

World Artists Experiences Presents



# Bridges to the World

17th Annual International Film Festival  
February 11 – March 11, 2025



Tanzania



Armenia



Iceland



United States

REGISTER: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_v8PSvezZSWKRk6ZC1vVvpQ#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_v8PSvezZSWKRk6ZC1vVvpQ#/registration)

PROGRAM GUIDE FOR  
VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE  
[www.WorldArtists.org](http://www.WorldArtists.org)

Arts as a bridge to international understanding

For information: [wae@comcast.net](mailto:wae@comcast.net) [www.WorldArtists.org](http://www.WorldArtists.org)





February 2025

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 17th Annual Bridges to the World International Film Festival, sponsored by World Artists Experiences in partnership with Tanzania, Armenia, Iceland, and the United States. The festival is in recognition of bridging the people and cultures of the world.

The five-week celebration features films in the following order: Tanzania (2/11), Armenia (2/18), Iceland (2/25), United States (3/4). The films present each country through images and sounds. Our hope is that you will gain the spirit of each country represented. All films were selected by the respective embassies or international organizations.

For the fifth year, the festival is being held virtually. In the past, films were screened throughout the State of Maryland. The festival is screened by individuals and groups in different areas. We recognize the venues and organizations who held and supported the live festival in the past and continue to support the festival: Salisbury University, Towson University, Allegany County Arts Council, Anne Arundel Arts Council, and many others.

Each film will be introduced by a diplomat, scholar, actor, and/or producer. The audience will then screen the film through the chat box. Following the screening, questions and answers will be addressed by presenters. This program guide will direct you through the details for attending virtually and provide information on each film at [www.worldartists.org](http://www.worldartists.org). The link to register for the film is in the technical guide.

We express gratitude to the planning committee: Greg Faller, June Krell-Salgado, Linda Smith, and Mendy Nitsch. We appreciate Dr. Greg Faller for writing the essays, Patrick McAlister and Tessa Kellar for their technical expertise, and Margaret Rose Caro for editing and designing the program guide. Thank you to the WAE Communications' Team, Suzanne Jaques, Bernard Wulff, Douglas Steele, Beth Penn. and Diana Elson. We acknowledge all volunteers and in-kind supporters who have generously contributed their time, talents, and resources to make the festival possible. We especially thank the embassies and other international organizations for partnering with World Artists Experiences to produce the 17th Annual Bridges to the World Film Festival.

We hope you will enjoy and learn about our world through this year's Bridges to the World Film Festival.

Bridging our world together,

*Betty McGinnis*

President, World Artists Experiences

**Note:** World Artists Experiences is a nonprofit organization that bridges people and cultures across the continents using the international language of the arts in communities, colleges, and schools.

Email: [wae@comcast.net](mailto:wae@comcast.net) for further information.

# Guide for Attending the Virtual Film Festival

In order to attend the 2024 Bridges to the World International Film Festival, attendees will need to follow the Zoom link below and provide a valid name and email address to attend. Zoom Webinars require both a valid name and e-mail address for security purposes.

## ZOOM LINK

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_v8PSvezZSWKRk6ZC1vVvpQ#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_v8PSvezZSWKRk6ZC1vVvpQ#/registration)

If prompted, the webinar ID is **834 0654 9352**, and the password is **bridges**.

## World Artists Experiences Webinar



## TOPIC

2024 Bridges to the World International Film Festival

## DESCRIPTION

At 7pm, guests will be invited into the Zoom Webinar room, where we will kick off the screenings with an introduction to that evening's film. After the introduction, we will post the film's screening URL in the chat box of the Zoom Webinar Platform. Guests will then follow that link to screen the film on their own computers. After the film has completed its runtime, guests are invited to return to the Webinar room to participate in a Q&A using the chat feature, if they would like to. We will hold brief closing statements and thank you's at the conclusion of the evening.



