

76
Locarno Film Festival

GRAND
PRIX
SEMAINE
DE LA
CRITIQUE

WINNER
San Gió Verona 30*
BEST
DIRECTION

Israeli Competition
DOCAVIV
|2024|

MAKEDOX
2024

TALLINN
BLACK NIGHTS
FILM FESTIVAL
2023

fsff
TALLINN FILM FESTIVAL
DOCUMENTARY FILMS
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2024

ZAGREBDOX
OFFICIAL
SELECTION
2024

OFFICIAL
SELECTION
BDF
2025

KRAKOW
FILM FESTIVAL
DOCUMENTARY
COMPETITION
2024

DOCU
DAYS
UA 2024
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS
DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION

JF+BB

MONOGAMIA

a film by Ohad Milstein

Producer, Director, Cinematographer, Editor Ohad Milstein Narration May Elimelech Sound Design Shahaf Wagshall
Editing Assistance Oliva Ramirez de Haro Graphic Design, Second Camera Rahel Streiff Color Grading Dima Lydkhov Archive Avi & Uri Milstein
Sound Editing Lior Waitzman Matan Dormebus Linguistic Consultants Eran Sagi Eva Gustafsson Aya Elia



SYNOPSIS

Monogamia takes you on a roller-coaster journey into the world of love and intimacy within committed relationships. Follow the director's personal quest to bring back the love that once flourished between his parents. As you watch, the inevitable question arises: Can love indeed endure the test of time? Can the revelation of buried secrets revive the spark of long-lost intimacy? Does monogamy stop being monogamy after tasting the 'forbidden fruit'? Amidst this captivating exploration, consider the excitement and price of open relationships.



DIRECTOR STATEMENT

I started this cinematic journey with the hope of bringing my parents back together, looking at photos shot 50 years ago when they were a couple in love. They lie embraced by the Red Sea. These are pictures full of joy and tenderness.

Can these images be revived? Can intimacy be restored?

MONOGAMIA tells the story of my parents' love echoing my own marriage. Will my partner and I manage to avoid my parents' mistakes and learn how to preserve the spark?

MONOGAMIA is the third chapter in a family trilogy (preceded by "Week 23" & "Summer Nights"). It is a story of a search. A story of hope.

FILM DATA

LENGTH 73 min

COUNTRIES Israel, Germany

YEAR 2023

FORMAT DCP (Aspect Ratio: 16:9)

SOUND Stereo

LANGUAGES Hebrew / English

PRODUCER Ohad Milstein

DIRECTOR Ohad Milstein

CINEMATOGRAPHY Ohad Milstein

EDITOR Ohad Milstein

NARRATOR May Elimelech

SECOND CAMERA Rahel Streiff-Milstein

SOUND DESIGN Shahaf Wagshall

SOUND EDITING Lior Waitzman, Matan Dormebus

COLOR GRADING Dima Lydkhov

AFTER EFFECTS Ivan Denisenko

GENERAL ASSISTANT Oliva Ramirez de Haro

GRAPHIC DESIGN Rahel Streiff-Milstein

8MM ARCHIVE Uri Milstein, Avi Milstein

MUSIC RECORDING SUPERVISOR Asher Goldschmidt

LINGUISTIC CONSULTANTS Eran Sagi, Eva Gustafsson, Aya Elia

BROADCASTERS Channel HOT8, Israel,
Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (RBB) in
collaboration with ARTE

FUNDING Rabinovich Foundation for the Arts



FESTIVAL AND AWARDS

76 LOCARNO FILM FESTIVAL SEMAINE DE LA CRITIQUE World Premiere, 2023

« Grand Prix Semaine de la Critique SRG SSR »

TALLINN BLACK NIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL (PÖFF), DOC@PÖFF selection, 2023

ZAGREBDOX INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, International Competition 2024

DOCAVIV INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Israeli Competition 2024

KRAKOW INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, International Competition 2024

DOCUDAYS UA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Best of Fest 2024

SANGIO' VERONA FILM FESTIVAL, Documentary Competition 2024

« Best Direction »

MAKEDOX INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, International Competition 2024

FIVE LAKES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Documentary Competition 2024

BUDAPEST INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, International Competition 2025





CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Avi - my father is 79 years old, retired.

My father was born in Israel to a humble family: his father was a carpenter, his mother a nurse, both of his parents fled from Poland before the outbreak of World War II and immigrated to Israel. My father worked all his life as an employee, saving wherever possible.

