

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: *Brussels Jewish International Film Festival*
Year: 2022

Please present your activity report according to the following lines. The whole rapport will not exceed 2 or 3 pages (as word document).

Name of the Program: **Brussels Jewish International Film Festival**

Year of activity: **2022**

Name of the report's writer: **Samuel Kujas**

Function of the report's writer: **Director of IMAJ**

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Website / Facebook address of the organization: **imaj.be** and **bjiff.be**

Number of active participants in the program: 500

Estimated number of impacted participants: 1.200

Give the actually state of the program (where the program stands at the date of the activity report, no more than ten lines):

The BJIFF 2022 has taken place in Brussels from 8 March to 13 March 2022.

We got positive feed-backs and we are thankful for all our collaborators and dear supportive audience.

We managed to propose to the Brussels public a total of 8 Israeli and international movies with Jewish themes, most of which will never been seen in movie theaters in Belgium, plus the Belgian short-film that won the French *Cesar* the week before its screening.

Moreover, we had a great Q and A session following the screening of *The Adventures of Saul Bellow* with its director, Asaf Galay who came to Brussels for the occasion, and Professor Kristian Versluys, an emeritus professor at the Gand University (Belgium) who specializes in American literature and specially in Jewish-American literature.

The main achievements during the last year of activity (main achievements, number of events, number of participants, etc.):

Organizing the BJIFF 2022 was particularly difficult for many reasons.

First, we have been working on constant pressure of having to cancel the Festival due to the pandemic.

Also, finding support among our usual private sponsors was also a challenge because, as everyone else, they have financially impacted by the pandemic and were not able to help us as much as they did in the past.

Finally, finding appropriate venues has been complicated as well because directors of movie theaters needed more flexibility this year due to the massive number of movies that had not been released for 2 years and that they wanted to screen when an eventual release date was scheduled.

For example, we were proposed by certain theaters we are usually working with, time slots that did not work for us. We had to find another venue to host the Festival in the final months of the preparation.

In these conditions we are happy to have been able to propose such program in good conditions to our audience.

The evaluation (methodology, results, comparisons with the precedent year, conclusions for the future...):

It was the first edition of the BJIFF since 2018, the Festival having been canceled in both 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. Therefore, it is difficult to compare with previous editions of the Festival. We felt that the audience was not fully prepared to come back to the movie theaters, maybe because the pandemic was not over at that time of the year and certain measures (such as wearing a mask or showing the Covid Safe Ticket) were still in place a week prior to the start of the Festival.

However we have had very positive feedback from the audience on the chosen movies.

Provisional guide lines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

Next year, we need to prepare earlier and to advertise more.

The BJIFF 2022 was the first edition for Samuel Kujas, the newly appointed Director of IMAJ. He had to learn and understand the process of organizing the Festival and anticipate the unexpected, which is inherent to any organization of Festivals.

We were supported by Radio Judaica (the Belgian Jewish radio) and Regards (a French-language Jewish newspaper) who reacted rapidly when we confirmed that the BJIFF would take place in 2022.

We need to prepare the next edition of the Festival in advance, ie at least 6 months prior to the event in order to have the venues, the financing, the poster, the invitees and the program timely ready.