

Those Shocking Shaking Days

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*In your film, you embrace both the Bosnian War of the 1990s and the question of its representation today. What made you choose such a project?*

On the one hand, it is explicitly about the Bosnian War, about this “European” catastrophe, but also about the fact that in almost all acts of war, in the public awareness of them, and further, in historiography, recurring parameters are actually reproduced; the Bosnian War thus represents itself as a massive conflict, but also stands for other potential conflicts; I think that the theme also has, beyond that, a general validity; I experienced the Bosnian War personally, as a child, so I feel that I am in a position to speak about it, but only because I have researched it to that effect, and precisely weighed out what can be said about war; Since it appears as a component of my persona, my approach is probably a bit more open than that of people who don’t have direct knowledge of such destructive principles; but also because the brazenness and excessive hatred of groups of people within society and among themselves are increasingly “cultivated,” and because I feel the need to counter that with something, as a matter of principle.

*Texts and images are totally intertwined. How did you work with those two elements?*

It is a method of uncovering how text and, mainly, language evokes first of all content and later also real circumstances; the texts are set inside the images; the images are de facto and apart from very few exceptions, are harmless; even though the content of the texts and images seem to coincide, in part, the two can be viewed either separately or as belonging together, that is a method to thematize this phenomenon of validity of truth and content through the intentions of images; the method and way of working is a tool and reveals underlying implications, such as that images generate content, even when this content is not available or not so precisely, or is even worse than what was previously known.

*And the text is superimposed onto the images. Is that a way of being suspicious of the images?*

*Their emotional aspect?*

Yes, exactly, because pictures imply a lack of ambiguity and also mediate feelings, but the feelings should be suppressed, in order to be able to think freely; also the narrator comments on the images

and their selection, is quite occupied with posing all questions about the images differently; the narrator fluctuates in position and type with each question, tries to take on manifold perspectives in order to clarify or provide cause for thought to that extent, that there cannot be only one standpoint in this unambiguous relationship to pictures' ability to represent; in doing so, comments quasi on the narrator's own exhibition and selection of images, as it were; through the variation of the questions with regard to the selection of images as an experiment, I aim to create kaleidoscopes and continually step away from established, supposed (image-)regimes and development of images, and their alleged enlightenment, in order to expose further thoughts and opinions.

*This text, often personal, is formulated as questions, seemingly addressed to the viewer as well as you. Why?*

An omniscient narrator should not be at the foreground implying enlightenment and knowing of the truth, but instead, the thoughts and further, opinions about what is participated in, what is seen here should be made by viewers themselves, at their own discretion; it is about signaling through formal appearance, that is, through a permanently present position of questioning that a moment of doubt and caution with regard to the general validity of history and narrative must always be kept in mind; the questions are, however, quasi suggestive, also to intentionally point to certain chains of thought and try to introduce these into thinking and further also include them in interpretation but without the claim of reducing all validity to a single denominator; It is about facets of complexity that, I think, can be well illustrated in the form of questions; thus, a moment of factuality and earnestness always remains, as it would not be serious to simply claim; making a claim in the form of a question is already somewhat more real.

*No interviews, some archives, and an insistence on landscapes. Why these choices?*

(...) Harun Farocki once said that while filming a dam, he realized that the responsible coordinator of that work, the dam in which he was filming had brought him to a site where at least two or three documentary film teams had set up their cameras before him: now he was placed on the same site to film precisely there because this place had offered the best possibilities for recording the dam; he then noted that even though three others before him had made the same picture precisely there and precisely from the same spot, the meaning of his image and film would be a different one; that says a lot about an attitude toward the documentary aspect and about the ability and willingness of the "documentarian" to think through again what is already developed and supposedly finished, and mainly: to make it again, anew.

*You use some images made during the war that seem home-video-like, which are, at times, very tough. Where do they come from? Can you explain your choices?*

I do a great deal of research for a film and open a broad scope for my own thinking in order to be able to later minimize and concentrate on what is essential; I create a very well-founded foundation in order to be absolutely certain of what I am speaking about; and several things provide help in that: media, philosophy, literature etc.

In the course of the research for my last film *It was a day just like any other in spring or summer.*, I came across material from a “colleague” who can be identified as a “private chronicler with personal interest in the documentary”; I contacted and visited him in order to obtain authentic war material, to open my realm of thought, and to get closer to the object of the work at the time. But then I first actually used that material for this film; I viewed and digitized 180 hours of this very obstinate and private VHS material (which also included horrific and drastic images) and decided to use as much as would be necessary to depict the “banality of evil” and the lack of excitement and senselessness of such massive acts of war; the images are intentionally very harmless (smoke in the distance, meadows and fields with the occasional sound of shots or noises, inspection of family homes that have been destroyed, restless and unambitious pans across landscapes...), which I chose here to direct attention to what it means to instrumentalize images and also the fact that one can never entirely depict the extent of destructive power; that images fail, even more than language perhaps; and it was interesting that these were not “official” pictures, they weren’t made under contract, but instead, by a private person who attempted to document the events with a camera, not exclusively for others, for an audience, but instead, primarily to explain to himself, to try to understand what was happening at the moment; it is almost surreal and that is profound with regard to the claim of documenting or thinking about documentation; it is always about a reformulation of the character of the documentary or “genuine”.