

We mourn the loss of

Sylke Tempel

1963 – 2017

*longstanding friend and supporter
of our festival.*

"Everyone who knew her was impressed by her intellect, her wit, her charm, and her vast knowledge, especially concerning questions of foreign and security policy. And by her joie de vivre and her humor." From the obituary by Shimon Stein, former Israeli ambassador to Germany.

We miss her deeply.

Nicola Galliner & the JFBB staff

NEWSLETTER 03/2017

We congratulate Reinhold Robbe, member of our Advisory Board, past President of the German-Israeli Association (DIG), and longstanding SPD member of the Bundestag, on being awarded the Heinz Galinski Prize this year. We would like to express our special thanks for his generous gesture of donating a part of his prize money to the Jewish Film Festival.

JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL BERLIN & BRANDENBURG 2017

The 23rd Jewish Film Festival Berlin & Brandenburg (JFBB) presented forty-four feature films, documentaries, and short films from ten countries, including Hungary, Israel, Hong Kong, and Australia, from 2 to 13 July 2017 under the motto »**NICHT GANZ KOSCHER**« (**»NOT QUITE KOSHER«**). The festival featured numerous German premieres, one world premiere, and one European premiere as well as various accompanying events at fourteen venues in Berlin and Brandenburg.

JFBB 2017 Opening Gala – Hans Otto Theater Potsdam

As in previous years, the Hans Otto Theater Potsdam was the venue of the opening gala. Besides Festival Patron Dr. Dietmar Woidke, Prime Minister of Brandenburg, speakers included the French Ambassador Anne-Marie Descôtes; Dr. Josef Schuster, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany; Dr. Dirk Behrendt, Senator for Justice, Consumer Protection, and Antidiscrimination in Berlin; and award-winning German-Turkish actress Almila Bagriacik as this year's Festival Ambassador. Knut Elstermann, film expert at the rbb broadcasting station, was the master of ceremonies. Accompanied by pianist and composer Christoph Israel on the piano, soprano Alma Sadé (Komische Oper Berlin) performed Yiddish songs, which were met with enthusiastic applause.



JFBB opening gala on 2 July at the Hans Otto Theater in Potsdam: Anne-Marie Descôtes, the French Ambassador to Germany; Dietmar Woidke, Prime Minister of Brandenburg; Josef Schuster, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany; Birge Schade and Adriana Altaras, JFBB Honorary Panel 2017; Katrin Dröse, Berlin Brandenburg Film Commission; Almila Bagriacik, JFBB Festival Ambassador 2017; Nicola Galliner, JFBB Festival Director; Sir Derek Jacobi, lead actor of the opening film; Radu Mihaileanu, director of the opening film; Richard Clifford, actor and husband of Sir Derek Jacobi.

Prime Minister of Brandenburg Dietmar Woidke emphasized the importance of the Jewish Film Festival Berlin & Brandenburg, which provides "deep insights into the richness and diversity of Jewish life in various parts of the world," thereby making an "enormous contribution" to intercultural and interreligious dialogue. With their tireless dedication, Festival Director Nicola Galliner and her staff had made the festival "the most important forum for Jewish and Israeli film in Germany" and "a jewel of the region's cultural landscape."

Josef Schuster, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, made clear that besides its role in mediating cultures, the festival also had an increasingly political dimension. "If we want our fight against anti-Semitism in all its facets—and that now includes growing Israel-related anti-Semitism—to be effective long-term, then we must also win over people's hearts," Schuster said. And that could succeed through images, through films.

At the opening gala, the JFBB's Honorary Panel for 2017—actresses Adriana Altaras and Birge Schade—bestowed a "Special Commendation Award for a German Film on a Jewish Topic" on Chris Kraus's *Die Blumen von gestern*.

Romanian-French director Radu Mihaileanu and British lead actor Sir Derek Jacobi were present for the following German premiere of the feature film *The History of Love*, a homage to the magic of literature. (<https://www.welt.de/kultur/kino/article166768649/Ich-konnte-zwei-Jahre-lang-vor-Angst-nicht-spielen.html>.)

The opening gala was sold out, with many VIPs attending. Guests included, among others, actress Iris Berben; Prof. Jeanine Meerapfel, President of the Academy of Arts Berlin; Petra Pau, Vice-President of the German Bundestag; Shimon Stein, former Israeli Ambassador to Germany; and Rabbi Jonah Sievers, Community Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Berlin.

