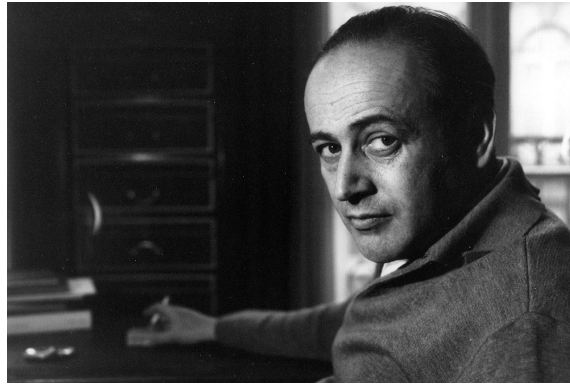


NORTH OF THE FUTURE



NORTH OF THE FUTURE is a 25-screen film installation which explores Paul Celan's life and art.

Paul Celan is widely regarded as one of the most significant poets of the 20th Century. Although his work is highly influential and referenced by artists such as Anselm Kiefer, Michael Nyman and many others, his name is little known outside academic and literary circles in the English-speaking world.

Celan's poetry leads the reader into a world both dark and rich in its illumination of humanity. It is a world that is largely fermented by his experience of the Holocaust and the murder of his parents in a concentration camp. But it does not only bear witness to the past... his poetry reaches towards a future and the significance of language and translation in that future. So, while the political landscape of Celan's own work is drawn from the Shoah, NORTH OF THE FUTURE will emphasize its relevance in a contemporary world of migrating people, people who own nothing except their language.

Background

Paul Celan was born Paul Antschel in 1920 in Czernowitz, now part of the Ukraine. After WW2 Celan moved to Bucharest and then Vienna in search of a home, finally settling in Paris. He was one of several Jewish writers who 'survived' the Holocaust, but who carried a pain that was too unbearable to live with. In 1970 Celan committed suicide by jumping from Pont Mirabeau into the River Seine... his body was found 7 miles downstream several weeks later. His pockets were empty except for two tickets to see a performance of 'Waiting for Godot'.

Synopsis

Each of the 25 short films will be self-contained and autonomous - combining in the installation to create a rhythmical form, like stanzas in a poem. Each film will be different both in duration and aesthetic - drawing upon a wide range of forms: from observational documentary, animation and archive... to reconstructions and fine art film.

The fragmentation and discordant transitions between each of the component short films will be as important as harmony, and the accumulated rhythmical sensibility will be a dynamic in evoking and referencing Celan's writing. In that sense this is not a linear documentary film 'about' Paul Celan, and it is not a subjective 'reading' of Celan's life, but an aesthetic approach to understanding the poetry and its possibilities, as it were obliquely.

Each film will be different both in duration and aesthetic - drawing upon a wide range of forms: from observational documentary, animation and archive... to reconstructions and fine art film. For example, in the short black and white 16mm film 'Music' we observe the composer Michael Nyman and singer Ute Lemper in a sound recording studio, rehearsing one of Nyman's songs with Celan 'lyrics' and eavesdrop on their discussions about the relationships between the text and music. 'Seven Rivers' is a structuralist short film shot on super 8mm film, constructed from seven 30 second shots of rivers which appear in Celan's writing: The Prut - which runs through Czernowitz, The Bug which flows past the camp in which Celan's parents died; the 'the currents of time... geological time' of The Rhine, as described in the poem 'Köln, Am Hof'... . 'Paris' is a lyrical film - a psychogeographic exploration through Paris with the poet and translator Jean Daive. Daive and Celan were close friends who explored the cityscape of Paris together - adventures described in Daive's published writings 'Under the Dome. Walks with Paul Celan'. 'Politics' uses archive footage of a reading of Celan's 'Todesfuge' by the actress Ida Ehre in the West German Parliament to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht, on 10 November 1988. After the reading, Philipp Jenninger - President of the Bundestag - gave a speech which was so controversial that 50 members of Parliament immediately walked out, accusing the speaker of justifying the Nazi era. Jenninger was forced to resign his presidency the next day and faded from political prominence. Sadly, he died in January 2018, and so we will interview Norbert Lammert, who witnessed the speech.

