

bostonjfilm.org





**bostonjfilm.org** for Festival program, additional films, guests, and event information.

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## TO THE 32ND ANNUAL BOSTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL!

We are so proud to share the exciting selection of films in our first virtual Festival! While we never imagined that we wouldn't be greeting you in person at theaters, we are looking forward to being with you virtually.

We are sure this brochure will pique your interest about the films and we encourage you to look online at bostonjfilm.org for a full schedule of programs, conversations and additional film information.

This year, you can view films on demand and join us for scheduled, live-streamed interactive programs and Q&As. These films will transport you from your home to places including Israel, Morocco, Italy, Norway, and destinations closer to home. We hope these films will help you explore and deepen your connections to your identity, history, art, and Jewish culture.

We're glad to have you in the Boston Jewish Film Festival audience. Your attendance and support sustains us and ensures that we will be together in person for future Festivals and programs as soon as we can.

Thank you for joining us this year as we go beyond the screen!

Sincerely,

Susan Adler, Executive Director Ariana Cohen-Halberstam, Artistic Director





## BEHIND THE SCENES OF *THE MARVELOUS MRS. MAISEL* WITH SHOW WRITER NOAH GARDENSWARTZ

Wednesday, November 11, 7:30 PM Comedian and writer Noah Gardenswartz has infused Amazon's Emmy and Golden Globe-winning show *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* with both humor and yiddishkeit. Join us for an exclusive zoom conversation with Gardenswartz where he will talk about writing for the beloved show and share some of his favorite Jewish moments.





### WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

### SHORT FILM PROGRAM

A collection of international short films exploring next steps

### A FATHER'S KADDISH

## **Director Jennifer Kaplan**Documentary, 2020, USA, 30 min, English **US Premiere**

A week after his son's death, Steve Branfman, a potter and teacher, went to his studio and made a Japanese-style tea bowl. He did the same each day for a year, performing his own personal Kaddish. A potent and moving film about the universality of loss, mourning, and rebuilding a life, told through the unique experience of art.

### **COMMANDMENT 613**

## **Director Miriam Lewin**Documentary, 2020, USA, 23 min, English **Massachusetts Premiere**

Rabbi Kevin Hale has dedicated his life to the 613<sup>th</sup> Commandment, the commandment to write a Torah scroll. As a *sofer*, a scribe, Rabbi Hale brings new life to scrolls saved from Czechoslovakia during the Holocaust, many now in Massachusetts. With wisdom and deep reflection on his own path to faith and practice, Rabbi Hale shares the beauty of this ancient sacred craft.

### **FATA MORGANA**

### Directors Daniella Bokor and Leanna Berkovitch

Documentary, 2019, USA, 11 min English and Hebrew with subtitles **Massachusetts Premiere** 

For Cristina, Anna, and Rachel the stability of motherhood and a homelife are in constant conflict with their yearning to wander. Beautiful animation and personal stories bring the lives and desires of these three wandering women into focus.

#### **PUSHKIN'S PANTS**

## **Director Lev Brodinsky**Narrative, 2019, Israel, 10 min Amharic and Russian with subtitles **Massachusetts Premiere**

In a temporary caravan site for recent immigrants, Abraham, a 9-year-old immigrant from Ethiopia, bonds with Marina, his disenchanted neighbor who emigrated from Russia.

### TREE #3

## Director Omer Ben-Shachar Narrative, 2019, USA, 20 min English and Hebrew with subtitles Massachusetts Premiere

Itai is determined to be cast as the lead in his school play. When he gets the lowly role of Tree #3, he is sure it is because of his Israeli accent. So when his drama teacher allows him to direct the other "trees," he is determined to make the trees into roles his drama teacher will never forget.



### ALSO DON'T MISS...

MISS YOU (page 10) Screening with Love & Stuff



## 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FRESHFLIX SHORT FILM COMPETITION

This celebration of new voices showcases eight short films made by emerging filmmakers from Germany, Israel, Norway, and the US. These films represent the wide range and talent of filmmakers working on Jewish cinema today.

These films were selected by a prestigious jury: Caleb Alemany, Bradley Babendir, Goldie Eder, Naomi Fireman, Sara Gardner, Olivia Grant, Samarjeet Wable, and Lani Weil.

