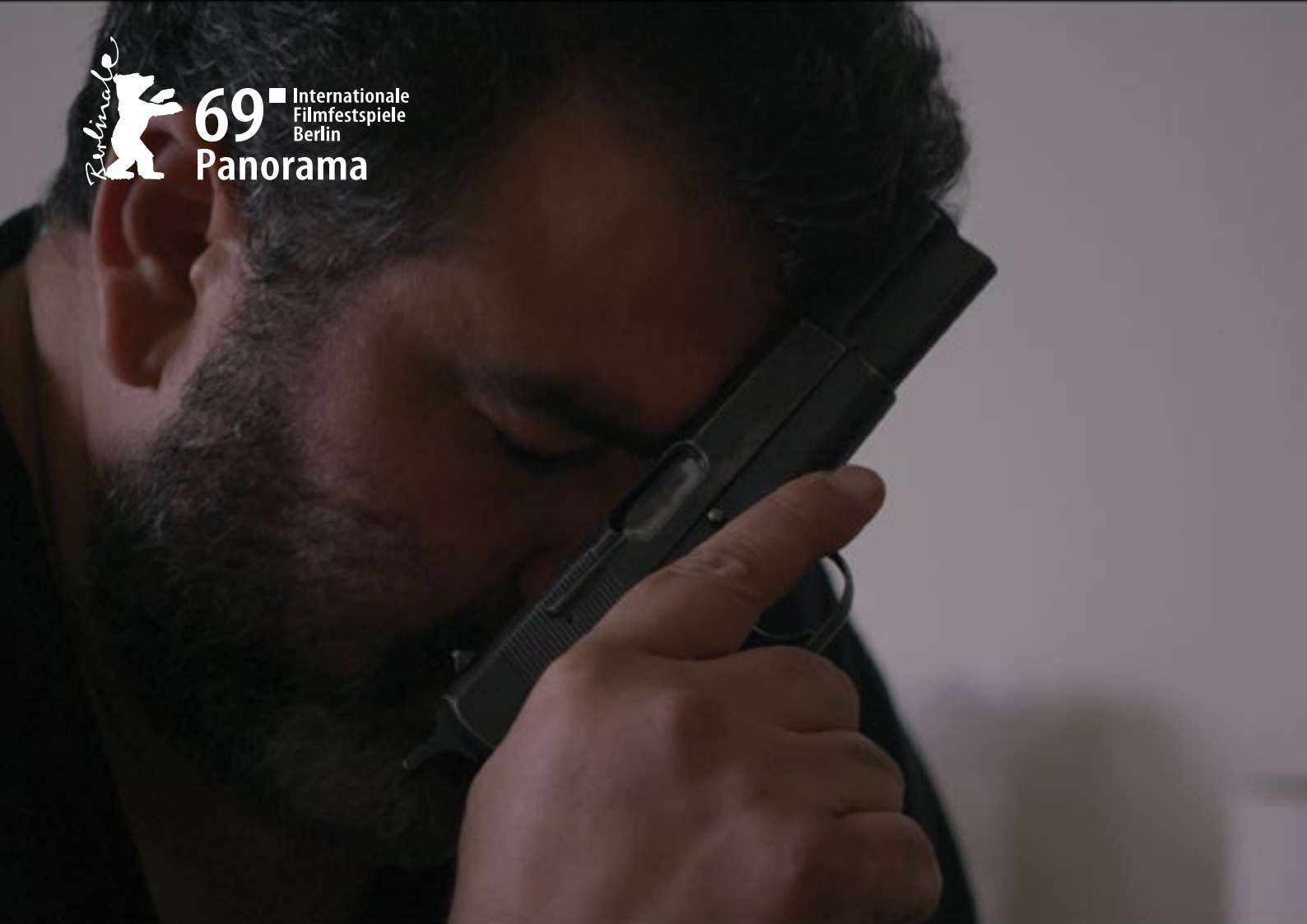


 69[■] Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Panorama



Love Trilogy

CHAINED

A Yaron Shani Picture

2019 – Israel / Germany – 4K – 112 min – 1:2.40 – 5.1 – Hebrew

Logline

A police officer is being accused of sexually attacking two boys. His helplessness under the investigation, and his inability to have a child of his own, push him toward the edges of his existence, where anything can happen.

