

GOD IS NOT WORKING ON SUNDAY!

A FILM BY LEONA GOLDSTEIN









**SYNOPSIS:**

**GOD IS NOT WORKING ON SUNDAY!**

**A FILM ABOUT SURVIVING WOMEN DRIVING SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE RWANDA OF TODAY.**

20 years after the genocide Rwanda is celebrated as one of the most progressive countries of the continent: fast economical growth, leading in IT technology, and the first parliament in the world ruled by a female majority. 20 years ago women were not allowed to talk publicly without the permission of their husbands.

"God Is Not Working On Sunday!" follows the life of Godeliève and Florida. Despite their divided histories, these women are struggling for a common goal: Breaking the silence, reconciliation, and political empowerment for women.

We follow Godeliève and Florida organizing self-empowerment trainings for women to confront patriarchal structures; to the rural area, where the new generation of children born out of rape are redefining their identities, facing a life shoulder to shoulder with the murderers of their families, their fathers. And where more and more women decide to break the silence and speak out.

Through an intimate, long-term observing portrait "God is not working on Sunday!" narrates about the Rwanda of today and its women, standing for a new generation of leaders on the african continent.

## PREFACE BY MINNA SALAMI

What would have once sounded like a far-fetched feminist fantasy – namely women forming the majority of a parliament – is a reality in one country in the world, Rwanda. Yet while women's rights activists everywhere have spent decades campaigning for equality in political leadership, the feminist movement at large pays insufficient attention to the gains of Rwandan women. The west, a key shaper of feminist discourses, has hardly looked toward Rwanda for clues to strengthen global struggles. Considering that only three of the 22 female heads of government are in the west (at the time of writing), it seems that Rwanda – where, since 2008, women have held over half the parliamentary seats – ought to make groundbreaking headlines for feminists.

NGOs have addressed Rwanda's achievements – not a bad thing per se – but without feminist debate, gender equality in Rwanda is mostly discussed in terms of the 1994 genocide, which although meaningful, does not paint the full picture. Even worse, the debate has, in Eurocentric fashion, all too often implied that women's progress in Rwanda is a result of the adoption of western values and that westerners are «helping» local women achieve them.

'God Is Not Working On Sundays!' is a welcome change in terms of telling the story of the Rwandan women's movement. The film focuses on three key factors as I see it. Firstly, that the genocide was gendered; women and men were affected in different if equally devastating ways. Two, that the subsequent healing process from the genocide, then, also is gendered. With different experiences of trauma to mitigate—sexual violence, mass rapes, giving birth to unwanted children—women have also, necessarily, adopted different curative strategies. And thirdly and most importantly Goldstein's film, thanks to its careful commitment to listening to Rwandan women themselves, makes it clear that the country's changing political terrain is a result of unprecedented local feminist activism.

It was a pleasure to watch such a conscious effort to storytelling. I am confident that viewers will enjoy the great candour and breathtaking beauty of women's resistance in Rwanda in an equally elegantly shot film. Certainly, the stories will stay with me for a long time.

MINNA SALAMI

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## PREFACE BY MILO RAU

On April 6, 1994, the Rwandan President's airplane was struck by two missiles shortly before landing. This signalled the start of the most gruesome genocide since the end of the Cold War: in only three months, an estimated one million people belonging to the Tutsi minority and thousands of Hutu moderates were killed in the Central African country.

Journalist Jean Hatzfeld, author of several volumes of eye witness accounts of the Rwandan genocide, observed that it was, in contrast to the Holocaust, a "genocide of proximity." The victims were not deported to camps and put to death there by special military units. It happened in their homes. In most cases, they were killed by their own neighbours.

Nevertheless, the comparison with the genocide of European Jews has influenced narratives about the Rwandan Genocide - a narrative that Leona Goldstein has taken up in a surprising manner in her film "God Is Not Working On Sundays!" Goldstein's intimate and yet consciously distant portrait of

daily life in Rwanda today, 20 years after the genocide, begins with a voiceover that tells of the filmmaker's grandfather: a Polish Jew who was the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust. His words are not heard. The perpetrator's silence surrounds him.

