

Fioretta

Four Countries.
Five Centuries.
One Family.

a film by Matthew Mishory



SYNOPSIS

History-obsessed Randy Schoenberg (memorably portrayed by Ryan Reynolds in *Woman in Gold*) brings his reluctant teenage son Joey along for the journey of a lifetime, through Europe and the centuries, to reclaim 500 years of their family story. Along the way, they encounter kings, mystics, and a false messiah — as well as numerous ordinary and extraordinary people who witnessed Europe's tumultuous past. And the relationship between father and son is forever changed. Randy is renowned for recovering Nazi-looted art, but his greatest achievement might just be reuniting the fractured and scattered shards of his own family. Filmed on location across Austria, Czech Republic, and Italy, *Fioretta* is “a meditative and intensely visual exploration...[filmmaker] Matthew Mishory reveals what history hides.” - Film Threat



TECHNICAL SPECS

Genre: Documentary Feature

TRT: 126 minutes

Audio 5.1 (and Stereo Mix available)

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Main Cameras: Alexa Mini LF and ARRIFLEX 416 (Super 16mm)

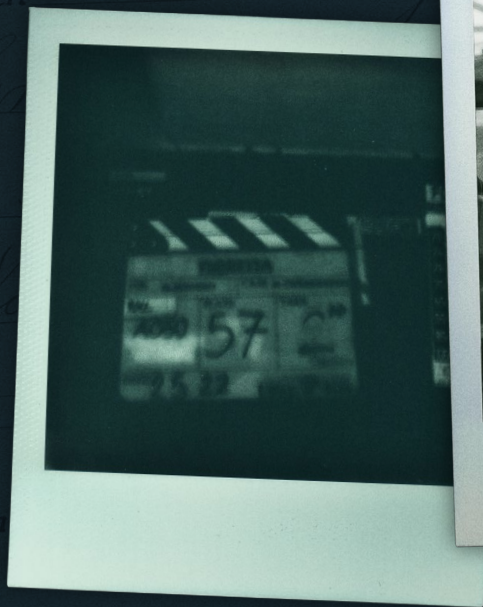
US+Czech Republic Co-production

Filming locations: Prague, Vienna, Venice, Florence, and Los Angeles

Screeener available upon request

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/783129454/4e5ec46dbb>

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



When I first met Randy Schoenberg, he mentioned his “interest” in family history. This made sense; he had a very famous grandfather. But Randy’s interest stretched further back through the centuries. He had been “looking into it” for quite a while and had made some progress. How far back could he go, I asked, expecting an impressive answer: the 1850s, perhaps. Five hundred years, he said. All the way back to the formation of the Jewish Ghetto in Venice. And he had the encyclopedic list of names (and documents) to prove it. To characterize Randy’s achievement as impressive would be a gross understatement. And his burning obsession, his passion for reclaiming and telling his own origin story (and helping others do the same), is no mere interest. It’s an epic

Photo by Bradford Schlei

personal quest across centuries and continents, one that brings to light and personalizes half a millennium of European history, carnage, and achievement. I had an inkling it could also be the basis of an unforgettable film.

The possibility of a further link in the chain, a final [for now] grave to track down somewhere in Europe's forgotten cemeteries, pulled Randy back into his quest. This time he opted to make the journey with his son, Joey, who was about to turn eighteen and set out on a journey of his own. This father-son voyage through time and space (Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, and California serve as backdrops) became the narrative backbone of our film. I am not drawn to overly

dramatic or polemical documentaries. I like to watch characters change subtly, relationships deepen, dynamics quietly shift. And this is what happens in *Fioretta*. Randy and Joey are changed by their time together, by what they see, and by the people they meet. The film has a light touch, but it never shies away from the weight of history, which permeates every frame. A new generation of Europeans will have to decide what to do about their inherited history. Randy has sought to re-assemble and re-unite family, known and rediscovered, genetic and created.

I filmed *Fioretta* as a narrative feature film that happens to be a documentary, avoiding the trappings and conventions of the genre that

have proliferated with streaming. This is not an "interviews and experts movie." The camera roams, settling to catch objects and locations and faces. Crucial emotional sequences are captured on Ektachrome film. And fragments of Randy's first trip to Prague, just after the fall of Communism, come to life in a 16mm film-within-a-film.

The journey was transformational, not only for the film's subjects, but also for those of us lucky enough to come along for the ride, watching through a vintage low-contrast lens.



