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SURVIVOR

The true story of one boy's journey through the Holocaust

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ZoomRockman



ROCKMAN & ROCKMAN



INTRODUCTION

We follow 12-year-old Ivor Perl from a small town in Hungary to the gates of Auschwitz, Kaufering, Allach, and Dachau, witnessing the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust. From being herded onto a cattle truck and narrowly avoiding the gas chambers and ovens, to enduring hunger, typhus, and unimaginable loss, we ultimately see the unbreakable bond between two brothers and their miraculous survival.

The beautiful visual and auditory intricacy of Zoom Rockman's unique animation style will captivate the audience, ensuring they won't want to take their eyes off the screen.

SURVIVOR

WATCH THE OFFICIAL TRAILER ON THE WEBSITE



SURVIVOR

MIPCOM / CANNES

Survivor was premiered at MIPCOM in Cannes on 22nd October, 2024 at the Palais des Festivals.

Attendees were treated to a Q&A with debut director Zoom Rockman and composer Erran Baron Cohen, moderated by Peter Hamilton.



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New animated movie follows story of Holocaust survivor

THE ANIMATED film, Survivor: The True Story Of One Boy's Journey Through The Holocaust, will be shown at a world-first screening today at 13.30 in Audi K. The new animation tells the true story of a boy who survived the Holocaust and a tortuous existence in numerous Nazi concentration camps. The screening will be attended by animator Zoom Rockman, marking his debut as a director, alongside the film's screenwriter, producer and executive producer.

Perl's life was spared initially by the Polish fellow prisoners who, on the cattle trucks heading to Auschwitz, yelled out in Yiddish that all young boys should claim to be 16 or over. Had he told the truth to the guards about his real age, Perl would have been killed in a gas chamber as soon as he arrived at Auschwitz. Survivor plays out numerous harrowing scenes from Perl's accounts, which have been adapted for the screen by screenwriter Kate Lennard.

Led by producer Sally Vaughan and executive producer, Nigel Canin, the project has been completed in less than a year, with the blessing of Perl himself. After today's screening the team, led by Rachel Mansson, founder of distribution company BYO Collective, will press ahead with efforts to secure international broadcast deals and further screenings, many of which are likely to be in the educational sector.

A portrait of Zoom Rockman, a man with short dark hair and a beard, wearing glasses and a dark blazer, standing outdoors with greenery in the background.

