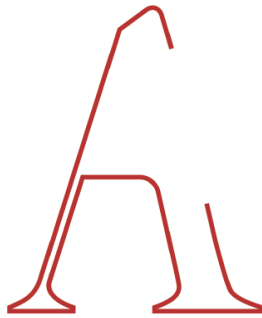


63<sup>e</sup> Festival d'Avignon



La Guerre des fils de lumière  
contre les fils des ténèbre  
(The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness)  
2009 premiere

after  
*The Jewish War*  
by Flavius Josèphe

direction Amos Gitai

7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 July 10 pm  
CARRIÈRE DE BOULBON

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## **La Guerre des fils de lumière contre les fils des ténèbres**

**(The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness)**

after *The Jewish War* by **Flavius Josephus**

direction **Amos Gitai**

CARRIÈRE DE BOULBON

estimated running time 2 hours 15 min

### Cast

Jeanne Moreau, Jerome Koenig, Menahem Lang, Shredi Jabarin, Shahar Even Zur  
Mireille Perrier, Gérard Benhamou

*The Jewish War* is a narrative documented by the historian Flavius Josephus on the capture of Jerusalem by the Roman Empire and on the end of Jewish sovereignty, in 70 A.D. Amos Gitai appreciates his meticulous reporting work, likes its tone which blends narrative and history, the style, between an epic and an intimate description. For Flavius Josephus belonged to the two sides. Through his birth, education and fights, he was from a large Jewish family and made war against Rome in Galilee. Out of necessity, he became Roman. Made a prisoner, his life spared provided that he reported the Roman triumphs, he adopted a Latin surname and plunged straight into the imperial culture. The Romans knew that to establish their supremacy, they had to glorify the people they had conquered.

Amos Gitai has found contemporary resonances in this text, making, in his interpretation, tradition and modernity hold a dialogue. The film-maker therefore went to film, south of Jerusalem, the natural fortress of Massada, the last refuge of the Jewish patriots who preferred dying over becoming slaves. In another mineral universe, the Carrière de Boulbon, like two spaces mirroring each other, the words are reverberated from echo to echo: they become songs, sounds, music, noise. They go from one language to another – French, Hebrew, Yiddish, Arabic, English. They incarnate one power or another, provoking questions : who are the occupant and the occupier, the empire and its rebel, the legitimate and the outlaw, in a world where each individual henceforth fights unexpectedly switching positions on every front? Outdoors and exposed to risks, *The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* is an acoustic adventure, a spatial manifesto, an acting challenge. It is the rock, as much as the voices, that sings in Boulbon; it is the movements and images that occupy the space in this territorial war; it is Jeanne Moreau who interprets this song of stones and embodies, alongside other actor-singers from different countries, the narrator of this historical account.

### **and**

*CINEMATOGRAPHIC TERRITORIES OF THE FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON*

**Kedma** and **Kippur**, films by Amos Gitai

UTOPIA – MANUTENTION

*READINGS WITH FRANCE CULTURE*

**Texts read by Amos and Jeanne Moreau**

13 JULY – MUSÉE CALVET – 8 p.m. – free admission

Selection of texts from *Mount Carmel* and *Genesis* by Amos Gitai, and from the correspondence of Efratia Gitai.

### **Press**

Remi Fort / Yannick Dufour

[presse@festival-avignon.com](mailto:presse@festival-avignon.com)

in Paris till the 26th of June : +33 156 954 852

in Avignon from the 29<sup>th</sup> of June to the 31<sup>st</sup> of July : +33 490 276 654

## Amos Gitai / Biography

Amos Gitai was studying architecture, following in his father's footsteps, when the Yom Kippur War interrupted his studies and it was the use of his Super-8 camera, whilst flying helicopter missions that led to his career as a filmmaker.

Based in Israel, the United States and France, Gitai has produced an extraordinary, wide-ranging, and deeply personal body of work. In around 40 films - documentary and fiction, Gitai has explored the layers of history in the Middle East and beyond, including his own personal history, through such themes as homeland and exile, religion, social control and utopia. His trademark style includes long takes with scarce but significant camera movements and a devilishly clever sense of humour.

