UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE PRESENTS:

BETWEEN

Escapism and Strife

A TRIBUTE TO

THE JERUSALEM SAM SPIEGEL FILM SCHOOL

RENEN SCHOR
NADAV LAPI
TALYA LAVIE
DAN GEVA
ELAD KEIDAN

DAVID OFEK
YAELE KAYAM
TAMAR KAY

YEHONATAN INDURSKY

WINTER 2016

21.11.16-10.3.16

MÖLLER CENTRE AUDITORIUM

CONTACT INFORMATION:
YP240@CAM.AC.UK

M&C TRUST
SHARON HAREL
SAM SPIEGEL FOUNDATION
LONDON NEW YORK
PROGRAM / SCHEDULE

ALL SESSIONS WILL BEGIN AT 19:00

SESSION 1  THURSDAY - 21.1.16
CHANGING ISRAELI CINEMA FROM WITHIN
Renen Schorr, founder-director of the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School and The Mutes’ House, screening and conversation with award-winning director Tamar Kay

SESSION 2  THURSDAY - 28.1.16
FOOTSTEPS IN JERUSALEM
Graduates homage (90’) to David Perlov’s iconic documentary, In Jerusalem fifty years later.
Guest: Dr. Dan Geva

SESSION 3  THURSDAY - 4.2.16
THE CONFLICT THROUGH THE EYES OF THE JSFS STUDENTS
A collection of shorts (1994-2014), a retrospective curated by Prof. Richard Peña (82’)
Guest: Yaelle Kayam

SESSION 4  THURSDAY - 11.2.16
A BIRTH OF A FILMMAKER
Nadav Lapid’s student and short films
Guest: Nadav Lapid

SESSION 5  THURSDAY - 18.2.16
THE NEW NORMAL HAREDI JEW IN ISRAELI CINEMA
Yehonatan Indurksy’s films
Guest: Yehonatan Indursky

SESSION 6  THURSDAY - 25.2.16
IN SEARCH OF A PASSIVE ISRAELI HERO
Elad Keidan’s films
Guest: Elad Keidan

SESSION 7  THURSDAY - 3.3.16
THE “MIZRAHI” (OF MIDDLE-EASTERN EXTRACTION) IS THE ARABIC JEW
David Ofek’s films and television works
Guest: David Ofek

SESSION 8  THURSDAY - 10.3.16
REVENGE OF THE LOSERS
Talya Lavie’s films
Guest: Talya Lavie
In 1989 the Israeli film and television industry was changed forever when the first Israeli national film school was established in Jerusalem. Since then and for the past 25 years, the School, later renamed the Sam Spiegel Film School, graduated many of Israel’s leading film and television creators, who changed the film and television industry in Israel and were the engine for its renaissance, both in Israel and abroad. “To my eyes, Israeli cinema, divides into BSS and ASS – that is, Before Sam Spiegel School and After Sam Spiegel School.” (Prof. Richard Peña, Director, New York Film Festival, March, 2011).

The Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge will mark the 25th anniversary of the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School this winter, 2016, with a series of 8 meetings that will provide a retrospective of some of the most notable films and television programs created by award-winning graduates of the school, among them Talya Lavie (*Zero Motivation*, 2014) and Nadav Lapid (*The Kindergarten Teacher*, 2014). The retrospective will provide a unique chance to go beyond the usual offerings of most film festivals by bringing filmmakers and audiences together, not only to view the films but to understand them in greater depth in Middle Eastern and in world context alike.

Dr. Yaron Peleg  
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies  
University of Cambridge
Greetings:

Dr. Yaron Peleg, Kennedy-Leigh Lecturer in Modern Hebrew Studies, University of Cambridge.
Adam Spiegel, English theatre producer

changing Israeli cinema from within

Renan Schorr, founder-director of the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School and The Mutes’ House, screening and conversation with award winning director Tamar Kay, class of 2015

Renen Schorr

Renen Schorr has been a key figure in the Israeli film arena since the late 70’s as an Israeli film activist, film director and educator.