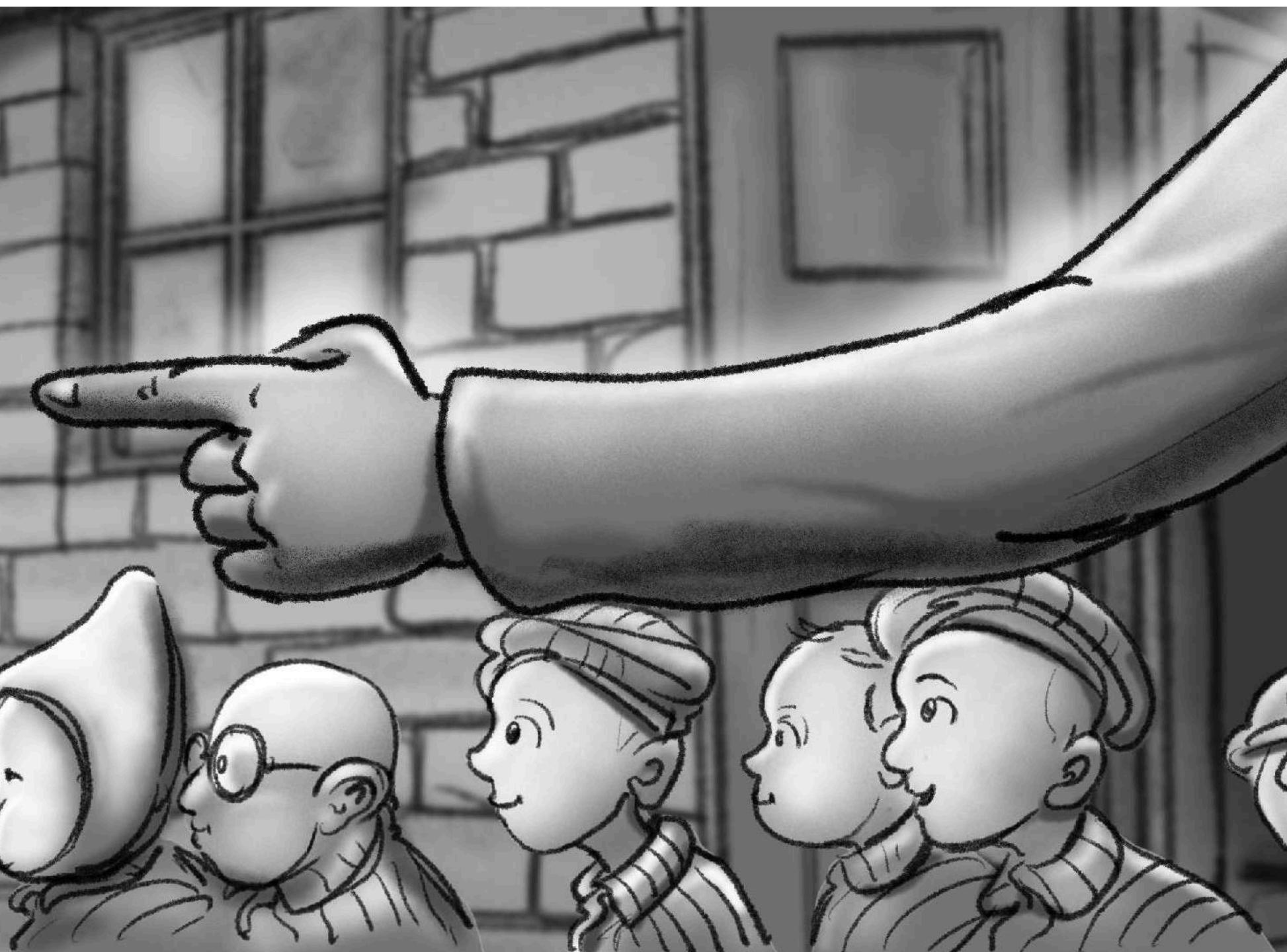
SURVIVOR

SYNOPSIS

Ivor is 12 when the Nazis march into his village in Hungary. His father and eldest brother are immediately sent to a labour battalion and the remaining family, to the ghetto, where they are eventually rounded up, herded to the station and pushed onto cattle trucks. On arrival at Auschwitz, his mother insists he leaves his sisters and younger siblings and stands with his two older brothers. Told to say he is sixteen, he makes the selection alongside them. In the shower blocks, he is disinfected, shaved, uniformed, given a number and marched to a barracks where his eldest brother is taken to work in the crematorium.

Ivor and his remaining brother, Alec spend the next 6 months witnessing the full horror of Birkenau. Soon after Ivor and Alec are miraculously reunited with their father, they are sent on another cattle truck to Kaufering IV where they are all put to work at Walnuss II. When Father and Alec are taken away at roll call, Ivor reaches his lowest point and by the time Alec returns three weeks later, he has contracted Typhus. Near to death, he is carried from the sick barracks by his brother.

Realising the war is almost lost, a Nazi officer is ordered to lead them on a death march and kill them in the mountains. Fearing he will be tried for war crimes, he delivers them alive to Allach 6 days later. When an artillery shell destroys part of the fence, they escape into the woods and hide out in an abandoned hut. American soldiers break in looking for Nazis and explain the war is over and they must go to Dachau which has been liberated. Once there, they clean up and are given fresh clothes and food. After finding out they are the only survivors in the family, Ivor sneaks onto a bus to Munich and into a cinema where he sees his first-ever film. On a second trip, he is arrested and accused of black marketeering. Appearing in court the judge is shown his Dachau papers and allows him to go free. Ivor and Alec are sent to Feldafing, the camp for displaced persons. They attend a Kol Nidre service and light memorial candles. Being the youngest, they are soon put on a plane to the UK.





DIRECTOR / ANIMATOR, ZOOM ROCKMAN

Zoom Rockman is an award-winning cartoonist, illustrator, puppet-maker and animator. Zoom is the youngest ever contributor to *The Beano* and *Private Eye*. Zoom has illustrated several books including Iain Dale's *The Prime Ministers* (Political Book of the Year 2020) and *The Presidents* (2021), Michael Rosen's *St Pancreas Defendat Me, The Boris Letters* (2022) and *Farce Majeure*. *The Evening Standard* named Zoom as one of the Most Influential Londoners under 25 and his cartoon for *Private Eye*, 'You can't do anything these days without being seen as an antisemite' won Pocket Political Cartoon of the Year 2023. .

