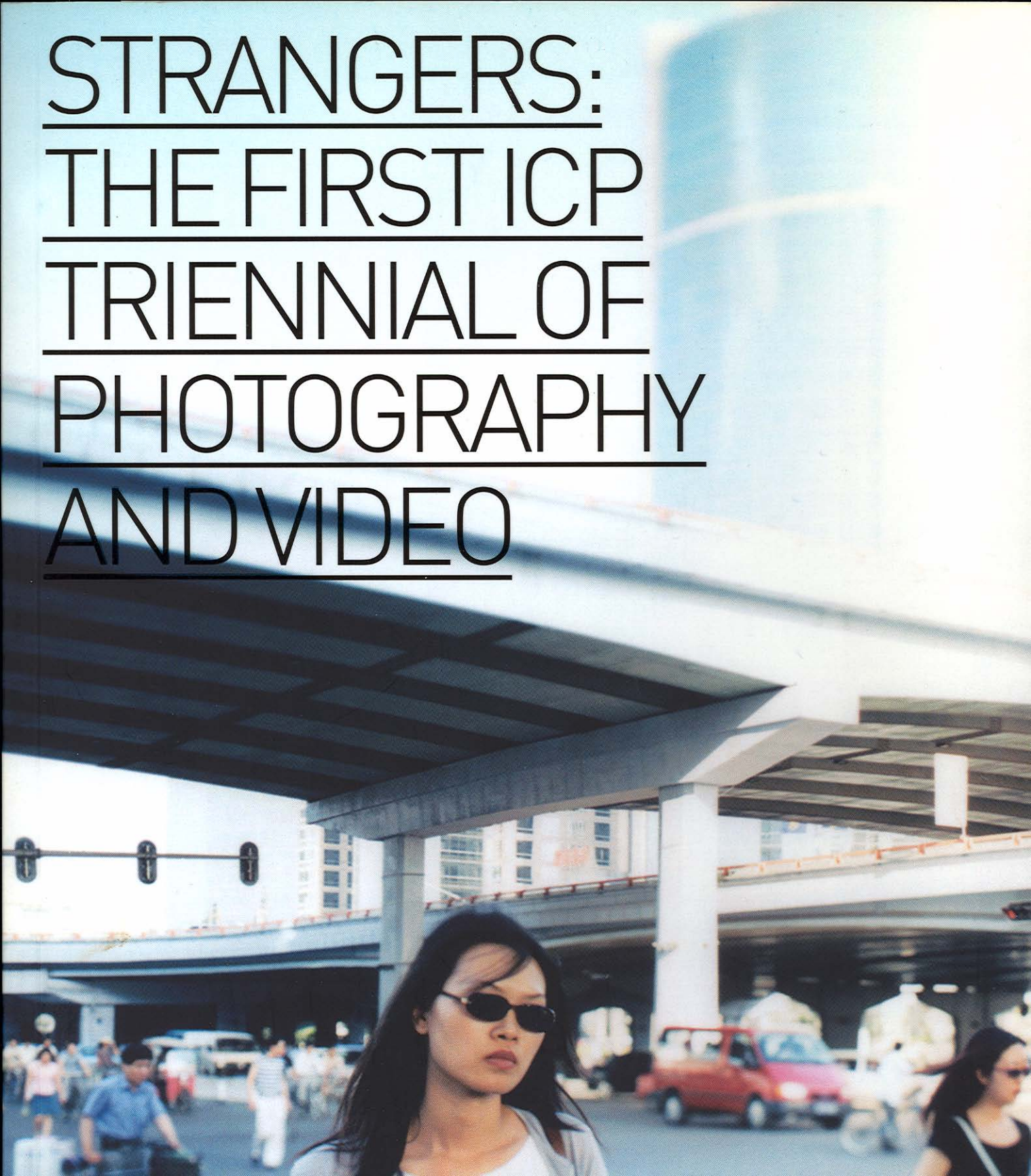


STRANGERS:
THE FIRST ICP
TRIENNIAL OF
PHOTOGRAPHY
AND VIDEO



EYAL SIVAN

Israeli filmmaker Eyal Sivan was born in 1964 in Haifa and grew up in Jerusalem. He left for France in 1985 to study photography and work as a fashion photographer, and still resides in Paris. Sivan made his first documentary film, *Aqabat Jaber, Passing Through*, in 1987. A life-long critic of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, Sivan has been concerned in his documentary work with the political manipulation of historical memory. He has made a number of documentary films since the early 1990s including *Izkor, Slaves of Memory* (1990); *Israeland* (1991), *Itgaber; He Will Overcome* (1993), *Jerusalem's Borderline Syndrome* (docudrama, 1994), *Aqabat Jaber, Peace With No Return?* (1995); and *The Specialist* with Rony Brauman (1999). With his partner, Alexis Cordesse, he has made four films, *Itsembatsemba, Rwanda, One Genocide Later* (1996); *Burundi, Under Terror* (1996); *Kabul, A Weary War* (1997); and *Foca, Absolute Serbia* (1997), all part of a series called "Populations in Danger." In 2001 he made *Au Sommet de la Descente* (What goes up must come down), his first fiction film.

The Specialist, Sivan's best-known film to date, was assembled from 350 hours of videotape of the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1960. The Israeli government had asked American documentary filmmaker Leo Hurwitz to record the trial of this man who, in the unforgettable words of Hannah Arendt, epitomized "the banality of evil." As a specialist in the transportation of railroad freight, Eichmann was personally responsible for delivering millions of German Jews to Nazi death camps. Yet, as Arendt pointed out, he seemed no more brutal than the family accountant. It was this normality that Arendt said was "much more terrifying than all atrocities together."

This observation resonates with even greater horror today, following the genocidal violence of Rwanda, Bosnia, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and the Middle East. In *Itsembatsemba, Rwanda, One Genocide Later* (1996), Sivan and Cordesse used contemporary radio broadcasts and still photographs to try to explain the three-month holocaust in Rwanda in 1994, in which over 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutu were hacked to death with machetes, shot, burned, and buried alive. The international community watched and listened with apparent indifference. In *Itsembatsemba* one cannot ignore the state-condoned broadcasts inciting genocide, or close one's eyes to its horror. Sivan does not question why genocide exists. Instead, he asks, "Can you stand this? Can you live with it?"

