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A FILM BY CHRISTINE CYNN
CO-DIRECTOR OF THE ACADEMY AWARD®-NOMINATED FILM
THE ACT OF KILLING

SHOOTING OURSELVES

A FILM BY CHRISTINE CYNN PRODUCED BY KRISTIAN MOSVOLD EDITOR ANETTE RIND-ANDERSEN MTK
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MARTIN HAMPTON COSTUME DESIGNER SAM BARTON AND WILL WORSLEY MUSIC BY FRANK BOLEY
CO-PRODUCERS ROBERT FRECHET CHRISTINE CYNN KATJA DUREGGER INTERPRETER PRODUCERS TISHNA MALEA ROBERT FRECHET PRODUCED BY JVA FILM IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH CRASH ICE-D
WITH THE SUPPORT OF NORSK FILMSTUDIETT NORLANSK FILMSENTER SERNORSK FILMSENTER FINTT ORG SPAREBANK 1 BERTHA FUNDATION MTK

SYA crash MTK Nordisk Filmcenter Sernorsk Filmcenter FINTT ORG SPAREBANK 1 BERTHA FUNDATION MTK

SHOOTING OURSELVES

(2016)

A new film from Christine Cynn,
co-director of the Academy Award® nominated film,
'The Act of Killing'

Visit the official website for more information about the film, and for additional content
and videos about the protagonists:

shootingourselves.org

facebook.com/ShootingOurselves

twitter.com/wearethegun

Watch the trailer: **vimeo.com/166637141**

Link to downloadable film poster: <https://goo.gl/7G4cPd>



A film by **Christine Cynn**

Producer **Kristian Mosvold** Editor **Anette Ruud Andersen NFK**

Director of Photography **Martin Hampton** Composers **Sam Britton** and **Will Worsley**

Sound Designer **Frank Böhle** Co-producers **Robert Freiart, Christine Cynn,** and **Katja**

Düregger Outreach Producers **Tishna Molla** and **Robert Freiart**

Produced by **Substans Film** in co-production with **Crash** and **Ice-9**

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Synopsis

13 lives affected by the arms trade converge in a warehouse in Berlin. From around the world, they have come to dramatise and record their personal stories for 'Situation Rooms', a show by Berlin-based theatre legends, Rimini Protokoll.

Director, Christine Cynn, continues the exploration of performance and violence begun in 'The Act of Killing' (which she co-directed), juxtaposing dramatic re-enactments with unscripted moments of private reflection and backstage conversation between protagonists, from heated exchanges on "collateral damage" to banter about diplomatic picnics at Osama Bin Laden's abandoned compound.

Each one acts out their story, filming from their own perspective with a handheld device, creating an uncanny environment where everyone is filming all the time. The set is both real and surreal, a maze of factories, battlefields, and boardrooms, where each room simulates a real place in the life of each protagonist. Step through one door and you're in a street demonstration in Homs, Syria. The next door leads you to a cubicle in San Diego where a drone operator drops bombs on villagers in Waziristan, Pakistan. Go past the Russian engineer in the Iranian nuclear lab and turn left to witness a nine-year old boy in a classroom in Democratic Republic of Congo, being kidnapped to train as a child soldier.

SHOOTING OURSELVES captures the idiosyncratic atmosphere behind the scenes of this futuristic production, where total strangers from across the globe—and the political spectrum—submit themselves to a theatrical world order where all perspectives are equal. Witness the creation of an oddly warm and dysfunctional family bound by weapons and warfare.

Topic Summary

The 2014 Global Peace Index Report's main finding is that since 2008, the world has become increasingly more violent, reversing a 63-year trend for increased peace and stability since 1945. They also report that 500 million people live in countries at risk of instability and conflict, and that the global economic impact of violence in the last year was \$9.8 trillion USD. For all our evolutionary and technological progress, human beings cannot figure out how to stop killing each other. The same clever and industrious nature that created sewage systems, hybrid cars and fantastic smartphones goes into making anti-aircraft guns, tanks, and cluster bombs. From some vantage points there is no meaningful difference between these commodities.

In SHOOTING OURSELVES we hear stories from many conflicts, past and current. We watch protagonists compare their experiences, and question the costs and benefits of armed conflict. Underneath, however, each person is respected and their common humanity allows them to relate to one another.

Ultimately, the film poses a question regarding how we relate to people far away from ourselves, people with whom we are economically and politically entangled, but whose

emotional lives remain anonymous, or whom we 'see' through the highly distorting filter of fear. Could it be that our collective failure to resolve conflict without resorting to terror is in part due to a failure of imagination? Or put in another way, could new ways of imagining ourselves open up new solutions to one of our oldest and ugliest faults?

