



presents

5 BROKEN CAMERAS

A FILM BY EMAD BURNAT AND GUY DAVIDI

France-Israel-Palestine / 2011 / Color and B&W / 90 mins. / Hebrew and Arabic w/English subtitles

**A Kino Lorber Release
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SYNOPSIS

When his fourth son Gibreel is born in 2005, self-taught cameraman Emad Burnat, a Palestinian villager, gets his first camera. At the same time, the people of his village begin to resist the construction of a separation barrier that will consume their farmlands.

For the next year, Burnat films this non-violent struggle, lead by two of his best friends, while simultaneously recording the growth of his son. Very soon, these events begin to affect Emad and his family. Daily arrests, violent attacks, destruction, and loss of life scare his family as the protesters are shot at and detained by police. As Emad documents these events, one camera after another is smashed – and each camera becomes a chapter in his struggle.

CREDITS

Directed by

Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi

Camera

Emad Burnat

Editing

Véronique Lagoarde – Ségot
Guy Davidi

Produced by

Christine Camdessus
Serge Gordey
Emad Burnat
Guy Davidi

Music

Le Trio Joubran
(Composers: Samir Joubran, Wissam Joubran, Adnan Joubran)

Additional Photography

Yisrael Puterman
Guy Davidi
Jonathan Massey
Alexandre Goetschmann
Shay Carmeli Pollak

Sound Editing and Mixing

Amelie Canini

Production Companies:

Guy DVD Films
Alegria Productions
Burnat Films Palestine



DIRECTORS STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

In 2005 when the demonstrations against the wall started, Emad got his first camera and started to film the happenings in the village. He also filmed his personal life and family not thinking that this would be part of any future film.

For the next years Emad's purpose wasn't to make a film. He filmed for many other reasons. First, it was a way to participate in the demonstrations. It also protected people in court when his footage was used as evidence. And it was a way to distribute information to news agencies and to the Internet.

Other filmmakers made films around the resistance in Bil'in and many of them utilized Emad's footage, as he was the only cameraman of the village. He had access that others didn't have. He was the one who could film the soldiers and the raids at night when the other cameramen left. These events were sometimes violent, and many times, he was in danger for filming.

In 2006 he was arrested and accused for throwing rocks and spent weeks in jail and under house arrest – after which, his cameras were broken. It was the peace activists and donors that helped to get Emad new cameras, so that he could continue to film and document what was happening.

Right from the start, Israeli and international peace activists helped and participated in the movement against the separation wall. Filmmaker Guy Davidi came to Bil'in in 2005 as a sympathizer and a media activist in the Indymedia group. He knew Emad as most people did, as Emad became an important figure of Bil'in's movement.

After making some short films in the village, Guy started making his first feature documentary on the politics of water. This film "Interrupted Streams" was shot in Bil'in from 2005 – 2008. It was finished in 2010 and premiered at the Jerusalem Film Festival that year.

During his work on this film, Guy stayed for several months in Bil'in. It was during this time that allowed him to develop his perspective and feel the meaning of life for the villagers under occupation. At night, soldiers invaded the village and he was the only Israeli around. So, the villagers called Guy to bring his cameras and film what was about to happen and to use the cameras to protect them from the violence. During these nights both Emad and Guy found themselves filming side by side.

Throughout this time Emad had the will to make his own film on the Bil'in's resistance. Often, he thought of making a personal film, but the events happening in the village always drew him to documenting what was going on with his people.



The Story of the 5 BROKEN CAMERAS

Emad Burnat presents his five broken cameras. They will tell his story – every camera is an episode in his life. *“If you are wounded you will always remember your wound, even after it’s healed. But what if you are injured again and again... you forget your scars. But the camera remembers and so I film to heal”.*

First Camera

In February 2005 when his fourth son Gibreel is born, Emad, a Palestinian peasant, gets his first camera and starts to film his family. At the same time, the people of Emad’s village Bil’in (west of Ramallah, a few miles from the international Green line) discover that the separation barrier route will pass through, consuming more than half of the village’s cultivated land. Moreover, the existing settlement Modi’in Ilit is planning an expansion into the village. The construction of new buildings is set to start imminently. The villagers resist this encroachment, marching every Friday after their prayer in peaceful protest. Israeli and international activists join them to show support.

