

EMILE HIRSCH

INBAR LAVI

He risked everything to save others.
She risked everything to save him.

A DISCUSSION GUIDE
BASED ON THE FILM
BAU, ARTIST AT WAR
ONLY IN THEATERS SEPTEMBER 26

BAU, ARTIST AT WAR

A SEAN MCNAMARA FILM

REPUBLIC PICTURES AND SHOWBIZ DIRECT PRESENTS BROOKWELL MCNAMARA ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION A BUSY BEE WITH HANGAR MEDIA PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH LOST SCIENCE PRODUCTIONS SPINOUT MEDIA CAPITAL AND JEFF BAITS FILMS
A SEAN MCNAMARA FILM EMILE HIRSCH INBAR LAVI "BAU, ARTIST AT WAR" JOSH ZUCKERMAN TAN TUNG LUDINE LIPVSKY JOSH WALKER EDWARD IVE CUNY COPI ADAM FICKERMAN AND JULY PAUL JENSEN CCA NIKOL PADOV
JERRY RUI NATION CATHARINE FALCON VISA JESSE DEY CHLOE AND SCOTT COULTER AND JOHN COBA "STONY BEAN SMITH GREGORY HUSSEN "HUBBUX "JAMES SPATON SEBERT AND TONY FADINA "JAMES THORNBURG KELLY TATE BRUCE O. JOHNSON
LAURENCE AMITYHUT JEFF BAITS CHARLES COOPER ALAN LEWIS ROBERT ANDERSON MATTHEW WEISBERMAN THOMAS MANN LORIE TAYLOR KEVIN ANTONIOW "DAVID BROWN WELLS "SEAN MCNAMARA "DANIELA CHALHEZNIK
MARC BRITTON "DAN GUN, HAVE YOU EVER GONE HUNGRY?" "DEBORAH SANCHEZ "DANIELA CHALHEZNIK "DAN GUN, HAVE YOU EVER GONE HUNGRY?" "SEAN MCNAMARA

BROOKWELL
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ENTERTAINMENT

BUSY BEE

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SHOWBIZ

REPUBLIC

BASED ON THE INCREDIBLE TRUE LOVE STORY

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BAU, ARTIST AT WAR

A STORY OF RESILIENCE, LOVE, AND JEWISH SURVIVAL

Introduction and Historical Context

"Bau, Artist at War" is a powerful new feature film based on the true story of Joseph Bau: Holocaust survivor, artist, humorist, and lover of life. Best known for animating joy in even the darkest moments, Joseph Bau's life is one of extraordinary courage, quiet resistance, and a romance that flourished inside the gates of hell.

Joseph Bau's life is a testament to the enduring spirit of creativity and resistance in the face of unimaginable adversity. Born in Kraków, Poland, in 1920, Bau was a budding artist whose education at the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts was abruptly halted by the outbreak of World War II. As the Nazis invaded Poland, Bau and his family were confined to the Kraków Ghetto, where he utilized his skills in Gothic lettering to produce signs and maps for the German authorities. This position granted him access to materials and information, which he covertly used to forge identity papers and documents, aiding over 1,200 Jews in escaping persecution.

While imprisoned in the Płaszów concentration camp, Bau met fellow inmate Rebecca Tennenbaum. Their love defied the horrors surrounding them, culminating in a secret marriage conducted within the camp, a union later depicted in Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List." With wit and charm he uplifted those around him. Bau's artistic talents continued to serve as a lifeline; he created a miniature book of poetry and illustrations, offering a semblance of hope amidst despair. His story is not just about survival; it's about the power of love, humor, and humanity.

After surviving the Holocaust, Bau reunited with Rebecca, and together they immigrated to Israel in 1950. There, Bau became a pioneer in the Israeli art scene, establishing one of the country's first animation studios and contributing to numerous films and publications. His work extended beyond entertainment; Bau clandestinely assisted the Mossad by forging documents for operatives, including those involved in the capture of Adolf Eichmann.

As antisemitism rises and Holocaust survivors pass away, "Bau, Artist at War" is not only a historical portrait, but also a modern-day call-to-action. By sharing Joseph Bau's remarkable journey, we not only honor his legacy but also inspire future generations to uphold the values of resilience, creativity, and unwavering faith in humanity.