As a film director, Christine Cynn worked for nearly 20 years to document the human imagination, particularly in the context of extreme political violence, such as the 1965 Indonesian genocide. In 'The Act of Killing' she used fiction filmmaking as a tool for understanding how mass murderers imagined themselves and documented how 'playing yourself' can be transformative. When she met one of the directors of 'Situation Rooms' and they invited her to the set, she realized that the project resonated with the concept behind 'The Act of Killing.' Christine was also intrigued by the differences, in particular the dynamic between the protagonists (who came as strangers with vastly different investments in the arms trade), and also by the intimate relationship created with audience members who would have to play the roles of the protagonists. She saw 'Situation Rooms' as a world-within-a-world, offering an opportunity to see the arms trade from both inside (through individual stories) and outside (through reflection on the stories as a collection).

SHOOTING OURSELVES wants to challenge viewers not only to imagine what it might be like to be a child soldier or an arms dealer, but consider what the world might be like if every manager of a defense firm had a chance to get acquainted with a child soldier and sit at the same table as equals. If we can see the world like a mechanical theatre where one can play any and all roles, perhaps we can also evolve away from being 'ghosts in a machine' where one family's bread is another family's catastrophe.

The Filmmaker

Christine Cynn, Director

Film director Christine Cynn has worked for 20 years to document the human imagination, particularly in the context of extreme political violence, such as the 1965 Indonesian genocide. Cynn co-directed 'The Act of Killing', which used fiction filmmaking as a tool for understanding how mass murderers imagined themselves and documented how 'playing yourself' can be transformative. Building on the blend of observation and dramatisation developed in 'The Act of Killing', Cynn now draws a wider frame around the fractured realities and real-life performances that constitute a global war machine.

From the Director, Christine Cynn: "There are times when one chooses to make a film. Other times, the film chooses you. A chance meeting leads to an impulse and, camera in hand, I find myself caught inside a superphenomenal vortex. So it happened with 'Shooting Ourselves.' After immersing myself for years in the performative politics of mass-murder in one small region of Indonesia for 'The Act of Killing', I knew how rare it is for so many people from so many conflicts to come together to re-enact parts of their lives.

Gathered by Berlin theatre legends Rimini Protokoll, the protagonists of 'Situation Rooms' were strangers in a strange place. Never met before. Unlikely to meet again. 'Situation Rooms' was a new type of time capsule and the protagonists arrived to deposit little pieces of their lives in each room. Kinshasa here. Israel here. Waziristan. Zurich. Kashmir. Homs. Worlds within a world, folded into a two-storey building. Our camera was one amongst a swarm of mechanical eyes, each recording from a singular perspective. Everyone is filming everything. The iPad shots are shaky and imperfect artefacts of humans in motion. Paths cross. I shoot you. You shoot me.

Does Situation Rooms propose a new form of democratic vision combining theatre and technology? Riding the U-bahn after late nights on the set, little screens glow in every hand, just like inside the 'Situation Rooms' set. I feel a wave of ambivalence. Can we see ourselves better through these small screens? Can self-documentation in this form lead us to self-realisation? Can magic mirrors which capture and transmit our faces, help us to see what we prefer not to see, the banal visage of institutionalised self-destruction? Do we risk adding to the fog of war?



My fascination with performance and ambivalence about the magic of technology, made me want to see and document the unscripted interactions and moments on set, to experience what it was like to really be in the room with each protagonist. Most of all, I wanted to be in the room when they all came together as a surreal family that would be fixed in those iPad films and in that space forever. Like any real family, togetherness means friction, awkward silence. Then something real, something without name, might pass between people and begin to grow. The cliché of the phrase "our common humanity" does not negate the simple and powerful feeling of sitting in a room with other humans, the physical reality of sharing space, exchanging glances in mutual recognition of the emergence of "we," followed by "can," "feel," "become". A joke, the weather, milk for your coffee—these soften the edge of our anxieties, ease our perpetual loneliness.

‘Shooting Ourselves’ does not express my attitude about the arms trade and armed warfare, so much as my desire to know the people who make war and who are, in turn, made by war. In making the film, my experience is one of near-hope. The film proposes a potential for hope in our fragility and curiosity, in our capacity to sideline our fears, even while reflecting upon our darkest acts and most foolish conceits.”

The Protagonists

Narendra Divekar - THE HELICOPTER PILOT

Narendra Divekar, India, Lieutenant Colonel, served as a helicopter pilot in the Indian Army with over 20 years of military service and has participated in military operations against Pakistan in the Siachen Glacier, the world’s highest battlefield as well as in the Kashmir Valley. He was awarded the Sena Medal as well as two Chief of the Army Staff Commendations, all for flying duties in active military operations.

