

The war against culture and the battle to save it

# THE DESTRUCTION OF MEMORY

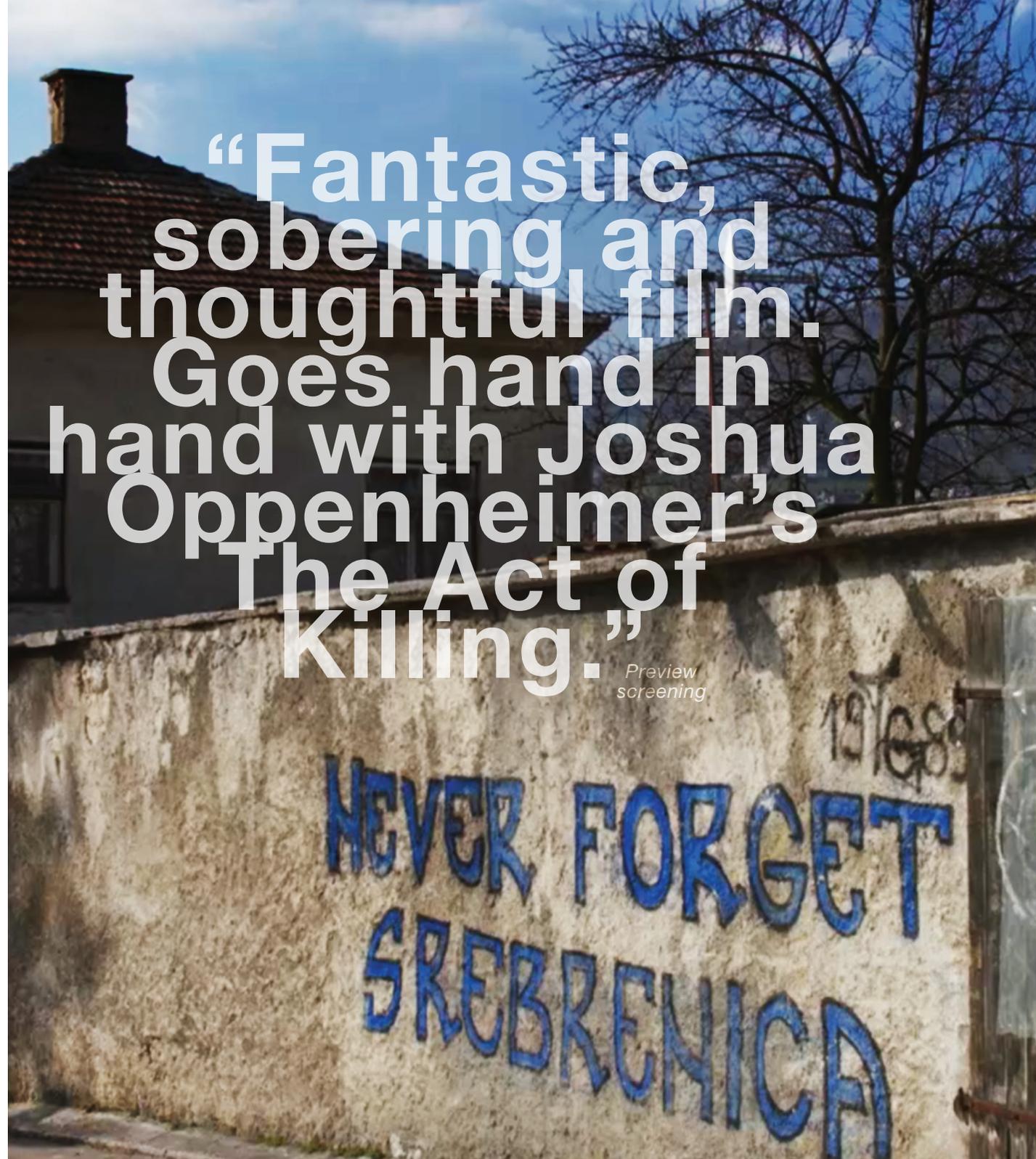


A documentary film by Vast Productions USA



“This film should become not just an ‘eye opener’ but a vehicle for change all around the world.”

Tsipi Ben-Haim,  
CEO, CityArts NYC



“Fantastic,  
sobering and  
thoughtful film.  
Goes hand in  
hand with Joshua  
Oppenheimer’s  
‘The Act of  
Killing.’”

