

A woman in a dark swimsuit and goggles is floating on her back in a swimming pool. A large, dark shadow of a person is cast onto the water's surface, partially overlapping the woman. The water is a vibrant blue with ripples. The title 'VISIONS DU RÉEL' is printed in large, bold, red capital letters across the middle of the image.

VISIONS DU RÉEL

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE CINÉMA NYON
DOC OUTLOOK-INTERNATIONAL MARKET
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UN HOMMAGE CONSACRÉ À EYAL SIVAN,
UN AUTEUR RECONNU DANS LE DOMAINE DE LA
CRÉATION ET DE LA RECHERCHE FORMELLE.

EINE HOMMAGE AN EYAL SIVAN,
EIN ANERKANNTER AUTOR IM BEREICH DER
FILMREALISATION UND FORMFINDUNG.

A TRIBUTE TO EYAL SIVAN, ACKNOWLEDGED
FOR HIS CREATIVITY AND FORM FINDING.

ATELIER EYAL SIVAN

EYAL SIVAN

BIOGRAPHY



FILMOGRAPHY

- 2013 Montage interdit (in progress)
- 2012 Etat commun – Conversation potentielle [1]
- 2009 Jaffa – La mécanique de l'orange
- 2007 Citizens K (mlf)
- 2005 Irak, quand les soldats meurent (mlf)
- 2004 Aus Liebe Zum Volk (co-directed)
- 2003 Route 181 – Fragments d'un voyage en Palestine-Israël (co-directed)
- 2001 Au Sommet de la descente (sf)
- 1999 Un Spécialiste – Portrait d'un criminel moderne
- 1997 Burundi – Sous la terreur (sf)
- 1996 Itsembatsemba, Rwanda un génocide plus tard (sf)
- 1995 Aqabat-Jaber – Paix sans Retour?
- 1994 Jerusalem(s), le syndrome borderline
- 1993 Itgaber – Le triomphe sur soi
- 1991 Israland (mlf)
- 1990 Izkor – Les esclaves de la mémoire
- 1987 Aqabat-Jaber – Vie de Passage

Eyal Sivan est né en 1964 à Haïfa, dans une famille d'immigrants arrivée d'Uruguay. Ses parents déménagèrent à Jérusalem un an après l'occupation militaire de la Cisjordanie et de la bande de Gaza. Censé servir dans l'armée en 1982, 60 jours seulement après le massacre de Sabra et Chatila, il fut libéré de ses obligations alors même qu'il avait décidé de ne pas rejoindre les rangs de l'armée. Après être devenu photographe de mode, il déménagea de Tel-Aviv à Paris. Sa visite du camp de réfugiés d'Aqabat-Jaber dans le cadre d'une séance photo le poussa à réaliser *Aqabat-Jaber – Vie de passage* (1987). Eyal Sivan, connu pour ses positions politiques virulentes et controversées, qui remettent en question la réalité politique d'Israël, est l'une des figures les plus marquantes du documentaire aujourd'hui. Fondateur de la société de production Memento! et de l'agence de distribution de films Scalpel, il est également fondateur et rédacteur en chef de «Sud Cinema Notebooks» et membre du comité de rédaction de «La Fabrique» et de «De l'Autre Côté». Il est aussi professeur associé en Production des médias à the School of Arts and Digital Industries à l'Université de East London.

Eyal Sivan wurde als Sohn uruguayischer Einwanderer 1964 in Haifa geboren. Ein Jahr nach der Besetzung des Westjordanlands und des Gazastreifens durch die israelische Armee zogen seine Eltern von Haifa nach Jerusalem. Sein Militärdienst, von dem er allerdings freigestellt wurde, nachdem er selbst bereits beschlossen hatte, sich ihm zu entziehen, sollte 1982, nur 60 Tage nach dem Massaker von Sabra und Schatila, beginnen. Als junger Modefotograf zog er wenig später von Tel-Aviv nach Paris. Nach einem Besuch des Flüchtlingslagers Aqabat-Jaber für Fotoaufnahmen drehte er 1987 *Aqabat-Jaber – Vie de passage*. Der für seine unverblühten und kontroversen, die politische Realität in Israel hinterfragenden Stellungnahmen bekannte Eyal Sivan zählt zu den herausragenden Dokumentarfilmern unserer Zeit. Der Gründer der Produktionsgesellschaft Memento! und des Filmverleihs Scalpel ist ebenfalls Gründer und Chefredakteur der «South Cinema Notebooks» und Mitglied des Redaktionsausschusses von «La Fabrique» und «De l'Autre Côté». Er ist Assistenzprofessor für Medienproduktion an der School of Arts and Digital Industries der Universität East London.

Born 1964 in Haifa, Eyal Sivan is the son of an immigrant family that arrived in Israel from Uruguay. His parents moved to Jerusalem a year after the military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Supposed to serve the army in 1982, just 60 days after the massacre of Sabra and Chatila, he was released from duty even though he already had made up his mind that he would not be joining the ranks of the military. He became a fashion photographer and moved to Paris, France, from Tel-Aviv. After visiting the refugee camp Aqabat-Jaber for a photo shoot, he made *Aqabat-Jaber – Vie de passage* (1987). Eyal Sivan, known for his outspoken and controversial political stances that question the political reality of Israel, is one of the most outstanding figures working in documentary today. Founder of production company Memento! and film distribution agency Scalpel, he is also founder and chief editor of «South Cinema Notebooks» and member of the editorial board of «La Fabrique» and «De l'Autre Côté». He is associate professor in Media Production at the School of Arts and Digital Industries at the University of East London.

GIONA A. NAZZARO

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE

THE CINEMA OF EYAL SIVAN

“THE PROBLEM IS TO ACCEPT A SEQUENCE IN HISTORY THAT BEGAN IN 1933 AND ENDED IN 1948. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT WITHOUT LANZMANN’S BARBER THE ONE OF “ROUTE 181” WOULDN’T EXIST. IF THE GENOCIDE OF EUROPEAN JEWS HAD NOT HAPPENED, THEN EUROPE WOULD NOT HAVE VOMITED THEIR REMAINS ON THE HEADS OF THE PALESTINIANS. THE BARBER OF “ROUTE 181” DOES NOT DENY THE EXISTENCE OF THE BARBER OF “SHOAH”, ON THE CONTRARY, HE CONFIRMS IT. HE SAYS THAT BOTH ARE VICTIMS OF THE WEST, OF COLONIALISM. THE BI-NATIONAL ARGUMENT SHOULD ENVISAGE OUR FUTURE NOT IN EUROPE, BUT IN FRONT OF EUROPE, AND OBLIGE HER TO TAKE ON HER RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS BOTH THE ISRAELIS AND THE PALESTINIANS. WE ARE AT THIS POINT BECAUSE IT IS WHAT EUROPE WANTED.”¹

“A JEW IS AN ARAB BORN IN POLAND” (EYAL SIVAN)

Eyal Sivan's work represents an exciting point of departure to reflect on what is still defined “documentary” today.

At the core of Sivan's work a relentless question beats. What is truth? Truth not as a ‘per se’ value, nor as an absolute or an ‘a priori’ factor, but rather as a dialectical process open to critical observation like a work in progress. In this sense, truth is not a corpus of ideology – or confession-related data inevitably shutting out those who don't share them, but a process of partaking in the truth discourse. Truth as such is not meant as revelation, but as critical work and conquest of freedom from truth itself – thus ceasing to be binding (to assumptions of identity, faith, or ideology) and, on the contrary, sparking a process of liberation from its own premises. Not for nothing goes the motto: “The truth shall set you free.” Gospel of St John 8:32

Therefore, truth according to Sivan, and apparently to his cinema, is always ‘a posteriori’. It is the outcome of analysis. Of an investigation. And as such, eternally revisable. The object of more investigations. In this sense, all of Eyal Sivan's cinema, by putting itself at the service of truth, is paradoxically aimed at setting us free from truths and returns us to a secular, open, critical, and ultimately problematic idea of truth. This truth is not meant as a teleological purpose but as a strategy of liberation:

in the first place, liberation from the dogma of truth itself.

This is the only way – throughout an unrelenting process of revision – to understand the ethics of work underlying the filmmaking of Eyal Sivan who, like a pro in a long-gone Hollywood, recites: “I believe in hard work.”

