

NON-ALIGNED FILMS & HUMANITARIAN LAW CENTER
in co-production with
CINÉMA DEFACTO
present

DEPTH TWO

a film by Ognjen Glavonić

2016 | Serbia, France | 80 min



Synopsis:

In 2001 a mass grave was discovered in a suburb of Belgrade. Soon there were more to come. DEPTH TWO investigates the hidden story behind this horrid discovery and takes us back to 1999 and the NATO bombings in Serbia. Using the verbal testimonies of perpetrators and victims, DEPTH TWO unfolds like a hypnotic thriller that visits the places where the crimes happened 17 years ago and follows the trail of this untold massacre, in an attempt to uncover and give a voice to the stories, that are still intentionally buried in silence.

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Director's statement:

A memorial is an object that serves to focus our memory on something – a person, an event. It can also be a visual mark, a visual entity that can be created to signify a troubling chapter in history. In 2001, a mass grave containing more than 700 bodies was found on the outskirts of Belgrade. Despite the disturbing proximity of the site of the mass grave to the center of the capital city of Serbia, today, 15 years later, this location remains unmarked. There's no memorial of any kind, and almost nobody in present-day Serbia even knows about this case or the story behind it. It is still a public secret.

By using light and sound, a combination of spoken testimonies and images of the places where the crimes happened, the film speaks directly to the sensations, imagination and emotions of the viewer. This film is an attempt to uncover, shed a light on and give a voice to this story, intentionally buried in silence. DEPTH TWO, a thriller documentary and a kind of a film-memorial, is also a rebellion against the ongoing oblivion.

DEPTH TWO / DUBINA DVA

2016 / Serbia, France / 80 min

DCP 2K / 1.85 / 5.1

Language: Serbo-Croatian, Albanian
Subtitles: English

Produced by: Non-Aligned Films, Serbia & Humanitarian Law Center, Serbia
Co-produced by: Cinéma Defacto, France

Editor: Jelena Maksimović
Cinematographer: Tatjana Krstevski
Sound designer: Jakov Munižaba
Sound mix: Gilles Benardeau
Colorists: Nikola Mrdalj, Nikola Marinković

Co-producer: Sophie Erbs
Producers: Dragana Jovović, Sandra Orlović
Written & Directed by: Ognjen Glavonić

You decided for a quite unusual artistic and dramaturgical concept. I feel DEPTH TWO brings the events much closer, and thus much more emotional, to the spectator than a classical documentation. The structure follows the structure of a political thriller, while the format is experimental.

The idea for this film was born while I was researching for a fiction film called THE LOAD. As the pre-production process for that film is taking a long time, through the ongoing research I was finding out more and more information. I realized I have to put them aside, far from the script I already had, as I did not want them to interfere with the narrative of the fiction film. As time passed by, those stories started to grow, and I started to articulate them towards something that could be a film which would, in a different genre and style, complement the future fiction film. That they could work as a diptych. Eventually I got the idea to make a short film comprised of the images of empty spaces of one location, and several monologues about what happened there. That was the beginning of DEPTH TWO, which eventually grew into a feature-length film: a combination of spoken testimonies and images of the places where crimes happened 17 years ago. From the start I knew I wanted to structure the narrative as a mystery, a thriller, by giving only traces of the bigger story, and giving the audience the chance to connect it all together. I wanted to leave the audience an opportunity to create the images and sensations for themselves. I think this way, all the questions raised are engraved far deeper and stronger.

Where did you find the monologues and how did you select the passages for the film?

The monologues you hear are actual testimonies from people related to the case. We recorded only one interview, and the rest is taken from the trials at the Hague tribunal. We watched several hundred of hours of testimonies recorded during almost 10 years of trials, in 3 separate cases and then we edited for 10 months. Previous cuts of the film had more witnesses, and also a lot of archive material, but eventually the editor Jelena Maksimovic and myself created a book of rules that helped us shape the film we were searching for. We decided to use only personal and intimate stories and to use only the witnesses who saw with their own eyes what they were talking about.

How did you work on the coordination of pictures and spoken words. Do the pictures show the authentic locations where the events took place, or did you chose spaces which would reflect the spoken monologues?

We started the journey through Serbia and Kosovo to record the authentic locations where the events took place. On our way we also stopped and recorded spaces and details that grabbed our attention, and intuitively seemed to be a part of the film. I wanted to incorporate imagery important for myself, as some things reminded me of my childhood at the time when these events took place. The images came first - we did not have the spoken testimonies yet. While editing we did not want to use the images suggestively, or as an illustration. We wanted to combine them in tone and atmosphere, taking care that the rhythm of the editing follows the stories.

You mentioned you are preparing a fiction feature film about those events. Could you tell us something more about this project?

THE LOAD follows a driver who took part in these events, driving a freezer truck through Serbia during the NATO bombing in 1999. It is based on real testimonies of the drivers, but it is, above all, a fiction film. It tracks a metaphysical, inner journey of the character, and the journey through the darkness of the society at a specific moment of its decay. We are finalizing the financial construction of the film and we are planning to shoot it in Spring of 2017.

Interview with Ognjen Glavonic, carried out by Bernd Buder for the Forum online catalogue pages. Used by kind permission.

Director's biography

Ognjen Glavonić (1985, Yugoslavia) graduated Film and TV directing at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade. His short films have been screened at more than 50 international film festivals.

His mid-length documentary, ZIVAN MAKES A PUNK FESTIVAL (2014) premiered at Cinéma du Réel film festival in Paris, France. This film has been screened at more than 40 international film festivals including IFF Rotterdam (2015), IndieLisboa (2015) and CPH:DOX (2014).

DEPTH TWO, premiering at 66th Berlinale Forum (2016), is Ognjen's first feature-length documentary. So far, the film has been screened at more than 30 international film festivals, winning best film awards at Open City Documentary Festival (UK), IFF Message to Men (Russia), DokuFest (Kosovo), Kasseler Dokfest (Germany),

Glavonić is currently in pre-production of his first fiction feature film, THE LOAD, a project supported by the Eurimages, CNC (Cinemas du monde), Croatian Audiovisual Centre, Visions Sud Est and the Hubert Bals Fund.

He is the director and co-founder of Pančevo Film Festival (Serbia).

Filmography

- 2017 THE LOAD (feature-length fiction, in pre-production)
- 2016 DEPTH TWO (80 minutes, feature-length documentary)
- 2014 ZIVAN MAKES A PUNK FESTIVAL (64 minutes, mid-length documentary)
- 2012 MADE OF ASHES (17 minutes, short fiction)
- 2010 RHYTHM GUITAR, BACKING VOCAL (23 minutes, short fiction)
- 2009 ŽIVAN PUJIĆ JIMMY (20 minutes, short documentary)



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