



RE-EMERGE
by DANI ROTSTEIN





"This is the story of a people who were scattered over all the world and yet remained a single family... a community which time and again was doomed to destruction and yet, out of the ruins, rose to new life."

Abba Kovener

Polish-Israeli Poet

A man with a shaved head and a goatee, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt with a small blue pattern and a black backpack, stands behind a rusty metal gate. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The gate has a padlock on it. In the background, there are palm trees and a white building.

RE-EMERGE: A 9-PART DOCUMENTARY SERIES

From award-winning filmmakers Dani Rotstein and Isaac Feder comes a poignant exploration of the struggles and triumphs of emerging Jewish communities in Latin America. Through intimate conversations with community members, Rotstein delves into the journey of discovering and reclaiming their Jewish faith and the challenges they face as they strive for acceptance and a sense of belonging.

| 9 Episodes | 40-Minutes Each |

The Journey

Based on our research, here are the locations we've identified where we will find inspiring and moving stories of emerging Jewish communities.

New Mexico



Mexico



Guatemala



Puerto Rico



Costa Rica



Colombia



Ecuador



Peru



Brazil



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Story

Our documentary series will visit pockets of Latin America, where people have been discovering their Jewish faith. Some of these individuals have unknowingly been following Jewish traditions for decades but are just now re-tracing their roots. Others are embracing Judaism anew, simply out of sheer conviction and love for the Torah.

However, the path is rocky and the journey turbulent, as these emerging communities are met with resistance, not just from people outside the Jewish faith but from those within it as well...



What's truly remarkable is how they brave these challenges by taking matters into their own hands. In towns where there is no synagogue and no existing Jewish community, they create their own - educating themselves about the religion through YouTube, celebrating holidays in each other's homes, finding rabbis online and building connections thread-by-thread. They have built their own strong, thriving Jewish communities literally from scratch.

We join New Jersey native, Spain-based filmmaker, and Jewish community leader Dani Rotstein as he immerses himself in Latin Jewish cultures and sees a side of the Jewish community that is starkly different from what he's grown up with and always known...



Over one too many bowls of Mexican Matzo Ball Soup, Dani sits down with the locals and understands what drove them to fall in love with the faith enough to not only change their religion but also dedicate their lives to serving the community and learning about Judaism.

The series is both a love letter to these emerging communities, showing their dedication and faith, and a wake-up-call to the rest of the Jewish population.

Should we welcome them with open arms?





Themes

Acceptance

"All of us Jews have been through moments of discrimination. And now, we are making similar mistakes towards the converts."

The struggle for acceptance within the emerging communities is a theme that is at the forefront of this series. What does it mean to be Jewish? Does DNA really matter, or is there such a thing as a Jewish soul which can come to love and respect the faith regardless of one's background?



Community

"Being Jewish is not the same as practicing Judaism. To be Jewish is to be a part of a community. And you can be a part of a community by blood, or by conviction."

Visiting these places, it is clear that the bonds within the emerging Jewish communities are sometimes stronger than those within more established Jewish communities. There is a heightened sense of family, and an eagerness to help and look out for one another.



Identity

”Some people are born with a Jewish soul, but not into a Jewish home or life.”

What does it mean to ‘belong’ to a community? Each individual has a different story of how they came to embrace Judaism. For some crypto-Jews, it came from rediscovering their roots, for others, it came from a sense of love and fascination for the Jewish way of life, and sometimes it was just an unknown gravitational force pulling them towards the faith.

But the core message that shines through when exploring these reasons is that none of them is “more” or “less” valid than the other. At the end of the day the only sense you’re left with after a conversation with any of the members of the emerging communities is one of pride and joy. One should witness how devoted they are to the Jewish faith.