**February 11, 2025, 7pm — Tanzania**

**February 18, 2025, 7pm — Armenia**

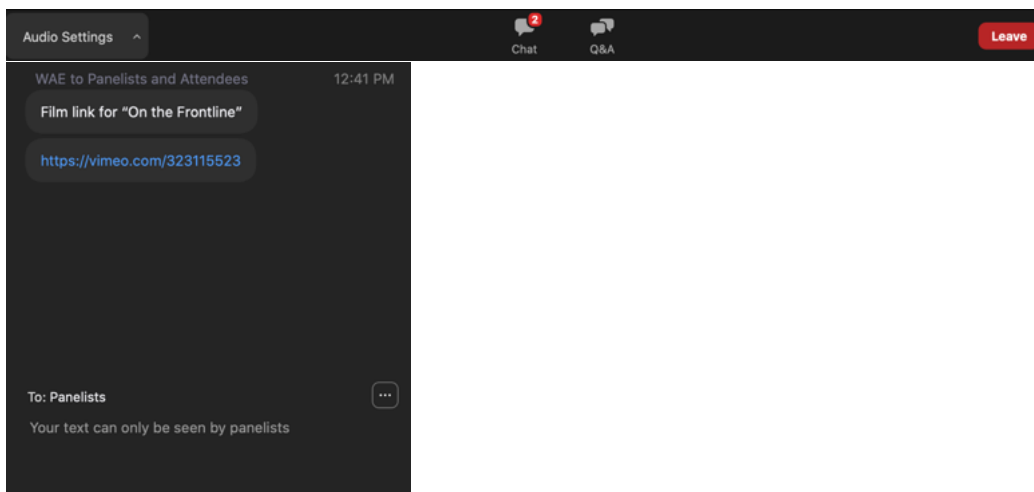
**February 25, 2025, 7pm — Iceland**

**March 4, 2025, 7pm — United States**

Time shows in Eastern Standard Time (U.S. and Canada)

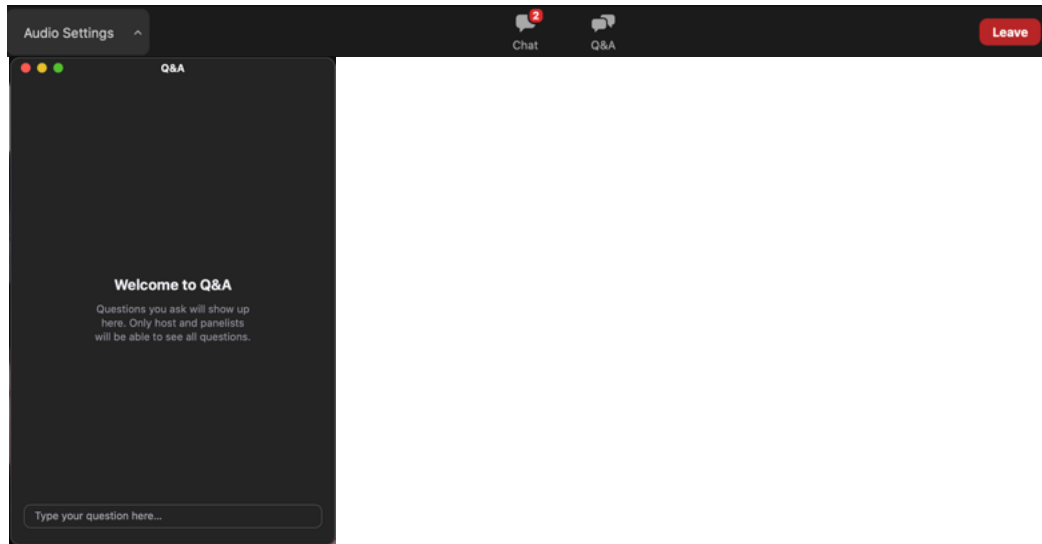
**Each Tuesday night, screening of the film festival will use the same link listed above and begin promptly at 7pm.**

- ❖ At 7pm, guests will be invited into the Zoom Webinar room, where we will hold a pre-screening introduction.
- ❖ After the introduction, we will post the link to the film's screening URL in the Chat box of the Zoom Webinar platform. The Chat feature is located in the "Control Bar," either at the top or bottom of your Zoom window. A notification will appear announcing that the link has been posted. When directed, select this box to bring up a new window.



