy/drama from acclaimed Israeli director Avi Nesher (*Turn Left at the End of the World*, *The Secrets*, *The Matchmaker*, *The Other Story*) is a “delightful, sophisticated mixture of a literary mystery, a witty comedy and a moving character study of two lost souls who make a connection” (*Jerusalem Post*). Set in the late 1980’s, the film follows Amitay Kariv, a novelist whose popularity peaked in the 1960s, only to wane in the decades that followed. Blaming current cultural politics for his lack of success, he decides to fight for what he feels is his rightful place in the Israeli literary canon, and hatches a clever, but scandalous, scheme to mount a career comeback. But to complete his plan he needs an accomplice, someone who is a literary researcher – or can convincingly pretend to be one. When a young woman named Margo takes on his mysterious job offer, their fateful encounter will change both their lives forever.

Nominated – 11 Israeli Academy Awards including Best Director, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress

Saturday, November 4th at 7:30 PM

SPECIAL GUEST:
Avi Nesher, Director



SAVOY

Israel 2022

Director: Zohar Wagner

Hebrew & Arabic with English subtitles

78 minutes

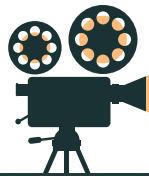
DocuDrama

This engrossing hybrid docudrama interweaves never-before-seen archival material and riveting re-enactments to tell the story of Kochava Levy, the forgotten heroine of the deadly 1975 Savoy Hotel terror attack in Tel Aviv. Levy, a young woman of Yemeni descent, was one of the hostages being held by the PLO gunmen on that fateful March 1975 night. Her fluency in Arabic allowed her to serve as mediator between IDF negotiators and the terrorists. Over the course of one night, she transformed herself into a fearless heroine. However, by dawn, she was left with nothing but shame.

Winner – Best Documentary Director Award and Best Editing Award, Jerusalem International Film Festival 2022

Winner – Best Editing Award and Best Art Direction Award, Israeli Academy Awards 2022

Sunday, November 5th at 1:00 PM



VISHNIAC

USA 2023

Director: Laura Bialis

English

90 minutes

Documentary

One of the foremost photographers of the 20th century, Roman Vishniac is best known for photographing Jewish life in Eastern Europe in the 1930s. Intended to raise funds for impoverished Jewish communities, few predicted that these photographs would provide the last visual records of an entire world that, only a few years later, would vanish in the Holocaust. But while Vishniac owes his fame to this specific collection of iconic images (published in the book *A Vanished World*), he was also an avid scientist who made considerable contributions in the field of microscopic photography. Told through the eyes of his daughter Mara, this visually captivating film brings to life Vishniac's stunning photography while exploring the remarkable career and dramatic life story of this flamboyant and sometimes controversial modernist photographer and preserver of memory. Executive-produced by Nancy Spielberg, Ori Eisen, Mirit Eisen, Taube Philanthropies & Maimonides Fund.

Sunday, November 5th at 2:45 PM



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Proudly co-sponsored by the
JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA
Jay Joffe Memorial Program



THE JAY JOFFE MEMORIAL PROGRAM OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA

The Jay Joffe Memorial Program was launched by the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta (JHSSA) to honour the memory of its long-serving founding president, Jay Joffe (1931 - 2006).

This program is dedicated to promoting and featuring Jewish culture and history through activities such as lectures, exhibits, films or performances.

The directors of JHSSA are pleased to continue their support of the Beth Tzedec Jewish Film Festival through the sponsorship of "VISHNIAC", about the life of the renowned photographer, Roman Vishniac, as told through the eyes of his daughter. Vishniac's iconic images of the Eastern European shtetls of the 1930s provide a visual record of a way of life that all but vanished only a few years later, but he was also a respected and avid scientist, with significant contributions to the field of microscopic photography. This film embodies Jay Joffe's passion for preserving and sharing Jewish history, with its compassionate telling of the story of someone who enriched our understanding of our world.





BARREN

Israel 2022

Director: Mordechai Vardi

Hebrew with English subtitles

108 minutes

Drama

A story of secrets, trust, love, and faith, this provocative and beautifully acted drama is centred around Feigi and Naftali, a young childless Hasidic couple living with Naftali's parents in Tzfat, Israel. Unable to conceive after four years of marriage, they want nothing more than to bring a child into the world. When Naftali pilgrims to Uman, in the Ukraine, over Rosh Hashanah to pray for a child, a guest – a Rabbi who claims to have healing powers – is invited to stay with the family over the holidays. But after the Rabbi offers to help Feigi with a healing treatment for barren women, nothing will remain as it was before. The resulting trauma sets a family crisis into motion, testing their faith in God and their relationships.

