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For downloadable images, visit pbs.org/pressroom

For the program companion website, visit pbs.org/independentlens/unmistaken-child

***UNMISTAKEN CHILD,
THE SEARCH FOR A
REINCARNATED TIBETAN MASTER,
PREMIERES WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7 AT 10 PM
ON THE PBS SERIES INDEPENDENT LENS***

“Unmistaken Child does more than take you inside a closed culture in an almost unreachable part of the world. It bears witness to a strange and mysterious process, the search for the childhood reincarnation of a recently deceased and revered Tibetan master. Its privileged glimpse deep into unfamiliar spiritual territory has the strength of revelation.”

— Kenneth Turan, The Los Angeles Times

(San Francisco, CA) — Nati Baratz’s *Unmistaken Child* follows the four-year search for a reincarnated Tibetan master as told through the eyes of Tenzin Zopa, the young monk chosen to fulfill the ages-old sacred quest for the “unmistaken child.” A revelatory glimpse into the hidden world of Buddhist beliefs and culture, the film premieres on Wednesday, April 7 at 10 PM (check local listings) on the PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Maggie Gyllenhaal.

After decades of isolated meditation in a mountain cave, Lama Konchog, a world-renowned Tibetan master, passed away in 2001 at the age of 84. The Dalai Lama charges Konchog’s devoted disciple, the shy and devoted Tenzin Zopa, to search for his master’s reincarnation in the form of a young boy. Tenzin, who served as Konchog’s disciple from the age of seven, has doubts about his worthiness, but accepts the formidable task of finding the chosen child.



Scenes from Unmistaken Child, coming to Independent Lens April 2010.

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Tenzin sets out alone on this unforgettable quest, crossing starkly beautiful mountains on foot, through breathtaking landscapes and remote traditional Tibetan villages that appear to have been unchanged for hundreds of years. Assisted by astrology, signs in dreams, and the whispers of villagers, Tenzin travels by mule, foot, and even helicopter, asking everyone he meets about young children in the area. He listens to stories about baby boys with special characteristics, and performs rarely seen ritualistic tests to determine the likelihood of reincarnation. Eventually he presents the child he believes to be his reincarnated master to the Dalai Lama for the final decision.

While *Unmistaken Child* brings to light a rarely seen aspect of the Buddhist faith, the true revelation is the journey of Tenzin, the man. Modest, shy, and with a delightfully impish sense of humor, Tenzin appears to be of another time and place, and yet is living profoundly in the present. Alone on his secretive quest, he is able to share his thoughts and feelings only with filmmaker Baratz; his simple honesty and openness make the viewer a privileged partner in the young monk's passage to the next phase of his remarkable life.

To learn more about the film and its subjects, visit the companion website for *Unmistaken Child* at pbs.org/unmistaken-child. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmaker and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section where viewers can share their ideas and opinions.

About the Filmmaker

Nati Baratz (writer/director/producer) was born in Jerusalem, Israel. He first became interested in Tibetans in 1993 on a trip to Tibet. Years later, while attending a course at Kopan Monastery, he met Tenzin Zopa. When Zopa asked participants to pray for the finding of his master's reincarnation, Baratz was struck with the idea that this story had to be made into a film. Zopa agreed to participate, and allowed Baratz to document the four-year search for the "unmistaken child."

Filming in the remote Himalayas was extremely difficult, and both Baratz and his cameraman suffered from altitude sickness, which can be fatal. At one point they had to cross an abyss on a path narrower than their shoes. One of the production horses lost his footing and fell, but luckily was saved by bushes below and pulled up by villagers. With no electricity in the area, the crew relied on a solar charger that was carried on horseback to power the production.

Baratz has been working as a freelance director and producer since graduating from the film school at Tel-Aviv University in 2000. His most notable films include *Tel Aviv-Kyrgyzstan* (2001) and *Noches* (2004). Both documentaries were broadcast on TV in Israel.

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 the *Independent Television Service* (ITVS), the series is supported by 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.