He used to take care of all the problems in the house himself: blockages in the toilets, leaks in the walls, electrical problems, car problems, my father always used common sense and his good hands. Usually it was also successful. In the last couple of years, his sharp mind is no longer what it used to be, his hands are weakened, but my father continues to insist on doing everything himself. The situation at home deteriorated and slowly the house became a patchwork quilt. Thick black masking tape seals leaks in the shower and the same black masking tape also tapes up loose metal parts in his car.

My father is a peaceful man, he doesn't like to fight, certainly not with my mother. He prefers to deal with the problems by shutting his eyes and covering his ears. Slowly he distanced himself from my mother, blocking his heart to protect his health.

When he has a spare moment he spends his quality time with himself smoking his pipe.

My mother - Rita, 76 years old, shopper.

My mother was born in Uzbekistan. My mother's father died when she was a child and my grandmother raised my mother on her own. After the war, when my mother was 6 years old, they moved to Poland and from there immigrated to Israel. In her Youth, my mother focused on accumulating survival skills and street wisdom. When she was in the army she met my father, they got married and moved to live together in Eilat. It was the early 70's - days when the so called 'children of the sun' hippies were everywhere and Eilat was in fashion. My father worked in the Timna mines and my mother worked as a teacher, and later as a social worker. The combination of breathtaking beauty and the joy of life allowed my mother to achieve anything she wanted. However, quite early in their marriage, it was clear that my mother's destiny was not to be a hard worker. My mother was born to be free. A few years after they got married she stopped working, leaving this occupation exclusively to my father. Instead, she focused on what later became her specialty: the pleasures of life. For years, most of her day was spent in skipping between gyms, beauty salons, hairdressers, and clothing stores. Lots of clothing stores.



INTERVIEW

What inspired you to make a film about your parents' relationship?

It all started with a feeling of anxiety. I was frightened to look at my parents' relationship from the side. I was frightened by the way they dealt with the crisis in their relationship and to see how each of them closed up and drifted into their own world. My mother became a compulsive shopper, my father withdrew more and more into himself. The communication between them was disrupted, they hardly spoke. And when they did, it turned into a fight very quickly. When I looked at the pictures at the beginning of their journey together, they looked like a happy couple with a lot of love and appreciation for each other.

And then, the realization that love can change so decisively and fade over the years made me question my own relationship with my partner Rahel.

Is our relationship also doomed to a similar course? Is it possible to prevent such deterioration and withdrawal?

What was the experience of filming your parents and family like?

I feel it is a great privilege to film my family. Beyond the creative joy of creating a film, the curiosity and the processes of exposure and discovery that exist in every cinematic endeavor, focusing on the family allowed me to have some quality time with them that I could not have had in any other way. Without a doubt the process of "making" creates communication, and with it also comes a strong intimacy with family members. It is an intimacy that is created both during the shooting days and in post-production where the quality time is given by the deep familiarity with the materials in the editing process. So it is double the fun!

What learnings did you have after having the opportunity to learn more about your parents' story and their relationship and how did this influence your own perspective on love and relationships?

From my parents I learned about the importance of communication. It is the basis for growth and development, it is the basis for a sense of closeness and partnership. From working together with Rahel on the film, I learned about the importance of creating something together, recognizing the needs of the other side, accepting each other's limits, supporting and being there for one another.

There was and still is a dimension of risk to this film and its release to the world. The subject is very personal and sensitive. It's not trivial for us as a couple to put ourselves on the screen like that. But along with this risk, a very strong bond was created between my partner Rahel and myself. I feel that through the film we both learned about this power of a close-knit relationship that builds around a common life experience.

What would be the main questions you have about the traditional concept of love and relationships?

My main question about the traditional long-term relationship has to do with keeping the spark alive. I still do believe strongly in one long and meaningful relationship. A relationship based on deep acquaintance and communication. But in the period in which we live, a period in which the pace of life has accelerated a thousand times, in which aging has no value, or

perhaps the values which come with aging are despised and nullified, a time which encourages constant novelty and replacement, how is it possible to create such a stable and long relationship? Assuming that a couple begins their journey out of choice and loving one another, how can the spark of love be preserved for so many years?

What was the process of exploring and sharing your personal experience of relationships like for the film, and did you have any particular apprehensions or challenges in doing so?

