

MENEMSHA FILMS & PARKCHESTER PICTURES

Present In Association With SUNDANCE CHANNEL

A Film By Hilary Helstein / Narrated By Maya Angelou

AS SEEN THROUGH THESE EYES

A New Feature Documentary About A Brave Group Of People Who Fought Against Hitler And His Reign Of Destruction Using The Only Weapons They Had....The Expression Of The Human Spirit

Opening In New York at the Cinema Village and other area venues on October 2nd, 2009

Director **Hilary Helstein's** *AS SEEN THROUGH THESE EYES* narrated by **Maya Angelou** will open its New York engagement at the Cinema Village and other area venues on October 2nd, 2009.

AS SEEN THROUGH THESE EYES is a window into the surviving art and artists of the Holocaust. This film, however, is more than a Holocaust study; it offers an incredible look at the survival mechanism of humankind, regardless of race or religion, and the profound need to communicate at any cost. The film reveals the emotions of the prisoners from the inside out; through the eyes of the witnesses and the expression of the human spirit.

The film features interviews with survivors who have given us something that history couldn't; a journal of the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of the artist, through the eyes of people who by the very act of creating, rebelled and risked their lives by doing what they were forbidden to do. Acclaimed Nazi Hunter **Simon Wiesenthal** is featured with his sketches made during his captivity in the Mauthausen death camp; Westchester resident **Ela Weissberger** is featured as a young child in a rare Nazi propaganda film of the children's opera 'Brundibar' filmed in the 'model ghetto' Theresienstadt. The day after filming all but two of the children, Ela being one, were sent to their deaths in Auschwitz. Brooklyn resident **Frederick Terna** tells how creating clandestine art gave him a sense of total control in a place where there was no freedom; **Judith Goldstein** of New Rochelle speaks about her childhood and how art helped her survive in the Vilna ghetto – site of the death pits of the Ponary Forest; she made a promise to record to tell the world what happened. And **Dina Gottliebova Babbitt**, who sadly died this summer, and Roma Gypsy child **Karl Stojka** tell how their lives were spared by the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele (the Angel of Death) – Babbitt by being forced as his personal artist to paint portraits of Gypsy men, women and children he then used in his monstrous experiments, and Stojka, who has painted over 1,000 canvases because he 'doesn't want to forget anything,' as Mengele's errand boy. Their art, and that of hundreds of others – survivors as well as those who perished at the hands of evil – presented in the film are documents echoing the message "Never Again."

Director/Writer/Producer Hilary Helstein worked extensively with Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation and is currently the Executive Director of the Los Angeles Jewish Festival. Other members of the creative team include Executive Producer **Jerry Offsay** (*The Believer, Diabolique*), music by Sony's **Anna Nalick** and Grammy Award-winning **Lorin Sklamberg** of The Klezmatics. The film is also partially scored with the melancholy harmonica music of **Henry Rosmarin** who just days before death in the gas chamber was brought to the camp commandant and told "Play me Schubert, you miserable dog!" He survived the rest of the war by playing for the SS in their mess hall, "It may look like just an instrument, but to me it is a lifesaver."

There was one other, however, who did not communicate as an artist, although he tried. His realization that he would be unsuccessful as an artist fueled his desire to paint a larger picture of his twisted vision, and the signature on the canvases, which open the film, read **Adolf Hitler**. *AS SEEN THROUGH THESE EYES* exposes the irony that its artists succeeded in the very arena in which their oppressor failed.

Screeners of *AS SEEN THROUGH THESE EYES* are available for **review & interview** purposes.

Hilary Helstein / Ela Weissberger / Frederick Terna / Judith Goldstein are available in NYC for interviews

