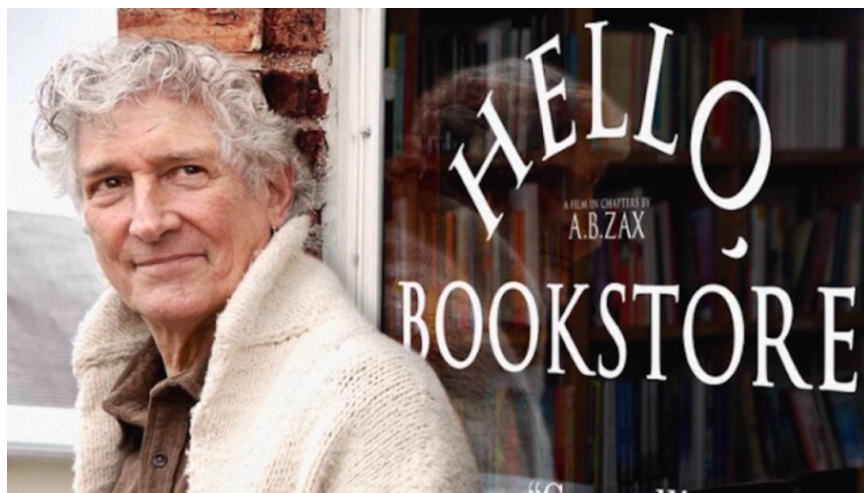


Programme Notes



Monday 31st July 19:30

Hello, Bookstore (PG)



Adam Zax's documentary tells the story of Matt Tannenbaum's The Bookstore. Tannenbaum's bookstore is instantly recognisable in its warmth and welcome: slightly shabby, armchairs to settle down in, children curled up on the floor with their heads in a book. There's even a wine bar in the corner. In the era of Amazon, Hello, Bookstore feels well-timed and intentional in reminding viewers to visit their own local version.

Filming began before the Covid pandemic hit and the pandemic highlighted what was important about a communal place like a bookstore. Initially, this proved to be a disappointment for Zax but then came the acknowledgement that he was able to make the film in such an unprecedented time. As he has said, "*this was what I was given, to show this transition from the old world into this new world. Once I started accepting that, it became clear that everything I was exploring in the subtext, like the age of Amazon, what's a bookstore to a community, it all came forward through this process with Covid.*"

Reviews

The movie is an offbeat, extremely atmospheric look at what longstanding small businesses and entrepreneurs like Tannenbaum mean to the communities that surround them. Hello, Bookstore succeeds in capturing the quiet, calming feel of being in a great independent bookstore. Zax tends to use lengthy, static shots that give each scene time to slowly develop, leisurely finding their purpose. Often the action is around Tannenbaum speaking to longtime patrons of The Bookstore or his two adult daughters; we also frequently see him engaging in a favoured pastime: evangelising for great literature. Although the effect of Zax's approach can be at first jarring, confounding a viewer's expectations, over time the unusual flow of the movie becomes more and more compelling, its rhythms more familiar and lulling.

Veronica Esposito, The Guardian, April 2022

The film feels personal and focused, transforming a small space into an entire world via a diverse set of camera angles, shots, and music. Switching from an interview shot at close range to a long shot across the store documenting a natural customer interaction, or even a tilted angle amongst the bookshelf with a well-timed voiceover from Tannenbaum, Hello, Bookstore is ever-changing in its filmmaking approach. The aesthetics of the bookshop have a lived-in quality and reflect the historicity of the place. Oozing personality and a feeling of creativity, family photos, regular customers you get to know through casual small talk, and even the 'Get Lit' wine bar are all reminders of the expressive nature of this shared space.

Annabel Smith, The Independent, July 2023

There's a magnetic cosiness to Hello, Bookstore, which takes place almost entirely within the narrow confines of Tannenbaum's Massachusetts icon. Over the duration of the film, we become intimately attuned to the store's bijou geography: the impromptu office set-up right by the entrance, where – when COVID isn't raging – friends pop by to pay Tannenbaum a visit; the tiny 'Get Lit' wine bar; the basement, with its precious stock of second-hand treasures. Together with the changing light from the changing of the seasons, the documentary conjures up the world of The Bookstore so vividly, by the time the closing credits have rolled, it's difficult to believe we haven't been physically transported there.

Chloe Walker, Culturefly.com, July 2023

Cast		Credits	
Matt Tannenbaum	Self	Director	A B Zax
Sophie Tannenbaum	Self	Producers	Sydney Flint, Mark Franks, Melissa Nathan, A B
Shawnee Tannenbaum	Self	Editor	Mark Franks, A B Zax
		Sound	Aidan Reynolds
		Music	Jeffrey Lubin
		Country	USA
		Running time	86 minutes

Film Facts

Adam Zax has said, *"I've always loved fly-on-the-wall documentaries. I've never really responded to the talking head style of movies. I don't want to hammer in things, I want there to be a sense of discovery while you're watching it."*

The film's title comes from Tannenbaum's greeting when he answers the phone.

The wine bar, Get Lit, was opened by Tannenbaum in memory of a wine-loving Czech friend who'd escaped the Nazis, then lived to the age of 90.

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