"When I read Ivor's story, I immediately began to visualise the scenes as a film that I could bring to life using my paper puppet animation and create something powerful and accessible to an audience who wouldn't normally think of delving into this vital subject matter." – Zoom Rockman.

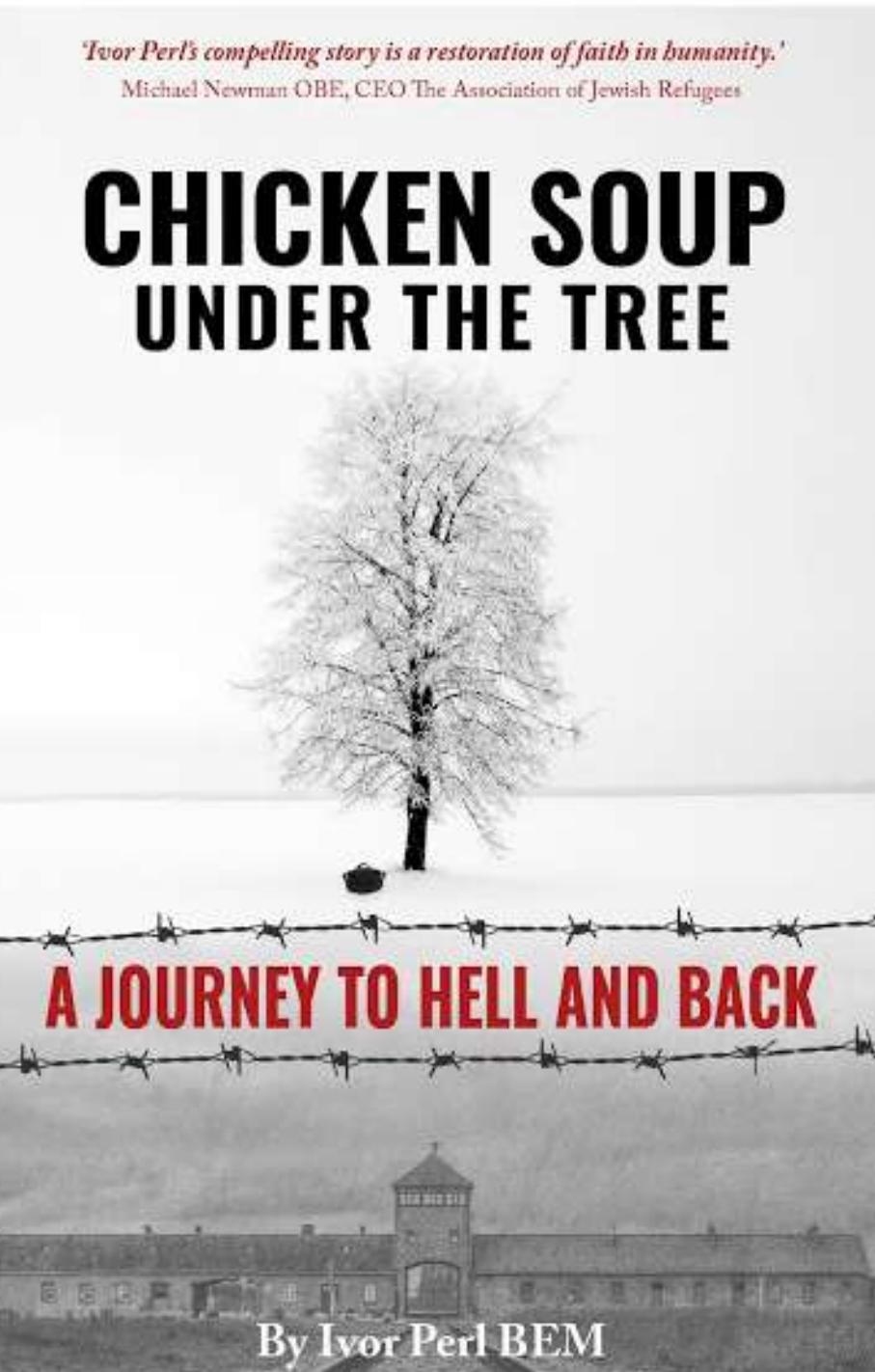
"Insanely talented" - Ian Hislop • "The inestimable rising star of the cartoon world" - Michael Rosen • "Hugely talented" - David Baddiel

