



FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER + THE JEWISH MUSEUM

**THE FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
AND THE JEWISH MUSEUM ANNOUNCE
THE MAIN SLATE LINEUP FOR THE 26TH ANNUAL
NEW YORK JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL,
JANUARY 11-24, 2017**

**Opening Night—NY Premiere of Dorit Hakim's *Moon in the 12th House*
Centerpiece—U.S. Premiere of Bernard-Henri Lévy's *Peshmerga*
Closing Night—NY Premiere of Maria Schrader's *Stefan Zweig, Farewell to Europe***

Highlights include new films by Amos Gitai and Radu Jude, documentaries about Bette Midler, William Kentridge, and Ohad Naharin, and more

NEW YORK, NY (December 12, 2016) – The Jewish Museum and the Film Society of Lincoln Center announce the main slate lineup for the 26th annual New York Jewish Film Festival (NYJFF), January 11-24, 2017. Among the oldest and most influential Jewish film festivals worldwide, unique in New York City, and one of the longest running partnerships of two major New York cultural institutions, the NYJFF each year presents the finest narrative and documentary films from around the world that explore the diverse Jewish experience.

The festival's 2017 main slate features 29 wide-ranging and exciting films and shorts from the iconic to the iconoclastic, of which 26 are screening in their world, U.S., and New York premieres.

The NYJFF opens on Wednesday, January 11 with the New York premiere of Dorit Hakim's impressive debut feature *Moon in the 12th House*, which follows two estranged Israeli sisters on the road to reconciliation. Closing Night is the New York premiere of *Aimée and Jaguar* star Maria Schrader's *Stefan Zweig, Farewell to Europe*, a dramatic chronicle of the German-Jewish writer's years in exile from Nazi Germany, on Tuesday, January 24. For the first time in its history, the NYJFF will have a Centerpiece screening

on Wednesday, January 18: the U.S. premiere of *Peshmerga* by French-Jewish philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, who documented his travels to Iraqi Kurdistan in an effort to better understand the psychology of a culture on the frontlines of the war against ISIS.

Special presentations include the World Premiere of Amos Gitai's latest, *Shalom Rabin*, a personal film diary utilizing the director's own archival footage, featuring a moving interview with Yitzhak Rabin completed shortly before his assassination; the World Premiere of Andrea Simon's *Angel Wagenstein: Art Is a Weapon*, a portrait of the revolutionary Bulgarian Jewish filmmaker and novelist, paired with a screening of Konrad Wolf's 1959 film *Stars*, for which Wagenstein wrote the screenplay; and the U.S. premiere of *Doing Jewish: A Story from Ghana*, which follows documentarian Gabrielle Zilkha as she discovers a centuries-old Jewish community in Ghana.

This year's edition of the festival also features a number of intimate documentaries about captivating Jewish performing artists, including the U.S. premiere of Samantha Peters's *Bette Midler: The Divine Miss M*, an ode to the entertainer's spectacular fifty-year career; *Mr. Gaga*, Tomer Heymann's intimate portrait of Ohad Naharin, the renowned choreographer and artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company, in its New York premiere; and Barak and Tomer Heymann's *Who's Gonna Love Me Now?*, which follows HIV-positive Israeli expat Saar Moaz, a member of the London Gay Men's Chorus.

Other highlights include the New York premiere of culinary documentary *Hummus! The Movie*; *Scarred Hearts*, the latest from Radu Jude (*Aferim!*), based on the novel by Romanian author Max Belcher; the U.S. premiere of Emmanuel Bourdieu's *Louis-Ferdinand Céline*, based on the real-life encounter between the controversial French author (played by Denis Lavant), an accused Nazi supporter, and a young Jewish professor in 1948; and the New York premiere of Marie Noëlle's *Marie Curie, The Courage of Knowledge*, an intimate biopic of the trailblazing physicist and chemist.

See below for the full main slate lineup. The NYJFF's special events sections will be announced later this week.

