



**mjff**  
GREAT FILMS UNITE US

# Maine Jewish Film Festival 2026



# MAZEL TOV!

*to the Maine Jewish Film Festival*

From the bright lights above Portland  
to the bright lights of the silver screen.

LAW OFFICES OF

**JOE BORNSTEIN**

PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS

**207-CALL-JOE**

joebornstein.com    

*Fighting and winning for injured Mainers since 1974.*

SANFORD • BIDDEFORD • PORTLAND • WINDHAM • LEWISTON • AUGUSTA • BANGOR

## Welcome!

Welcome to the 2026 Maine Jewish Film Festival! Our 28th season promises to be one of our most eclectic, engaging and entertaining, and we are so delighted you've come to share in the experience.

The theme of this year's Festival, "The Whole Wide World" truly embraces our vision that great films unite us. People from around the world, regardless of religion, culture or geography, share common challenges. With films from Argentina, Belgium, Germany, Israel, Poland, the United State, and beyond, this year's festival offers Mainers a global perspective on common challenges and themes that connect us as human beings. The diverse films in this year's lineup explore such universal and timely themes as family dysfunction, the human cost of war, gender equality, and other issues - in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.

The Maine Jewish Film Festival celebrates filmmaking. Our dynamic and engaging programming invites a diverse statewide audience to explore the world through a uniquely Jewish lens. Each year we search for the very best dramas and documentaries that collectively bring aspects of the global Jewish experience to audiences across Maine. Whether you want a fresh perspective on timely issues, comedic relief, an engrossing historical drama, or a revealing documentary - you will find it all at MJFF 2026. Selected films will be complemented by opportunities to engage with special guests speakers - so join the conversation!

These are turbulent times. Amid a rising rates of Antisemitism, a divisive political environment, and global unrest, we hope that our films and programs will offer fresh perspectives on timely issues, widen collective understanding and kindle meaningful conversations in a safe space where all are welcome.

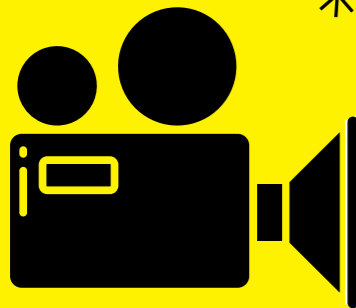
We thank our donors, sponsors, community partners, board, volunteers, staff, and you, our audience members. Your support enables us to create unique cultural experiences for audiences across Maine.

With warm regards,

David Scholder  
President

Melinda Molin  
Vice President

The Onion Foundation is proud to support the Maine Jewish Film Festival and the Cultural Alliance of Maine.



Applaud great art, then  
**advocate to protect it!**



**Strong cultural policy and funding keep great stories, performances, and events available to Maine audiences.**

Elected officials need to hear from people like you that arts, culture, and the humanities must be legislative and budget priorities. It takes five minutes, and it makes a difference!

**ADVOCATE**



**FOR CULTURE**



**Cultural Alliance of Maine**  
[culturalmaine.org/advocate](http://culturalmaine.org/advocate)

### **Letter from the Co-Chairs of the Maine Jewish Film Festival Screening Committee**

One of the most exciting, yet daunting, challenges we face as screening co-chairs of the Maine Jewish Film Festival, is to curate a series of movies about Jewish experiences. With the support of the Screening Committee, we consider, gather, and view scores of films that represent the diverse history and storytelling of Jews from around the world.

That's why we chose "The Whole Wide World" as the theme for the 2026 Festival. We've shaped a program that offers an international landscape: It's not a singular experience, but a diverse and varied one that represents a broad spectrum of priorities, traditions, history, and politics. It's plural, not singular. It's particular, but universal. And it's the Maine Jewish Film Festival audience that we have in mind to provide its own brand of response to the 13 films we're featuring, documentaries and narrative films you're unlikely to see anywhere else.

