



Directed by Lior Shamriz

With: Imri Kahn, Tal Meiri, Irit Gidron, Naama Yuria, Amnon Friedman, Benny Ziffer

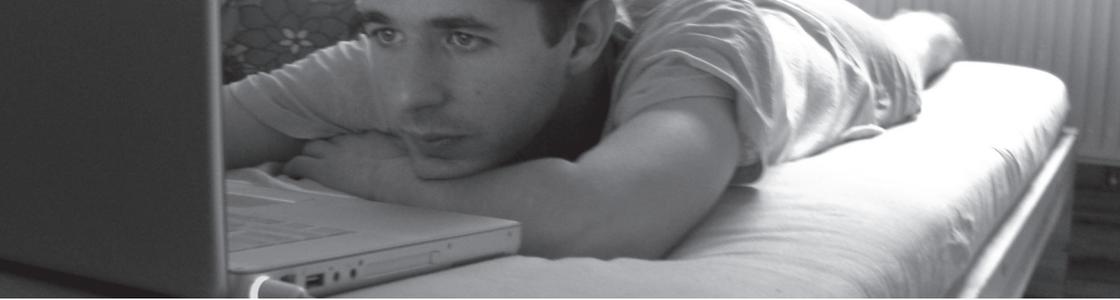
Script: Lior Shamriz / Improvised  
Cinematography and Editing: Lior Shamriz  
Sound Design: Jochen Jezussek

Produced by Jehuti Films (IL/DE)  
Edited at the Institut for Time-Based Media, UdK, Berlin

65 Minutes / Israel 2007 / VIDEO

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Tuesday, August 7th 2007, Kursaal, 6.00 pm (Press)  
Wednesday, August 8th 2007, Auditorium Fevi , 6.30 pm (World Premiere)  
Thursday, August 9th 2007, La Sala , 9.00 am  
Friday, August 10th 2007, Cinema Otello , 2.00 pm  
60th Film Festival Locarno - Filmmakers of the Present



## PLOT

At 19, after dismissing himself from the army, Imri moves from a peripheral city in Israel to the central Tel Aviv. He lives with a flaky roommate and finds work at a specialty shop, all the while it is a given both to him and to his environment that he is saving up with a plan to move to Japan. At around the same time he moves to Tel Aviv, a childhood friend, supported by her parents, is moving to New York.

Besides learning Japanese, he's experiencing the life in Tel Aviv, engaging himself in sexual experiences with men, meeting friends, et cetera. A war is taking place some kilometers from his home, although this seems even further away than Japan.

An exploration of living in the exotic city of Tel Aviv is presented through a hero who is himself in the midst of exploring his own choice of an exotic place. A unique correlation is formed between the hero's misconception of Japan and ours of him.

The movie was constructed by both improvised and pre-scripted scenes, as required by the nature of each scene. The production of the picture was with a budget under 200 Euros (The postproduction, of course, was more expensive) using a small mini-DV camera, shooting mainly in the actors' homes and workplaces for around 20 half-days during March 2006.



**DIRECTOR** - Lior Shamriz

Born in Ashkelon, Israel, 1978.

Studied Film at the Jerusalem Film School (2002-2004)

Since October 2006 attending the Institute for Time-Based Media at the University of Arts (UdK) Berlin. Makes movies and music.

## **FILMOGRAPHY**

- **Return to the Savanna**  
A cycle of 6 short movies,  
75' in total:
  - New Order Low Life (2004)
  - The Prince (2004)
  - Return to the Savanna (2005)
  - Look Who I Brought Home (2004)
  - Infantile (2005)
  - Hand (2004)
- **Ho! Terrible Exteriors**  
28' minutes, Israel 2006
- **The Farewell**  
Israel 2006
- **Japan Japan**  
65', Israel / USA / Germany 2006-7
- **Before The Flowers Of Friendship Faded Friendship Faded**  
7', Germany 2007



## ABOUT

In my first long-length film I wanted to see what happens when a fictional story is structured as a documentary one would be. The story was about a young man who comes to live in Tel Aviv but dreams of moving to Japan. Many young people in Tel Aviv, including myself, went through a period, even if only a short one, of admiration to the cultures of the far east. For me it was Japan.