*Preview  
screening*

Vast Productions USA presents

## **THE DESTRUCTION OF MEMORY**

Written, Directed and Produced by Tim Slade

Based on the book 'The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War' by Robert Bevan

Cinematographer Derek Wieseahn Editor Lindi Harrison ASE Music by Ezio Bosso

Produced with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, the Rothschild Foundation UK,

Global Heritage Fund and World Monuments Fund

Produced in association with TVO

Developed with assistance from Screen Australia and Screen NSW

A sponsored production of IFP The Independent Filmmaker Project

'The Destruction of Memory' is a sponsored project of IFP

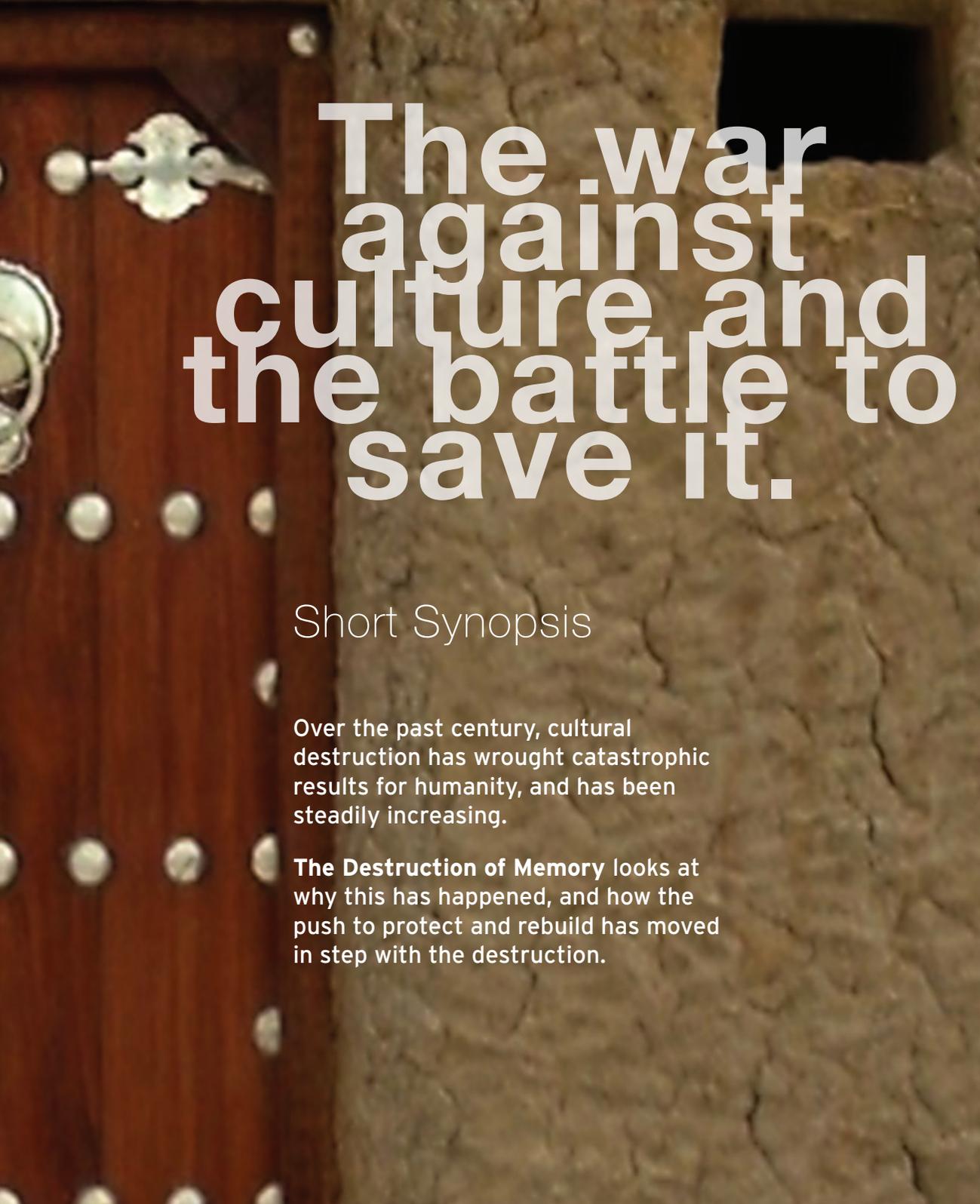
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FILMSALES



1 x 85 mins and 1 x 58 mins



# The war against culture and the battle to save it.

## Short Synopsis

Over the past century, cultural destruction has wrought catastrophic results for humanity, and has been steadily increasing.

**The Destruction of Memory** looks at why this has happened, and how the push to protect and rebuild has moved in step with the destruction.



Interviewees for THE DESTRUCTION OF MEMORY include the Director-General of UNESCO, representatives of the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, as well as diverse and distinguished international experts.

# Long Synopsis

Over the past century, cultural destruction - the purposeful destruction of buildings, books and art in order to erase collective memory and identity - has wrought catastrophic results on every continent. But the war is by no means over. If anything, this kind of cultural warfare has been steadily increasing. Based on the acclaimed book by Robert

Bevan, **The Destruction of Memory** looks at how and why this has happened, and how the push to protect, salvage and rebuild has moved in step with the destruction.

