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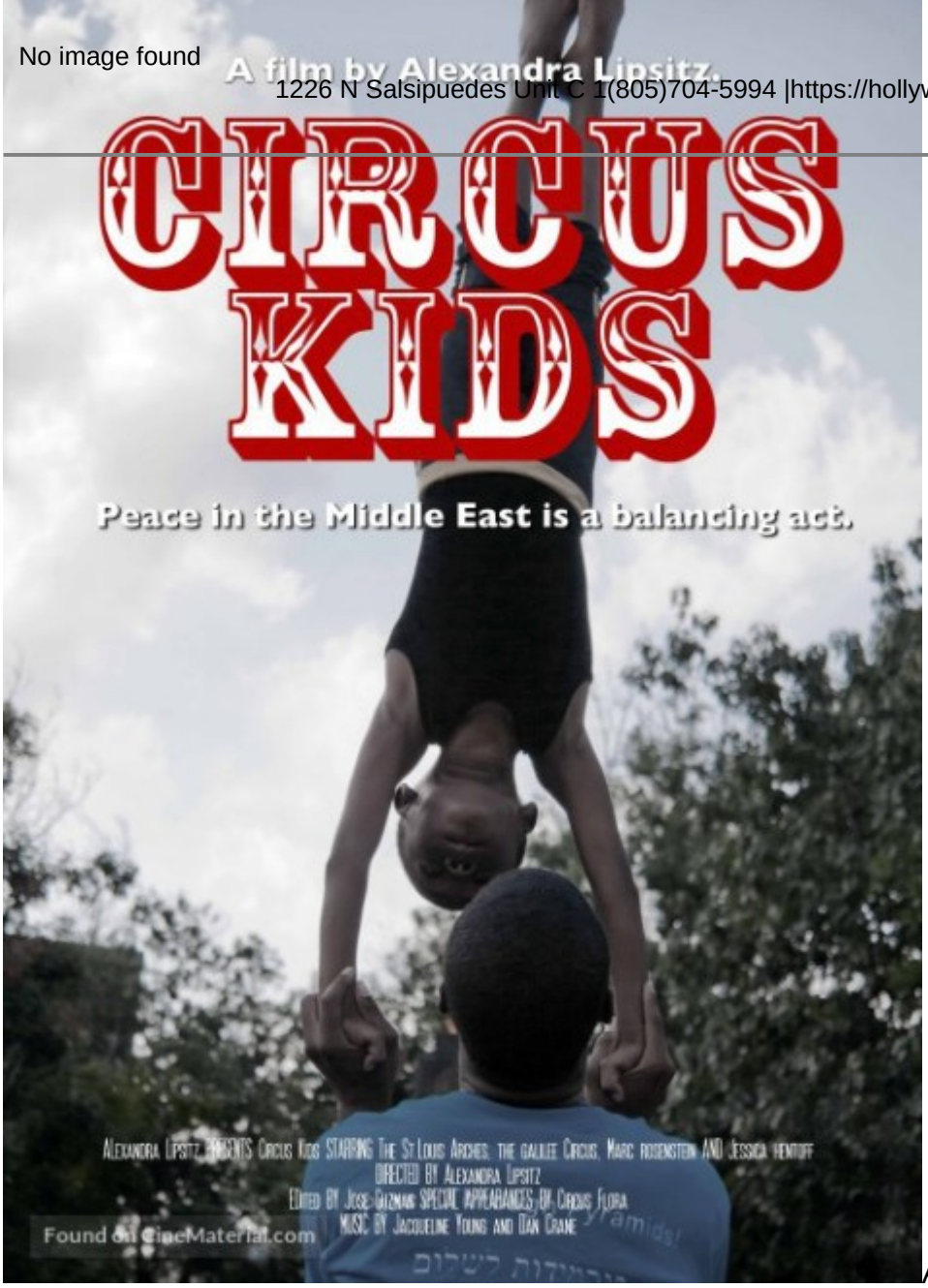


FILM CAPSULE: Circus Kids (Alexandra Lipsitz, 2010): Israel | USA

Description

By Larry Gleeson

Viewed at the Egyptian Theatre, Hollywood, Calif., AFI film festival 2010.



A new documentary, *Circus Kids*, directed by Alexandra Lipsitz, made its second stop on the festival route in Los Angeles, CA during the AFIfest. Last month Lipsitz debuted Circus Kids at the Chicago International Film Festival. The film follows a group of young circus performers, known as the St. Louis Arches, aged 7-17 from St. Louis, Missouri as they are invited to travel to Israel and to perform with a Israeli/Palestinian kids circus troupe known as the Galilee Childrenâ??s Circus.

For most of the Arches, many of whom are from broken homes, it is the first time traveling abroad. Israel is at war. One of the Arches does not receive parental permission to make the trip. Jessica Hentoff, a lifelong circus performer, organized the trip and tells the camera she views the role of the Arches as â??peace ambassadors.â?• Hentoff sees the circus arts as a vehicle to encourage social

change here and abroad.

The Galilee Circus is comprised of both Israeli and Palestinian children. The mission of the Galilee Circus is to foster collaboration among the warring cultures and to focus on their cultural similarities and to work toward creating positive solutions.

Jose Guzman edits the film and uses graphic aids in telling this childrenâ??s story. His visuals include cartoonish animations depicting airplanes, similar to *Man on Wire* depictions, flying to and from Tel Aviv, and a bus as it traverses the Israeli countryside. The children exchange circus tricks and performances. The Arches are astounding acrobats but donâ??t have the baton twirling gifts of the Galileans.

Lipsitz captures her own footage with her own camera. The viewer is treated to a display of teen angst, including a retelling of a performers first kiss, while watching two circus groups separated by a language barrier come together as one strong performing unit.

At the end of the tour a tearful goodbye is captured as the Arches must return to St. Louis. They are wished well with promises that the Galileans will come to St. Louis for another successful performance collaboration.

Category

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2. #AFIFEST
3. Documentary
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Tags

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17. warring cultures

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