

BACKWARDS

A short documentary

16:18 minutes, 2018

Directed by Dana Gelman

The refugee crisis encapsulated in a single night: a crowd of people wait in front of the immigration office for the tiny chance that they'll be granted a refugee status.



(Photo: Keren Rosenberg)

Summary:

At the outskirts of the Tel Aviv “bubble”, in the neighbourhood known as Florentine, a play is enacted nightly, with hundreds of work-seeking migrants and asylum seekers waiting to enter the offices of the Department of Immigration, their gateway to a better life. As the lights of the city go out, the line outside the Immigration Office begins to grow. Everyone wants to be among the first in line when the doors to the office open at 8:00am. By midnight, hundreds of people have lined up, most of them Ukrainian. While one sleeps on the sidewalk, another tries anxiously to organize a list of names. Most of them won’t get in anyway, and even the few that do will go through a procedure that doesn’t provide much chance of success.

Backwards encapsulates the refugee crisis into a single night: exhausted multitudes of people patiently persisting in their effort to begin a new life—as the rest of the world sleeps.

About the film:

The people waiting in line are a microcosm of conflicts, power struggles, frustration, and chaos, incongruous among this young, outgoing Tel-Aviv neighbourhood. There is a kind of inner world with laws and a cast of characters all its own, most of whom hail from the (former) Soviet Block: wheeler-dealer types, work contractors, lawyers, police, and office security guards. This is the sole place in all of Israel where migrants can apply for the coveted work permit. The film accompanies them throughout a single night of waiting.



(Photo: Dana Gelman)

Festivals and Awards:

International premiere at **IDFA 2018** (Amsterdam, Netherlands). The film won **the spacial jury award** for student documentary. French premiere at **Poitiers Film Festival 2018** (Poitiers, France). North American premiere at **Palm Springs ShortFest 2019** (Palm Springs, CA). Romanian premiere at **Astra Film Festival** (Sibiu, Romania). **Other Israel Film Festival** (New York, NY).

About the Director:

Dana Gelman (born 1986) is a cinematographer, video editor and documentary filmmaker living in Tel Aviv. Backwards is her third student film ("Wonderful Here" 2014 - final project for the BFA in the Photography department of Bezalel academy of art and design in Jerusalem ; "James is Leaving" 2017 - summer film for the MFA at The Steve Tisch School of Film & TV, Tel Aviv University), that was made in the context of a joint project on the topic of Israel's declaration of Independence—"70 years after"—with the Steve Tisch School of Film and Television at Tel Aviv University and with Channel 8 HOT. Along with her creative work as a filmmaker, Dana works with Shoval film distribution company, and is currently working on her final film project for the MFA.



Directed and edited by Dana Gelman
Series Editors: Amir Tausinger, Hilla Shitrit
Production: Hilla Shitrit, Efrat Cohen / Gaudeamus Productions, Kobi Mizrahi
Cinematography: Dana Gelman
Research: Daniel Resnitsky, Misha Pletinsky, Sofia Reis
Sound Design: Dana Gelman, Tomer Avraham
Sound Mix: Jonatan Englender / DB Studios
Color: Peleg Levi