THE INSPIRATION

Based on the book published by Lemon Soul Publishing

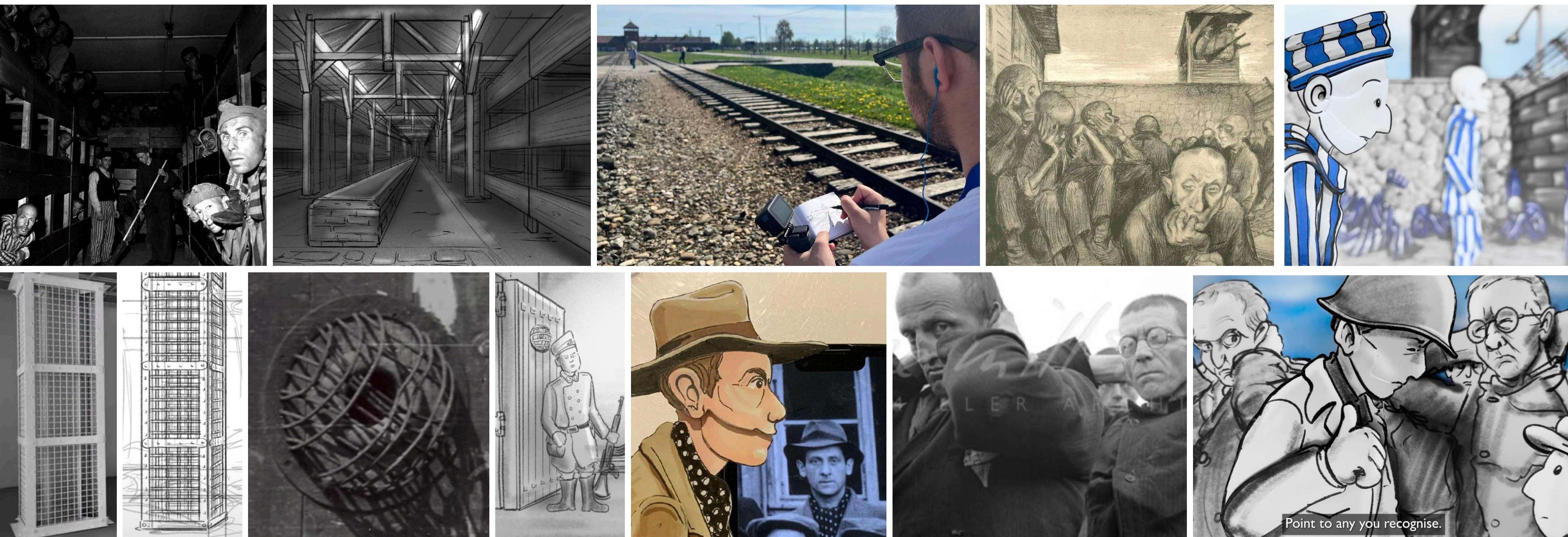
After years of requests from his family, Ivor Perl BEM wrote the memoir of his experiences in the incredible true story of survival, *Chicken Soup Under the Tree*.

Ivor was born Yitzchak Perlmutter on 4 February 1932, in a Hungarian town called Mako and grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family with eight siblings. Following the Nazi occupation of Hungary in March 1944, Ivor was taken to Auschwitz at the age of twelve. Of his whole family, only Ivor and his brother Alec survived. After liberation and rehabilitation, Ivor and Alec travelled to England to begin to rebuild their lives. For Ivor, this meant finding love with his late wife Rhoda. *Chicken Soup Under the Tree* has been distributed throughout the UK, USA and Europe.

