

"My So-Called Enemy" at UCLA and in Savannah in May, recent press and much more!



Rezan, on the Coast of Ireland.



Gal, with students at the Songhai Center who are learning to be farmers.

Dear Friends,

I hope this note finds you happy, healthy and at peace. Due to an unprecedented number of screenings in the past few months (including eight in April), this is the first I've had time to reach out with an update! We continue to be heartened, humbled and energized by the universal embrace "[My So-Called Enemy](#)" is receiving from the most diverse audiences.

Please read on for listings of our May screenings, some recent press, information about bringing "My So-Called Enemy" to your community and how you can help to support our outreach efforts. Because people always ask me what the spectacular young women in our film have been doing since we locked picture, this edition of your newsletter includes our first update, featuring Rezan and Gal.

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Rezan: Palestinian/Christian

After completing her undergraduate degree in Sociology and Media Studies at City University in London, Rezan worked as a researcher with Exeter University's "Conflict In Cities" program. She now has a thriving [photography business](#) in her hometown of Jerusalem, specializing in baby, children, teen, family, pre-wedding, and event photography. Rezan's artistic vision is based on telling a story and preserving memories through artistic photographs. She visits her sister Joline in the New York area at least once a year. So, if you are interested in hiring Rezan to photograph your family or for a special occasion, I know she would love to hear from you!

Gal: Israeli/Jewish

After graduating from Ben Gurion University with a degree in Political Science, Gal spent 3 months in the Republic of Benin in West Africa volunteering for [Songhai](#), an organization working with young adults to promote a "new African society by developing a continual focus on sustainable socio-economic entrepreneurship," mainly in agriculture. She now works at The Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development ([NISPED](#)) as their IT and PR coordinator. Gal and Palestinian Rawan (also a main character in our film) are the Middle East Coordinators of [Seeking Common Ground](#). (Building Bridges for Peace is SCG's flagship program.) Gal and her boyfriend Nati live in Beersheba, Israel.

May Screenings

UCLA (Los Angeles Campus)

In the Olive Tree Initiative's "Month of Ideas" Series

Thursday, May 10th at 7:00pm -- Northwest Campus Auditorium
200 De Neve Drive

OTI student leaders will lead a post-screening conversation.

This event is free and open to the public

[Click here](#) for tickets and more information.

Co-Sponsored by UCLA's Office of Residential Life.

2012 Savannah Jewish Film Festival (GA)

Thursday, May 10th -- Dinner at 6:30pm, Screening at 7:30pm
Jewish Educational Alliance -- 5111 Abercorn Street, Savannah, GA
[Click here](#) for tickets and more information. (Reserve dinner by May 8th.)

Recent Press

You'll find excerpts from two film reviews after my signature at the very end of this newsletter. Here is my favorite, written by 19-year old Laini Cassis for "Teen Voices."

[Movie Review: "My So-Called Enemy"](#)

Teen Voices, By Laini Cassis, 19 years old

"My So-Called Enemy" is a mesmerizing, eye-opening film that shows the true power of friendship... What these honest and intelligent girls have to say about their world is at times shocking and compelling, but oftentimes universal...

This transformative film beautifully exhibits that the first steps toward peace involve listening, challenging one's own beliefs, and including women in the discussion. Talking about war and terrorism is not always easy, but these young women dared to be a part of these tough conversations. Long after the camp, the six young women continued in their individual directions, but were now aware of friends on the other side of the wall. "My So-Called Enemy" is the perfect film for anyone interested in conflict resolution, peacemaking, or simply witnessing how the power of friendship and empathy can conquer political boundaries.

Sean Martin, Professor of Philosophy, Santa Rosa Junior College

I couldn't resist sharing part of a beautiful e-mail that Sean Martin recently sent to the SRJC faculty list-serve. Professor Martin brought students from his "Philosophy of Peace and Nonviolent Action" class to our screening, organized by Rhonda Finding in honor of Women's History Month.

... "My So-Called Enemy" is not at all a "message" film though; it is remarkably non-ideological and makes no attempt to simplify the complicated or offer easy solutions to the seemingly intractable difficulties faced by the subjects of the film. It is a personal and sometimes painfully intimate portrait of the deep psychological complexities young people encounter when faced with historic social conflict in their personal and public lives. Triumphs of friendship in apparently impossible circumstances, heartbreak and frustration with the terrible costs of conflict, and the gradual coming of age of each of the participants in the film are all addressed beautifully...

The subject matter of this film is, in my estimation, applicable to so many of the conflicts our students likely face (or will face) in their lives. Whether the issue is immigration, economic class, race, religion, etc, there are numerous touch points in the film that will provide a valuable starting point for important dialogue...

