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***The Art of the Shine* Premieres on *Independent Lens*
Monday, April 9, 2018 on PBS**

Online Streaming Begins April 10

**A Delightful, Eye-Opening Look at the World of Professional
Shoe Shiners**



Credit: Stacey Tenenbaum

(San Francisco, CA) — You might pass them on the sidewalk, at the mall or at the airport. They're the shoe shiners, purveying an old school trade that seems like something out of the *Mad Men* era, out of step with our fast-paced, disposable consumer culture. Yet, to many of the shoe shiners in Stacey Tenenbaum's joyous and quirky film, shining shoes is a calling and a passion, a way to be one's own boss and connect with other people. ***The Art of the Shine*** premieres on *Independent Lens* Monday, April 9, 2018, 10:00-11:00 PM ([check local listings](#)) on PBS.

The Art of the Shine travels from Toronto to Paris to New York to La Paz and beyond, introducing viewers to shiners who share their feelings about their work. In Bolivia, where

shining is looked down upon, shiners wear masks so their classmates and neighbors won't know what they do for a living. In Sarajevo, we meet Ramiz, the last shoe shiner in the city. Ramiz inherited his job from his father, who was beloved — during the Bosnian war, the simple act of getting one's shoes shined was seen as an act of resistance and a statement of hope.

With a renewed interest in all things 'retro,' shining is slowly becoming hip again. In cities like New York, Toronto, and Tokyo, the job is attracting younger people who are working to elevate the profession and give it a newfound cachet. Some are turning the trade into an art form, hand-painting luxury shoes to create custom patinas and designs. In Tokyo, the dapper Yuya purveys a seriously high-end shine that takes an hour and is accompanied by a flute of champagne. Others, like Vincent in Toronto, find shoe shining an effective form of therapy.

In New York, we meet Kevin and his crew, all recovering alcoholics, who he calls his "sober shoe shine gang." Together they've found not only sobriety but a way of life that's artistically and socially fulfilling. Says Kevin: "I feel like I have the secret to life." Don, who works from a cart on Fifth Avenue, would probably agree. A former accountant and baker, he gave up the stressful 9-to-5 routine for shoe shining and has never looked back. Joking with people on the street and chatting with his harried customers, Don wouldn't trade his life for theirs. "This is freedom. It pays

the bills and I'm free. I think I live a happier life – I stopped chasing my tail.”

“We live in a disposable culture: use, discard, buy again. What happened to ‘waste not, want not’?” says Lois Vossen, *Independent Lens* Executive Producer. “Stacey’s film is about manual labor and what we value — the objects we do or don’t take care of and the people behind that work. It reminds us that professions like shoe shining help create and maintain social bridges, a way for people of different social classes to interconnect. And it makes shoe shining cool again.”

Visit the page for [The Art of the Shine](#) on *Independent Lens*, which features more information about the film, which will be available for online viewing on the site beginning April 10, 2018.

About the Filmmaker

Stacey Tenenbaum (Producer/Director/Writer). Canadian filmmaker Tenenbaum loves getting her shoes shined and is passionate about social justice. She started her career as a researcher in factual television over 18 years ago. In 2004, she began producing documentary series for channels such as Discovery, History, National Geographic, and others. In 2008, she co-created and produced the Canadian documentary television series *The Beat*, which followed a team of beat police officers patrolling the streets of the Downtown Eastside area in Vancouver. She was nominated for an International Emmy in 2012 for *In Real Life*, a factual series she co-created and produced.

Throughout her career, Tenenbaum often returns to her true passion of finding interesting characters and bringing their stories to life. She worked as a researcher on several documentary films including *Dish: Women, Waitressing and the Art of Service*, *S&M: Short and Male*, *Karsh Is History*, and the 2007 Peabody Award-winning film, *Braindamaj'd... Take II*. In 2014, she started H2L Productions, a documentary film production company based in Montreal, and began research on her first feature documentary, *The Art of the Shine*. Stacey is currently in production on *Pipe Dreams*, a documentary which follows six international organists as they compete in the Canadian International Organ Competition.

CREDITS

Director and Writer	Stacey Tenenbaum
Producers	Stacey Tenenbaum and Sergio Kirby
Director of Photography	Van Royko, CSC
Editor	Howard Goldberg
Original Music	Tim Rideout
Sound Design	Daniel Lagacé
A H2L Productions and Documentary Channel Production	

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. The acclaimed series, with Lois Vossen as executive producer, features



documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens. Join the conversation: [facebook.com/independentlens](https://www.facebook.com/independentlens) and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](https://twitter.com/IndependentLens).

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