

# SURVIVOR'S TALE

Directed by the award winning Malcolm Green, Edek is a poignant fusion of prose, music and rap that tells one of the world's darkest stories



"This is really an exercise in experimental digital filmmaking and exploring what the medium allows us to do that pre-digital filmmaking couldn't," so says Edek director Malcolm Green on his thought-provoking new project. It's about an 85-year-old Holocaust survivor named Janine and a young American rapper named Kapoo, who have

collaborated to deliver a Hip Hop message to the youth of the world. It's certainly different... "This is a film that simply wouldn't have been possible to create before digital technology brought creative filmmaking within reach. From the cameras (and smartphones) we used, to the editing software, to the music composition, recording and

production (that was literally done in a bedroom in my home) to the online distribution, digital tech let me as a director change the entire process."

#### Proven record

Green's background has been mainstream advertising, writing and directing big populist TV campaigns for the UK and



Janine today such a positive, humane and inspirational person, despite the unspeakable horrors she has endured. Even for HipHop, it's about the potential to create music that moves listeners in a good way and not be trapped in an environment of negativity. We are living in troubled times of hatred and racism. This film is a reminder that, as human beings, we are all better than that!"

*"We also created sections where we might break into a rap, which I had sketched out"*

### Inspired tale

While Malcolm might have written the film it was, he says, Janine and all the other survivors he has met who inspired him. "This is a very different film to most, as it sits within the music video and documentary categories. In a way, my inspiration came from some of the work of Kendrick Lamar, Frank Ocean and Kamasi Washington. Even watching some of their videos, I see an underlying move towards activism, which I find compelling. I like the idea that they are using their reach with a younger audience to make

important social statements. Musically and visually, we started with a beat and a story. I cut up Janine's words to fit the rhythm whilst finding a song structure within her narrative. The word 'Edek' became something of a chorus, whilst her story was divided into verses. We also created sections where we might break into a rap, which I had sketched out after listening to Kapoo's work."

### Detailed work

Then," adds Malcolm, "Kevin and I worked on developing and recording that part of the track. Back in the edit, I asked Kevin if it was possible to transform Janine's voice to that of a child at certain moments. Kevin being Kevin, he did this instantly. That gave birth to the idea of adding a child playing 'young Janine' and we found Issy Burnham. Discovering that she had played Cosette in the *Les Misérables* on the West End stage, I felt it would be great if she could sing in the film. That meant writing a song. I quickly put some lyrics together, she wrote the melody and Kevin worked his magic in production. As icing on the cake, we brought in a Cantor, Avromi Freilich to add his voice towards the end of the film. Finally, Adrian Hall gave

impact of global trade for the company Maersk. I also made a film for the UN to celebrate International Women's Day, called *SheTrades*."

### Small wonder

Edek was completed with a small-but-perfectly-formed crew, which helped to shape the overall outcome very nicely. "Janine Webber, Kapoo and Issy Burnham starred in the film," furthers Malcolm. "While I wrote and directed, Tom Baker edited. Kevin Pollard composed and produced the music. Malcolm and Tom handled cinematography. Timo Salla was sound recordist. Chris Bell of Creep was colourist. Sara Huxley of Mini Productions produced and executive producer was Marc Cave. I draw on almost every skill I've ever learned in my career in advertising, as well as learning some new ones. Visually, I wanted to bring an aesthetic from high-end commercials (without the cost!) as well as bringing in my past skills in applied lyric writing (from Howard of the Halifax to applying HipHop and Rap to the Holocaust). I've also been trained in thinking

about the audience and trying to understand what might inspire and motivate them. Ultimately, my past has been about changing behaviour and creating impact. I've tried to bring any small talent I have absorbed to this project."