Sunday, November 5th at 7:00 PM



FOUR WINTERS: A STORY OF JEWISH PARTISAN RESISTANCE & BRAVERY IN WWII

USA 2020

Director: Julia Mintz

English

97 minutes

SPECIAL GUEST:
Julia Mintz, Director



Documentary

"All I owned was my camera, leopard coat, rifle and a grenade in case I'm captured... the pillow was the rifle, the walls were the trees, and the sky was the roof," says Faye Schulman, one of over 25,000 Jewish partisans, who, against extraordinary odds, fought back against the Nazis and their collaborators from deep within the forests of WWII's Eastern Europe, Ukraine, and Belarus. Torn from their families by the ravages of Hitler's armies, young men and women, many barely in their teens, escaped into the forests, banding together in partisan brigades, transforming from young innocents raised in closely knit families to courageous resistance fighters. Shattering the myth of Jewish passivity, some of the last surviving partisans share their inspiring stories of resistance in Four Winters, revealing a heartfelt narrative of heroism, determination, and resilience.

Thursday, November 9th at 7:00 PM

Screening of Four Winters and Special Guest Speaker are open to the entire community, at NO CHARGE, as part of our community-wide Kristallnacht Commemoration.



**Proudly co-sponsored by
CALGARY JEWISH FEDERATION**



PERFECT STRANGERS

Israel 2021

Director: Lior Ashkenazi

Hebrew with English subtitles

95 minutes

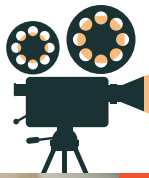
Comedy/Drama

Seven life-long friends with a lot of shared history and experiences, and a mutual death from their past, meet for dinner to watch a rare lunar eclipse. What starts out as a congenial evening takes an unexpected turn when they agree to play a game: every text message, call, or notification that they receive on their cell phones must be shared with the entire group. Betrayals, secrets, and unresolved issues emerge, threatening their long-standing friendships and marriages. Adapted from the hit 2016 Italian film of the same name, this entertaining dramedy is the directorial debut of prolific actor Lior Ashkenazi, who puts a uniquely Israeli spin on a film that has been remade in over 20 countries.

Saturday, November 11th at 7:00 PM



Presented in partnership with
JAC – Jewish Adult Calgary



MARCH '68

Poland, 2022

Director: Krzysztof Lang

Polish with English subtitles

115 Minutes

Drama

Warsaw – March 1968. Hania, a young Jewish theatre student, meets and falls madly in love with Janek as the city is engulfed in protests against the authoritarian regime's crackdown on civil liberties and anti-Semitic policies in Communist-era Poland. While the young lovers are uninterested in politics, they soon find themselves unable to avoid it when Hania's parents lose their respective jobs due to the anti-Semitic purge and are forced to emigrate. Hania wants to stay in Poland with Janek, but after participating in a protest rally at the university, events soon spiral out of control. History, politics and romance collide in this stirring coming-of-age love story as the young couple is forced to choose between love, family and freedom.

Saturday, November 11th at 9:00 PM



Presented in partnership with
JAC – Jewish Adult Calgary



SPECIAL MOVIE EVENT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

Canada 1999

Director: Stefan Leblanc

English

23 minutes

Animated Short Film for the Whole Family

Based on acclaimed author Phoebe Gilman's award-winning book of the same name, this beautifully animated short film is the heartwarming story of a boy named Joseph, his beloved grandfather, and his special friend, Mazel the mouse. Adapted from an old Jewish folktale, and set in a small shtetl, it's an enchanting tale of family love, hope, and renewal that will warm the hearts of young and old alike.

Sunday, November 12th at 11:00 AM

Join us after the film to dive into the world of storytelling and resourcefulness as we craft our own unique creations. Let your imagination run wild and discover the magic of turning everyday materials into something extraordinary. Don't miss out on this opportunity to connect with PJ Library and bring stories to life through art!

This Film and Fun, Hands-On Crafting Activity is open to everyone at NO CHARGE and is proudly presented in partnership with PJ Library.



To register for this FREE event on-line, please go to JewishCalgary.org



THE NARROW BRIDGE

Australia 2022

Director: Esther Takac

English, Hebrew & Arabic with English subtitles

76 minutes

Documentary

The Narrow Bridge explores the journeys of four people who, after searing pain and loss, develop strengths they never had before. Bushra, Rami, Meytal and Bassam, Israeli and Palestinian women and men who have lost a child or parent in the prolonged and violent conflict, transform their grief into a bridge for understanding and reconciliation. They belong to a highly controversial grassroots movement - Israeli and Palestinian Bereaved Families - who stand side-by-side to end the violence and build a future based on dignity and equality. Despite fierce political, social, and family opposition, they refuse to give up. Charting a journey of hope amidst pain, this powerfully moving and thought-provoking film follows their paths from devastating trauma to courageous activism.