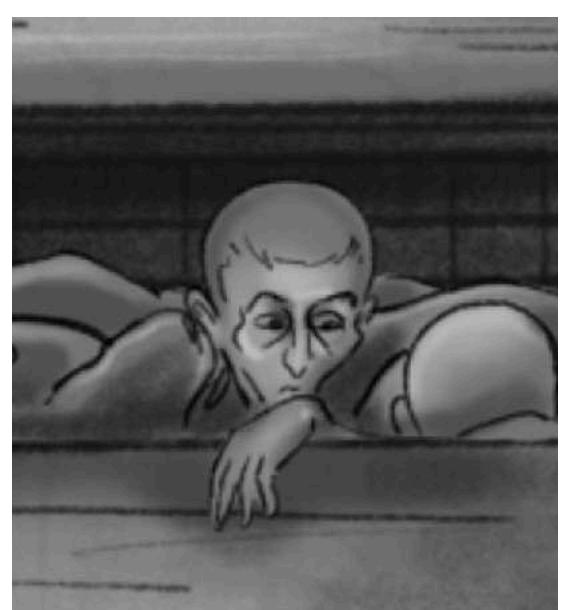
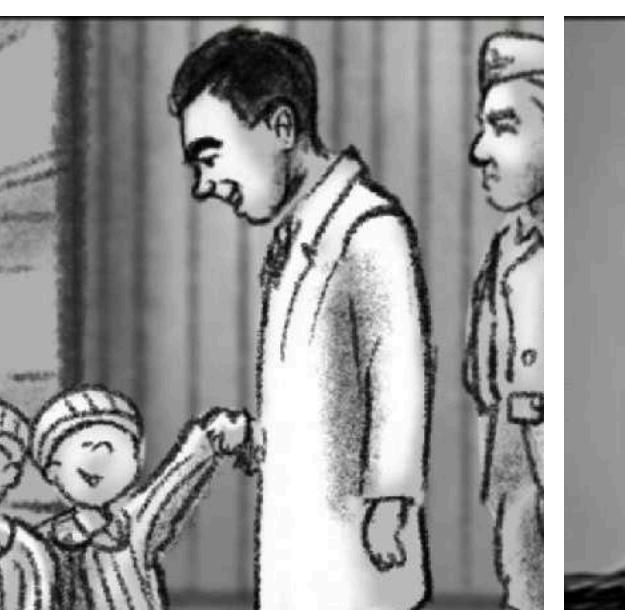
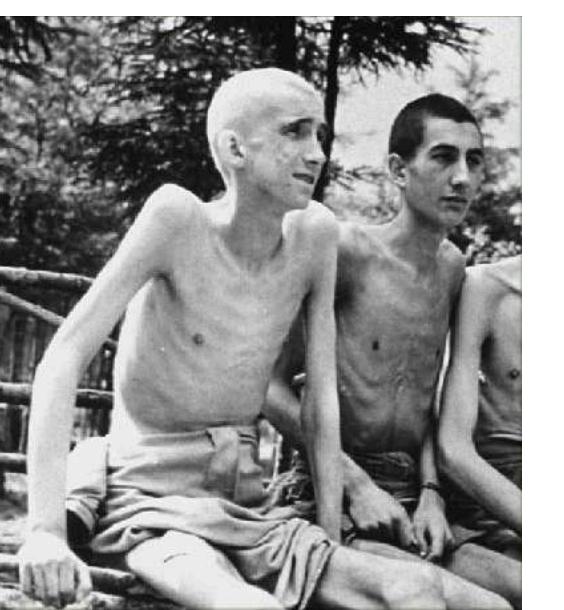
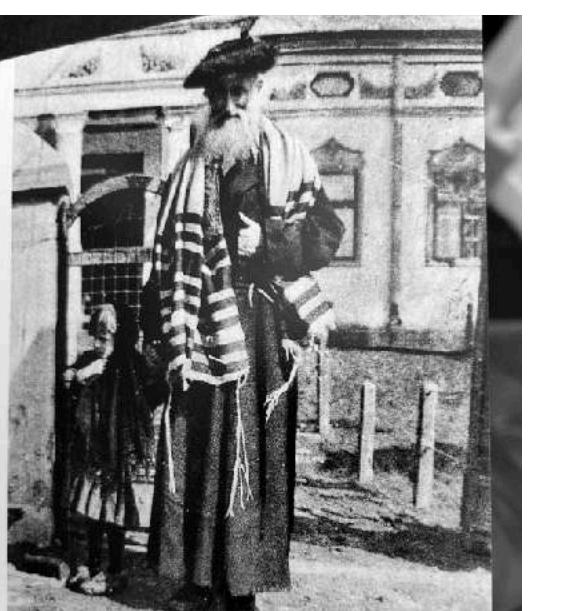
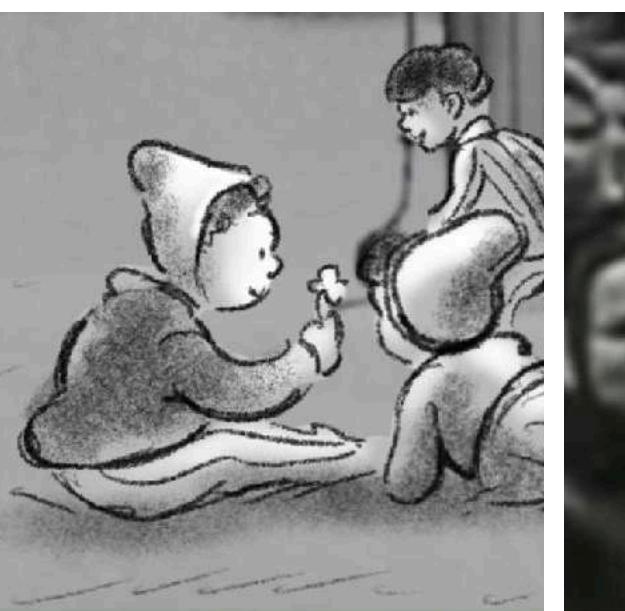