There are two concepts underlying the

which are becoming cages that tends to normativize formal outlooks and strategies. He actually denounces the on-going production system as a new “totalitarianism”.

“A good story means nothing”, maintains Sivan. The basic problem is how to relate to the “structuring device” and consequently “how to break the time-

EDITING IS THE PLACE WHERE (HYPOTHETICAL) TRUTH IS TESTED BECAUSE IN A MATERIALISTIC OUTLOOK, TRUTH IS ALWAYS THE OUTCOME OF SOME WORK.

filmmaking of Eyal Sivan, basically history and revision. Not by chance does Sivan state that “documentary is the idea of revision itself.” In this sense, reviewing can only become reviving. You review to revive. This dynamics, in turn, can't help questioning the acquired notion of history and the idea that substantiates it.

The biggest problem to be found in this practice, according to Sivan, is the risk of reducing “history to a story”. Here too Sivan goes against the tide as far as rules in the documentary world are concerned: commissioning editors impose production and narration guidelines

line”. Narrative time is already a story of time itself (a ‘truth’), therefore it must be questioned to activate the process of revision.

Before going on, another premise should be made clear.

The idea of revision usually conveys a negative meaning. Revision is commonly understood as an ideological, right-wing, reactionary work aimed at e.g. denying the horror of genocide as far as the destiny of Jews in the extermination camps is concerned, or relativising the genocides committed by Pol Pot's regime – as a portion of the Cambodian political class is currently doing in courts



(as can be seen in Bernard Mangiante's film 'Le Khmer rouge' et le non-violent). Sivan himself has made it clear: "Historical revision normally means to deny something."

Therefore, revision can only depart from a "shift of the point of view". This way, we can begin to imagine a "counter history," and it is exactly this aspiration

he himself defines "a compassionate arrogance", he poses a crucial question on the role played by memory in the process of canonization of historical truth. Along with Goethe, while questioning the meaning of 'memory', Sivan wonders what was forgotten (excluded) from memory itself. This is the reason why one of the major objectives of his work

ALONG WITH GOETHE, WHILE QUESTIONING THE MEANING OF "MEMORY", SIVAN WONDERS WHAT WAS FORGOTTEN (EXCLUDED) FROM MEMORY ITSELF.

to becoming a different (hi)story that fleshes out Sivan's formal and cinematic discourse.

If we consider the narration of history as a frame (a film frame if you like), then we must inevitably wonder what was left out of this frame that is commonly accepted as the 'truth' of 'history'. The next inevitable step is to consider the frame as a form of censorship. By way of the frame, something is always left out of the picture. It is not a coincidence that Sivan, with notable polemical wit, has declared that "documentary is like a secular church." Sustained by something

is to pursue "an encounter between two exclusions" (see in particular the reflection to be found in *Etat commun – Conversation potentielle [1]*), well aware that "memory can be a tool of crime" because if you are the victim then you will never be the culprit (or the perpetrator). It becomes clear, then, that a considerable portion of Sivan's operative strategies is not to provide answers at all costs but to "reformulate questions". This is the only way to make documentary "counter history".

In the evolution of Sivan's work another encounter has played a pivotal role,

partly due to the circumstances in which it happened, and partly for its potential as continuing conversation (even though it actually is a circular, 'complete' dialogue): his encounter with philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz.

A staunch adversary of Israel's nationalist politics, Leibowitz was born in 1903 in Russia, which he left in 1916 to seek refuge in Berlin. A committed Zionist, he left Germany in 1934 and moved to Palestine along with his wife Greta. With his firm belief that state and religion should be two separate, independent bodies he was at odds with David Ben-Gurion. His later stance taken in favour of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories, his invitations to insubordination, and his troublesome conviction that Israel's regression began exactly in concomitance with winning the Six-Day War make him a point of reference for dissidents as well as the perfect, negative example of the Jew who encourages anti-Semite arguments. That is what his enemies in the Parliament said and reiterated the day after Leibowitz was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize for Culture.

It might be argued that by way of his encounter with Leibowitz, Sivan defined a listening approach that would shape all his later work.

Old Leibowitz speaks slowly in the film *Itgaber*. His speech is interspersed with

long silences. He highlights certain words with great attention and reiterates those parts of his argument he deems crucial. A monitor placed on the philosopher's desktop allows us to listen again to moments of the conversation and to check the film editing almost in real time (as can be seen when Leibowitz criticizes Sivan for cutting something out at a certain point). But there is more to it: gradually, Sivan creates a connection between the present of Leibowitz's argument and the past by overlapping him speaking with archive footage. Even though the context changes, the meaning and the words do not.

Being "memory selective by definition", meeting Leibowitz – who is a Zionist, whereas Sivan isn't – does not constitute a corpus of truths to pass on to the converted, but an ethical model as regards the use of truth, by keeping it open, problematic and non-exclusive of other voices and stories.

During this process of understanding, sharing and opening, Sivan began to grow a new stance compared to the editing that is fully manifest in *Un Spécialiste – Portrait d'un criminel moderne*. As was acutely remarked by Gal Raz in his essay 'Narrative Sabotage as a Tactic in the Arena of the Collective Memory: an Alternative Logic of Documentation in Eyal Sivan's *Un Spécialiste*': "The film does not



so much document the reality of the Eichmann trial as it reflects upon the functional representation of this affair in the Israeli collective memory." In other words, Sivan's film is focussed on the Zionist ideology underlying the Eichmann trial rather than on the facts of the trial itself. Referring to Bill Nichols' book 'Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary', Raz also wrote: "Historical evidence in a documentary differs from the historical evidence in fiction films [...] In documentary it is chosen, framed and juxtaposed to support a certain perspective about the world – an argument." And Sivan actually replied to those who would accuse him that the film betrayed reality: "*Un Spécialiste* is not the Eichmann trial, it's a film from the archives of the Eichmann trial." This work of deconstruction of the narrative of collective and nationalist memory – to be understood correctly only through the lens of post-Zionist criticism that took shape in Israel during the last two decades of the 20th century – is manifested with renewed strength, despite the controversies that affected his film on Eichmann, in *Route 181 – Fragments d'un voyage en Palestine-Israël*. This film was vehemently fought by Claude Lanzmann, withdrawn from the inaugural screening of Paris-based film festival Cinéma du Réel and charged with being

"a lie, a call to kill all Jews" by Alain Finkielkraut. Outstanding figures of French culture such as Pascal Bruckner, Pierre-André Tagieff, Thierry Garrel, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Philippe Sollers, Julia Kristeva, Arnaud Desplechin and Chantal Ackerman resolutely sided against the film by Michel Khleifi and Eyal Sivan (who even received a bullet at home in the post).

The encounter of two exclusions, therefore, involves editing as the place where this potential meeting can happen. Editing is the place where (hypothetical) truth is tested and experimented (see *Etat commun – Conversation potentielle [1]*). It should not be a coincidence that Sivan is currently working on a film with a challenging title: 'Montage interdit'. In a complete materialistic outlook, truth is always the outcome of some work. Of a practice of truth. In cinematic terms, instead, truth is the outcome of de-editing the narrative of history's official version and re-editing, aware that this is only an intermediary step towards further, different formulations.

All Eyal Sivan quotes are taken from the masterclass held in Thessaloniki during the 14th Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival (9-18 March 2012)

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A "WELL-INTENTIONED" DIRECTOR

A CONVERSATION WITH EYAL SIVAN

JEAN-LUC GODARD SAID THAT CINEMA IS TRUTH 24 FRAMES PER SECOND. WHAT IS YOUR TAKE ON THIS IDEA?

I THINK IT IS A VERY PROVOCATIVE NOTION. IF YOU TAKE IT IN A VERY LINEAR WAY IT GIVES YOU THE IMPRESSION THAT 24 IMAGES PER SECOND ARE THE TRUTH ALL THE TIME. BUT I'D TAKE IT IN A BENJAMIN-LIKE WAY (I.E. IN THE SENSE OF PHILOSOPHER WALTER BENJAMIN), OF JUST FLASHES OF TRUTH. THIS IS ONLY 24 FRAMES PER SECOND AND THEN IS NO MORE THAN THAT. IT IS NOT A NOTION OF RELATIVITY, BUT A NOTION OF STATUS.

