

## Uriel Orlow

(Zurich, 1973)

Uriel Orlow's works are long-lasting processes that originate from in-depth documentary and in-the-field research. Shifting skilfully among a range of expressive languages, the artist produces videos, photographs, sound installations, workshops and performance conferences that allow the audience to consider the subject of the work from different yet complementary angles. Interested in the events that shaped the contemporary era and driven by the desire to bring to light elements that have been removed or forgotten, he explores micro-stories that find no room within official mainstream narratives.

His best-known and most ambitious project began in 2012 and takes the form of a film deconstructed into its component parts, featuring ten different works that take on meaning as a whole. *Unmade Film* is something that does not yet exist despite having already been – the adjective of the title is used in the double sense of 'never having been created' and 'taken apart' – and its plot is revealed gradually, fragment after fragment. The starting point is the complex story of the psychiatric hospital of Kfar Sha'ul, founded after WWII to the west of Jerusalem to take care of Holocaust survivors. The building stands on the ruins of the Palestinian village of Deir Yassin, sadly known for the massacre of the population carried out by the Zionist militia in 1948. Linked to this place by family events, Orlow poses himself the problem of how to bring together in a single work the double trauma of the Holocaust and the Nabka: the expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from their lands. It's the very conflictual nature of the two narratives, which overlap also in structural terms in the buildings of Deir Yassin/Kfar Sha'ul, that leads him towards a fragmentary representation in which ample space is left to the judgment of the viewer.

The project includes a variety of elements, each of which has a title inspired by the working stages of the film. *The Script* elaborates the dialogues held with a number of psychologists from Jerusalem and Ramallah specialised in post-traumatic stress, while *The Storyboard* includes the drawings produced by the students of a school which once hosted the orphans of Deir Yassin. The installation *The Reconnaissance* revolves around a backdrop that shows the ruins of a Palestinian settlement and a fictitious conversation between Pier Paolo Pasolini and Robert Smithson. As well as the images shot in various moments (*The Stills* and *The Production Photographs*), there were also a performance workshop (*The Staging*), an audio tour guiding us through the places of the event (*The Voiceover*) and a 16 mm film that commemorates the more than four hundred villages abandoned during the exodus (*The Closing Credits*). Lastly, *The Proposal* is the lecture-performance during which Orlow retraces the genesis of the work and unveils the history that inspired it, that of his great-aunt who survived Auschwitz and who was a patient for many years in the hospital of Kfar Sha'ul.

RA