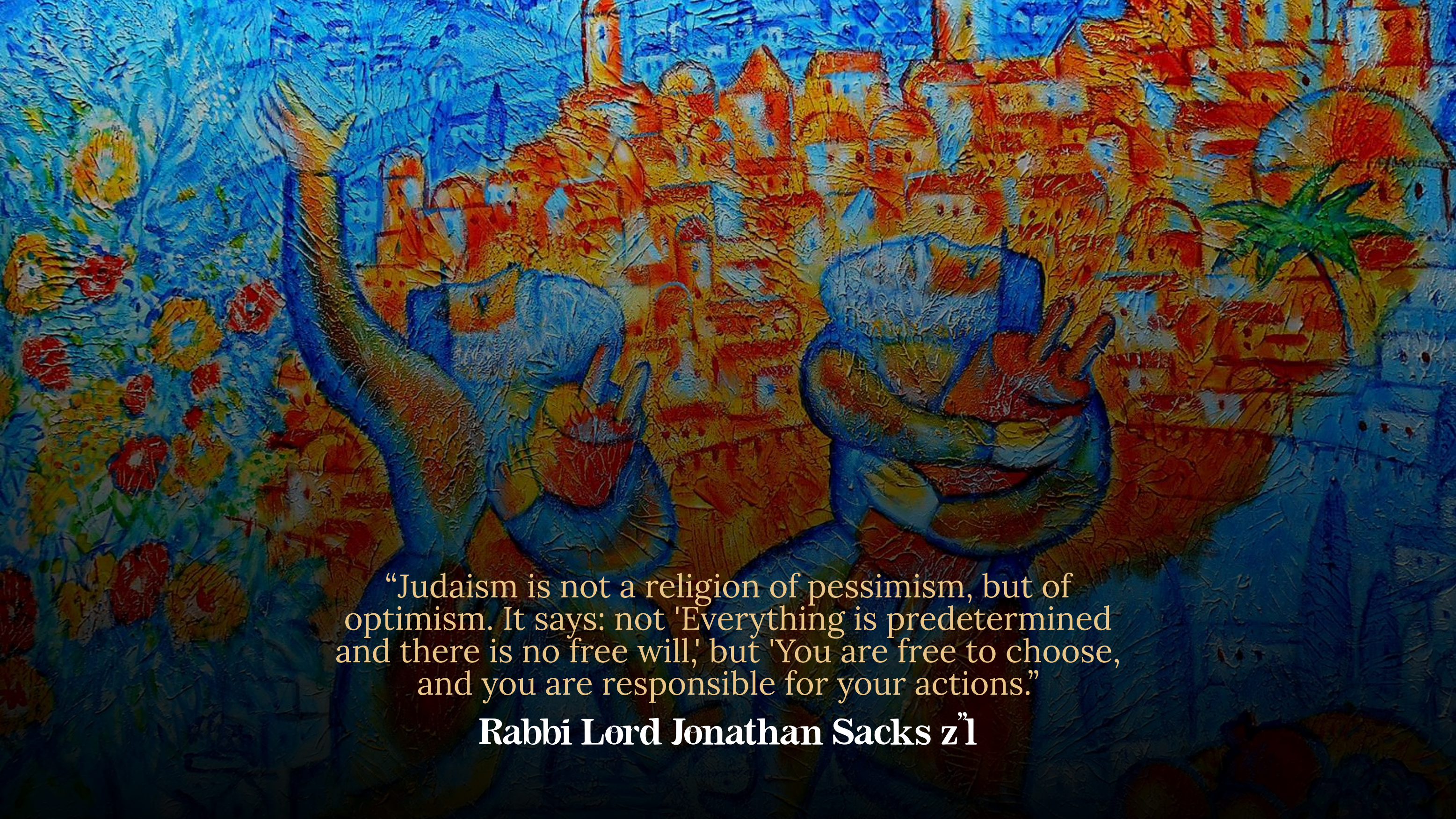


Faith

"If you ask me to prove if I'm Jewish, I probably won't be able to. But I can show you my heart. My heart is 100% Jewish."