The proposed contributors to NORTH OF THE FUTURE are from a broad palate of disciplines and backgrounds. They include the artists Anselm Kiefer and William Kentridge; writers such as Siri Hustvedt and Paul Auster; the architect Peter Zumthor; the critic George Steiner; the film maker, academic and translator of Heidegger Terrence Malick... all of whom have a particular relationship with Celan's poetry. There are also contributions from Celan's contemporaries: as the last remaining few of a generation who lived through a world war, these are people who have a profound philosophical sensibility and approach to life.

As well as the idiom of Gideon Koppel's filmmaking, the twenty-five short films will be unified by a Steve Reich soundtrack - Celan's poetry has a particular resonance for Reich.

Strategic Information

NORTH OF THE FUTURE has been developed with funding from the European Commission's MEDIA programme, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, and with the support of The Paul Celan Estate.

The Jewish Museum in Berlin is the main partner, and the installation will open there in November 2020 - the 100th anniversary of Celan's birth.

Project Producer - Alexander Godschalk F.A.C. Amsterdam
Film Production - Talking Projects GmbH, Berlin

The production is underway and a rough edit of some of the filmed material can be viewed at:
<http://notf.rinseandreturn.com/>

A more detailed script of the twenty-five short films follows.

NORTH OF THE FUTURE - SCRIPT

What follows is a description of each of 25 short films that make up 'NORTH OF THE FUTURE'.

Please note that this particular number of short films does not have a significance and allows for contingency and some natural wastage. That is to say, this is not a definitive 'script'. For example, since recently meeting the actor Bruno Ganz, who expressed a strong interest in collaborating on the project, I have started working on two new possible short films, involving Bruno. One is a dramatization of the meeting between Celan and Heidegger, written by John Banville, and the other is an adaptation of Celan's prose text 'Conversation in the Mountain'.

As I have described in the synopsis, these films are self-contained and autonomous in idiom, combining in an installation environment to create a rhythmical form, like stanzas in a poem. I have attempted to resist the temptation to produce a 'reading' of Celan which favours any of the predictable narratives available and have integrated a wide range of responses, reflections and interventions with the poetry.

There is also the intention to sometimes approach the material 'lightly' - a difficult task given the weight of history which contextualizes Celan's writing, but a necessary one which is in keeping with his idiom. That is to say, 'NORTH OF THE FUTURE' is not intended as either an objective or subjective 'reading' of Celan's life, but an aesthetic approach to understanding the poetry, as it were obliquely.

Voice is important in the film installation - not only the voices of the many very old people who speak and tell their stories with wisdom and experience - but also the readings of the poems which will have an almost choric quality, which is liberating and inclusive for the audience

1. EUROPE

This film will be made in part from archive footage of Germany during the early post World War Two period, under the allied occupation.

This material will be combined with an interview with Georges Berthoin - a senior French statesman and diplomat, who was Chief of Staff to Jean Monnet and one of the leading figures in the formation and development of the European Community.

Georges Berthoin reflects on the political success of re-establishing Germany after the war and the process that led up to the formation of the European Community. He parallels some of those dynamics with contemporary politics and makes a strong case why politicians now need to listen to artists and poets to develop insights about society. He said that it is "poets who can give humanity a universal dimension... in a world where politicians are limited by their language which has a limited freedom".

2. MARBACH

The Celan archives - manuscripts, notebooks, correspondence and library - were acquired in 1990 for The German Literature Archive in Marbach. The German authorities paid a sum of approximately €400,000.

Originally Gisèle Celan-Lestrange wanted to bequest it to an archive in France, but there was no interest because most of the text on offer was in the German language.

Using graphic cinematographic compositions of the German Literature Archive - tracking down racks, shelving, corridors... - we discover the Celan collection housed and catalogued with almost clinical precision and order. The montage suggests the historical weight and significance this work has acquired and perhaps a quality of incarceration.

Interview Dr. Jochen Meyer - then the Director of The German Literature Archive - who describes the negotiations that took place with Gisèle Celan-Lestrange and the German authorities which lead up to the acquisition of the Celan archive.

We pose the question "why did the German authorities consider the Celan archive so important and so valuable?" In considering the question, Dr Meyer shows us a photograph of the President of Germany at the time of the Celan acquisition - Richard von Weizsäcker (born 1920) - reading a volume of Celan poetry. Richard von Weizsäcker not only served in the German army during the war, but after the war, defended his father Ernst von Weizsäcker [Hitler's State Secretary at the Foreign Office] when he was tried for his role in the deportation of Jews from occupied France.