### **BROKEN BIRD**

**Director Rachel Harrison Gordon** Narrative, 2020, USA, 10 min

#### **ESTHER**

**Director Rebecca Halfon** Narrative, 2019, USA, 12 min

### **GREY ZONE**

**Director Gal Sagy** Narrative, 2019, Israel, 10 min

### **JEGNA**

**Director Gal Sagy** Narrative, 2019, Israel, 5 min

### **MASEL TOV COCKTAIL**

**Directors Arkadij Khaet and Mickey Paatzsch**Narrative. 2020. German. 30 min

### **SAFIYYAH**

**Director Mattis Ohana Goksøyr** Narrative, 2019, Norway, 9 min

### THE SHABBOS GOY

**Director Talia Osteen** Narrative, 2019, USA, 7 min

### **TAMOU**

**Directors Tzor Edery and Tom Prezman** Narrative, 2020, Israel, 10 min

**November 5**<sup>th</sup> Join us for a conversation with the filmmakers! Don't forget to vote for the FreshFlix Audience Award—the winning filmmakers take home the audience award prize. For more information about the films and how to vote, visit **bostonjfilm.org**.



More films FreshFlix audiences might enjoy:

SHIVA BABY
TAHARA
HONEYMOOD (page 7)
THE END OF LOVE (page 7)

MINYAN (page 10)
SUBLET (page 12)
THEY AIN'T READY FOR ME (page 13)
UNCHAINED (page 14)



### **SHIVA BABY**

## **Director Emma Seligman**Narrative, 2020, USA, 77 min, English **Massachusetts Premiere**

When Danielle joins her family at a shiva, the last person she expects to run into is Max, the 'sugar daddy' she said goodbye to just a few hours earlier. With this unexpected clash of her worlds, Danielle is forced into juggling multiple roles: the good Jewish daughter, entertaining small talk with estranged relatives, playing it cool with her ex-girlfriend Maya, and keeping her relationship with Max a secret. A provocative and comedic examination of relationships in the 'hookup' culture of the digital age.

### **TAHARA**

### **Director Olivia Peace** Narrative, 2020, USA, 76 min, English **Massachusetts Premiere**

Carrie Lowenstein and Hannah Rosen have been best friends since childhood. When their former Hebrew school classmate dies by suicide, they attend the funeral and their synagogue's "teen talk-back" session, designed to help them process their grief. But the girls are distracted by complicated teenage feelings around lust, social status, and wavering faith. An innocent kiss turns Carrie's world inside out, leaving both friends as confused, misguided, and stuck in their own heads as ever.





### **ASIA**

## Director Ruthy Pribar Narrative, 2020, Israel, 85 min Hebrew and Russian with subtitles East Coast Premiere

35-year old Asia is more like a sister than a mother to her teenage daughter, Vika (Shira Haas, *Unorthodox*). She is non-judgmental and free-spirited, works hard and plays hard. As Vika starts to demand more privacy and independence, Asia struggles to balance setting boundaries with her parenting style. When Vika's health begins to rapidly deteriorate, their household routine is shaken, and Asia must become the physical and emotional caregiver her daughter so desperately needs.

Winner: The Nora Ephron Award, Best Cinematography, and Best Actress, Tribeca Film Festival, 2020 Nominated: Best Picture, Israeli Academy of Film and Television Ophir Awards, 2020

### THE CROSSING

# **Director Johanne Helgeland**Narrative, 2019, Norway, 90 min Norwegian with subtitles **New England Premiere**

Gerda is a 10-year old girl with a wooden sword, an apron cape, and a very big imagination. When her parents, who are part of the Norwegian resistance to the Nazis, are arrested, Gerda must transition her brave play-acting to reality. She and her brother, Otto, discover two Jewish children in their basement and decide to bring their new friends to safety in Sweden. The four children set out together across the Norwegian wilderness, facing danger, and learning true courage. An incredible story for the whole family about friendship, bravery, and righteous acts.

