

In Flow of Words

a film by Eliane Esther Bots



***In Flow of Words* follows the narratives of three interpreters of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. They interpreted shocking testimonies from witnesses, victims and perpetrators, without ever allowing their own emotions, feelings and personal histories to be present. Contrary to their position at the tribunal, this film places their voices and experiences center stage.**

Director: Eliane Esther Bots
Producer: Manon Bovenkerk
Country of production: the Netherlands, 2021
With: Alma Imamovic, Besmir Fadhic, Nenad Popovic Pops
Director of photography: Daniel Donato
Sound design: Sergio Gonzalez Cuervo
Festival distribution: Square Eyes
Executive producer/distribution USA: The New Yorker

Genre: Documentary short
Length: 22 min 15 sec
Available print: DCP, Apple ProRes, H264
Language: English / Bosnian / Serbian / Croatian
Available subtitles: English, French
Support: Municipality of The Hague, Stroom The Hague, Netherlands Film Fund
World premiere: 74 Locarno Film Festival, August 2021
Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/561377845>

Directors' statement

In Flow of Words is a short experimental film about the piercing experiences of three interpreters of the Yugoslavia Tribunal in The Hague and their position as a channel between speakers and listeners, witnesses and defendants, judges and attendees.

The interpreters I work with in *In Flow of Words*, are born and raised in the former Yugoslavia and lived through the war in the 90's. They find themselves in the surreal position of having their own memories and emotions confronted with the narratives from opposite sides of the conflict: those of the people accused of war crimes, and those of the victims with whom they can identify as countrymen.

The Tribunal, the courtroom and the fact-finding missions are rigorously designed sites defined by strict rules, rituals and costumes. Every participant has to play his part as neutrally and objectively as possible so that the conflict can be presented in the courtroom in

a 'linguistic', controlled, civilised form. The interpreters have to align the erratic process of interpretation with the rules that apply in the arena of the Tribunal.

The film focuses on the contrast between the emotional and physical impact of the dramatic stories that the interpreters have to deal with on the one hand, and the controlled and neutral environment of the Tribunal and its missions in which these narratives get retold on the other.

In the interpretation process, the interpreters have to be simultaneously present and absent: to be visibly neutral yet as invisible as possible, to get close to those involved yet keep their distance, to speak out yet be silent. They have to deal with the contrast between their inner turmoil and what they are allowed to show on the outside. They find themselves in a position in which they are transformed into human machines.

About the director



Eliane Esther Bots

Eliane Esther Bots (1986, NL) graduated from the University of the Arts Utrecht (NL) in 2008. She participated in the post-graduate program 'Document and contemporary art' at École Européenne Supérieure de l'image (FR) in 2012. In 2016 she graduated cum laude from the Master of Film at the Film Academy in Amsterdam (NL).

Her films have been screened and exhibited at (inter) national festivals such as 'IDFA' Amsterdam (NL), 'Berlinale', Berlin (DE), 'Cinema du Reel', Paris (FR), 'New York Film Festival' (USA), 'International short film festival Oberhausen' (DE), 'Go Short', Nijmegen (NL),

'International short film festival Curta Cinema', Rio de Janeiro (BR), Glasgow Short Film Festival (UK), Kassel Dokfest (DE), POLIN Museum (PL).

In 2022 her film *In Flow of Words* was awarded with a 'Golden Calf' at The Netherlands Film Festival. She has been programming for the Go Short Film festival, Nijmegen (NL) and works currently as a lecturer 'Moving image' at the University of the Arts in Utrecht (NL).

Filmography director

In Flow of Words (2021), 22 min.
The Channel (2020), 35 min (film performance)
Cloud Forest (2019), 18.20 min.
The Brick House (2017) 15.49 min.
We can't come from nothing, (2015) 30.52 min.
Conversations (2014), 21.07 min.
The Visionary (2013) 17 min. (installation)
The dome & The cone of silence (2012) 16.50 min.
The captain and the boy (2012) 9.14 min.
Gulo (2011) 15 min.

About the producer



Manon Bovenkerk

Manon Bovenkerk has a background as a visual artist, curator and film programmer, and holds a MA in Film & Photographic Studies from the University of Leiden. She was a programmer for Go Short International Short Film Festival and is currently attached as an advisor to the Flanders Audiovisual Fund. As a creative producer she is actively involved with the conceptual and formal developments of the film projects.

near/by film

Founded by Manon Bovenkerk in 2018, near/by film produces work by directors and artists seeking innovative forms of cinema. near/by film focuses on auteur film, creative documentary, essay film and hybrid film genres of all lengths.

Filmography producer

Realized:

Insieme Insieme - Bernardo Zanotta (2022), 37 min, coproduction with Venin Film (FR)
In Flow of Words – Eliane Esther Bots (2021), 22 min.
 Selection of awards: Best Direction Pardi di Domani, Locarno, Best Documentary at Hamptons Film Festival and Clermont-Ferrand and Best Short Film at DocAviv.
In His Bold Gaze - Bernardo Zanotta (2020), 19 min.
Cloud Forest - Eliane Esther Bots (2019) 18 min.

In postproduction:

Wild Fruits – Bernardo Zanotta, 30 min, short fiction

In production:

Consider a Tomato - Marina Sulima, short documentary, Filmfonds Wildcard
City of Poets - Sara Rajaei, short essay film
Call me Agnes - Daniel Donato, feature fiction film

In development:

Missing Scenes - Sabine Groenewegen, essay film
Here Be Dragons - Maria Molina Peiro, creative documentary
The Listeners - Misho Antadze, creative documentary
Headless Trees - Sara Rajaei, feature fiction film

