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Zuflucht in Shanghai

The Port of Last Resort

Filmscreening and Director Talk

A special *u:japan* lecture with Paul Rosdy

Thursday
2021-11-11
18:30~20:30
screening on site
hybrid talk



<https://japanologie.univie.ac.at/ujapanlectures>



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| Synopsis |

THE PORT OF LAST RESORT presents the little-known story of nearly 20,000 European Jewish refugees who fled to Shanghai in the years 1938-41. Shanghai was a free port that did not require papers for entry, and became the “last resort” to find a safe haven from the Nazis. This lost world is revealed through the memories of four survivors, and through a collage of rare and remarkable film footage. Extraordinary images of refugees and uncommon views of Chinese life create a compelling vantage point for understanding and experiencing this story of survival.

... more about the film <https://www.rosdyfilm.com/port>

| Director's Statement |

I made this film because I wanted to know what it was like for a person of my home country – or any other country, to be – all of a sudden – declared an enemy of the state that actually exists, among other things, for to protection of this very same citizen. What was it like for a person to be thrown out of his home country, all their belongings taken away, and finding refuge in a city like Shanghai? What happened there and how did people survive?

For me, to understand the history of my home country it was not enough to just read about it and know the story. Making this film made me much more aware of what these people had to go through, something that today hardly anyone imagines can happen again. Though it just did happen not long ago in Bosnia & Hercegovina.

Shanghai was for most refugees a lost time. They survived but often lost their youth, lost their chance for an education and after these 10 years they had to start all over again for the 2nd or 3rd time. But time did pass, people became older and so their chance for a happy and successful life. As Sig Simon says in the film: The bad is buried by the good.

For me this is a positive story, a story of survival with all its hardship, facts and memories that usually are not mentioned in history books: human feelings about their struggle to survive. To know what this is like I made the film. I know how privileged I am in being able to make this film and I am grateful for that. I know from the response of the people who were in Shanghai, that they appreciated that their story was finally told.

Paul Rosdy, June 1999

Born and raised in Vienna, **Paul Rosdy** worked in the tourism industry and traveled the world, in the 1980s, for American Express, including the Soviet Union, China, and the USA. In 1990 he moved to Vancouver, Canada, where he completed a film curriculum. His first film was called *You Don't Look For Street Signs When You're In A Jungle* (1991), followed by *Release Day* (1992), both of which dealt with life in prison. In New York he founded Pinball Films with Joan Grossman and they released *The Port of last Resort – Zuflucht in Shanghai* in 1998, about the 20,000 Jewish refugees who escaped the Nazis for Shanghai. Then he turned to Central Europe to film *New World* (2005) a poetic travelogue, from the old world to the new. In 2009, Rosdy wrote and directed *Černobílá Barevná* (Black White Color), a Czech production about transformations in the Northern Bohemian brown coal fields. In 2011 he released *The Last Jew from Drohobych*, a portrait of Alfred Schreyer, whose incredible life story spans all the upheavals of the 20th century. In 2012 Rosdy began a long journey through the cinema landscape and history of Vienna, from 1896 until today. *Kino Wien Film* (Vienna's Cinemas) premieres at the 2018 Viennale Film Festival.



Photo by Wolfram Wainovic

<https://japanologie.univie.ac.at/ujapanlectures>
ujapanlectures.ostasien@univie.ac.at