BJFF Jr! Family friendly films are recommended for ages 11+





### THE END OF LOVE

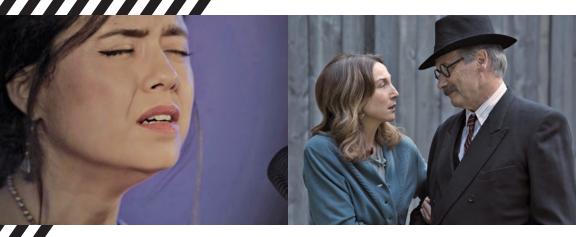
# **Director Keren Ben Rafael**Narrative, 2019, France, 90 min French and Hebrew with subtitles **New England Premiere**

Yuval and Julie (Judith Chemla, My Polish Honeymoon) are in love and living in Paris with their new baby. When Yuval has to return to Israel to renew his visa, the couple video chats daily, sharing their routines on camera. But as his visa process drags on, their conversations become terse and less frequent, the distance beginning to wear on their relationship. At a time of video-communication and long-distance connection, The End of Love is a reminder of the limits of technology in meaningful relationships.

### **HONEYMOOD**

# **Director Talya Lavie**Narrative, 2020, Israel, 90 min Hebrew with subtitles **Massachusetts Premiere**

A new comedy from the director of Zero Motivation (BJFF 2014). Upon arriving at their honeymoon suite, bride Eleanor (Avigail Harari, The Other Story) discovers that her new husband's exgirlfriend gave him a ring as a wedding gift—and she is livid. Eleanor insists that before they can enjoy the glow of their wedding night, they must find the ex and return the ring. A simple mission turns into an all-night odyssey, taking them across Jerusalem, forcing them to confront past lovers, repressed doubts, and the lives they are leaving behind,



## IN YOUR EYES, I SEE MY COUNTRY

#### **Director Kamal Hachkar**

Documentary, 2019, France/Morocco, 75 min

Hebrew, Amazigh, and Darija with subtitles

### **Massachusetts Premiere**

Neta Elkayam and Amit Haï Cohen create music that evokes both their Israeli identities and their Judeo-Moroccan heritage. Through a musical tour of Morocco, the couple attempts to bridge the dissonance in these identities, heal their parents' wounds of exile, and take in their grandparents' homeland. With a rich soundtrack of traditional songs, In Your Eyes, I See My Country tells the story of Moroccan Jewry, at a time when Jews and Muslims lived together, and of what was lost and what lives on.

Go Beyond: Neta Elkayam and Amit Hai Cohen will perform live on Zoom November 8, 12:30 pm.

### AN IRREPRESSIBLE WOMAN

### **Director Laurent Heynemann**

Narrative, 2019, France, 104 min French with subtitles

### **New England Premiere**

Janot Reichenbach (Elsa Zylberstein) fell in love with Léon Blum as a teenager but life circumstances kept them from marrying. When, at last, they can be together, it's 1940 and the French government has fallen to Germany. Blum, the French-Jewish socialist three-time Prime Minister, is pursued by the Nazis and Janot, determined to stay close to Blum, refuses to follow family as they flee the country. This touching historical drama follows Janot in her decision to abandon her comfortable life and risk everything to be by Blum's side.



### **ISAAC**

## **Director Jurgis Matulevicius**Narrative, 2019, Lithuania, 104 min Lithuanian and Russian with subtitles **US Premiere**

During Lithuania's 1941 Lietukis Garage Massacre, Andrius Gluosnis brutally kills Isaac, his Jewish neighbor who he believes had reported him to the NKVD. Decades later, Gluosnis' old friend, now a famous movie director, returns to Soviet Lithuania with a screenplay detailing the events of the massacre. Gluosnis is still plagued with guilt and, when the screenplay is taken in as evidence, images from the past begin to collide with his present. Visually stunning, Isaac takes viewers through several decades, exposing trauma, the shock of war, and the complicated nature of a friendship diverged.

Screening as part of the Cummings Social Justice Film Series.

Film contains adult content

### **LOVE & STUFF**

## **Director Judith Helfand**Documentary, 2020, USA, 79 min English

**Massachusetts Premiere** 

After her mother's death, awardwinning filmmaker Judith Helfand spends months sorting through boxes and belongings. She finds home videos of Jewish holidays, family celebrations, and of time spent with her mother. As she struggles to say goodbye, Helfand embarks on a new chapter, adopting a child and embracing single motherhood at 50. Suddenly she must deal with her own "stuff," clearing out boxes to make space for a child, undergoing gastric sleeve surgery, and considering motherdaughter relationships from a new perspective. A generous and personal story about triumphant recovery, memories, and family.