BAU, ARTIST AT WAR

BASED ON THE INCREDIBLE TRUE LOVE STORY

Film Overview

Directed by: Sean McNamara

Written by: Deborah Smerecnik, Ron Bass, Sonia Kifferstein

Starring: Emile Hirsch, Inbar Lavi, Yan Tual



The Story:

The film follows Joseph Bau from his time in the Krakow Ghetto to his imprisonment at Plaszow and eventual liberation. Along the way, we witness his artistic brilliance, his resilience in the face of unfathomable cruelty, and the extraordinary love between him and Rebecca, a love that inspired others and withstood the most trying of circumstances.

Connection to Schindler's List:

Joseph and Rebecca's wedding, which appears briefly in Spielberg's film, is reimaged in full here, capturing the defiant celebration of life amidst death. This story expands that moment and brings to light the lesser-known acts of courage and spiritual resistance.

BAU, ARTIST AT WAR

RESILIENCE AND THE INDOMITABLE JEWISH SPIRIT

Themes to Explore During the 2025 High Holidays

The story of Joseph Bau encapsulates the broader narrative of Jewish perseverance throughout history. Despite centuries of persecution and attempts at eradication, the Jewish people have continually demonstrated an unwavering commitment to survival, identity, and cultural preservation.

Art as Resistance: Bau's use of art as a means of survival and defiance underscores the power of creativity as a tool for resistance. His ability to find beauty and humor amidst horror serves as a poignant reminder of the human capacity for hope.

The Power of Love and Community: The clandestine marriage of Joseph and Rebecca within a concentration camp symbolizes the enduring strength of love and community bonds, even in the darkest of times.

Legacy and Memory: Bau's post-war contributions to Israeli culture and his efforts to document and share his experiences highlight the importance of preserving individual stories to ensure collective memory and learning.

Bau, Artist at War also powerfully reflects the core themes of the Jewish High Holidays: **teshuvah (repentance)**, **tefillah (prayer)**, and **tzedakah (justice)**, making it an ideal film to watch and reflect upon between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World):

Using one's gifts, as Joseph did, to make a difference.

Teshuvah (Return):

Joseph's ability to return to life, to love, and to hope.

Zachor (Remembrance):

Keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive as firsthand witnesses pass.

Ahavat Yisrael (Love for the People of Israel):

A romance grounded in faith, solidarity, and shared survival.





BAU, ARTIST AT WAR

THE CORE THEMES OF THE HIGH HOLIDAYS **Why It Belongs in the Days of Awe**

1. A STORY OF TESHUVAH (RETURN & RENEWAL)

The High Holidays ask us to return to our truest selves. To reflect on who we are, how we've failed, and how we can do better. Joseph Bau's journey is one of profound moral clarity and resilience. In a world designed to destroy him, he returns again and again to his humanity through love, art, and the courage to save others. His story reminds us that even in darkness, we are called to choose life, purpose, and goodness.

2. THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS AND MEMORY

As Joseph is called to testify against the Nazi who tortured him, we confront one of the deepest questions of Yom Kippur: how do we hold memory, justice, and forgiveness in balance? His struggle is ours: to honor the past without being consumed by it, to face what was broken and still believe in what can be healed.

3. A TESTAMENT TO TZEDAKAH AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Bau risked everything not only to survive, but to save others. His life embodies tzedakah, not just charity, but righteousness. During this season when we are urged to do more, to give more, to live more meaningfully, his example is a stirring call to act on behalf of others.

4. CHOOSING LIGHT IN THE SHADOW OF DESTRUCTION

This season invites us to imagine renewal after brokenness. Bau's love story, forged in the fire of the Holocaust, is proof that even after devastation, we can build something lasting. That our love, faith, and imagination can carry us forward.

In short, this is not just a Holocaust film. It is a Jewish story. A High Holiday story. It asks the same questions these sacred days ask of us:

- Who are we, really?
- What do we stand for when everything is on the line?
- What does it mean to remember and to begin again?

BAU, ARTIST AT WAR

WHY THIS FILM MATTERS NOW

Discussion and Community Engagement

We are living in a time when hatred is on the rise. The stories of survivors like Joseph are critical reminders of what can happen when humanity fails. But his story also teaches us how to live with courage and compassion, even in darkness. Additionally, as Holocaust survivors continue to pass away, their stories must continue to be told, we must **NEVER FORGET**.

PROGRAMMING SUGGESTIONS:

- Film Screening + Panel Discussion with a Holocaust educator, clergy, or family member of Joseph Bau.
- Youth Engagement: Post-screening sessions for teens around courage, identity, and creative resistance.
- Sermon Integration: Rabbis may tie themes of the film into sermons on resilience, Jewish continuity, and moral courage.
- Art Exhibits/Workshops: Celebrate Jewish creativity in the face of adversity.





