

GUM FILMS PRESENT

SHIRA HAAS

ALENA YIV

# ASIA

A FILM BY RUTHY PRIBAR



Design: Michal Wolff

TAMIR MULLA | GERA SANDLER | EDEN HALILI | OR BARAK | NADIA TICHONOVA | MIRNA FRIDMAN

DOP DANIELLA NOWITZ | EDITOR NETA DVORKIS | CASTING ESTHER KLING | COMPOSER KARNI POSTEL | SCRIPT EDITING OMRI BURSTYN | PRODUCTION DESIGN TAMAR GADISH  
SOUND RECORDING AMIR BOVERMAN | SOUND DESIGN SHAHAF WAGSHAL | COSTUME DESIGN INBAL SHUKI | MAKE UP HILA ELKAYAM | LINE PRODUCER MATAN GAIDA | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GAL NAE  
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER JANJA KRALJ | PRODUCERS YOAV ROEH & AURIT ZAMIR | DIRECTOR & WRITER RUTHY PRIBAR



# ASIA a film by Ruthy Pribar

Israel / 2020 / 85 min. / Hebrew and Russian

A GUM FILMS production

- Developed in the prestigious Cannes Film Festival residency program
- Winner of The Sam Spiegel Alumni Fund for First Features
- Cinemart 2017 official selection
- Supported by Israel film fund, The Jerusalem film fund, The new foundation for cinema, YES TV & Mifal Hapais

## **Logline:**

Asia is the single mother of 17-year-old Vika. Vika's deteriorating health urges Asia to finally find her voice as a mother and to embrace and cherish their time together.

## **Synopsis:**

Asia's motherhood has always been an ongoing struggle rather than an obvious instinct. Becoming a mother at a very early age has shaped Asia's relationship with her teenage daughter Vika. Despite living together, Asia and Vika barely interact with one another. Asia concentrates on her job as a nurse while Vika hangs out at the skate-park with her friends.

Their routine is shaken when Vika's health deteriorates rapidly. Asia must step in and become the mother Vika so desperately needs.

Vika's illness turns out to be an opportunity to reveal the great love within this small family unit.

## **Director's note:**

Asia never chose to be a mother, yet she deeply loves her daughter. While Asia devotes herself to caring for Vika, she still cannot quite understand what she, as a mother, can offer her daughter. Asia's failed attempts at helping Vika, eventually bring them closer together. Asia gets to know her daughter; her fears and her longings. She learns that what Vika needs most, is her unconditional love.

This is a film about motherhood, sacrifice, and love. It's about the ability and the choice to take responsibility for another person's life. Even when it means letting go.

**Director & writer: Ruthy Pribar**

## **Bio (short)**

Ruthy graduated with honors from Sam Spiegel Film School in 2012. Her short films LAST CALLS and THE CAREGIVER were screened and awarded at numerous

festivals worldwide. ASIA, which was chosen for Cannes Festival Residency Program, is her first feature film.

### **Bio (Long)**

Born in Israel in 1982, Ruthy Pribar graduated with honors from The Sam Spiegel Film School in 2012. During her studies she received a scholarship from "The America-Israel Cultural foundation" for promising director. Her short films LAST CALLS and THE CAREGIVER have both been screened at many international film festivals, garnering numerous awards. Alongside her work as a film director, Ruthy works as an editor on both fiction and documentary films.

Ruthy has participated with her work at Rotterdam's CineMart, and is an alumna of the Cannes Festival Residency Program. Her work focuses on delicate moments of human emotions and interactions. ASIA is her debut feature film.

### **Producers: Yoav Roeh & Aurit Zamir**

Owners of Gum Films, graduated the Sam Spiegel film school, and are in the art and business of making movies for over 15 years. To date Gum Films has produced more than 10 narrative feature films, several TV series, and many documentaries.

Selected projects : "The Testament" (Best film Haifa ff, Venice official selection) by Amichai Greenberg / "Manpower" by Noam Kaplan (Cinemart, Cannes Atelier, Palm Springs) / "Off white lies" by Maya Kenig (Berlinale, Busan) / "Cupcakes" by Eytan Fox / "The Cursed" a TV series by Haggai Levi / "The Lab" by Yotam Feldman (Cinema du reel, Dok Leipzig).

