



Charlotte Jewish Film Festival

A project of The Sandra and Leon Levine Jewish Community Center and the Charlotte chapter of Hadassah

Web Site

www.charlottejewishfilm.com

At a Glance

A volunteer-run program of films designed to help people throughout Charlotte share the diversity of the Jewish experience around the world

Highlights

- Fourth-Annual Festival: Ten films, March 1-8
- Pre-Festival Screening: "The Rape of Europa," February 26, 7 p.m., Mint Museum of Art (co-sponsor)
- What a Wonderful Place, dessert reception and speaker (filmmaker Eyal Halfon), March 1, Ballantyne Village Theatre
- "God and Allah Need to Talk: A Film for Healing and Reconciliation," an interfaith evening of film, March 4, Temple Beth El, Free
- "39 Pounds of Love," March 5, co-sponsored by The Light Factory

ASC Community Cultural Connections Grant

To expand the film offerings and length of the festival, attracting a broader audience of non-Jews as well as the diverse members of Charlotte's Jewish community

Universal Experiences

Fourth Film Festival to Share Diverse Lives Of Jews Around the World



PHOTO BY MEL MORANSTEIN

The Light Factory's executive director, Marcie Kelso, left, festival volunteer coordinator Ellyn Gross, 2008 festival co-director and film curator Debby Block, Light Factory film director Wendy Fishman and co-director Jodi Greenwald at a 2007 evening of films about women.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Realtor® Reflections regularly features an artist or agency affiliated with the Arts & Science Council (ASC) as a way for Realtors® to help educate their clients about our cultural community. CRRRA is an annual contributor to ASC.

BY LOUISE BARDEN

Starting February 26, Charlotteans can see acclaimed international movies that range from a tale of international art theft to a humorous on-the-road pic about a man with a rare disease.

The fourth-annual Charlotte Jewish Film Festival isn't just for Jews, says festival co-director Jodi Werner Greenwald. It's a way for people throughout the community to share the experiences of Jews around the world — people who are not like the TV characters on "Seinfeld" or the stereotypical characters in Hollywood movies.

The festival's other co-director and curator, Debby Block, agrees. "Film really moves me personally. It's a great way to connect to other people. We want to let audiences live the Jewish life in other places as opposed to only hearing about it."

Both directors say the films can help the members of this minority culture share their common experience with each other while introducing Judaism to people of other faiths.

Volunteers Make It Happen

The Charlotte Jewish Film Festival, run entirely by volunteers and featuring movies that otherwise might not be shown in Charlotte, is patterned after similar festivals in major cities around the country. It has grown fast since the first weekend in 2005 when it featured two films in a small auditorium for a sold-out crowd of 140.

This year, for more than a week, 10 feature-length films and a number of shorts

PHOTO SOURCE: LYNN NICHOLAS




will attract an expected audience of more than 1,000. Discussions and speakers (including filmmakers) have been added to enhance the film experience. Making it all happen will take the efforts of 100 volunteers and an executive committee of 10.

Even before the festival begins, the Mint Museum of Art will sponsor a showing of the widely acclaimed "The Rape of Europa," which follows the twisting secret path taken by hundreds of art masterpieces confiscated by Hitler. Many of these valuable works have never been recovered.

Moreover, in celebration of the 60th anniversary of Israel, several films by Israeli directors will portray what life in this country is like today.

ASC's Support Promotes Growth

According to Greenwald and Block, an ASC grant in 2007 helped increase the number of feature films and venues and expanded the organization's marketing efforts. A 2008 ASC grant will allow the festival to increase its film offerings and broaden its outreach to the non-Jewish community.

While the festival continues to program various films that can help audiences from all backgrounds discover the Jewish experience in many countries, Greenwald emphasizes, "An important part of the entire event is for people to enjoy coming together for these experiences. We have a lot of fun." 



LEFT STRIP: Images from the film "The Rape of Europa."
Top: Capt. James Rorimer supervises the safeguarding of art stolen from French Jews.
Middle: Return of Leonardo da Vinci's "Lady" to a museum in Poland.
Bottom: Sgt. Kenneth Lindsay examines painting.
PHOTO SOURCE: Archives of the National Gallery of Art
RIGHT STRIP: Images from the film "39 Pounds of Love."