You'll find domestic fare, such as *Looking Up*, the story of a young man facing encroaching blindness, who takes on the challenge of climbing the world's most epic granite wall; *We Met As Grossingers*, a joyfully nostalgic journey through the Jewish Catskills — once known as the Borscht Belt — told through the rise and fall of its most beloved resort; *Maintenance Artist*, the tale of the first artist-in-residence at NYC's Department of Sanitation, collaborating with municipal workers to inject art directly into the city's bloodstream; and *Heightened Scrutiny*, a high-stakes legal battle to overturn Tennessee's ban on gender-affirming care for transgender youth.

From further afield, the menu extends offerings from Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, Israel, Palestine, and Poland. Films such as *Mazel Tov*, a story about the messy yet enduring love of an Argentine family; *The Sea*, the narrative of a twelve-year-old Palestinian boy who's on a dangerous journey to visit the sea for the first time; *Soda*, the story of a working class Tel Aviv neighborhood in 1954, when partisans and survivors navigate betrayal and family relationships; and *The Stamp Thief*, part detective story, part heist film, and part historical reckoning, that delves into a decades-old mystery rooted in the Holocaust.

So please, do what film lovers around the world do best: grow your emotional landscape as you attend a live screening in the company of others for the fullest movie experience possible. Join us in an immersive and magical week of films— coupled with enriching talks and interactive presentations. Together, we will experience *The Whole Wide World*.

*Phyllis Graher Jensen and Stephanie Pridgeon*

*Many thanks to our  
Principal Supporters and Sponsors!*

PRINCIPAL SUPPORTERS

THE MOSER FOUNDATION



THE LUNDER FOUNDATION

BERNARD OSHER



DAVIS FAMILY FOUNDATION

PLATINUM SPONSORS



ROZ SIEGEL

GOLD SPONSORS



GOLDBERG FAMILY FOUNDATION

THE PERDUE FOUNDATION

BOWDOIN COLLEGE

# Mazel Tov

97 min. Argentina Genre: Comedy, Drama Director: Adrián Suar



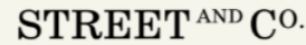
When Dario Roitman returns from the U.S. to Argentina for a family wedding and Bat Mitzvah, he anticipates the usual family drama. But his carefully laid plans for a family reunion are suddenly upended when he learns, just hours before his flight, that his father has passed away. As the Roitmans gather for the funeral, old wounds resurface and longstanding tensions reach a boiling point. Despite the emotional turmoil, Dario remains determined to celebrate both the wedding and Bat Mitzvah, even if it means challenging tradition and risking further discord. Navigating grief, sibling rivalry, and delightfully eccentric grudges, the Roitmans reveal the messy yet enduring love of family.

**Saturday, April 25 at 5:00pm, Portland Museum of Art**

**Movie: 5:00 p.m.**

**Opening Night Portland Reception: 6:45 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

SILVER SPONSORS



ROBERT HIRSHON FAMILY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

TEMPLE SHALOM AUBURN

D. SUZI OSHER FOUNDATION

HASTE FAMILY FUND

SIMMONS FOUNDATION

BRONZE SPONSORS

ALFOND FOUNDATION

BATES COLLEGE



# We Met at Grossinger's

104 min. United States Genre: Documentary Director: Paula Eiselt



*We Met at Grossinger's* is a joyfully nostalgic journey through the Jewish Catskills—once known as the Borscht Belt—told through the rise and fall of its most beloved resort: Grossinger's Resort and Hotel (the real-life inspiration for *Dirty Dancing*). Built and run by three generations of trailblazing women, Grossinger's Resort and Hotel stood at the center of a world Jews built for themselves after being shut out of America's mainstream resorts and clubs. It became far more than a vacation destination—it was a sanctuary of identity, joy, and reinvention. Here, amid the laughter of comics, the brilliance of athletes, and the grace of guests like Jackie Robinson, Eddie Fisher, and Eleanor Roosevelt, Jewish Americans and other marginalized communities found a stage to redefine what it meant to be accepted, celebrated, and free. "An inspiring affirmation of the American Dream" wrote *Forbes* of this one-of-a-kind film.