Of course the first image is in a position of truth but what we are discussing is flashes. And flashes are immediately about the past. In a sense, when we say cinema we say "past", even if our relation to it is to the present. The relation to the past involves the notion of truth as well because it integrates the notion of memory. I think that this is something very important, when you think about this idea of the 24 frames per second as truth. It is just seconds of truth. Not "the" truth. It is not the T-R-U-T-H. It is just moments that we relate to the idea of truth. I like very much Michel Foucault's idea that refers to the "status of truth". We project a status of truth on the image. This is my general relation to cinema. It's a double notion. It's a contract that is based on accepting a moment of truth. It is not about trying to build an image of absolute truth, which is a totalitarian stance.

What do you think of the fact that documentaries, even the so-called militant ones, have more or less accepted exactly this idea of totalitarian truth?

First of all, I do not put the documentary outside of the history of the emergence of the moving image and cinema, which is in fact the emergence of documentary itself. This is the first point. The other one is never to forget the very direct relationship between the documentary

and power. In fact, if there is something that defines power, it is to impose the notion of truth itself. Obviously it does not mean it is the truth. It simply means it imposes the notion of truth. Documentary cinema has a long history in common with power. Of course, it also has a history of counter-power. If we think about what the documentary tackling the idea of power looks like, it is exactly that that challenges the idea of truth. It is of course linked to the themes, the subject, the issues that the documentary is dealing with.

One of the critiques that we should address to documentary is its humanistic take. A universally humanistic attitude. The main problem in this humanistic attitude is that it always tries to impose "the" truth. In fact, there is a relation of power from the very beginning of the history of documentary. We have the power - the ones that have the camera, the ones that have the frame, the ones that have the possibility to create the frame. We hold the power: which means that we hold the truth and what we are showing is, therefore, "the" truth.

I think that the most crucial element of the documentary is in fact to challenge this position of power. To challenge this kind of truth that is the result of the relationship to and with power. It is not important to show what we pretend is

the truth, but to tackle exactly this idea by proposing a counter-power.

What is really fascinating in your film *État commun - Conversation potentielle* [1] is that you try to challenge the idea of truth in the field. You challenge this idea through the 'mise en scene' of speech. Through this way of working, your film results in the ultimate anti-talking heads film. It is a film that, through the 'mise-en-scène' of speech, challenges the boundaries of languages and the idea of truth that comes with it.

État commun was a very complex film for me to make in terms of 'mise en scene'. From the very beginning the question was how to build a fiction and give it a status of truth. We are going back to the notion of "status of truth". I'll explain myself. In fact, this film is a fiction in its form because it is something that already puts in the present tense something that is just potential. Something that is a possibility of the future. In this way it makes the future, the potential, not just a possibility, but a reality. In this way, it is no longer an "it can be". It's an "it is", which means there is a conversation that is taking place, and a conversation is always a 'mise en scene de la parole'. There is a performance of speech. This performance will therefore raise a crucial question. Even

UN SPECIALISTE



those viewers who are bored by the film because they think it is just a flow of talking heads will ask the question: "Are these people really together? Are they listening to each other? Do they know what the others are saying?"

In my opinion, this is a very interesting reaction because it raises a double question: about the film and about reality. So the question becomes: what and where is the space where speech can take place? One of the things that really impressed me was the quality of the discourse. Not because of the sophistication of the people involved, but because of the quality of the listening. This is the true 'mise en scene': it's the 'mise en scene' of the act of listening.

Therefore the film device becomes a tool that allows the viewer to question how people can live together. The device becomes a thinking device. A political device.

Absolutely. The film device itself makes a statement about reality. A statement that is not merely aesthetical about reality. It is not representation. It is one possible presentation of reality. It is a cinematic statement. In a way, while there have been pretentious attempts for years to build something that was a relation between a political and an esthetical discourse about maybe the most represented historical element

in the world, the Israeli-palestinian conflict, *État commun - Conversation potentielle* [1] is an actual proposal. A proposal for a stance.

Most documentary films do not deal with the notion that 'mise en scene' is a political stance. Most documentary filmmakers seem to believe that fiction needs a 'mise en scene' while in documentary the nobility of the subject is enough.

'Mise-en-scene' is a construct in the documentary. There is an idea there that maybe goes again back to what we were saying about the truth, about this whole idea of pureness. If we don't intervene, if we let things just happen, if we record reality, eventually we will get closer to the truth. This is the pretentious side of cinema and documentary, while for me, if I were asked a question about it, is the exact opposite. This is what *Potential Conversation* is about. First of all: a 'mise en scene'. You pointed it out: it, it is the 'mise en scene' of a discourse. This becomes a political proposal. Not the discourse in itself, but this way of relating to reality, of thinking in images. The way I try, at the very beginning of the film, to point out that the notion of one state is not a question of the future because there already is one state. The question is what is common in this state. And here comes a proposal of what is common.

Most people should be reminded that when the Lumière brothers filmed the workers exiting the factory they reshot it because the first take did not seem real enough.

Of course! We should also remember Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*, which actually is the second shooting of the film because the first rushes were accidentally burned. So when *Nanook* is playing *Nanook*, there is a 'mise en scene'. And it is this 'mise en scene' that makes a document out of *Nanook*. Not the lack of it.

In terms of being a filmmaker who deals not with the future but with the present, where the present becomes a construct for the device that ultimately becomes a political proposal, how do you work with these kinds of tools in a society that has a totally different take on what is the truth?

Nowhere in the world had I to endure so much criticism, so many debates, arguing constantly about my so-called "lack of objectivity" and the fact that I was "manipulating reality". This happens all the time in Israel. In Israel, in a television show dedicated to documentary filmmaking, I had an interview about *Jaffa - La mécanique de l'orange*. The guy that was conducting the interview started to lose his temper accusing me of having changed the story, of having

manipulated the facts, deconstructed events. "You totally manipulated the story." My answer was: "Yes, I did." What happened then was that he started to shout at me. He was completely lost it. I tried to explain to him: "This is the history of documentary itself." At the end of the interview he came to me and said: "You know, I was absolutely sure that when I told you that you've manipulated the facts, you'd have defended yourself. But when you said, 'Yes I did', I didn't have an interview any longer because I was prepared for a completely different thing."

I'm telling you this story because indeed the problem in Israel, when you ask how I can work, is that I have to answer: I work from outside. It's almost impossible to work inside. Because when you're working inside you have to take into account this impossibility to have different points of view. It sounds so banal, but this is an element that shapes a society that is more and more closed in on itself and paranoid. The result is that it builds up a double violence, an internal one and the one directed outside. It is what we call fascism. What characterises a society like this one is the lack of imagination and the inability to see the possibility possibility that a different point of view could exist. So to answer your question, I can still work thanks to two things. The first



is because I stay outside. The second is because I keep a permanent link inside, my teaching in Israel which allows me to meet young people and to hold my seminar, which has been the same for years and it's called "What Do We See When We Watch?" This is just to discuss the possibility of subjectivity. We are in a terrible situation in which subjectivity is admitted only when it comes to fiction. You are not allowed to have a subjective take on reality. As if the common discourse were an objective take. This is maybe the most terrifying aspects of the situation in Israel. You only have the dominant point of view, and if you try to differentiate yourself from it, the first thing that you have to do is to acknowledge it. The only way to propose a different point of view is to point out propose a different point of view you have to point out "This is me speaking subjectively." This maybe explains why in Israel we have so many political films made in the first person. This is maybe a way to protect yourself by saying: "This is just me." I believe that Avi Moghrabi is one of the greatest Israeli filmmakers. He has a signature. A project. But to be on the inside he has to point out all the time: "This is me." It is the only way to be accepted. In a way, it is the only way to be heard: to reduce your point of view to a specific individual one.

Coming back to *Jaffa*, which is not a first person film, the accusation is: "It is not objective. It is a lie, a historical falsification." The same happened for *Un Spécialiste* or *Etat commun*. The pattern of criticism in Israel against my films is always the same. It's never discussing what the films are about, saying or showing. The same happened with the exhibition that I made about the perpetrators. The question was not about the testimonies of the war crimes but: "Did I tell the truth?" The problem is always about my opposition to a supposedly objective point of view. In Israel, in Hebrew, we use a strange word to criticise something. We say it is intentional, which means it is biased. 'Megamati'. Where 'megama' means intention. Wherever my films have been discussed, the arguments have revolved around the fact that I was 'megamati', 'intentioned'. Even in Parliament, where my films have been discussed, the main accusation was that I was a filmmaker with intentions. To which I obviously answer: "Of course I'm intentioned." What is the meaning of a film without intention? A comedy without intention? If you look at it from the outside, it seems like a weird position. But on the inside nobody thinks it is bizarre. This means there is a common notion of objectivity. This is maybe the very first characteristic of fascism. A norm which

is the same from north to south, from east to west. Up or down. A rule. Or if you want it in cinematic terms: a frame.

