**JERUSALEM FILM CENTER SEPTEMBER 2020 REPORT**

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The COVID-19 crisis and ongoing health restrictions have led the Jerusalem Film Center to create new methods of connecting with viewers via online programming as well as outdoor screenings. These programs have proven immensely popular and have demonstrated the Israeli public’s inherent need for cultural events and communal engagement. Our online programming selection, made available since March 2020 and no longer free of charge (as of late August 2020), has engaged our growing membership base as well as viewers dispersed throughout the country interested in our exclusive artistic selection and unique curatorial choices.

In order to provide cultural content during the quarantine period and reinforce our relationship with our community of members, starting in March 2020, the Jerusalem Film Center began offering a weekly selection of online film screenings and special programs. Throughout the quarantine period, over 300 online materials were programmed for our viewers, including films, operas, plays, the popular Exhibition on Screen series (distributed in Israel solely by the JFC), masterclasses and lectures, as well as exclusive artistic film selections. These online programs – otherwise knowns as the popular “**With You at Home**” series, have received over 200,000 views thus far. Although challenging, this period has also proven to be greatly encouraging, demonstrating that nearly half of the viewers have not been members of the JFC, but rather, geographically dispersed throughout the country and keenly interested in the exclusive artistic programming offered by our institution. Perhaps, more than anything, the lockdown period has emphasized the importance of the institution’s mission, which, having come into fruition over the past few years, has proven key to this period: the establishment of a digital archive and playing a leading role as a digital film access provider offering access to all.

After five years of intensive planning and execution, the JFC has launched the Israel Film Archive website. The new online platform promotes Israel’s rich film culture and heritage. Additionally, and due to the need to continue offering contemporary online content, the new website has now incorporated and launched the JFC’s first V.O.D channel, presenting a curated selection of online films and programs from the Jerusalem Cinematheque, the Jerusalem Film Festival, and Israel Film Archive.

We are ending 2020 with a cinematic celebration at JFC. It will begin with an excellent online edition of the Jewish Film Festival (JFF), which will include the best films of the past year. The highlight will be an online presentation of five competitive frameworks for Israeli and international films, plus events for professionals in the film industry.

**CINEMATHEQUE DAILY PROGRAMMING**

The year 2020 posed a particularly significant challenge for the ongoing activities of the Jerusalem Cinematheque. The gaps between the current reality and our original plans are huge, since our planned activities were based on public events in the Cinematheque halls and interactions between creators, films, and audiences. Dozens of major, scheduled festivals and events have undergone a change in terms of dates, scope, and of course the platform on which they can take place. We have made every effort to preserve the quality of the activities and to provide the audience with the planned activities, at least in part. We are also striving to maintain the many collaborations that the Cinematheque has with embassies and academic and cultural institutions.

**Coming events:**

With the uncertainty about possible return-date to our halls, the cinematheque is building programs and events for the coming weeks and months that will be presented at our online platform (with an option for the later ones to be partly presented in our halls as well), such as:

* **Anthropology film festival** – November 26-28th – the 9th edition of the festival in collaboration with the anthropology department at the Hebrew university will include 7 titles in premieres in Israel, all accompanied by lectures from top scholars un this field and zoom talks with 2 international guests**.**
* **Czech film week –** a national event together with the Czech cultural center in Israel, early November
* **Austrian Doc spotlight –** exclusive collaboration with the Austrian cultural forum in Israel presenting top documentary films from the Austrian industry, end of November.
* **Oh La La –** National festival presenting the best of the latest French comedies, about 25 titles, Nov. 22nd-mid December
* **Special film and lecture series with the Van Leer institute and the Begin center Jerusalem:** a special collaboration presenting 4-5 films and lectures dealing with significant social issues faced by a multicultural Arab-Jewish
* society, end of December**.**

**The Jewish Film Festival Online**

Following a beloved tradition of over 20 years, the Jewish Film Festival will continue to offer the audience a special cultural experience, a fascinating selection of features and documentaries shedding light upon Jewish life in cinema from different and unique perspectives. This year’s selection includes surprising comedies, stars, cinematic discoveries, a glimpse into the lives of Lucian Freud, Modigliani, Einstein and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, as well as personal stories, thought-provoking films and encounters with filmmakers and actors.

The festival will open with the brilliant comedy "An American Pickle" starring Seth Rogen, which raises astute questions about contemporary Jewish identity. As part of the festival, a master class will be held with the American actor Jesse Eisenberg, on the occasion of the screening of the film "Resistance".