RESEARCH

All characters have been developed using photographs of Ivor's family and anonymous victims of the Holocaust. Each soul depicted is based on a real person, respectfully brought back to life in puppet form. This includes Zoom's own great-great-uncle, Lazar Rozenwajn, who was imprisoned at Auschwitz and liberated from Dachau on the same day as Ivor. Holocaust artist David Olère's visual descriptions of the Sonderkommando informed Zoom's understanding of the workings of the crematoriums, leading him to include Olère himself in these scenes. Knowledge and layouts of locations have been enhanced by research trips to Auschwitz, Dachau, Allach, Kaufering IV, and Walnuss II, guided by historians. Testimony from Ivor has been cross-referenced with the books of Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, and József Debreczeni, who were also at Auschwitz around the same time. Later this year, Zoom will travel to Mako, Hungary, to see where Ivor lived with his parents and siblings. From there, he will take a train to Szeged and see the scenery the family travelled through on their first cattle truck journey to Auschwitz.



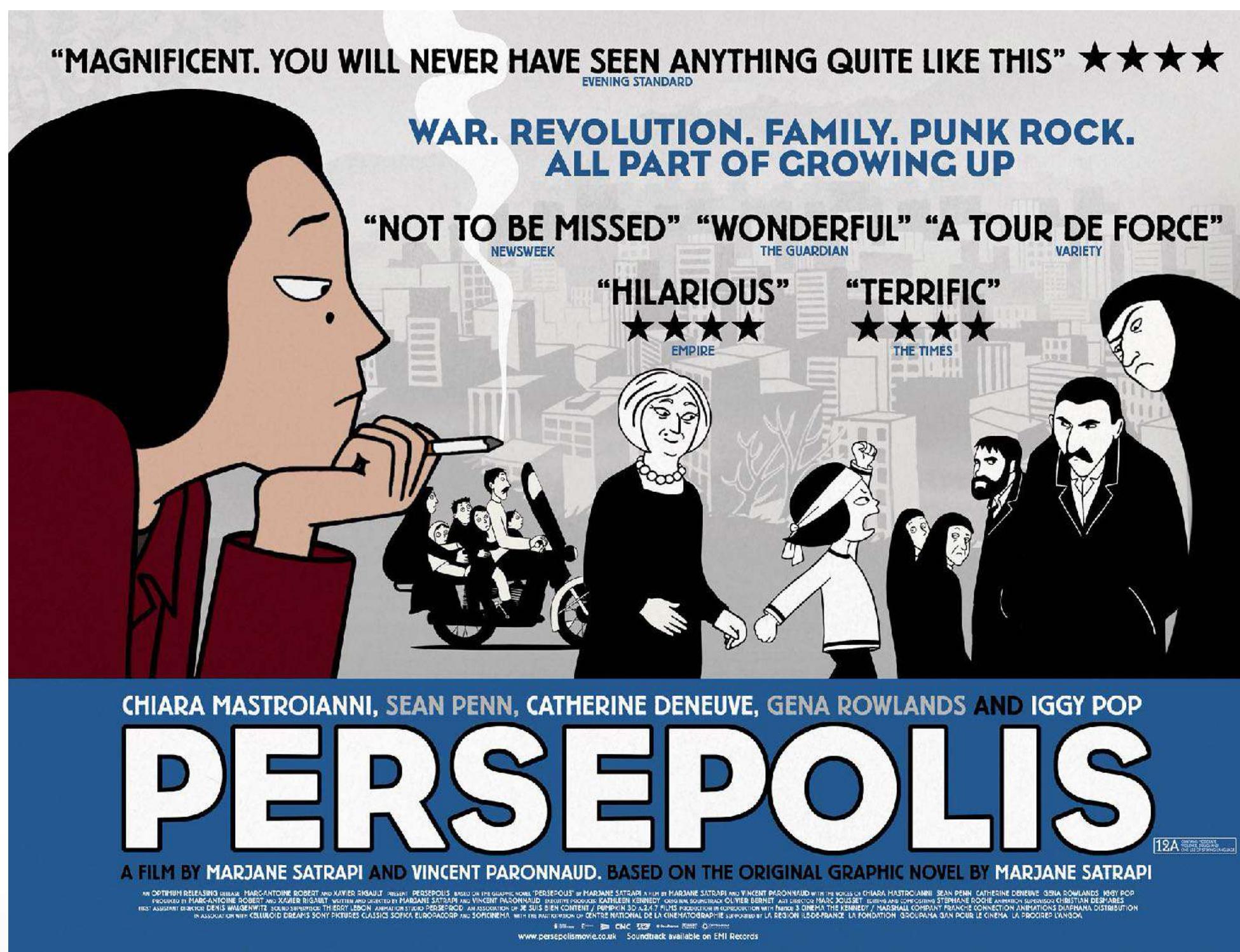
SURVIVOR



SURVIVOR

COMPARABLE