Support our outreach efforts for "My So-Called Enemy"

Once funding is in place, we are poised to embark on a number of important initiatives that will ensure our film has maximum reach and impact in the years ahead. If you are interested in learning more and/or want to support any of these efforts through a tax-deductible donation, I would love to hear from you.

- **A Screening/Teaching Guide for educators, facilitators, clergy and lay people:** For post-screening discussions, classroom use and more, with exercises around Conflict Transformation, Identity, Gender, Leadership, Intra/Interfaith Engagement, Community/Coexistence, Personal and Political Maps and Narrative/Story. We will also create a supplement called "Tools for Talking about the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict."
- **A more functional and sophisticated website:** With Arabic and Hebrew versions, that will include downloads of our teaching guide.
- **Professionally authored dvds.**
- **Consistent Branding/Design:** For our website, teaching materials, postcards and dvd packaging.
- **A 58-minute version of our film:** For international television.

Bringing "My So-Called Enemy" to your community

If you have ideas about how our film can have the greatest impact in your community: not only for dialogue around Middle East peace, but for celebrating diversity, building bridges of understanding, and empowering girls/women/our youth to be agents for social change, please get in touch with me.

My greatest joy is teaching and being "in community" with "My So-Called Enemy," using it as a tool for dialogue and fostering mutual understanding. Please drop me a line if you are interested in hosting a screening and/or inviting me to present "My So-Called Enemy" at your academic or religious institution, peace/multi-faith organization or youth/after-school program. Because our model is coalition building, we encourage screenings to be co-hosted by diverse groups when possible.

As you know, we first started filming "My So-Called Enemy" almost ten years ago. It's, in large part, thanks to your friendship and support that our film is reaching the audiences it needs to. The greatest gift of this journey has been meeting like-minded spirits, like you.

With gratitude and love,

Lisa

[Friend or Foe? "My So-Called Enemy" Humanizes the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict](#)

The Seattle Star, By D. Tuchman

Every good Jewish film festival includes *at least* one piece that focuses in on the most controversial and complex issue of our generation, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This year's Seattle Jewish Film Festival (SJFF) is no exception, and one of the most compelling of the films selected for screening was the documentary, "My So-Called Enemy."...

Facing a seemingly insurmountable situation with nearly impossible solutions, these young women are a reminder that the possibility of peace has the most probable success within the youth of both sides. Humanizing each of the girls in a neutral place (the Building Bridges camp) and letting them talk in a safe, honest environment allowed them to gain new understanding and respect for one another's situation. What this documentary doesn't do is set up an unrealistic expectation that with a 10-day summer camp program, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will magically come to a peaceful end (i.e., it's not all puppies and rainbows). Rather, what it does create for viewers is a deeper understanding of the possibility for change found within a more hopeful, encouraged youth.

[Talking Pictures Film Festival 2012](#)

Evanston RoundTable, by Natalie Wainwright

Three distinctive films are here reviewed by the *RoundTable*, to give an idea of the fine movie-making to be experienced at the Talking Pictures Festival...

The camp is a place where the girls, in their mid-to-late teens, can not only engage in activities together and live together, but spend time talking, with and without mediation, about their lives and the futures they see for themselves and their people. It is very difficult at times for them to let go of hostility and preconceptions and converse. They are well-served by Melodye Feldman, who reminds them that being there "is not about getting each other to agree" but about learning how to listen and communicate...

This film, though often painful to watch, is enlightening on many levels. One example is that the viewer is shown how both Palestinian and Jewish girls have diversely religious and ideological upbringings. Some are more committed to peace from the beginning than are others. A girl whose father died because a "closure" prevented an ambulance from coming to their home found it hard at first to trust any Jews...

When the film closes, the viewer recognizes that the story does not. The different ways in which each of these young women stand prepared to meet their futures and whether or not they will use their voices to mold them is a powerful ending as well as a beginning to the untold part of their story.

For the latest news on "My So-Called Enemy"

Join our mailing list: [www.mysocalledenemy.com](#)

"Like" our film on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/mysocalledenemy](#)

Watch our trailer: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kKOL14t2XE](#)

"MY SO-CALLED ENEMY" a good egg production
director/producer **Lisa Gossels** producer **Eden Wurmfeld**
director of photography **Justin Schein** edited by **Lisa Gossels**
David Mehiman Toby Shimin music by **Nathan Larson**

2010 Hamptons International Film Festival
Winner, Jury Prize for Best Conflict & Resolution Film

2010 Starz Denver Film Festival
Winner, Special Jury Prize in Filmmaking

2010 Boston Jewish Film Festival
Winner, Audience Award, Best Feature Documentary Film

2011 Newport Beach Film Festival
Winner, Jury Award, Best Feature Documentary Film
Winner, MacGillivray Freeman Films Award for Excellence in Documentary Filmmaking (feature)

2011 CINE Golden Eagle
Winner, CINE Golden Eagle, Documentary Feature