INTERVIEW MADE OVER SKYPE
ON JANUARY 11TH 2013
GIONA A. NAZZARO



AQABAT-JABER – VIE DE PASSAGE

EYAL SIVAN

FRANCE | 1987 | 81' | 16 MM | ARABIC
AQABAT-JABER – PASSING THROUGH

Construit au début des années 1950 au Moyen-Orient par l'ONU, Aqabat-Jaber, situé sur la mer Morte dans la vallée de Jéricho, est l'un des nombreux camps de réfugiés destinés à accueillir les Palestiniens chassés de leurs villages natus par l'armée israélienne. La plupart des 65 000 personnes vivant dans ce camp étaient des habitants des villages du centre de la Palestine détruits en 1948. La guerre de 1967 poussa la plus grosse partie des réfugiés (certains l'estiment à 95%) à fuir vers l'autre rive du Jourdain. Nourris par l'espoir de pouvoir un jour retourner sur les terres de leurs ancêtres, les résidents d'Aqabat-Jaber vivent dans une zone tampon à l'allure de ville fantôme. Filmé en 1987, quelques mois seulement avant la Première Intifada – la révolte palestinienne en Cisjordanie et dans la bande de Gaza –, *Aqabat-Jaber – Vie de passage* est l'histoire de ce qui ne devait être qu'une solution temporaire pour les réfugiés mais qui s'est transformé en un mode de vie désabusé et sans espoir. Grâce à un cadrage soigné, Eyal Sivan met en lumière une ville fantôme dont les seuls liens avec l'histoire se nourrissent des souvenirs et d'un douloureux sentiment de nostalgie.

Das Anfang der 1950er-Jahre von der UNO am Toten Meer im Jericho-Tal gebaute Aqabat-Jaber ist eines der vielen Flüchtlingslager, in dem die Palästinenser Aufnahme fanden, die von der israelischen Armee aus ihren Heimatdörfern vertrieben wurden. Die meisten der 65 000 Flüchtlinge des Lagers stammten aus den 1948 zerstörten Dörfern in Zentral-Palästina. Der Krieg 1967 trieb den grössten Teil der Flüchtlinge (manche gehen von 95% aus) auf die andere Seite des Jordan. Getragen von der Hoffnung einer Rückkehr in das Land ihrer Vorfahren, leben die Menschen in Aqabat-Jaber in einem geisterstadtähnlichen Niemandsland. *Aqabat-Jaber – Vie de passage* wurde wenige Monate vor der ersten Intifada, dem palästinensischen Aufstand im Westjordanland und dem Gazastreifen, gedreht, und erzählt von dem, was als Übergangslösung für Flüchtlinge geplant war, statt dessen aber bitterer, hoffnungsloser Alltag wurde. Anhand sorgfältig gewählter Einstellungen zeigt Eyal Sivan eine Geisterstadt, deren einzige Verbindungen zur Geschichte aus Erinnerungen und schmerzdem Heimweh bestehen.

Built in the early 1950s in the Middle East by the United Nations, Aqabat-Jaber, located on the Dead Sea in the valley of Jericho, is one of the many refugee camps destined to shelter the Palestinians driven away from their native villages by the Israeli army. The majority of the 65,000 people living in the camp were inhabitants of the villages of central Palestine destroyed in 1948. The 1967 war forced the biggest part of the refugees (some estimate 95%) across the banks of the river Jordan. Nurtured on the hope of going back one day to the land of their ancestors, the people in Aqabat-Jaber live in a no man's land that looks like a ghost town. Filmed in 1987, a mere few months before the First Intifada – the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza strip – broke out, *Aqabat-Jaber – Vie de passage* is the story of what was supposed to be only a temporary solution for the refugees but became a bitter and hopeless way of life. Through his carefully framed pictures, Eyal Sivan draws attention the attention to a ghost town whose only ties to history are fed on memories and an aching sense of nostalgia.

SCREENPLAY
Eyal SivanCINEMATOGRAPHY
Nurith AvivSOUND
Rémy AttalEDITING
Ruth SchellPRODUCTION
Dune vision,
Memento Production

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EYAL SIVAN

AQABAT-JABER – PAIX SANS RETOUR?

FRANCE, ISRAEL | 1995 | 61' | 16 MM | ARABIC
AQABAT-JABER – PEACE WITH NO RETURN?CINEMATOGRAPHY
Nurith AvivSOUND
Rémy AttalEDITING
Sylvie PontoizeauPRODUCTION
Dune vision,
Memento Production

Huit ans après ses débuts, Eyal Sivan retourne dans le camp de réfugiés d'Aqabat-Jaber. En enquêtant sur le droit des Palestiniens à rentrer dans les villages d'où ils avaient été chassés en 1948, Sivan touche au cœur même de la question du conflit israélo-palestinien. Près de 3000 personnes vivent encore à Aqabat-Jaber. Même les jeunes générations, qui n'ont jamais connu d'autre réalité que celle du camp, rêvent de retourner dans les lieux où sont ancrées leurs racines. Les habitants vivent en suspension, comme flottant dans une bulle d'espoir – une bulle confrontée aux contradictions quotidiennes de la situation politique d'Israël, qui ne veut pas trouver de solution pour les réfugiés. Un état de pure suspension. La Première Intifada n'est plus qu'un souvenir, même si certains militants l'ont qualifiée de «plus beau cadeau que le peuple arabe ait jamais fait aux Israéliens». Une situation sans issue qui transforme la réalisation d'un «documentaire» en une intervention critique sur la possibilité de rechercher des réalités alternatives.

Acht Jahre nach seinem Debüt kehrt Eyal Sivan zurück in das Flüchtlingslager Aqabat-Jaber. Bei seinen Nachforschungen über das Recht auf Rückkehr der Palästinenser in die Dörfer, aus denen sie 1948 vertrieben wurden, dringt Sivan zum Kern des arabisch-israelischen Konflikts vor. In dem Lager leben weiterhin rund 3000 Menschen. Auch die jüngere Generation, die nur die Realität des Lagers kennt, träumt von einer Rückkehr an den Ort, an dem ihre Wurzeln schon immer waren. Und so leben diese Menschen in einem Schwebezustand und treiben auf einer Blase der Hoffnung dahin, der die Widersprüche der politischen Lage in Israel gegenüber stehen, das keine Lösung für die Flüchtlinge finden möchte. Ein scheinodähnlicher Zustand. Trotz der Behauptung einiger Militanter, sie sei «den Israelis jemals gemacht haben», ist die erste Intifada nur noch Erinnerung. Eine ausweglose Situation, die das Drehen eines «Dokumentarfilms» zu einem effektiv kritischen Eingriff in die Möglichkeit einer Suche nach Alternativwirklichkeiten macht.

Eight years after his debut, Eyal Sivan goes back to the refugee camp of Aqabat-Jaber. By inquiring about the right of the Palestinians to return to the villages from which they were driven away in 1948, Sivan goes to the very heart of the issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict. About 3000 people still live in Aqabat-Jaber. Even the younger generations, who have never known any reality other than that of the camp, dream to return to the place where their roots have always been. Therefore the people live in a state of suspension, almost floating on a bubble of hope – a bubble facing the daily contradictions of the political situation of an Israel that does not want to find a solution for the refugees. A state of pure suspended animation. The First Intifada is only a memory, even though some militants have declared it is “the most beautiful gift the Arab people have ever made to the Israelis.” A situation with no way out comes thus to be the point where the process of making a “documentary” becomes a truly critical intervention on the possibility of seeking alternative realities.

