

[PERSONAL]—geographies—

—ANGELIKA LEVI—

MY LIFE PART 2

film essay, 90:00, 2003

On my 18th birthday, my mother handed me a piece of paper on which she had written ten points that she wanted to pass on to me in adulthood. Item one read: 'The purpose of our lives is to evolve towards perfection. Nothing that is created and good is ever thrown away. Everything builds on previous achievements. You are descended from Joseph's brother Levi, who lived 3,000 years ago.' My mother collected and archived her own life. I inherited it and made it into a film that is primarily about perception, my legacy and addressing history. My film is an attempt to tell what was told and not told in my family, using objects, photos, audio and video material. The film is about trauma and at the same time about how history can be produced, archived, brought into conversations and categorized, both at macro and micro level, and how I continued to collect so that I could tell a story. My mother died in 1996 while preparing this film. I wondered how should I continue. Eventually, I decided to focus on the things she left behind and the memories that I connect with these things. I wanted to understand how trauma that I didn't experience was transmitted to me and how it has influenced my perception.

It's very hard to avoid thinking in terms of perpetrators and victims. I deliberately avoided it while working with the material because I thought it was important to show the complexity of the connections. It was a process. I think I used to want to identify more strongly with the Jewish side and leave out the contradictions. Working on the film helped me to begin seeing things much more precisely. I also tried to portray my mother and grandmother not as victims, but as women who fought in their own way (mainly with humor and irony) and developed their own ways of transforming painful experiences into stories, suffering into something bearable.

screenplay, director: Angelika Levi. director of photography: Antje Schäfer, Angelika Levi. camera assistant: Markus Otto. sound: Inger Schwarz, Ulrike Vetter, Anja Fix. Music: Marta Monserrat. montage: Angelika Levi. online-editing: Friederike Anders. sounddesign: Holger Müller. soundmix: Alex Leser. production design: Goga Letic. lightning: Branka Letic. production Team: Thomas Becker-Levi, Natalia Lizama, Martin Zawadzki. translation: Patricia Lüdicke, Karl Hoffmann. production: celestefilm, Angelika Levi in co-production with ZDF- Das Kleine Fernsehspiel, Redaktion Burkhard Althoff. supported by Film Fund NW, Künstlerinnenprogramm des Berliner Senats.

with: Ursula Becker Levi, Karla Levi Heins, Robert Levi, Johannes Becker, Angelika Levi, Thomas Becker Levi and others.

Angelika Levi is a filmmaker and researcher who works with a range of media, particularly film material, video, audio, photography and text. She studied at the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin. Levi fosters a multi-linear approach in her films and video essays, allowing the viewer to freely follow the chain of associations in an undetermined process of perception. Her works revolve around concepts of memory and subjectivity, transgenerational trauma and personal dignity. The starting point of her work is direct experience, but is examined and situated within a political and social space. From 1985 on, her works has been awarded and presented at international film festivals. Her first full-length documentary *My Life Part 2* won several prizes and had its premiere at the Forum / International Berlin Film Festival (2003). *Children of Sri-kandi*, a collaborative film project reflecting on authors' lived experience as queer women in Muslim Indonesia, had its premiere at Panorama / International Berlin Film Festival (2012) and won several awards. Her latest work *Miete Essen Seele Auf* was shown in the *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*, Berlin (2015). Levi also works as a script and dramatic advisor, lecturer and film editor. Lives and works in Berlin.