Sunday, November 12th at 1:00 PM

**SHTTL***Ukraine/France 2022**Director: Ady Walter**Yiddish with English subtitles**114 minutes***Drama**

Entirely in Yiddish, and featuring visually compelling black and white cinematography, SHTTL is the story of the inhabitants of a Jewish Ukrainian village at the border of Poland. Mendeley, who has been living a secular life in Kyiv, finds himself back in the familiar world of his shtetl where, amid simmering communal tensions between tradition and modernity, he is fighting for the hand of the woman he loves. Set in the 24 hours before the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the film captures a day in the life of this unnamed village – a vibrant place brimming with the romance, politics, and intrigue of everyday life – in the context of a world about to disappear. The absence of the letter “e” in the film’s title symbolizes a vacuum, an empty space, a gaping hole, where once a world existed.

Sunday, November 12th at 2:45 PM**CLOSED CIRCUIT***Israel 2022**Director: Tal Inbar**Producer: Nancy Spielberg**Hebrew & Arabic with English subtitles**54 minutes***SPECIAL GUEST:**
Tal Inbar, Director**Documentary**

Two men in suits sit at a popular café in Tel Aviv. Moments later, they open fire on the shocked diners around them. One customer fights back. Others run to safety. No one escapes unharmed. Closed Circuit deconstructs the infamous 2016 terrorist attack at Sarona Market by skilfully weaving together raw footage from closed-circuit security cameras with riveting present-day interviews with survivors of the incident: a father breaking the Ramadan fast with his family, a cop who unknowingly saves one of the fleeing terrorists, a girl who escapes but loses her dad, and restaurant workers, both Arab and Jewish, whose lives were forever changed on that fateful night. Produced by Nancy Spielberg, and directed by award-winning filmmaker Tal Inbar, this searing and heart-pounding documentary offers us insight into the complex Israeli reality and the lasting trauma shared by the victims.

Sunday, November 12th at 7:00 PM



THE OTHER WIDOW

Israel/France 2022

Director: Maayan Rypp

Hebrew with English subtitles

83 minutes

Drama

A dark comedic drama about Ella, a 34-year-old theater costume designer, who experiences the sudden death of her lover Assaf, a respected but married theatre playwright. Keeping her identity under wraps, she attends his Shiva, where she gets glimpses of aspects of her lover and his life which were hitherto closed off from her. Through intimate encounters with Assaf's brother, mother, and, most especially, his wife, she examines her place in his life and eventually demands her legitimate right to mourn.

Nominated – 9 Israeli Academy Awards, including Best Film, Best Director, Best Actress

Saturday, November 18th at 7:00 PM



THE SHADOW OF THE DAY

Italy 2022

Director: Giuseppe Piccioni

Italian with English subtitles

125 minutes

Drama

Beautifully shot and acted, this dramatic and gripping love story is set in late 1930's Italy, against the backdrop of the rise of fascism and the increasing oppression of the country's Jewish community. Luciano, a wounded World War I veteran and a sympathizer with fascism, runs an upscale restaurant overlooking the ancient town square in the picturesque provincial town of Ascoli Piceno. He believes he can live his life according to his own set of rules. In this bubble, he observes the world through the window of his pleasant restaurant. Luciano's world changes, however, when Anna, a young woman with a dangerous secret, arrives in town and is hired to work in his restaurant. Slowly, affection creeps in between the two and among the many dangers Luciano faces, including the onset of WWII, there is the greatest danger of all: love.

Saturday, November 18th at 8:50 PM



SABOTAGE

Israel 2022

Director: Noa Aharoni

Hebrew & English with English subtitles

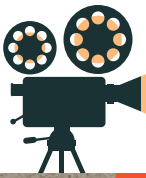
65 minutes

Documentary

January 1945, less than two weeks before the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, four courageous forced laborer women were hanged in public, accused of sabotaging the Nazi war machine. Using a mix of animation, archival footage and witness testimonies, Sabotage tells the dramatic unknown story of the women's underground operation in Auschwitz-Birkenau. It's a story of feminine heroism, resistance, and tragedy told through the eyes of then 16-year-old Anna Wajcblum Heilman, the youngest member of the resistance, whose sister Estusia was one of those hanged, and whose diary forms the basis of the film. Through Anna's diary, we learn of the women's bold and daring resistance, the camaraderie, and the bonds of friendship that formed between these women under the most horrific circumstances.