**Sunday, April 26 at 2:00pm, Portland Museum of Art**

# Love, Statistically Speaking

90 min. Israel Genre: Romantic Comedy Director: Amichai Greenberg

## BRONZE SPONSORS

ALFOND FOUNDATION

BATES COLLEGE



TANDEM COFFEE ROASTERS



## SERET SOCIETY MEMBERS

Judith Berman  
Angie Bryan  
Eleanor Goldberg  
Peggy Golden  
Karen Harris and Rob Gips  
Robert Hirshon  
Randi Greenwald and Lowell Turnbull  
Kris Lape and Jamie Isaacson

Laura Kittle and Jeremy Moser  
Ken Spierer and Joan Leitzer  
Melinda Molin  
Geoffrey and Harriet Rice  
Roz Siegel  
Kimberly Volk  
Norman and Judy Wilson

## FESTIVAL SUPPORTERS

Richard Borts  
Lawrence Michael Epstein  
Fred and Karen Farber  
Phyllis Jensen  
Beth Lubetkin

Muscat Family Fund  
Ellen Seidman  
Jenny Scheu  
Ann and Jack Siegel



When Reuben, an 80-year-old actuary who lives by statistics, loses both his wife and her insurance money at the swimming pool, he's forced into a reluctant partnership with his free-spirited granddaughter. Their bumbling investigation among eccentric pool regulars turns into a funny, heartfelt journey proving that while you can calculate almost anything, you can't predict love or family.

**Monday, April 27 at 7:00pm, The Hill Arts**



## Immersion Programs at the Language Exchange



*Promoting Understanding  
one language at a time ...*

Serving the Portland Community

with a great variety of **Language Programs** since 1992!

[www.immersionprograms.com](http://www.immersionprograms.com)

# Las Dos Mariette

80 min. Argentina Genre: Documentary Director: Poli Martinez Kaplun



A secret kept for 70 years, and a woman, Mariette, who dares to tell it. A film that follows the perspectives of four generations when what had been hidden finally comes to light. How long can a person keep a secret? The film's protagonist, Mariette, did it for 70 years. Now, at a threshold in her life, she finally decides to speak up. Afraid of betraying her mother, who did everything she could to keep the secret hidden, Mariette faces her world filled with doubt, fearing rejection and prejudice.

**Tuesday, April 28 at 7:00pm, The Hill Arts**

# Heightened Scrutiny

85 min. United States Genre: Documentary Director: Sam Feder



Amid the surge in anti-trans legislation that Chase Strangio battles in the courtroom, he must also fight against media bias, exposing how the narratives in the press influence public perception and the fight for transgender rights.

**Wednesday, April 29 at 2:00pm, Portland Museum of Art**  
A post-screening discussion with EqualityMaine Executive Director Gia Drew follows the film.

**Thursday, April 30 at 7:30pm at Eveningstar Cinema, Brunswick**

A post-screening discussion led by Natalie Turrin, Director of the Sexuality, Women, and Gender Center follows the film.

*The Maine Jewish Film Festival celebrates filmmaking—inspiring conversation through the lens of global Jewish experience. Innovative programming invites a diverse statewide audience into the dialogue.*

*Congratulations to MJFF on this exciting festival season! We love investing in such inspiring and educational programming in Maine!*

– Kim Volk, President



Maine Advisory Associates  
Securing what matters—*your future*

Registered Investment Advisor

Kim@maineadvisory.com • (207) 778-2250  
www.maineadvisory.com

# Looking Up

72 min. United States Genre: Documentary Director: Elena Neuman



Temple Shalom Synagogue-Center congratulates MJFF



*Looking UP* is the inspiring story of Eitan Armon, a young man facing encroaching blindness who takes on the challenge of climbing the world's most epic granite wall. While in military service at age 20, Eitan is diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa, a rare and incurable genetic disease that causes blindness. With only 5% of his central vision remaining, Eitan learns to rock climb and ascends Yosemite's daunting El Capitan. *Looking Up* documents Eitan's journey and resilience, demonstrating the endless possibilities for those who approach life with positivity.

