



Peace is
merchandise
nobody's buying
here anymore

The Third Language

(La Troisième Langue)

A FILM BY BENNO HUNGERBÜHLER



PRESS KIT



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As a child, I
never saw
laws or Arabs,
just people
descending
from the
same earth
Dalit



STORY

Dalit Bloch, a Swiss-Jewish drama teacher, returns to Israel, the country of her birth, after 40 years to lead a theatre project with Arabic and Jewish teenagers. The project is based on the Swiss novel „A Village Romeo and Juliet“ by Gottfried Keller.

She encounters a land cut through with walls and trenches, deeply melancholic, sensuous, attractive and rejecting at once.

The film witnesses Dalit Bloch's attempt to shake up the rigidity entrenched in the Jewish-Arab relations. It follows the development of the project in Jaffa, and how the teenagers tentatively approach each other, the director and Keller's story about land, feuding families and a tragic love. The film takes us into today's living rooms and onto the streets, elaborates, contrasts and, together with the teenagers, their parents and their social environment, collects stories and points of view. About trauma, contact, feud, impotence, separation, respect and hope.

Parallel to this the film accompanies Dalit Bloch on her journey to her past and the present. She re-lives the emotions, pictures and memories of her childhood and meets friends. Among these are Palestinian creative artists, Jewish peace activists and an old acquaintance from Basel who became a religious settler in West Jordan. A wide span of differing lifestyles and points of view on the same land is revealed.

The film becomes a testimonial of the fragile reality of people living in a land divided by walls (real and imaginary), and of their dedicated, humorous, active or passive, but always very different struggle for their present and some common future.

Quoi, si personne ne
piquerait plus?
François



Silk purse from a sow's ear

HISTORY David, crowdfunder

In June 1914 Dalit and I fly to Tel Aviv again. We have organised a preview of the film to which all the participating teenagers, their parents, friends and helpers are invited. Everyone comes. An emotional moment, and the last chance to show all the teenagers a documentary of their time together. Shortly after that the Jewish teenagers are to be conscripted into the army.

It is the second last chapter of a fascinating, demanding journey which began eight years ago. Dalit's idea of travelling to Israel with the "Swiss Romeo & Julia" material and staging the theatre play „Yalla!“ and my project of making a film out of it.

The making of this film was an adventure. Because Israel is also the orient. Everything has it's own rhythm, it doesn't move, or moves only slowly, and then suddenly very fast. At first, the staging of the play seems quite impossible, because Dalit can't find anyone who's interested in it or because everyone says it is totally unrealistic. We even get to know the so-called „peace industry“ present in Israel. Then the Gaza war starts and seems to destroy the whole effort already invested in the preparations. Then, unexpectedly, it seems that it is all possible, but only if we start tomorrow.

We have to decide: do we do it or not? We do it, without knowing if we'll get any sponsoring or not. The shooting takes on many twists and turns and pulls us, with unbridled power, deep into the interior of this land.

We produce 130 hours of film material in five languages. It was only possible to condense it into a film because so many people, in Switzerland, Israel and in Palestine, helped, either voluntarily or by working for modest, almost symbolic wages.

In 2015 the remaining funds necessary to complete the film professionally were collected by a Swiss crowdfunding community in a breathtaking show of solidarity.



SYNOPSIS

„La Troisième Langue“ examines the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a wide range of narratives. It centers around a Swiss Jewish theatre director named Dalit Bloch who, after 40 years, returns to her home country of Israel to stage Gottfried Keller's „A Village Romeo and Juliet“ with a mixed group of Jewish and Arabic teenagers. As the Swiss novella touches on some common issues arising from today's deeply divided territory, it also paves the way for the documentary's larger preoccupation with peace, reconciliation and tolerance. „La Troisième Langue“ ably illustrates the fundamental rift between Jews and Palestinians while never catering to extremist voices, and is at it's best when following the development of Dalit Bloch's production at the Arab-Hebrew Theatre in the Old City of Jaffa. During the weeks of rehearsing Keller's drama in this neutral space the teenagers reject the prevailing animosity and detachment in favour of mutual empathy.

Mahmoud Darwish
disait: nous sommes
les malades de
l'espoir, comme un
cancer... de l'espoir
Français

LOGLINE

La Troisième Langue is a multi-layered examination of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It focuses on the development of a theatrical production initiated by Swiss Jewish director Dalit Bloch, involving both Jewish and Arabic teenagers, and sheds light on the possibility of a peaceful coexistence.

Written by Fabrizio Fracassi



A VILLAGE ROMEO & JULIET BY GOTTFRIED KELLER

Gottfried Keller wrote the novel „A Village Romeo and Juliet“ in 1847, inspired by a true story described in a newspaper article.

Two young people, the son and daughter of two rich farmers, fall in love despite the bitter hostility between their fathers. These were once good friends but now fight about a piece of land in-between their fields that both want to possess. But the uncultivated land is claimed by the descendant of the original owner – a wandering fiddle player. In spite of this, the corrupt local authority decides to auction it. It is then awarded to one of the farmers at an exorbitant price.

In Shakespeare’s play the feuding families attack each other with large entourages . Keller concentrates the conflict to a small Swiss village community and the animosity of the fathers. This leads to the fatal catastrophe of their children who, seeing no possibility for a future together, take their own lives.

