THE WALL, REMEMBERED

On November 9, 1989, like millions of others around the globe, Juliane Camfield watched the Berlin Wall fall. Though she was seated in her living room in Atlanta, the story hit close to home: Camfield was born in West Berlin and had only moved to the United States a few months before because, as she puts it, “nothing new was happening.”

And then something did happen. As people swarmed the wall, hacking into the concrete, Camfield saw decades of physical and psychological separation crashing to the dirt.

To commemorate the 25-year anniversary of the wall’s demise, Camfield—now director of Deutsches Haus at NYU—and her colleagues are offering a multitude of perspectives via art exhibits, panel discussions, and film screenings, including two featuring Tilda Swinton. The short Cycling the Frame serendipitously captured the actor in West Berlin in 1988, riding her bike along the wall’s entire span. In 2009’s The Invisible Frame, she repeated the journey—only this time on both sides of the barrier.

—AMANDA COCHRAN (GSAS ’09)

A CAPTIVATING TALE

When Joshua Fattal was in prison, his story was told by everyone but him. One of three American hikers detained after inadvertently crossing Iran’s porous border from Iraqi Kurdistan in 2009, he, along with his companions, Shane Bauer and Sarah Shourd, has finally had his say. In the engrossing memoir A Sliver of Light: Three Americans Imprisoned in Iran (Eamon Dolan/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), the friends detail their time in Tehran’s notorious Evin Prison and the arduous campaign by family and friends for their release. (Shourd was released after 14 months; Fattal and Bauer remained another year.)

Coincidentally, the ordeal drove Fattal (GSAS ’17) to embark on an MA and, as of this fall, a PhD in a discipline devoted to storytelling—history. While his research focuses on “the legal complexities of local democracy in 20th-century America,” he is constantly reminded of his own unsolicited moment of fame. “It’s amazing how frequently captivity comes up in studying history,” Fattal notes. “My experience definitely gives me empathy.”

—VANESSA H. LARSON (GSAS ’06)