**Wednesday, April 29 at 5:00pm, Portland Museum of Art**



“  
Congratulations  
to MJFF on  
27 wonderful years  
of film. It's an honor to  
support your work!

*~Roz Siegel*

Rosalyn Siegel, RE/MAX Shoreline  
The Common @ 88 Middle St. | Portland, ME 04101  
C -207-233-0009 | O - 207-553-7500  
E: roz@homesinmaine.com

# The Stamp Thief

100 min. United States, Poland, Germany Genre: Drama, History, Crime  
Director: Dan Sturman



Part detective story, part heist film, and part historical reckoning, *The Stamp Thief* is an engrossing cat-and-mouse journey that delves into a decades-old mystery rooted in the Holocaust. The film reveals the story of a rogue Nazi officer tasked with cataloging the valuables of Jews sent to concentration camps. Rather than aiding the victims, he seized the opportunity to steal millions of dollars worth of rare stamps and buried them in his home—now modern-day Poland. In a real-life, *Argo*-like mission, former *Seinfeld* producer Gary Gilbert embarks on a daring quest to uncover the truth and recover the stolen stamps. Disguising his investigation as a movie shoot, Gilbert seeks to return the stamps to their rightful heirs, delivering a small yet powerful act of justice more than 75 years after the Holocaust.

**Sunday, April 26 at 1:30pm, Eveningstar Cinema, Brunswick**  
A post-screening discussion led by Tricia Welsch, Professor and Director of the Cinema Studies Program follows the film.

**Wednesday, April 29 at 7:00pm, Maine Film Center, Waterville**

**Thursday, April 30 at 2:00 pm, Portland Museum of Art**  
A post-screening discussion with Jakub Kazecki, Bates College Associate Professor of German follows the film.



# Proud Jewish Boy

90 min. Israel Genre: Documentary Director: Isri Halpern



## There is an art to living well.

Enjoying the best of Portland's arts offering—like the Maine Jewish Film Festival—is part of it.

INDEPENDENT LIVING AT THE ATRIUM is luxurious and carefree, focused on wellness and personal growth, and filled with culture, activities, and friends. From farm-to-table dining to the saltwater pool, we give you the time to truly enjoy all Portland, Maine offers.

Schedule your personal visit today!  
640 Ocean Avenue, Portland, Maine  
(207) 221-7100 | [thecedarsportland.org](http://thecedarsportland.org)



*Proud Jewish Boy* uncovers a meticulously researched, little-known story of how a teenage Jewish refugee's shooting of a Nazi diplomat ignited the prewar pogrom widely seen as a prelude to the Holocaust. Through rare archives, family testimony, and striking black-and-white illustrations, this Haifa Film Festival Best Documentary winner charts a high-stakes battle between a defiant teen and the Reich's most ruthless manipulators.

**Thursday, April 30 – 5:00 p.m. – Portland Museum of Art**



## MAINE MADE WOMAN OWNED FARMER FOCUSED

Since 1994, Coffee By Design has led the way in bringing **impeccably sourced, painstakingly roasted, and lovingly served** artisanal coffee to Maine. We're proud of our commitment to ethical practices, our long history of support for the arts and progressive causes, and the consistently outstanding quality of our coffee have made us an iconic mainstay of local landscape.

**As a 100% woman-owned business**, we have a passion for what we do. We choose to conduct our business in a way that is sustainable, and we work with restaurants, cafes, wholesalers and specialty venues that share these values. **We believe in giving back to the local and international communities** to which Coffee By Design is so intimately connected.

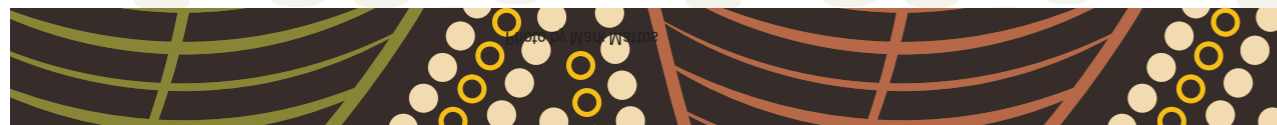
At Coffee By Design, we take pride in **building long-term relationships with our farm partners**. We honor the fruits of their labor by ensuring that the superior character of every bean is celebrated in every cup.



