

Set in Tel Aviv, New Israeli Film ‘Jellyfish’ Shines With Virtue, Veracity

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on June 3, 2008 - 2:25am

- [Beaufort](#) [2]
- [Etgar Keret](#) [3]
- [Jellyfish](#) [4]
- [Magnolia](#) [5]
- [Movie Review](#) [6]
- [Nikol Leidman](#) [7]
- [Noa Knoller](#) [8]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [9]
- [Paul Thomas Anderson](#) [10]
- [Shira Geffen](#) [11]
- [The Band's Visit](#) [12]
- [Zeitgeist Films](#) [13]



CHICAGO – It has been a banner year so far for the Israeli film industry. Following the American debuts of “[The Band's Visit](#) [14]” and “[Beaufort](#) [15],” we now have the stunningly composed and heart-rending “Jellyfish”.

Unwinding like a Tel Aviv version of Paul Thomas Anderson’s “Magnolia” – but warmer – “Jellyfish” follows several lives steeped in moral crisis and offers redemption like an elusive brass ring.



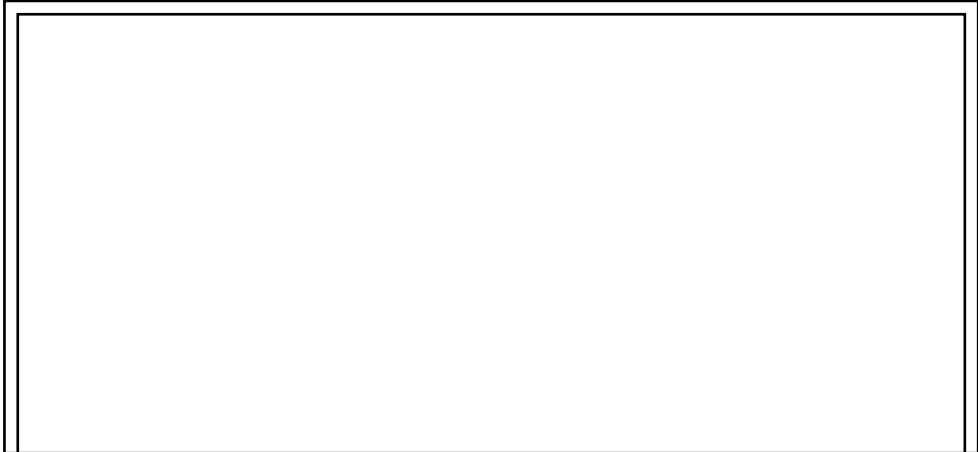
An underachieving wedding waitress with career and mother issues searches for answers while staring at the sea. An unusual 5-year-old child approaches her in a bathing suit and life-preserver ring.

Since the little girl seems separated from her parents and circumstances, she adopts the other lost soul as her temporary guardian.

Meanwhile, a wedding that the waitress was working at has gone wrong after the reception. The bride suffers a broken leg, which forces honeymoon plans to be moved to a tacky Tel Aviv hotel nearby.

Anxious and bored, the groom begins a friendship with a woman – a resident of the hotel – who seems to be a writer.

Almost as soon as she has appeared, the little seaside girl has disappeared. This generates a tailspin for the waitress that results in the loss of her job, a tense reconnection with her estranged father and a horrendous accident in the street.





Noa Knoller as Keren in “Jellyfish,” which is a film by Etgar Keret and Shira Geffen.

Photo credit: Zeitgeist Films

All these characters engage and disengage often during the same meeting interval. There’s a sense of destiny within each of the new relationships. This begs for an emotional cure from a collective buried sorrow.

The city of Tel Aviv is used as an atmosphere that affects all the proceedings. The class distinctions are prominently displayed as well as the fatalistic nature of life during wartime.

The city has been a target of terrorism in the last 10 years. The long Mediterranean coastline is a well-used setting for the interaction of memory and magical realism. As well, the waters attempt to wash away the internal sins.

The soul of the film is a story that maximizes each character’s journey in a lovely cinema vérité framework.

RELATED IMAGE GALLERY



[View our full “Jellyfish” image gallery.](#)

[16]

RELATED READING



[Read more film reviews from critic Patrick McDonald.](#) [9]

Writer and director Shira Geffen along with co-director Etgar Keret discover lyrical qualities in the simple exposition of recollections, childhood and even a tacky advertising poster.

These moments are mesmerizing and surprising especially in combination with the narrative conclusions. Geffen’s script is a poignant intersection of the regrettable past and the transitions that must occur to move on.

Whether the newlyweds realize their commonality, the writer finds her words or the waitress forgives herself, it’s all dependent on energies swirling within each of them. These are powers that can either save or condemn them. In this 60th-year celebration of Israel, this film feels like the whole country.

“Jellyfish” opened in Chicago on May 23, 2008 at the Music Box Theatre.



[17]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [18]
Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [17]

© 2008 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 20 2024 - 8:00am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/2627/set-in-tel-aviv-new-israeli-film-jellyfish-shines-with-virtue-veracity>

Links:

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hollywoodchicagocom>

[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/beaufort>
[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/etgar-keret>
[4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/jellyfish>
[5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/magnolia>
[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
[7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/nikol-leidman>
[8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/noa-knoller>
[9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/patrick-mcdonald>
[10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/paul-thomas-anderson>
[11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/shira-geffen>
[12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/the-bands-visit>
[13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/zeitgeist-films>
[14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/1841/israeli-directorial-debut-the-bands-visit-built-on-series-of-bittersweet-exquisite-moments>
[15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/1929/academy-award-nominated-beaufort-ponders-question-of-why-we-fight>
[16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/image/tid/3012>
[17] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>
[18] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#pat>