## Q & A with Ruthy Pribar – director & screenwriter

### **What was your inspiration for making Asia?**

Fourteen years ago, my older sister passed away after a few unbearable months in a hospital bed. All I felt at the time was a terrible sense of helplessness in the face of her constantly deteriorating condition. My mother spent days and nights at her side. The hardships she experienced seemed to have little effect on her endless devotion. Amid all the pain, she remained strong and focused. She never allowed herself to reach a breaking point.

For a long time, I was absorbed in my own pain over the loss of my sister. Only years later I was able to look back and contemplate over my mother's endless dedication and empathy. Those moments, etched in my memory, haunted me unceasingly. They prompted me to explore the subject of motherhood. To

understand how and when, a woman becomes a mother.

This is how I came up with the character of Asia. A young woman who never chose motherhood, and to whom the role doesn't come easily at all. The small age difference between Asia and Vika combined with their physical resemblance, undermine the implicit division of mother and daughter. From this point of departure, I went on to explore the elements of motherly devotion; its nature, development and boundaries.

### **Alena Eve and Shira Hass who play Asia and Vika, look and feel like a real mother and daughter. How did you achieve that?**

The moment I saw Alena and Shira together it was very clear they were just what I was looking for. Their chemistry and resemblance blew me away. Throughout rehearsals I made sure there would be some amount of distance between them. I wanted them to get closer as shooting progressed, just like their characters in the film. Sinking deep into the characters, both Shira and Alena drew from their own personal experiences into their roles.

Casting Alena brought so much liveliness to Asia's character. She's not a burned-out middle-aged woman. She is strong, independent and beautiful. She is at her prime. Vika portrayed by Shira, shares an amazing resemblance to her, and yet in the film you realize very early on that she is terminally ill. When you see the two of them together you can't help but think that Vika will never become the woman her mother is. They both know that. This creates an unbearable distance and tension between them. It makes their relationship feel real.

### **What was the biggest challenge in making the film?**

While in advanced pre-production I found out I was pregnant. I was prepared to shoot the film in two months no matter what, but it didn't go quite as planned. No Israeli insurance company agreed to insure the production with a pregnant director. I had to postpone filming until after I gave birth. I wasn't a mother yet and already I was making sacrifices. I had been waiting years to make ASIA, and there I was, watching my dream slip away between my fingers.

I wrote a film about motherhood long before I became a mother. I then went on to direct it when my son was only 9 months old. During production I'd wake up every morning at 4 AM to nurse my son, and then go on to a full shooting day. It was crazy, but it was also a blessing in disguise. I put so much of my new motherly experiences into this film.

## **Most of the crew members in Asia are female. What influence did it have on the film?**

This is a film about women, told from a woman's point of view. As a filmmaker and film lover, I think the world still lacks films about women that are made by women. Having mostly female crew members was a conscious choice. I am very aware of the inequality in the film industry. I decided that when I get the chance to make a film, I will do everything in my power to put women in key roles. I wanted to work with women who put their lives and insights into their work. I think it shows.

## **What do you want people to take with them as they step out of the screening?**

I would like viewers to embrace the moments of laughter and grace in the film. I'd like them to hold onto the vibrant beauty in the fragile intimate relationship that evolves between a mother and her daughter. This is a relationship like no other, an ultimate bond that can not be separated. The compassion Asia and Vika find for one another is uplifting. Although dealing with difficult subject matters, this film is meant to give viewers a sense of hope.

### **Cast:**

Alena Yiv - Asia

Shira Haas - Vika

Tamir Mulla - Gabi

Gera Sandler - Stas

Eden Halili - Natalie

Or Barak - Roy

Nadia Tichonova - Valentina

### **Crew:**

Associate producer : Janja Kralj

DOP: Daniella Nowitz

Editor: Neta Dvorkis

Casting: Esther Kling

Composer: Karni Postel

Sound designer: Shahaf Wagshal

Sound Recording: Amir Boverman

Production Design: Tamar Gadish

Costume design: Inbal Shuki

Make up: Hila Elkayam

Line producer: Matan Gaida

Assistant director: Gal Nae

**Technical details:**

Shooting Format: 2K

Screening Formats: DCP

Spoken Language: Hebrew / Russian

Subtitles: English

Frame Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1 (1998X1080)

Sound: 5.1/stereo

**Production Company Contact Details:**

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