Schorr is a director-producer whose critically acclaimed full-length feature Late Summer Blues (1987), won the Israeli Academy Award for Best Film of the Year and became one of the most successful Israeli cult movies of all times. His short Wedding in Jerusalem is an Israeli classic. His second feature-length film as a director, The Loners (2007) was nominated for 11 Israeli academy awards. “The Loners” won the Best Actor Award.

In late 1989, Schorr created The Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School, Israel’s national film school, and has been its director ever since. Under his leadership, the school has become a major catalyst in the renaissance of Israeli cinema. Schorr was chosen by his colleagues as President of GEECT, the association of 70 European film schools (2000-2004) and led to the entry of Israel to the European Film Academy.

He pioneered major developments in the Israeli public film funds as one of the three initiators and founders of The Israel Film Fund (1978) and the initiator of The New Fund for Film & Television (NFCT, 1993). In 2008, Schorr created The Jerusalem Film and Television Fund, Israel’s first regional fund, serving as its first chairman. In 2011 he founded the Sam Spiegel International Film Lab. In 2015 celebrating 25 years to the school, he fulfilled another dream and established the Sam Spiegel Alumni Fund for First Features.
TAMAR KAY

Born in Jerusalem from Hebron based family, Tamar Kay graduated Psychology & Philosophy departments at the Hebrew University and filmmaking at the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School. She specialized in documentary directing and film editing.

Tamar was assistant editor to American documentarist Susan Korda and worked in a variety of editing and production capacities with filmmakers Willy Lindwer, Amos Kollek and Anat Zuria.

In 2015 Tamar completed her graduation film, *The Mute’s House*, which received the school’s most outstanding film award of the year and won IDFA’S 2015 Special Jury Award.

*The Mute’s House* will be commercially released in Israel in 2016, a rare achievement for a short film.
SESSION 2
THURSDAY - 28.1.16

“FOOTSTEPS IN JERUSALEM”
graduates homage (90’) to David Perlov’s iconic documentary, In Jerusalem fifty years later. The film was screened on one day simultaneously in 50 film venues in 41 countries.

Guest: Dr. Dan Geva
Class of 1994

DAN GEVA

Born in Haifa, Dan Geva graduated the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School with honours. His documentary short film Jerusalem: Rhythms of a Distant City (1993, 12’) won the Jerusalem Film Festival 1993 best documentary film award and received later international prizes.

Geva has made over 20 full-length documentary films, winning world acclaim. Amongst them are What I Saw in Hebron (1999), Routine (2000), The Key (2001), Fall (2003), “Think Popcorn” (2014) and Noise (2012). His 2006 film Description of a Memory, an homage to Chris Marker’s classic Description of a Struggle (1960), has been celebrated as one of the Ten Best Documentaries of the 2000’s.

Geva is a senior lecturer in documentary studies at Beit-Berl College and the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School, and a fellow researcher at Haifa University. He is the laureate of the 2011 Dan David Prize for Promising Researcher in Cinema and Society. His Ph.D. dissertation (Tel-Aviv University) is titled “The Extended Sign of the Documentarian.”

Dan Geva is the co-artistic director of Footsteps in Jerusalem (2013).
SESSION 3
THURSDAY - 4.2.16

THE CONFLICT THROUGH THE EYES OF THE JSFS STUDENTS

A collection of the best shorts (1994-2014), a retrospective curated by Prof. Richard Peña, former director of the New York Film Festival (82’).

Guest: Yaelle Kayam
Class of 2008

YAEHELLE KAYAM

Born in Hezeliya, Yaelle Kayam studied filmmaking at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, Australia (2004-2006) and at the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School (2006-2008).

Her graduation film Diploma (22 min, 2009) has been chosen by an international jury to be one of 20 best school films of all times. “Diploma” won third place at the Cinéfondation competition at Cannes film festival 2009, was screened in over 70 festivals worldwide, including MoMA and won 14 international awards.