What concerned only a very small amount of Germans affects the entire population in Rwanda: the Hutu and Tutsi people live next to each other just like before the genocide. Former killers and the survivors are neighbours again. A comprehensive reconciliation program is propagating forgiveness and a new, fragile nationalism beyond ethnic characteristics. A social project that is unique in the history of humanity.

Leona Goldstein's film reflects this project from various perspectives. In just over 90 minutes, we accompany exceptional women in their often difficult daily lives: one protagonist turns her own home into a shelter for female genocide survivors. Another organises a course on self-confidence and assertiveness. Lastly, a third reports - anonymously - about how she survived the genocide as a ten year old. During these, the motif demonstrated by the example of Goldstein's grandfather, his inability to speak and yet still having to "go on," comes into focus again and again - of the paradox, which ultimately can't be individually or collectively processed conclusively, that perpetrator and survivor are living together again and are supposed to build up trust in one another.

Thus at the centre of Goldstein's film is perhaps the most important question of all for documentary filmmaking: how can the incommunicable, the unprocessable be communicated and even brought to life? The achievement of "God Is Not Working On Sundays!" is that it is able to ask these questions as concretely and relentlessly as possible through the detailed, equally beautiful and brutal portrait of a society that is reconstructing itself. And this is also the moment of hope in Goldstein's film: though the director's grandfather sinks into silence, "God Is Not Working On Sundays!" is a film about speaking and acting. It is also a film about solidarity - a powerful sign of life after survival.

MILO RAU

[HTTP://INTERNATIONAL-INSTITUTE.DE](http://international-institute.de)



# CREW

## PRODUCER

Veronika Janatková and Leona Goldstein

## AUTHOR AND DIRECTOR

Leona Goldstein

## CAMERA

Leona Goldstein

## MONTAGE

Clara Andres

## MUSIC

Emilio Gordo

## SOUND DESIGN

Felicitas Heck

## RESEARCH

Esther Denzinger

## THE PROTAGONISTS AND FILM-CREW



### **LEONA IS THE DIRECTOR AND CINEMATOGRAPHER.**

Award-winning documentary filmmaker and journalist Leona Goldstein (\*1976) has studied visual communication in Rome, Dortmund and Berlin. In numerous film- and photodocumentations she questions topics of borders, with a focus on civil rights, gender equality and migration. Her projects document activities of social movements a.o. in Rwanda, Cambodia, Venezuela, Burkina Faso, Mexico as well as throughout Europe. Her works were distinguished with numerous awards and scholarships, a.o.: „Best film“ Award, MIC Genero 2015, Cine Women 2015 „Best director“, Human Rights Film Award, Dresden 2015, Kontext-Scholarship for budding journalists (2010), Berlinale Talent Campus (2011), Scholarship of the VG-Bild-Kunst (2009), scholarship of ESODOC, scholarship of the German Academic Exchange Service (2008), Selection „open eyes“, Nuremberg Int. Human Rights Film Festival (2007), „Work is elsewhere“ scholarship of the EU commission (2006), XENOS –award of citizens` involvement (2005). She published 4 books as well as several documentaries. Since 2012 she` s holding a lectureship for documentary film at the University of applied sciences HTW in Berlin, Germany.  
Further info: [www.leonagoldstein.de](http://www.leonagoldstein.de)



**GODELIEVE IS A RWANDAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND ONE OF THE MAIN PROTAGONISTS OF THIS DOCUMENTARY.**

Godelieve Mukasarasi has struggled for gender equality and women's rights for over 30 years. Right after the genocide Godelieve began to gather surviving women by offering them shelter in her house, which continuously evolved into a safe space to empower each other and to speak out openly about what had happened. To learn how to overcome the profound traumata she founded the initiative SEVOTA. SEVOTA fights for the rights of raped women and their children born out of rape, even though topics like sexualized violence, living with HIV/AIDS, and being the „child of a perpetrator“ are strongly tabooed and those that speak out are often fiercely stigmatized. She has accompanied several women to testify about the strategic use of mass-rape during the genocide in front of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, where, for the first time in history, war rape was recognized as a strategic genocidal weapon. Today, Godelieve is one of the most prominent women's rights activists in Rwanda. Her engagement got recognized by numerous national and international Human Rights Awards. For more information about her activities and projects, see her website: [www.sevota.org](http://www.sevota.org)





