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For downloadable images, visit pbs.org/pressroom/

For the program companion website, visit www.pbs.org/independentlens/film-unfinished

***A FILM UNFINISHED, A HAUNTING EXPLORATION OF A NAZI PROPAGANDA FILM,
PREMIERES ON
INDEPENDENT LENS ON TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2011 AT 10 PM***

“It is a privileged experience to watch *A Film Unfinished*. There is no other historical document like it but, of course, its lasting value is as a human document.”

— Peter Rainer, *Christian Science Monitor*

In 1954, 60 minutes of raw footage once belonging to the Third Reich was discovered inside a concrete vault in East Germany. Shot in 1942 in the urban concentration camp known as the Warsaw Ghetto, the film juxtaposed shocking images of starvation and despair against scenes of wealthy Jewish residents enjoying fine dinners, dancing in nightclubs, and attending the theater. In 1998 — 44 years later — two additional film cans were found, revealing that the vignettes of the “good life” had been staged by the Nazis to create a hideously false impression. Directed by Yael Hersonski, *A Film Unfinished* probes deeply into the making of this now-infamous Nazi propaganda film. The film will have its broadcast television premiere on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by America Ferrera, on Tuesday, May 3, 2011 at 10 PM (check local listings). The film was released theatrically by Oscilloscope Laboratories.

Presenting the raw footage in its entirety, *A Film Unfinished* contains diary entries kept by the Jewish Council leader in Warsaw, court transcripts featuring testimony from a cameraman who shot the movie, and scenes of ghetto survivors reacting as they watch the film. After more than 70 years, no one has been able to find a single document revealing the identity of the film’s initiators,



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the purpose of the mysterious film, or why it was never completed.

Hersonski points out that the Holocaust not only presented inconceivable horrors, but also, for the first time, systematically documented those horrors. What does the footage, created by the perpetrators, tell us about the victims?

“For me, it begins with the victim’s gaze into the camera,” she says. “That gaze contains what is perhaps the only emotional truth not crushed under the wheels of propaganda, the only truth that cannot be possessed and that remains forever, as if to testify: ‘I was there, I existed in this world that words cannot describe.’”

Why the Nazis chose to make, then abandon, this propaganda film will never be known. What *A Film Unfinished* showcases, with its scene-by-scene refutation of “reality,” is the importance of bearing witness, and the reminder that image does not necessarily mean “truth.”

To learn more about the film, visit the *A Film Unfinished* interactive companion website (pbs.org/film-unfinished), which features detailed information on the film, including an interview with the filmmaker and links and resources pertaining to the film’s subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section, where viewers can share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.

About the Filmmakers

Yael Hersonski (Director) has been working as a freelance director and editor since graduating with high honors from the Sam Spiegel Film & Television School seven years ago. After serving as the content editor of the chief weekly documentary program of Channel 10 (an Israeli commercial television station), which won the Israeli Academy Award for Best Documentary Television Program in 2004, Hersonski currently edits documentary and fictional drama programs for Israeli television. *A Film Unfinished* is her first feature documentary film.

Noemi Schory (Producer) is a documentary film director and producer who founded Belfilms, an independent production house, in 1988. She is also active in many Israeli and international co-productions, primarily in the documentary field. In 2005, Schory was elected president of Input, the international public television conference. She also serves as a museum film director and producer for Yad Vashem, Israel’s official memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Itay Ken-Tor (Producer), a graduate of the Tel Aviv University Department of Film and Television, is a documentary film and television director and producer. He has been managing Belfilms since 2008, working on both series and single-feature documentaries.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community, or moment in history. Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by

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interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at www.pbs.org/independentlens. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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