The series explores the power of faith to unite people like few other things can. It celebrates the Jewish way of life and through the lens of the devotees helps viewers (Jewish and non-Jewish alike) see the purity and beauty in the religion and the profound impact faith can have on our lives.



The background is a highly textured, expressive painting. It features a cityscape with buildings in shades of orange, red, and yellow, set against a deep blue sky. In the foreground, a large, stylized figure is rendered in various shades of blue and green, appearing to be in a dynamic, possibly dancing or expressive pose. The overall style is reminiscent of Vincent van Gogh's 'Olympia' or similar Impressionist/Expressionist works, with visible brushstrokes and a rich, layered color palette.

“Judaism is not a religion of pessimism, but of optimism. It says: not 'Everything is predetermined and there is no free will,' but 'You are free to choose, and you are responsible for your actions.’”

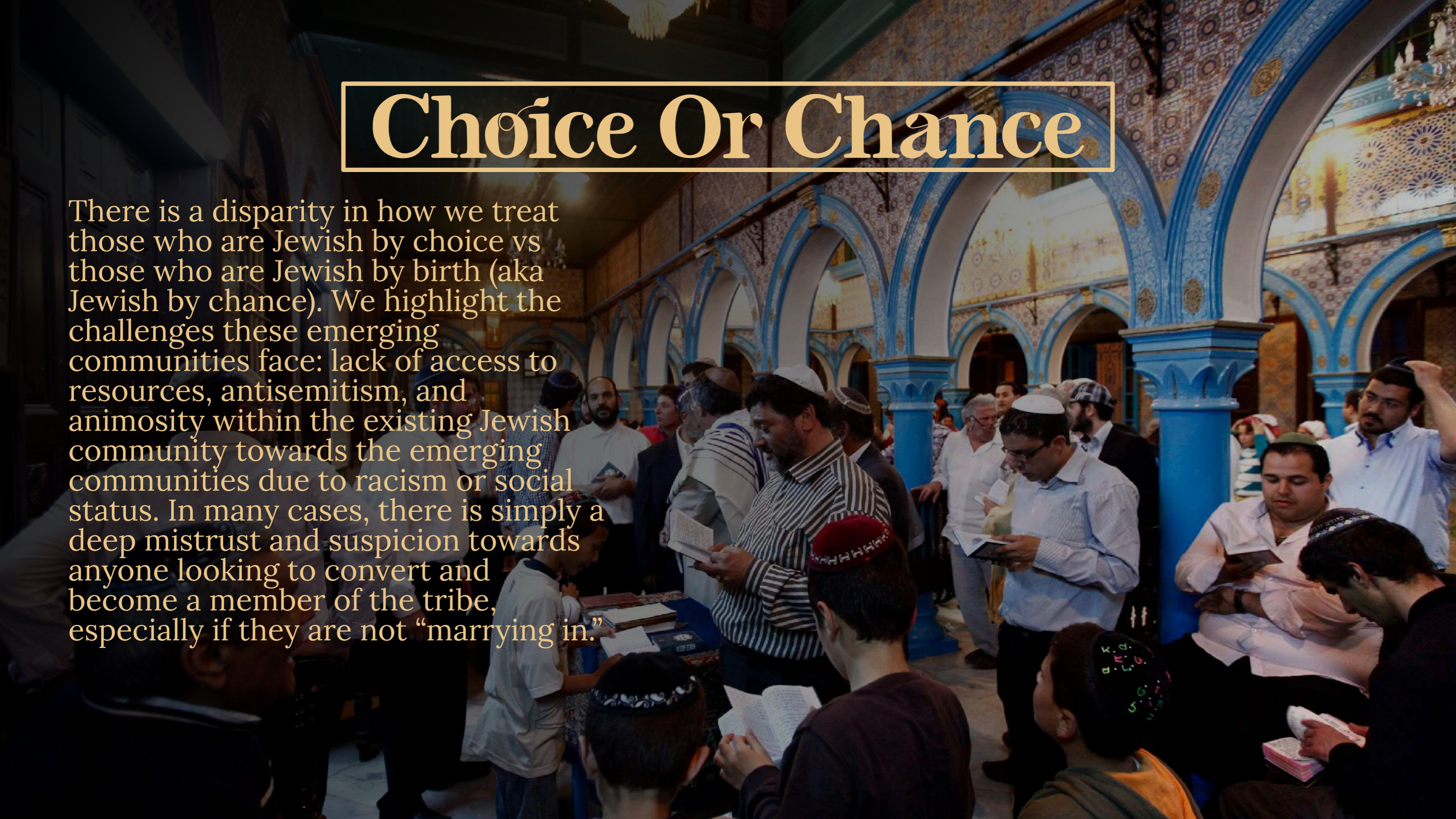
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z”l




