

 Jakob Gläser  
memorial foundation  
presents

# Tales of Teleki square

A film by Barbara Spitzer



# Tales of Teleki Square

French-Hungarian participatory documentary 83'

## Longline

*A kaleidoscopic portrait of Budapest's last Jewish prayer house; discovering the forgotten past, connecting generations and the survival of a small, unique community*

## Synopsis

*The last Jewish prayer house of Teleki square, Budapest miraculously survived the last 100 years.*

*Teleki square is not around the "Jewish quarter" of Budapest, in fact it is in a different district. The new generation of the Teleki community start a journey unfolding the story of the praying house. The young realize, that the old interviewees they found are the last living members of a once thriving, now lost civilization. The once second biggest market place in the capital of Hungary at Teleki square hosted a surprisingly big kosher infrastructure, dozens of praying houses, cafes, schools, restaurants serving the daily needs of the tens of thousands of Jews living around and of the market. The aging interviewees can still recall what a thriving, colorful life in the 8th district of Budapest, with the second biggest Jewish population in Budapest. At that time "Teleki square Jew" used to be a well-known notion among Budapest Jews.*

## About the Filmmakers

### Barbara Spitzer – Director

Barbara Spitzer was born in Paris. She studied directing at Le Fémis in Paris and cinematography at the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest. During the years, she was making several long and short documentaries for the French televisions, including „La Grève éternelle” (about the 1995's French strike) and „Ce qu'il en reste” (about discovering the land of her ancestor in Hungary). She got in touch with Teleki tér Synagogue during her research fieldwork about her family's roots in Hungary. She got drawn into the world of the Shtiebel to the extent that she's been following the life of the community for over a decade with her camera.

**Filmography:** "A Body That Cause" (Un corps qui cause) doc. 26' (2016), « It will only be greener in the spring » doc. 126' (2014), "Going up the Old Roads" (En remontant les vieilles routes) documentary 52' (2010), Spitzer Rhapsody: In My Father's Footsteps (Ce qu'il en reste) documentary 120' (2006), The Eternal Strike (La Grève éternelle) » documentary 75' (1999), The Shadow of Angkor (L'Ombre d'Angkor) documentary 52' (1997), What we work for? (On travaille pour quoi?) documentary 52' (1996), It's so cool to be Hungarian 100' (2001), Tales of Teleki square (2017)

### Gábor Mayer – Producer

Gábor Mayer started working as a producer on the community project of the movie Tales of the Teleki square in around 2007. He is the chairman of the NGO producing the film. He learned being a producer on the job. After recording about 200 hours of footage on three continents and in the span of 10+ years he is *proud to have been able to finish this production and be part of creating of such an important cultural venture.*

## Background Information:

When we met Jakab Gláser he was old and weary but seemed indestructible. We were all quite sure that he will just keep on telling his ancient stories and jokes – and live forever. Sometimes, however we had doubts so we wanted to make a movie just in case he won't.

As none of us were rich film producers the movie project just kept on being delayed for years. Then in 2000, seemingly out of nowhere, the French-Hungarian documentarist Barbara Spitzer popped in the Shul. She was on a quest searching for her relatives, her Hungarian and Jewish roots and in the process systematically visited every single synagogue in the country.

She was not a procrastinating type and started shooting a few days later. In the following years, we shot hours and hours of footage about Old Gláser as well as other members of the congregation, the Shul and the neighborhood, District Eight.

Then she had to return to France and the project was halted. It was frozen for years. Meantime Old Gláser disproved our theories of his immortality and at the age of 95 died along with other old members of the Kehile (community).

The Shul had a very good chance of vanishing, but it didn't. The community changed a lot – it had to. A younger generation started to frequent the old rooms and we began a gradual and careful renovation.