When I was a young film student I studied with David Perlov, one of the fathers of Israeli documentary cinema. In the first part of his film "Diary" (1973), David films his daughter Yael eating soup. She invites him to eat with her. David is debating out loud between wanting to film the soup or eating it. This is actually the essence of the dilemma of every documentary filmmaker filming his personal life. Where is the line between life and the world of film? The making of MONOGAMIA was very much a search for this balance between my life and the world of film and at the same time a balance between my curiosity to explore the personal truth of the central people in my life (my parents and my partner Rahel), and the fear of revealing or pushing too much. These fine lines were constantly top of mind and my most significant challenge.

If your motivation for making this film was such a personal question, how do you expect audiences to react to it? What kind of discussions would you like to see generated in viewers after watching this film?

I feel that this film, along with the questions it asks, is relevant to many, many people. I believe that anyone who is in a marital or long term relationship, who was in such a relationship in the past, who wishes for one or avoids such a relationship can find a point of reference for their life in the film.

Keeping the flame alive in a long-term relationship is a challenge for many people. Based on your personal experience and your research for the film, what would you say are some of the key factors that contribute to maintaining an emotional and romantic connection over time?

The importance of communication as a basis for growth and development, for a sense of closeness and partnership. The importance of creativity and co-creation. Recognizing the needs of the other, supporting each other, being there for the other.

As an artist, how do you balance the line between sharing your personal experiences and maintaining some privacy in your life?

MONOGAMIA is the first of my films where I am directly sharing my own personal experiences and it is quite scary. This is my 8th film and my 3d personal film. In the prior two films involving my family, I had an observer role. I feel that as a member of my family who allowed me to get so close to them with my camera and also as a filmmaker, I have the obligation to experience what it means to be on the other side as well.

Rahel and I had many long conversations about what we are willing to share and where our limits are. Even though it might not seem this way, we are actually both very fond of our privacy. In the case of this film, I think that our curiosity about the truth is stronger than our fear of exposure.

MONOGAMIA is part of a trilogy, could you tell us about the other two parts and their awards?

MONOGAMIA is the third part of a family trilogy.

The first part - "Week 23" is a film about motherhood and the power of maternal intuition. It tells the story of our first pregnancy. A pregnancy that started as an identical twin pregnancy, and later got more complicated. When we received the news that one of the fetuses died in Rahel's womb, all the doctors and the immediate environment from my family and friends advised Rahel to abort the living fetus, for fear of significant damage. Doctors made sure to emphasize the likely risk of brain damage or physical disability of the living fetus. The film tells about Rahel's war in that system and the medical mechanisms around it and her fight with the conventions and cultural norms that surrounded her.

At the end of the film, our son Alva was born.

The second part - "Summer Nights" is a film about fatherhood. This is a film that I made during the summer vacation before Alva went to first grade. During the whole summer we had conversations before he went to sleep. Whispered conversations in total darkness. In those conversations in a state between awakesness and sleep, Alva unfolded before me the way he looks at the world, he talked about his fears and his passions. "Summer Night" is a glimpse into the inner world of a 6-year old child just before he falls asleep.

"Week 23" was nominated for the Israel Academy Award in 2016 and "Summer Nights" won the First Prize at the DocAviv International Film Festival and the Israel Academy Award for Best Documentary in 2021.

TRAILER

<https://youtu.be/gBtzjx9lJjc>

SEGMENT FROM THE FILM

<https://youtu.be/PQQJrbziEWo>



OHAD MILSTEIN

Ohad Milstein is an award winning Israeli documentary filmmaker and producer. He teaches Cinema at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design (Screen-based Arts Department) in Jerusalem and lives in Tel Aviv.

Ohad studied Cinema at Tel Aviv University and graduated from the Department of Art & Photography at The Bezalel Academy of Art and Design with an MFA.



FILMOGRAPHY

"Knock on the door" (2023)

* Best Documentary - 2023 Jewish Film Festival Berlin-Brandenburg

"Summer Nights" (2021)

- * First Prize - 2021 DocAviv Film Festival, Tel Aviv
- * Best Documentary - 2021 Israeli Academy Award (Ophir Award)
- * Best Documentary - 2022 Jewish Film Festival Berlin-Brandenburg

"Flood" (2018)

"Week 23" (2016)

* Nominated for the Israeli Academy Award (Ophir Award) for Best Documentary

"Planets- Four Variations of Detachment" (2014)

* Jury Special Mention for its Artistic Vision - 2014 DocAviv Film Festival, Tel Aviv

"Systema" (2010)

"Obsession" (2008)

* Nominated for the Israeli Academy Award (Ophir Award) for Best Documentary

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