People willingly risk their lives to protect not just other human beings, but their cultural identity - to safeguard the record of who they are.

People who never thought of themselves as heroes have fought back, and it's these people and their resistance that gives heart to the story. Heroic acts are needed more than ever. In Syria and Iraq, the 'cradle of civilization', millennia of culture have been destroyed. Cities like Aleppo have been 'reduced to apocalyptic landscapes'.

The tide is turning. These stories are being reported. For the first time, perpetrators are being brought to justice. Awareness is growing. The film proposes hope. We tell stories not just of protection, but of rebuilding. Increasingly, the power of modern technology is being harnessed to document, protect, and to play a role in the rebuilding process.





Courtesy of the ICJ. All rights reserved.



**Dr. Günter Blobel**  
Nobel Laureate



## Director's Statement

**The Destruction of Memory** comes at a time of significant media attention, as well as policy and legislative movements around the issue of cultural destruction.

Acts of destruction in Syria, Iraq and Mali have been front page news. Key judgments will be handed down in 2016 at the ICTY re the Bosnian War on the destruction of cultural heritage. The United Nations Security Council recently unanimously passed Resolution 2199, curbing the issue of looting and heritage destruction as it relates to Syria and Iraq. The International Criminal Court may commence a trial in 2016 for the destruction of religious buildings and

manuscripts in Mali. This would be the first time the ICC's Rome Statute's provision to protect buildings dedicated to religion would be exercised.

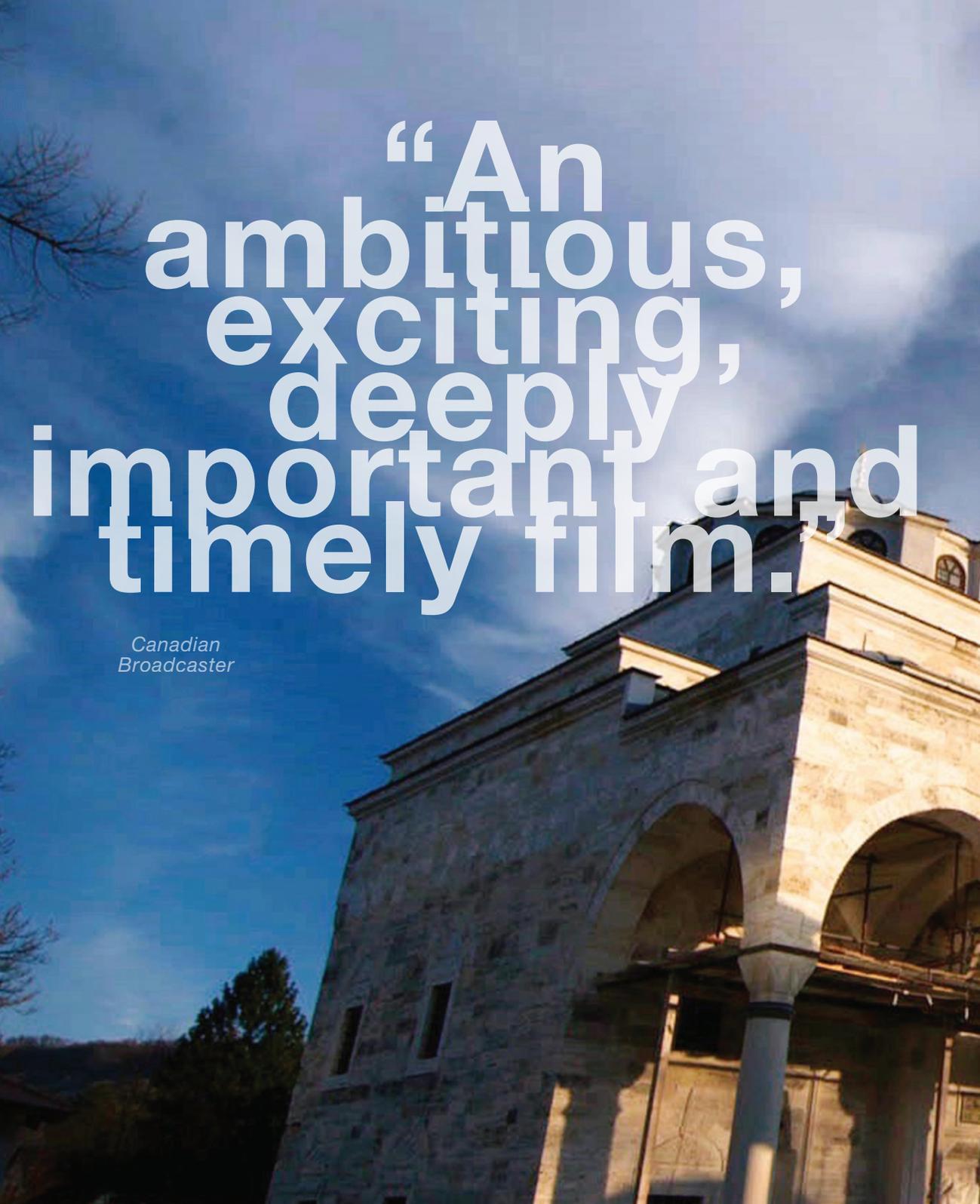
Importantly, this film tells the whole story of the issue in modern times. This is necessary because unless we look at this process as a whole, and look at it deeply and honestly, it will continue.