### Screening With: Miss You Director Ellie Lobovits Documentary, 2020, USA, 10 min English, Massachusetts Premiere

A film about memory and a mother-daughter relationship told through home movies and the answering machine messages saved for decades.



### **MA'ABAROT**

#### **Director Dina Zvi-Riklis**

Documentary, 2019, Israel, 84 min Hebrew with subtitles Massachusetts Premiere

From 1948-1952, more than 300,000 Jewish refugees who arrived in Israel were housed in ma'abarot, or transit camps. The majority of these new immigrants came from the Arab world and the ma'abarot were their introduction to Israel's then-Ashkenazidominated culture. Though the camps have been largely forgotten, their impact on the lives of these immigrants resonates in contemporary Israeli culture. Rare footage and interviews with former residents provides an up close look at life inside the ma'abarot and offers stark insights into racial divides that still permeate Israeli society.

### MINYAN

#### **Director Eric Steel**

Narrative, 2020, USA, 118 min English, Hebrew, Russian, and Yiddish with subtitles

### **New England Premiere**

David, a 17-year old yeshiva student, lives in Brighton Beach with his Russian immigrant family. He divides his time between regularly helping out as a tenthman in area minyans, and visiting his grandfather's senior housing complex, where he befriends a closeted elderly gay couple. It's the 1980s and as he wrestles with his identity, faith, and sexuality, the HIV/AIDS crisis looms. Evocative and told with quiet humor, Minyan is based on a story by David Bezmozgis (Natasha, BJFF 2015).

Film contains adult content

### **OPENING NIGHT PROGRAM**



### THE RABBI FROM HEZBOLLAH

#### **Director Itamar Chen**

Documentary, 2019, Israel, 64 min Hebrew with subtitles Massachusetts Premiere

Ibrahim Yassin and Avraham Sinai are the same man. Born in a small village in Lebanon and raised to become a shepherd like his father, he never could have expected the horrors that would befall him when Hezbollah arrived in the 1980s. But years later, a new and surprising chapter begins for Yassin, and he is placed at the heart of some of Israel's most daring and dangerous secret operations in Lebanon. An intimate portrait of a man who, through both coincidence and conscience, became one of Israel's leading spies.

## SAUL AND RUBY'S HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR BAND

### **Director Tod Lending**

Documentary, 2019, Canada/Poland/ USA, 80 min

English and Polish with subtitles

Boston Premiere

Saul Dreier didn't pick up the drumsticks until he was 89 years-old, but he is motivated by a dream: to perform and share the klezmer music that sustained him during his time in concentration camps. He and his friend, 87-year old accordionist/keyboardist Ruby Sosnowicz, form The Holocaust Survivors Band. The duo are on a mission to share their lust for life and spread peace to the world. Their pursuit takes a new direction as they read about the rise of anti-Semitism and prejudice. The band's new goal is to return to Poland, where they were born, and perform in tribute to their families and others who perished.

Screening as part of the Cummings Social Justice Film Series.

Go Beyond: Saul Dreier and Ruby Sosnowicz will perform live on Zoom on Opening Night, November 4, 7:30 pm.



### **SHARED LEGACIES:**

## The African-American Jewish Civil Rights Alliance

# Director Dr. Shari Rogers Documentary, 2020, USA, 95 min English with subtitles Boston Premiere

The historical ties between Black and Jewish Americans began long before the Civil Rights era. Shared Legacies explores this significant alliance, sharing eyewitness accounts, interviews with civil rights leaders, including the late U.S. Representative John Lewis, and a treasure trove of archival footage. The film is a tribute to the pursuit of what Dr. King called a "coalition of conscience" and a celebration of partnership, as well as an urgent call to action for today.

Screening as part of the Cummings Social Justice Film Series.