**FLORIDA IS A RWANDAN SOCIAL WORKER  
AND ONE OF THE MAIN PROTAGONISTS OF THIS DOCUMENTARY.**

Florida Mukarubuga is 55 years old and strongly believes in the power of women. For over 30 years now, she has devoted her passion and energy to transforming the patriarchal structures handed-down from generation to generation in Rwanda in order to procure self-determination and the ability for women to shape their own paths in life. Through her self-organized initiative AMIZERO, Florida empowers women through income-generating activities to ensure their economic and social independence. She also organizes trainings on how to respond to sexist comments and how to recognize and challenge male dominance in public spaces and at home. In addition, she organizes child care services that allow women to pursue education, training or work. Her aim is to change the living conditions for those women that live “at the edges of society” and to accomplish this goal, she doesn't shy away from difficult tasks. She even visits perpetrators in prison to mediate between them and their wives, children and victims, despite having lost large parts of her family during the genocide herself. For her extraordinary engagement she recently got distinguished with the Harubuntu Award for social justice.



**VERONIKA IS THE PRODUCER.**

Veronika Janatková is an independent producer with the focus on documentary films. She is a graduate of the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU) in Prague and the Université St. Denis in Paris. She has participated in the European Workshops "ExOriente", "ArchiDoc" and "Clearview".



**CLARA IS THE EDITOR.**

Clara Andres studied at the filmuniversity "HFF Konrad Wolf" in Potsdam/ Babelsberg. With a main focus on editing, her films have been screened at numerous festivals such as "Festival de Cannes" and "Festival des Deutschen Films".

The media film allows her an expression in the argument of cultural, social and political aspects. The accumulated experience in her travels through various countries such as South Africa, Israel and Argentina have a strong influence on her artistic work and help her form the basis of a better understanding on the contexts mentioned above.



#### **FE IS THE SOUND DESIGNER.**

Felicitas Heck has over a decade of industry experience as freelance Sound Designer and Synchronization Specialist (ADR recording). Her projects include award-winning movies, such as Homevideo (Grimme Award) and Five Ways to Kill a Man (Human Rights Award). In 2012, she completed a Masters in Sound Studies, focusing on the theory and history of audio culture, at the Berlin University of the Arts (UDK). In addition to her industry commitments, she has recently embarked on a PhD research project investigating the role of voice in memorial media.



### **EMILIO IS THE MUSIC COMPOSER.**

Emilio Gordoa is a Mexican musician and composer, percussionist and vibraphonist. He lives and works in Berlin and Mexico City. Coming from a family with strong artistic tendencies, Emilio is involved in numerous projects among which are highlighted those related to experimental music, noise, free jazz, improvisation and contemporary music. He is redefining the vibraphone as a source, treating it with preparations and extended techniques, and is a busy composer as well, writing graphic scores for a variety of ensembles, large and small, for theater, documentary films & audiovisual."

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## **DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

„God is not working on Sunday!“- surviving women driving social change in the rwanda of today (83 min, 2015, director and DOP)  
„el poder es el pueblo“- new donors from the south? (work in progress, 2010, director and DOP)  
„Au clair de la lune...“- neo-colonial continuities and european outer borders (40 min, 2007, director and DOP)  
„Le Heim“ – Asylum in Germany (16 min, 2005, director and DOP)  
„Transit-Home“ – unaccompanied minor refugees about being home (13 min, 2004)

## **BOOKS**

„24 hours Berlin“ (2009),  
„displaced –Refugees at Europe's borders“ (2008)  
„everyday incertitude- Experiences of woman in custody pending deportation“ (2007)

Documentary | Rwanda 2015 | 83` | DCP | Colour  
Original Languages: Kinyarwanda, French, English  
Subtitles: French, English, German, Kinyarwanda

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**PRODUCTION COMPANY**

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