This year's New York Jewish Film Festival was selected by Rachel Chanoff, Director, THE OFFICE performing arts + film; Jaron Gandelman, Curatorial Assistant for Media, Jewish Museum and Coordinator, New York Jewish Film Festival; Jens Hoffmann, Director of Special Exhibitions and Public Programs, Jewish Museum and Curator for Special Programs, New York Jewish Film Festival; Dennis Lim, Director of Programming, Film Society of Lincoln Center; Aviva Weintraub, Associate Curator, Jewish Museum and Director, New York Jewish Film Festival; and Tyler Wilson, Programming Coordinator, Film Society of Lincoln Center.

NYJFF tickets will go on sale to FSLC and Jewish Museum members on Thursday, December 15 and to the public on Thursday, December 22. Tickets may be purchased online or in person at the Film Society's Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center and Walter Reade Theater box offices, 144 & 165 West 65th Street. For our free event ticket policy and complete festival information, visit www.NYJFF.org.

The New York Jewish Film Festival is made possible by the Martin and Doris Payson Fund for Film and Media. Generous support is also provided by Mimi and Barry Alperin, Wendy Fisher and Dennis Goodman, The Liman Foundation, The Jack and Pearl Resnick Foundation, Sara and Axel Schupf, an anonymous gift, and through public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with City Council. Additional support is provided by Israel's Office of Cultural Affairs, the Polish Cultural Institute New York, and the German Consulate General New York.

FILM DESCRIPTIONS & SCHEDULE

All films screen digitally at the Walter Reade Theater (165 West 65th St.) unless otherwise noted

Opening Night

Moon in the 12th House

Dorit Hakim, Israel, 2016, 110m

Hebrew with English subtitles

New York Premiere

When two estranged young sisters are reunited, they must come to terms with each other and the circumstances that tore them apart: Lenny had stayed in their childhood home to take care of their father, while Mira left for a faster life in Tel Aviv. Despite their divergent paths, love and affection bind the characters and lead them toward fragile redemption. This impressive debut feature by Dorit Hakim features unforgettable performances by Yuval Sharf (*Ana Arabia, Footnote*) and Yaara Pelzig (*Policeman*).

Wednesday, January 11, 3:30pm & 9:00pm

Centerpiece

Peshmerga

Bernard-Henri Lévy, France, 2016, 92m

Kurdish, Arabic, English, and French with English subtitles

U.S. Premiere

In 2015, French Jewish philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy sought to understand the psychology and culture of those embroiled with ISIS in the Middle East. Accompanied by a team of cameramen, Lévy travelled through Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurdish fighters he encounters share unforgettable stories and show unflinching determination in their fight against jihadi fundamentalism. His journey offers an unprecedented view of a war that rages in our own time, and whose stakes are of global importance.

Wednesday, January 18, 1:00pm & 6:00pm

Closing Night

Stefan Zweig, Farewell to Europe

Maria Schrader, Austria/France/Germany, 2016, 106m

German, English, Portuguese, French, and Spanish with English subtitles

New York Premiere

Known for her performances in *Aimée and Jaguar* and *In Darkness*, Maria Schrader goes behind the camera to chronicle the years of exile of Stefan Zweig, one of the most widely read German writers of his time. In the film, told in five chapters, from the mid 1930s to 1942, and taking place in Buenos Aires, New York, and Brazil, Zweig struggles

to find the right stance toward the events in Nazi Germany, while searching for a home abroad. Schrader's emotional film is as much about a tormented literary icon as it is about a continent going up in flames. Starring Josef Hader as Zweig and Barbara Sukowa (*Hannah Arendt*) as his wife, Friderike.

Tuesday, January 24, 3:30pm & 9:00pm

Aida's Secrets

Alon Schwarz, Shaul Schwarz, Israel/U.S./Germany/Canada, 2016, 90m
English and Hebrew with English subtitles

New York Premiere

A web of family secrets begins to unravel in this gripping documentary from Alon and Shaul Schwarz following a family fractured by war. Born inside a displaced persons camp in 1945 and sent for adoption in Israel, Izak learns at a late age the details of his birth mother, an unknown brother in Canada, and his father's true identity. This emotional, thought-provoking film about the plight of displaced people and war refugees is a work of resilience and compassion.