In 2009 Barbara returned to continue the documentary. She was present when the facelift of the “blue room” started. She recorded Old Gláser's memorial celebration at the cemetery, and made follow-up interviews. But the most amazing part was the exploration of Old Gláser's house. He was born in the very room he lived in until he died. It turned out that his son, Tamás hadn't moved a thing in his father's house for 4 years. Apart from the dust nothing changed, everything was the way it was left by the old man – and a legion of mice. We made amazing discoveries from old wartime photographs to Old Gláser's grandparents' clothes, letters and furniture.

The movie project is still on.

At the moment, it seems, “Tales of Teleki tér” will be the main title of a trilogy not just of one episode as it is today.

The one episode available today will be the second part of the trilogy.

The title of the first part in French is planned to be “*Tonton Jacobine*” or (?) “*Oncle Jacobine*”. The Hungarian title is “*Juci Bács*”. This was actually the nickname of Jakab Gláser – not an easy name to translate into English. “Old Man Jacobine” is as near as I could get in translating it, but we are open to suggestions...

The second part is work-titled “Teleki square Jew”, and is more about the community and Teleki square than the first part.

The third part is strictly about the happenings of the year 1944 in the neighborhood and is going to be created using the video interviews of the research and archive materials from that era.

**Stage of production:**

The filming project has been injected into a bigger research project in 2012. This bigger project is partly financed by EACEA (EU agency) and we also won a complementary grant from Mazsök.

The first episode consisting of footage from 2000-2009 of the edited material was first screened in Vörösmarty cinema, Budapest. At the time of writing, the first episode is still 90% finished, waiting for further founding options. The second episode was edited from the support of the Civil Alap grant of the Hungarian Government.

First public screenings of the second film were hold at the Budapest Jewish Filmfestival (ZSIFI) in November 2014 in Hungary, and in Detroit (MI) and New York City (NY) in December 2014.

The film went through an editorial revision after the first public, pre-release screenings in the USA.

In February 2017 the final (as of today) version of the film was screened one time in Budapest (25/2/2017) Bem Mozi and since has been screened in numerous film festivals in Hungary and abroad.

In May 2017 the film won the at the Eurasia International Monthly Film Festival:

## Best Documentary (over 40 min)

**Technical Information:**

Running time: 83 min

Year of production: 2017

Country of Production: Hungary/France

Color: Color

Format: HDCam

Ratio: 16:9

Sound: Stereo

Language: Hungarian, English, Yiddish

Subtitle: English, Polish, (Hungarian)

Website/Trailer: <http://talesoftelekiter.com/>, [IMDB](#)

**Production Company:**

***Jakab Gláser Memorial Foundation /***

***Gláser Jakab Emlékalapítvány***

**+36203515893**

**[info@telekiter.com](mailto:info@telekiter.com)**

9 Wesselényi Str.  
Budapest  
H-1077  
Hungary

**Production Stills:**





## PRODUCTION CREDITS:

**Director:**

Barbara Spitzer ([IMDB](#))

**Producer:**

Gábor Mayer / Hungary ([JGMF](#))

**Associate Producer:**

Kálmán Péchy

**Assistant of the Director:**

András Mayer

**Editor:**

Péter Pál Tóth ([IMDB](#))

**Camera:**

Róbert Bordás, Claudia Kovács, Gergely Pápai, András Mayer, Botond Nagy, Barbara Spitzer, Sándor Seybold ([IMDB](#)), Gergely Tóth, Vizkelety Márton ([IMDB](#))

**Steadycam:**

Ádám Pataki ([IMDB](#))

**Sound:**

Daniel Böhm ([IMDB](#)), Gergely Pápai, István Nagy

**Music:**

Dániel Kardos ([IMDB](#)) János Vázsonyi ([IMDB](#))

**Lighting:**

Claudia Kovács, Harlon Samjudin

**Colorist:**

Dániel Berger

**Sound editor:**

Balázs Pejkó ([IMDB](#))

**More:**

<http://telekiterimesek.com/> (Hungarian)

<http://talesoftelekiter.com> (English)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt4217742/>