A close-up photograph of a person's hand with a gold ring on the ring finger, touching a wall. The wall has peeling white paint and patches of light blue paint. The background is a blurred wall with similar textures.

And the alley she whitewashed  
in light blue

A film by Nili Portugali



# Synopsis

At a time of existential threat to the physical and human environment we live in, **Architect Nili Portugali** takes us into a deeply intimate journey in the Galilean '**Kabbala**' holy city of Tsefat.

A **childhood journey** that unfolds gradually from her **present holistic / phenomenological / Buddhist / scientific Point of View** (replacing current thoughts and approaches) to a discovery of profound **universal insights** of: What is their secret of all those great **timeless** buildings of the past, cities, villages, tents and temples endowed with **beauty and soul** in which man feels 'at home', and what is that **One pure 'art of making'** which is thousands of years old that creates them (any the Arts), **at any culture, at any place and at any time**. That, via **reconstructing** in her unique **poetic meditative cinematic language** her childhood memories engraved on each stone of the invisible city's history with cultural heritage of more than 1000 years that no longer exists, and is totally forgotten. The birth place and hometown of her family since early 19th century, where her

grandmother founded her hotel, in a small stone building around a patio at the end of an alley in the old city that no longer exists.

"Using my body of knowledge and experience I have been accumulating in multidisciplinary creative work in the **visual arts; writing and Architecture** as my main profession, **the film both in form and content, explore and cross new boundaries, and straddle the line between art and cinema**".





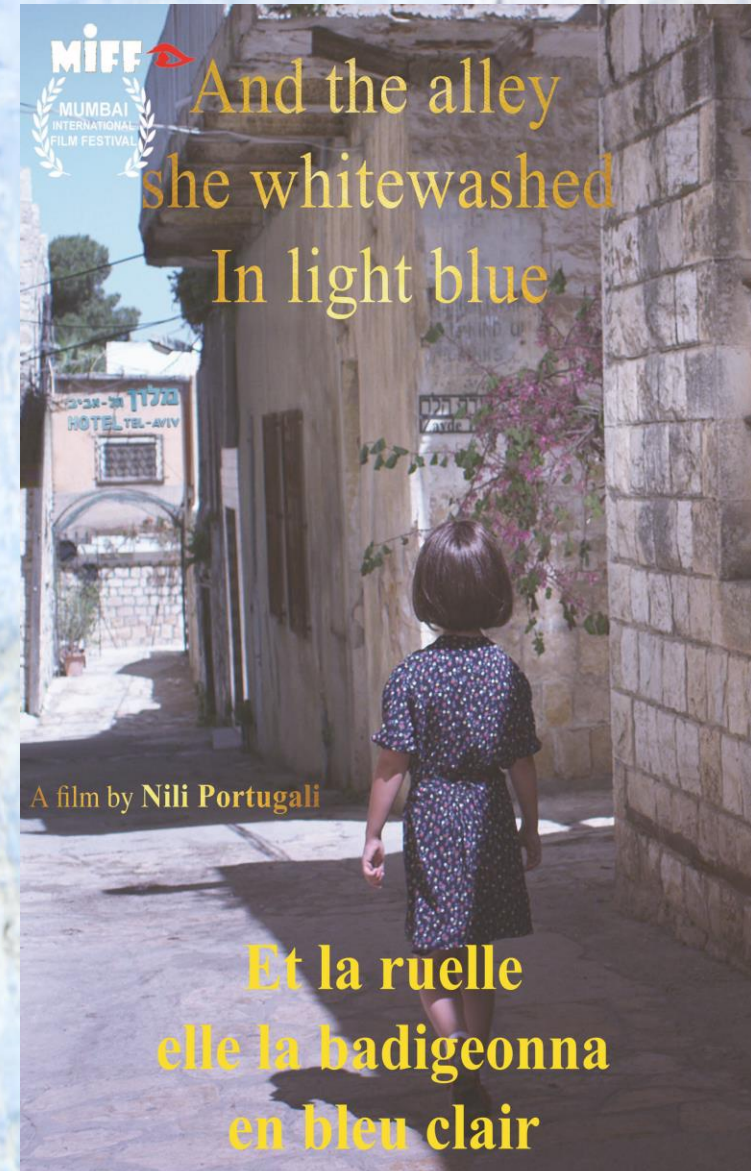
## Synopsis Short (FR)

Dans un langage cinématographique singulier, l'architecte **Nili Portugali** nous convie à un voyage intime et profond dans la ville **kabbalistique de Galilée, Safed**. Un voyage au cœur de **souvenirs d'enfance** évolue en un exposé de discernements universels à partir d'un point de vue **holistique / bouddhiste / scientifique** : quel est le secret de ces lieux intemporels dans lesquels l'homme se sent 'chez lui' ? Et quel est cet 'art pur de produire' qui conduit à leur création ? **Quelle que soit la culture, quel que soit le lieu, quelle que soit l'époque.**

**Un film au-delà des frontières de la forme et du fond, entre art et cinéma.**

Le film a été présenté en avant-première mondiale au festival international de cinéma en Inde, ainsi qu'aux Etats-Unis, en Suède et en Israël.

