# Isaac Mizrahi on the 30th anniversary of the original - and genius! - high fashion doc Unzipped



Isaac Mizrahi, the gay fashion designer, has recently reflected on the upcoming 30th anniversary of his documentary Unzipped, a smash hit for its behind-the-scenes portrayal of the fashion industry and Mizrahi himself. Directed by Mizrahi's then-boyfriend, Douglas Keeve, the film follows Mizrahi as he prepares for his 1994 fall collection in New York City, providing a rare, behind-the-scenes look at his creative process. The documentary originally premiered at the 1995 Sundance Film Festival, where it received the audience award, and is now set to return to Park City in a newly restored 4K digital format.

Mizrahi expressed his mixed feelings about revisiting Unzipped during a recent interview with Variety, stating, “It makes me feel old, wise, weirdly empowered.” The candidness of the film, attributed largely to the personal relationship between Mizrahi and Keeve, presents a more complex view of Mizrahi’s character than one might expect. Mizrahi has acknowledged that his intense focus on work led to many vulnerable moments captured on film, some of which he initially resisted but were included in the final edit.

One particularly poignant scene remains a source of discomfort for Mizrahi. He recalls a moment where he reacted emotionally to a Nanook of the North-inspired collection by Jean-Paul Gaultier. “I burst into tears when they showed me that,” Mizrahi recounts, his frustration palpable as he yells in the film, “Why would you show me that? It’s like you get some cruel pleasure out of it!”

The candid lens of Unzipped ultimately strained Mizrahi's relationship with Keeve. He commented, “I don’t think we would have stayed together regardless, but it definitely wrenched us apart in some ways.” The unprecedented access Keeve had during the filming was a double-edged sword that intertwined their personal and professional lives.

Despite the potential for discomfort, Mizrahi chose to step back from the editing process intentionally. “It was virtually impossible… I tried, and I succeeded. I didn’t see it 3 million times. I saw it 1 million times,” he joked, hinting at his determination to maintain some distance from the project while also acknowledging his awareness of the portrayal.

The film is marked by its dynamic visual storytelling. Cinematographers Ellen Kuras and Robert Leacock provided a stark contrast in visuals, starting with grainy black-and-white footage before transitioning to vibrant colour for the climactic runway show. Mizrahi’s journey through downtown Manhattan is showcased through interactions with renowned supermodels, including Christy Turlington, Cindy Crawford, and Naomi Campbell, as well as rising talents like Kate Moss.

In reflecting on the film, Mizrahi highlighted the candid moments with his mother, Sarah Mizrahi, as some of his favourite parts of the documentary. “That’s what I like the most about my life,” he said, underlining the significance of personal relationships in his narrative.

While reminiscing about his past, Mizrahi emphasised the importance of reflecting not merely for nostalgia's sake, but to acknowledge the joy and impact of those experiences. “Looking back is necessary… to go, ‘Oh, wait a minute, this is filled with joy. This is what I did. This is what I should do,’” Mizrahi articulated, thereby framing his journey not only as a recollection but as an affirmation of his creative legacy.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.primevideo.com/-/pt/detail/Unzipped/0IDYU3J50CCKPE5HVJSCK4K692> - This URL provides information about the documentary 'Unzipped' and its availability on Prime Video, corroborating details about the film's content and its focus on Isaac Mizrahi.
* <https://festival.sundance.org/blogs/douglas-keeve-on-the-magic-of-unzipped-and-its-30th-anniversary-at-sundance-film-festival/> - This article discusses the 30th anniversary of 'Unzipped' and includes reflections from Douglas Keeve, supporting claims about the film's premiere at Sundance and its impact.
* <https://www.isaacmizrahi.com/blogs/latest-news/im-loves-unzipped-the-documentary-isaac-mizrahi> - This blog post from Isaac Mizrahi's website celebrates the documentary 'Unzipped' and its significance, aligning with the article's discussion of Mizrahi's reflections on the film.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unzipped_(film)> - This Wikipedia page provides detailed information about the documentary 'Unzipped', including its production, release, and reception, supporting various claims in the article.
* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0114888/> - IMDb's page for 'Unzipped' offers additional details about the film, such as its cast, crew, and awards, corroborating the article's description of the documentary.
* <https://www.sundance.org/festival/program/film/1995/unzipped> - This Sundance page archives information about 'Unzipped' from its 1995 premiere, supporting claims about the film's festival debut.
* <https://variety.com/2023/film/news/isaac-mizrahi-unzipped-documentary-30th-anniversary-1235554444/> - Variety's article on Isaac Mizrahi and 'Unzipped' includes his recent reflections on the documentary, aligning with the article's mention of Mizrahi's mixed feelings about revisiting the film.
* <https://www.vogue.com/article/isaac-mizrahi-unzipped-documentary> - Vogue's coverage of 'Unzipped' provides insights into the documentary's portrayal of Isaac Mizrahi and the fashion industry, supporting the article's description of the film's candidness.