3. CZERNOWITZ

27 June 1942

That summer, a series of deportations ordered by SS Commander Oto Ohlendorf had targeted the town's Jewish population. These took place exclusively and regularly on Saturday nights. On the last Saturday of June, Paul Celan took shelter in a deserted factory or possibly in the home of a friend. His parents did not. When he returned to his home on the following Monday, he found his mother and father gone, the house sealed and empty. His father died of typhus in a work camp that autumn His mother was shot as unfit for work some months later. Celan learned of this only in the following year.

Czernowitz or Chernivtsi. The city - now in the Ukraine - in which Paul Celan was born and grew up. In 1920 almost half of the 100,000 inhabitants were Jews - they called the city 'Little Vienna'. A city which unsurprisingly had a presence and resonance for Celan throughout his life.

The City has recently recognized Celan as one of its celebrated 'sons' with a newly formed 'Paul Celan Literaturzentrum'.

This film will combine Super 8mm film of present day Czernowitz - many of the places associated with Celan and his family still exist - with the small amount of archive footage of the city. The intention is to keep this film expressionistic, evoking the energy of a metropolis. In that sense it will be stylistically equivalent to the city films of the period like 'Man with a Movie Camera'. There will be a sound design made from contemporary and archival elements.

There will be archive voices reflecting on life in the Jewish community of Czernowitz:

Aharon Appelfeld – Israeli writer [1932-2018] born in Czernowitz. The American novelist Philip Roth described him as “a displaced writer of displaced fiction, who has made of displacement and disorientation, a subject uniquely his own.”

Ilana Shmueli - born Liane Schindler in Czernowitz [1924-2011] - was a childhood friend of Paul Celan who settled in Palestine. Their friendship was rekindled in the mid-sixties when they met in

Paris and they started a correspondence which continued through to his death. She reflects on her memories of Cernowitz and Celan in various writings and in a recorded interview by Norman Manea in 2009.

"Like most children, Paul received thrashings. Other children simply dealt with them as a matter of course. Paul was more hurt, because he was more sensitive. but what exactly was the nature of his sensitivity? Later the problems Celan had with his father were compared to those Kafka had with his - also a myth. Celan's genius, if one may call it that, was a gift of the gods, and thus the heaviest burden. he felt no one understood him. It could be no other way. He did not endure the loneliness that must have arisen out of this. And besides, perhaps his case is similar to that of Kafka and Benjamin - more and more research always being done at universities and more connections being drawn between them."

4. ANAGRAM

Liberated by the Russians in 1944, Paul Antschel worked for a while as an aide in a psychiatric hospital.

In 1945 he travelled to Bucharest, working there as an editor and translator, adopting the pen name Celan, an anagram of Antschel in its Romanian spelling. Antschel... Ancel... to Celan...

One suggestion is that he changed his name because it sounded too Jewish.

The visuals for this film is an animation made by the UK artist and typographic designer Paul Elliman. His work combines an interest in typography and the human voice, often referring to forms of audio signage that mediate a relationship between both. His typeface Found Font is an ongoing collection of found 'typography' drawn from objects and industrial debris in which no letter-form is repeated. Elliman animates typographic elements to create a visual play on Celan's names and the transformations from one name to another. The sound is also formed by Elliman using voices and the names in a rhythmic montage.



The Psychoanalyst Adam Phillips explores the psychodynamics possibilities of changing a family name.

Eric Celan speaks about how his father Paul did not change his name formally - that his passport remained Antschel. We ask him why he - Eric - adopted his father's pen name and did not want to take the real family name... . After all, by taking on the name Celan, he was also taking on a weighty legacy.

5. BACHMANN

One of the most important relationships that spanned Paul Celan's adult life was with the Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann, who is herself recognised as a significant figure in German language literature.

They first met in 1948 when Celan was living in Vienna. They had a passionate and charged engagement with each other – as lovers, intellectual and creative equals. Their beautifully written correspondence exists as a moving record of the possibilities of love.

In 1957 their affair was reignited when they were both invited to a symposium in Wuppertal - straight after which they went to Cologne, a charged moment alluded to in Celan's poem 'Köln, Am Hof'. There is archive footage of Celan reading this poem which will be used in this film.

