

The Ring: Author's statement

How can I describe my film? It was provoked by the birth of my daughter and it grew from that fundamental shock, that you are responsible for a new human being. And it's about that, in a way – just meeting people... I was driven, I suppose, by a sense of responsibility to reveal hidden parts of our world, and the people who exist there. The goldmine, the camp, the volcano... The Ring is a brutal place, and a beautiful place. The motif of the circle has many meanings. It appears – and it is made – more times than I know in my own material.

The Swiss-Canadian cinematographer Peter Metter introduced me to super 16, lightweight cinema, and with it the idea of living with a project, working intuitively, making a journey. Our paths crossed in the Azores, and then my own journey took me on through West Africa and Bosnia. To make a film in that way is to live alongside a river of images and voices – first one journey through the world, and then a second journey to search for a simple form to contain all the complexity, the secret resonance.

Editing started in 1996, and ended in 2003. The process of editing is as delicate as brain surgery, but no one gives you the manual. I had to learn to allow things to speak for themselves, to allow the light, and the time, and the place to reveal something, something serious, something beautiful. Funny, even. And then to find a balance, a kind of audio-visual score, a way to allow different things to connect up with one another, by themselves.

Is there a thesis? Perhaps – in extreme adversity, in the presence of death, we are at our most humble, our most human. Creativity happens against impossible odds. Because it must.

When the poet Dane Zajc translated and spoke my poems for the Slovene version, this was a last and extraordinary gift to the project, a kind of coming of age in Slovenia. As though we could share a determination to find a convincing artistic language to address the relation of people here to the damage, the sadistic brutality of 1992. It is so important and so hard to see it for what it was.

It has been a duty, in a way, demanding and endless. Like being a father.

**The film is dedicated to my teacher, friend and fellow filmmaker
Jack Shea, 1950 - 2004**