Emad starts to follow this resistance, filming the demonstration with his new camera. The army’s reaction to this resistance is harsh. The soldiers release with tear gas, abuse the protesters, and even shoot rubber-coated bullets. The demonstrators try to come up every week with creative ways of drawing the attention of the Israeli and international media. They tenaciously return with new types of direct, non-violent action, like tying themselves to the fence. Two of Emad’s friends are always in the first line.

Adeeb is a tough looking guy. He is angry for losing his land; he expresses his anger in almost every demonstration before the soldiers – he likes to make a scene and be filmed.

Phil is a very different guy. He always hangs around in the village, often with the village children. They take to him because he exudes a hopefulness absent in most other adults. The army starts to arrest people. Emad’s brother Riyad, is the first to be arrested by Israeli soldiers disguised as Palestinians. After this, Emad’s first camera is shot and broken by soldiers.

Second Camera

The separation wall is built, but people decide not to give up. Emad gets another camera from his friend Yisrael, an Israeli cameraman. Emad is filming his baby boy Gibreel grow. He also films his wife Soraya. She is Palestinian, but was born in Brazil. The entire family likes to pick olives together in the autumn. Beyond just feeding the people, the land is a connection, pulling the village together. Bil’in’s struggle becomes a symbol worldwide for non-violent popular resistance.

Over the course of the demonstrations, a great bond develops between Emad, Adeeb, and Phil. The soldiers shoot Adeeb in his leg. Phil shouts at the soldiers in anger and is arrested, but released the same day

Gibreel and Phil develop a strong connection. Like other children, Gibreel finds hope in Phil that



other adults do not possess. In order to make sure the lands beyond the barrier aren't be taken, the protesters try to make their presence pervasive. There is an idea to copy one of the settlers' tactics – put trailers on the land so that it cannot be taken. Emad and his friends do this several times but the army removes them again and again. Exasperated, they build a concrete outpost, but that too is destroyed. The villagers rebuild it, and this time it remains standing. It becomes a place for the village meetings. In retaliation, the settlers burn the olive trees. The construction of settlements continues. Emad films Daba, Phil's brother, when he climbs over a crane trying to stop the work. Daba is arrested, and a settler breaks Emad's second camera.

Third Camera

Gibreel is now three years old. With a new camera, Emad takes Gibreel to see the demonstration for himself. This way, he will be able to see things through his own eyes. Gibreel watches as people he knows, including another of Emad's brothers, are arrested. The soldiers enter the village more frequently, and start taking people from their houses.

At one point, Emad films his father and mother try to block a jeep from taking his brother away. Emad is frustrated, but that these images will mean something.

At night, soldiers enter the village and arrest children in their homes for throwing rocks during demonstrations. In the morning, all the kids march in protest, crying: "We want to sleep". But the violence continues, and an Israeli activist is injured after being hit in the head with a rubber bullet. In his house, the kids speak about brochures the army has distributed to warn people against demonstrating. Soraya explains to them that they have to continue resisting, even as soldiers continue to look for children to arrest.

One night they come into Emad's house while he is filming and take him to the police station. He is imprisoned for a few weeks before being placed under house arrest. In a house far from Bil'in, Emad is held alone, ostensibly for throwing rocks. In reality, this is his punishment for filming. Eventually the army drops all charges, citing a lack of evidence. Once freed, Emad immediately resumes filming, despite Soraya's pleas for him to stop. His third camera is shot at and hit. The bullet caught inside is a reminder of how fragile life is.

