

# [PERSONAL]—geographies—

—YARA HASKIEL—

## TSAKALOS BLUES

video essay, 65:00, 2014

*As a stateless person, you can avoid or oppose the state, but you cannot be its ally anymore. D.E. Sattler (36th thesis of statelessness)*

*Tsakalos Blues develops along years of conversations between my father Gabriel and myself. Together we revisited places closely linked to our family history: Munich, Salonica, Haifa and Eilat. In conversations with my father, I was trying to understand what it meant for him to grow up in post-war Germany as a stateless person. How is this unarticulated experience subjectified and transferred from one generation to another? The term “Tsakalos” literally means “rascal”, it describes the sub-proletarian figure “Mangas” of the Greek Rembetiko culture. It is an humorous description about my grandfather from Thessaloniki who survived the death camps in Poland and Germany during World War II. As my father pointed out, the topic of the camps were taboo, my grandfather would not speak much about it with his kids, rather he would speak in ladino or Greek with the ones who had shared this experience with him. The painful past, memories and traumas were not only transferred in a subtle way through habits and the echo of specific words but also through certain strategies of surviving, strategies of distancing from the past in order to celebrate the simple fact of being alive.*

*Within the process of working on the video essay, I have traced the gaps and taboos of fractured memories and connected them to the places of lived experience, but interwoven with fictional super 8 diaries. The anachronism of time and places generate the non-linear montage, that mirrors the process of the chaotic restlessness in searching for answers, mourning and fractured remembrance itself. Tsakalos Blues tries to render visible the different experiences and modalities of speech that are reflected in our hybrid and contradicting identity constructions and that remain invisible and insignificant within hegemonial discourses on history and geopolitical arrangements. The work affirms a forthright proletarian “Blues” between the second and third generation after Shoah.*

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*supported by University of Arts Berlin, University of Arts Hamburg, ARRI*

*Yara Haskiel is a video artist, researcher and activist who experiments with found footage, new media and performative formats through video essays and multi-screen installations. She studied Experimental Film and Art and Media at the University of Arts in Berlin and Hamburg. She was part of the Program of Independent Studies at Museu d'Art Contemporani Barcelona (MACBA). Haskiel holds a specific master degree in Museum Studies and Critical Theory from Universitat Autònoma, Barcelona. The connections between memory and (dis-) placement of minor and forgotten narratives and their social effects are central themes in her works: Memory Extended (2011) and Tsakalos Blues (2014). Further she deals with practices of mourning through storytelling and the effects of precarity in relation to love from a feminist perspective: It's late, a mourning spell (2017), I don't write diaries I, II: On Love and Crisis and the Power of Fragility (2016). She presented her works at international film festivals and exhibitions, including the gallery Àngels in Barcelona (2015), Dimitria Festival in Thessaloniki (2015) and Athens Biennale (2016). In the past she held lectures and screenings at the University of Thessaly, Alice Salomon University Berlin, University of Perugia, the University of Vienna and at the Centro de Fotografia y Medios Documentales (CFD) Barcelona. Lives and works in Berlin.*