Synopsis

Rashi has been a police officer for 15 years, a guardian of others and the law, always in control. Despite his constant exposure to violence, he dearly hopes to have a child with his wife Avigail. Then Rashi's world is shaken. He is accused of sexual assault and suspended from the force due to his conduct during a standard police-check on some privileged boys. While defending his innocence at work, he finds himself clashing at home with his Lolita-like step-daughter who is as assertive and stubborn as he is, defying his authority. His wife becomes gradually distant. Helpless and chained by his need to dominate, he becomes a danger to himself and his beloved ones.

Director's statement

Chained and its two trilogy sisters (*Stripped* and *Reborn*) are part of the next revolution in cinema, as it rejects the familiar lines between fiction and real life. The actors you see in *Chained* are experiencing the deep nature of their actual and authentic life, the drama is deeply connected to their core identity and much of it has really happened to them. For almost a year, they have been living as their characters - step by step in chronological manner, without reading a script or being aware of what the next step is going to be. The emotions they experienced were raw and spontaneous - a laugh was a real burst of joy and surprise. Anger was genuine, not performed. Nevertheless, everything was carefully controlled and directed in order to escalate into moments of explosive sincerity. The outer frames of plot and theme are closely constructed, but the building blocks of emotions, energies and dialog are deeper, richer and more intense than anything I could write in a script. The outcome offers a completely new definition to storytelling, filmmaking and drama. Unlike fiction filmmaking, the drama is not performed. It is alive and spontaneous and therefore highly authentic. Yet, it is controlled and follows a well defined plot. Unlike niche approaches which blur the lines between fiction and life, we are able to experience the most intense moments from the most intimate positions. It's like being a fly on the wall when a real emotional climax unfolds. It is something that is almost impossible for fiction or documentary to achieve.





Director's biography

Born in 1973, Shani is a graduate of Tel Aviv University Film Department. In his thesis film *Disphoria* (2003), he experimented with a unique way of making fiction with the authentic personalities of non-actors. *Disphoria* was awarded internationally at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival and Sehsuchte Film Festival, and set him off to his debut feature length film *Ajami* (2009, co-created with Scandar Copti) which became a landmark in Israeli Cinema. *Ajami* was an Academy Award Nominee (Oscar) for Best Foreign Film; it has received a special distinction in Cannes; received five Israeli Academy Awards, among them - Best Film, Best Director and Best Script; and won 15 other International awards including Golden Alexander at Thessaloniki IFF, Sutherland Trophy at London IFF and Best Feature Length Film at Jerusalem IFF. *Life Sentences* (co-directed with Nurit Kedar) won the Award for Best Documentary at the Jerusalem Film Festival 2013. Since 2012, Shani is working on his highly ambitious project - *Love Trilogy*. A world of intertwined human stories told from three different angles. Each film stands for itself, and the three-combined present an epic and surprising scope on the notion of love. *Love Trilogy - Stripped* premiered at Venice – Orizzonti 2018 and won awards for Best Editing and Best Actress at Haifa IFF 2018. *Love Trilogy - Chained* will premiere at Berlinale Panorama 2019. *Love Trilogy - Reborn* will be completed during 2019.

Filmography

Love Trilogy – Chained (EYNAYIM SHELI)

2019 – Director/Writer/Editor
Berlinale 2019 – Panorama

Love Trilogy – Stripped (EROM)

2018 – Director/Writer/Editor
Venice Film Festival 2018 – Orizzonti
Haifa International Film Festival 2018 – Winner - Best Editing, Best Leading Actress

Ajami

2009 – Director/Writer/Editor
Academy Award Nominee for Best Foreign Language film
Cannes Film Festival 2009 – Winner - Camera d'Or Special Mention
Winner of 5 Israeli Academy Awards, including:
Best Film, Best Director and Best Script
Winner of 15 international awards including:
Golden Alexander - Thessaloniki IFF
Sutherland Trophy - London IFF
Best Full-Length Feature - Jerusalem IFF