Nathan Fain - THE COMPUTER HACKER

Nathan Fain, born in the USA, has lived in Jerusalem, Israel, where he was part of a team of hackers working for major bank companies to test their systems. He currently lives in Berlin, Germany.

Ulrich Pfaff - THE PEACE ACTIVIST

Ulrich Pfaff, Germany, holds a degree in theology and currently works as a peace worker in Oberndorf, a center of arms production. Before his return to Germany, he served as a development aid worker for Brot für die Welt in various African countries .

Shahzad Akbar - THE LAWYER

Shahzad Akbar, Pakistan, qualified as a barrister in England and enrolled as a practicing attorney with the Punjab Bar Council. He is a leading human rights lawyer in Islamabad. He represents the growing number of victims’ families in Waziristan affected by drone strikes in Pakistani courts. Shahzad has been teaching human rights law at the Islamic International University in Islamabad intermittently since 2004.

Emmanuel Thaunay - THE SECURITY SYSTEMS DEVELOPER

Emmanuel Thaunay, France, grew up in Corsica as the son of a military boot maker. A member of the Foreign Legion, he participated in several special missions abroad, including Lebanon and Algeria. For several years now he has been building up his own company, regularly visiting weapons fairs around the world. Alongside bullet-proof vests, metal-detecting gloves for explosives detection, and armoured vehicles, he also offers unmanned vehicles that can be operated by remote control using cameras and, if desired, ammunition.

Maurizio Gambarini - THE WAR PHOTOGRAPHER

Maurizio Gambarini, Germany. After completing basic training with Fernspähkompanie 100 (Intelligence and Reconnaissance) in Braunschweig, Maurizio Gambarini worked as a photographer for several publications, including Bild, Kölner Express, and Focus. Since 2003, he has worked as a dpa photographer primarily in war and crisis zones: Congo, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Angola, and Mali. Since 2012 he has published ca. 8,000 photographs and taken around 80,000.

Yaoundé Mulamba Nkita - THE CHILD SOLDIER

Yaounde Mulamba Nkita, Congo, was born the son of a soldier in Mobuto's army in the Congo. At age 9, his school was attacked by Kabila's rebel army and Yaounde was drafted as a child soldier. During the war from 1998 to 2003, he fought in the jungles of the country and participated in the taking of Kinshasa. After the victory of Laurent Kabila, he was promoted to the presidential guard, from which he was demobilized at age 14. He then began working at Espace Massolo, an art center in Kinshasa. He has lived in Paris for ten years now, working on several projects across Europe.

Wolfgang Ohlert - THE CHIEF PROTOCOL OFFICER

Wolfgang Ohlert, Germany, Oberstleutnant. During his active years as a professional soldier he was responsible for organizing the Munich Security Conference, formerly known as the Wehrkundetagung. Serving in the Balkan region in 1999, he experienced the concrete impact of international arms trading on site. As a protocol officer, he organized programs for high-ranking guests of the Defense Ministry. Tours of the arms industry in Germany were often part of the program.

Volker Herzog - THE SURGEON

Volker Herzog, Germany. After training as a surgeon, Volker Herzog worked for 22 years as a surgeon at Evangelisches Hubertus Krankenhaus, Berlin-Zehlendorf. His first project as a war zone surgeon for Doctors Without Borders brought him to Sri Lanka in 1998; additional missions brought him to Ethiopia, Sudan, and Liberia, later followed by the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone.

Abu Abdu al Homssi - THE SYRIAN REFUGEE

Abu Abdu al Homssi, Syria, was born in 1974 in the Bab Drid neighborhood in Homs and lived there his whole life until 2012 when he was forced to flee and leave his family behind. He appears under a pseudonym.

Irina Panibratowa - THE CAFETERIA MANAGER

Irina Panibratowa, Russia, is a nutritional engineer. She worked from 1981-1992 in 15 underground cafeterias at the weapons factory Kirova near the city of Perm. In 1992, she moved to Germany, where she now works at Autostadt Wolfsburg in visitor services.

Marcel Gloor - THE FACTORY WORKER

Marcel Gloor, Switzerland , born in Zug, in 1948, trained as a toolmaker from 1965 to 1969. After working as a toolmaker in the civilian realm until 1975, Gloor began training as a driller in the weaponry department, where he became responsible for tool making and training. Later he began making weapon parts and components. In 2013, Marcel Gloor went into early retirement .

Amir Yagel - THE ISRAELI SOLDIER

Amir Yagel, Israel, born in 1988 in Kibutz Geshor. Served in the Israel Defense Forces IDF between 2007-2010. Completed his service in the rank of a sergeant.