**The 37th Jerusalem Film Festival will be held during Hanukkah**

This year’s festival will feature more than 80 films and will host six competitions: the Israeli Feature Film Competition, the Israeli Documentary Film Competition, the Israeli Short Film Competition, the Experimental Film Competition, the International Competition and the International Debut Film Competition. These films reflect the best of this year’s cinematic crop from Israel and internationally.

The virtual screenings will take place using the Shift72 viewing system, which has been used by many of the world's leading festivals, including the New York Film Festival and the SXSW Film Festival. To help enable an enjoyable viewing experience, people purchasing the film packages will be entered in a raffle with numerous prizes (such as pizza or wine delivered to their home while watching movies, bags with the festival logo, etc.). Among the raffle prizes available to participants will be three private screenings (for 10 friends / family members) of the festival films in the Cinematheque hall.

Alongside these film screenings available to the general public, there will be special events for professionals in the local film industry, with the participation of prominent representatives of the international film industry. These will include master classes, and two tracks for pitching films, with awards: one track for short films and one for full-length feature films.

The festival will be accompanied by a publicity and marketing campaign, which is already underway. It includes a collaboration with the newspaper *Haaretz*, following the success of their participation in the Jerusalem Cinematheque’s "The Day After?" project. In the event that there is an easing of the Ministry of Health guidelines, even at the last minute, there will be limited screenings of the festival films in the Cinematheque hall.

1. **EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMANT**

The Covid-19 pandemic also led to the cancellation of dozens of cinema days planned for school students in March-June 2020. Towards the beginning of the school year, we received many inquiries from educators who wanted to find a way to visit with their students at the Cinematheque despite the restrictions of the Ministry of Health, although the guidelines do not allow this to happen. The JFC is currently working to prepare online cinema programs for students, and aims to expand its audience outside the city of Jerusalem.

* **20/21 educational courses launched online** –the Department of Education launched, for the first time ever, two education courses for adults geared toward our members as well as general audience viewers. The lectures are filmed onstage at the JFC and streamed online alongside films on the JFC platform. Using the advantages of the online platform, this year participants include viewers from distant geographic areas who could not join the physical screenings.
* **Getting back to schools** - The Department of Education is producing, together with the local education authorities, a selection of online educational film curricula for the new school year. The materials has already been approved for schools by the educational authorities, and will enable the students to continue to experience and enjoy their Educational Film Days (lectures + educational films) during the ongoing COVID restrictions. **Subject matters for the new online educational materials includes:**
* **Children and Leadership** - Created by the Department of Education for students in Grades 3-6. The lectures in the series will explore the subjects of Individuality, Children in and Adult World, Children Leading Social Change, Gender Norms, Personal Responsibility, Charity, Ecology, and more.
* **History and Identity in collaboration with the Digital Film Archive** – This new course will provide elementary school students the tools to carry out individual archival research on their identities, family history, and communities by familiarization with the Archive’s unique vast audio-visual heritage collection. The students will receive a virtual tool of the Archive, alongside explanations of the site as well its different holdings and newsreels. The students will learn to navigate the new website, become familiarized with its mapping system, learn to locate the origins of their families/communities, and carry out archival research.
* Additional online programs for elementary schoolchildren will include courses discussing **Erich Kastner’s Novels and Film Adaptations**, **Film Classics**, and **Identities**.

**V. ISRAEL FILM ARCHIVE**

2020 was a banner year for the Israeli Film Archive. After more than five years of planning, initiating, and executing complex work processes, the JFC's Israel Film Archive website was launched, with great celebration. This project included the establishment of a digitization laboratory, the training of a professional technical team, the signing of accessibility agreements for collections of heritage Israeli films, the creation of a long-term digital preservation system, and the creation of an accessible website. This year, we reached the goal of launching the bilingual website.

With hundreds of historical and artistic movie titles on an online video-on-demand (VOD) platform, which allows for instant viewing of rare archived materials for free by the general public. The launching of the website involved the formulation of a comprehensive digital promotional strategy, including a marketing campaign, social media outreach, and public relations. We set quantitative and qualitative goals for the website’s promotion, strategies for analyzing users’ behavior on the site, and methods for adjusting the overall strategy. Our goal of bringing 150,000 different viewers to the site by the end of the year has already been achieved and even surpassed. To date, close to a quarter of a million users have visited the site, with over 30% accessing the site more than once. We are currently working to raise resources for next year’s projects. We are beginning to explore new options for arranging to receive long-term support from state funds for the digital archive.