Fourth Camera

By 2008, many other villages have followed in Bil'in's lead, staging demonstrations as the separation barrier begins to enter their lands. In the neighboring village, the violence becomes extreme, and there is a fear that these demonstrations will turn into a wider popular resistance – a third Intifada. In an effort to prevent this, the actions of the army become increasingly harsh. Snipers shoot an 11-year-old boy after the funeral of 17-year-old who was shot dead. Amid the chaos, Daba, Phil's brother, is shot in his leg.

With death all around, it is hard for people to hold on to their ideals of non-violence. But just as things begin to look desperate, the Bil'in villagers find out that they have won a legal victory – the

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court has ruled that the existing barrier should be dismantled and erected closer to the settlement buildings. This is a small victory for some villagers who will regain part of their land. Celebrations ensue. However, time passes, and the ruling is not carried out.

Emad goes to the other side of the barrier to work the land and discovers the remains of trees burned by settlers. On his way back to the village, the truck he is driving crashes into the separation wall. The images of this accident are the last to be filmed by the fourth camera.

Fifth Camera

Emad remains unconscious for 20 days in an Israeli hospital. He sustained serious injuries, and is on the verge of death. When he first wakes up, it's late 2008. Israel starts its attack on the Gaza strip. When Emad returns, ***** there is no big welcome, as people are in grief over Gaza. He is recovering in his house, without support and with the knowledge he won't be able to work physically again. Bil'in's struggle gains worldwide attention, and politicians from all over the world come to visit to show their support. But Adeeb looks at all this and doesn't like this charade. Inside the outpost, he hopes for a small retreat. For him, that would be success. In the meantime, new settlers are entering the empty houses that will not be returned to the villagers.

Phil is the only one who is still optimistic and who still believes in repairing the world. Gibreel is now 4 years old, and must be prepared for the worst. The level of violence is escalating, and during a demonstration, Phil gets hit in the chest by a gas grenade. He dies instantly.

At night, Daba puts up posters of his dead brother. The village is in shock. Gibreel and the rest of Emad's children kiss the posters. They are the only ones who have not yet understood what has happened. It will take weeks before the anger and hate surfaces, leading Gibreel to ask Emad, "Why did they shoot my Phil? What did Phil do to the soldiers?"

Phil's funeral is followed by an angry demonstration. Adeeb is furious in a subsequent demonstration and gets arrested and sent to jail. His kid shouts at the soldiers "release my father!"

Emad gets a letter saying that he, too, will be arrested. When he tells Soraya, she gets agitated, demanding that he stop filming and attending demonstrations. But her demands fall on deaf ears, and as Emad proceeds to film yet another demonstration, his fifth camera is shot and broken.

Epilogue - The Sixth Camera

A year passes and Adeeb is still in jail. In 2010, Israel begins to remove the old barrier and to put up a new concrete wall closer to the settlement. There are no big celebrations. Gibreel's 5th birthday comes and he turns from a baby into a young boy. It's a sad and poignant moment. For his last treatment in Tel Aviv, Emad takes Gibreel and Taki-yadin to see the sea in Tel Aviv for their first time.



TEAMING UP TO MAKE THE FILM

In 2009, Emad approached Guy to make a film together. The idea was to focus on two characters Adeeb and Phil. Phil was killed during the resistance and Emad wanted to create a film that would memorialize Phil. The film was developed through the Greenhouse Program with Dutch filmmaker John Appel as a mentor. During the Greenhouse sessions the script was written telling Emad's story from a personal perspective.

Guy:

“When I first looked at the footage I wasn't sure I wanted to make another film on the same subject of the resistance. I knew Emad had a visual natural talent but I wasn't sure how we could create somewhat of a new story. Then in one of the images I saw an old man I didn't know climbing on a military jeep and blocking it from moving. I asked Emad who that was and what he was doing? Emad explained that the man was his father and he was blocking the jeep from taking his brother to jail. And then it struck me that from this moment we had the makings of a new film that would tell the events the way Emad experienced them as a cameraman. We could use all of his home videos footage to include his perspective as a family man.”

