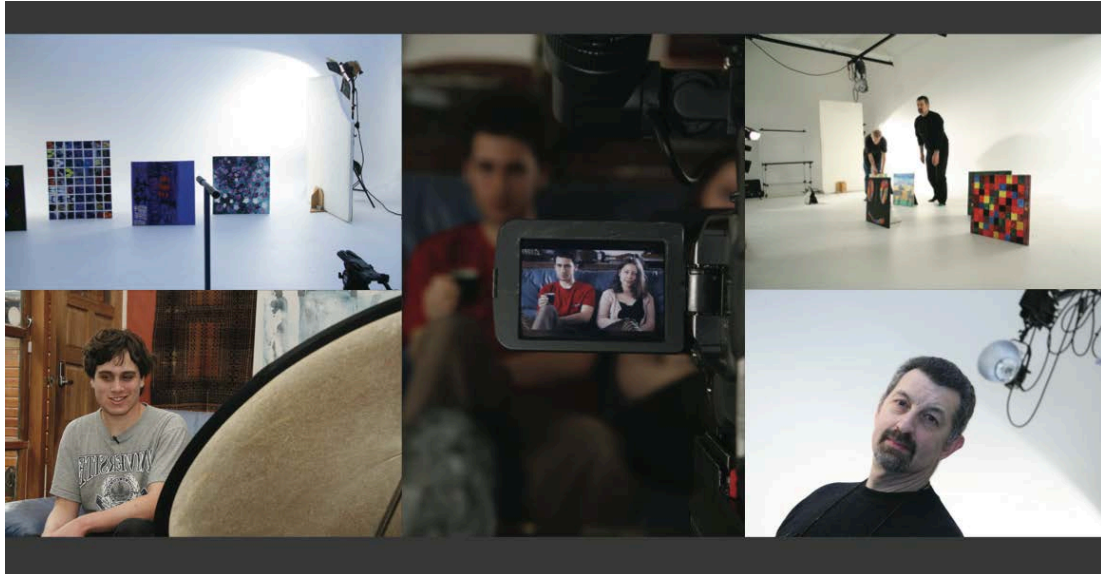


*PRESS KIT*

## **YANIV saves the world**

*Produced by Blue Water Productions and Samarah Wilson Productions*

*Directed by: John Mandelberg Duration: 53 min 25 sec*



### **Synopsis**

***“Art can be therapeutic – for the audience as well as the artist. All art is.”***

*Bonnie Sherr Klein, Canadian Documentary filmmaker, 2006*

A two-year journey from 2008 to late 2010 as a young high school student, Yaniv Janson who has Aspergers syndrome, along with his family enter the world of the artist, arts practice and the practicalities of selling work to survive into the future. The documentary describes in depth how relationships with siblings and family contributed to building his thriving artist career.

After success at local and regional gallery exhibitions, Yaniv became a finalist in 2 major New Zealand National Art Awards. Within 5 minutes of the Exhibition opening his work was the first to be sold. From then on he saw a career as an artist as a real possibility. His career path as a popular and sought after artist has only taken 2 years, as almost everything he paints is sold immediately. Yaniv uses art to make a connection with the world around him and communicate environmental and social messages to society as a whole.

We see the very human side of someone who sees the world in a very different way to most us. We hear the voice of the artist/Aspergers person, which is unusual, humorous, obsessed and unusually focused on each task to achieve a way of communicating to the world through his art.

YANIV SAVES THE WORLD is aimed at a wide general audience but also deals with the social, political, economic and cultural environments as they impact on the specific audiences of documentary film.



**PROGRAMMING DESCRIPTORS**

*FORMS:* Documentary, Feature, and Television

*GENRES:* Family, Personal Narrative, Biography

*NICHES:* Disability Culture, Women, Student, Youth/Teen, and Mature/Adult

**DATE OF COMPLETION**

July 2011

**COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION / FILMING**

New Zealand / New Zealand

**SHOOTING FORMATS**

HDV PAL

**PREVIEW FORMATS**

DVD Region0 PAL SD

**EXHIBITION FORMATS**

As required

**JOHN MANDELBERG**

**Blue Water Productions**

PO Box 7158

Hamilton East

Hamilton, 3247

New Zealand

[john@mediarts.net.nz](mailto:john@mediarts.net.nz)

Tele: +6478564560

(Evening)



**PRODUCTION**

**John Mandelberg**

Co-Producer; Director; Editor; Sound Recordist; 2<sup>nd</sup> Unit Camera operator

**Samarah Wilson**

Co-Producer; Cinematographer/DP

**Phil Thornton**

2<sup>nd</sup> Unit Sound Recordist

**POST PRODUCTION**

**John Mandelberg**

Editor

**David Sidwell**

Composer

**Brad Morgan**

Sound Mixer

**Exhibition Info**

Aspect Ratios: 1.78 (16x9 VIDEO)

This Project contains dialogue in English with no translations available.

**Distribution**

The project has NO distribution yet.



All photographs, 2011 © Janice Abo Ganis



### *Long Synopsis*

*“This is not a story about an Asperger young man who happens to be an artist – this is a story about a talented artist who happens to have Asperger”.*

This documentary film depicts the journey of a young adult, Yaniv Janson and his family dealing with two mental health issues from birth to young adulthood, Aspergers and epilepsy, how the family gathered around him to turn their initial trauma around and help Yaniv trail-blaze a resilient path to success.

