

A shadowed gaze

France - 52' - Color and Black & White

Digital Beta (S. 16 mm)

A Porte Rouge, Rougemarine, Images Plus production

For fifty years, Willy Holt was silent. He wanted to live, to have a family : he needed to forget.

In 1995, however, this famous art director decided to pass on his memory through the story of his deportation.

Confronting his words with those of his daughter, of high school students and of his companions of misfortune (Jorge Semprun, Roman Polanski), he tries to give meaning to his survival.

A film by

Rafaël Lewandowski

Produced by

Jean-Pierre Morillon

With the voice of

Stanislas Merhar

Original music

Olivier Marie-Catherine

Image

Jean-Marc Bouzou

Sound

Sophie Laloy,

Aymeric Devoldère

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| Assistant director | Lucas Weisbuch, Agata Królikowska |
| Editing | Bruno Esquirol |
| Sound editing | Philippe Amouroux |
| Mixing | Cyril Holtz |
| Post-production | Guillaume Parent, Sonia Ider. |

With the participation of the FEMIS, the SCAM, the CNC, the PROCIREP, and the SACEM.

Inspired by Willy Holt's Femmes en deuil sur un camion (NIL Editions 1995).

It was four years ago. I knew Willy Holt for I had the chance to run into him more than once on a professional level. The various films and the directors with which his career was associated gave him an exceptional aura in my eyes. However, I knew nothing of his life. Through a restrained use of speech and a permanent sense of humour, he carefully protected in himself an important part of this secret.

I was preparing the shoot for my documentary film, Cela [tséla] and had just begun, for an American foundation, a series of interviews of survivors of the Holocaust. The memory of the Second World War was therefore at the heart of my work.

A few weeks before the commemorative ceremonies for the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the camps, a producer friend of mine, Jean-Pierre Morillon, gave me a manuscript called " Surviving. An autobiographical story. " Two hundred pages that I read without stopping, discovering with emotion a story long contained, then suddenly released with a sort of painful necessity. The story of Willy Holt's deportation.

From the contrast between the public personality of this man and the secret of his memory was born the initial idea for this film : to retrace, through the

portrait of this singular survivor, the long path from silence to speech.

A Shadowed Gaze is not the story of deportation, but of that of survival after deportation.

Today, hundreds of testimonies and publications on the concentration camps exist. And we forget how much the difficult return to "normal life" for the deportees was accompanied by a long phase of silence and of taboos. And how much these unspoken things provoked, in the descendants, difficulties and sometimes even "trauma by proxy". Nathalie, Willy Holt's daughter, is an emblematic example. Her own view of her relationship with her father's story brings to light the extreme complexity of the process of transmission. But also the shadows which continue to haunt her father's silence...

As a reflection on the resurgence of memory and the reasons for testimony, the film equally questions the sense, the impact, and the consequences of speech. Is speaking a true release for the survivor? The messages of hope that speech carries, are they not the ultimate escape from the inexpressible?

To the innumerable questions the Holocaust raises in us, Willy Holt seems to reply with one image: that, inevitably silent, of his solitude face to face with

the desert-like immensity of what is left of
Birkenau.

Rafael Lewandowski.

First screening of **A shadowed gaze** has been take place on the 18th of February 1999 at "Auditorium du Forum des Halles de la Vidéothèque de Paris".

A shadowed gaze has been selected by numerous festivals throughout the world:

"Festival du Film Scientifique" (Oullins, France, March 99)

"Résistances" (Tarascon-sur-Arièges, France, July 99)

"Etats Généraux du Documentaire" (Lussas, France, August 99)

"14 Festival du Film Francophone de Namur" (Belgium, October 99)

"International Documentary Film Festival of Kalamata" (Greece, October 99)

"New Documentaries" (MOMA, New York, USA, November 99)

"Amiens International Film Festival" (France, November 99)

"Mumbai International Film Festival 2000" (India, February 2000)

"6th Bradford Film Festival" (G.B., March 2000)

"4^{ème} Festival International du Film sur la Résistance" (Nice, December 2001)

"A Celebration of Jewish Film in Jerusalem" (Israël, December 2001)

"I Warsaw Jewish Films Festival" (Poland, November 2003)

A shadowed gaze was winner of "Written Dream" grant SCAM 1995.

A shadowed gaze has been awarded in Kalamata (**First Prize** in the Short Film Category. Jury president: Fred. Wiseman) and in Warsaw (Second Prize).

A shadowed gaze has been broadcast on such channels as France 2, Planète, Canal Plus Polska, RAI, TSR, Israeli Television..