Whilst there are no films quite like *Survivor*, and none animated in Zoom's style, there have been some critically acclaimed pioneering animated films that are noteworthy for the way they handle serious subject matter. Stop-motion animated film *Anomalisa* (2015) deals with themes of loneliness, identity, and the search for connection and *Persepolis* (2007) depicts childhood oppression, and war during and after the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Like *Survivor*, *Son of Saul* (2015) is about a Hungarian Jew, and is one of the very few films about the Holocaust that have received critical acclaim, whilst also being praised for historical accuracy. Drawing from Ivor Perl's firsthand accounts and from his own meticulous research, Zoom Rockman's *Survivor* will be as accurate and as moving as any Holocaust film that has gone before, whilst aiming to be the most stylistically poignant and accessible.



SURVIVOR

MUSIC & SOUND DESIGN

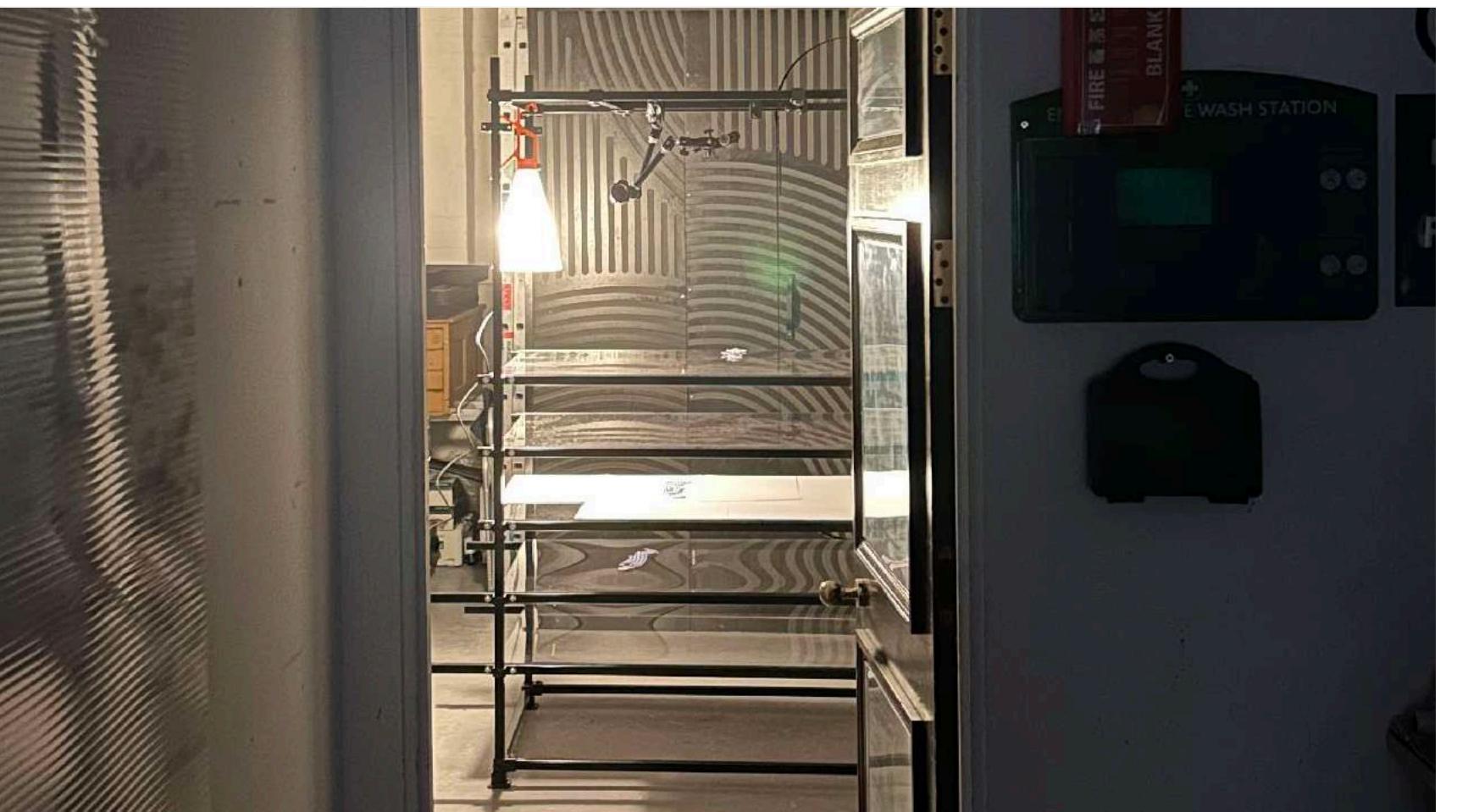
Zoom Rockman's music concept is for the soundtrack to be broken down into three main sections. The first, set in Hungary, traditional Yiddish Folk, developing into an ominous, Talmudic chant as the Nazi invasion unfolds only to end abruptly, when the cattle truck doors are bolted shut.