**PROUD SUPPORTER OF MJFF**

**1 DIAMOND STREET • PORTLAND**

coffeebydesign.com  



# Maintenance Artist

95 min. United States Genre: Documentary Director: Toby Perl Freilich



Crashing the boundary between art and action, in 1977 Mierle Laderman Ukeles became the first artist-in-residence at NYC's Department of Sanitation, collaborating with municipal workers to inject art directly into the city's bloodstream. MAINTENANCE ARTIST is the first feature documentary about this revolutionary public artist. Ukeles, inspired by Marcel Duchamp, pioneered the notion that routine maintenance – from changing diapers to picking up city trash to caring for the earth – could be acts of performance art. With never-before-seen archival footage, MAINTENANCE ARTIST tells a story of essential workers and radical contemporary art set during the social and artistic upheavals of the last half century. Penetrating, provocative, funny, and deeply moving, MAINTENANCE ARTIST fills a glaring cultural gap and heralds Ukeles' call for a Maintenance Revolution. With a pre-recorded introduction by director Toby Perl Freilich.

**A post-screening discussion with Kat Zagaria, Chair of the Portland Public Art Committee, and Director of Exhibitions and Outreach, University of Southern Maine, Laura McDermit, Executive Director of TempOart, and Niccole Cormier-Real, interdisciplinary artist who creates material frameworks that foster connection, follows the film.**



# OceanView

AT • FALMOUTH

A 21st century retirement community

*It's the time of your life!*

Falmouth, Maine

Ask Us  
About New  
Construction!



**OceanView at Falmouth** is a locally owned and managed retirement community, and we are proud sponsors of the

## **Maine Jewish Film Festival!**

Just minutes from Portland, we offer an independent, active, maintenance-free lifestyle with a care continuum that provides peace of mind for the future. Our beautiful 80-acre campus includes a wide variety of apartments and cottages, **including an additional 37 new homes currently under construction.**

Set your own retirement timeline by reserving your brand-new apartment. Don't miss your chance!



Please contact us  
to schedule a tour:  
(207) 781-4460  
Explore floor plans,  
video tours, and more at  
[www.oceanviewrc.com](http://www.oceanviewrc.com)



# The Sea

93 min. Israel Genre: Drama, Coming of Age  
Director: Shai Carmeli Pollak



Khaled, a twelve-year-old Palestinian boy is on his way to visit the sea for the first time. At a checkpoint, the Israeli authorities deny his entry. Determined, Khaled sneaks into Israel and embarks on a dangerous journey to the sea in this “deeply humanist tale (Variety)” that offers a look at the contemporary reactions between Israelis and Palestinians with an honest, open, and unflinching eye. With a pre-recorded film introduction by Director Shai Carmeli-Pollak.

**Sunday, April 26 at 7pm, Waldo Theater, Waldoboro**

Post-screening discussion with Stephanie Pridgeon, Bates College Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies, and Rabbi Lorin Troderman, Adas Yeshuron Synagogue, Rockland follows the film.

**Monday, April 27 at 7:00pm, Maine Film Center, Waterville**  
Post screening discussion with Israeli and Palestinian panelists, moderated by Laurie Osher, Maine House of Representatives.

**Friday, May 1 at 5:00pm, Portland Museum of Art**

**Sunday, May 3 at 1:30pm, Eveningstart Cinema, Brunswick**  
A post-screening discussion led by Connor Dedrick, Bowdoin's Jewish Life Advisor follows the film.