Why now?

Choice Or Chance

There is a disparity in how we treat those who are Jewish by choice vs those who are Jewish by birth (aka Jewish by chance). We highlight the challenges these emerging communities face: lack of access to resources, antisemitism, and animosity within the existing Jewish community towards the emerging communities due to racism or social status. In many cases, there is simply a deep mistrust and suspicion towards anyone looking to convert and become a member of the tribe, especially if they are not “marrying in.”





Many of the subjects in the series have had their Jewish identity erased due to the Inquisition and are now on the quest to re-discover what was taken from them. This path of self-discovery and yearning to be one with the religion is what keeps the soul of this documentary series alive and spirited.


Lost Histories

New Side to Judaism

The lens of the documentary is that of the host/producer Dani Rotstein. Having grown up in an American-Jewish family in New Jersey, Dani's experiences of Judaism are the kind that are more commonly "seen" and documented in television and media. He always had easy access to kosher food and could enter synagogues of different denominations. Observing Shabbat and celebrating holidays among Jewish friends and family were the norm. For him, Judaism was always - *accessible*.

In contrast, we see the emerging communities in the film who are literally fighting for their right to exist and be recognized as Jewish. Being cognizant of this privilege makes Dani the perfect host to ask the right questions and bring this contrast to the forefront.



A woman with curly brown hair, wearing a white dress with puffed sleeves and a necklace with a Star of David pendant, is seated at a table. In front of her are several lit orange candles in a holder and a vase with white flowers. The scene is dimly lit, creating a warm and intimate atmosphere.

The intention is to present a unique portrayal of Judaism by offering a fresh perspective on the religion that may not have been previously explored. At the same time, the series also celebrates the diversity within the Jewish community.

Rekindling Love for Faith

In a time when antisemitism is at large globally, it seems ridiculous to outright reject large groups of people who love and respect the Jewish faith and want to be a part of the community. This series seeks to deliver the powerful message that the way to a brighter collective Jewish future is by extending the olive branch and welcoming these emerging communities in, and opening our homes and our hearts to them.

A large crowd of people is participating in a parade on a city street. In the foreground, two large flags are being held up: the flag of Brazil on the left and the flag of Israel on the right. The Brazilian flag features a blue globe with white stars and the text 'ORDEM E PROGRESSO'. The Israeli flag is white with two blue horizontal stripes and a blue Star of David in the center. In the background, many other people are visible, some holding smaller flags, including the flag of the United States. The scene is bright and festive, suggesting a public celebration or demonstration.

Radical Inclusion



Episodes

Brazil

The journey kicks off with visiting Recife, Brazil - home to the first synagogue in the Americas!

The synagogue has been reconstructed and turned into a museum; a fact that some of the emerging community members are upset with.



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A person wearing a large, shaggy brown lion's mane costume is holding a large, textured ball that is orange and yellow. The person is wearing a plaid shirt and a dark sweater. In the background, there are plates of food and glasses on a table, suggesting a social gathering or event.

Ecuador

In Ambato, Ecuador a handful of individuals seek to follow a Jewish way of life, but there is no access to a synagogue or formal education about the religion. So, they take matters into their own hands: build a synagogue and create their own Jewish community from scratch.