### **SUBLET**

### **Director Eytan Fox**

Narrative, 2020, Israel, 90 min English and Hebrew **Boston Premiere** 

Michael (John Benjamin Hickey, The Good Wife) is in Tel Aviv to prepare his latest New York Times travel story. Grieving a loss and away from his husband, he is eager to complete his assignment and get home. When he sublets an apartment from Tomer, a young film student who offers to show him around, he finds himself drawn into the life of the city. The two men are from different generations and have starkly differing points of view, yet they form an undeniable connection that will transform both of their lives in unexpected ways. The newest film by Eytan Fox (Yossi & Jagger, Walk on Water).

Film contains adult content





### SYNDROME K

### **Director Stephen Edwards**

Documentary, 2020, USA, 76 min English and Italian with subtitles East Coast Premiere

Ray Liotta narrates this remarkable story about an ingenious plot that saved hundreds of Italian Jews. When the Nazis occupied Rome, three Roman Catholic doctors invented Syndrome K, a disease they claimed was deadly, highly contagious, and commonly found in Jews of Roman descent. Exploiting Nazi fears of infectious disease, the doctors were able to quarantine their Jewish "patients" in a hospital near the Vatican and from there, smuggle them to safety. Featuring reenactments, archival footage, first person accounts and an interview with the last surviving doctor, 98-year-old Adriano Ossicini, Syndrome K is the story of a disease that, incredibly, saved lives.

Screening as part of the Cummings Social Justice Film Series.

### THEY AIN'T READY FOR ME

### **Director Brad Rothschild**

Documentary, 2020, USA, 87 min English

#### **Massachusetts Premiere**

Dynamic, energetic, and inspiring, Tamar Manasseh is an African-American rabbinical student who is leading the fight against violence on the South Side of Chicago. For years, Tamar, a mother of two, has spent every summer day sitting on the corner in her neighborhood, dedicating the area for safe play. Through this simple but revolutionary act, Tamar reminds her neighbors that there are people who care if they live or die. Tamar's organization, MASK (Mothers Against Senseless Killing), is rooted in her worldview as a mother, a Black woman, and a Jew. Her complex identity and magnetic personality make her a force to be reckoned with and provide a road map for addressing one of America's most urgent crises.

Screening as part of the Cummings Social Justice Film Series.



### THOU SHALT NOT HATE

## **Director Mauro Mancini**Narrative, 2020, Italy/Poland, 96 min Italian with subtitles **East Coast Premiere**

Simone Segre, a renowned Jewish surgeon, leads a comfortable, though solitary life in an elegant apartment in Northeastern Italy. Simone's morals and training are challenged when he witnesses a hit-and-run and tries to assist the victim. Upon discovering Nazi symbols tattooed on the man's chest, Simone decides to abandon him to fate. Simone becomes tormented by guilt and surreptitiously finds and reaches out to the dead man's working-class family, ingratiating himself and becoming embroiled in their complicated lives.

Screening as part of the Cummings Social Justice Film Series.

## TLV TV Binge: **UNCHAINED** SEASON 1 (Episodes 1–12)

### Directors Tamar Kay, Joseph Madmoni and David Ofek

TV Series, 2019, Israel, 533 min Hebrew with subtitles Massachusetts Premiere

Rabbi Yossef Mourad (Aviv Alush, Baker and the Beauty) works for Israel's rabbinical courts, tracking down husbands who refuse to give their wives getts, the document required to grant women Jewish divorces. Acting as a hybrid detective/psychologist, Yossef will go to any lengths within Jewish law, and sometimes outside of it, to obtain freedom for these "chained" women. When Yossef uncovers a secret which threatens to dissolve his own marriage his world begins to crumble.

### **Brandeis**

HADASSAH-BRANDEIS INSTITUTE





### WHEN HITLER STOLE PINK RABBIT

# **Director Caroline Link**Narrative, 2019, Germany/Switzerland, 110 min, German with subtitles Massachusetts Premiere

Nine-year-old Anna is too busy with school and playing with friends to notice Hitler's face on posters plastered around Berlin. But when her father, a well-known Jewish journalist, suddenly vanishes, Anna begins to realize that everything is about to change. As Anna and her family set off on a courageous adventure, they must navigate unfamiliar lands, and cope with the challenges of being refugees. A gentle and beautifully rendered adaptation of Judith Kerr's semi-autobiographical bestselling children's novel by Oscar-winning filmmaker Caroline Link (Nowhere in Africa), When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit provides a moving perspective on the experiences of German Jews who fled before the war.

