

April 17, 19 & 22nd, 2018

RWU Film & Speaker Series on the Jewish Experience

ARTS AND CULTURE: STORYTELLING THROUGH TIME

Three events in April that focus on the Jewish experience through short films, documentary, media and guest speakers. Presented in partnership with *Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival*, the *Edwin S. Soforenko Foundation*, the *RWU Department of Communication, Graphic Design and Web Development*, Dean Jeffrey L. Meriwether, *RWU School of Humanities, Arts and Education*, the *RWU Film Production Collaborative*, *RWU Hillel*, and the *Spiritual Life Office*.



These events are free and open to the general public.

TUESDAY, APRIL 17TH

5:00 p.m.

Location: CAS 157 at Roger Williams University

STORIES FROM THE HEART: IMMUTABLE MEMORIES

Introduced by Adjunct Professor **George T. Marshall**, the **Rev. Nancy Hamlin Soukup**, University Multifaith Chaplain, RWU.

HOLIDAY HOSTAGE

Directed by: D.W. Moffett | 16 min. USA, 2017

You think your family is messed up? A comedic short film about a dysfunctional Jewish family held hostage on Thanksgiving. #FML

It's Thanksgiving night and siblings Abby and David just want to quickly eat their turkey and ditch their overbearing "still has their umbilical cords" Jewish mother. Before they can make their getaway, Gary, a deranged ex-convict, breaks in and takes the family hostage.

Tensions are high, family secrets are revealed, and Gary's getting so annoyed he's starting to regret this. At least Grandma is here to calm the family down. Just kidding, she's crazy. Can this dysfunctional family make peace with one another before they're offed? Oy vey!

OMA

Directed by: Bill Kirstein | 16 min. Netherlands, USA, 2017

On the eve of her 100th birthday, Carmen's grandchildren discover a treasure trove of 8mm films from her life during and after WWII. An exploration of memory, secrets and living to be 100, 'Oma' asks us to reflect on our own lives and how we live today.

HOME

Directed by: Robert Schulzmann | 35 min. Germany, 2017

A Russian-Jewish immigrant is searching for his Germaneness and wonders about why his family is celebrating Christmas with a stolen Christmas tree. An autobiographical soul-searching through suburban Germany.

CALL ME ALVY

Directed by: Alexei Slater | 11 min. United Kingdom, 2017

When Bar Mitzvah boy Brian Silver becomes obsessed with Woody Allen, his mother Judith goes to great lengths to make sure the big day goes smoothly.

THE RABBI

Directed by: Uriya Hertz | 20 min. Israel, 2017

Michael is a charismatic and much-admired Rabbi at a Jerusalem Yeshiva. When his favorite student, Gadi, shares with him his innermost secrets, Michael's familiar, secure world comes into question.

Israel has a tradition of producing excellent LGBT+ cinema in the last 15 years, including Eytan Fox's 2006 drama [The Bubble](#) and 2009's Iris Prize winning short film *Steam*, directed by Eldar Rappaport. But while many aspects of life in Israel have been explored, including its politics, the country's fraught relationship with its neighbors and military conscription, it isn't often we see Judaism put front and centre in a gay drama.

The title character of *The Rabbi* is Michael, played by Gur Yaari, a married man teaching at a Jerusalem yeshiva, or religious college. When a favorite student admits to being confused about his sexuality, Michael finds that he must confront his own sublimated desires. This subtle, understated drama is more about those things that go unsaid than the soap opera pyrotechnics of full-blown arguments, and a frosty dinner scene, where Michael's student joins the Rabbi's family for supper, positively fizzes with pent-up energy and emotion.

THURSDAY APRIL 19TH

5:00 p.m.

Location: Global Heritage Hall 01 at Roger Williams University

MEMORIES NEVER DIE

Introduced by the **Rev. Nancy Hamlin Soukup**, University Multifaith Chaplain, RWU.

SEARCHING FOR SUGIHARA

Directed by: Adam Gross | 21 min. USA / Japan, 2017

Searching for Sugihara is a personal and historical journey about the Japanese diplomat Sugihara Chiune, who saved the lives of over 6,000 Jews who were fleeing WWII Europe.

TWICE ORPHANED: HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS' LAST BATTLE

Directed by: Talila Frank | 57 min. Israel, 2016

217 aged Holocaust orphans sue the State of Israel, which they founded. Confronting their "official guardian" revives their pain of orphan hood. During their struggle, they find consolation in their closeness.

Avraham, Ziggy, Schreiber and Robinson form the uncrowned governing council of the "Teheran Children." The four represent 217 Holocaust orphans who are now bringing legal action against the State of Israel for monies received from Germany for their rehabilitation.

In their old age, they have set out to battle the State of Israel, the state of which they dreamed and established through their own hard work. The confrontation with the State, their "official guardian," once again floods them with the pain of orphan hood. The dozen stormy years of struggle have transformed them into a group with love, a shared fate, and consolation.

LIFE WILL SMILE

Directed by: Drey Kleanthous | 40 min. Greece, Israel, United Kingdom, 2017

Narrated by Haim Konstantini this is not only his story of the dramatic events during WWII, but also the story of every single one of the 275 Jews that evaded the Nazi's on the island of Zakynthos.

FRIDAY APRIL 20th

4:00 p.m.

Location: CAS157 at Roger Williams University

FIRST ANNUAL YOM HASHOAH SPEAKER SERIES

Sami Steigmann has been many things. He has been a victim of the Holocaust. When he was liberated, he became a survivor. Now, he is a motivational speaker.