The primary purposes of the film are to raise awareness, to encourage and sustain conversations and considerations that may help to curb these acts, and to heal wounds between religious, ethnic and national groups who have experienced these issues.

The film tells human stories - of courage and resistance. It celebrates perseverance against the odds. It takes a firm position - things must change. Greater protections need to be implemented. Its purpose is to bring recognition, to encourage us all to watch for signs of trouble.

Ultimately, like the Mostar Bridge, whose story we tell, the film's aim is to bridge stronger connections between the people, to appeal for tolerance, and to bring understanding and recognition of this recurring phenomenon.

**Tim Slade**



“An  
ambitious,  
exciting,  
deeply  
important and  
timely film.”

Canadian  
Broadcaster

## Biographies

TIM SLADE

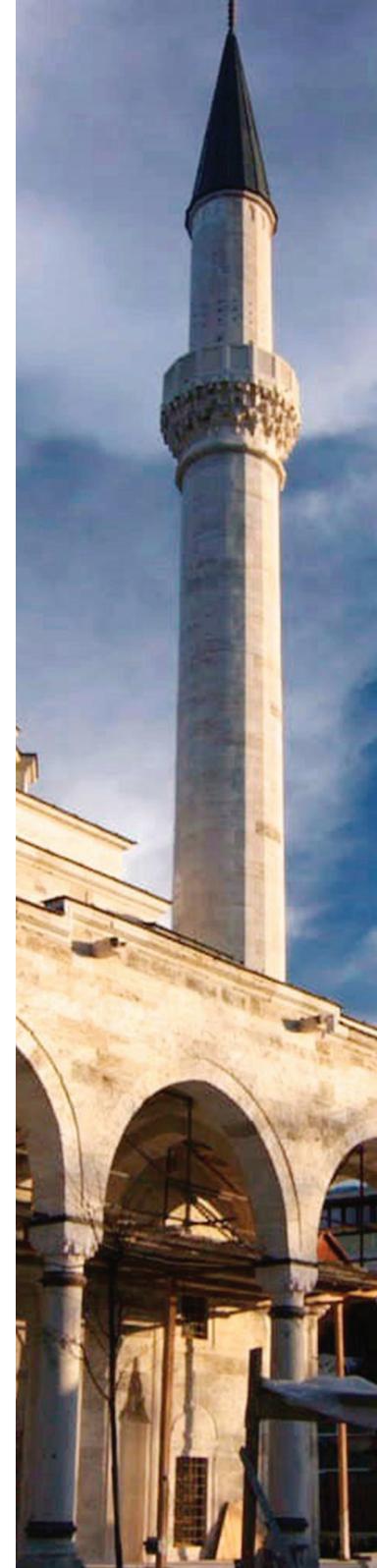
Writer, Director, Producer

Tim Slade's films have screened across Europe, the UK, the USA, Canada, South America, Australia and Asia.

He has directed television and feature documentaries, such as '4', which was released theatrically and won a Gold HUGO, as well as receiving nominations at Banff, an International Documentary Association Award and two AFI (Australian Film Institute) awards.

He has also directed drama, including the shorts *Every Other Weekend* and *I Was Robert Mitchum*.

His films have screened at more than sixty international film festivals.



# Biographies

DEREK WIESEHAHN  
Cinematographer



Derek is a New York based director of photography with over 20 years of experience in film and television.

Recent documentary DP credits have included *God Loves Uganda* (Sundance 2013, Academy Awards shortlist), the 2010 Academy Award winning documentary short film *Music By Prudence* and the 2013 Academy Award nominated and Sundance selected documentary feature *How To Survive A Plague*, as well as a camera operating credit on

the 2011 Sundance winner and Academy Award nominated documentary, *Restrepo*.