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EYAL SIVAN, AUDREY MAURION

AUS LIEBE ZUM VOLK

FRANCE, GERMANY | 2004 | 88' | VIDEO | GERMAN
I LOVE YOU ALL

Monsieur B. travaillait pour la Stasi (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit), le service de sécurité officiel de la République démocratique allemande (RDA). Il croyait en son poste et travaillait dur nuit et jour, sacrifiant tout à sa mission. Il voulait être un citoyen modèle. Il faisait son travail par amour pour sa patrie et ses concitoyens. Il savait que s'il vacillait, toute l'idée du socialisme est-allemand s'écroulerait aux pieds du Moloch capitaliste qui attendait de l'autre côté du mur. Monsieur B. faisait donc des efforts supplémentaires pour espionner et contrôler ses camarades et concitoyens. Or, fin 1989, le mur tomba et le peuple s'engouffra dans les bureaux de la Stasi. Même si Monsieur B. était censé rechercher toute activité contre-révolutionnaire suspecte, il ne vit pas venir la révolution. *Aus Liebe zum Volk* est un film qui remet en question la notion de cadre comme forme de censure et l'idéologie de la surveillance comme propagande. Eyal Sivan affirme: «C'est mon film contre le cinéma.» A juste titre.

Herr B. arbeitete für das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (Stasi) der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik. Vom Sinn seines Tuns war er überzeugt. Und er arbeitete hart, Tag und Nacht, sein ganzes Leben war der Arbeit gewidmet. Er wollte ein vorbildlicher Bürger sein. Er tat seine Arbeit aus Liebe zu seinem Land und seinen Mitbürgern. Er wusste, dass durch sein Straucheln die gesamte Idee des ostdeutschen Sozialismus vor den Augen des kapitalistischen Molochs auf der anderen Mauerseite zusammenbrechen würde. Also gab Herr B. beim Ausspionieren und Überwachen seiner Mitbürger und Kameraden sein Bestes. Doch Ende 1989 fiel die Mauer und die Menschen stürmten die Büros der Stasi. Obgleich Herrn B. das Ausspähen jeglicher konterrevolutionärer Aktivität oblag, kam die Revolution für ihn völlig unerwartet. *Aus Liebe zum Volk* ist ein Film, der das Konzept der Begrenztheit des Filmausschnittes als eine Form der Zensur und die Überwachungsideologie als Propaganda hinterfragt. «Dies ist mein Film gegen das Kino», so Eyal Sivan. Zu Recht.

Mr. B. used to work for the Stasi (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit), the official state security service of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). He believed in the motivations of his job and worked hard day and night sacrificing everything to his work. He wanted to be a model citizen. He did his job out of love for his country and his fellow citizens. He knew that if he faltered, the whole idea of East German socialism would crumble at the feet of the capitalistic Moloch that was waiting on the other side of the wall. Therefore, Mr. B. put extra effort into spying and controlling his comrades and co-citizens. But at the end of 1989 the wall came down and the people stormed into the Stasi offices. Even though Mr. B. was supposed to watch out for any suspicious counterrevolutionary activities, when the revolution finally struck he did not see it coming. *Aus Liebe zum Volk* is a film that questions the notion of the film frame as a form of censorship and the ideology of surveillance as propaganda. "This is my film against cinema", states Eyal Sivan. Rightly so.

CINEMATOGRAPHY
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SOUND
Werner Philipp

EDITING
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PRODUCTION
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EYAL SIVAN

ÉTAT COMMUN – CONVERSATION POTENTIELLE [1]

FRANCE | 2012 | 124' | HD | ARABIC

COMMON STATE – POTENTIAL CONVERSATION [1]

SCREENPLAY
Eyal Sivan

CINEMATOGRAPHY
Eyal Sivan, Erez Miller

SOUND
Nathalie Vidal, Erez Miller

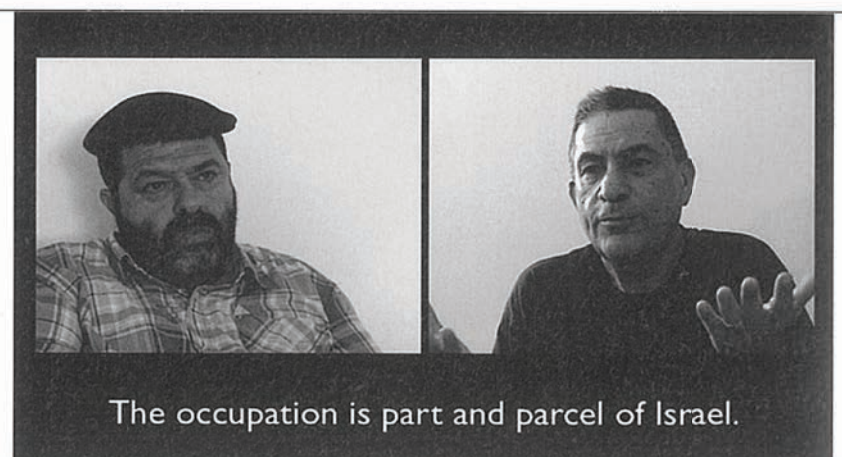
EDITING
Audrey Maurion

PRODUCTION
Momento Production,
La fabrique Editions

A l'heure d'une nouvelle impasse dans le processus de paix, Eyal Sivan essaie de dépasser les vieilles idées qui continuent de hanter le débat sur la question israélo-palestinienne. Ainsi, l'attention n'est plus portée sur la «solution des deux Etats». Ce que le film propose, c'est un Etat commun. En réalité, cette proposition n'a même pas à être faite puisque l'Etat commun existe déjà. Deux communautés nationales vivent sur la même terre. L'idée révolutionnaire derrière le concept d'Etat commun est d'abandonner la notion de séparation pour embrasser celle de partage. Ainsi, Eyal Sivan, par le truchement du montage, provoque une rencontre entre Arabes palestiniens et Juifs israéliens. Vingt interviews sur le thème d'un Etat commun. Des politiciens et des colons. Des Juifs ashkénazes et séfarades. Des Arabes palestiniens installés en Israël et dans les territoires occupés. L'écran se sépare en deux. Un Juif israélien et un Palestinien se font face. L'un parle, l'autre écoute et vice versa. Ainsi, cette conversation cinématographique devient le terreau d'un Etat commun, grâce au pouvoir du dialogue et de la dialectique.

Zu einem Moment, in dem Friedensprozess in einer weiteren Sackgasse gelandet ist, sucht Eyal Sivan die Überwindung der immer gleichen alten Ideen, die jede Debatte über Palästina-Israel prägen. Es geht dabei nicht mehr um die «Zwei-Staaten-Lösung». Vielmehr schlägt der Film einen gemeinsamen Staat vor. Wobei dieser Vorschlag nicht erst eingebracht werden muss: den Gemeinschaftsstaat gibt es bereits. Zwei staatliche Gemeinschaften, die auf dem gleichen Gebiet leben. Das Revolutionäre an der Idee eines Gemeinschaftsstaates ist das Ersetzen der Trennung durch Teilen. Hierzu lässt Sivan per Montage eine Begegnung zwischen palästinensischen Arabern und israelischen Juden entstehen. Zwanzig Interviews über den gemeinsamen Staat. Politiker und Siedler. Ashkenasen und Sepharaden. Palästinensische Araber, die in Israel und den besetzten Gebieten leben. Die Leinwand ist zweigeteilt. Ein israelischer Jude und ein Palästinenser. Einer spricht, der andere hört zu. Und umgekehrt. Das filmische Gespräch wird zum Nährboden der Idee eines Gemeinschaftsstaates, der aus Dialog und Dialektik hervorgehen könnte.

At the point where the peace process has reached yet another dead end, Eyal Sivan tries to go beyond the same old ideas haunting the debate on the Palestine-Israel. Thus the attention is not not pointed towards the "two state solution" any more. What the film proposes is a common state. In fact, the proposition does not even need to be made: a common state is already existing. Two national communities living on the same land. The revolutionary shift behind the idea of a common state is to move from partition to sharing. Therefore Sivan, through the use of editing, creates an encounter between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews. Twenty interviews on the theme of a common state. Politicians and settlers. Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews. Palestinian Arabs settled in Israel and in the occupied territories. The screen is split in two. An Israeli Jew and a Palestinian facing each other. One talks, the other listens. And vice versa. Thus this cinematic conversation becomes the ideal ground on which the idea of a common state could be shaped through the power of dialogue and dialectics.



The occupation is part and parcel of Israel.