- ❖ Guests will then follow the link in the Chat to screen the film on their own computers. Selecting the link will bring up an Internet browser window.
- ❖ We will make an announcement to play the film and expectations for the length of the film's runtime. Guests are invited to come back to the Zoom Webinar at the conclusion of the film's runtime. We will give you an expectation for a specific time to rejoin the Zoom Webinar.
- ❖ Please leave your Zoom Webinar open and in the background during this time. Be aware that while you will have the ability to pause and resume play of the film at your leisure, we are only allowing for a five-minute buffer before the post-screening discussion. If you close your Zoom Webinar window, you will have to rejoin the Zoom Webinar to participate in the post-screening discussion.

- ❖ After the film has completed its runtime, guests are invited to return to the Zoom Webinar room to participate in a post-screening discussion using the Q&A feature. Submit questions by writing them in the Q&A box.



- ❖ We will hold brief closing statements and thank you's at the conclusion of the evening.

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

- ❖ Guests will be muted during the session. If guests have any technical difficulties, they may correspond with WAE Tech Support via the Chat feature. WAE Tech Support will privately message you to respond. Please reserve the Q&A function for the post-screening discussion.
- ❖ The links to these films will only remain active DURING the screening, so guests will NOT be able to watch these films via the links after the evening of the event.

February 11, 2025

## TANZANIA

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**Tanzania: The Royal Tour** (2022)

**Written & Directed by:** John Feist

**Running Time:** 60 minutes

**Speaker:** Ambassador Dr. Elise Sia Kanza, Embassy of United Republic of Tanzania ,

**Moderated by:** Dr. Greg Faller

An intimate and personal travel documentary, *Tanzania: The Royal Tour*, reveals the sprawling nation through the eyes of Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, president of Tanzania. "Mama Samia" (as she is affectionately called) and Emmy Award-winning journalist Peter Greenberg journey across incredibly varied geography, showcasing the history, culture, environment, food, music, and economy of a diverse and remarkable country. From the modern capital city of Dar es Salaam, to the Arabic influenced islands of Zanzibar, to the "Roof of Africa" (Mt. Kilimanjaro), to the "endless plains" of the Serengeti (home of the Maasai), the film tells the stories of just some of Tanzania's amazing hidden gems.

We visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Stone Town, learn about the Indian Ocean slave trade and the emergence of Swahili culture. We see the rural school and mosque where President Hassan spent her formative years. We are treated to examples of the growing ecotourism industry (including an underwater lodge). We



come to visually understand the immensity of the poaching problem that led to a 60 percent decrease in the elephant population. We discover a tricky way to experience the 19,340 foot summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro and see firsthand the impact of climate change. We descend three miles into a Tanzanite mine, the heavily guarded and solitary mine that yields the world's rarest gem. We go on safari in the Ngorongoro Crater (to observe "the Big Five") and in the Serengeti (by balloon) and visit a Maasai village to appreciate their traditions. By the end of the film, you will want to plan your own epic trip to Tanzania!

*Tanzania: The Royal Tour* is part of a groundbreaking series of television specials, produced and hosted by Peter Greenberg — America's most recognized, honored, and respected front-line travel news journalist — showcasing nations in a way no visitor has ever seen them before. Each "royal tour" is guided by some of the most dynamic and powerful heads of state, taking us deep inside each country to offer access to extraordinary locations, historic landmarks, and cultural experiences. Other countries in the series include: Mexico, Ecuador, Israel, Rwanda, and Poland. Greenberg also hosts the public television show *The Travel Detective* which provides half-hour episodes that seek to empower audiences with travel news, must-have information, insider tips, and hidden destinations not found in traditional guidebooks or brochures. Explore his award-winning website at [www.PeterGreenberg.com](http://www.PeterGreenberg.com).