The gala was received very well by the media and the public as well as the political community. Besides the opening film, it was above all the speeches by Dietmar Woidke, Prime Minister of Brandenburg, and Josef Schuster, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, that attracted attention and were discussed during the gala reception; not least because of the development of the general climate in German society, which many guests believed made the call for financial security for the Jewish Film Festival all the more urgent.

Special series »100 Years of UFA – Wrested from Oblivion«

In the special series »Wrested from Oblivion,« the JFBB honored Oscar winner Emeric Pressburger (1902-1988), one of the most productive Jewish screenwriters, producers, and directors of his time, representing the many filmmakers who were driven into exile, persecuted, or murdered after the Nazis took power. The curator of this special series on the occasion of the anniversary "100 Years of UFA" was Prof. Dr. Frank Stern, film scholar and Director of the Jewish Film Club Vienna.

The visit by Pressburger's two grandsons—producer Andrew Macdonald (*Trainspotting*, *The Last King of Scotland*) and his brother Kevin Macdonald, who won an Oscar for *One Day in September* and numerous other awards—to the Filmmuseum Potsdam was a special highlight.



From left: Prof. Dr. Frank Stern, University of Vienna; Prof. Dr. Ursula von Keitz, Director, Filmmuseum Potsdam; Thomas Kralinski, Head of the State Chancellery and Media Ombudsperson of the Federal State of Brandenburg; Jörg Winger, Director, UFA FICTION GmbH; Nicola Galliner, Festival Director of the Jewish Film Festival Berlin & Brandenburg; and the grandsons of Emeric Pressburger: Kevin Macdonald, director and Oscar winner, and Andrew Macdonald, film producer.

»Mohamed and Anna«

Dialogue of religions, bridges to the present

One of the festival's most important films was the documentary »Mohamed and Anna« about Egyptian physician Mohamed Helmy, who rescued Jews in Berlin during the Nazi period and was later honored by the Holocaust Remembrance Center Yad Vashem as a "Righteous Among the Nations," the only Arab to receive this honor to date. Israeli director Taliya Finkel was the first to make a film telling this story.

A special screening was held with KIgA (Kreuzberg Initiative against Anti-Semitism) for students at the Carl von Ossietzky School and the Refik Veseli School in Berlin-Kreuzberg. This gave approximately 100 young people, many of them with a family background of migration, the opportunity to see the film and discuss it with the director. Additional special screenings of the film were held after the festival for the Amadeu Antonio Foundation and the German Federal Foreign Office.

New category: New discoveries—Young Jewish Talents!

The world premiere of filmmaker Nathan J. Minsberg's debut film »Ginette« kicked off this new series which will become a permanent feature of the JFBB. The 60-minute documentary sketches a lively portrait of the director's grandmother Ginette Yana, a 90-year-old Jewish woman from Tunisia now living in Marseille.

Panel discussion at the Heinrich Böll Foundation "Mehr Juden ins Kino" ("More Jews to the Cinema")

A discussion at the Heinrich Böll Foundation with international panelists underlined that the Jewish Film Festival is a place for exchange, changing perspectives, and discussion.

Ruth Diskin of the Jerusalem Foundation (Israel), Hannah Brown of the Jerusalem Post (Israel), politician Bettina Jarasch, member of the federal executive of Alliance 90/The Greens and the parliament of Berlin, cultural and film scholar Frank Stern of Vienna, and Aviva Weintraub of the Jewish Museum New York and the New York Jewish Film Festival discussed current questions, including: how can Jewish film festivals contribute to explaining Jewish life and Jewish culture and to conveying a differentiated image of Israel?



From left: Hannah Brown, Jerusalem Post (Israel); Nicola Galliner, Festival Director of the Jewish Film Festival Berlin & Brandenburg; Ruth Diskin, Jerusalem Foundation (Israel); Aviva Weintraub, Jewish Museum New York und Festival Director of the New York Jewish Film Festival; Bettina Jarasch, member of the federal executive of Alliance 90/The Greens and the parliament of Berlin; Sergey Lagodinsky, Head of the Department EU/North America, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Berlin.