„A Village Romeo and Juliet“ was filmed by the Swiss film-maker Hans Trommer in 1941. Created under the threat of World War II, today it is considered to be one of the milestones in the history of Swiss film.

es wird nie gut
kommen - geh in
Gottes Namen
deiner Wege, Sali!
Verena



MONOLOGUES

The director's goal was to, together with the teenagers, look for parallels to Keller's Swiss novel in daily life in Israel. The teenagers also went out onto the streets to ask passers-by if they know of any Arab-Jewish couples or friendships and, if so, what are the problems and/or prejudices they have to confront.

From such stories the teenagers collected on the streets and within their families, Shredy Jabarin wrote the theatrical monologues to be added to Keller's story as interspersing elements.

It's not my Fault

Dolev (jewish)

It's not my fault, it's not my fault they took your grandfather's land.
Had they asked me I would have said no.
But that was long before I was born,
and even if I were alive then, no one would have asked me.
You think someone would have asked me?
Look at me. I was born into my life, into a fait accompli,
I have no control over the past, nor do I have much control over the present.
I hardly have control over my life, it makes most of the decisions for me.
I was born into this great big fait accompli and I know no other reality,
but I love you,
not because I'm scared or because I have no choice
or because you are part of my reality.
But because I love you.
I don't care about history nor the broadcasting authority
nor the stories, the stories I can't change. But I promise I will study you,
your language, so I can watch the movies you watch, listen to your music,
so that we can dance together,
and thus perhaps there will come a time when we will be able
to see a theater play without translation to a third language.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The film which I once sketched as the biography of a drama teacher with „two kinds of blood in her veins“, accompanying her through a theatre project, led me to meet people from both sides of the conflict and pulled me deep into this country.

The images which arose on this journey were raw, poetic and flickering; words, dancing on a tightrope and contradictory like their motive – Israel.

Even this way, one cannot understand Israel but ‚La Troisième Langue‘ transmits images which are seldom portrayed by the news media. Ordinary people telling stories, divulging personal histories, being involved.

For me they're all witnesses of another Israel: in the hard political and social reality they manage to find humanity, sentimentality and optimism. And they have the power to add a few shades of grey to the contrasting black and white picture we are used to.

**we are caught in this
Golem, this monster
we created ourselves
Natan**



CAST & CREW

The Kids	Mahmoud Ablassi, Khulud Abu Lasan, Noy Maximov, Muhamad Masharavi, Tamer Abou Shamis, Lian Tal, Dolev Toledano, Laila Toukhy, Manar Tourk, Omri Zekel
The Friends	François Abu Salem, Evi Guggenheim Shbeta, Natan Haber, Suzan Lavie, Yoav Weiss
The Parents	Abed Abu Lasan, Oded Zekel, Adel Masharavi
The Teachers	Abir Satel, Shimrit Revivo
Theatre Responsibles	Mahmoud Dassouki, Igal Ezraty
Play directed by	Dalit Bloch
Assistant Director & Author Monologues	Shredy Jabarin
Stagiaire	Tamar Cohen
Written & directed by	Benno Hungerbühler
Cinematography	Giorgio Zehnder
Sound	Timon Barnea
Production Manager	Shredy Jabarin
Editor	Ben O'Bond
Edit Supervisor	Fabrizio Fracassi
Music	Thomas Jeker, Christian Moser, Claudio Puntin
Mix	Dänu Rohrer, dexmusic.ch
Denosing	Tommi Buser, parklane.ch
Colorgrading	Rolf Lang, redsmoke.ch
Graphics	Pascal Brun, flyart.com
Translators	Ayalah Kahn Mahoud Nonoume Michael Abramski



PRODUCTION

Produced by Les Enfants du Paradis Films, Benno Hungerbühler
regarde, Franz Schnyder

Switzerland, 2016

Production Consultants Judith Lichtneckert
Reinhard Manz

Supported by Fachausschuss Audiovision der Kantone BS/BL
Ernst Göhner-Stiftung
Association SalamShalom
Emi Dreyfus-Stiftung
Fundraising Supporters
Crowdfunders of 100-days.net
Crew Participants

TECHNICAL SPECS

THE THIRD LANGUAGE 84', DCP/HD 1080p - DOLBY 5.1.
(La Troisième Langue) CHD/HEBR/ARAB/E/F/english subtitles

available also with german subtitles



DIRECTOR'S BIO

Benno Hungerbühler, filmmaker ARF/FDS

a multilayered culturist, born in Basel/Switzerland, 1960. Filmmaker, musician, teacher. Since 30 years doing interventions in pictures, words, sounds & moves, always on the track of stories, bridges & breaks and the human beings in back of them.



2016	La Troisième Langue	Documentary, 84'
2012	Zwischen Zorn und Zärtlichkeit	Documentary, 66'
2009	Die Rose	Slam Poetry Clip, 5'30 ZOOM - Basler Filmpreis 2010 - winner, best clip Jugendfilmtage Zürich - UNICA Medal, best film Filmfestival Spiez - winner ART Basel - Festival SCOPE SUBJECT - winner
2008	Del Mar	Dancumentary, 90'
2007	Altered Landscapes	Dancumentary, 14'
2005	Kinderleben	Documentary, 29'
2004	Ketuba	Documentary, 16'
1999	Blue Motion	Documentary, 73' Official selection Solothurner Filmtage 1999
1996	Benvenuti a Rigolone Marina	Mockumentary, 18'

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Not less, not more.
Sibyl, crowdfunding
booster



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Links

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www.dexmusic.ch
www.flyart.ch
www.thomasjeker.ch
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www.redsmoke.ch
www.felixschaffert.ch

Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/157920506>