Screening as part of the Cummings Social Justice Film Series.

BJFF Jr! Family friendly films are recommended for ages 11+



### WHAT IS A VIRTUAL FESTIVAL?

Take in a film with your morning coffee or enjoy a midnight binge. You can watch the films anytime between November 4-15, but we recommend watching the films you are interested in before the scheduled Q&As so you can log on and join the conversations!

This year's Festival includes daily conversations with filmmakers, actors, special guests, musical performances, and more! Your film ticket grants you access to the corresponding events and conversations.

Want to see it all? Purchase an All-Access Pass!

For tickets and a complete lineup of Festival films, special guests, and events, visit **bostonjfilm.org**. Join us and *go beyond the screen!* 

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The Barbara Epstein Foundation





















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For more information about becoming a Boston Jewish Film Sustainer please visit **bostonjfilm.org**.

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August 1, 2019-July 31, 2020

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### THE CUMMINGS SOCIAL JUSTICE FILM SERIES

Thanks to a \$100k for 100 Grant from the Cummings Foundation, we are able to present films about anti-Semitism and social justice with the hope of eliminating prejudice and preventing future genocide.

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### **TICKETS**

Tickets are only available online, at **bostonjfilm.org** (with credit card only). No refunds or exchanges. For customer service, contact info@bostonjfilm.org.

Watching with your family and friends? Please consider donating for companion viewing.

### General Admission: \$15

There is a \$1.50 processing fee per ticket.

### Group Sales (10 Ticket minimum): \$12

There is a \$1.50 processing fee per ticket. Contact info@bostonjfilm.org to coordinate group tickets.

### Midfest: November 11, 7:30 pm: \$36

Behind the Scenes of *The Marvelous*Mrs. Maisel with show writer

Noah Gardenswartz.

### 10-Film Pass Package: \$118

Watch at your convenience! Access any 10 films presented at the virtual Boston Jewish Film Festival (excludes Midfest).

10-Film Pass valid for one user login only. There is a \$2.00 processing fee per pass.

### All-Access Festival Pass: \$360

Access all Boston Jewish Film Festival virtual screenings and events November 4–15, including Midfest. Easily view all films from home in Boston Jewish Film Festival's digital screening room. Films may be viewed anytime during the Festival.

All-Access Passes are non-transferable and are valid for only one user login. There is a \$4.00 processing fee per pass.

### **VIEWING FILMS**

Your All-Access pass or online ticket allows you to watch the film at any time during the Festival November 4-15. Once you begin to watch, you have 48 hours to complete viewing.

Films are available to Massachusetts residents. Anyone outside the Massachusetts area will not be able to view films, unless otherwise noted. Check bostonjfilm.org for more details.

For more information on how to view films or streaming options go to bostonjfilm.org or contact us at helpdesk@bostonjfilm.org.

### FILM CONVERSATIONS & PROGRAMS

Individual tickets purchased include access to the corresponding live-streamed programs. All-Access Passholders have access to all live-streamed programs.

Conversations and programs will take place on specific dates and times throughout the Festival. Watch live events by clicking the link from your confirmation email or ticket account.

The special Midfest event, Behind the Scenes of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, is a live program and will only be accessible on Wednesday, November 11 at 7:30pm. Midfest ticket buyers and All-Access Pass holders will receive a link for the program in their confirmation email.

There are NO refunds for Midfest or other missed programs.



## SAWE THE DATES



Boston Jewish Film is your home for great Jewish films throughout the year. Join us for events, screenings, and more festivals.

#### **3rd Annual Boston Israeli Film Festival 2021**

Join us for the best new films from Israel, followed by conversations and programs with Israeli filmmakers!

### **ReelAbilities Film Festival Boston**

ReelAbilities is dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories, and artistic expressions of people with disabilities. Join us for the 10th annual ReelAbilities Boston in 2021.

### **Boston Jewish Film Summer Cinematheque**

Our weekly screenings of new Jewish cinema returns July-August 2021.

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