The Genesis of the Film

By Randol Schoenberg

Fioretta was an idea of my cousin Serena Nono's in Venice, who is also an artist and filmmaker. When she learned that my genealogical research had extended all the way back to a family that lived in the 500-year-old Jewish Ghetto in Venice, Serena thought we could make a documentary film. When I mentioned the idea to producer Brad Schlei and director Matthew Mishory in Los Angeles, they agreed. The film is a journey I took with my teenage son Joey, who accompanied me as we traced our family history, from my grandfather, the well-known composer Arnold Schoenberg, to his mother Pauline from Prague, and beyond. Along the way, we met a great many strange and fascinating people who helped us uncover the traces that my family left behind. The documentary is as much about my relationships with these various characters and my relationship with my son as it is about the genealogical journey.

I have been an avid genealogist and family historian since I was a little kid. Luckily, there was a genealogical article published around the time of Arnold Schoenberg's centennial in 1974, which traced his ancestry back to the 18th century, and my maternal grandmother Gertrud Zeisl was able to remember a great number of people from my mother's side of the family.

Over the decades, I was able to make substantial progress on my family tree. I traveled to Vienna and Prague to visit archives and research. In 1996 we even organized a large family reunion in Vienna with all branches of my extended family. The Internet helped me extend my research and find other genealogists who helped expand my horizons. Over the past twenty years I have become very involved in the larger genealogical community as a board member of JewishGen.org, the Internet hub for Jewish genealogy.

Fioretta focuses on just one, extremely rich and interesting ancestral line that now traces back to Venice, where Jews were forced to live inside gates that were locked in the evening. We were very

fortunate that at each generation we could find a document, a gravestone, a book, or other artifact that gave us a specific insight into the family. In the film we visit and find these remnants, guided by many of the genealogy friends I have made over the years.

This film tells the stories of my ancestors through the people we met who provided us the evidence and insight into our history as well as our present. The atmosphere of the locations was spectacular, not only in the cities—Vienna, Prague, Florence, and Venice—but also in the less well-known locales. Music and art permeate the film, culminating in a Venice exhibit of inspired portraits of our ancestors created by Serena and her husband Nicola Golea.

What makes *Fioretta* special is that director Matthew Mishory found a way to explore the uniquely deep and extensive genealogy in a universally appealing and entertaining manner. Viewers do not need to be aware of, or even particularly interested in, genealogy or the history of Jews in Central Europe to enjoy the film, because it is as much about the people we meet and their

stories as it is about my ancestors. My hope is that the film inspires people to explore their own family history, as I did, to learn a little something about themselves.



KEY CREW



MATTHEW MISHORY

Director

Filmmaker Matthew Mishory was named a “rising talent” by Variety. His work is noted for its exquisite visual style and expansive narrative language. Equally comfortable working in (and in-between) documentary and fiction forms, he has told the stories of outsiders and visionaries who have changed the way we understand art, history, and the natural world.

Matthew recently shot the hybrid narrative-doc feature *Fioretta*, in Prague, Venice, and Vienna, for a 2023 release. He also wrapped *Who Are the Marcuses?* (“A great documentary” - Film Threat), which screened at the 2022 Newport Beach Film Festival and 2023 Santa Barbara Film Festival.

Matthew’s 2018 film *No Place of Exile*, about the modernist composer and pianist Artur Schnabel, premiered on the Arte network. The film was shot

in Switzerland, Italy, Vienna, and Berlin, utilizing unexpected textures (super 8, drone footage, back-projection) and celebrated German actor Udo Samel to chart Schnabel's course through the emotional and physical landscapes of the 20th century.

His 2015 documentary *Absent* was filmed in the remotest reaches of rural Moldova in the former Soviet Union. It was designated a "must-see" film by Cineuropa. Cine Maldito named *Absent* one of the top ten films of the year.

Matthew's feature film debut, the 35mm *Joshua Tree, 1951: A Portrait of James Dean* was released theatrically in the United States, the UK, and Germany. The San Francisco Chronicle declared *Joshua Tree* "mesmerizing and sexy," and Artforum pronounced it "a nuanced portrayal of an entire era."



As a commercial director, Matthew shot the national "Powerful Performance" campaign starring back-to-back NBA MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo. It was featured on the 2019 Super Bowl broadcast. Other brand films include a second collaboration with Antetokounmpo, a surf campaign with pro surfer Tia Blanco, and a Turkish Airlines campaign shot in southeastern Europe.

Matthew's short film, *Delphinium*, about artist Derek Jarman, was installed in the British Film Institute's National Film Archive. The film was subsequently re-released in the UK by the BFI as part of the year-long Jarman2014 celebration. In 2017, it was presented by the Tate Britain Museum in London.