Thursday, January 12, 3:30pm & 8:45pm

Angel Wagenstein: Art Is a Weapon

Andrea Simon, U.S./Bulgaria, 2017, 84m

Bulgarian, English, German and Russian with English subtitles

World Premiere

This documentary portrait of Bulgarian Jewish filmmaker, novelist, partisan warrior, and lifelong revolutionary Angel Wagenstein introduces American viewers to a brilliant and charismatic artist, for whom art became a form of resistance against a series of oppressive and corrupt regimes. It is also a meditation on what his life and films reveal about the intimate realities of Cold War culture in a divided and contentious post-war Europe, and the vertiginous transformations of 1989 and after in the former Eastern Bloc states.

Screening with:

Stars (Sterne)

Konrad Wolf, East Germany/Bulgaria, 1959, 88m

German, Bulgarian, Yiddish, and Ladino with English subtitles

This gripping drama, based on the personal story of screenwriter Angel Wagenstein during the Holocaust in the Balkans, sheds light on the Sephardic experience of WWII. Stationed in a secluded Bulgarian village in 1943, Walter, an artist and sergeant in the Wehrmacht, lives an almost idyllic life far away from the war. Soon, a transit camp is set up for Jews arriving from Greece. When Ruth, one of the Greek Jews, asks Walter to help a pregnant woman in the camp, the two form an unlikely bond. Presented in a new digital restoration from the original 35mm negative.

Sunday, January 22, 8:30pm

(Stars also screens on Thursday, January 12 at 1:00pm)

Bette Midler: The Divine Miss M

Samantha Peters, UK, 2014, 75m

U.S. Premiere

For five decades the woman they call "The Divine Miss M" forged a path that has taken her from a pineapple canning factory in Honolulu to the highest echelons of Hollywood. The BBC's *Imagine* series joins Bette Midler on her journey through the chorus lines of Broadway, the bathhouses and nightclubs of New York City in the 1970s, and to the top

of the film industry. Her combination of soulful voice and raucous wit made her irreplaceable as an outrageous, captivating entertainer. As she releases her first album in eight years, host Alan Yentob joins Ms. Midler to revisit the places and early influences of her spectacular career.

Monday, January 16, 9:00pm

Dimona Twist

Michal Aviad, Israel, 2016, 70m

Hebrew with English subtitles

U.S. Premiere

Israeli documentarian Michal Aviad (*The Women Pioneers*) returns to the NYJFF with another moving film focusing on the lives of women in Israel, specifically those from North Africa and Poland who came by ship in the 1950s and 1960s and were sent to Dimona, a newly established town in the desert. They talk about the pain of leaving their homes behind, about poverty and the difficulties of adjusting in their new homeland, and about their determined attempts to create rich and meaningful lives. These intimate conversations are interwoven with stunning archival footage and music of the time.

Monday, January 23, 4:00pm & 8:30pm

Doing Jewish: A Story from Ghana

Gabrielle Zilkha, Canada, 2016, 85m

U.S. Premiere

Who would expect to find Jews in Ghana? Certainly not filmmaker Gabrielle Zilkha. But when she volunteered to work in Africa, and found herself alone as the Jewish New Year approached, she made a surprising connection with the Jewish Africans she met there. In remote Sefwi Wiawso, Zilkha encounters a group of practicing Jews, dedicated and devout, who perform rites like circumcision and observe Kosher dietary laws. Only recently did this Ghanaese community discover they were part of a worldwide religion with millions of followers, and were as surprised as the filmmaker who made this inspiring documentary.

Screening with:

Kol Nidre #3

Tatiana McCabe, U.S. 2016, 4m

World Premiere

Images from Brooklyn-based artist Archie Rand's acclaimed book *The 613*, an illustrated reimagining of the 613 Jewish commandments that earned praise from the likes of Art Spiegelman and Ang Lee, are recreated in this charming animated short.

