

Exhibition 5 February - 19 May 2014
Sabatini Building, 3rd Floor

Biographies of Amos Gitai



Wadi Salib (Haifa), photo Amos Gitai, ca. 1998

Biographies of Amos Gitai can be regarded as a case study within the framework of inquiry proposed by the exhibition *Biographical Forms. Construction and Individual Mythology*. Amos Gitai, born in Haifa in 1950, recently devoted two films to his parents, *Carmel* (2009) and *Lullaby to My Father* (2011). His mother (1909-2004) was born in Jaffa to Russian parents. His father (1909-1970), an architect trained at the Bauhaus, fled from Nazi Germany in 1933.

Contemporaneous with this endeavor of the memory, the exhibition resituates the biographies in a constellation of characters that emerged and took shape in the course of various documentary investigations and fictions, beginning with *House* in 1980. These intersecting biographies are inscribed within a history and a geography, dramatic and sedimented. The geological and archaeological model of stratified terrain is recurrent.

The cinema is in itself a composite and hybrid art, a form of narrative that permits the assembly of certain *biographical elements*. In the same way, every moment in the exhibition itinerary is formed by materials (documents) reassembled around a sequence of film. Since his very first film essays, Gitai has used the recorded image and montage to question the link between biography and History, between individual itineraries and collective destiny. The lives he relates are routes of migration and dispossession.

The exhibition favors the documentary orientation and content of a prolix oeuvre. The outlines of that orientation were drawn up in the second half of the 1970s, when Gitai renounced his job as an architect to avoid contributing to the colonization of the occupied territories. From his training, Gitai has retained an interest in the spatial forms of sociality. For him, however, documentary cinema has always been a support for action in the public sphere, and above all a form of intervention in the political affairs of the Near East. His first fiction film, *Esther* (1985), inscribes the biblical legend within the reality and history of his native city, Haifa. The *dramatic* dimension of historical violence is interpreted through forms inspired by a distanced, Brechtian practice of theatre.

But violence is also exercised upon bodies in the everyday life of the peoples subjected to the barbarity of world economic disorder. Two films, *Pineapple* (1983) and *Bangkok-Bahreïn* (1984), deal with situations of slavery that subsist for the benefit of a reinforced mobility and mobilization of labor on a global scale.

The artistic experimentation with biographical forms, autobiography included, should appear in the exhibition as the site of a critical reflection on the world. By placing his own biography in contact with the multitude of lives condemned to anonymity and silence, he actualizes the privileged posture of the “man of the world” (Baudelaire, on the “Painter of modern life”). He exposes himself to the critical gaze.

Related Activities

Encounter 5 February 7:00 p.m.
Sabatini Building, Auditorium

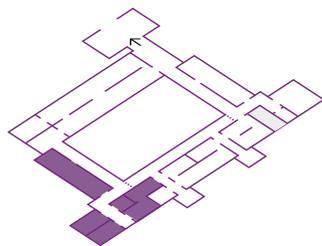
**Amos Gitai in conversation
with Jean-François Chevrier**

Film series 6–26 February 7:00 p.m.
Sabatini Building, Auditorium

Biography, history, territories
Nine films by Amos Gitai

Sabatini Building

3rd floor, rooms 302 – 304



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Opening hours

Monday to Saturday

and bank holidays

from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Sundays

from 10:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

complete Museum visit,

from 14:15 to 7:00 p.m.

visit to Collection 1 and a temporary
exhibition (check Website)

Closed on Tuesdays

Visitors are kindly asked

to clear the galleries

15 minutes before closing.

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