**(72 min. Heb. French Sub)**





## Director's biography

**Nili Portugali** is a well-known practicing Architect; senior lecturer; researcher and published author.

**Her multidisciplinary** work both in practice and theory is closely connected to the holistic-phenomenological school of thought.

**She is 7th generation** descendant of a family living in the holly 'Kabbala' city of Tsefat, Israel since the early 19th century.

**She was a senior lecturer** at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem and at the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning at the Technion, Haifa.

**She is a Guest lecturer** at MIT, Harvard, Carleton University, Oxford University, TU Stuttgart; TU Dresden; TU Delft, Tsinghua University China.

**Her first book:** *The Act of Creation and The Spirit of A Place/ A Holistic-Phenomenological Approach to Architecture/ Edition Axel Menges Stuttgart/London* was listed in **the books of the year** by the Royal Institute of British Architects (R.I.B.A).

**In the book Review** by *URBAN DESIGN International* / Palgrave Macmillan Journals it was written:

---

## Cinematographer's biography

**Boaz Yehonatan Yaakov**

Among his Award-winning films: '**AJAMI**' - Academy Award Film Nominee (**shortlist**) for Best Foreign Language Film; '**MY FATHER MY LORD**'; '**RESTORATION**'; '**DR. PPMERANZ**' and many more.

## "PORTUGALI'S QUIET REVOLUTION MAY BE THE ONE THAT PASSES THE ULTIMATE TEST OF TIME"

**Her work is documented** in books, in the Dictionair De l'Architecture Du xxe Scielle / Hazan Publication France, in professional journals, in the press and on TV.

**Graduated at** the A.A. School of Architecture - London; Post G selected studies in Architecture & Buddhism at U.C Berkeley; Film studies at the Tel-Aviv University.

**She did research** work in the 'Center for Environmental Structure' Berkeley, with Prof. Chris Alexander.

**Among the world-known** buildings she designed is:

'The Felicja Blumenthal Music Center and Library' at the historic heart of Tel-Aviv.

**Her work was exhibited** in the Venice Architecture Biennale, Barcelona Spain, Linz Austria, San Paolo Architecture Biennale and more.

**The film she directed; edited and did the production design can be seen as the third of a TRILOGY following the buildings she designed as an architect and the published books she wrote.**

---

**Ofer Inov**

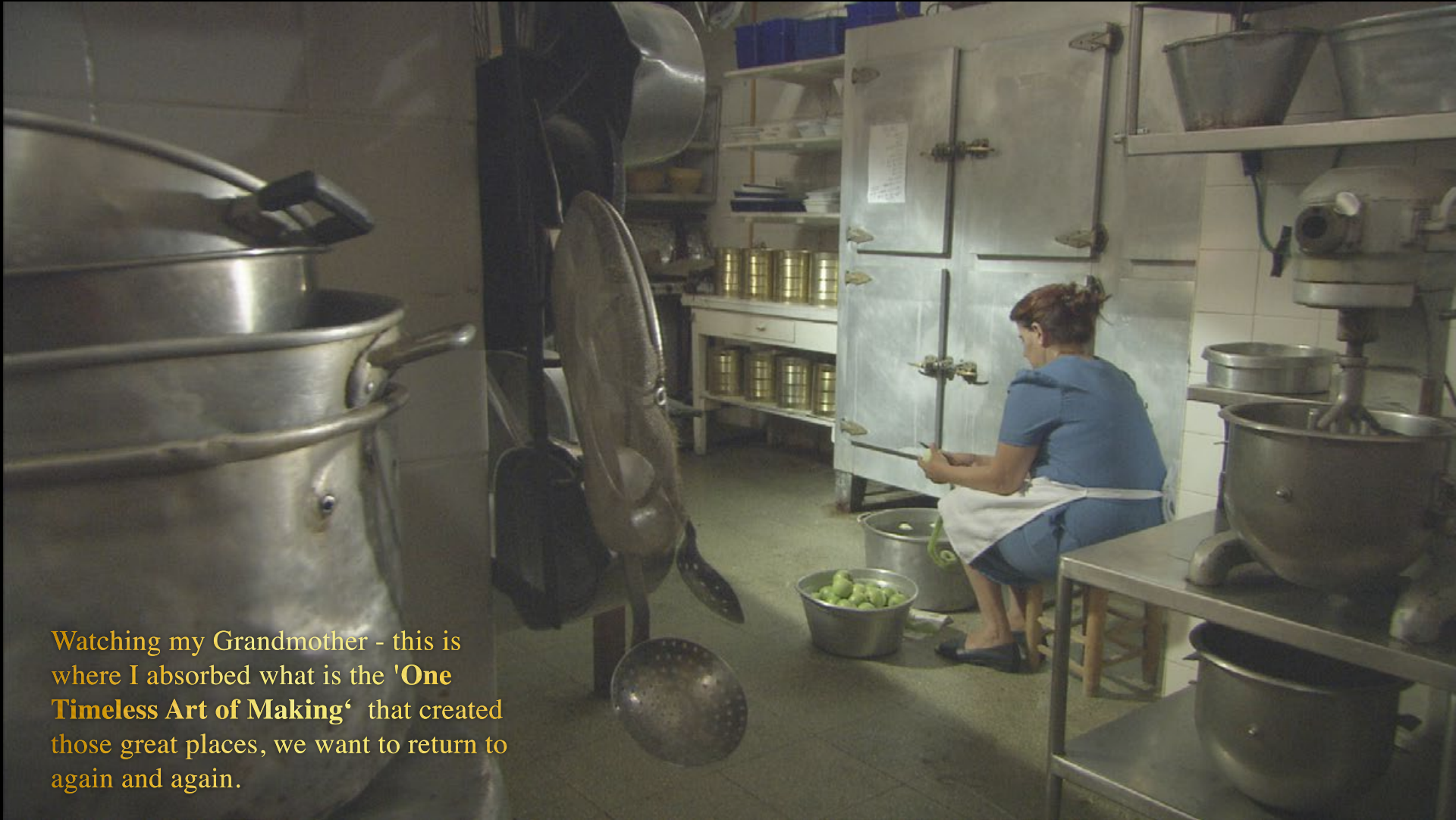
Among his Award-winning films: '**BEAUFORT**' Silver Bear Winner in Berlin Film Festival; Academy Award Film Nominee (**shortlist**) for Best Foreign Language Film; '**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO GOD**'; '**HAIU LEILOT**' and many more.



