Press Release

The Berlinale Mourns the Loss of Lia van Leer

On March 13, Lia van Leer, the doyenne of Israeli cinema, died at the age of 90. Lia van Leer was the founder of the cinematheques in Haifa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and established the Israel Film Archive as well as the Jerusalem Film Festival.

"Lia van Leer was a striking personality whose commitment to cinema and to Israeli filmmaking in particular was incomparable. We have lost a fervent advocate of the seventh art. But above all Lia was a good friend whom I will miss greatly," says Berlinale Director Dieter Kosslick.

In the 1950s Lia van Leer already had a great passion for international cinema. With her husband Wim, she launched several film clubs and the Israel Film Archive in 1960. She also founded the cinematheques in Haifa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, as well as many other initiatives. In 1984 she established the Jerusalem Film Festival, whose director she remained until a few years ago. She received countless awards, including the prestigious Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement for her contribution to society and the state of Israel. Lia van Leer was invited to the Berlinale many times and was president of the International Jury in 1995. In 2003 she mentored the festival's new initiative, the *Berlinale Talent Campus*. In 2011 the Berlin International Film Festival awarded Lia van Leer the Berlinale Camera.

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