

News > NSW

# Jewish International Film fest devotees forge on in Sydney’s east

A Jewish International Film Festival is going ahead in Sydney’s east, with the venue’s owner describing rising anti-Semitism as “insanity” and “clearly un-Australian”. Read what attendees think.



Eilidh Sproul-Mellis

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 @Eilidh\_Mellis  2 min read November 15, 2023 - 8:02PM



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Californian photographer Ari Salomon, at the Jewish International Film Festival, said he's noticed posters called for Israeli hostages to be released torn down.  
Picture: Jonathan Ng

A Sydney cinema owner has described rising anti-Semitism and attacks on Jewish-owned businesses as “insanity” and “clearly un-Australian” as he forges ahead with a festival of local and international Jewish film screenings.

Eddie Tamir, artistic director of the Jewish International Film Festival and co-owner of the Ritz cinema in Randwick, hoped the festival would help heal the divide in the community.

Criticism of Israel, he said, has in some instances morphed into anti-Semitism locally and overseas.

“To say the least, it’s inappropriate and racist and clearly putting the world Jewish population into a state of concern and fear,” he said.

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John Holland

“It’s pressing all the trauma buttons embedded in the Jewish DNA.”



Jewish International Film Festival artistic director Eddie Tamir. Picture: Hamish Blair

The month-long film festival kicked off just weeks after Hamas’ attacks on Israel settlements and a music festival shocked the world.

“These are very tragic, bleak, sad times and there was the question of does one proceed with a Jewish film festival given there’s been enormous impacts on the Jewish community,” Mr Tamir said.

“We chose not to let terrorism influence the decision to do positive things in life and in the world ... it would be a victory to the perpetrators (to cancel it).

“The arts, and film in particular ... are all about the absolute positive multicultural messaging that’s so important to Australia.

“To present stories from different cultures to foster understanding within communities and between communities (is) more important than ever.”

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Ari Salomon at the Jewish International Film Festival at the Ritz Cinemas in Randwick on Wednesday night. Picture: Jonathan Ng

Israeli-American photographer Ari Salomon was one of about 70 attendees at the screening on Wednesday night, and said after arriving in Sydney just days ago from California, he’s already seen posters being ripped down in the suburb he’s staying in.

“Newtown is pretty similar to the Mission in San Francisco where I’m from, where posters calling for Israeli hostages to be released have been town down,” he said.

Mr Salomon “it was really nice to see” an Israeli vigil being held at Bondi Beach over the weekend, following consecutive weeks of pro-Palestine protests.



The 2023 JIFF features several films centred around the Holocaust, including the US documentary Vishniac, to be followed on Wednesday night at the Ritz by a panel discussion with photographers, war correspondents and documentarians.

Mr Tamir said every year he’s asked why filmmakers keep making Holocaust films after so many decades.

“This year, no one’s asking those questions,” he said.

“Unfortunately ... the Holocaust and the need to be vigilant about anti-Semitism and racism in general, is more relevant than ever.”

Moshe Rosenzveig, Director of the coinciding Head On Photo Festival and convener of the Vishniac panel, said Australians “need to think straight” about the conflict in Gaza, rather than become divided.

“In this sort of atmosphere it can be hard to trust each other,” he said.

“The real people are trying to find a solution, a way to coexist.”

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Ari1 hour ago (Edited)

Edit

Thanks for this article. The movie was both sad and also a beacon of hope that it was made and celebrated at this difficult time.

As mentioned, it was a co-presentation with the Head On photography festival.

Please come out and support this Israeli American photographer by attending my exhibition!

11 Nov – 26 Nov

Gallery hours: Thurs – Sun 11am–5pm

open late: Sat Nov 18 (till 7pm)

Opening: Sun Nov 19, 11am–1pm

Articulate Project Space

497 Parramatta Rd, Leichhardt NSW 2040

<https://arisalomon.com/exhibitions/head-on-photo-festival/>

👍

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Sandy D.1 day ago

I hope the film festival is a success. I do not recognise this country anymore. First the division and mud slinging

we saw with the recent referendum, now the Israeli/Hamas conflict. Why is it at the pro Palestinian rallies, is there never an Australian flag flown, yet, at the vigils for Israel, our flags are visible? Our politicians should be trying to unite this country, instead some, particularly the Greens are doing their best to divide it

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**Col**   1 day ago

I support this festival.

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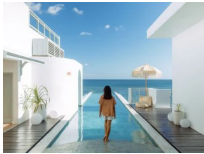
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