This is where I felt how a place endowed with soul, in which we feel '**at home**', should 'feel', and what is that '**One Timeless Art of Making**' adopted by my Grandmother when

whitewashing the Alley in light blue. A way which is thousands of years old that created those great cities, villages, tents and temples, we want to return to again and again!





Watching my Grandmother - this is where I absorbed what is the '**One Timeless Art of Making**' that created those great places, we want to return to again and again.



## The building is born not created

A building must grow organically out of the visible and hidden 'voices' of the place on which it is built.

The Dalai Lama writes in his book: "When searching for the meaning of truth, we search for reality itself.

And in order to be in touch with the way things actually exist, we need to choose a process of awareness and alertness, **releasing us from any factor interfering the clarity of the mind.**"



# Director's Notes

I am a practicing architect; senior lecturer; researcher and published author.

My multidisciplinary work focuses on both practice and theory, and is tightly connected to the Holistic / Phenomenological school of thought.

A worldview which stands in recent years at the forefront of the scientific discourse as a whole in disciplines like: cosmology, neurobiology, psychology, particle physics, brain sciences, recent theories of complexity, and is in convergence with the fundamentals of Buddhist philosophy.

**Two worlds to which my work is associated with, apparently underlying the essence of my film.**

The film of which I wrote its essay; directed; edited and did the production design can be seen as **the third of a trilogy** following the many buildings I designed and the published books I wrote and illustrated.

## Milestones

My curiosity about what lies at the foundation of that organic architecture endowed with beauty and soul which has the enormous power to excite us, the one that makes us

feel '**at home**' and want to return to again and again, and my willing to understand the process – the '**art of making**' by which these buildings / artifacts / paintings were created, started at my first year student of architecture.

A search which continued through my studies at the A.A school of Architecture (London) ; my post graduate studies in architecture and Buddhist philosophy at U.C. Berkeley ; my research work with Architect Prof. Christopher Alexander at the 'Center for Environmental Structure' (Berkeley) and finally my acquaintance with Buddhism.

After inspired by **Scientists and Buddhist scholars** that guided my ongoing work , and while reaching the summit of my journey-the temple of the Dalai Lama at the time I also started to think about making my film, I realized, that in this journey I was, and the answers to these questions I was searching for I already got. There, in my childhood, at the **Galilee 'Kabbala' holy city of Tsefat** - birth place and hometown of my family since early 19th century, where my grandmother Rivka founded her hotel, in a small stone building around a patio at the end of an alley in the old city - my own temple. In that patio was her home together with the guests until the day she died.



## Credits

**Written and directed by:** Nili Portugali

**Cinematography:** Boaz Yehonatan Yaakov;  
Ofer Inov

**Editing:** Nili Portugali

**Online Editor:** Yoav Raz

**Sound Design & Mix:** Itzik Cohen

**Music Selection & Editing:** Nili Portugali

**Production Designer:** Nili Portugali

**Artistic Advisor:** Sigal Weiss

**Produced by:** Nili Portugali

## Technical details

Production: Israel

Length: 72 minutes

Format: DCP

Aspect ratio: 1:1, 85

Color

Sound: Surround 5.1

Language: Hebrew

English Subtitles

**Contact details:** Nili Portugali • [nili\\_p@netvision.net.il](mailto:nili_p@netvision.net.il) • + 972-3-6415615