Maybe it's a problem of identity. Growing up in a small place, dominated by American culture, a young man may tend to try and find an alternative mother-culture for his life as he finds out that what he thought to be his "own" culture does not belong to him, and he is to live in a violent war-zone. I've never been to Japan. My knowledge of it came exclusively through filters of mediation. A few years later, after I almost forgot about Japan, the image of a young man in Tel Aviv, who puts a barrier between himself and his near surroundings stayed in my mind.

As a filmmaker in Israel I knew my films would often be perceived as a window to an exotic place in the midst of political conflict. In "Japan Japan" I could question the place of Exotism and Orientalism in cinema and in my life. More than a "Middle-Eastern" movie about "Japan", this movie should be seen as a film from the middle east that would have preferred to have been "Japanese".





I planned the shooting as if I was planning the scenes I would have liked to have in a documentary about the daily life of a young man wanting to go to Japan, leaving most of the structuring of the film for the editing process. After constructing on paper the surroundings of the hero, I went to shoot his encounters and relationships on different points of time over an imaginary year. Every such scene was fictionalized as an independent episode, with its own suitable film technique, should it be scripted, improvised or a real event visited by the hero/actor. For some scenes I just took some still photos, others I shot like a home-made musical.

This multiplicity of cinematic languages was used in an attempt to evoke a truer representation of life, to use the motion-picture not as a documentation of a continuous 3D space but as a screen.

*Lior Shamriz*



## **ACTORS:**

Although led mainly by Imri Kahn, “Japan Japan” should be taken as an ensemble movie that gathers a crowd of professional, semi-professional and non-professional actors who are socially and/or artistically connected. Some of the scenes in the movie are no more than a documentation of actual events, such as the Left-Wing Queer Party (“Queerahana”) in Tel Aviv or the farewell of Imri and Naama, which is their real farewell, as he was leaving Israel on that day on his way to Berlin.

### **Imri Kahn** (b. 1982, New York)

An artist and filmmaker that has participated numerous times in the director’s movies. The month when the filming took place was his last month in Israel before leaving to study in Berlin. Currently attending the Fine-Arts department at the University of Berlin.

### **Tal Meiri** (b. 1977, Jerusalem)

A DJ under the name “Stadtkind” and an Art-History student at the Tel Aviv University, Meiri has collaborated already in many of the directors shorter projects. She is a Cinephile with a particular love of European oldies. The apartment she’s sharing with Imri in the film is her apartment in Tel Aviv.

### **Irit Gidron** (b. 1956, Tel Aviv)

Acting professionally since 1987, she participated in films directed by, among others, Amos Gitai and Savi Gabizons. Has recently starred in the theater comedy “Talking women”. The scenes she participated in were shot in her actual house. Since her son was studying Japanese while living in Tel Aviv in his early 20s, Gidron brought her own experiences to the character of the mother of Imri in the movie.





**Naama Yuria** (b. 1982, Tel Aviv)

A visual artist who Besides making videos and photography, has initiated social-oriented art-projects in Israel (the Toys Project). Yuria is also a singer, and was co-singing with Lior Shamriz on his gay political electro hebrew songs, later founding her own electro band “Dolly Dolly”. They performed together in several “Queerahana” parties. She is now an art student at the Goldsmith Academy, London.

**Benny Ziffer** (b. 1953, Tel Aviv)

Writer, translator and editor of Haaretz literary supplement. His own house was used for the shooting of the scene he participated in. His blog has made him the “infant terrible” of Israel’s cultural scene - a defender of so-called “high culture”, he’s been accusing Israeli cinema of being “artificial, fake and unreal”, declaring: “It’s impossible for a bad people to have a good cinema”, and has encouraged the younger generation to find education abroad.

**Amnon Friedman** (b. 1981, Tel Aviv)

Born and raised in Tel Aviv, he is a fresh graduate of the photography department at the Bezalel academy in Jerusalem, he describes himself as a “crazy bloke that seeks trouble, peace in the middle east and cure to mental boredom, dreams to get an EU passport and a quiet environment”



Website: [www.jehuti.com/japanjapan](http://www.jehuti.com/japanjapan)

**Press Corner:**

[www.jehuti.com/japanjapan/press](http://www.jehuti.com/japanjapan/press)

The following find hi-res pictures can be found on the press-conner:



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