LINDI HARRISON ASE  
Editor



Lindi is an acclaimed editor of award-winning documentary, drama and arts programs. She has edited a range of feature length documentaries including: '4', with Tim Slade; *The Snowman*, which was selected for Competition at IDFA & nominated for an Australian Film Institute Awards for Best Feature Length Documentary; *On Borrowed Time*, and

*Virtuosi*, which has screened internationally.

The feature documentary *I Am A Girl* was listed in *The Guardian's* '10 Best Australian Films of 2013' and was nominated for several AACTA (Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts) Awards including Best Editing in a Documentary. The documentary *Salt* about Australian photographer Murray Fredericks' time on Lake Eyre received 16 national and international awards and screened on PBS POV.

SOPHIE OKONEDO  
Narrator

The narrator for **The Destruction of Memory** is the extraordinary British actress Sophie Okonedo.

Sophie has been nominated for Oscar™, BAFTA and Golden

Globe awards, won the Tony for Best Featured Actress in 2014 for her performance in *A Raisin in the Sun*, and returns to Broadway in early 2016 to star in *The Crucible*, opposite Ben Whishaw and Saoirse Ronan. She will also be seen this year in Season Two of *The Hollow Crown*, opposite Benedict Cumberbatch, as well as in Peter Moffat's political thriller *Undercover* for the BBC.

It was a great honor to work with Sophie, whose voice brings such a profound level of passion and conviction to the important message of the film.



# Biographies

EZIO BOSSO

Composer



Italian born, London based composer, conductor and double bassist Ezio Bosso was born in Turin. He made his professional debut aged 16, and performed as a soloist and conductor with such orchestras as the Vienna Chamber Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He went on to study composition and conducting at the Vienna Academy, and later conducted at venues including Carnegie Hall, Palacio de las Bellas Artes, Mexico City, and Teatro Regio di Torino.

He composed his first music for film in 1989 and has since worked extensively in cinema, credits including *Un amore* and *Io non ho paura*, and in theatre with directors including James Thiérrée. In dance, he regularly composes for Rafael Bonachela and for companies including Scottish Dance Theatre, Sydney Dance Company, San Francisco Ballet, and Harlem Ballet.

Bosso's compositions include four operas, symphonies, concertos and various quartets, piano trios and sonatas.

ROBERT BEVAN

Author of source book

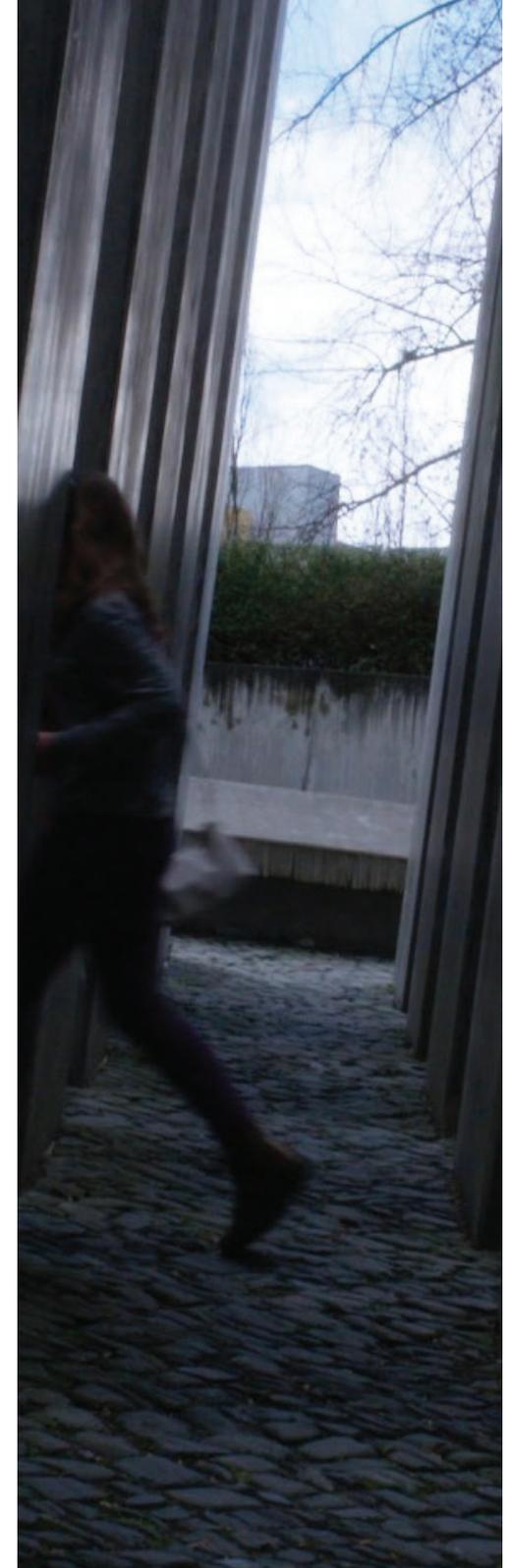
Robert is the author of *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (2006), on which the film is based.

