The Tenth Annual MSU Israeli Film Festival
Hosted by the MSU Jewish Studies Program
Sunday and Monday, March 22–23, 2015
Wells Hall B-122

All movies are free and open to the public

Sunday, March 22

2:30–3:45 pm  The Garden of Eden (2012)
Director: Ran Tal
Runtime: 73 minutes. Hebrew, with English subtitles.

The documentary The Garden of Eden is the story of Sakhne springs, one of the most popular national parks in Israel. The film documents the park’s transformations over the course of a year while telling the poignant stories of its denizens. Among them: Yaacov, who has been on his own ever since his wife left years ago; Athir, a Palestinian who plans to move to Canada because life in Israel does not enable him to reach his full potential; Yael, who was forced to wed at the age of 13 and suffered years of physical and mental abuse; Itzhak, who has yet to recover from his brother’s death in war. Director Ran Tal, who deconstructed kibbutz communal childrearing in Children of the Sun, here profiles a cross-section of Israeli society in a film imbued with humor, beauty, pain, and compassion. Winner of Best Documentary at the 2012 Jerusalem Film Festival. Discussion to be led by Dr. Ronen Steinberg.

4:00 pm–5:45 pm  Bethlehem (2013)
Director: Yuval Adler
Runtime: 99 minutes. Hebrew and Arabic, with English subtitles.

Bethlehem is the story of the bond between Razi, an Israeli Shin Bet (secret service) officer, and his Palestinian informant, Sanfur, the younger brother of a Palestinian militant. Razi recruited Sanfur when he was fifteen years old, and developed a very close, almost paternal relationship to Sanfur. Now 17, Sanfur lives a double life as he navigates between Razi’s demands and loyalty to his brother. When the Shin Bet discovers how deeply involved Sanfur is in his brother’s activities, Razi is faced with an impossible dilemma. Co-written by Yuval Adler and Ali Waked, an Arab journalist who spent years in the West Bank, Bethlehem gives an unparalleled, authentic portrait of the complex reality behind the news. Israel’s nominee for Best Foreign Film at the 2013 Academy Awards. Discussion to be led by Dr. Yael Aronoff.

6:00–7:00 pm  Dinner Break

Meals available for purchase onsite. Catered by Woody’s Oasis Mediterranean Deli
Prices: $7 meal, 50¢ drink
Sunday, March 22 (continued)

7:00–8:45 pm  **Farewell Party** (2014)
Directors: Sharon Maymon and Tal Granit
Runtime: 90 minutes. Hebrew, with English subtitles.

A compassionate, humor-softened handling of a difficult issue that all must someday confront. A group of friends at a Jerusalem retirement home construct a machine for self-euthanasia in order to help a terminally ill pal. *The Farewell Party*, a poignant, provocative dramedy from Israeli directors Sharon Maymon and Tal Granit, boasts a dream cast of septuagenarian talent. With a finely honed visual sense and superbly ironic comic timing and dialogue, the movie pits the ethics of assisted suicide against the right to die with dignity. Winner of many Israeli and world film festival prizes in 2014. 
**Discussion to be led by Dr. Steven Weiland.**

Monday, March 23

7:00–8:30 pm  **Shattered Rhymes** (2014)
Director: Sami Shalom Chetrit
67 minutes. Hebrew and Arabic, with English subtitles.

This documentary film is a portrait of the blind Israeli poet Erez Bitton, who as a young child in 1948 was forced to emigrate from Morocco with his family. *Shattered Rhymes* tells the collective story of Moroccan Jews in Israel through Bitton’s groundbreaking poetry and his life’s milestones over the past 65 years. Bitton’s personal story includes the life-altering tragic event and journey since the moment he lost his eyesight at the age of 11. His blindness has afforded him a unique window on to Israel’s society, culture, and politics. *Shattered Rhymes* is a celebration of beautiful cinematography, Moroccan music, and exciting poetry. 
**The screening will feature an introduction and Q & A session with director Sami Shalom Chetrit, renowned Moroccan-born Israeli poet, author, and film maker.**

**********

IFF 2015 Festival Coordinator: Marc Bernstein
IFF 2015 Film Committee: Ariana Mentzel and Ronen Steinberg

We would like to thank our co-sponsors for their generous support:

Asian Studies Center, College of Arts and Letters, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, Department of English, Department of Linguistics & Languages, Greater Lansing Jewish Welfare Federation, Hadassah—the Women’s Zionist Organization of America (Lansing Chapter), Hillel Student Center, James Madison College, Kehillat Israel Congregation, and the Muslim Studies Program.

**Questions? Contact MSU Jewish Studies at (517) 432-3493 or email us at jewishst@msu.edu**