Life Sentences (MISHPATEI HAHAIM) – Documentary

2013 – Director/Writer/Editor/Producer
Jerusalem Film Festival – Winner - Best Documentary

Disphoria – Short

2003 – Director/Writer/Editor/Producer
Karlovy Vary Fresh Films Fest – Special Mention
Sehsuchte International Student Film Festival
– Winner - The Audience Award

The Jaffa Project – Short Documentary Series

2002 – Artistic Director
Jerusalem Film Festival – Winner - Best Documentary



Leading actor's biography

Eran Naim

Born in 1970, served at the 890 paratroopers in the Israeli army. Upon his release, he enlisted in the Israel Police for the role of a detective for 15 years. He has played the detective role in Yaron Shani's 2010 Academy Award Nominee for Best Foreign Language film- "Ajami". Nowadays, he is based in Holon and working as security manager. He is a father of five.

Stav Almagor

Born in 1984, is a freelance graphic designer, living and working in Ramat Gan, Israel. She's a graduate of the Art and education department at the Seminar Hakibutzim College. Studied photography at Hadassah College and art at Beit Berl College, where she focused in the field of video art. In the past, she worked as an assistant chef and pastry chef. She writes poetry and is interested in Buddhism, gender studies and informal education.

Stav Patay

Born in 2002, studying at Ort Holon high school in the 11th grade in the film department. She has completed a three-year acting course at the Holon Theater where she took part in leading roles at different plays. Currently she's studying at "The Studio" - acting school at the Cultural Hall in Rishon Letzion.



About Love Trilogy

Human Love is as complex as life itself. It contains so many paradoxes and contradictions and holds the meaning of our existence. Each of the trilogy films concentrates on a different dimension. Each film is complete in itself and can be viewed alone to make a whole experience, but the combination of the three provides a wide-scope picture of the characters' intersecting lives from different angles and in different times. The films can be seen in any order, making a different meaning each way. The content was not written by a script-writer. It lived freely in front of the camera. The actors were not acting, they were being. They were actually living the lives of their characters and in a way - their most personal self. In that sense, the drama is not constrained to clichés and stereotypes. It is as real and genuine as life.

Stripped

2018 – Israel / Germany – 6K – 120 min
– 1:2.40 – 5.1 – Hebrew

World premiere in Venice – Orizzonti 2018

Synopsis

Ziv is a 17-year old talented musician. He still lives with his parents and is about to enter the army where he will be forced into 'manhood' and stripped of his innocence and dreams. Across the street lives the beautiful 34-year old Alice, a successful author and emancipated woman. A random meeting between the two will catalyze attraction and understanding, then following a terrible incident, destruction and growth. Alice will be stripped of her confidence and strong social image, and left to struggle to find inner peace.



Reborn

2019 - Israel / Germany – feature length film

In Post-production

Synopsis

Reborn focuses on three women: Avigail, Yael and Na'ama. Avigail is the perfect mother, wife to Rashi, and nurse. She sacrifices herself for everyone, but deep inside she feels alienated and directs her anger against herself. Yael is a wounded daughter, abandoned by her mother, she wants to be the mother of all orphans, neglecting the one who most needs her love, her young sister Na'ama. Na'ama is living with a secret sexual trauma. She is mothering her aging father by day and degrading herself as a sex worker by night. Yet there is hope through connections. These women can help each other to change, break the cage of their self-destruction and be reborn.

Q & A with Yaron Shani

Can you tell us the origin of this project?

In 2011 I have put *Ajami* behind me. I had one 2-year-old daughter, and I was going to be father again. The birth of my daughters have changed my life profoundly. My emotional and intellectual connection to life became much deeper than I have ever experienced. I began to feel a great need to work with these emotions and insights. I have always been a researcher of life before I became a filmmaker. I realized that I must make another film, which will be my gift of love to all children and parents in the world - an honest look at who we are, and how much suffering we put on ourselves and others, but also how graceful and amazing life is. movies are often sheer entertainment (emotional and intellectual) but they can also be a medicine. They can open up our hidden wounds and let in light of change. *Love Trilogy* is my medicine.

Why a trilogy?