# Holding Liat

97 min. United States Genre: Documentary Director: Brandon Kramer



On the morning of October 7, 2023, Israeli-American Liat Atzili and her husband Aviv were at home when Hamas attacked their kibbutz. By nightfall, Liat and Aviv are captives in Gaza along with 250 other people – 12 of whom, like Liat, are American citizens. Caught between international diplomacy and a rapidly escalating war, their family must face their own uncertainty and conflicting perspectives in the pursuit of Liat and Aviv’s release. This agonizing process, and the ultimate fate of their loved ones, challenges how the members of the family understand themselves and their place in the conflict of this “powerful” film (*The Guardian*). With a pre-recorded introduction by Director Brandon Kramer.

**Saturday, May 2 at 2:00pm, Portland Museum of Art**

## JEWISH COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SOUTHERN MAINE

We're the hub of Jewish life in Southern Maine.  
As a combined Jewish Federation, Jewish Community Center, and Jewish Family Services program, the JCA is here to be a resource for the entire Southern Maine community.

The JCA is proud to support the  
Maine Jewish Film Festival



207.772.1959  
WWW.MAINEJEWISH.ORG

# Farewell, Mr. Haffmann

115 min. France, Belgium Genre: History, Drama, Thriller  
Director: Fred Cavayé



Occupied Paris, 1941: all members of the Jewish community are instructed to come forward and identify themselves to authorities. Dedicated jeweller Joseph Haffmann (Daniel Auteuil), fearing the worst, arranges for his family to flee the city and offers his employee François Mercier (Gilles Lellouche) the chance to take over his store until the conflict subsides. But his own attempts to escape are thwarted, and Haffmann is forced to seek his assistant's protection. It's a risky proposition for both men, and one that Mercier's wife Blanche (a wonderful Sara Giraudeau) is sceptical of. As the couple move into the Haffmann home, the agreement turns into a Faustian bargain, one that will forever change the fate of all in this "engrossing" (*Los Angeles Times*) film.

**Thursday, April 23 at 7:00pm, Eveningstar Cinema, Brunswick**

**A post-screening discussion led by Katy Stern, Bowdoin's Director of Institutional Inclusion and Diversity Programs follow the film.**

**Saturday, May 2 at 5:00pm, Portland Museum of Art**

Bowdoin College and  
Bowdoin's Cinema Studies  
Program are proud to partner  
with Eveningstar Cinema  
to support the 2026  
Maine Jewish Film Festival.

**Bowdoin**





# The Bank of "YES!" (and so much more)

For more than 150 years, Machias Savings Bank has been moving Mainers and their businesses forward with the banking solutions they need to find their "yes!"

We're here to say "yes!" to all your hopes, goals, and dreams.



MachiasSavings.Bank

Equal Housing Lender  
Member FDIC - NMLS 469539



*Susie Kendeigh*

Broker

Local Expertise. Trusted Results

Proud To Sponsor:



Visit My Website

207.653.4412

susie@portsidereg.com

NOW PLAYING 7 DAYS A WEEK

# A GOOD RELIABLE BAGEL

"Look no  
further"

"★★★★★"



"Rose loves  
the MJFF"

FEATURING CHOPPED LIVER, GRIBENES, LOX, WHITEFISH  
SALAD, HOMEMADE GOLDEN BAGELS, PASTRAMI,  
SABLE, MATZO BALL SOUP, LATKES AND MORE



Rose Foods

428 FOREST AVE. PORTLAND  
207 835-0991 ROSEFOODS.ME

Maine Summer -

It's just around the corner!



And we're here to help you make your next move.



QUALITY IS NOT A COINCIDENCE.



THE NEW VOLKSWAGEN TIGUAN

PORSCHE, AUDI, VOLKSWAGEN, & MAZDA  
www.morong.com

AFFORDABLE PRICES.  
GREAT DEALS.  
TOP TIER EXPERIENCE.

eastbrowncow.com



SUPPORTING MAINE'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE.

East Brown Cow is a proud sponsor of the 2025 Maine Jewish Film Festival.

LISA DiFRANZA

www.lisadifranza.com



It's an exciting privilege to serve as MJFF Festival Coordinator!