

## VIDEOS RECEIVED

### **BAL EJ: THE HIDDEN JEWS OF ETHIOPIA**

a film by Irene Orleansky  
[www.ireneorleansky.com](http://www.ireneorleansky.com)



Though it has been formally announced that with the last emigration of Falash Mura, there are no more Jews left in Ethiopia, there are still a

number Jews living in Addis Ababa and the North Shewa region of Ethiopia, most of whom practice pre-Talmudic form of Judaism secretly. They split from the Beta Israel who settled in Northern regions of Ethiopia since Biblical times and even had the only independent Jewish Kingdom in the world. The migration of the Beta Israel from the area of Gondar to North Shewa was gradual with its pick in the 19th century. Beta Israel began their migration from North Shewa region to Kechene village in the northern part of today's Addis Ababa when Emperor Menelik II decided to move his palace from Ankober to Entoto and later to Addis Abbaba. Named Bal Ej, which means craftsmen, for for their skills in crafts, the community members played an important role in building the capital of Ethiopia Addis Ababa. Bal Ej of North Shewa and Kechene were forced to convert into Christianity. For centuries they have been persecuted by their Orthodox Christian neighbors who slandered them as buda or evil-eyed and hyena-people and have been deprived of the basic rights such as ownership of land, the reason for adopting crafts such as pottery, weaving and iron smithery.

The stigma and discrimination persist till nowadays. Though they appeared Christians outwardly, inwardly they never abandoned Judaism and continued practicing Judaism secretly. Only recently, the youths of the community opened a synagogue in Kechene neighborhood of Addis Ababa where they hold their services openly; the rest of the synagogues are not visited by strangers and their location and practices are kept in strict secret. Because of persecutions, out of 40, only 15 cryptic synagogues have survived till today. In spite of the fears of murder and persecutions, Beta Israel of North Shewa keep faithful to their beliefs and ancient Hebrew traditions, some of which have been completely forgotten by the rest of the Jewish world.



## HOW TO LET GO OF THE WORLD AND LOVE ALL THE THINGS CLIMATE CAN'T CHANGE

a film by Josh Fox  
Bullfrog Films, 2016  
[www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/howto.html](http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/howto.html)



In his new film, Oscar-nominated director Josh Fox (GASLAND) continues in his deeply personal style, investigating climate change – the greatest

threat our world has ever known. Traveling to 12 countries on 6 continents, the film acknowledges that it may be too late to stop some of the worst consequences and asks, what is it that climate change can't destroy? What is so deep within us that no calamity can take it away?



## J. C. ABBEY GHANA'S PUPPETEER

A film by Steven Feld  
2015, VoxLox Distribution



This film documents an exceptional fifty-year artistic career, from Accra's streets to Ghana's villages to international TV. In fifteen delightful puppet shows, Mr. Abbey is joined by musicians Nii Noi Nortey and NiiOtoo Annan and filmmakers Nii Yemo Nunu and Steven Feld to chronicle Ghana's music since independence in 1957. The marionettes perform ethnic songs, dances and stories, but equally the sounds of highlife, Afrojazz, Afro-rock, reggae, and contemporary hiplife. The innovative soundtrack includes historical documents from radio, TV and broadcast, and LP, as well as new compositions commissioned and performed to playback. This fifth feature in the Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra series mixes styles of historical documentary and contemporary music video. Through the pleasures of performance it reveals the cosmopolitan politics that intertwine ethnic, traditional, national, and global musical styles in Ghana today.

## THE ACTIVISTS. WAR, PEACE, AND POLITICS IN THE STREETS

a film by Melody Shemtov  
Bullfrog Films, 2017

[www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/acts.html](http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/acts.html)



Activists and activism have long been a part of the struggle for peace and justice in American politics and society. Activists have fought battles for civil

rights, voter enfranchisement, collective bargaining, and an end to wars. While these struggles have sometimes yielded significant victories, and at other times resulted in disappointing defeats, activism has always been driven by ordinary people who give freely of their time and resources to try to bring about their visions for a new world. However, activists — as well as how they fit into the political process — are often overlooked or misunderstood by their fellow citizens. The *The Activists: War, Peace, and Politics in the Streets* brings to life the stories of ordinary people who tried to stop and end the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. At best, activists had limited influence over the conduct of military policy after 9/11. Yet, their experiences in the antiwar movement helped them to learn about speaking out in the face of injustice. They inspired others to do the same during the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street movements. Indeed, democracy requires more than just one vote every four years. It requires continued pressure by citizens on their government. This is what democracy looks like!



## DISTURBING THE PEACE

A film by Stephen Apkon and Andrew Young  
2016, Bullfrog Films



“Disturbing the Peace” is a story of the human potential unleashed when we stop participating in a story that no longer serves us and, with the power of

our convictions, take action to create new possibilities. “Disturbing the Peace” follows former enemy combatants--Israeli soldiers from elite units and Palestinian fighters, many of whom served years in prison--who have joined together to challenge the status quo and say “enough.”

The film reveals their transformational journeys from soldiers committed to armed battle to nonviolent peace activists, leading to the creation of Combatants for Peace. While based in the Middle East, “Disturbing the Peace” evokes universal themes relevant to us all and inspires us to become active participants in the creation of our world.



## THE RETURN

a film by Kelly Duane de la Vega,  
Katie Galloway  
2016, Bullfrog Films



In 2012, California amended its "Three Strikes" law--one of the harshest criminal sentencing policies in the country. The passage of Prop. 36 marked the

first time in U.S. history that citizens voted to shorten sentences of those currently incarcerated. Within days the reintegration of thousands of "lifers" was underway.

"The Return" examines this unprecedented reform through the eyes of those on the front lines--prisoners suddenly freed, families turned upside down, reentry providers helping navigate complex transitions, and attorneys and judges wrestling with an untested law. At a moment of reckoning on mass incarceration, what can California's experiment teach the nation?