In the past nineteen years I have been exploring a new approach to filmmaking. The writing of the script is actually a very long process of studying the actual reality behind my themes. I am mainly concerned about the psychological nucleus which generates human behavior in real life. My actors are being chosen by their deep connection to the personality of the characters. In many ways, my actors' authentic lives have prepared them for their roles. They know more than me about what it means to be a tough policeman, an insecure woman or a 13 year old girl. All I have to do is to give them the dramatic space to explore and express it freely. In a common filmmaking we constrain the story, actions, dialogues and emotions to the narrow imagination of the filmmaker. It is mostly planned and performed and therefore it can be easily contained in a package of a full-length feature film. I knew that like in real life, my way of filmmaking will explode with endless expressions of raw and sincere experiences. While shooting it already became apparent that this project is much bigger than a single full-length film. Since we've built a very flexible production, which contained a year-long shooting period, I could plan my shooting accordingly in order to build a wide scale experience - like a universe made of three separate novels. Each novel can be read alone as a whole experience, and the three can be read in any order to build a wider and deeper picture, where characters and stories mirror each other.

Please elaborate on this walk on the line between fiction and real life?

Words and actions are easily faked, not emotions. Fiction filmmakers tend to concentrate mainly on texture - words and actions which have limited dramatic impact. I concentrate on the origin of words and actions - emotions. Emotions cannot be scripted or performed as they come from the unconscious. They just appear without intention or control. My goal is to find the right people who can identify deeply with the characters and let them live the story - step by step in chronological manner - like in real life. The actors never read a script and receive no direction (except in moments of extreme emotional or physical challenges, where we direct and act in the classical way, in order to avoid hurtful or shameful surprises.) This unawareness helps the actors forget themselves in the moment, and like in a hypnotic state, they become the characters. What happens is magic - real emotions ignite the most authentic dialogues and actions. All I have to do is plan a flexible and sophisticated way of capturing it on film. Although the actors experience the drama spontaneously and freely, the drama itself is carefully constructed and controlled. It's sounds paradoxical, but it's not. The unique mixture between fiction

and life can be explained in the four stages of production: When **writing** the initial script, I don't use much of creative freedom. I carefully observe reality, and construct its essence in a script. My scenes are very loyal to what happens in real life and the script is constantly being rewritten through the next stages of production. I'm **casting** personalities, not actors, since my "actors" are not acting - they are being. By getting to know my actors personally I can expect them to be gentle in a certain event or tough. I can prepare myself for their spontaneous behavior in each scene. The final cast rewrites the script according to the new ideas and expectations it brings, and sets the actors off to experience the history of their characters. I plan these **preparations** very carefully in order to make my actors identify deeply with their characters. In this stage, we actually experience the life of the character - family bonds, work, dreams, conflicts etc. If I prepare my actors right, they will enter the shootings fueled by the right energy and knowledge, which will push them to certain directions I want. Due to the fact that I've carefully studied the actual reality behind the story, and also got to know and prepared my actors, I can expect how their spontaneous improvisations will evolve. What happens in the **shootings** is deeply connected to the personal life of the actors, and what they experienced in the preparations, and therefore I don't need to tell them anything. They know better than me who and how and why. Of course, they never read a script. They are just living as someone else, who is actually a reflection of themselves. Although they don't know what I expect of them, they are actually behaving according to my expectations. My **production** is built in a way which gives me as much flexibility as possible, because we know where we start, but we don't know where (and when) we end. At the end of the shoot I have a huge amount of raw and diverse content. The **editing** is similar to the work of a sculpture, who starts with a huge lump of marble and little by little he carves away small pieces to find a diamond inside.

Why is it important for you to work this way?

Because sincerity is the most important thing in life. Imagine your loved one experiencing a climax of emotions in front of you, and you know that he/she is faking it. How would you feel? Sincerity, honesty, truth and trust are the ground of everything. My actors are not acting, they are being the characters. This approach is using the fictional scenery in order to connect to the deep truth we never dare to express, in a way which we cannot find in fiction nor in documentaries. At its peak - It's exploding with emotional intensity, experienced from the most intimate position, and it's not fake, it's not make believe, it's the real thing.

