

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

KINOELEKTRON

OPUS



intramovies



yes.



# ASIA // A GUM FILMS production

Israel 2020 // 85 min. // Hebrew and Russian  
Directed by Ruthy Pribar  
Produced by Yoav Roeh and Aurit Zamir  
[www.gumfilms.com/projects/asia](http://www.gumfilms.com/projects/asia) // Link to [trailer](#)



•Winner of **Ophir Prize for Best Picture**. Israel's **Official Selection to the Academy Awards for Best International Feature Film**. Awarded **9 Ophir Prizes** including Best Actress to **Alena Yiv**, Best Supporting Actress to **Shira Haas**, best cinematography, editing, casting, original score, production design, and makeup.

•Nora Ephron Award to **Ruthy Pribar** – Tribeca Film Festival 2020

•Best Actress Award to Shira Haas - Tribeca Film Festival 2020

The festival jury (including Danny Boyle and William Hurt) wrote about Haas:

*"Her face is a never-ending landscape in which even the tiniest expression is heartbreaking. She's an incredibly honest and present actress who brings depth to everything she does."*

•Best Cinematography Award to **Daniella Nowitz** - Tribeca Film Festival 2020

•Developed in the prestigious **Cannes Film Festival** residency program

•Winner of **The Sam Spiegel Alumni Fund for First Features**

•**Cinemart** official selection

•Supported by Israel Film Fund, The Jerusalem Film Fund, The New Foundation for Cinema, YES TV & Mifal Hapais

## 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

## 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 skatepark 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, developed at the Cannes Festival Residency Program, is her first feature film.

## Director & Writer: Ruthy Pribar // Bio (Longer)

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.

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## 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. Gum Films produces award winning narrative feature films, TV drama series, and documentaries. Selected projects: "The Testament" by Amichai Greenberg (Best film Haifa FF, Venice Official Selection). "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 Hagai Levi. "The Lab" by Yotam Feldman (Cinema du Reel, Dok Leipzig, Docaviv Best Film).

## Press release (NOV 2020):

**Israeli ASIA by first time director Ruthy Pribar wins Ophir Prize for Best Picture and will be Israel's Official selection to the Academy Awards for Best International Feature Film.**

These awards follow a successful world premiere at **Tribeca Film Festival** where director Ruthy Pribar was awarded the Nora Ephron Award, while Shira Haas and Daniella Nowitz took home Best Actress and Best Cinematography, respectively.

ASIA was awarded **9 Ophir prizes** including Best Actress to Alena Yi, **Best Supporting Actress to Shira Haas** Emmy Award Nominee, Outstanding Lead Actress in a Limited Series for Netflix's massive global hit UNORTHODOX, Best Cinematography to Daniella Nowitz as well as best editing, casting, original score, art design and makeup artist.

**Daniella Nowitz is the first female cinematographer to receive the Ophir Prize, and composer Karni Postel is the first female to receive the Ophir prize for original score. All other prizes were awarded to women, with Best Film shared by producers Aurit Zamir and Yoav Roeh.**

The film is produced by Yoav Roeh and Aurit Zamir at Gum Films, Israel, and coproduced by Janja Kralj of KinoElektron, France.

International sales are handled by Italian IntraMovies. Menemsha Films have acquired North American rights, Curzon hold UK rights.

Stills and Press Info [here](#).

Festival Scope: <https://pro.festivalscope.com/film/asia>

## Select International Press Clips:

**"Ruthy Pribar's Asia, from Israel, won three prizes"**

—Hilary Lewis, *Hollywood Reporter*:

[Tribeca: 'Asia,' 'Cowboys,' 'Materna' Among Awards Winners](#)

**"The maturity of the directorial voice is evident in its clear-eyed, rigorously unsentimental assessment of a shattering situation."**

—David Rooney, *Hollywood Reporter*

['Asia': Film Review | Tribeca 2020](#)

**"Ruthy Pribar's first feature avoids obvious sentimental beats and delivers an emotional wallop."**

—Eric Kohn, *Indie Wire*

[Shira Haas Is Devastating in Emotional Mother-Daughter Drama](#)

## Production Company Contact:

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Email: [info@gumfilms.com](mailto:info@gumfilms.com)

## International Sales:

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Via E. Manfredi, 15 – 00197  
Roma (Italy)  
T: +39 06 8077 252  
[www.intramovies.com](http://www.intramovies.com)  
Email: [sales@intramovies.com](mailto:sales@intramovies.com)

## US Distribution:

Menemsha Films  
Neil A. Friedman  
2601 Ocean Park Blvd., Suite 100  
Santa Monica, CA 90405  
[www.MenemshaFilms.com](http://www.MenemshaFilms.com)  
[neilf@menemshafilms.com](mailto:neilf@menemshafilms.com)  
T: +1 310 452 1775  
F: +1 310 452 3740

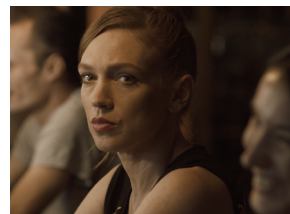
## UK Distribution:

Curzon Film World Ltd  
22 Stukeley St,  
London, WC2B 5LR  
[curzon.com](http://curzon.com)



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## 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 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 Haas 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 got the chance to make a film, I would 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 cannot be separated. The compassion Asia and Vika find for one another is uplifting. Although dealing with difficult subject matter, this film is meant to give viewers a sense of hope.