Mountain, Yaelle’s debut feature film which won the Torino Lab Award, has premiered at Orizontti Official selection, Venice film festival 2015 and “New Discovery”, Toronto film festival 2015.

Diploma is one of the films selected by Prof. Richard Peña, former Director of New York Festival, to be included in the school’s retrospective on “The Conflict” which was screened at 2014 Jerusalem Film Festival. Additional films in the collection are: Cock Fight (2000) by Sigalit Lifshitz, Home (1994) by David Ofek, Lookout (2014) by Noa Guskov, The Arrest (2014) by Yair Agmon.
SESSION 4
THURSDAY - 11.2.16

A BIRTH OF A FILMMAKER

Nadav Lapid’s student and short films, including, Students’ Restrooms (8’), Road (16’), Ammunition Hill (7’), Why? (5’) and fragments from the award winning features The Policeman (2011) and The Kindergarten Teacher (2014).

Guest: Nadav Lapid
Class of 2006

NADAV LAPID

Nadav Lapid, born in Tel Aviv, studied philosophy at the University of Tel-Aviv and literature in Paris.

During his studies at the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel School, he directed three acclaimed shorts: The Students’ Restrooms was screened at 2003 Cannes film festival; Road was screened at the Berlin Film Festival and has been chosen by an international jury to be one of 20 best school films of all times. His 50-minute graduation film, Emile’s Girlfriend was screened in Cannes 2006 Cinéfondation Competition.

Nadav’s first feature The Policeman, won the jury award at the 2011 Locarno Film Festival, 15 international awards and was screened in numerous festivals, including the New York and London.

His second feature film, The Kindergarten Teacher, which was developed in the Sam Spiegel International Film Lab, premiered in Cannes. The film won ten international awards and was screened in more than 150 international festivals.

The Kindergarten Teacher was selected as one of the best films of 2014 by almost each critics poll and film review worldwide. In recent years, Nadav participated in two school’s productions: Footsteps in Jerusalem (Ammunition Hill, 2003, 7’), and Love Letters to Cinema (Why?, 2014, 5’) Why? competed in 2014 Berlin Film Festival.

Nadav teaches directing at the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel School.
SESSION 5
THURSDAY - 18.2.16

THE NEW NORMAL HAREDI JEW IN ISRAELI CINEMA

The films of Yehonatan Indurksy including fragments from Driver, Ponevezh Time, The Cantor and the Sea (24’) and the award winning TV series Shtisel.

Guest: Yehonatan Indursky
Class of 2011

YEHONATAN INDURSKY

Born in Jerusalem, Yehonatan Indursky, studied at the highly acclaimed Orthodox school, Yeshivat Ponevezh, in Bnei Brak and later at the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel School. His graduation film Driver, won the best film award of the school in 2011.

His full-length documentary Ponevezh Time, was nominated for the Best Documentary Award for 2013 of the Israeli Film Academy, and won the Best Debut Film Award of the Israeli Documentary Filmmakers Forum 2013.

His short film The Cantor and the Sea won the Best Director Award at the Jerusalem Film Festival 2015 and was nominated for Israeli Film Academy short award 2015.

As a screenwriter he created the highly acclaimed 12 episode drama series Shtisel which won 11 Israeli Television Academy awards 2013, including best series and best screenplay.

His first feature film Razumni, which was developed in the Sam Spiegel International Film Lab, will be shot in March 2016 as an Israeli-French coproduction.
IN SEARCH OF A PASSIVE ISRAELI HERO
The films of Elad Keidan, including *Anthem* (36’) and fragments from *Afterthought*.

Guest: Elad Keidan
Class of 2007

**ELAD KEIDAN**
Born in Haifa, Elad Keidan graduated the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film school in 2007.

His graduation film *Anthem* (2008, 36’) was chosen by an international jury as the Best Film of the school of all times. *Anthem* won the first prize in the Cinéfondation competition at Cannes, a unique accomplishment for an Israeli short, and dozens of international awards.