Watch a trailer for Tanzania: The Royal Tour at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO3cqGSKjWw>



## **SPEAKERS**

### **Her Excellency Ambassador, Dr. Elsie Sia Kanza. Ambassador from the United Republic of Tanzania**

Between 2002 and 2006, Elsie S. Kanza, a Tanzanian economist, served in various positions in the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank of Tanzania, including personal assistant economic advisor to His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of the United Republic of Tanzania. She joined the World Economic Forum in 2011 and has been engaged in changing the narrative of the African economy. In 2014, she became the Head of Africa, and member Executive Committee, World Economic Forum. She was named one of Pan-Africa's continent leading women 2020 by *Forbes*.

Kanza was born and raised in Kenya by Tanzanian parents. She began her education in Kenya before proceeding to the U.S., where she graduated with a bachelor's degree from the United States International University-Africa in business administration. She also earned a master's degree in finance from the University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom, and a master's degree in development economics,

Center for Development Economics, Williams College, U.S.

Kanza has been recognized from different bodies for her contribution to the economic sector; including:

- Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Leadership Fellow, 2008
- Young Global Leader, World Economic Forum, 2011
- Nominee, Rising Talents Program, Women's Forum for the Economy and Society, 2011
- 20 Youngest Powerful Women In Africa, *Forbes Africa*, 2011
- 50 Influential Africans in The World, *Pan-African* magazine, Jeune Afrique, 2014
- Africa's 50 Most Powerful Women, *Forbes Africa*, 2020

### **Peter Greenburg**

An Emmy award-winning investigative reporter and producer, CBS News Travel Editor Peter Greenberg is America's most recognized, honored, and respected front-line travel news journalist, reporting from more than 152 countries. Greenberg also produces and co-hosts an ongoing series of acclaimed public television specials, *The Royal Tour*, featuring personal, one-on-one journeys through countries with the heads of state, ranging from the King of Jordan to the Prime Minister of New Zealand; the President of Rwanda to the Prime Minister of Israel; the Presidents of Mexico and Peru; the Prime Ministers of Poland and Jamaica, to name a few.

The latest is *Royal Tour: the President of Tanzania*. In addition, Greenberg hosts the long-running public television series, *The Travel Detective*. This investigative news magazine offers cutting-edge travel information and insider tips, plus in-depth reports on the good, bad, and yes, even ugly, aspects of travel.

*HIDDEN* is the latest series, with a specific editorial mandate: no gift shops, tour buses, or glossy brochures. *HIDDEN* reveals the little known but incredible experiences in special destinations around the world that are accessible to the audience. Recent specials include Turkey, Canary Islands, Poland, Saudi Arabia, and Ireland.

Each week, Greenberg hosts the CBS News three-hour national radio show, *Eye on Travel*, broadcast from a different remote location around the world.

Greenberg is also author of the New York Times best-selling travel detective series, including *The Best Places For Everything*, *Don't Go There!* and *The Complete Travel Detective Bible*.

*Travel Weekly* named Greenberg one of the most influential people in travel, along with Bill Marriott and Richard Brandon. Greenberg's most recent Emmy award was for his work on the Dateline team reporting on Miracle on the Hudson.

His website, PeterGreenberg.com, is one of the leading travel news resources for consumers and industry insiders alike. When he is not traveling the globe, Greenberg serves as an active volunteer firefighter in New York.

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### **MODERATOR**

Dr. Greg Faller has been professor of Electronic Media & Film at Towson University since 1986. He has served as Associate Dean of the College of Fine Arts &



Communication since 2012. He received his Masters in Film Production from Syracuse University and Doctorate in Film Studies from Northwestern University. He has been published in *Literature/Film Quarterly*, *Popular Music and Society*, *American National Biography*, *Film Quarterly*, *Media Criticism*, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen*, and *Movies, Moves, and Music*. He has presented papers at numerous conferences including the Literature/Film Association, the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, University Film & Video Association, and the Art Seminar Group. He co-chaired the inaugural Maryland Sister States International Film Series in 2006, which is now the WAE International Film Festival, and writes the program notes for the series. Dr. Faller also worked professionally as a film editor. He recently completed a feature-length documentary on Rene Gimpel, an important 20th century art dealer and French resistance fighter.