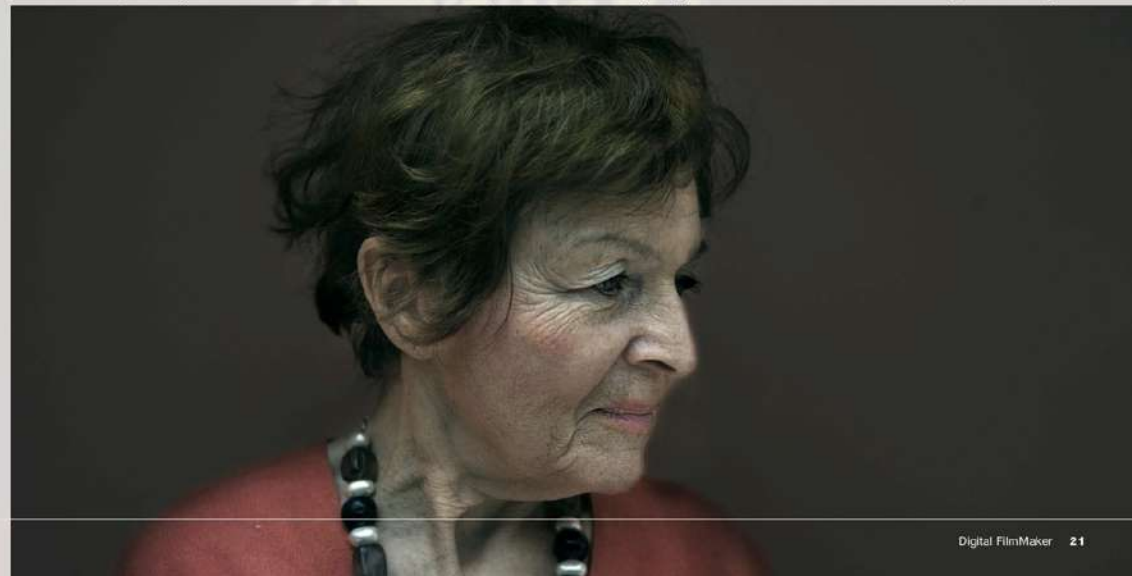
### Thought provoking

On a surface level, the film is about one tragic story in the life of Janine, an 85-year-old Holocaust

survivor. But the director think it runs deeper than that. "It's really about humanity," he says. "About what the capacity and potential that lies inside each and every one of us. On one hand, the capacity to do acts of extreme cruelty. On the other, to perform unimaginable kindness and selflessness. At the same time, it's about the strength and resources we all have, that make



abroad. But he was clearly itching to do more edgy projects, of which *Edek* is one. "Often I'd be working with extremely large budgets for major brands," says Malcolm. "However, in recent years, I've been exploring the potential and possibilities of new non-traditional creativity and production. My first foray into a slightly longer form was a short film called *Pearls*. Recently I completed an award-winning series of short films about the human



us a real, commercial HipHop mix. The incredible Sara Huxley was producer, making the impossible possible whilst always retaining her boundless positive energy, as well as using her powers of persuasion to pull in an untold number of favours, whilst Marc Cave was exec producer, generating a small amount of 'seed budget' from the NHC. We made this on a shoestring. In fact, maybe half a shoestring. As well as shooting Janine, Issy and Kapoo, we made sure to grab extra B roll shots whilst on other shoots. We shot on the Sony A7S and Sony A7R, using our own Zeiss and Leica stills lenses, with close-focus adaptor. Stills were shot on my a7 and my Leica M9 digital stills camera. We were mainly handheld. Sound was often recorded on Zoom H4N."

### Creative high

"This is something that has brought all strands of my experience together, plus exploring new areas of filmmaking that I've never explored," adds Malcolm. "More importantly, it has the meaning and purpose I have strived for in my work. We are currently screening at festivals, both in the UK and abroad, as well as showing it in schools. The aim is to get it to as many young people as possible. We are also exploring a social media campaign. I was invited to screen the film

and do a Q&A at the WeAreSocial agency and somehow managed to persuade them to help create a social media campaign to push the film out. Aside from that, it's recently been a mix of branded content, continuing the work I've been doing for Maersk, as well as making films for charities and causes. I recently made a short promo to raise awareness of increased racism. Other than that, I'm exploring and am open to new projects."

### Real dealings

Malcolm clearly has a fondness for telling true-life stories, so it seems likely that he'll be developing more things along the lines of Edek in the future. "I like making 'creative' documentaries, that tell real human stories," he agrees. "But in a way that

is a bit different, both visually and in sound. I try and avoid a 'corporate' style even when making content for corporations. I guess you could say I prefer to make 'uncorporate'. Equally, I

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like making films with meaning and purpose. I also really enjoy experimenting with what I call 'handheld' content. The idea of a screen becoming physical, within a viewers hand opens up some really interesting and exciting opportunities. Overall, I'd love to make something longer



Take the time to really explore a story over time, both in the making and the viewing. That would be a dream. However, we are in a saturated market. Yes, there is a greater demand for film and video content than ever before, but it's hard to cut through the noise and clutter. It's true, everyone is a filmmaker or photographer or broadcaster, but not everyone has the vision to have an idea or to tell a story or to inspire a movement. But I don't hanker for the old pre-digital days at all. I think we are living in a period where literally

anything is possible and we have all the tools to make our dreams a reality. I also love the fact that I'm able to work with a diverse group of young talents who teach me more than I could ever teach them. That's beautiful! I make some money from my commercial work, but pretty much nothing from everything else. I guess I'm lucky that one part of my life has been able to help me with the other. I'm on a journey of exploration, finding and telling the stories of people who don't realise just how amazing they are." ■

