



TABOO - Amos Guttman

World premiere: Rotterdam Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), 2024



Logline

Director Amos Gutman's life, marred by an untimely death from AIDS at 38, was a ceaseless battle. His mission: pioneering queer films, a response to Israel's norms, conservatism, and the film industry. This journey also pushed him to confront his inner demons.

Synopsis

While he was alive, Amos Guttman remained a red flag for the notoriously conservative Israeli film establishment. A Romanian migrant, he never truly found his place in his new home. He was gay and made the nation's first movies on the subject. He was an artist who wanted to make films not for the masses but for the few. Conversely, he wanted to make movies that connected with the rest of the world and not only Israel – works that maybe Derek Jarman or Pedro Almodóvar could watch by chance and feel understood. His Yoram Kaniuk-adaptation *Himmo Melech Yerushalaim* (1987), painted even the most sacred moments in Israel's history in campy shades and hues. He was adventurous, but Guttman only made four features before dying of AIDS. *TABOO* – Amos Guttman is formed by excerpts from his last interview. There are very few new voices to remember him. Melamed is more interested in letting the historical materials (of which there are many!) tell the story. To understand the times is to appreciate the choices Guttman made, on and off the set.

Artistic Approach

"*TABOO*" offers a unique glimpse into the final days of Amos Guttman. This documentary captures his last interview, conducted as he lay dying in his mother's apartment – a never-before-published testament to his enduring spirit. The film showcases previously unreleased footage from his film sets, raw materials, rare archival materials, still photos, his personal diary and three very intimate interviews. We filmed these interviews with the people who were closest to him: his sister, his boyfriend, and his personal assistant, who also filmed the last interview. Her interview for our film adds another layer to our story, creating the sensation of a "film within a film." Unearthed from his estate and from his unpublished writings, these texts are brought to life through the artist's digitally generated voice. We harnessed AI technology to lend an eerie resonance to his legacy.

Director and editor

Shauly Melamed born in Tel Aviv, Israel, in 1993.

Before finishing his BFA at the Steve Tisch School for Film and TV, Shauly worked as an editor in the Israeli award-winning television satire shows -Gav Ha'uma.

He directed 4 short films which screened in film festivals worldwide. In 2022 he directed his first documentary feature film "Mini DV".

The film premiered in DocAviv, shown in many film festivals and was theatrically released in Israel art house cinemas.

"TABOO Amos Guttman" which will have its international premiere at the Rotterdam International film festival (IFFR) is his second feature documentary.

Shauly is an award winning film editor. He edited the films: "Spotting Yossi" and "Queen Shoshana". In 2021 he edited "Concerned Citizen", which had its international premiere at the Berlin film festival (Berlinale). In 2022 he edited the docudrama film "Savoy" and won the Israeli academy award for best editor.

Producer

Gil Sima is an independent film and TV producer.

In 2015 he founded Sima films, an independent production company.

His productions include: TABOO – Amos Guttman, Concerned Citizen, Mini DV, Shalall - a reel war, Sight, Hounds, Set me as a Seal, Girl Talk, More: Israeli consumer culture, Shimon, My father Yaakov Shabtai and many more were showcased in films festivals such: Sundance, Berlinale, Locarno, IFFR, AFI, BFI among others.

They were broadcasted in various television platforms including HBO, Amazon Prime Video, Fandor, Yes Docu, Channel 8, Arte, Canal+, Kan 11.

Between 2011 and 2015, Sima worked as an executive producer at Alma films, a leading Israeli Production company specializing in foreign co-productions.

Between 2016 and 2019, Sima was Executive Director of "TLVFest, the Tel-Aviv International LGBTQ Film Festival".

Created by

Shauly Melamed and Gil Sima

Directed and Written by

Shauly Melamed

Produced by

Gil Sima

Edited by

Shauly Melamed and Neta Dvorkis

Cinematography

May Abadi Grebler

Original Score

Zoe Polanski

Participants

Anat Dotan

Mariana (Miri) Guttman

Aharon Mitchell

Design and Animation

Yoav Brill

Color Grading

Ido Karilla

Sound Design and Mix

Aviv Aldema

Editorial Advisor

Nili Feller

Content Editor

Gil Sima

Research

Shauly Melamed

Executive Producers

Maureen Friedman Guttman

Rinat Klein

Dorit Hessel

Vocal AI Modeling

Yishay Razieli