*Cologne, Am Hof
Heart-time
The dreamt ones stand for
The midnight numeral*

*Some things spoke in the silence, some things were silent,
Some things went their way.
Banished and Lost
were at home*

*You cathedrals,
You cathedrals unseen,
you waters unlistened to
you clocks deep in us.*

Translation Wieland Hoban

A black and white travelling shot from the front of the monorail in Wuppertal will also be used as a visual back bone - timeline - for this film.

The story of the Celan - Bachmann love affair will be told by two scholars speaking to camera: Barbara Wiedemann is Professor of German literature at Tübingen University and Wieland Hoban is a British composer and the translator of the Celan - Bachmann correspondence.

The interviews with Wiedemann and Hoban will be intercut to create a sense of conversation, rhythmically mirroring the dialogue and exchange of the correspondence. Very close-up images representing the hands of Celan and Bachmann writing will be used to carry the excerpts of their letters which will be read out by the Interviewees.

Bachmann and Celan belonged to a group of German language writers who formalised their association under the name Gruppe 47.

We had planned to interview Günter Grass - writer, painter and illustrator - who was a friend of Bachmann and Celan. Bachmann first met Grass at the Gruppe 47 conference in 1955 and introduced him to Celan one year later. Sadly Grass has died and we now need to find an alternative contributor to talks about their relationship, particularly in the context of the post-war German atmosphere and how German language writers/writing responded - perhaps Alexander Kluge.

6. POETRY AS EXPERIENCE

Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe 'Poetry as Experience':

There is no 'poetic experience' in the sense of a 'lived moment' or a poetic 'state.' If such a thing exists or thinks it does – for after all it is the power, or impotence of literature to believe and make others believe this – it cannot give rise to a poem. To a story, yes, or to a discourse whether in verse or prose. To 'literature', perhaps at least in the sense that we understand it today. But not to a poem. A poem has nothing to recount, nothing to say; what it recounts and says is that from which it wrenches away as a poem.

Bernard Stiegler is a Professor of Philosophy and a convicted armed robber. He studied philosophy by correspondence during a 5-year period in jail... later - most notably - collaborating closely with Jacques Derrida. He opens this film with a brief thought about the 'difficulty' of Celan's writing:

To say that it was readable would be literally abusive, for it is also very unreadable and this is why it wears out reading to the very marrow. but it belongs to the experience of reading...

"How do we know that the words of Celan aren't the words of a mad man's ramblings... how do we know if there is meaning in a text which is apparently obscure?" George Steiner - scholar and talks about reading, starting with an act of trust.... .

The film then becomes observational in mode as we are in the midst of an energetic seminar in Harvard University which the poet Jorie Graham discusses reading Celan with a group of graduate students. This sequence is filmed with two cameras - each on a long lens to isolate the characters and to create intimacy more like a scene of cinema drama than a documentary recording.

7. TODESFUGE

This film is an animation made by the artist William Kentridge working to an archive recording of Celan reciting his best-known work 'Todesfuge'.

*Black milk of daybreak we drink it at sundown
we drink it at noon in the morning we drink it at night
we drink and we drink it
we dig a grave in the breezes there one lies unconfined
A man lives in the house he plays with the serpents he writes
he writes when dusk falls to Germany your golden hair Margarete
he writes it and steps out of doors and the stars are flashing he whistles his pack out
he whistles his Jews out in earth has them dig for a grave
he commands us strike up for the dance
Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night*

*we drink in the morning at noon we drink you at sundown
we drink and we drink you
A man lives in the house he plays with the serpents he writes
he writes when dusk falls to Germany your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith we dig a grave in the breezes there one lies unconfined.
He calls out jab deeper into the earth you lot you others sing now and play
he grabs at the iron in his belt he waves it his eyes are blue
jab deeper you lot with your spades you others play on for the dance*

*Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at noon in the morning we drink you at sundown
we drink you and we drink you
a man lives in the house your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith he plays with the serpents*

*He calls out more sweetly play death death is a master from Germany
he calls out more darkly now stroke your strings then as smoke you will rise into air
then a grave you will have in the clouds there one lies unconfined*

*Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at noon death is a master from Germany
we drink you at sundown and in the morning we drink and we drink you
death is a master from Germany his eyes are blue
he strikes you with leaden bullets his aim is true
a man lives in the house your golden hair Margarete
he sets his pack on to us he grants us a grave in the air
he plays with the serpents and daydreams death is a master from Germany
your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith*

Trans. Michael Hamburger

William Kentridge is a South African Jewish artist of international acclaim, represented by the Marian Goodman Gallery in New York. Best known for his drawings, prints and animated films - he has incorporated these different media into work commissioned for Opera and Theatre performance. Kentridge's father was a Queens Council lawyer who acted on behalf of Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko

In addition to William Kentridge's animated film, we will observe and film Kentridge at work to explore the details and tactility of his making process. This material will be used without voice as bookends to Kentridge's animation for 'Todesfuge'.

8. POLITICS

The West German Parliament's memorial to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht, on 10 November 1988, began with a reading of Celan's 'Todesfuge' by Ida Ehre. Ehre was the daughter of a Jewish cantor and a famous actor whose career was cut short in 1933, but after surviving incarceration in a concentration camp began a remarkable career again in Hamburg as actor and theatre director

Following Ehre's reading was the controversial speech given by the President of the Bundestag - Philipp Jenninger. The controversy resulted in about 50 members of Parliament walking out, accusing the speaker of justifying the Nazi era.

Jenninger - who had previously served as Minister of State at the German Chancellery, under Chancellor Helmut Kohl - resigned his Bundestag presidency the next day and did not stand for re-election as a Bundestag member in the 1990 elections.

This film is intended to place the poetry of Paul Celan in a direct political context. It will be composed from archive footage of the commemoration and an interview with Norbert Lammert and Charlotte Knobloch who describe the events from their different perspectives.

From The New York Times 11/11/88

Blunt Bonn Speech On the Hitler Years Prompts a Walkout

A political controversy broke out at a special memorial session of the West German Parliament today when the Speaker gave an address in which he tried to show that most Germans let themselves be "blinded and seduced" by the Nazis in the 1930's.

But the address by the Speaker, Philipp Jenninger of the governing Christian Democratic Party, appeared to backfire. Dozens of members of the opposition Social Democratic Party and the Green Party, as well as some members of the Free Democratic Party, walked out of the Parliament chamber, accusing Mr. Jenninger of seeming to justify the Nazi era.

Mr. Jenninger's speech - in which he tried to depict the Germans' enthusiasm for Hitler, but not to justify or apologize for it - was the keynote of a special commemorative session of Parliament to mark the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

The parliamentary session had already roused some controversy when the chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Heinz Galinski, protested that he had not been invited to speak. Mr. Galinski listened from the public gallery, seated next to the state President, Richard von Weizsacker.

Foreign diplomats were somewhat taken aback by the furor, which some saw as an indication of the heightened sensitivity among Germans to how their pronouncements on the Nazi past might be viewed and interpreted.

Mr. Jenninger's graphic description of how Hitler was viewed by the Germans of the 1930's alarmed and offended many legislators who thought it could be interpreted as an apology for those feelings. Jewish Spokesman Backs Address

But a vice president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Michael Furst, said in a statement that he failed to understand the calls for Mr. Jenninger's resignation.

"I welcome that the Bundestag Speaker spoke with such clarity about what the situation was like in Germany between 1933 and 1938," he said. "I expected a speech with substance, not another expression of mourning, and especially one that expressed the fact that everything Hitler did was supported by the whole German people."

9. FRAGILITY

In 1953 Claire Goll [1890 - 1977], the widow of one of Celan's closest friends, the poet Yvan Goll, sent an 'open letter' to several German publishers claiming that Celan had plagiarized her husband's writing through 'cleverly assimilated utilization of phrases and images'. Despite the efforts of several individuals, including Hans Magnus Enzensberger, to successfully clear Celan's name of these charges, Celan remained deeply disturbed by the public controversies which ensued.

Interview: Hans Magnus Enzensberger is one of Germany's most revered thinkers, poets and essayists. He was a close friend and supporter of Celan. In this interview he tells the story of why and how Paul Celan was accused of plagiarism and goes on to consider the personal and political implications of this attack. One dynamic of Celan's distress about this episode presumably goes beyond the manifest circumstances: there is a poignant reference to Nazi ideology, which defined Jews as parasites with no tradition of their own, who were not capable of any creative originality and who simply stole from others. Although Celan self-mockingly referred to himself as 'a dealer in used metaphors' there is no uncertainty that this situation created [another] deep psychological wound.

