

Yesterday, Turkish-Norwegian filmmaker, Nefise Ozkal Lorentzen, came to visit. Soft-spoken, strong-minded, fluent in so many languages, Nefise's new documentary Seyran Ates: Sex, Revolution, and Islam is appearing at film festivals and has been entered in the competition for an Academy Award. The film is about my dear friend, Imam Seyran Ates, a fearless seeker of both freedom and God. Seyran must live and travel with 24/7 police protection—and why? Because she opened a mosque in Berlin

that serves both women, men, and members of the LGBTQ communities. Why so many police? Because Seyran published a book titled Islam Needs a Sexual Revolution; the police advised her to get out of Berlin fast. And, when she did, she came to stay with me. In the film, there are some extraordinary scenes: Young Sufi women dervish-dancing, Seyran and her mother talking about Seyran's near-assassination, nine female imams praying together in China in an all-female mosque. They turn out

**to be fierce traditionalists. I love the scene in which Seyran talks with young Chinese Muslims who are wrestling with their sexuality and with their religion—but most of all, I love the scene where she enters a cave somewhere in Norway and calls for “freedom” and that call echoes again and again and again.**

*From The [Times of Israel](#)*

Two major bookstore chains in Israel announce that they will no longer sell books by Sally Rooney after the Irish author said last month that she would not allow her latest work to be translated by an Israeli into Hebrew.

Bookstores Steimatzky and Tzomet Sefarim – which together have more than 200 shops nationwide – say they will pull her books from their shelves after her comments. The chains say that her books will be removed from their websites and stores by the end of today.

Rooney, a vocal critic of Israel and author of “Normal People,” said that she would not allow “Beautiful World, Where Are You?” to be published by an Israeli because she supports a cultural boycott of Israel.

A representative from Steimatzky gave [the Guardian](#) the following statement:

“The Steimatzky chain is a literary stage and a warm and embracing home for any literary work with a love of the written word. From the moment the subject was brought to our attention, as an immediate step, we removed the books from the site.”

The Guardian has approached Tzomet Sefarim, which is said to have put out a statement of a similar kind, but has not yet had a response.

Yoseph Haddad, CEO of Together – Vouch for Each Other, a social activist organisation, has been leading a campaign this week to encourage Israeli booksellers to boycott Rooney’s books