

# IN THE LAND OF POMEGRANATES

A film by Hava Kohav Beller

125 min / Arabic & Hebrew with English subtitles / 2017 / Color / Digital



## FIRST RUN FEATURES

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## Synopsis

*The pomegranate is the fruit of the land, a symbol of rejuvenation and rebirth.*

*It is also a euphemism for a hand grenade.*

*In the Land of Pomegranates* is a suspenseful, multi-layered documentary about a group of young people who were born into a violent and insidious ongoing war. They are young Palestinians and Israelis invited to Germany to join a retreat called 'Vacation From War' where they live under the same roof and face each other every day. In these highly charged encounters they confront the entrenched myths and grievances that each side has for the other. As they try to gain insight into the seemingly irreconcilable narratives, the paradoxes and contradictions born of legend and history along with passionately held ideals and the daily fight for survival surface.

Interwoven into this intense footage, adding context, the film also follows other embattled lives in the Occupied Territories and Israel: four children living in the shadow of the wall abutting Gaza; an imprisoned Palestinian and the subsequent path he's taken; an Israeli survivor of a suicide bombing; and a daring Palestinian mother whose son's life is saved by an Israeli doctor. They are all caught in the duality of the pomegranate: will they embrace rebirth and each other's humanity, or will they pull the pin on the grenade?

## Press

*"Hava Kohav Beller has shown us that a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians is the only way out of a violent and tragic stalemate that has lasted fifty years and more. Her beautiful camera work has found the dignity and intelligence in each interlocutor on both sides of the conflict. No one can see this film without being changed. It is a monument to patience, objectivity and compassion."*

**-Edmund White**

*"This documentary about a seemingly intractable problem has the good sense to capture the full spectrum of ambivalence, conviction, wariness and good will. If an honest dialogue is the initial step toward reconciliation, what we are given here could stand as a model. Its complexity is salutary, its professional film-making skill exemplary."* **-Phillip Lopate**

*"In The Land of Pomegranates dramatically and evenhandedly portrays the seemingly intractable problems of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by casting its net wide but judiciously. This includes a soul searching and painfully honest discussion by members of the young generation on both side of the conflict. It is a must-see film for anyone looking for a sensitively nuanced yet highly informative examination of this heart breaking impasse between two peoples. In The Land of Pomegranates is not only a film, it is an experience."* **-Arnold Steinhardt**

## **Filmmaker Biography**

**Hava Kohav Beller** is a filmmaker with creative roots in the theater. Born in Germany and raised in Israel, she came to the U.S. to study at the Juilliard School. Today she lives and works in New York. *In the Land of Pomegranates* is her third documentary. Her other feature docs include:

*The Restless Conscience: Resistance to Hitler within Germany 1933-1945* (1992) delves into the Nazi terror and those who fought it from within, premiered at Sundance, opened theatrically and aired on PBS and internationally, receiving several awards and an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Feature. The film has been translated into thirteen languages and is currently in national and international distribution.

*The Burning Wall*, which investigates the profoundly contemporary dilemma of individual resistance within a totalitarian state, from the first stirring of single acts of resistance all the way to the astounding ground swell of defiance that brought down the Berlin Wall and resulted in the collapse of the German Democratic Republic. It opened to wide acclaim and has since been screened at festivals and in theaters nationally, and is still being shown at American universities and colleges. It has been broadcast by the BBC in Great Britain and on Public Television internationally.

Ms. Beller has received awards from the Petra Foundation at the American Institute of Arts and Sciences, the American Film and Video Association, and Women in Film. She was also presented with the Cine Golden Eagle Award and was decorated by President Richard von Weizsäcker with the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1992.

## **Credits**

Producer, Director HAVA KOHAV BELLER

Editor JONATHAN OPPENHEIM

Cinematographers COLIN ROSIN, CHRISTOPH LERCH