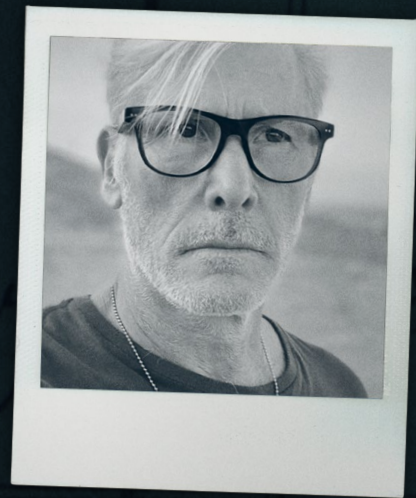
BRADFORD SCHLEI

Producer

Stone Canyon Founder Bradford L. Schlei is an acclaimed producer and financier who was born and raised in Los Angeles, attended Harvard School, Bennington College, and Yale Law School.

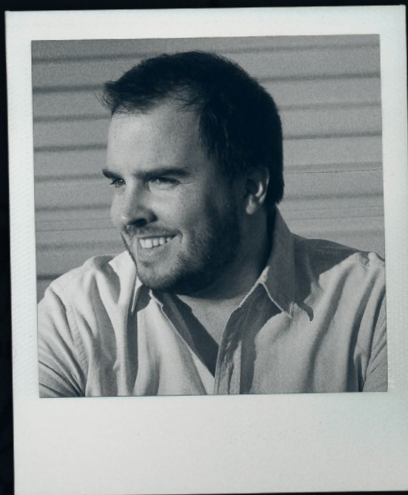
As Co-founder of the film finance fund Stone Canyon Entertainment and of Lindemann Entertainment Group, Schlei was responsible for the financing and production of such indie powerhouse films such as *Swingers* and *Slingblade*. For fifteen years, Bradford has served as partner and Head of Production of Muse Productions, creators of such critically acclaimed films as *American Psycho*, Sofia Coppola's directorial debut *Virgin Suicides*, *Buffalo 66*, *Irreversible*, and *Bully*.

As a producer, Schlei's credits include *Spun*, *Some Folks Call It A Slingblade*, *Swingers*, *Dogtown*, *Welcome To Hollywood*, and *The Killer Inside Me*, starring Kate Hudson, Jessica Alba, Simon Baker, and Casey Affleck. Most recently Schlei produced *The Trust*, with Nicolas Cage and Elijah Wood, and he is currently producing *Goldberg Variations*, directed by Matthew Mishory. A frequent guest speaker on the subjects of film, literature, and art, Schlei has guest-lectured at USC Film School MFA writing program and Columbia University Film School. Schlei is a well-known contemporary art collector and critic.



ÁLVARO FERNÁNDEZ

Producer



Álvaro Fernández is a vastly experienced producer and line producer who has delivered dozens of projects to completion over the past decade. He is particularly skilled in navigating the difficult terrain of international co-productions, having filmed in over a dozen of countries.

Álvaro's credits include the upcoming documentary *The Color of Cola*, helmed by Academy-Award nominee Stanley Nelson and Jackie Olive. Álvaro's collaborations with director Matthew Mishory include *Artur Schnabel: No Place of Exile*, for Arte and RBB; *Wittgenstein's Repertoire*; and *Mosolov's Suitcase*. These films together form an intimate trilogy of classical music portraits. Álvaro has also overseen national commercial spots for clients such as Roku, Pinterest, DirecTV, Best Buy and TCL — including two recent latest campaigns with NBA MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo.

ROB LEVINE

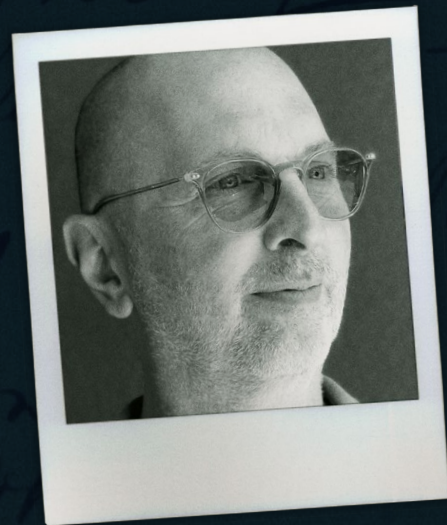
Executive Producer, Co-Writer

A native New Yorker and graduate of Columbia University and NYU, Rob Levine began his career at The Image Bank's newly-acquired film division. After moving to Los Angeles and working as a Story Analyst for New Line Cinema, he began a fifteen-year stint as a Production Executive at Universal Television.

While working for Emmy-winning producer Dick Wolf at Universal, Rob helped to assemble an ace writing staff for a stable of hit shows that included *Law & Order*, *New York Undercover*, *Mann and Machine*, *Feds*, *Players*, *Crime & Punishment*, and *The Wright Verdicts*. Rob was then offered the opportunity to run legendary actor Peter Falk's production company. Rob was responsible

for developing the last three *Columbo* movies for ABC as well as Falk's film and stage projects – including Arthur Miller's *Mr. Peter's Connections*, Jon Favreau's *Made*, and Paul Reiser's *The Thing About My Folks*.