His first full-length feature *Afterthought* was Keidan’s debut entry to Cannes out of competition 2015. Afterthought won the best film award at Haifa 2015 Festival and the best screenplay award at the Israeli Academy Awards. *Afterthought* was released in December 2015 to rave reviews.

His films touch upon movement, choice, meaning, human bondage and the ironies of life.

Keidan teaches scriptwriting at the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School.

*Anthem* (2008)
Cinéfondation, Cannes – First Prize
The Best school film of all times
Identity – The “Mizrahi” (Of Middle-Eastern Extraction) Is The Arabic Jew

David Ofek’s films and television works including *Home*, *Bat Yam – New York* and *Minimum Wage*.

Guest: David Ofek

Class of 1922

David Ofek

Born in Ramat Gan, David Ofek graduated the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School in 1992. Ofek’s graduation documentary “High-Tech Dreams” won 1993 Jerusalem Film Festival best short award. His extra graduation short *Home* (written by Yossi Madmoni) won the first prize award at 1994 Jerusalem film festival and dozens of international awards. The film has been chosen by an international jury to be one of 20 best school films of all times.

David Ofek is one of Israel’s leading and prolific documentary and television series makers. His full-fledged body of award winning works (with Yossi Madmoni and individually) include: *Bat Yam - New York* (Israeli Academy Best TV Drama Series Award), *No. 17* (Israeli Academy Award for Best Documentary, Best Film - DocAviv Festival); the TV mini-series *Melanoma My Love* (Israeli Academy Award for Best Drama), *The Ulpan* (The Israeli Documentary Forum Award, Best Directing Award), *Minimum Wage* (Israeli Academy Award for Best Drama Series, Best Directing Award), and many more.

This corpus of work, changed the stereotype of the “Mizrahi” in Israeli Television.
REVENGE OF THE LOSERS


Guest: Talya Lavie

Class of 2005

TALYA LAVIE

Born in Petah Tikva, Talya Lavie studied one year animation at the Bezalel Art Academy and graduated Summa Cum Laude the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School.

Her short film *Sliding Flora* was screened at MoMA and in over 55 film festivals worldwide, among them the Berlin film festival and the Louvre. Her graduation film, *The Substitute*, received dozens of international awards, notably the Audience Award at the Berlin festival. The film has been chosen by an international jury to be one of 20 best school films of all times.

Her first feature *Zero Motivation*, premiered at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival’s main competition, and won Best Film Award and the femme-centric Nora Ephron Prize. *Zero Motivation* was released in Israel on June 2014 and broke the box-office record of 20 years. It won 6 Israeli Academy Awards including best director and best screenplay and was chosen as 2014 the Best Israeli Film by the Israeli Film Critics.

Talya worked on her second feature *The Current Love of My Life* at the Sam Spiegel International Film Lab. The film is an adaptation to the novel *My First Romance* by Sholem Aleichem.

Talya Lavie teaches scriptwriting and directing at the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel School.
(Top) Talya Lavie winning the Tribeca Award for *Zero Motivation*
Elad Keidan (Center) with *Afterthought*’s Actors – Cannes, 2015
Before I left England to come here, the director of the NFTS, Nik Powell, asked me to give you his congratulations, and his apologies. Congratulations you can understand, but why should he apologize? It’s because the NFTS website keeps quoting the Hollywood Reporter: NFTS is the number one international film school - when everyone knows Renen has been claiming this for your school for at least the last 20 years!

It reminds me of a story my primary school teacher told me about the three butchers in our small town – all in the same street and all claiming to be the best. One of them stuck a sign in the window: “best butchers in town!” A few days later, another put up: “best butchers in Scotland!” After another few days, the third joined in with a sign: “best butchers on the street!” Our teacher asked us to say which sign was the best... I got the right answer when I said there was only one which all the local customers could easily check.

So I can confidently state that the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel School is the best film school at Number 4 Yad Harutzim Street – and leave it at that...