BAU, ARTIST AT WAR

DEEP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR BAU, ARTIST AT WAR

Post Movie: Stimulating conversation across ages and backgrounds

THEMES OF RESILIENCE, CREATIVITY & IDENTITY

1. Joseph Bau used humor and art as survival tools — how can creativity help us endure personal or collective trauma today?
2. In what ways can laughter be an act of resistance? Where is the line between coping and denying pain?
3. What does it mean to keep one's identity intact when every system around you is trying to erase it?
4. Bau risked everything forging documents to save others. What drives someone to help others at great personal cost? Would you?

LOVE AND HOPE IN DARKNESS

5. How does the love story between Joseph and Rebecca transform the narrative of the Holocaust — does it challenge or deepen our understanding of that history?
6. What does this film teach us about choosing hope over despair, even in the bleakest circumstances?
7. Do love and partnership become more meaningful when forged in adversity? Why or why not?

HISTORY, MEMORY & THE DANGERS OF FORGETTING

8. Why is it important to tell Holocaust stories through new lenses — love stories, art, or humor — rather than only through horror?
9. How do films like this reshape or reinforce the way younger generations learn about and emotionally process history?
10. What responsibility do we have in an era when living survivors are disappearing? How do we preserve firsthand memory in a secondhand world?

MORAL COURAGE AND CHOICES

11. The Nazis used Joseph's talents for their own needs, while he used those same skills to subvert them. How do we draw the line between survival and complicity?
12. When is breaking the law the most moral thing a person can do?
13. How do we evaluate heroism — by outcome, by intention, or by sacrifice?

BAU, ARTIST AT WAR



MODERN PARALLELS AND ANTISEMITISM TODAY

14. With the rise of antisemitism today, what lessons from Bau's story feel urgent now?
15. What role does storytelling, especially film, play in shaping public consciousness around hate and prejudice?
16. Can the Jewish experience of resilience and rebuilding serve as a universal model? How do we apply it to the hate others face today?

THE POWER OF LOVE

17. This film's theme shows how love in its truest form is a spiritual force for good, healing, and resilience.
18. At the heart of every great war film is a story of what makes life worth fighting for. In "Bau: Artist at War," that story is love, fierce, undying, and courageous.
19. Joseph and Rebecca Bau's bond was not a subplot; it was a revolution.
20. Their love was forged in the unimaginable: a wedding in a Nazi concentration camp. This wasn't just survival, it was defiance, joy, and hope against hate.
21. Their relationship carried them through loss, terror, and war anchored by laughter and mutual belief. In an age of fleeting connections, their commitment reminds us that love is not just a feeling, but a form of resistance.



A black and white photograph of a man and a woman in a close embrace, about to kiss. They are positioned behind several strands of barbed wire that stretch across the frame. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

BAU, ARTIST AT WAR

BECAUSE STORIES LIKE THIS CANNOT BE FORGOTTEN

Timeline and How to Get Involved

RELEASE TIMELINE

- Summer 2025: National & international festival appearances
- Fall 2025 (Between the High Holidays): Limited theatrical release & community screening opportunities

*Let Joseph Bau's story inspire your community to remember,
to act, and to believe in the power of resilience and love*

HOW TO BRING THIS FILM TO YOUR COMMUNITY

- Partner with us to host a private screening for your synagogue, youth group, or community center.
- Use the film as part of Holocaust education and High Holiday reflections.
- Complete the attached Participation Form to schedule a private screening and receive a digital kit including flyers, trailers, sermon prompts, and discussion guide.



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LEARN MORE ABOUT JOSEPH BAU
ON THE JOSEPH BAU HOUSE WEBSITE.
LINKTR.EE/JOSEPHBAUHOUSE

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A SEAN MCNAMARA FILM

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CASTING BY RITA NAYNE CATHARINE FALCON COSTUME DESIGNER JOSEPH D'AMICO PRODUCTION DESIGNER SCOTT COLETTEDIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JON COOKEXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JEFF HASTO CHARLES COOPER ALLEN LEVINE ROBERT MURDOCH MATTHEW WEISBERMAN THOMAS MANN LORNE TAYLOR KEVIN WATCHELL PRODUCED BY DAVID BRYAN WELLS
WRITTEN BY DEAN COHN BASED UPON THE TRUE STORY OF JOSEPH BAU AND ANITA KATZ
DIRECTED BY SEAN MCNAMARA

SEAN MCNAMARA
ENTERED THE RING

BUSY BEE

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