Stills from the Film



Former child soldier Yaoundé Nkita prepares with the group to re-enact his experiences being abducted from his classroom in Democratic Republic of Congo.



A scene from the set of 'Situation Rooms' is overlaid on a burning cityscape.



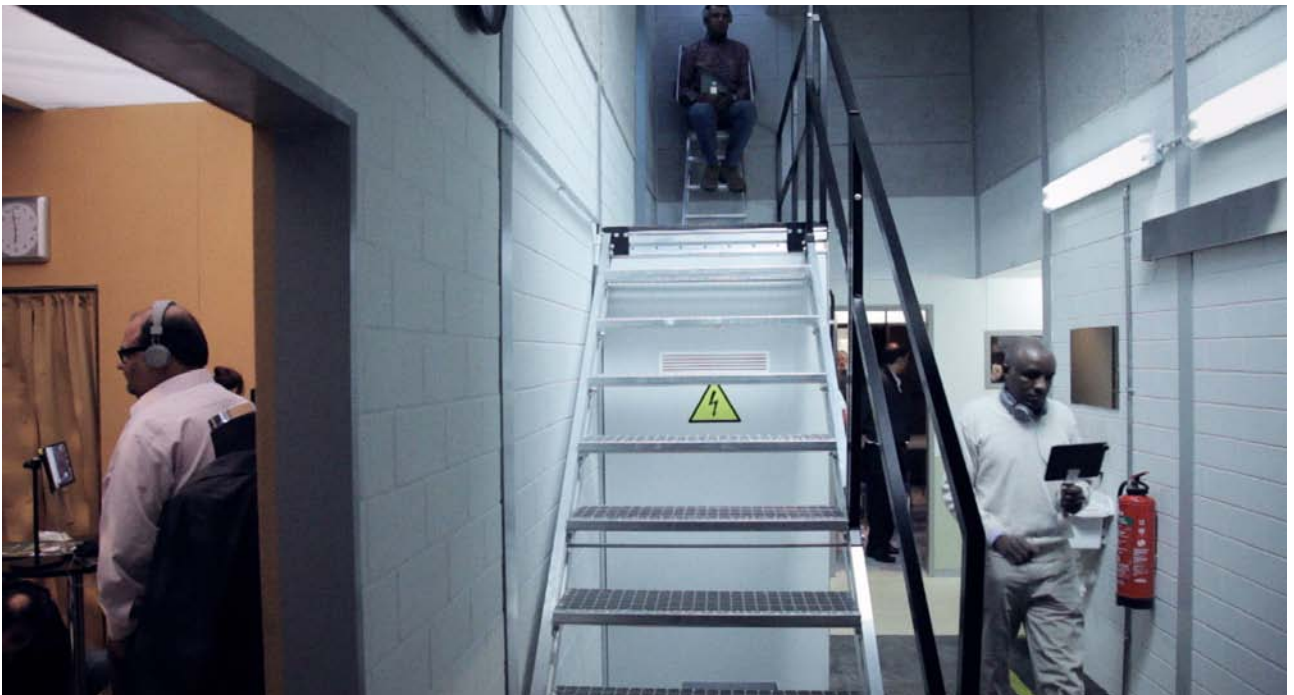
Narendra Divekar speaks with Shahzad Akbar at a “cast” party after the interactive play has concluded.



An audience member of ‘Situation Rooms’ observes another playing the role of a surgeon for Doctors Without Borders, Dr. Volker Herzog, as he triages a patient.



Indian Army Gunship Pilot, Narendra Divekar, re-enacts a typical mission on the set of 'Situation Rooms.'



Cast and crew members wander the labyrinthine halls of the "theatre" during the production of 'Situation Rooms.'

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Full Credits

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Jan van Aken

Narendra Divekar

Nathan Fain

Maurizio Gambarini

Marcel Gloor

Barbara Happe

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ADDITIONAL MUSIC
'Situation Rooms'
by Daniel Wetzel
'Y Tu Mamá También'
composed by Fred Thomas
performed by Fly Agaric
Accordion tune
by Gerlinde Feicht
'Too Much Information'
by Dele Sosimi
'Neon King Kong'
by Icarus
'Music for Rooms'
by Franu Bollini
'I Get Along Without You Very Well
(Except Sometimes)'
Written by Hoagy Carmichael
Performed by Chet Baker
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Fabrizio Bensch
Yaoundé Mulamba Nkita
Serge Amisi
Amir Yagel
Narendra Divekar
Abu Abdu Al Homssi
Gertrud Zach
Armend Nimani

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