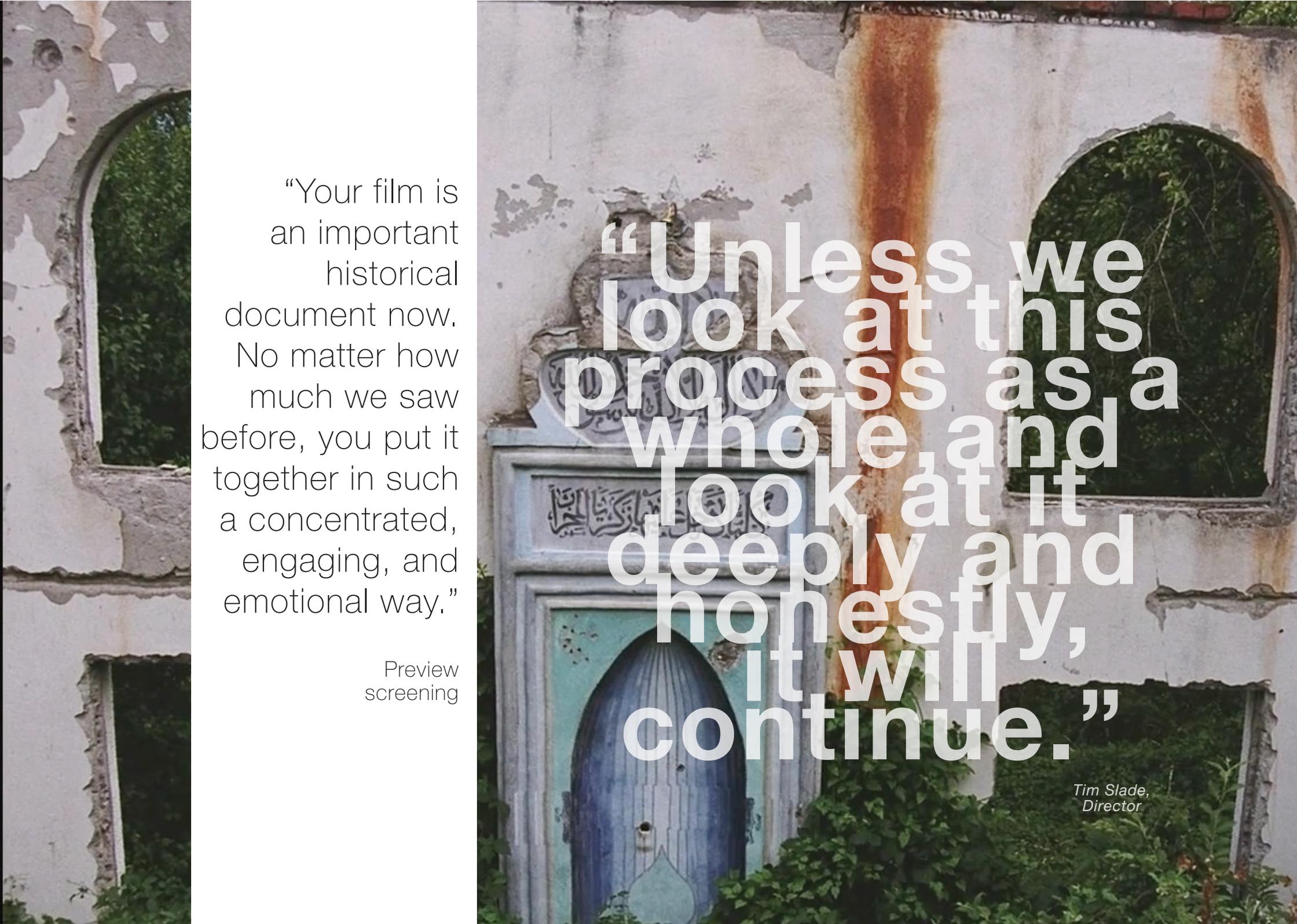
He is a member of the International Council on

Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) that advises UNESCO on world heritage, and has degrees in architecture, planning and urban design.

Robert is the architecture critic for the *London Evening Standard*. He has previously been editor of *Building Design* and the architecture critic for two other daily newspapers, *The Australian* and the *Australian Financial Review*. He has written for design, art and travel magazines around the world, including *Vogue Living*, where he was deputy editor.

Robert has just issued a new edition of *The Destruction of Memory*, released in January 2016 by Reaktion Books.





“Your film is an important historical document now. No matter how much we saw before, you put it together in such a concentrated, engaging, and emotional way.”