Wednesday, January 11, 1:00pm, 6:30pm

Hummus! The Movie

Oren Rosenfeld, Israel, 2016, 70m

English, Arabic, and Hebrew with English subtitles

New York Premiere

Three Israelis from very different backgrounds are brought together by their love for a common dietary staple: hummus. Jalil, a young Christian-Arab from Ramla who has taken over his family's hummus restaurant, struggles with the urge to forge his own path. Eliyahu is a former dread-headed vagrant turned Hasidic Jew, who opens a chain of successful kosher hummus restaurants. Suheila, the only woman to own her own business in the Arab market, has won the Golden Pita Award for Best Hummus, beating ten men for the title. Weaving together their stories, director Oren Rosenfeld tastefully

demonstrates how food can positively affect our culture—and is even able to transcend religious and political divides.

Screening with:

Numbers Guy

Vanessa Jung, Canada, 2015, 33m

New York Premiere

From behind his counter in Toronto, cashier David delivers more than your purchase; funny, fascinating trivia about facts and figures await his customers.

Tuesday, January 17, 8:45pm

Wednesday, January 18, 3:30pm

Louis-Ferdinand Céline

Emmanuel Bourdieu, France/Belgium, 2016, 97m

French with English subtitles

U.S. Premiere

This stirring drama is based on the real-life encounter between the controversial French author Louis-Ferdinand Céline, and Milton Hindus, a young American literature professor, in 1948 Denmark, where the Frenchman was in self-imposed exile. Hindus, who was Jewish, would later write of his shock and disappointment at his encounter with Céline, who was accused of collaborating with the Nazis. Denis Lavant (*Holy Motors*) brings us into the mind of the great, if deeply troubled, artist and author of *Journey to the End of the Night*. Directed by Emmanuel Bourdieu (co-writer of the Arnaud Desplechin films *Esther Kahn* and *My Sex Life ... or How I Got Into an Argument*).

Saturday, January 21, 9:30pm

Sunday, January 22, 1:00pm

Marie Curie, The Courage of Knowledge

Marie Noëlle, Germany/France/Poland, 2016, 95m

French, German and Polish with English subtitles

New York Premiere

A sweeping biographical film about the first woman to win the Nobel Prize, *Marie Curie: The Courage of Knowledge* is as much an intimate portrayal of the struggles of the scientist's private world as of her legendary public accomplishments, chronicling her battles against the male academic establishment, as well as her blissful marriage to her scientific partner, Pierre. Her world falls apart when her husband perishes in a tragic accident, and despite near scandal, Curie perseveres and triumphs once more. Director Marie Noëlle vividly depicts turn-of-the century Europe in this inspiring true story.

Tuesday, January 24, 1:00pm & 6:30pm

Mr. Gaga

Tomer Heymann, Israel/Sweden/Germany/Netherlands, 2015, 100m

English and Hebrew with English subtitles

New York Premiere

Enter the world of Ohad Naharin, renowned choreographer and artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company, and creator of an innovative and exciting movement language known as Gaga. Eight years in the making, this high-energy documentary immerses the audience in the creative process behind Batsheva's unique performances. Using intimate rehearsal footage, extensive unseen archival materials, and stunning dance sequences, acclaimed director Tomer Heymann (*Paper Dolls*, *The Queen Has No*

Crown, I Shot My Love) tells the fascinating story of an artistic genius who redefined the language of modern dance.

Thursday, January 12, 6:00pm

Past Life

Avi Neshet, Israel, 2016, 110m

Hebrew, English, German, and Polish with English subtitles

New York Premiere

Inspired by true events, *Past Life* tracks the daring 1977 trans-European odyssey of two sisters—one an introverted ambitious classical music composer, the other a combative liberal magazine editor. As they try to unravel a disturbing wartime mystery that has cast a foreboding shadow on their entire lives, they realize that freedom from the shackles of the past requires painful sacrifices, as does the struggle to discover one's unique voice. Nelly Tagar (*Zero Motivation*), Joy Rieger (*Live and Become*), Doron Tavory (*Lemon Tree*), and Evgenia Dodina (*The Attack; Nina's Tragedies*) lead the cast. Acclaimed filmmaker Avi Neshet (*Turn Left at the End of the World, The Matchmaker*) directed from his own screenplay.