February 18, 2025

# ARMENIA

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***The American Good Samaritans*** (2022)

**Directed by:** Ara Mnatsakanyan

**Running Time:** 70 minutes

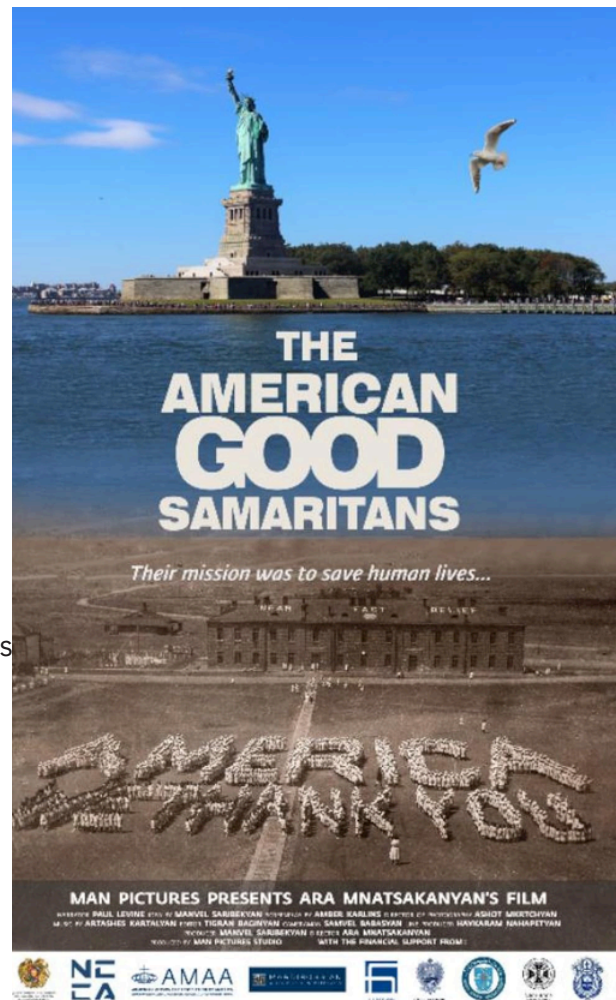
**Introduced by:** To be announced by the Embassy of Armenia

**Moderated by:** Dr. Greg Faller

*The American Good Samaritans* examines the unimaginable atrocities of the Armenian genocide — and the American diplomats, health professionals, actors, and religious leaders, who helped save countless lives. The Armenian genocide most commonly refers to the pogroms perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire during the early years of World War I.

A more complex history considers a 30-year timespan (1894–1924) when Christian minorities were systematically eliminated by the pan-Islamic policies of the Empire. The Hamidian massacres of the mid-1890s resulted in 100,000–300,000 deaths and 50,000 orphaned children. The Adana massacre of 1909 killed 25,000 ethnic Armenians and destroyed half of the city. The World War I genocide (starting in Constantinople with “Red Sunday” on 24 April 1915) saw 1,000,000 Armenians murdered, primarily through death marches to the Syrian Desert. The Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923) massacred nearly 100,000 Armenians.

These events put an end to more than 2,000 years of Armenian civilization in the region. Thirty-four countries (including the United States) now formally recognize this extermination of an ethnic group as the largest and most thorough “racial cleansing” until World War II. Reportedly, the Nazis incorporated the lessons of the Armenian genocide into its own tactics against the Jews. Turkey continues to deny this history



and attempts to limit any recognition or mention of the genocide in the global community.

Notwithstanding, *The American Good Samaritans* is a story about survival; the film is dedicated “to the memory of those who



devoted their lives to saving nations, as gratitude from the side of survived nations.” Produced by Manvel Saribekyan with the support of the National Cinema Center of Armenia, the film is the second in a series of documentaries (“The Map of Gratitude” project) that gives testament to the international humanitarians who helped the Armenian people (the first film, *The Map of Salvation*, is about European missionaries and the third film, *The Golden Chain of Mercy*, is about ANZAC soldiers).