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ISRALAND

FRANCE | 1991 | 58' | VIDEO | ARABIC, HEBREW

Tourné pendant la guerre du Golfe en 1991, le film juxtapose deux réalités très différentes. D'une part, le quotidien brutal des habitants de Tel-Aviv devant chercher un abri lors des attaques des forces américaines contre les Irakiens. D'autre part, des travailleurs arabes et israéliens partageant un même chantier pour créer un gigantesque parc à thème: Israland. Alors que les premiers sont forcés de vivre la nuit dans des abris anti-bombes; le jour, les seconds expriment la méfiance qu'ils éprouvent les uns envers les autres. Alors que des missiles Patriot explosent dans le ciel de Tel-Aviv; au sol, Israéliens et Arabes travaillent sur le même chantier pour bâtir une illusion. Ainsi, Eyal Sivan reconnaît la fragilité de la rhétorique israélienne nationaliste qui est en effet menacée par sa propre faiblesse idéologique. Le parc à thème dédié au mythe d'Israël est l'autre visage d'une machine de propagande qui demande à son peuple de se cacher dans des abris pour éviter les attaques au gaz, tout en sachant que cela pourrait être parfaitement inutile. Dans ce film, Sivan conteste la façon dont l'Etat d'Israël manipule son image pour arriver à un consensus politique et moral.

Der während des Golfkriegs 1991 entstandene Film vermittelt zwei stark divergierende Realitäten. Auf der einen Seite die Einwohner Tel-Avivs, die sich aufgrund der US-Intervention im Irak in Sicherheit bringen müssen. Auf der anderen Seite israelische und arabische Arbeiter auf dem Gelände des zukünftigen Freizeitparks Israland. Wo die einen die Nächte in Schutzkellern verbringen, lassen sich tagsüber die israelischen und arabischen Arbeiter über das gegenseitige Misstrauen aus. Hier das Eindringen von Patriot-Raketen in den Luftraum über Tel-Aviv, dort die Entstehung einer von Israelis und Arabern gemeinsam erschaffenen Illusion. Sivan zeigt die Zerbrechlichkeit der Rhetorik Israels, die sich durch ihre ideologische Schwäche selbst gefährdet. Der dem Mythos Israel gewidmete Freizeitpark ist die Kehrseite einer Propaganda-Maschine, die den Menschen trotz des Wissens um die eigentliche Sinnlosigkeit nahe legt, sich in Schutzkellern vor Gasangriffen zu verstecken. Sivan äussert Zweifel an der Art und Weise, wie Israel zugunsten eines politisch-moralischen Konsenses sein eigenes Image manipuliert.

Shot during the Gulf War in 1991, the film juxtaposes two very different realities. On one hand, the brutal daily life of the people inhabiting Tel-Aviv forced, to seek shelter during the attacks that the American forces launched against the Iraqis. On the other hand, Israeli and Arab workers sharing the same building site while working on a gigantic theme park that will be called Israland. While the former are constrained to live at night in bomb shelters, during the day the latter vent about the mistrust they feel for each other. While Patriot missiles shoot above the sky in Tel-Aviv, on the ground both Israelis and Arabs share the same site to build up an illusion. Thus Eyal Sivan acknowledges the frailty of the nationalist Israeli rhetoric that is indeed threatened by its own ideological weakness. The theme park devoted to the myth of Israel is the other face of a propaganda machine that asks its people to hide in shelters to avoid gas attacks, knowing that it may be perfectly useless. In this film, Sivan challenges the way the state of Israel does manipulate its own image in order to gain political and moral consensus.

SCREENPLAY
Eyal Sivan

CINEMATOGRAPHY
Emmanuel Kadosh

SOUND
Elie Taragan

EDITING
Sylvie Pontoizeau

PRODUCTION
Ima production, FR3,
Etat d'urgence

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EYAL SIVAN

ITGABER – LE TRIOMPHE SUR SOI

FRANCE, ISRAEL | 1993 | 170' | VIDEO | HEBREW

ITGABER – HE WILL OVERCOME

SCREENPLAY
Eyal Sivan

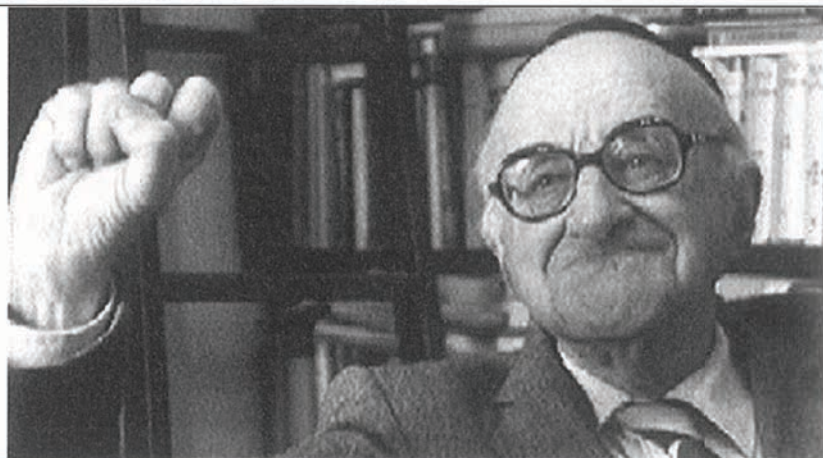
CINEMATOGRAPHY
Rony Katzenelson

SOUND
Amir Buverman

EDITING
Charlotte Tourres, Eyal Sivan

PRODUCTION
Les Films d'ici, Amythos

«Les judéo-nazis existent» est l'une des nombreuses pensées controversées du philosophe Yeshayahu Leibowitz qui a fait scandale en Israël. Né en 1903 à Riga, en Lettonie, il fuit la Russie en 1916 et trouve refuge à Berlin sous la République de Weimar. Lorsque les nazis accèdent au pouvoir, du fait de son engagement sioniste, il quitte l'Allemagne pour la Palestine, où il s'installe avec son épouse. Grand défenseur des droits des Palestiniens et intimentement persuadé que l'Etat et la religion doivent être séparés, il est devenu au fil des ans un personnage public pour tous ceux qui ne soutiennent pas la politique d'Israël sur les territoires occupés et la suppression des droits de l'homme des Palestiniens. Durant presque trois heures, Eyal Sivan questionne un homme qui croit en Dieu et soutient les jeunes qui refusent de s'engager dans l'armée (il promeut l'organisation d'«insubordinations massives») sans jamais cesser de déclarer qu'Israël va droit à son autodestruction et qu'enfin, elle devrait abandonner les territoires occupés. *Itgaber* est un portrait émouvant de la dignité intellectuelle et un précieux rappel que nous «ne devrions pas avoir peur de ceux qui se moquent de nous».



«Jüdische Nazis gibt es» lautet nur eine der vielen kontroversen Thesen Jeschajahu Leibowitz', die in Israel für Empörung gesorgt haben. 1903 im lettischen Riga geboren, floh er 1916 aus Russland und lebte während der Weimarer Republik in Berlin. Als überzeugter Zionist verliess er während der Machtergreifung der Nazis Deutschland und ging nach Palästina, wo er sich mit seiner Frau niederliess. Leibowitz, ein standhafter Verteidiger der Rechte der Palästinenser und von der Notwendigkeit einer Trennung von Staat und Religion fest überzeugt, wurde im Laufe der Jahre eine öffentliche Figur für all jene, die Israels Politik bezüglich der besetzten Gebiete und der Missachtung der Menschenrechte der Palästinenser kritisieren. Eyal Sivan befragt fast drei Stunden lang einen Mann, der an Gott glaubt und junge Leute unterstützt, die den Militärdienst verweigern (er ist für eine Bewegung des «Massen-Ungehorsams»), und der stets betont, dass Israel den Weg der Selbstzerstörung eingeschlagen hat und die besetzten Gebiete endlich zurückgeben muss. *Itgaber* ist ein bewegendes Porträt intellektueller Würde und eine wertvolle Erinnerung daran, dass wir «keine Angst vor denjenigen haben sollten, die sich über uns lustig machen».

"Judeo-Nazis do exist" is just one of the many controversial thoughts of philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz that have caused outrage in Israel. Eorn in 1903 in Riga, Latvia, he fled from Russia in 1916 and sought shelter in Berlin during the Weimar Republic. As the Nazis rose to power, as a committed Zionist, he left Germany and headed for Palestine where he settled down with his wife. Being a staunch advocate of the rights of the Palestinians and believing firmly that State and religion should be separate, Leibowitz has become a public figure over the years for all those who do not support Israel's policy regarding the occupied territories and the suppression of the human rights of the Palestinians. For nearly three hours, Eyal Sivan questions a man who believes in God and supports the youth that refuse to serve in the army (he promotes the organisation of "mass insubordinations") while never ceasing to declare that Israel marches on a path to self-destruction and it should finally surrender the occupied territories. *Itgaber* is a moving portrait of intellectual dignity and a precious reminder that we "should not be afraid of those who mock us".

