

Deaf Jam



Synopsis:

Deaf Jam is the story of deaf teen Aneta Brodski's bold journey into the spoken word slam scene. In a wondrous twist, Aneta, an Israeli immigrant living in the Queens section of New York City, eventually meets Tahani, a hearing Palestinian slam poet. The two women embark on a collaboration/performance duet creating a new form of slam poetry that speaks to both the hearing and the Deaf. Deaf Jam had its U.S. broadcast premiere on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series Independent Lens in their 2011/2012 season.

Directors:

Judy Lieff

Run Time

70 minutes

Website

<http://officialdarkgirlsmovie.com>

Awards

The Japan Prize - NHK Broadcasting, Tokyo
Best Documentary - The Greater Reading Film Festival, PA; Greenpoint Film Festival, NY
Best of Festival - The 1st Irish Deaf Film Festival, Dublin
Emerging Filmmaker Award - Philadelphia Jewish Film Festival
13th Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival, Greece 2012 Woodstock Film Festival - Official Selection



Judy Lieff is a filmmaker and educator with a background in dance and experimental film. Her first feature documentary, DEAF JAM, showcases American Sign Language (ASL) poetry through the story of a young deaf poet's search for identity (www.deafjam.org). Judy won a finishing grant from ITVS for the film. Judy is on faculty at SUNY Purchase teaching film production that explores the intersections of film and dance. She earned her M.F.A. in dance & experimental film/video from the California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts), following a career as a professional dancer. She participated in a Dance On Camera residency with BBC producer Bob Lockyer at the Banff Centre for the Arts. She is a recipient of a National Dance/Media fellowship from the Pew Charitable Trusts,

and a six-time grant recipient for media projects with youth. Judy has years of experience working in production and post-production on commercials, industrials, shorts, and EPKs for feature films. She has documented dance in New York City since 1999 (single and multi-camera). Additionally, she has worked as a motion capture performer/choreographer, and as a stop-motion performer/choreographer.

Questions for Discussion – Deaf Jam

- What are your initial impressions of the film?
- Did you identify with any moments or scenes in the film?
- Have you ever been exposed to ASL poetry before?
- Did you find anything inspiring or motivational in the film?
- What do you think about Aneta’s decision to not be voiced at the Nuyorican Poetry Slam and then her decision to collaborate with Tahani, the spoken word poet?
- What kind of effect do you think the poetry workshops had on Aneta?
- What do you think about Aneta’s redefinition of “deaf” at the end of the film?