Our guide through the film is the late Swedish-Americans Associate Professor of Holocaust History and Genocide Studies, Dr. Paul Levine. He and other experts recount important people — from Clara Barton (founder of the American Red Cross) to Ambassador Henry Morgenthau to missionaries Elizabeth Webb, Elizabeth Barrows, and Clarence Ussher to US Consul Leslie Davis to Jackie Coogan (the famous child actor) to Pastor Asa Jennings, who provided vital assistance to a population nearing obliteration. Using a narrator, archival footage and stills, numerous interviews, historical letters, and reenactments, *The American Good Samaritans* resurfaces a forgotten story that needs to become common knowledge in world history. The film was shot in six countries (the United States, Armenia, Lebanon, Greece, Turkey, and Iran), participated in 98 international film festivals, and won 135 prestigious awards. You can watch a trailer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQ3LvcAVrZg>

February 25, 2025

## ICELAND

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***Svar við bréfi Helgu*** (2022)

[A Letter from Helga]

**Directed and Co-Written by:** Ása Helga Hjörleifsdóttir

**Running Time:** 100 minutes

**Introduced and produced by:** Svanhildur Holm Valsdóttir, Ambassador to Iceland; Ragnhildur E Arnorsdóttir, Counselor of the Republic of Iceland; Asa.Helga Hor, producer

**Moderated by:** Dr. Greg Faller

Set in the remote Strandir area of the Westfjords during the 1940s, *A Letter From Helga* contrasts Iceland's stark landscape with the inescapable complexity of human desire. There may be little to see on the region's cold surface but underneath lies a bubbling caldron of obsession, grief, longing, and despair. Much like the country's foundational magma, these repressed emotions always threaten to erupt. And when these hidden passions do emerge, they are revealed by a combination of silence, aching looks and touches, heated arguments, and violence.

Two externally "perfect" couples in a small sheep farming community become entangled in rumors, questionable choices, and misbegotten love. Employing some thematic tropes from classical melodrama, the film explores emotional turmoil,

sacrifices made for children, ties to tradition, self-imposed isolation, and an inability to recognize the consequences of one's actions. Bjarni (Thor Kristjansson) and his wife Unnar (Anita Briem) share a hollow, childless marriage brought about by an unspoken tragedy. Helga (Hera Hilmar) and her husband Hallgrímur (Björn Thors) have two lovely children but share nothing in common other than disappointment. Because of their love of literature and poetry, Bjarni and Helga begin a not quite secret love affair. But even their renewed passion reveals a major conflict: Bjarni wants to remain on his family farm while Helga wants to experience the modernity of Reykjavik.

*A Letter from Helga* also exposes us to some seminal Norwegian and Icelandic literature, not surprisingly since Hjörleifsdóttir holds a BA in Comparative Literature from the University of Iceland and the Sorbonne (she also earned an MA in filmmaking from Columbia University). Some of the works discussed in the community book club readings are: *Pan* by Knut Hamsun; *Vonir* by Einar Hjörleifsson Kvaran; and *The Black Cliffs* by Gunnar Gunnarsson. Each story is echoed in the film itself, an adaptation of Bergsveinn Birgisson's novella (*Reply to a Letter from Helga*). The book and the film roil with ardor, guilt, and regret about choices made and paths left unexplored. It is a sensitive film offering universal themes of hope and loss, desire and regret, and the wonder of having looked into the eyes of someone who loves you deeply — if fleetingly. It has been said that Icelandic love stories are never simple and that's certainly true here. The narrative is complex and sophisticated and ultimately asks if we should sacrifice everything for love.

*A Letter from Helga* is Hjörleifsdóttir's second feature film and appeared in 17 international film festivals. It received 12 Edda Award nominations including Best Actor, Actress, Director, Screenplay, and Cinematography. Anita Briem (Unnur) won Best Supporting Actress and Björn Thors (Hallgrímur) won Best Supporting Actor. Jasper Wolf's stunning cinematography makes the cliffs, fields, and coast of Iceland an important metaphor for the characters' internal turmoil.