As the cattle truck doors are unbolted again at Auschwitz, the second section begins. Blood pumping in the ears, panic attack sounds slowly evolving into an industrial soundscape following the new inmate's metamorphosis into death camp prisoners through a full spectrum of Holocaust indignities, revealed in rapid succession. It's relentless, uncomfortable, disturbing and inhumane. The final crescendo and eventual escape through the perimeter fence are illustrated with the use of the exhilarating, rebellious sound of *Motorcade* By Magazine (Post-Punk band from 1978) ending abruptly at the end of WW2 with a door being kicked in.

Section 3 begins with silence. A chance to see what remains. We hear nature. It's emotional, still threatening, but hopeful. Finally we hear the distant ancient sounds of the Hebrew prayers getting louder and eventually transforming into the joyous sound of 1950's Brick Lane, British, Yiddish Jazz. *Ivor's Theme*, composed by Erran Baron Cohen is woven throughout, with additional vocals provided by trained cantor, Pini Brown. The Industrial sound is designed by musician Morgan Penn and edited by Zoom in his studio.

The entire soundtrack has been mixed in Stereo and in 5.1 by Portland Audio.





ANIMATION TECHNIQUE

Using handmade, paper puppets with multi-layered background scenery, Zoom is filming everything on a purpose built multi-plane camera rig in his Shoreditch studio. Zoom's research into anatomy, mechanics, pre-cinema techniques such as shadow puppetry, magic lanterns and automata has developed into a unique style of real-time animation - drawings that move in the moment in a lifelike way. The pre-filming process involves the creation of hundreds of paper puppets, multiple pieces of moving scenery and intricate props, which are currently being assembled. Puppets takes between three hours and a week to make.





ASPIRATIONS

This film hopes to join the ranks of the most significant Holocaust films ever made. By utilising a distinctive animation style with paper puppet characters and scenery derived from archival material, we aim to vividly depict the physical and emotional realities of the Holocaust based on thoroughly researched, fact-checked primary source testimonies.

Our goal is to engage deeply, surprise, and touch the audience as they follow Ivor, an ordinary boy, through his journey of love, loss, fear, joy, excitement, despair, confusion, shame, happiness and courage. We intend for this film to reach a wide audience, spark meaningful debate and discussion, and be recognised as a vital creative expression of humanity's fragility, preserved for current and future generations.

SURVIVOR



PRODUCTION INFO

1 x TV hour

Drama

Paper Puppet Animation

English Language

Director & Filmmaker Zoom Rockman

Screenwriter Kate Lennard

Producer Sally Vaughan

Executive Producers Nigel Canin, Lemon Soul

Nick Goldfarb, Mainstreet Media

Co-Producer Rachel Mansson

Associate Producer Jennifer Buzzelli

Story by Ivor Perl BEM

Composer Erran Baron Cohen

Sound Design Morgan Penn

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