



JELLYFISH

A FILM BY ETGAR KERET & SHIRA GEFFEN

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A ZEITGEIST FILMS RELEASE

JELLYFISH

a film by Etgar Keret & Shira Geffen

Winner of the Camera d'Or at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival

Poignant, often witty and exceedingly cinematic, JELLYFISH tells the story of three very different Tel Aviv women whose intersecting stories weave an unlikely portrait of modern Israeli life. Batya, a catering waitress, takes in a child apparently abandoned at a local beach. Batya is one of the servers at the wedding reception of Keren, a bride who breaks her leg escaping a locked toilet stall, ruining her chance at a dream Caribbean honeymoon. And attending the event with an employer is Joy, a non Hebrew-speaking domestic worker who has guiltily left her son behind in her native Philippines.

As this distaff trio separately wends their way through Israel's most cosmopolitan city, they struggle with issues of communication, affection and destiny—but at times find uneasy refuge in its tranquil seas.

JELLYFISH will be released in Spring 2008

FILMMAKERS' STATEMENT

We are two Israeli artists who have lived most of our lives in Tel Aviv. Consequently, making the sea the main protagonist of our debut feature seemed a logical step. The reality of Israel is so dense, so charged with violence, with suspicion and ideological intolerance, that the sea has become for many Israelis, a place of refuge, a place of shelter and comfort. This is because the sea is free, the only territory within the land of Israel where people can just be as they are and not be constrained by things such as a passport and social status.

The film is structured around several stories. The sea provides a common denominator, a collective subconscious, a space in which each of the characters can come face to face with himself or herself. Each of the main strands works as a different facet of a similar state of being - a different aspect of a single overriding mood of existential loneliness, steeped in the unrequited need for affection and communication.

These people need a medium through which to express and convey their feelings. Malika hugs Joy, the foreign-born domestic, in order to reach her own daughter, Galia. Michael discovers the desires and needs of his new bride through a suicide note left by a stranger he briefly encountered in a hotel. Batya is able to confront her own history through the intermediary of a lost child, a girl encountered on the beach.

The setting is Tel Aviv but this is not the ordinary Tel Aviv we know. Great care has been taken in framing the city in order to shift usual perceptions of place such as they are conveyed in most Israeli films.

Like a ship in a bottle, this over familiar city has been displaced, moved into a different context in order to generate new emotional parameters.

The characters are under the illusion that they can design their own destinies. But the reality is that they wander like jellyfish, without being able to exercise any form of control over their lives, shunted here and there by mysterious, submarine currents that hail from a distant past - traumatic or all too stereotypical events they may have experienced long ago.

In the end, some will overcome the forces that determine their lives. They will make their way down to the water's edge. And for just one short moment they will manage to stand upright in a place that is bright and true...and full of hope.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ETGAR KERET

Born in Tel Aviv in 1967, Etgar Keret is one of Israel's most acclaimed contemporary authors. His books, which are bestsellers in Israel, have also received international acclaim and have been published in 22 languages.

His collection *The Nimrod Flipout* was chosen by the *L.A. Times* and the *Boston Phoenix* as one of the best books of 2006. In 2007 he was shortlisted for "the world's richest short story award", the Frank O'Connor prize, for his collection *Missing Kissinger*. In Israel he has received the Book Publishers Association's Platinum Prize several times, as well as the Prime Minister's Prize, and the Ministry of Culture's Cinema Prize.

Over 40 short films have been based on his stories. The upcoming American independent feature film *Wristcutters: A Love Story*, which premiered at Sundance, was adapted from his novella *Kneller's Happy Campers*.

As a filmmaker himself, Keret's first short film *Skin Deep* (1996, 40 mins) won prizes at several international film festivals, and was awarded an Israeli Oscar.

Jellyfish is his first feature film as a director. As well as winning the Camera D'Or at Cannes he and his partner Shira Geffen won the Best Director Award from the French Artists and Writers' Guild.

Keret is also a lecturer in the film department at Tel Aviv University.

Bibliography

Pipelines (stories), 1992

Missing Kissinger (stories) 1994 [first published in English 2007]

Nobody Said it Was Going to Be Fun (graphic novel), Etgar Keret & Rutu Modan, 1996

Streets of Rage (graphic novel), Etgar Keret & Assaf Hanuka, 1997

Kneller's Happy Campers (novella & stories), 1998 [published in the USA in 2004 as part of
The Bus Driver Who Wanted to be God]

Dad Runs Away With The Circus, (children's book), Etgar Keret & Rutu Modan, 2000

Anihu (stories), 2002 [published in the USA in 2006 as *The Nimrod Flip-Out*]

Pizzeria Kamikaze (graphic novel), 2004 [published in the USA in 2004 as part of
The Bus Driver Who Wanted to be God]

A Moonless Night, (children's book), Etgar Keret & Shira Geffen, 2006

SHIRA GEFFEN

Born in 1971, scriptwriter and *Jellyfish* co-director Shira Geffen is an acclaimed writer of children's books and stageplays. Her plays have been performed in Israel and abroad.

Partners in life and in their work, Etgar and Shira are maverick spirits of the Israeli artistic scene.

JELLYFISH

(MEDUZOT)

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Cast

Sarah Adler (Batya)
Nikol Leidman (The little girl)
Gera Sandler (Michael)
Noa Knöller (Keren)
Ma-nenita De Latorre (Joy)
Zharira Charifai (Malka)

written by
Shira Geffen

directed by
Etgar Keret & Shira Geffen

cinematography
Antoine Héberlé

sound
Gil Toren Oliver Dô Hùu Aviv Aldema

editing
Sasha Franklin François Gédigier

production design
Avi Fahima

original music
Christopher Bowen

“La vie en rose” sung by Corinne Allal

produced by
Amir Harel Ayelet Kait
for LAMA FILMS
Yaël Fogiel and Laetitia Gonzalez
for LES FILMS DU POISSON

supported by the Israeli Film Fund
in co-production with ARTE France Cinema
and with the participation of Canal + / TPS Star / Keshet

Israel/France • 2007 • 78 mins • 1.85:1 • Dolby SRD
In Hebrew with English subtitles

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