

CASSIS FILMS PRESENTS:



A FILM BY
DAPHNI LEEF

BEFORE MY FEET TOUCH THE GROUND



Israel | 2017 | Documentary | 77 min

DIRECTOR Daphni Leef
PRODUCERS Yael Abecassis, Hillel Roseman
WORLD SALES Hedva Goldschmidt, Go2Films

July 2011, a young Israeli video editor named Daphni Leef decides to protest against rent prices by pitching a tent in the city center. Within a few days a whole boulevard is full of tents, as a modest protest against housing policy grows into a national protest movement for social justice. In cities throughout Israel, and mass rallies are organized all over. Daphni at first combative and exuding an attractive idealism, she gradually becomes exhausted. As director, Daphni looks back on this turbulent period when she was transformed from a naive young woman into a celebrated and controversial national icon.



Director's Note

When The Social Protest Movement in Israel started I thought I would never make another film. Pressure to go into politics was massive and the obligation to the values and goals of the movement became a part of my heart and soul. I was becoming part of the public domain, part of the mission.

The more time passed, the more I felt a need to revisit the events that occurred to me and my country. A meeting with Yael Abecassis and Hillel Roseman in the production company's office changed everything. I got out of this meeting knowing I must make a film. I wanted to tell my side of the story, to set things straight. During the summer of the protest, Yonatan Pihotke, who worked for Channel 10 News, started documenting me for TV. He got to me a few days before I pitched the first tent. Little did I know his intention was to show how I was going to fail. He got the most access, however, most of the footage was left out of the news.

We began the production by taking out over 80 hours of footage from the channel. You can see in the film a few of the conversations Yonatan and I had during the protest, scenes that reveal the tension between the object and the subject. In many ways taking over the material was reclaiming my identity as a subject.

In the beginning, watching the footage was intolerable. Gradually, I understood I had to let go of my original goals of making the film. It took me many years until I was able to deal with the material, not run away from it, revising what I thought happened to what actually did. Understanding that in many ways that you see very little from inside the eye of the storm. The process of making the film was a process of healing, of acceptance and eventually confronting the difficult question of how to tell the story, or even more so, who is telling it?

Daphni Leef from the protest movement or Daphni the young woman who has her own narrative, a private emotional one? It became very clear to both Tal Shefi and myself, in the editing room, that the story begins from a breaking point. It was very difficult wanting to scream "I was not broken" and understanding that this is not entirely the case.

Putting together the scenes from the protests became intertwined with footage I have shot on my phone in the years following, while trying to gain back my own point of view. It was a very challenging process personally and artistically.



Emotionally, because I had to keep asking myself how candid I was willing to be. Criticising myself during breaking points and confused moments might not be smart politically, however, there's no other way to tell the story. Not if you want it to be authentic. The camera sees it all. This took time. I did my best. Artistically, it was a challenge because, like in real life, the narrative of the movement competes with the personal one. However, the connection between the two is so close you must deal all the time with letting them support and not weaken one another.

Also, this is a first person personal piece. It was a great challenge to build this point of view from a collage of various sorts of footage from the news, social networks and personal phone cameras, all shot from different perspectives.

In the end, I must say I think this film was a great present to myself, for healing personally and for using this rare opportunity to tell my story.

Bio



DAPHNI LEEF
DIRECTOR (BIO)

Filmmaker and social activist. Born in 1986 in Jerusalem, based in Tel Aviv. BA Graduate of The Steve Tisch School of Film and Television in Tel Aviv. Since age 16, she has edited music videos, short films, TV shows and feature length documentaries such as "PEPE's last fight" (directed by Michael Alalu), nominated for best documentary by Ophir Israeli Awards (Israel Academy Awards) 2017. While filming her graduation film in the summer of 2011 her life took a different direction. Daphni pitched a tent in the center of Tel Aviv, protesting the high prices of housing. Her tent ignited the largest social protest movement in Israel. The film was never completed. Before My Feet Touch the Ground is her first feature documentary film.



Tal Shefi
EDITOR & CO -WRITER

Tal Shefi is a Tel Aviv based Film Editor, Script Writer, Editing Mentor and Teacher, and Documentary film Director. She studied film making in NY, LA and Tel Aviv, and has Edited, Written and Mentored over 50 Documentary and Drama projects in Israel, India, and Europe. Projects Tal collaborated on won many International awards, such as the "Best Journalistic Work Award" for "The little Tea boy from Gaza" in London and "Life in Stills", for which she received the "Best Editing Award" at the DocAviv FF. Tal's Directorial debut Documentary feature film "Not Your Life" was released in 2013 at the Haifa IFF, and received the "most Promising Director" award at the International women FF in Rehovot. Tal is currently editing a Dutch Feature length Documentary by the name of "God's Address" and an Independent feature film by the name of "15 Years"

cassis films

Cassis Films produces feature films & documentaries with a focus on female and social issues. Among their productions is AYA which was nominated to the 2014 Oscars in the best live action short film category, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me Venice film festival, Best Feature Debut in Haifa Film Festival and Before My Feet Touch The Ground documentary film by Daphni Leef



Yael Abecassis
PRODUCER

Actress and Producer Yael Abecassis is one of Israel's leading actresses. Throughout her career she collaborated with top Israeli and international film directors, including: Amos Gitai, Gideon Raf, Olivier Panchot, Radu Mihaileanu, Salvatore Mereu, Stéphane Giusti, Ronit and Shlomi Elkabetz. Yael debuted her acting career in 2001 in the film "Tel Aviv Stories", and has since then starred in some of Israel's most renowned Films and TV Series, including "Kadosh", "Alila", "Live and Become" and the acclaimed drama series "Hatufim" (English title: "Prisoners of War") which served as the basis for Showtime's Emmy Awards winner "Homeland". In 2011 Yael Abecassis started her own production company - Cassis Films. Yael is also the founder of "Women's Spirit", a non-profit organization that supports victims of violence, and offers them tools to reach financial independence.



Hillel Roseman
PRODUCER

Hillel Roseman grew up in a kibbutz in the south of Israel and now lives in a village in the north near the Mediterranean coast. Hillel started his career in the Israeli film industry in 1994, first as a truck driver, and then as a location manager. From 1997 to 2001 he studied cinema at the 'Sam Spiegel' Film School in Jerusalem and graduated with honors. In the ten years prior to the establishment of "Cassis films" Hillel worked mainly as a line producer in feature films such as "Campfire", "Good Morning Mr. Fidelman", "The Slut", "The Bubble", "Little Heroes" and on several TV series including; "In Treatment", "Papadizi" and "Sesame Street". In 2011 he founded Cassis Films together with Yael Abecassis.



Credits

EDITOR **Tal Shefi**

CINEMATOGRAPHER **Johnathan Pihotka**

SCREENPLAY **Daphni Leef, Tal Shefi**

SOUND DESIGNER **Alex Claude, Daniel Meir**

ORIGINAL MUSIC **Eli Shargo**



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