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IZKOR – LES ESCLAVES DE LA MÉMOIRE

FRANCE, ISRAEL, GERMANY | 1990 | 97' | 16 MM | HEBREW
IZKOR – SLAVES OF MEMORY

Entrecoupé des réflexions du professeur Yeshayahu Leibowitz, l'une des personnalités les plus prestigieuses et les plus contestées d'Israël, ce film aborde le commandement biblique de toujours se souvenir ('Izkor') en tant que fondement de l'Etat sioniste. En Israël, fêtes et commémorations se succèdent au mois d'avril. Ces quatre semaines débutent par la célébration de Pessa'h et se poursuivent avec la commémoration des victimes des crimes nazis et la journée de commémoration nationale pour les soldats israéliens tombés au combat. Le mois se termine avec la célébration du Jour de l'Indépendance nationale. Au cours de ces festivités, Eyal Sivan et son équipe se rendent dans trois écoles différentes et explorent la notion de «mémoire nationalisée». Son but est de comprendre la façon dont l'impératif 'Izkor' dicte et façonne la vie des citoyens israéliens. Ainsi, en exploitant la mémoire historique de l'oppression juive, l'Etat se l'approprie pour justifier ses politiques. En filigrane derrière le commandement 'Izkor', filtre donc l'exigence de se soumettre à l'autorité de l'Etat. Comme l'indique Eyal Sivan: «La mémoire peut être un outil criminel».

Durchzogen von den Gedanken Professor Jeschajahu Leibowitz', einer der angesehensten und faszinierendsten Persönlichkeiten Israels, befasst sich der Film mit dem biblischen Gebot des Erinnerns ('Izkor') als Basis des zionistischen Staates. April ist der Monat mit den meisten israelischen Festen und Gedenkfeiern. Vier Wochen, die mit dem Passah-Fest beginnen, auf das der Gedenktag für die Opfer der Shoa und der Nationalgedenktage für die gefallenen Soldaten Israels folgen. Sie enden mit dem israelischen Unabhängigkeitstag. Eyal Sivan besucht mit seinem Team in diesem Zeitraum drei Schulen und geht dem Konzept des «verstaatlichten Gedenkens» nach. Er versucht zu ergründen, auf welche Weise das 'Izkor'-Gebot das Leben der Bürger Israels lenkt und gestaltet. Mithin macht sich der Staat zur Rechtfertigung seiner Politik das Gedenken an die historische Unterdrückung der Juden zu eigen, indem er dieses Gedenken ausbeutet. So ist das 'Izkor'-Gebot im Subtext auch als Aufforderung zu verstehen, sich der Obrigkeit zu unterwerfen. Ausgedrückt mit den Worten Eyal Sivans: «Erinnerung kann eine Tatwaffe sein.»

Interspersed with the thoughts of professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, one of Israel's most prestigious and most challenging personalities, the film discusses the biblical command to always remember ('Izkor') as the foundation of the Zionist state. April is the most intense time of Israeli festivals and memorials. The four weeks begin with the religious celebration of the Passover festivities and go on with the commemoration of the victims of the Nazi crimes and the national Memorial Day for the fallen Israeli soldiers. The month ends with the celebration of Israel's Independence Day. Eyal Sivan and his crew visit three different schools during these festivities and explore the notion of "nationalised memory". His aim is to understand how the 'Izkor' imperative dictates and shapes the life of the Israeli citizen. Thus, through the exploitation of the historical memory of Jewish oppression, the state appropriates it for the justification of its policies. The subtext of the 'Izkor' imperative therefore is a demand to submit to the authority of the state. As Eyal Sivan states: "Memory can be a tool of crime."

SCREENPLAY
Eyal Sivan

CINEMATOGRAPHY
Rony Katzenelson

SOUND
Rémy Attal

EDITING
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EYAL SIVAN

JAFFA – LA MÉCANIQUE DE L'ORANGE

ISRAEL, FRANCE, BELGIUM, GERMANY | 2009 | 88' | VIDEO |
HEBREW, ARABIC
JAFFA – THE ORANGE'S CLOCKWORK

CINEMATOGRAPHY
David Zarif

SOUND
Oren Raviv, Jean-Jacques Quinet, Asher Saraga

EDITING
Audrey Maurion

PRODUCTION
Trabelsi Productions, Alma Films, The Factory, Luna Blue Film, WDR, NOGA Channel8, RTBF

La marque Jaffa a toujours été un symbole d'Israël. Des oranges juteuses et savoureuses issues d'une terre qui recommença à prospérer après le retour des Juifs. Mais quelle est la véritable histoire derrière les images ensoleillées des vergers dont les arbres aux fruits abondants n'ont plus qu'à être cueillis par des travailleurs souriants? Eyal Sivan retrace l'histoire de Jaffa dès la naissance de la photographie en 1839 et explore la façon dont l'image de la prétendue terre sainte est devenue un mythe occidental. Mais derrière le mythe se trouve également une histoire de cohabitation entre Juifs et Arabes. Des Arabes travaillant pour des Juifs et vice versa. Même avant 1948, les oranges du port de Yaffo auraient été envoyées par bateau dans le monde entier. C'est seulement à la création du port de Tel-Aviv que la séparation entre Arabes et Juifs est devenue un problème qui allait façonner la politique et l'économie du Moyen-Orient. Par une analyse des images d'archives des stratégies publicitaires de Jaffa ainsi que de la propagande sioniste, Sivan crée une contre-récit dont sourd un sentiment de perte et de chagrin envers ce qui était autrefois une terre et qui aujourd'hui n'en est plus une.



Die Marke Jaffa war immer auch ein Symbol Israels. Köstliche Orangen aus einem Gebiet, das nach der Rückkehr der Juden in ihr Land zu neuer Blüte erwacht war. Doch welches ist die wahre Geschichte hinter den sonnigen Bildern üppiger Plantagen voller Früchte, bereit, von lächelnden Arbeitern gepflückt zu werden? Eyal Sivan verfolgt die Geschichte Jaffas zurück bis zu den Anfängen der Fotografie 1839 und erforscht die Entstehung des Mythos des Heiligen Landes im Westen. Ein Mythos, hinter dem sich auch eine Geschichte von der jüdisch-arabischen Koexistenz verbirgt. Für Juden arbeiten Araber, für Araber arbeitende Juden. Auch vor 1948 wurden bereits Orangen aus dem Hafen Jaffa in die ganze Welt verschifft. Erst mit der Entstehung des Tel Aviver Hafens wurde die Trennung von Arabern und Juden zu einem Thema, das Politik und Wirtschaft des Nahen Ostens nachhaltig prägte. Mit Reflexionen über Archivbilder der Jaffa-Werbestrategien und der zionistischen Propaganda schafft Sivan eine Gegen-erzählung, durchdrungen von Verlustgefühlen und Trauer um das, was einst ein Land war und heute keines mehr ist.

The Jaffa brand has always been a symbol of Israel itself. Tasty and juicy oranges from a land that had begun to flourish again after the Jews returned to their land. But what is the real story behind the sunny images of orchards with trees full of fruit that only need to be plucked by smiling workers? Eyal Sivan traces the story of Jaffa back to the birth of photography itself in 1839, and explores the way the image of the so-called holy land became a Western myth. But behind the myth there is also a story of Jewish and Arab coexistence. Arabs working for Jews, Jews working for Arabs. Even before 1948, the oranges from the Yaffo harbour were shipped out to the whole world. It is only with the creation of the port in Tel-Aviv that the separation between Arab and Jews becomes an issue that would shape the politics and the economy in the Middle East. Reflecting on the images from the archives of the advertising strategies of Jaffa as well as the Zionist propaganda, Sivan creates a counter narrative ridden with a deep feeling of loss and grief for what once was a land and now is no more.