Winner – Best Mid Length Documentary Award, Israeli Documentary Forum Awards 2022

Sunday, November 19th at 1:00 PM



THE DR. RALPH GUREVITCH TIKKUN OLAM SCREENING
"Repairing the World"

HOPE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

Israel 2023

Director: Itay Vered

Hebrew, Ukrainian & English with English subtitles

65 minutes

Documentary

In the midst of the war in Ukraine, an Israeli field hospital is established to care for those affected by the conflict. This timely and inspiring film follows the challenges faced by the medical teams as they treat Ukrainian patients who have lost everything. Amidst the chaos and destruction, the film highlights the intersection of history and culture as the Israeli teams, some descended from Holocaust survivors, offer help and hope to those in need. A touching portrayal of humanity, compassion, and the power of small acts of kindness to bring people together.

Sunday, November 19th at 2:30 PM

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THE ARTIST'S DAUGHTER: OIL ON CANVAS

Israel 2022

Directors: Margarita Linton & Yaniv Linton

Hebrew & Russian with English subtitles

60 minutes

Documentary

In an effort to better understand her long-estranged father, filmmaker Margarita Linton visits an exhibition of his work in the gallery of a museum in Tel Aviv. Margarita has not seen her father—an esteemed Russian painter known for his intimate and revealing self-portraits—in over a decade, but she is hopeful that this new exhibition could be the opportunity for them to reconnect. She contacts him to share her idea of making a film about their relationship, rekindled by his artwork. But as work on the film progresses, she discovers that actually meeting the man behind the portraits in-person is her real challenge. As she stares at her father's images, Linton feels a great sense of absence. How does one film an absence? Though her father's love eludes her, she remains masterfully determined to make meaning out of the void, hoping to find solace and healing in her work – the results are mystifying and surprising.

Winner – Best Mid-Length Documentary Film, Israeli Academy Awards 2022

Sunday, November 19th at 3:45 PM



THE DR. MARTHA COHEN MEMORIAL SCREENING

WITHOUT PRECEDENT: THE SUPREME LIFE OF ROSALIE ABELLA

Canada 2023

Director: Barry Avrich

English

84 minutes

Documentary

The daughter of Holocaust survivors, Rosalie Silberman Abella was determined from a young age to defend the rights of those who faced injustice. Appointed at the age of 29 as the youngest judge in Canadian history, she went on to become Canada's first Jewish female Supreme Court Justice, in an illustrious career that made her a respected human rights hero. With a perspective and point of view shaped from being born in a displaced person's camp following the Holocaust, and being an immigrant to Canada at the age of 4 —Abella has been at the forefront of historic, monumental, and sometimes controversial landmark legal decisions in human rights, religious practices, and sex-discrimination cases. Chronicling her family beginnings, and reflecting on her remarkable life and career, this captivating documentary offers a loving and intimate portrait of a modern, fierce, uncompromising, and gracious champion of equal rights, who has spent her entire life reminding us that we must never forget how the world looks to those who are vulnerable.

Sunday, November 19th at 7:00 PM

Proudly sponsored by

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PROUDLY SUPPORTS THE Beth Tzedec Jewish Film Festival

ON BEHALF OF
The Sander Family



CALGARY JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

November 4 - 19, 2023



ADMISSION TO THE FESTIVAL

A PASS FOR THE ENTIRE FESTIVAL

includes all films, guest speakers and receptions

\$80 per person prior to November 4th
(\$90 at the door)

SINGLE SESSION

One full afternoon or evening of films

\$20 per person

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

\$20 for the entire festival

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All films will be screened live and in-person at the

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1325 Glenmore Trail S.W.

Festival Passes may be purchased online at

WWW.CALGARYJEWISHFILMFESTIVAL.COM

or at the synagogue office by calling

403-255-8688

**ENJOY THIS YEAR'S EXCITING LINE-UP OF
OUTSTANDING FILMS LIVE AND IN PERSON!**

FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4

7:30 pm The Monkey House

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5

1:00 pm Savoy

2:45 pm Vishniac

7:00 pm Barren

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9

7:00 pm Four Winters

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11

7:00 pm Perfect Strangers

9:00 pm March '68

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12

11:00 am Something From Nothing

1:00 pm The Narrow Bridge

2:45 pm Shttl

7:00 pm Closed Circuit

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18

7:00 pm The Other Widow

8:50 pm The Shadow Of The Day

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19

1:00 pm Sabotage

2:30 pm Hope Without Boundaries

3:45 pm The Artist's Daughter

7:00 pm Without Precedent



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