Over the last two decades an exciting body of work by Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers has emerged that speaks to both peoples’ narrative of national yearning and historical attachment. Recent films documenting the resurgence of violence provide points of view that are not often found in news reporting. And dramatic feature films present remarkable stories that raise the possibility of reconciliation amid an atmosphere of distrust.

April 29 – Beyond the Walls — 1984 Directed by Uri Barbash
This gritty, humanistic film draws a provocative parallel between a maximum security block and Israeli society. It presents a daring notion that Arab and Jew can find friendship and envision a dignity and freedom that can be found through solidarity.
International Critics Prize, 1984 Venice Film Festival: Best Picture, Nominated, Best Foreign Film, Academy Awards.

May 6 – Wedding in Galilee — 1987 Directed by Michel Khleifi
One of the first films made in Israel to feature an Arab point of view, Wedding in Galilee is a richly-detailed allegory of marriage, tradition and national identity. The elder of a Palestinian village under Israeli military rule wants permission to hold a traditional wedding for his son that will go past the imposed curfew. The Army commander agrees on the condition that he and his officers are invited as guests of honor at the ceremony.
Winner: International Critics Award, Cannes Film Festival, 1987.

May 13 – Salata Baladi (Egyptian Salad) — 2008 Directed by Nadia Kamel
Award-winning, Egyptian filmmaker Nadia Kamel’s heritage is a complex blend of religions and cultures. Her mother is a half Jewish, half Italian Christian who converted to Islam when she married Nadia’s half Turkish, half Ukrainian father. Prompted by the realization that her 10-year-old nephew Nabeel is growing up in an Egyptian society where talk of culture clashes is all too common, Nadia decides to let her mother share their diverse family history that includes her Egyptian-Jewish relatives now living in Israel.

May 20 – Encounter Point — 2006 Directed by Ronit Avni and Julia Bacha
This documentary film follows a former Israeli settler, a Palestinian ex-prisoner, a bereaved Israeli mother and a wounded Palestinian bereaved brother who risk their lives and public standing to promote a nonviolent end to the conflict. Their journeys lead them to the unlikeliest places to confront hatred within their communities. The film explores what drives them and thousands of other like-minded civilians to overcome anger and grief to work for grassroots solutions.

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