Preview screening

“Unless we look at this process as a whole, and look at it deeply and honestly, it will continue.”

*Tim Slade,  
Director*

## Director Filmography

2016 The Destruction of Memory  
Documentary.  
85 and 58 minutes

2009 Blank Canvas  
Television Documentary.  
52 minutes

2008 Every Other Weekend  
Drama. 11 minutes  
FESTIVALS: Cork Film Festival, Montreal World Film Festival, Brisbane International Film Festival, Festival Mix, Brazil, Melbourne Queer Film Festival, St Kilda Film Festival, NewFest New York City, Outfest LA., Finalist, Iris Prize, Cardiff, Wales.

2007 '4'  
Documentary 88 minutes and 52 minutes.  
FESTIVALS: Official Selection Sydney International Film Festival, Official Selection

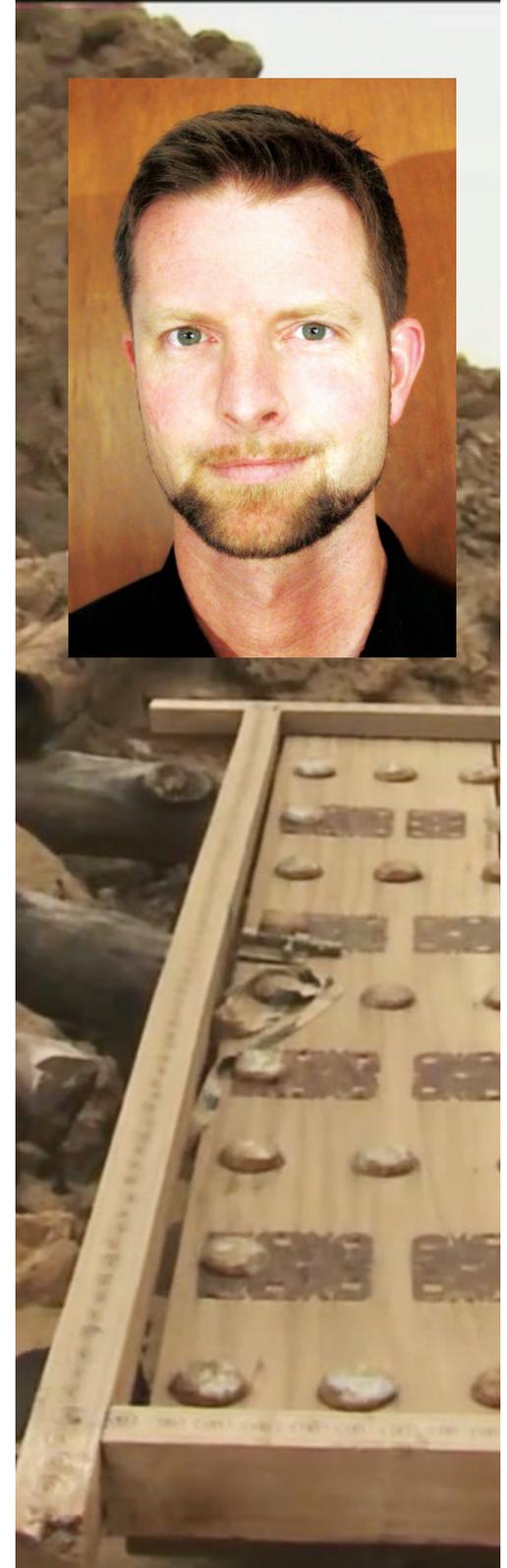
Melbourne International Film Festival, Best Documentary nomination, Australian Film Institute Awards, Best Cinematography nomination, Australian Film Institute Awards, Best Documentary nomination, IF Awards, Best Music Documentary (Alan Ett Award) nomination IDA Awards, LA, Kuala Lumpur International Film Festival, Guangzhou International Documentary Film Festival, China, London Australian Film Festival at the Barbican, Adelaide Festival, World Cinema Showcase 2008, New Zealand, INPUT 2008, Johannesburg.  
AWARDS: 2007 Pieter De Vries Australian Cinematography Society (NSW) - GOLD, 2007 Best Documentary, Kuala Lumpur International Film Festival, 2007 Special Mention, Guangzhou International Documentary Film Festival, China, 2008 Chicago International Film Festival - Gold Plaque Hugo Television

Awards, 2008 Nomination for Best Arts Documentary, BANFF World Television Festival.

2003 Musical Renegades  
Television Documentary.  
52 minutes

2000 'Sydney 2000'  
Television Documentary.  
26 minutes

1999 I was Robert Mitchum  
Drama 9 minutes.  
FESTIVALS: Olympic Arts Festival, Sydney, 2000, Films Down Under, Berlin, 2000, Hawaii, Brisbane, Sydney International Film Festivals, 1999, Finalist, Short drama, Flickerfest, 2000, St Kilda Film Festival, 2000, Clermont Ferrand Short Film Market, 1999, Theatrical release, Melbourne, 1999, Finalist, Short drama, Atom Awards, 2000.