The film examines how Yaniv overcame fundamental communication challenges by developing a visual language. The film investigates how relationships with siblings and family contributed to his thriving artist career.

Growing up in Israel his family emigrated to the rural heart of New Zealand, in a large regional center in the North Island, Hamilton. Over the next few years Yaniv's two aunts and their family moved to live within 5 minutes of each other. They are a closely-knit family or aunts, and cousins, brothers and sisters supporting each other and Yaniv.

After learning to paint and draw in kindergarten, he refused to have any interest in art again until his teen years at high school where he picked up skills in lino cutting and printing that spurred him onto to make art again. Not for the sake of art but for sake of being the first to complete his class painting assignments in which he was praised for his work. He then saw painting as a possibility to create colors, shapes and ideas that pleased him and seemed to please others.

After success at local and regional gallery exhibitions Yaniv entered and was a finalist in 2 major New Zealand National Art Awards. His finalist work was the first to be sold within 5 minutes of the Exhibition opening. From then on he saw a career as an artist as a real possibility. His career path as a popular and sought after artist has only taken 2 years with almost everything he paints is sold immediately.

Using art to connect, he communicates environmental and social messages to society as a whole.

Now that he has finished high school, Yaniv is mentored by a specialist in Art



Education for people with a disability and guides him towards being able to survive as an artist and maybe become self sufficient through the sale of his works. Yaniv is passionate about raising awareness about climate change and in order to create the much-needed behavior change, he paints the images people prefer to ignore, of what will happen to landscapes and houses if we cannot alter our current path - he calls this "Visualizing sustainability".



**Comment about YANIV SAVES THE WORLD**

**Karen Brady**, Support Coordinator,  
Wellington Branch - Autism New Zealand, 2011

*I thought it was a really an interesting story to tell of Yaniv, a young man with Aspergers Syndrome, and how he has found a communication outlet through his art. I particularly liked that we got to hear from Yaniv himself as well as his family members and art teacher/mentor. It is inherently difficult to 'hear' from people with Autism because of their communication difficulties so the filming/editing path works well. It wasn't overtly about Autism but you learnt about it through hearing about Yaniv.*

*I do think that as the film progressed the interviewees managed to convey the challenges of Autism and the significance of Yaniv finding an outlet for communication and expression through art...*

*I think the subtlety of the Autism message would make it more appealing to a wide audience and while watching a story about a successful artist they will be 'educated' about autism without it being pushed at them.*

## ***Production Notes***



DIRECTOR: John Mandelberg CINEMATOGRAPHER: Samarah Wilson ASSISTANT: Klas Eriksson

### ***Making a film one shot at a time:***

....Being friends of the Janson family meant that we were kept informed about the number of exhibitions of Yaniv's work that were starting to take place regularly. Then much to our surprise we were invited to the opening night of the 2008 Trust Waikato National Contemporary Arts Awards where a painting by Yaniv was selected as a finalist. It was that night after chatting with family and friends and looking at the range of the finalist's work that I thought: here's a great story to make a film about, and I told Annick, Yaniv's mum that I would love to make a film about him.

Starting any film project is a daunting act and particularly when you have no idea as to the final outcome. But undeterred we started working almost the next week.

I asked Samarah Wilson, a recent graduate student of mine from the Media Arts course at WINTEC to be the cinematographer and to collaborate with me on the project. I also discovered that Samarah had a connection with Yaniv through her mother. She had been a teacher in the special needs class at the high school where Yaniv was attending.

We started filming on a rather sunny Hamilton day with Yaniv, Rob (Yaniv's father) and Annick at the Waikato Museum where we proceeded to film them as they strolled around the Awards exhibition with Yaniv commenting rather acerbically on the finalists work, and then looking at his own work on display.

We also filmed Yaniv in Auckland at the Wallace Art Gallery, where his work was hanging with other entrants to the 2008 Wallace prize. Here he talked about his work and he rated the other works he liked in the gallery.....

The piecing of the images together is not just like putting a picture puzzle together from the image on the puzzle box but an intricate weaving of image, sound and interrelationships form between the material as you use words or images to propel the story forward. As the story is told through the memories of Rob and Annick, the narrative moves back and forward in time revealing much of Yaniv's life story and his work to date.

Yaniv's brother and sister, Stephane and Melissa, Marcel, the Learning Connexion mentor and Yaniv himself, all tell aspects of Yaniv's story and their relationship to him and his developing skills in painting. I was able to link all these ideas together in a flow that moves seamlessly as the documentary story is told....

We also filmed Yaniv at school working on a project from the Learning Connexion, and a sequence in a cooking class with Yaniv icing some chocolate muffins he had made all the while talking about what he would do with the prize if he won a particular art award. Yaniv is obsessed with entering competitions from the back of cereal box tops; from biscuit and soup labels, and due to this it led him to entering the Waikato and Wallace National Art Awards....

However Yaniv's story is ongoing, he is only 18 years old and has a long and full life ahead of him as an artist. He might stop painting tomorrow or continue through adulthood to old age, who knows? His work appeals to a great number of people, from the evidence that just about all the works he paints are snapped up by family, friends and new admirers who see his work on display.

*Article excerpts published in **Changing the World - One Painting at a Time**, Yaniv Daniel Janson, 2010, Publisher: CreateSpace*