If I stay away from this debate (about the best film school), I can still pay for my supper by saying something about the wonderful films I saw in preparation for my visit. I must be discreet because I also agreed to take Nik Powell’s place on an international jury to rank the best ten films out of the 32 which were sent to me. The jury’s decisions are not to be revealed until next autumn, so I had better not name names.

This is a problem, because some of the films in this collection just blew me away with their audacity, their fearlessness and their sheer skill. I would love to be able to name them tonight. But I promised Renen to behave myself and so I will stick to some general remarks.

Everyone knows of the trials and tribulations of your country. So the temptation students here must face in their films is to take sides. That would be only too easy. This doesn’t mean that they duck the issues. Instead they find ways to deal with the effect of your conflicts on life at the personal and family level. They investigate problems of age, of loneliness, of loss, sexual distress, homelessness, frustration – but without hate, without blame. The characters in your films can feel alienated and pessimistic – frightened even – but the films are not without hope. The best of them promote dialogue. They engage us in a complex consideration of our human condition – willing us to look more closely at our possibilities for peace and freedom – and happiness. That’s not a bad agenda.
Shorter films can use concealed short hand if they wish to reach beyond their restricted running time. One film did this by the simple device of having the protagonist facing the “wrong” way at a crucial moment – without changing the dialogue.

Disputes between the generations are routinely rich pickings for student films but one of my favourites digs deeper by locating the story at a moment of great ritual importance for the family involved – without ducking or diving. It takes an honest unblinking look at failure and deception, and the tragedy they can cause.

Others make their impact by ambiguity – leaving things unsaid and unshown – risky but effective nonetheless.

Metaphor also plays its part. There’s more than one film in this collection which works on the imagination without apology for its strangeness - leaving us to enjoy it just as it is.

The faces in these films are wonderful and in some cases fingers and hands are just as expressive–following the maxim of less gives more. This is not my first time in Jerusalem. On my first visit Renen took his visitors on a tour of the Old City to the top of some building where we could have the best view. We passed through a space where a group of men were working on a collection of old rugs. On the way down we saw that they were in fact filling in faded sections of the rugs with coloured felt-tip pens, hoping no doubt to get a better price for them on the street below.

I have to insist that nothing Renen has said since that time, about this school has even a suggestion of the felt-tip pen about it. Not even a whiff.

All he does is point to the truth of your films and their excellent craft. It was a pleasure seeing them, and it’s been a pleasure and an honour talking to you tonight.

Continue to be a beacon for your country’s future – Good luck for the next 25!

COLIN YOUNG
Founding Director, NFTS
President Emeritus, CILECT

The School's 20th Anniversary DVD
In mid 2016, the school will release
The Best 25 Films Collection
THE JERUSALEM SAM SPIEGEL FILM SCHOOL
AT THE VANGUARD OF ISRAELI CINEMA

THE BIRTH OF A SCHOOL

Against the compelling background drama of a 1988 student revolt, the Jerusalem Film School was born. The students of the Film department of the Beit Zvi School of Theatre & Film, at that point, the only Film school in Israel, had taken to rioting in protest against the school’s alleged preference for the theatre department. Their demand for autonomy spurred the Education and Culture Minister to establish a public inquiry that subsequently supported the students’ position and recommended the creation of the first independent school for film and television in Israel.

In 1989, the Jerusalem Foundation and the Ministry of Education and Culture established the Jerusalem Film and Television School as Israel’s national film school. In 1996, after receiving a contribution from his estate, the school was renamed The Sam Spiegel Film & Television School, Jerusalem in honour of the legendary, Academy Award-winning producer Sam Spiegel.

FORGING NEW STANDARDS

From its inception in November 1989, during a time of deep local film industry crisis that drove away audiences, with director-producer Renen Schorr at the helm, The Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School asked new questions that Israeli students had never heard before: Is the film you wish to make relevant? Is it original? Has its story been told? Are you the only one who can tell the story? Do you have an obligation to tell it? Is it relevant to your own inner world and to your personal taste? Is it relevant to your audience? To which audience? With what artistic means will you reach this audience? Will its meaning traverse countries and cultures?

