

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER

A Film by Irina Gedrovich



26 minutes / color – b&w / 2004

German & Russian w/ English Voiceover

“Highly intelligent... striking.”

—George Robinson, Jewish Week

“A riveting story.”

—Jana Prikryl, The Reeler.com

ICARUS FILMS

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Synopsis

As a young man in Germany during the Thirties, Gerhard M. was an amateur photographer who preserved his work in a photo album. In 1941, when he was sent to the Eastern Front as a German soldier, he took along a camera to record his combat experiences in the Soviet Union.

Based on his wartime diary and photo album, *AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER* recounts Gerhard M.'s experiences with his unit, which was engaged in "retaliatory measures in captured areas," including the burning of homes, the "resettlement" of Jews and the shipment of their seized valuables to the Reich Chancellery, and the random and mass execution of Soviet Jews, partisans and wounded soldiers. He also took snapshots of Soviet prisoners and other civilian victims of the war, the German army's expropriation of livestock and other food supplies from the local populace, and a temporary leave spent happily in Berlin with his fiancée.

After the war, as a citizen of the German Democratic Republic and a dues-paying member of the Soviet-German Friendship Society, Gerhard M. came to regret his enthusiasm for photography. The discovery by East German Communist authorities of his incriminating diary and photo album, replete with horrific images of executions and other atrocities, led to Gerhard M.'s conviction by a Soviet court and his execution by firing squad in 1952.



Awards

Grand Prix
2005 Humanity in the World Film Festival

Award for Artistic Reflection of Reality
2005 Ekaterinburg Film Festival

Best Short Documentary
2005 Jewish Eye Film Festival

Official Selection
2005 Berlin Film Festival



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The story of the film

The Russian Jewish writer Lev Roshal approached Efim Reznikov, producer and director of Granat Film Studios with whom he had worked previously, about making a new film together. Efim agreed on the basis that the new film would be on a subject of personal importance to Lev Roshal.

Lev then submitted several ideas to Efim, one of them being on the great suffering endured by the Jews under the Nazi regime. While researching the KGB archives several years before, Lev had come across the diary of a German soldier who had chronicled his life in the army in words and pictures, using snapshots he had taken during the war. Lev had written the story of this diary and presented it to Efim, saying that he wished to make an anti-Fascist film.

Efim liked the story, but preferred to make the film “Anti-War”, rather than “Anti-Fascist”. Also, being very busy on other projects, he was not available to direct the film himself. Lev then suggested that the directing be done by the young director Irina Gedrovich, who had worked with Lev when making her first film “Kitchen” for Granat Film Studios.

Lev and Irina then worked together with Efim producing, and the film AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER was born.

Director’s Biography

Irina Gedrovich was born in 1969 in Moscow. Before she entered VGIK, she had been working as a director’s assistant. Irina graduated VGIK in 1995 and worked at the NTV television channel and 6-th channel.

Director’s Filmography

2001 – “Kitchen” – documentary, 35mm, 26 minutes, produced by GRANAT filmstudio.
Has a diploma of the Russian Human Rights film festival “STALKER”

Credits

Directed by
Irina Gedrovich

Written by
Lev Roshal

Photography by
Ilia Melikhov

Sound & Music by
Eugeni Kadiniskiy

Edited by
Sergey Norikov

Consultants
Vladimir Magidov, Dmitry Khokhlov

Narrated by
Yury Belyaev, Stephan Hille

Produced by
Granat Studio
Cinematography Service, Russian Ministry of Culture

Photography Assistant
Sergey Grinevich

Driver
Dmitry Tishkin

Administrator
Tatiana Kozharinova

Financial Director
Tatiana Nakhabina

Executive Producer
Olesya Buryachenko

Producer & Art Director
Efim Reznikov

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