How all this connects to the main narrative and theme of *Chained*?

Chained follows a respectful policeman who gradually loses his job, his pride and his family. What does it mean to be a policeman in real life? What kind of people choose to dedicate their lives for this dangerous occupation? How does their personality affect their work, and is work affecting their family life? What does it mean to lose your powerful status as guardian of the law? If we haven't been there, we cannot really know. Eran Naim, the main actor knows a lot about it, like the other actors in the movie who know their characters in ways I could not even imagine. The details are too personal, therefore I can't elaborate. I can only say that thanks to the fictional frame, the actors can relive and deal with their personal daemons and in the process express emotions they would never dare to express in real life. Through them we get a chance to experience genuine and profound moments in others' lives, which in a strange way mirror our own.

As in *Stripped*, you use blurs with naked bodies. Why ?

The blur effect is a technique which was planned when I began writing. In my way of filmmaking - where lines between what is true and what's not are blurred - a person is sometimes real and sometimes fictional; nudity is sometimes real and sometime not; a discrete identity is sometime real and sometime not. It's easy to expose all these when they are fake, when we are dealing with completely fictional characters, but here it's often personal and true. The respect and sensitivity comes from the real prices of exposure in real life. Just as I wouldn't expose the most vulnerable body parts of your daughter, and just as I wouldn't expose a discrete identity in a documentary, I wouldn't do it here. In a hipper sexualized and even pornographic culture like ours, it's also an important statement, and let's not forget that one of the main themes in *Love Trilogy* is violence through body and sex. Once I've decided to do it, the blur gained more functions, like pointing out places in the frame which attract violent attention, a tool for storytelling (in one story an extra hasn't got a face, and in the other it's the main character), and sometimes it's a visualization of psychological detachment which is a common thread in the trilogy.

What will happen in the third film *Reborn*?

Oh, *Reborn* is not the "third" film. It can be the first, or second, as you can watch the three films in any order. *Reborn* tells the story of characters who are at the back stage of the other two films. It can be watched alone as one piece. It is the most gracefull of the three. If you've already watch *Stripped* and *Chained*, *Reborn* will definitely surprise you, and will deepen your understanding and emotional connection to all the characters in *Love Trilogy*.



Cast

Rafi "Rashi" Malka	Eran Naim
Avigail Malka	Stav Almagor
Yasmin	Stav Patay
Barda Private Investigator	Asher Ayalon
Asi	Yaniv Assaraf
Dimri	Yaniv Dimri
Hezi	Udi Ohana

Crew

Written and Directed by	Yaron Shani
Producers	Saar Yogev, Naomi Levari (Black Sheep Film Productions)
Co- Producer	Michael Reuter
Line Producer	Alona Refua
In co-production with	The Post Republic, Electric Sheep
With the support of	Israel Film Fund, Gesher Multicultural Film Fund, Mifal Hapais, ZDF/Das Kleine Fernesehspiel and ARTE
Cinematographers	Shai Skiff, Nizan Lotem
Edited by	Yaron Shani
Sound Recordist	Nir Alon
Sound Designer & Mix	Aviv Aldema



International press in Berlin

Rendez-Vous
Viviana Andriani: +33 6 80 16 81 39
viviana@rv-press.com

Aurélie Dard : +33 6 77 04 52 20
aurelie@rv-press.com

World sales

Alpha Violet
In Berlin: Gropius Bau #103
Virginie Devesa: +33 6 2041 1137
Keiko Funato: +33 6 2983 5108
info@alphaviolet.com
www.alphaviolet.com

Photos credits: ©Nizan Lotem & Shai Skiff



Love Trilogy

CHAINED

A Yaron Shani Picture

Black Sheep Film Productions & The Post Republic present

With **Eran Naim, Stav Almagor, Stav Patay** Cinematographers **Nizan Lotem, Shai Skiff** Sound Recordist **Nir Alon** Sound Designer and Mix **Aviv Aldema**
Line Producer **Alona Refua** Co-Producer **Michael Reuter** Producers **Saar Yogev Naomi Levari** Written, Directed and Edited by **Yaron Shani**