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Colombia

For the past five years, a community called the Christian Church for the Family has become the Sephardic community of Antioquia. We learn more about what inspired them to make this shift and understand the motivations and challenges of similar Christian communities who are converting to Judaism en masse.



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Mexico

We visit a neighborhood outside Mexico City where the community is rediscovering their Jewish roots. We speak with a pastor who has performed over 100 adult circumcisions and learn about the Brit Milah process. The community here does not seek validation from other Jewish communities and prefers to practice Judaism without formal conversion.



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Vision

I believe that these emerging communities are the future of Judaism. And I find myself constantly inspired and in awe of their dedication, commitment and resilience. It's fascinating how their version of "living a Jewish life" is so different from my own.

My intention is to capture the beauty I saw and the emotions I felt when interacting with these emerging communities and project them on screen for the world to witness. There are a lot of misconceptions about new-converts and crypto-Jews, and I believe RE-EMERGE has the potential to shatter many of those.

This series will help bring awareness to these mass movements happening all over the world and get large parts of the Jewish community to see the traditions they've grown up with and taken for granted in a new light. It may encourage some viewers to expand their horizon and consider their own connection to faith, whichever faith that may be.





Treatment

► Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown
Brazil - Season 3, Episode 8 (2014)

We will combine a structured, cinematic approach with guerrilla filming techniques to achieve a result that is sleek and professional yet raw and authentic. Everything from the narrative style to the music and cinematography will be in service of showcasing the human side of this story. The film will capture the dynamic colors and rhythms of the Latin American communities through a vibrant visual style and energetic soundtrack.

It's no secret that Latinos love busting out a guitar, so a lot of the music will be recorded on location, giving a wonderful layer of authenticity to the film. Animation and motion graphics, coupled with voice-over, will be used as a device to simplify historical context or provide social and political commentary wherever required, similar to the style of Vox. Overall, our goal is to convey the strong sense of community and tradition that exists within these vibrant and unique Jewish Latin American communities.

To sum up, the series is:

Anthony Bourdain

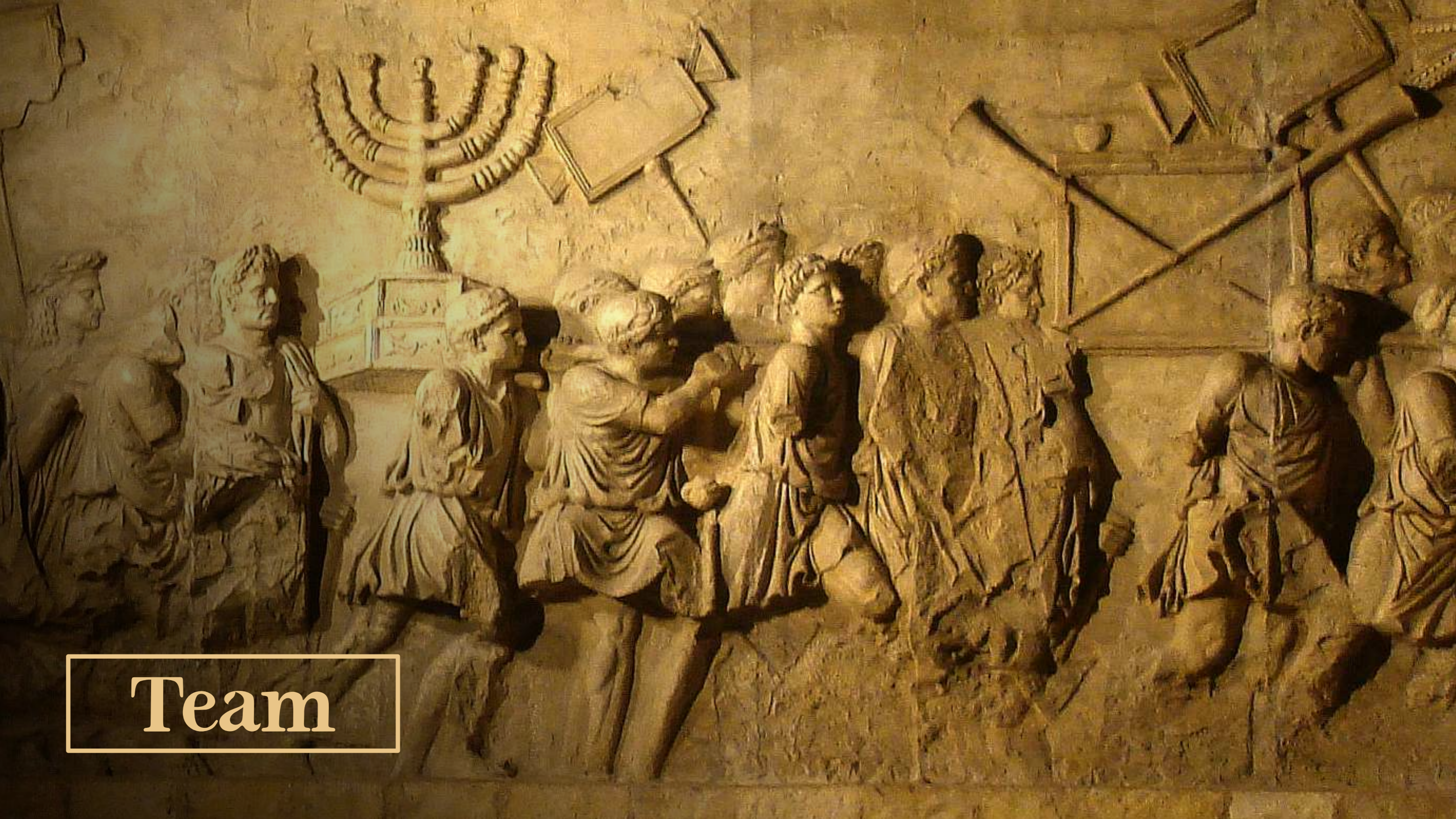
meets

Benjamin of Tudela

meets

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Team

Isaac Feder

Director

- Film director and television showrunner.
- Recent projects include series for Netflix, Sony Pictures Television, Disney+, and Amazon. He has directed shows for Funny or Die, Comedy Central, Viceland, Tru, Fuse, and IFC.
- Works frequently with Sacha Baron Cohen, Robert Smigel, Nikki Glaser, Glen Powell, and Haley Joel Osment.
- His first feature, the scripted comedy “Sex Ed,” won the Grand Jury Prize for Best Narrative Feature Film at the Portland Film Festival. His short film produced for ESPN’s 30 for 30 series, “AC Green: Iron Virgin,” was an official selection at the TriBeCa Film Festival.
- Most recently, Isaac was the Creative Director for Bookclub.com, directing all filmed content for the VC- backed tech company. He is a graduate of Northwestern University and holds an MFA from the American Film Institute Conservatory. Isaac was born and raised in Chicago, and now lives in Los Angeles.