Emad:

“It was a very hard decision for me to make a personal film. This is not something people here can understand easily. It means exposure of some difficult moments like my arrest or my accident.”

MAKING 5 BROKEN CAMERAS TOGETHER

In the next two years, a film using Emad's footage of more than 500 hours was created. It also had new scenes that were made while Emad was doing the filming (except when he is filmed) and Guy constructing the story and then doing the pre-editing.

The first editing sessions were held in a little room in Bil'in. It was an inspiring way to start the editing process. During the evening, Emad and Guy had conversations that formed the first narration draft. In the next year, the two worked to add new scenes to strengthen the special balance between the family and intimate moments, the characters of the film and the continuing story of the changes in the village. Trio Joubran's beautiful music was added to the film.

In 2010, Guy and Emad attended the IDFA Academy with a first assembly of the film. Together with Italian-Dutch editor Menno Boerema, the film developed even more in the editing process. In 2010, producers Serge Gordey & Christine Camdessus got involved and brought France Televisions support. The last editing sessions of the final film started with the French editor Veronique Lagoarde- Ségot. During those first two months, 5 BROKEN CAMERAS was re-edited, re-discussed in the team and the final version was created.



PERSONAL STATEMENT

As an Israeli and a Palestinian, we knew we would be criticized for making a film together even before we began. Indeed, the differences in our cultural backgrounds, life experience, access to the outside world, and privileges afforded us presented immediately and were unavoidable. By necessity, we learned to use these complications to our benefit.

After finally resolving to move forward on the project, we decided that making a personal and intimate film was the only way for it to feel new and genuine. For Emad, this was not an easy decision – the exposure may be flattering, but it carries significant risk. Ultimately, we decided that closely following Emad’s story was worth the peril. Guy’s role in the film is a bit more ambiguous – he is a kind of Cyrano de Bergerac, not directly involved, but incapable of complete objectivity. While his presence is palpable, it remains subservient to the narrative.

We hope people will put aside pre-judgments and approach the film with fresh eyes. We think it is easy to shut down when watching a film that deals with such pain and controversy, and reduce the experience to a series of binaries: right and wrong, good and bad, Palestinian and Israeli. We urge viewers to set aside these oversimplifications to fully embrace the complexity, beauty, and emotion of the circumstance.

We made 5 BROKEN CAMERAS to inspire people in their own lives, beyond the scope of political discourse. Although politics are an inherent foundation of the film, we made sincere attempts to challenge our own biases, setting aside cliché and ideological traps. In the end, we have opened our hearts to viewers, and hope they will respond in kind.

EMAD BURNAT and GUY DAVIDI

Co-Directors, 5 BROKEN CAMERAS



THE FILMMAKERS

A lifelong inhabitant of the Palestinian village of Bil'in, **Emad Burnat** is a farmer and freelance cameraman. He has also worked with Reuters on several occasions, and filmed footage for the documentaries *Bil'in*, *My Love*, *Palestine Kids*, *Open Close*, and *Interrupted Streams*, among others.

Born in Jaffa, Israel, **Guy Davidi** is a documentary filmmaker and cinema teacher. He has been directing, editing, and shooting films since the age of 16. As a cameraman, he shot the films *Hamza* and *Journal D'une Orange* for France 3.

Davidi also directed many short documentaries such as *In Working Progress*, *Keywords*, and *Women Defying Barriers*, which were presented in film festivals and venues worldwide. In 2010, Guy Davidi's first feature film *Interrupted Streams*, premiered to great acclaim at the Jerusalem International Film Festival.

Filmography:

Interrupted Streams - 75' (2010)

Keywords - 23' (2010)

Women Defying Barriers - 15' (2009)

A Gift From Heaven - 20' (2009)

In Working Progress - 30' (2006)