



**BOSTON
JEWISH
FILM FESTIVAL**

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BOSTON JEWISH FILM ANNOUNCES FILM LINEUP FOR 2019 FESTIVAL

31st Anniversary Festival Runs Throughout Greater Boston November 6-17

WEST NEWTON, MA (October 15, 2019) – [Boston Jewish Film](#) is excited to announce the official selections for its annual Boston Jewish Film Festival, showcasing a varied selection of films that explore personal identity, history, the environment, empowerment of women, legal advocacy, and more.

The 31st annual festival will feature 48 films at 12 venues throughout Greater Boston from November 6-17, 2019. With nearly 60 screenings and events, the Boston Jewish Film Festival (BJFF) is a destination to enjoy thought-provoking films and new media, and to join lively conversations with filmmakers.

The 2019 festival begins with an Opening Night screening of [Safe Spaces](#), starring Justin Long (*Dodgeball*), Fran Drescher (*The Nanny*), Richard Schiff (*The West Wing*) and Kate Berlant (*Sorry to Bother You*). Other highlights include the MidFest screening of [From Slavery to Freedom](#), as well as two short film series: the 9th Annual [FRESHFLIX Short Film Competition](#) and the [Short Film Program: Beyond Expectations](#).

New this year, the Festival will feature a series of films with an “eye on the environment,” including a spotlight screening of [Picture of His Life](#) at a new venue for the Festival, the New England Aquarium’s Simon IMAX Theatre. In its second year, the [TLV TV Binge](#) will screen episodes of popular Israeli TV shows.

“Our 31st annual Boston Jewish Film Festival brings universal and timeless themes to the big screen, with an eye on what is affecting our world and our communities today. From exploring personal identities and the way they are shaped by — and sometimes despite — family and tradition, to focusing on the environment, this year’s festival gives space for people to deepen the conversations they may already be having around current issues and ideas,” said Ariana Cohen-Halberstam, Artistic Director for Boston Jewish Film. “Our 2019 Festival is curated to bring meaningful film programs that will engage, excite, entertain, and inspire filmgoers of all ages and backgrounds.”

Here are the details on some of the featured screenings and events for the 2019 festival:

The Festival opens on Wednesday, November 6 with the Boston Premiere of *Safe Spaces* at the Coolidge Corner Theatre at 7 pm. In this coming of age comedy, Josh (Justin Long, *Dodgeball*) has a lot going on. His job as an adjunct writing professor is being threatened after a student accused him of being inappropriate in class. And his beloved grandmother (Lynn Cohen) is in the hospital, meaning his divorced parents (Fran

Drescher, *The Nanny*, and Richard Schiff, *The West Wing*) and siblings (including Kate Berlant, *Sorry to Bother You*) need to all come together. This candid and often-humorous take on how we deal with modern crises, both unexpected and self-inflicted, is a testament to the importance of family — no matter how dysfunctional. **The screening will be followed by a conversation with Actor Justin Long and Director Daniel Schechter.**

On Wednesday, November 13, at 6:30 pm at the Coolidge Corner Theatre, the MidFest Event features the New England Premiere of *From Slavery to Freedom*. This documentary (in Russian with subtitles) showcases the remarkable life of famous human rights activist, Natan Sharansky. In 1977, Sharansky was charged with spying for America, treason, and anti-Soviet agitation and was sentenced to 13 years of forced labor. No single person symbolizes the era more than he, a “Refusenik” who defied the entire Soviet system in his fight for freedom and national identification. **The screening is followed by a conversation with Sharansky’s daughter, writer Rachel Sharansky Danziger, moderated by writer William Novak, who worked with Natan Sharansky on his memoir.**

Developed for a young professional audience, the Festival’s 9th Annual **FRESHFLIX Short Film Competition** highlights the next generation of filmmakers on Thursday, November 7 at 7 pm at the Somerville Arts at the Armory. Filmgoers will have the opportunity to vote on their favorite film of the eight short films shown. The winner will receive a cash prize to go towards their next project.

The **Short Film Program: Beyond Expectations** features a series of international short films about the surprises and triumphs that can happen at any point in life’s journey. View these shorts on Sunday, November 10 at 1:00 pm at the Emerson Paramount Bright Family Screening Room.

On Saturday, November 16 at 7:30 pm at New England Aquarium’s Simon IMAX Theatre, the Festival will screen *Picture of His Life* in a special spotlight event. In an intimate story of dedication, sacrifice, and personal redemption, the film documents the ultimate challenge of 65-year-old Amos Nachoum, one of the greatest underwater photographers of all time: photographing a polar bear, up close, without any protection. The screening will be followed by a conversation with Director Dani Menkin.

The Festival’s Closing Night will feature the New England Premiere of *The Rabbi Goes West* on Sunday, November 17 at 7 pm at the Somerville Theatre. When Rabbi Chaim Bruk moved from Brooklyn to Bozeman, Montana, he left a large Chabad Hasidic community. In all of Montana there are just 2,000 Jewish families — and Rabbi Chaim is determined to put a mezuzah on each of their doorposts. While Rabbi Chaim builds his community, becoming beloved by his congregants, some of the state’s Jews believe he is a threat to the other denominations of Judaism. At the same time, threats of anti-Semitism, including from neo-Nazis, loom. The screening will be followed by a conversation with Rabbi Bruk and Directors Amy Geller and Gerald Peary.

The [Boston Jewish Film Festival](http://www.bostonjewishfilmfestival.org) will take place at 12 locations: The Capitol Theatre in Arlington, Brattle Theatre, Coolidge Corner Theatre, Emerson Paramount Bright Family Screening Room, JCC Riemer-Goldstein Theater, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, NewBridge on the Charles, New England Aquarium, Foxboro Patriot Place, Somerville Arts at the Armory, Somerville Theatre, and West Newton Cinema.

Tickets for individual screenings can be purchased online at www.bostonjewishfilm.org, by phone at 888-615-3332 or in person at select box offices. Group sales and Festival passes are available online or by phone from the Boston Jewish Film office. For the full film schedule or for additional information, visit www.bostonjewishfilm.org.

About Boston Jewish Film

Boston Jewish Film offers the finest in film programming, education, and conversation to audiences across the Greater Boston community. Created in 1989 as the Boston Jewish Film Festival, it is now the largest film-based organization in New England, welcoming more than 15,000 attendees annually. From year-round premieres to its marquee Fall Festival – one of the oldest and most prestigious Jewish film festivals in the world – the not-for-profit arts organization hosts screenings, multimedia presentations, live podcasts, music and dance performances, discussions with filmmakers, and ReelAbilities Boston — the city’s disability film festival. Boston Jewish Film invites the community to Go Beyond the Screen and celebrate the global Jewish experience.