Sunday, January 15, 6:00pm

Monday, January 16, 3:15pm

The Patriarch's Room

Danae Elon, Israel/Canada, 2016, 83m

English, Hebrew, and Greek with English subtitles

New York Premiere

In 2005, the elderly Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem was accused of selling properties to Jewish Settlers. He was deposed and confined to his room in the Old City for eleven years. Documentarian Danae Elon (*Another Road Home*) forges a special relationship with the Patriarch to unravel the twisted story. With humor and sensitivity, Elon probes the workings of the Church and presents a portrait of a complicated religious community.

Sunday, January 15, 8:45pm

Tuesday, January 17, 1:00pm

Saving Nur

Nili Tal, Israel, 2016, 70m

Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles

New York Premiere

Afflicted with a rare genetic disease, nine-year-old Nur has only one chance of survival: crossing the border from Gaza into Israel, where doctors are capable of performing a liver transplant. Meanwhile, her Palestinian parents Ibrahim and Maha are fighting resolutely for the life of their daughter while their family struggles back in Gaza. Director Nili Tal (*Ukraine Brides, Etched in My Body, Sixty and the City*) takes us on Nur's journey across borders and shows us the transformative power of humanity and hope.

Screening with:

My Travels with Oliver

Laurel Chiten, U.S., 2017, 7m

World Premiere

With heartfelt humor, photojournalist Lowell Handler narrates a series of photographs he took while traveling the world with British neurologist, naturalist, and author Oliver Sacks.

Monday, January 23, 1:30pm & 6:15pm

Scarred Hearts**Radu Jude, Romania, 2016, 141m****Romanian and German with English subtitles****New York Premiere**

Set in 1937, *Scarred Hearts*, inspired by Romanian author Max Blecher's novel, centers on Emanuel, a young intellectual with a penchant for poetry who spends his days at a sanatorium on the Black Sea coast, suffering from bone tuberculosis. Despite his physical condition, Emanuel falls in love, quotes literature, and encourages his fellow patients to live life fully, which includes listening to jazz and throwing the occasional drunken party. Meanwhile, outside the sanatorium walls, fascism is on the rise. Director Radu Jude's richly detailed camerawork—shot on 35mm film in the full-screen, square Academy ratio—provides a master class in mise-en-scène.

Wednesday, January 18, 8:30pm**Thursday, January 19, 1:00pm****Shalom Rabin****Amos Gitai, Israel, 2017, 89m****English and Hebrew with English subtitles****World Premiere**

Shalom Rabin is a film diary that follows director Amos Gitai as he journeys to Washington, Cairo, Gaza, and Jerusalem at the time of the Oslo Accords. With footage taken from Gitai's exclusive archive, it includes excerpts from a profoundly moving, extended interview with Yitzhak Rabin and some of the leaders of the time shortly before Rabin's assassination in November 1995. The events and conversations shown here reveal a watershed moment in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Saturday, January 21, 7:00pm**Sunday, January 22, 3:30pm****Who's Gonna Love Me Now?****Barak Heymann, Tomer Heymann, Israel/UK, 2016, 84m****English and Hebrew with English subtitles****New York Premiere**

An HIV-positive gay man living in London, Israeli expat Saar finds refuge in the British capital from the religious kibbutz where he grew up. Since his diagnosis, Saar craves his family's love, while they struggle with their fears and prejudices. Saar and his fellow members of the London Gay Men's Chorus provide a glorious soundtrack for this documentary about the necessity of forgiveness and the power of home.

