

Tom SHOVAL



Genre: Art House
 Format: 35mm
 Estimated Running Time: 100 min.

Budget:
 US\$ 1,450,000 (HK\$ 11,310,000)
 Funds Secured:
 US\$ 15,000 (HK\$ 117,000)

Producer:
 Gal GREENSPAN

Writing Credit:
 Tom SHOVAL

Production Company:
 GREENproductions

HAF Goals:
 Funds, Co-producers,
 Sales agents, Pre-sales

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INTRODUCTION

Youth is an attempt to describe the shared inner world of two brothers who decide to take their fate into their own hands. By realistically following their daily routines, *Youth* will get under the brothers' skin to expose their psychological workings and inner beings. The elements that define their existence – their family, their neighborhood, their country, the world itself – will be as crucial to the story as the brothers' own nervous heartbeats.

SYNOPSIS

Yaki and Shaul are two teenage Israeli brothers living with their parents, Moti and Paula, in a small apartment in Petah Tikva - a satellite town of Tel Aviv. The brothers have a strong, almost telepathic, connection. Like all Israeli boys at 18, Yaki, the eldest of the two, is excited and nervous to be drafted by the IDF. The family lives on a tight budget since Moti, their father, lost his job. Paula, their mother, is the only responsible adult left in the house but despite her attempts to make ends meet the family is falling apart. And so Yaki and Shaul hatch a plan.

As Yaki goes into training, Shaul begins a daily routine of following a beautiful young girl home from school. He is infatuated with her, filming her every move on his cell phone camera. He sends the clips to Yaki at the army base. On his first weekend leave, Yaki arrives home fully equipped from the army – including his M-16 rifle. The family welcomes him back with great pride, but the brothers don't waste any time on novelties. They immediately execute their plan to kidnap the beautiful young girl Shaul has been following. They lock her in their building's basement.

Yaki and Shaul demand a high ransom from the girl's father, who is a rich man. While at home with their parents, the brothers are a source of pride, but in the basement they are violent, aggressive and cold, beating the girl mercilessly, venting their rage and frustrations on her. Difficulties arise and after some nerve-racking hours they decide to let her go before Yaki returns to the military base. At her release they run into trouble again when the girl turns her head and gets a glimpse of Yaki's face.

Upon returning to base Yaki is terrified, hoping he and Shaul will not be traced. A few weeks later he is called into his commander's office. Convinced he has been found out he considers defecting but is too afraid. Inside the office, his commander tells him that his father has committed suicide; crushed beneath a mountain of debts he was too proud to ask for help.

The family sits shiva (the Jewish tradition of seven days of mourning) and Ori Eder, their landlord, comes to pay his respects and tells Paula that he has forgiven all her family's debts. His words are like knives in the brothers' hearts – all the risks they took are invalidated with this simple sentence. Their father

didn't die in vain. Now they know who is responsible. Now they have more experience. When Ori Eder is walking calmly back to his car their gaze follows him. The intentions of the brothers are clear, their point of view and their souls are finally one.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My intention is portraying Yaki and Shaul's connection and point-of-view to the viewers. I want to show how social realities affect their connection to each other and test it. For example, the fact that the brothers share a bedroom due to the family only being able to afford a small apartment requires them to share intimate experiences that deepen their connection.

I also intend to explore the meaning of being a good son. From the brother's perspective, desperate times call for desperate measures – they commit violent actions in an attempt to save their family. The line between devoted brothers who are the pride of their parents and the boys who hold a terrified girl hostage is almost non-existent.

What begins as a realistic family drama turns into a kidnapping film. It is an attempt to shake the foundations on which the traditional drama rests. *Youth* is an angry film. Its goal is to raise questions about artistic interpretation and to take a moral position that questions our assumptions about cinema and society. Most of all, the film depicts the texture of everyday life in Petah Tikva, my home town, and shines a light on the Israeli middle-class, a population that is being eroded by recent government reforms and accelerated capitalism.

DIRECTOR

Tom SHOVAL was born in 1981 in Israel. He graduated from the Sam Spiegel School for Cinema and Television in 2007. Two of his short films, *The Hungry Heart* and *Shred of Hope*, played at film festivals around the world, winning numerous prizes such as Best Film at the Pisticchi Film Festival in Italy and the Stella Artois Grant for Best Short Film. He is one of the founders of the Baboon Group, a collective of young directors coming together to create short films and rejecting government support in order to achieve creative freedom. Their films have shown at festivals worldwide and in selected Israeli theaters. As a

member of the Baboon Group he directed the 2002 short *Van Gogh in Tel Aviv*. He has also directed several award-winning music videos. He currently teaches cinema at the Sam Spiegel School. *Youth* is his first feature film.

PRODUCER

Gal GREENSPAN is a young film producer born and raised in Tel Aviv, Israel. During his years in the first film production track of the Sam Spiegel School of Film and Television GREENSPAN produced several short films including *Shred of Hope* by Tom SHOVAL in 2007. After his graduation, GREENSPAN went on to open his firm, GREENproductions and produce two short films, *Passing Shadow* by Shimon SHAI (2008) and *To Kill a Bumblebee* (2009), which won Best Short Film at the Haifa International Film Festival. That same year he produced Dan WOLMAN's feature film, *Gai Oni* as well as independently produced *It's Never Too Late* by Ido FLUK.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

GREENproductions is a young film production company dedicated to the creation of quality art house films of promising young Israeli writer/directors which offer both innovation and excitement to its audiences. The company specialises in feature length productions and documentary films. It manages a library of award-winning shorts, and has several productions underway with a collection of handpicked directors.