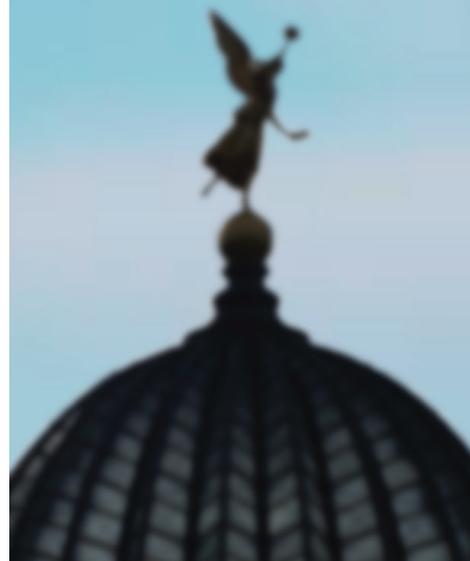
## Production Notes

The Destruction of Memory is the result of an almost six year journey. Initial interviews were conducted in mid 2010 in New York City, with development support from Australian government agencies Screen Australia and Screen NSW.

The project moved forward in gradual increments until mid 2012, when global events greatly impacted the interest in a film about this often neglected subject.

Director Tim Slade says: "Robert Bevan had published his book in 2006, partly inspired by the Balkan Wars and their fallout, which brought the issue into sharp contrast for him, and for me on reading his book. Cultural destruction is always occurring, somewhere in the world, but the period from publication until 2012 was a less pronounced period,

The  
need to  
tell the  
story  
through  
this film  
became  
much  
more  
urgent.



reflected in less public and media attention. When destruction was perpetrated in Mali in 2012, and the devastating events in Iraq and Syria began playing out, the world listened and reacted. The need to tell the story through this film became much more urgent."

Principal photography took place in the US, Canada, Bosnia, France, Germany, Mali and Iraq, with funding support coming from a range of sources - Canadian broadcaster TVO, Swedish broadcaster SVT, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Rothschild Foundation UK, World Monuments Fund and Global Heritage Fund, as well as crowdsourcing and generosity of individual donors.

"The way we financed the film reflects the 'it takes a village' aspect that has happily

marked the whole process. The interest, engagement and generosity of people in every place we filmed was extraordinary", says Slade. "People really feel for the issue, and for its resolution."

Many of the interviewees are experts, but who have a personal engagement with the issue. Some were refugees. The connection of the issue to human rights, the fragile, crucial link between cultural identity and well being, is clear to them, through personal experience. This conviction, which comes through in their interviews, will help convey this same message to audiences.

# List of Interviewees

Interviewees featured in the film include:

**Irina Bokova**, Director-General, UNESCO

**Fatou Bensouda**, Prosecutor, International Criminal Court

**Albert Koenders**, formerly UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Mission in Mali)

**Bonnie Burnham**, President Emerita, World Monuments Fund

**Corine Wegener**, Cultural Heritage Preservation Officer, Smithsonian Institution

**Daniel Libeskind**, architect

**Andras Riedlmayer**, Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Harvard University & expert witness, International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

**Robert Bevan**, heritage architect, journalist, and author of source book 'The Destruction of Memory'

**Patty Gerstenblith**, Distinguished Research Professor of Law; Director, Center for Art, Museum & Cultural Heritage Law, DePaul University

**Amr Al-Azm**, former Director of Scientific and Conservation Laboratories at the General Department of Antiquities and Museums, Syria, now Associate Professor, Shawnee State University

**Katharyn Hanson**, University of Pennsylvania; Archaeological Site Preservation Program, Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage, Erbil, Iraq

**Salam Al-Kuntar**, formerly of General Department of Antiquities and Museums, Syria, now Visiting Scholar, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania

**Susan Wolfinbarger**, Project Director for the Geospatial Technologies and Human Rights Project, American Association for the Advancement of Science

**Elizabeth Lee**, Vice-President, CyArk

**Muhammed Hamidovic**, Institute for Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage Protection, Bosnia and Herzegovina & former dean of the Faculty of Architecture, University of Sarajevo

**Günter Blobel**, Nobel Laureate, Rockefeller University

**Dirk Moses**, Historian of genocide

**Amila Buturovic**, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities, York University, Toronto

A hand holds a lit candle in a dark setting. The candle is lit, and a sign is attached to it that reads "Peace be with you!". The background is dark, and the candle's light illuminates the hand and the sign.

# THE DESTRUCTION OF MEMORY

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