Saturday, January 14, 9:30pm**Sunday, January 22, 6:00pm****William Kentridge: Triumphs and Laments****Giovanni Troilo, Italy, 2016, 67m****English and Italian with English subtitles****U.S. Premiere**

Triumphs and Laments documents one of contemporary artist William Kentridge's most ambitious and controversial projects: a colossal frieze along the banks of the Tiber river in Rome portraying the glories and tragedies of the Eternal City that was commissioned in the summer of 2016. The film, shot with exclusive access to Kentridge over the course of two years from his home in South Africa to the center of Rome, details the artist's

vision and his creative process in developing a work of art that will disappear in just a few years.

Tuesday, January 17, 6:00pm

Thursday, January 19, 4:15pm

The Women's Balcony

Emil Ben-Shimon, Israel, 2016, 96m

Hebrew with English subtitles

New York Premiere

In this sharply observed dramedy about a literal and metaphorical fall—a women's balcony collapses during a Bar Mitzvah—a close-knit Sephardic congregation in Jerusalem fractures along gender lines. Emil Ben-Shimon's feature debut is a warm portrait of a community seeking to balance protocol with practical and progressive values. This rousing, good-hearted tale about women speaking truth to patriarchal power is accompanied by stirring music and sumptuous food.

Saturday, January 14, 7:00pm

Shorts Program

110m

Various languages

New York Premieres

A collection of five short films transport us from 1930s Czechoslovakia to a contemporary Tel Aviv museum. In ***Mr. Bernstein*** (Francine Zuckerman, Canada, 2015, 12m), when Debbie hears of her father's life-changing musical experience in a refugee camp, she tracks down the famous conductor years later, with unexpected consequences. In ***Home Movie*** (Caroline Pick, UK, 2013, 17m), filmmaker Caroline Pick uses footage that her father shot from the 1930s to 1960s to look back at her family's past in Czechoslovakia and Britain, gradually unearthing the story that her parents hid. Eleven-year-old Tamal, overweight and a victim to bullying, develops a unique coping mechanism in ***Vow*** (Netalie Braun, Israel, 2015, 28m), a darkly funny portrayal of an adolescent in crisis. As Uri prepares for his wedding, he relives memories of his parents' cancerous relationship in ***Lamps Lit on the Towpath*** (Efim Graboy, Vitali Friedland, Israel, 2016, 23m). In ***Hounds*** (Omer Tobi, Israel, 2015, 30m), Iris, a museum security guard, faces an ethical dilemma following a terrible accident on the day of her long-awaited promotion.

Monday, January 16, 6:00pm

THE JEWISH MUSEUM

Led by Claudia Gould, Helen Goldsmith Menschel Director, and located on Museum Mile at Fifth Avenue and 92nd Street, the Jewish Museum is one of the world's preeminent institutions devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, offering intellectually engaging and educational exhibitions and programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Museum was established in 1904, when Judge Mayer Sulzberger donated 26 ceremonial objects to The Jewish Theological Seminary as the core of a museum collection. Today, the Museum maintains a collection of over 30,000 works of art, artifacts, and broadcast media reflecting global Jewish identity, and presents a diverse schedule of internationally acclaimed temporary exhibitions. For more information, visit TheJewishMuseum.org.

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

The Film Society of Lincoln Center is devoted to supporting the art and elevating the craft of cinema. The only branch of the world-renowned arts complex Lincoln Center to shine a light on the everlasting yet evolving importance of the moving image, this nonprofit organization was founded in 1969 to celebrate American and international film. Via year-round programming and discussions; its annual New York Film Festival; and its publications, including *Film Comment*, the U.S.'s premier magazine about films and film culture, the Film Society endeavors to make the discussion and appreciation of cinema accessible to a broader audience, as well as to ensure that it will remain an essential art form for years to come.

The Film Society receives generous, year-round support from *The New York Times*, *Variety*, Loews Regency Hotel, Row NYC Hotel, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. American Airlines is the Official Airline of the Film Society of Lincoln Center. For more information, visit filmlinc.org and follow @filmlinc on Twitter.

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