Interview: Bernard Stiegler discusses the nature of theft and plagiarism.

Michael Hamburger [1924 - 2007] the friend and English language translator of Celan wrote of this situation: *In eras less bedeviled with notions of private property in the arts, it was taken for granted not only that one had to learn from one or more of one's elders but that 'individuation' is a process involving both the assimilation and gradual outgrowing of precedents. What is more, real artists can't be plagiarists because everything they have a use for becomes their own.*

Interview: Anselm Kiefer - internationally acclaimed artist who has made direct reference to Celan in his work - comments on the Hamburger quotation and reflects on his ideas about incorporating and appropriating ideas and materials into art work.

10. PARIS

This film is a journey through Paris - the Paris of Celan - with the poet Jean Daive who is also a translator and a one-time radio journalist with France Culture. Daive was a close friend of both Paul Celan and Gisèle. He published a description of his memories, conversations while walking with Celan through the Parisian cityscape with the title 'Under the Dome. Walks with Paul Celan':

We will see Jean Daive walking through Paris with Eric Celan and hear his voice - sometimes as a voice-over and sometimes in synch reflecting on his relationship and time spent with Eric's father:

A recollection: near Avenue Emile-Zola, Paul Celan looks for a grocery store. He buys a lightbulb that he puts in a huge net bag. Carrying the netted light bulb, he moves on in a lordly way. And the net hangs heavy.

"The world is uninhabited" he says on the terrace of the Panthéon, "the moon already is."

In a grey coat he crosses the Place du Palais Royal. He suddenly stops under the thick snow. He seems unsure which way to go. He turns his head and walks on. He is going to cross the Seine.

In a café, Paul Celan goes through his identity for me in a neutral, toneless voice, the acoustic equivalent of a photomat.

"Jean Davie, I was born in Bukovina, in Cernowitz."

He weighs his words carefully. Every moment he evaluates the word. I should add: every moment he evaluates silence.

I've come to understand that a silence – is – the negative movement of thought and that it needs to be heard thoroughly. The moments he tells of his identity have echoes of an epic. Everything falls into place: the father, the mother, Judaism, languages, disappearances, the dismembered family regrouped in the camps, then destroyed, the war, poetry. Tours, Paris. Neutral voice, always. Nothing too much.

11. NIGHT AND FOG

In 1954 Celan worked with Resnais on the film 'Night and Fog' - adapting and translating Jean Cayrol's French narration. 'Night and Fog' was made about ten years after the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps and juxtaposes images of the empty camps with footage of the emaciated survivors burying the millions who were murdered. We see images of the mountains of suits, shoes, spectacles... left behind. The film's closing sentence resonates: "we do not hear that the scream never falls silent".

The film provoked strong reactions: French censors demanded that images which were considered too violent had to be removed; a shot with French officers guarding a Vichy Government run detention centre for Jews, was considered too offensive to the French military; and when the West German embassy saw the film at a private screening, a letter was sent to the French foreign minister, demanding that the film be withdrawn from the lineup at Cannes. It was only after considerable pressure from the International press that 'Night and Fog' was given a screening - albeit out of competition.

In this film we see images from 'Night and Fog' and a brief story of its making is told in the words of Jean Cayrol - taken from an archive radio interview. An interview with Sylvie Lindeperg - who wrote 'Nuit et brouillard: un film dans l'histoire' - describes the political and humanitarian controversies that it provoked.

Interview: Markus May - Professor of Philology at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München - who has written on Celan's involvement in the making of 'Night and Fog'. Markus May connects Celan's experience working on the film with a poem he wrote: 'Unter ein Bild' ('Under a Picture') from the 1959 collection 'Sprachgitter'.

We cut to the image of Van Gogh's painting 'Crows Over Wheatfields' - painted in July 1890 during the last weeks of Van Gogh's life; many claiming it was his last painting - and hear a recital of the poem:

Under a Picture

Swarming of Ravens over a wheat billow
Blue of which heaven? The higher? Nether?
Late arrow that the soul released
Louder whirring. Nearer Glow. This World and the other.