Watch a trailer at <https://www.icelandicfilms.info/films/nr/2121>



March 4, 2025

## UNITED STATES

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***Bombers & Masterpieces:  
Recovering the Life, Art,  
and Diary of Rene Gimpel***  
— (2022)

**Running Time:** 75 minutes

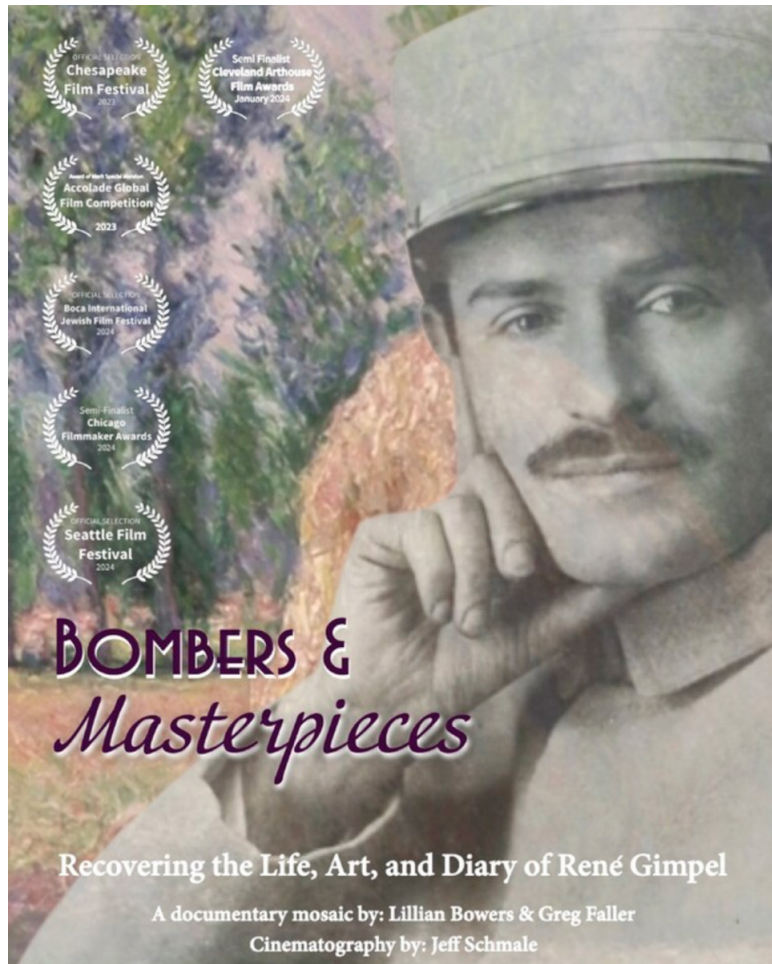
**Co-Producers:** Lillian  
Bowers and Greg Faller

**Speaker:** Dr. Greg Faller

The documentary mosaic recounts the life, times, and diary of Rene Gimpel, an important Jewish art dealer and friend of nearly all major French artists of the first half of the 20th century. He was also a resistance fighter, who died in the Neuengamme concentration camp.

Not only did the Nazis take Rene Gimpel's life, they stole famous works of art from him. The film also describes his legacy and his heirs' ongoing efforts to recover artworks stolen by the Nazis.

Watch a trailer at <https://vimeo.com/598264966?share=copy>



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### MODERATOR

Dr. Greg Faller has been professor of Electronic Media & Film at Towson University since 1986. He has served as Associate Dean of the College of Fine Arts & Communication since 2012. He received his Masters in Film Production from Syracuse University and Doctorate in Film Studies from Northwestern University. He has been published in *Literature/Film Quarterly*, *Popular Music and Society*, *American National Biography*, *Film Quarterly*, *Media Criticism*, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen*, and *Movies, Moves, and Music*. He has presented papers at numerous conferences

including the Literature/Film Association, the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, University Film & Video Association, and the Art Seminar Group. He co-chaired the inaugural Maryland Sister States International Film Series in 2006, which is now the WAE International Film Festival, and writes the program notes for the series. Dr. Faller also worked professionally as a film editor. He recently completed a feature-length documentary on Rene Gimpel, an important 20th century art dealer and French resistance fighter.

**NOTE:** Due to unforeseen global circumstances, the films from Ecuador and Pakistan will be either postponed or cancelled until a future time.