

ZYKLON PORTRAIT

A film by Elida Schogt
1999, 13 minutes, Color, 16mm/Video

A Holocaust film without Holocaust imagery, *Zyklon Portrait* combines archival instructional films with family snapshots, home movies, underwater photography, and hand-painted imagery for an expressive exploration of how history and memory are related to one family's loss. "...Elida Schogt's deeply moving portrait of her family's experience during the Holocaust...wisely privileges the subjective response over any attempts at historical objectivity. Beginning with a hypermeticulous analysis of Zyklon B, the gas used to kill millions in the concentration camps, the documentary approach quickly fractures into a necessarily personal one, underscoring the impossibility of making sense of the senseless. Skillfully weaving archival footage and the conventional documentary's dispassionate voice of authority with family photos and her mother's cautious words, Schogt creates a palpable tension between these irreconcilable elements. The film is a fitting testament to the unspeakable nature of these horrors and to the courage of those who have to struggle to summon up the words to even begin to describe them." Barbara Goslawski, *Take One: Film & Television in Canada*

- **Toronto International Film Festival**
- **Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival**
- **Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival — Honorable Mention, Best Short and Editing**
- **New York Exposition of Short Film & Video — Best Debut Prize, Documentary**
- **Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival — Special Mention, Fipresci Jury**
- **San Francisco Jewish Film Festival**
- **Leipzig International Festival for Documentary and Animated Films**
- **Brisbane International Film Festival**

"Visually stunning and beautifully crafted, *Zyklon Portrait* demonstrates that the process of remembering and filmmaking are themselves rites and passages."
Boston Jewish Film Festival

"Through the juxtaposition of scientific, personal and poetic images, this film achieves a rare level of accomplishment, distilling the Holocaust experience in a fresh and meaningful way."
Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival

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Credits

Written & Directed by
Elida Schogt

Edited by
Caroline Christie and Elida Schogt

Photography by
Roberto Ariganello

Underwater photography by
Sebastjan Henrickson

Sound by
Julie Saragosa

Narrator
Gerhard Hauck

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Maker's Bio

Elida Schogt was born in Princeton, N.J. and is of Dutch descent. She graduated from the University of Toronto with a BA in French Language and Literature and recently received an MA in Media Studies from the New School for Social Research in New York, where she studied film production and theory. Her thesis, *Juncture, Rupture: Trains, Film, Holocaust Memory* examines cinematic train imagery after W.W.II.

Elida is particularly interested in working with personal stories that reveal the relationship between history and memory. *Zyklon Portrait*, her first film, is a Holocaust film without Holocaust imagery: family photographs, underwater photography and hand-painted imagery draw a personal story out of historical minutiae. *Zyklon Portrait* is a 13 minute film poem about the Holocaust. It juxtaposes the Nazi weapon of mass destruction, Zyklon B gas, with my family history. The film has just won several awards at Hot Docs, Canadian International Documentary Festival in Toronto: including Best Short and Best Editing. The film also won the Best Debut Prize, Documentary Category at the New York Exposition of Short Film & Video. The film has screened across North America, Europe, Israel and Asia.

Elida is currently working on her second short film *The Walnut Tree*, a piece that questions the ability of photographs to capture personal and collective memories.

Elida lives and works in Toronto, Canada.