12. MESSAGES IN A BOTTLE

This film is based on Celan's ideas from the Bremen speech given in 1958, on the occasion of receiving the Literature Prize of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen. He reflects on the nature of poetry and suggests its essential contribution to humanity. There is a high-quality archive sound recording of this speech, which will be used as a voice-over in the film.

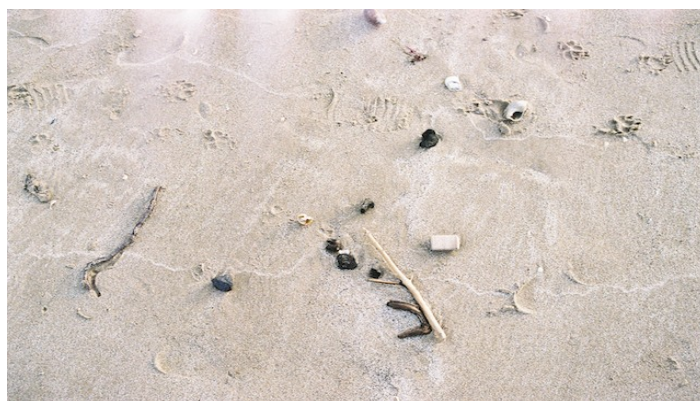
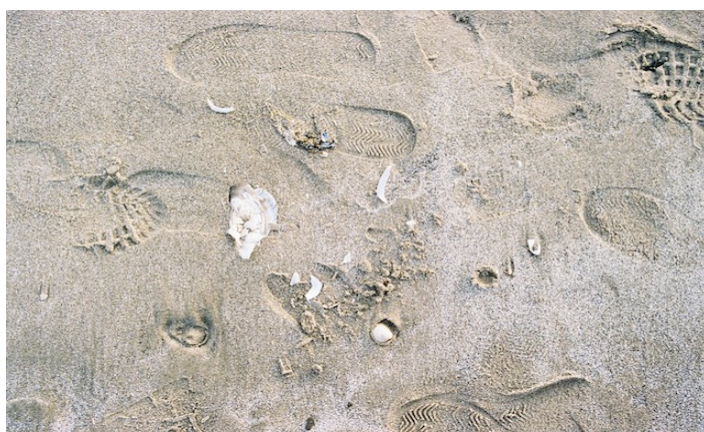
An excerpt:

A poem, as a manifestation of language and thus essentially dialogue, can be a message in a bottle, sent out in the - not always hopeful - belief that somewhere and sometime it could wash up

on land, on heartland perhaps. Poems in this sense too are under way: they are making toward something.

The film will be a sequence of tableaux: observed compositions of elements washed up on the sea shore... seen as almost still life paintings, with subtle movement, particularly the interplay between light and shadow and movement in any reflective surfaces. The elements in the compositions will combine natural elements found on the shore such as shells, pebbles, feathers... with objets trouvés. It is intended to shoot this material on simple track using a super 8mm film camera. The texture and imperfections of super 8mm create that painterly quality which evokes memory.

The Bremen speech will also be filmed - on a digital format - with Bruno Ganz lip-synching to the original recording of Celan. This will be intercut with the super 8mm material.



13. MUSIC

This film will be made as an observational film over a period of 2-3 days..

The composer Michael Nyman and singer Ute Lemper are in a sound recording studio rehearsing one of his Celan-inspired songs.

In 1990 Michael Nyman wrote a cycle of six songs taken from poems by Paul Celan, which were sung by Ute Lemper:

Chanson einer Dame im Schatten

Es war Erde in ihnen

Psalm

Corona

Nächtlich geschürzt

Blume

Nyman wrote there seems to have been a totally unconscious desire on my part to choose poems that are both amongst Celan's most lyrical and least hermetic and therefore, if at all, most susceptible to musicking, and unexpectedly viewed in 15-year retrospect, most full of flower references.

This film will be an intimate observation of Nyman and Ute Lemper rehearsing, either a newly composed song or one previously recorded. Then, throughout the recording and mixing process, we will eavesdrop on discussions about the relationships between the text and music as well, as exploring a strong sense of the evolutionary quality in their creative process.

Perhaps the most appropriate filmic references for this component is Jean-Luc Godard's 1968 film of the Rolling Stones - 'Sympathy for the Devil' (originally titled 'One Plus One').