ABOUT OUR GUEST SPEAKER:

Sami Steigmann's life story is remarkable. He was born on December 21, 1939 in Czernovitz, Bukovina, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire belonging to Romania. Later, it became part of former Soviet Union and today it is in Ukraine. From 1941 through 1944, he was with his parents in the Ukraine at Mogilev-Podolsky, a labor camp in an area called Transnistria. The camp was liberated by the Red Army and his family was deported by the Romanians, not by the Germans. He grew up in Transylvania, in a small town called Reghin. He did not know the language. In 1961, the whole family (his sister was born in 1946) emigrated to Israel. He served in the Israeli Air Force, not as a pilot. In 1968, without knowing the language and no money, alone, Sami came to the United States. He lived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where he married, divorced and eventually, in 1983 returned to Israel. However, in 1988, he returned to the United States, choosing New York City as his final home.

SUNDAY, APRIL 22nd

2:00 p.m.

Location: Global Heritage Hall 01 at Roger Williams University

THE STORIES WE TELL

Documentary Screening and Director's Discussion

Hosted by **Rev. Nancy Soukup**, Multifaith Chaplain

TRIPTYCH

Directed by: Katia Lom | 8 min. United Kingdom, 2018

'Triptych' is a short film reflecting on the nature of time and memory as a daughter empties her late father's home. Based on the true story of the director's mother escaping Czechoslovakia in 1951 at the age of four with her parents through the woods at night, the narrative blurs the line between fiction and documentary. The film deploys a non-linear structure to express the consequences of war on civilians throughout their lives through the prism of the Stalinist show trials erupting in Prague as a direct result of the events of WWII. By using real vintage artifacts from Czechoslovakia and photographs from a variety of archives, 'Triptych' highlights the significance that objects hold in bearing witness to the past and connecting future generations to that history. With millions of people displaced as a direct consequence of armed and political conflict at this present day, the film attempts to bring to light both a personal and global experience.

Starring Lisa Diveney and Simon Stephens, Triptych was captured on 16mm for the live action sequences with all of its animation scenes created in-camera with a combination of replacement, stop motion, hand-drawn and pixilation animation.

CHASING PORTRAITS

Directed by: Elizabeth Rynecki | 77 min. Canada, Israel, Poland, USA, 2018
One man's art. One woman's unexpected path to healing.

Moshe Rynecki's body of work reached close to eight hundred paintings and sculptures before his life came to a tragic end. Decades later, his great-granddaughter Elizabeth sought to rediscover his legacy, setting out on a journey to find what had been lost but never forgotten...

Spanning three decades of Elizabeth's life and three generations of her family, this compelling documentary is a deeply moving narrative of the richness of one man's art, the devastation of war, and one woman's unexpected path to healing.

4:15 p.m.

Location: Global Heritage Hall 01 at Roger Williams University

TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES

Introduced by the **Rev. Nancy Hamlin Soukup**, University Multifaith Chaplain with Guest Speaker....

ONE FOR THE ROAD

Directed by: Fernanda Faya | 12 min. Brazil, USA, 2016

As she moves from Brazil to NY, the filmmaker looks back at her grandma's migration as a way to find traces of her own identity.

"SECRET CINEMA" Special Preview Screening

We cannot tell you the film's name -- it's a secret. But we can tell you that you will discover a major new film before it premieres at RIFF in August. We can tell you that it is a documentary and that an award-winning screenwriter/director, **Chris Sparling** will be on hand to lead a discussion about the film.

ABOUT OUR GUEST SPEAKER:

Chris Sparling wrote the 2010 film BURIED starring Ryan Reynolds, for which he won "Best Original Screenplay" from the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures. His Black List script, ATM, was released by IFC Films in 2012, and his co-written script, THE WARNING, was released by Moreno Films in 2018. His feature directing debut, the supernatural thriller THE ATTICUS INSTITUTE, was released in early 2015 by Universal Pictures. THE SEA OF TREES, which he wrote and produced -- starring Matthew McConaughey, Naomi Watts, and directed by Gus Van Sant -- was nominated for the Palm d'Or at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival and contributed to his selection to Variety's annual list of "10 Screenwriters to Watch." After adapting the novel DOWN A DARK HALL for Temple Hill and Lionsgate Films, he is now adapting LAND OF THE LIVING for Broad Green Pictures. His latest film MERCY, which he wrote and directed for Netflix, was released in 2016, and he will write and direct THE ORCHARD for Miramax in 2018

A Reception Sponsored by RWU Spiritual Life Office will take place during the intermission.

ABOUT ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY:

Roger Williams University located in Bristol, R.I. is a leading independent, coeducational university with programs in the liberal arts and the professions, where students become community- and globally-minded citizens. With 42 academic majors, an array of co-curricular activities and study abroad opportunities on six continents, RWU is an open community dedicated to the success of students, commitment to a set of core values and providing a

world-class education above all else. In the last decade, the University has achieved unprecedented successes including recognition as one of the best colleges in the nation by *Forbes*, a College of Distinction by Student Horizons, Inc. and as both a best college in the Northeast and one of the nation's greenest universities by *The Princeton Review*. For more information, go to: www.rwu.edu.

ABOUT FLICKERS' RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL:

The **Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival** (RIIFF) has secured its place in the global community as the portal for the best in international independent cinema, earning the respect of domestic and foreign filmmakers, filmgoers and trend watchers. Ranked as one of the top 10 Festivals in the United States, RIIFF is a qualifying festival for the Live Action, Documentary and Animation Short Academy Awards through its affiliation with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, the Canadian Screen Awards and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA). There are only 10 film festivals worldwide that share this distinction and RIIFF is the only festival in New England. The Festival takes place every August. For more information, go to: www.rifilmfest.org