A voting member of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, Rob has written more than a dozen screenplays and teleplays, including *Seven Days In Utopia*, starring Academy Award winners Robert Duvall and Melissa Leo. He is excited to be working with the talented Rubber Ring team on a slate of socially impactful and environmentally-conscious programming.



ANNETA FURDECKÁ

Co-Producer



Anneta graduated from FAMU in Prague (Production) and the Department of Film Studies (at Charles University in Prague). She has produced ten short films of different genres with a focus on semi-experimental forms of film narration and is always looking for outstanding and original projects.

Her portfolio includes the short experimental project *Delimitation* (2020, dir. by Tereza Vejvodová), which premiered at the Ji.hlava IDFF, was awarded at the Prague Dance Film Festival and circulated at other festivals abroad (Slamdance, PÖFF Shorts, VAEFF NY, Tous Courts, Žubroffka, Riga, Cineast, Prague shorts.); the animated essay *Social Cube* (2018, dir. by Bety Suchanová); *Past The Voice* (2020, dir. by Natalia Antoňáková); and the experimental dance performance film *Roselyne* (2021, dir. by Tereza Vejvodová and Cecile da Costa). Her short comedy drama *Switched Shifts* (2018, dir. by Luboš Kučera) was awarded by Prague Shorts Film Festival.

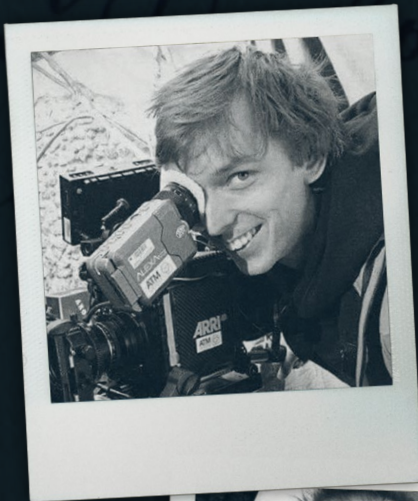
Anneta co-produced the US/Czech independent documentary *Fioretta* (2023, dir. by Matthew Mishory), and has the short animation sci-fi *Genius Dream* (dir. by Martin Bůřil) and a documentary about Czech early 90's alternative culture (dir. by Šimon Šafránek) in the development stage.

Anneta is collaborating with nutprodukce on the documentary projects documentary *Intensive Life Unit* (2021, dir. by Adéla Komrzý); *Brotherhood* (2022, dir. by Francesco Montagner); and *Apart* (2018, dir. by Diana Cam Van Nguyen). She has also worked as freelance line producer and different production positions on projects including *Tribes of Europa* (2021); *Walpurgisnacht* (2019); *Das Boot* (2018); *Alma & Oskar* (2022); and different commercials.

MACIEJ TWARDOWSKI

Cinematographer

Maciej graduated cinematography in National Polish Film School in Lodz. He used to be a sailing regatta athlete. Maciej is an author of many award-winning narrative and documentary films, both features and shorts. Movies he shot were screened at many festivals such as Hot Docs Toronto, IDFA, Camerimage and Sundance where his first feature length film, *“All the sleepless nights”* got a directing award in 2016. His work was listed by Indiewire magazine on the list of The 10 Best Cinematographers of 2017.



MARC COHEN

Editor

Marc Cohen is an Emmy Award-nominated film editor with a passion for character-driven stories. He has a wide range of experience on documentary and scripted projects. Marc's credits as editor and co-writer include *Carrie Fisher: Wishful Drinking* as well as *Absent*, *Artur Schnabel: No Place of Exile*, and *Who Are the Marcuses?*, all directed by Matthew Mishory. Cohen has worked for HBO, NBC, ESPN, Arte, Oxygen, The History Channel, Lifetime, and TLC.

CREDITS

RUBBER RING FILMS and STONE CANYON ENTERTAINMENT present
in association with MONOLITHIC FILMS and NUTPRODUKCE

a film by MATTHEW MISHORY

E. RANDOL SCHOENBERG, SERENA NONO,
ARNIE SCHOENBERG and JOEY SCHOENBERG

in “**Fioretta**”

production designer MAGDALENA ZEMANOVA

original score & sound OHAD STEMATI

edited by MARC COHEN

cinematography MACIEJ TWARDOWSKIGO

producer ANNETA FURDECKA

executive producers ROB LEVINE and E. RANDOL SCHOENBERG

produced by ALVARO FERNANDEZ, p.g.a. BRADFORD L. SCHLEI, p.g.a.

co-writer ROB LEVINE

written and directed by MATTHEW MISHORY

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Fioretta

a film by Matthew Mishory