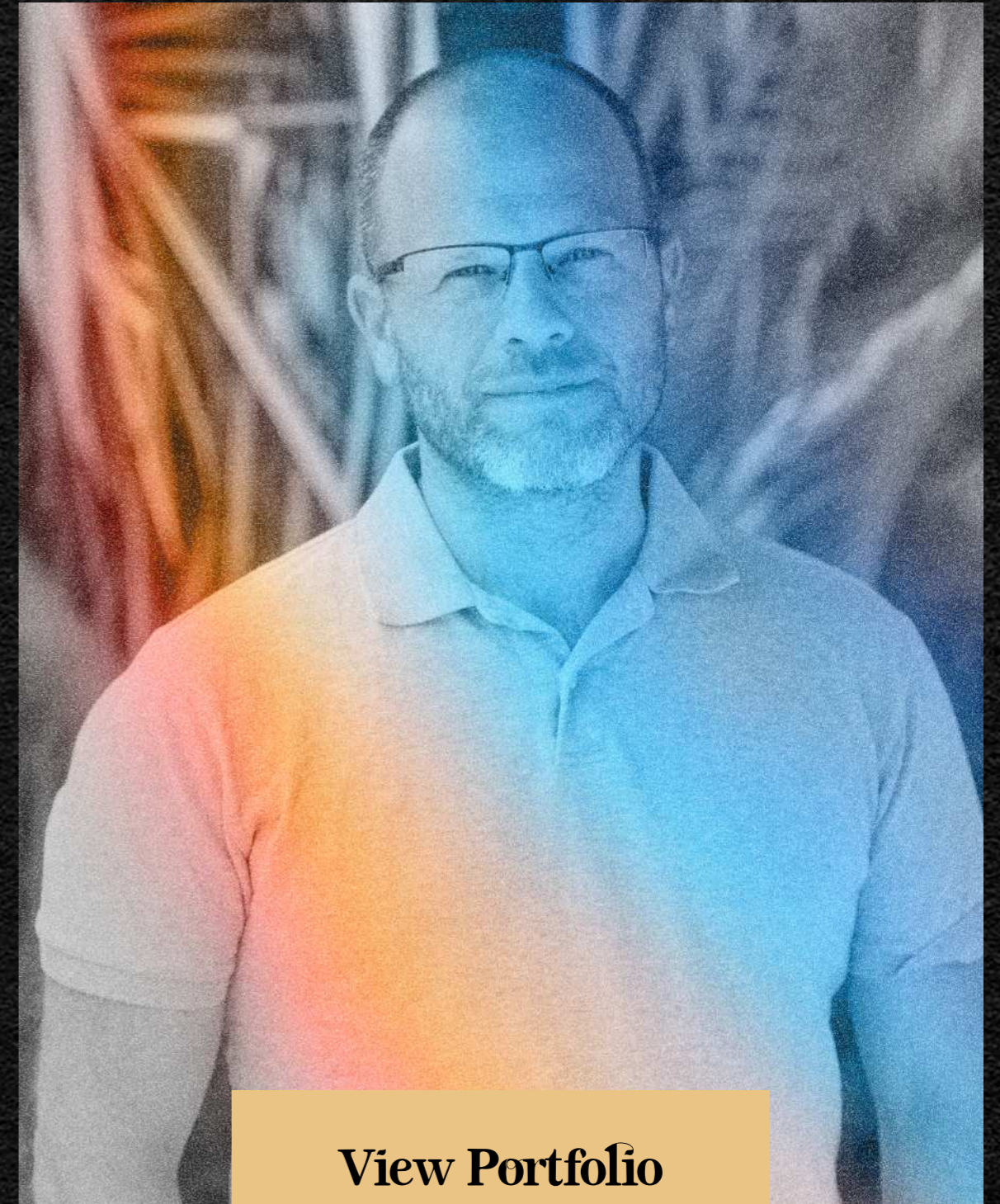


[View Portfolio](#)

Dani Rotstein

Producer

- Line producer and Jewish educator.
- Dani has worked with directors Laurent Chanez, Warren Fischer, and Olivier Gondry as well as photographers Annie Leibovitz, Nick Knight, and Steven Meisel.
- His list of collaborators also extends to celebrities such as Madonna, Lady Gaga, and Natalie Portman.
- He has produced TV commercials shooting in locations all over the world working for top brands such as Maybelline, Nissan, and Stella Artois. In 2022 he released the feature documentary “Xueta Island” which won awards at Maringa Human Rights Festival and Docs Without Borders.
- He is a graduate of Wesleyan University and is a member of the Limmud, NGF, and ROI networks. Dani was born and raised in New Jersey, and now lives in Mallorca, Spain.