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A l'été 2002, Eyal Sivan et son ami, le réalisateur palestinien Michel Khleifi, ont entrepris ensemble un long périple. Leur objectif était de suivre les frontières définies par la Résolution 181, adoptée par les Nations Unies en 1947, et qui ont divisé la Palestine en deux états. Au cours de ce voyage, ils doivent faire face à toutes les contradictions d'une terre autrefois unie. Aujourd'hui, les frontières, les points de contrôle, les barbelés, le béton et les soldats font partie du paysage et rappellent la lutte politique féroce qui a lieu. La division apparaît nettement dans les témoignages des gens qu'ils rencontrent: tristesse, déception, pertes, suspicion, mais aussi humour et cynisme et, au final, le sentiment d'une véritable perte. Eyal Sivan et Michel Khleifi tentent d'élaborer un contre-récit qui reflète toutes les complexités auxquelles ils sont confrontés et réfute les versions officielles du gouvernement. Aussi incroyable que cela puisse paraître, le film a dû faire face à des accusations absurdes: il pourrait encourager des actes antisémites. Sa projection au Cinéma du Réel à Paris a donc été annulée en 2004. Le film a été tourné pendant la Seconde Intifada, connue sous le nom d'Intifadat El-Aksa.

Im Sommer 2002 begab sich Eyal Sivan mit seinem Freund und palästinensischen Filmemacher-Kollegen Michel Khleifi auf eine lange Reise. Sie wollten entlang der Grenze reisen, die in der 1947 von den Vereinten Nationen verabschiedeten Resolution 181 festgelegt wurde, und Palästina in zwei Staaten teilen. Auf dieser Reise werden sie mit den Widersprüchen ihres einst ungeteilten Landes konfrontiert. Grenzen, Checkpoints, Stacheldraht, Beton und Soldaten gehören inzwischen zur Landschaft und erinnern an die Heftigkeit des hier wütenden politischen Kampfes. Diese Teilung ist auch Teil der Geschichten der Menschen, denen sie begegnen. Sie sind geprägt von Traurigkeit, Enttäuschung und Misstrauen, aber auch von Humor und Zynismus und dem Gefühl, dass etwas verloren gegangen ist. Sivan und Khleifi versuchen, eine Gegenerzählung aufzubauen, die die Komplexität des Erlebten widerspiegelt und die offiziellen Versionen der Regierung dementiert. Schier unglaublich, dass der Film mit dem Vorwurf konfrontiert war, zu antisemitisch motivierten Handlungen zu ermutigen. Aus diesem Grund wurde seine Ausstrahlung 2004 beim Pariser Filmfestival Cinéma du Réel abgesagt. Gedreht wurde er während der Zweiten, auch als Al-Aqsa-Intifada bezeichneten Intifada.

GIONA A. NAZZARO

In the summer of 2002, Eyal Sivan and his Palestinian friend and fellow filmmaker Michel Khleifi embarked on a long journey together. They aimed to travel along the borders outlined in Resolution 181, which was adopted by the United Nations in 1947 and divided Palestine in two states. On their trip, they have to face all the contradictions of a land that once was a whole. Now borders, checkpoints, barbed wire, concrete, soldiers are part of the landscape and a reminder that a ferocious political struggle is going on. The division is well reflected in the stories of the people they meet. Sadness, disappointment, suspicion, but also humour and cynicism and, after all, a feeling that something has been lost. Sivan and Khleifi try to build a counter-narrative that mirrors all the complexities they have to face and denies the official versions of the government. Incredibly enough, the film had to face the absurd accusations that it might encourage anti-Semitic acts. Therefore, its screening in 2004 at Cinéma du Réel in Paris was cancelled. Shot during the Second Intifada, known as Intifadat El-Aksa.

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ROUTE 181 – FRAGMENTS D'UN VOYAGE EN PALESTINE-ISRAËL

FRANCE, BELGIUM, GERMANY | 2003 | 272' | VIDEO |

ARABIC, HEBREW

ROUTE 181 – FRAGMENTS OF A JOURNEY IN
PALESTINE-ISRAEL

SCREENPLAY
Eyal Sivan, Michel Khleifi

CINEMATOGRAPHY
Philippe Bellaïche

SOUND
Richard Verthé

EDITING
Sari Ezouz, Eyal Sivan,
Michel Khleifi

PRODUCTION
Memento Production,
Sourat films, Sindibad, WDR

ATELIER – EYAL SIVAN | 229

230 | ATELIER – EYAL SIVAN

EYAL SIVAN, RONY BRAUMAN

UN SPÉCIALISTE – PORTRAIT D'UN CRIMINEL MODERNE

FRANCE, GERMANY, ISRAEL, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM | 1999 | 128' |

35 MM | HEBREW, GERMAN

THE SPECIALIST – PORTRAIT OF A MODERN CRIMINAL

SCREENPLAY
Eyal Sivan, Rony Braumann

CINEMATOGRAPHY
Leo Hurwitz

SOUND
Nicolas Becker,
Philippe Baudhuin,
Thomas Gauder

EDITING
Audrey Maurion

PRODUCTION
Memento Production,
France2 cinema, WDR & BIFF,
Images Creation & RTBF,
Lotus films & ORF, Amythos

Adolf Eichmann était le responsable du Département aux affaires juives de la Gestapo, sous le grade de SS-Obersturmbannführer. Il a servi de chef des opérations lors de la déportation de trois millions de Juifs vers les camps d'extermination. Après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, le 14 juillet 1950, Adolf Eichmann est parvenu à s'enfuir en Argentine. Le 11 mai 1960, il était capturé par une équipe d'agents du Mossad et du Shin Bet à San Fernando (Buenos Aires). Son procès a débuté à Jérusalem le 11 avril 1961. La philosophe et théoricienne politique Hannah Arendt l'a couvert pour «The New Yorker», avant d'écrire un essai intitulé «Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil» qui n'a été publié en Israël qu'en 2000, après la sortie de *Un spécialiste*. Sivan a réalisé son film en s'appuyant sur plus de 350 heures d'images issues de la Steven Spielbergs Jewish Film Archive. Son but n'est pas de reconstruire le procès lui-même, mais de déconstruire l'idéologie sioniste qui le sous-tend. L'approche argumentative de l'exploitation des archives remet en cause la notion d'histoire et demande le droit de la re-visionner. «Le documentaire est l'idée d'une re-vision.» (ES)

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SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann leitete in der Gestapo das Referat für jüdische Angelegenheiten. Er war für die Organisation der Deportation von drei Millionen Juden in die Vernichtungslager zuständig. Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg gelang Eichmann am 14. Juli 1950 die Flucht nach Argentinien. Am 11. Mai 1960 wurde er in San Fernando (Buenos Aires) von Agenten des Mossad und des Shin Bet entführt. Der Eichmann-Prozess in Jerusalem begann am 11. April 1961. Die Philosophin und Politiktheoretikerin Hannah Arendt berichtete für «The New Yorker» aus dem Gerichtssaal und veröffentlichte später ihr Essay «Eichmann in Jerusalem: Ein Bericht von der Banalität des Bösen», das in Israel erst nach dem Film Sivans 2000 erschien. Sivan, der mit Material aus Steven Spielbergs Jewish Film Archive arbeitete, hat seinen Film aus mehr als 350 Stunden gesichtetem Filmmaterial geschnitten. Sein Ziel ist dabei nicht die Rekonstruktion des Prozesses, sondern die Analyse der ihm zugrunde liegenden zionistischen Ideologie. Die argumentative Annäherung an das Archivmaterial ist zugleich eine Infragestellung des Geschichtsbegriffs und die Forderung, diesen neu betrachten zu dürfen. «Der Dokumentarfilm beruht auf der Idee der Neubetrachtung» (ES).

Adolf Eichmann was the head of the Department for Jewish Affairs in Gestapo with the rank of SS-Obersturmbannführer. He acted as chief of operations in the deportation of three million Jews to the extermination camps. After the end of the Second World War, Eichmann managed to escape to Argentina on 14 July 1950. On 11 May 1960, he was captured by a team of Mossad and Shin Bet agents in San Fernando (Buenos Aires). The trial began in Jerusalem on 11 April 1961. Philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt reported on the trial for 'The New Yorker' and later published her essay 'Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil' that was published in Israel only in the year 2000 after Sivan's film was released. Sivan, working with the materials he found in the Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive, culled his film from over 350 hours of footage. His aim is not to reconstruct the actual trial but to deconstruct the Zionist ideology behind it. The argumentative approach to the archival footage questions the notion of history and asks for the right to re-vision it. "Documentary is the idea of re-vision." (ES)

GIONA A. NAZZARO