Guest Curators 2017

Ester Schapira, award-winning journalist, filmmaker, and politics and society editor at the German public radio and television network Hessischer Rundfunk, and her husband Georg M. Hafner, award-winning television journalist, director of the politics and society division at Hessischer Rundfunk, and commentator for the TV show *Tagesthemen*, the flagship daily news analysis program, served as independent curators for the JFBB 2017. Their expertise as filmmakers as well as their profound knowledge about Jewish life in Germany, Israel, and the US informed their selection of the films screened at the festival.

The Guest Curators of the JFBB 2017: Esther Schapira and Georg M. Hafner.



Gershon Klein Film Prizes for »1945« and »Auf Ediths Spuren—Tracking Edith«

In 2017, the Jewish Film Festival Berlin & Brandenburg again awarded the Gershon Klein Film Prizes, which are endowed by the Klein family with € 7,000 annually. The prizes are dedicated to film legend Gerhard Klein, who died in 1999.

The international jury of critics, whose members this year were film journalists Anna Wollner, Avner Shavit (Israel), and Barbara Schweizerhof, selected director Ferenc Török as "Best Feature Film Director" for his feature film »1945,« which is now being screened in the US.

The jury explained: "Ferenc Török's '1945' captures the aftermath of the Holocaust in a small Hungarian village in all its bitter melange of grief and guilt. In poignant black-and-white images of old Westerns, the film does not show the usual duels, but the silent confrontation between the perpetrators and followers on one side and the survivors and relatives of the victims on the other. Török creates an eerie atmosphere that captivates viewers right from the beginning. A film that feels like a classic even now."

The Radio Eins Listeners' Jury awarded Peter Stephan Jungk, who presented "Auf Ediths Spuren—Tracking Edith" at the JFBB, the prize of "Best Documentary Director."

The jury explained: "The emotional force of the fascinating portrait that the writer and director paints of his great-aunt Edith Tudor-Hart can leave nobody cold. The life story of a courageous, unusual woman who fought and lived for her political convictions. A film about photography, espionage, and uncovering a family secret."

Supporters, sponsors, media partners, partners, and cooperation partners 2017

Supporters:

Federal State of Brandenburg, Stiftung Lotto Berlin, Berlin Brandenburg Film Commission, Berliner Sparkasse, Finanzgruppe Ostdeutscher Sparkassenverband, ILB Investitionsbank des Landes Brandenburg, Central Council of Jews in Germany, Audi City Berlin, Szloma-Albam-Stiftung, Wyndham Berlin Excelsior, telefactory.com, Restaurant Franke.

Media partners and partners:

3sat, tip-berlin, radioeins, Jüdische Allgemeine, Hans Otto Theater, media:net berlinbrandenburg, KlG, Institut Français Deutschland, Heinrich Böll Foundation, FilmFestival Cottbus, Fine Emotion, UFA 100 Years, fine & functional, Universum, Geiselman, Die Botschafter.

Cooperation partners:

- Amadeu Antonio Foundation
- Anne Frank Zentrum
- German Federal Foreign Office
- German-Israeli Association
- FilmFestival Cottbus
- Without Borders Film Festival, Bad Saarow
- Filmmuseum Potsdam
- Film Polska
- French Embassy to Germany
- Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit
- Heinrich Böll Foundation
- International Filmfestival Haifa
- Israelitische Kultusgemeinde München
- Jüdischer Filmclub Wien
- KlG e.V. (Kreuzberg Initiative against Anti-Semitism)

- Other Israel Film Festival New York
- Synagogue Fraenkelufer
- UFA GmbH
- Central Council of Jews in Germany

Public perception: from the *Tagesspiegel* to the *Jerusalem Post*

In 2017, the JFBB again succeeded in reaching regional, Germany-wide, and international audiences through extensive media reporting. Press reports covered the entire breadth of the film festival, the premieres, and the special series "100 Years of UFA" as well as the numerous accompanying events.

Without exception, the article, features, film reviews, and radio and TV reports were very positive and praised the high quality of the program.

To mention just one example, the article "Life Through A Jewish Lens" by Jerusalem Post journalist Hannah Brown puts the JFBB's diversity and quality in a nutshell by forging the connection between the special series "100 Years of UFA" and the present:

"This fascinating and moving Pressburger tribute (...) was emblematic of the depth of this festival."

We would be very happy to hear from you.

Suggestions, feedback, and criticism are always welcome!

Yours, Nicola Galliner, Festival Director