

the second memory [2004]

35mm, 11 min., colour, Czech / German (English subtitled)

production: AnotherFilm
scenario / director: Bea de Visser
camera: Miroslav Janek
HD technique: Tomas Majer
sound: Michael Micek
animation / edit: Bea de Visser
the woman: Marketa Kulhanková
music: the use of ashes
assistant director & production:
Hans Eijses, Renata Vlckova
the paintings: The Skipping Mind, oil on canvas [BdV 1994]

Short SYNOPSIS

Portrait of a woman (Marketa Kulhanková) and of pictures of her, taken around the year 1953 by her photographer husband. De Visser had made an installation in 1994, using pictures she had painted based on her photographic portraits. During a world tour of this work the woman was recognised by her granddaughter at the exhibition at the National Gallery Prague. In this film, De Visser visits the lady in Prague, now in advancing years, for the first time. The discrepancies between past and present are intriguing.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS ON APPROACH AND CONTENT

I was not interested in making a documentary in its general sense. As reality fails to come back to us, the film reveals a story made from still images, remarks and imagination, focussed on one photograph and a video. When one reads the image of the woman's face closely, one recognises her Jewish features. Old faces have the ability to tell the past. Her face now at the age of 85 tells the story of the last century in a certain way. 'The second memory' will stage the aged woman Marketa Kulhanková. Alongside the photograph that once urged me to make a video/ painting installation, Mrs. Kulhanková tells her side of the story about the photograph. Nowadays the perspective of Marketa is shrunk into the view through the window overlooking the houses in the neighbourhood. Her other window is the television screen.

MARKETA KULHANKOVÁ lives in Prague. She was raised by a well-established Jewish family and had grandparents in Germany. After her studies, she married a lawyer whose great passion was photography. Her husband published several books about the technique of photography. She translated one of them in German for AGFA in Berlin. In his entire work one can find photographs of Marketa. The studio was located in the house that is still owned by the family, where up till 10 years ago Marketa Kulhanková lived. At the age of 86 she looks back on her life concerning hers as not so normal, suffering the occupation by the Germans, then after the elections in 1948 the communists were soon the next suppressors that led to occupation by the Russians. Nowadays the Czech Republic is a democratic republic ruled by the economic laws of capitalism. Marketa follows politics day by day with a great sense of humour. She loves talk shows, sports and knitting. Her daughters and son, grandchildren and even grand-grandchildren are her life.



The Skipping Mind, oil on canvas (detail)
[Bea de Visser 1994] (film still The Second Memory)



The Skipping Mind, animation (detail)
[Bea de Visser 1994] (film still The Second Memory)



Marketa Kulhanková (film still The Second Memory)

Bea de Visser studied design public space and painting, and left the Academy of Visual Art to study electro-acoustic sound.

She started her career as a performing artist, went on stage making sound works and live installations. Then she turned back to painting, followed by two years residency at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam ('93-'94).

She works within a frame ranging from an artist initiative to a well established museum, but also the public space, the theatre and the cinema come within the scope of her work.

Other films: Just a Minute Yoko ['04] - The Second Memory ['04] - The Barren Land ['01] - Another Another ['99] - A Breath Hush ['96]