[View Portfolio](#)

Daniel Fernández

Director Of Photography

- Puerto Rican Cinematographer & Photographer with over 10 years of experience.
- Has filmed in remote destinations including a three-month shoot in Antarctica on the award-winning documentary “At the Edge of the World”.
- Experience includes commercials, music videos, and episodic series such as “Grown” and “This is Paradise”.
- Has worked on commercials for Hermes, Vidgo, and Visible Wireless.
- Has worked with artists such as Taylor Momsen, Rick Ross, Prince Royce, Brody Dalle, and Karol G.
- Work has been featured at multiple international film festivals, including Sundance, South by Southwest, and the Toronto Film Festival.



[View Portfolio](#)

Paula Kweskin

Associate Producer

- Paula Kweskin is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, writer and human rights attorney.
- She believes in the power of media and arts to advocate for change. Her films have been featured in several international film festivals and distributed on Netflix, Amazon, iTunes, DirecTV and Al-Hurra, among other international platforms.
- Paula is the former founder and director of the Censored Women's Film Festival, a festival which pushed the envelope in the cinematic portrayal of women's rights and brought together dynamic activists and filmmakers from around the globe.
- Paula grew up in Charlotte, NC and received a J.D. and B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- She holds and LL.M in Human Right and International Law from Hebrew University.



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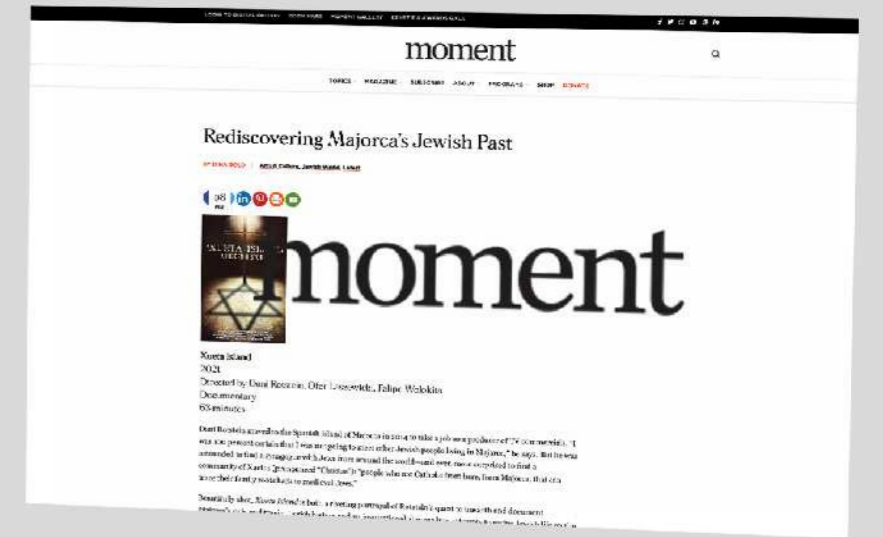
Patricio Serna

Executive Producer

- Award-winning filmmaker from Monterrey, Mexico.
- Received an MA in Creative Documentary and Film Production from Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, and attended the MFA program at Tisch School of the Arts, New York University.
- Films have screened at Sundance, Clermont Ferrand, Guadalajara, Huelva, Morelia, and Milano film festivals.
- Awards include the Student Academy Award, Honorable Mention at Sundance, Best Short at Sao Paulo Short Film Festival, and Canal+ award at Cinema Jove Festival.
- Documentary "12 Ounces" (2012) participated in Gira Ambulante and acquired by Canal 22 and Filmin Latino; short "Mating Call" (2004) exhibited in over 300 Landmark theaters and acquired by Canal+, ARTV, and Television de Catalunya.
- Currently developing projects through his production company Pakidermo and has collaborated on projects that have screened on Netflix and HBO.



[View Portfolio](#)



Press

Click the images to visit the websites

Budget

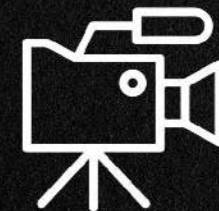
\$75,000
per episode

Breakdown



Pre

\$15,000



Production

\$40,000



Post

\$20,000

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