In the late 70s and early 80s, Gitai directed numerous documentaries, including *House* and *Field Diary*. During the same era, Gitai received his PhD in architecture from the University of California - Berkeley.

Following the controversial reception to *Field Diary*, Gitai moved to Paris in 1983, where he was based for the next ten years and during this period continued to travel widely directing such documentaries as *Pineapple* - a humorous odyssey about the growth and marketing of pineapples. He also made *Brand New Day* - a film that followed Annie Lennox and the Eurythmics as they toured Japan.

During this period he began directing fiction and historical films about the experience of exile. These films include the Venice critic's prize-winning *Berlin Jerusalem* and the extraordinary trilogy on the Jewish legend of *Golem*.

In the mid-90s Gitai moved to Haifa and began the most fertile, productive period of his career to date. Over 10 years, Gitai made some 15 films, both documentary and fiction. The 1995 feature *Devarim* marked the return to his country and his reunion with the light and landscape of Tel Aviv. The first film in Gitai's trilogy of Israeli cities, *Devarim* was followed by *Yom Yom* (shot in Haifa) and *Kadosh* (shot in Mea Shearim, the Jerusalem district of Orthodox Jews).

This return to his country is also a travel back in his own history : Gitai directs *Kippur* (2000), a feature film based on his war memories.

*Eden* (2001) and *Kedma* (2002) follow, and both take us back to the creation of the Israeli State, to display its origins, its historical and ideological grounds.

With *Alila* (2003), Amos Gitai films again the present of his country, observing the contemporary Israeli society through the destinies of the inhabitants of a building in Tel Aviv.

*Promised Land* (2004) and *Free Zone* (2005) also depict the current state of the country and the whole area. Together, they form the two first parts of a trilogy on frontiers, in a region where their settlement is a dramatic stake.

*News from Home / News from House* (2006), his latest documentary film, carries on the investigation about the history of a West Jerusalem house and its inhabitants, which Amos Gitai begun in 1980 with *House* and pursued in 1998 with *A House in Jerusalem*.

Gitai's work has been the subject of major retrospectives, notably at the Centre Pompidou (Paris), NFT and ICA (London), Lincoln Center (New York), Berlin's Kunstwerk, and cinematheques in Madrid, Jerusalem, Paris, São Paulo, Tokyo, Toronto..

## Josephus Flavius / Biography

Josephus Flavius, the ancient Jewish writer of first century Palestine, wrote a number of historical, apologetical and autobiographical works which together comprise a major part of Hellenistic Jewish literature. The original Aramaic version of his first work, known as *Bellum Judaicum*, or *The Jewish War*, has been lost. However, the Greek version of this work, and the rest of his works written in Greek during his Roman exile after the destruction of Jerusalem, were preserved by the Church, particularly because of their general importance for the history of Palestine in the early Christian period and for the curious *Testimonium Flavianum* to the founder of Christianity contained in the *Jewish Antiquities*.

Latin translations of Josephus' *oeuvre* made between the fourth and sixth centuries were studied in Christian Europe for an entire millennium. The *editio princeps* of Josephus displayed here was in fact an edition of his works in Latin, still the intellectual language of Europe in 1470; the first edition of the Greek text did not appear in print until nearly 75 years later, after the Renaissance revival of Greek learning. Subsequently, hundreds of editions of Josephus' works appeared in all corners of the Western world, not only in Greek and Latin but in every modern vernacular as well. Among the most popular authors during the history of Christian printing, Josephus suffered a different fate among Jews: except for a pseudepigraphic medieval Hebrew paraphrase of *The Jewish War*, the works of Josephus were virtually forgotten by the Jewish people until modern times.

Performance on tour

2009 July 17th and 18th – GREC Festival – Barcelona (Spain)

2009 July 24th and 25th – Athens and Epidaurus Festival – Epidaurus (Greece)

2009 July 31st and August 1st – International Theater Festival – Istanbul (Turkey)

2010 6th to 10th January – Odéon Théâtre de l'Europe – Paris (France)