Thankfully, this demand for relevance resulted in a genuine energy and passion that seized the first student body. Their presentation of graduate films in 1992 marked a turning point in Israeli cinema. Their films dealt boldly, through heroes and emotions, with topics of political, cultural and personal conflicts and identity, opening a dialogue with Israeli and international audiences.

The school became a trailblazer in Israeli film education, setting new standards for Israeli film schools. Among the efforts spearheaded by the school to revolutionize the nation’s film education: viewing film students as future cultural leaders; fostering the unique voice of each student in a “personal story-telling”

Sam Spiegel (1901-1985)

“Hollywood without Sam Spiegel is like Tahiti without Gauguin” (Billy Wilder)
school milieu; changing the priority of investment in Israel’s film students; transforming the hero to the focal point in the story and the narrative; fighting for the acknowledgment of short films as a genre; providing state-of-the art equipment; proclaiming students as citizens of the world by funding their participation in numerous international film festivals and workshops; gaining mass exposure by marketing school films to local and international festivals; and promoting the broadcast of student films on Israeli and international television networks.

In the last two decades, the school won 16 Best Film School Program awards in student film festivals; received 400 awards, including at Cannes, Berlin and Venice; was honoured with 181 international festival retrospectives in 55 countries, including at Berlin, Rotterdam, Clermont-Ferrand, Sarajevo, Havana, Jerusalem (3 times), Haifa and the New York Museum of Modern Art’s first ever tribute to a film school.

In 2005, at 15th anniversary, the Jerusalem Municipality marked the occasion by naming the street where the school is located “The Sam Spiegel Alley”
THE SCHOOL - 2016

Currently 160 handpicked students study in the school’s unique “triangle” structure of curriculum.

THE FULL COURSE

The flagship program of the school, the director’s course, is a five year comprehensive program which enables students to master all aspects of filmmaking. The curriculum includes directing, screenwriting, cinematography, editing and production.

THE SCREENWRITING COURSE

In 1999, a special two-year intensive screenwriting course was established. It’s aim was to train and nurture screenwriters for the film and television industry, working to create a model for cooperation between screenwriters and directors. The student are expected to complete a script for a full length feature and a television series in order to acquire their diploma.

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PRODUCERS COURSE

In 2004, a singular three-and-a-half year course was inaugurated for entrepreneur producers. The first of its kind in Israel, the program was created to cultivate producers who would initiate and lead projects in various media and change the infrastructure of the Israeli cinema. The diploma work of the student is to initiate and write a project, to cast a screenwriter and a director and lead a production including its marketing and distribution.

SILVER JUBILEE

Celebrating its Silver Jubilee, the school decided to intensify its dialogue with its alumni of all times by assisting with professional placements, “Mornings After” conferences, a “Shadowing” internship program, feature length tribute projects and many more. In 2015 the school launched The Sam Spiegel Alumni Fund for First Features. The school has committed $100,000 annually, in partnership with ARP Sélection, France, for the coming five years, awarding the prize to a first feature film by a graduate. The first winning project is Nimrod Eldar’s The Day After I’m Gone was granted at the school’s Silver Jubilee gala in March 2015, attended by six hundreds guests, including the school’s founders, donors, teachers, graduates, students, staff and friends.

The school special commitment to its graduates, and its uniqueness in willing to go an extra mile for them and create platforms for them to further develop their careers was discussed in July 2015 in the school’s GEECT’s (European Film Schools) conference: “School’s Best Kept Secrets; School-Alumni Relations Going the Extra Mile”.

In 2011 the school launched the Sam Spiegel International Film Lab for full length features. 23 lab graduates completed their films, including Hungarian László Nemes, winning the grand prix award in Cannes 2015.
Content Editors
Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School - Renen Schorr
University of Cambridge - Dr. Yaron Peleg, Dr. Tali Artman-Partock

Production
Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School - Michal Sinai

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