14. SEVEN RIVERS

This film is made from seven 30 second shots – each is of a river which is mentioned in Celan's writing.

In this sense, this film is structuralist in form - no explanation, no contextualization, just a caption on screen with the name of the river.

The sound will be the 'synch' sounds of each environment... perhaps a line from each of the poems is whispered in each shot.

The images of the rivers are poignant – suggesting a quality of time and perpetual motion that is in keeping with Celan's poetry.

Prut – which runs through Czernowitz

Bug – flows through the Ukraine – past the camp in which Celan's parents died.

Havel - flows through the German states of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg, Berlin and Saxony-Anhalt.

Spree – flows through Berlin

Oka – in Russia – flows through Tarrusa a town near Moscow, an artists colony where the writer Marina Tsvetayeva grew up.

Rhine – The currents of the Rhine and the currents of time. Geological time.
Köln Am Hof

Seine - Paris

15. TODTNAUBERG

Todtnauberg is the location of Martin Heidegger's hut – the place where Celan famously visited the philosopher.

In this film we look at the place Todtnauberg... and Heidegger's hut.

We start with the architect Peter Zumthor talking about his relationship between place and landscape:

What I design is part of the place in which it stands, part of its surroundings. It will be used and loved, discovered and bequeathed, given away and abandoned, and perhaps even hated – in short, it will be lived in, in the widest sense. Heidegger observed that our thinking, as abstract as it may seem, is closely connected with our experience of place. Man exists in places... it is from places that he forms his relationships with the world. Thus, the thought process is not abstract but works with spatial images. It has sensuous components. It uses the images of places and spaces to which we have access, which we remember.

We see close-up details of Heidegger's hut... which accumulate to provide a strong sense of the space - which is empty and still. The hut is still owned and used by the Heidegger family. The architect and academic Adam Sharr - author of 'Heidegger's Hut' talks about the location, the hut and what it meant for Heidegger:

For Heidegger, the hut sat in a providential landscape. Some of the waters rising in the vicinity of Todtnauberg flow into the Danube, and he remained deeply aware of the interpretation of that river's course by the poet Friedrich Hölderlin. In the poem "Der Ister" – taking the classical name for the Danube – Hölderlin writes of the river as almost flowing backward. He casts its destination toward the Black Sea as the mythopoetic landscape of ancient Greece, a metaphorical source, and its beginnings in the west as a golden age Hesperia.⁴⁷ This landscape, for Hölderlin and for Heidegger, was somewhere that great things could and should take place.

Travel shots from a car moving slowly down the local lanes are intercut with the novelist John Banville speaking to camera. He describes the circumstance of the meeting between Celan and Heidegger and while doing so, reads a letter from Paul Celan to Gisèle dated 2 August 1967:

The Freiburg lecture was an outstanding success: 1200 people who listened to me for an hour with bated breath, then after a long applause, listened again for another quarter of an hour.

Heidegger had come up to me – The day after my reading, with Mr Neumann, Elmar's [Tophoven] friend, I was at Heidegger's hut in the Black Forest. Then in the car there was serious dialogue, with clear words on my part. Mr. Neumann, who was witness to this, told me later that for him this

conversation had something epochal about it. I hope Heidegger will take up his pen and write a few pages echoing all this, and warning as well, now that Nazism is on the rise again.

Celan's poem 'Todtnauberg' is the only record of that historical meeting - he wrote it a week later.

Banville continues to explain that Celan had the poem printed in a very limited edition and sent the first copy to Heidegger... in some sense waiting for a reply to his 'hope, today, for a thinker's word in the heart'. When the reply finally came it was empty of any significant comment – simply a bland "thanks".

We hear a recital of Celan's poem 'Todtnauberg' - written as a response to meeting Heidegger - as a voice-over:

*Arnica, eyebright, the
draft from the well with the
star-crowned die above it,*

in the hut,

*the line
- whose name did the book
register before mine? - ,
the line inscribed
in that book about
a hope, today
of a thinking man's
coming
word
in the heart,*

*woodland sward, unlevelled
orchid and orchid, single*

*coarse stuff, later, clear
in passing,*

*he who drives us, the man
who listens in,*

*the half-
trodden fascine
walks over the high moors*

*dampness
much*

As Michael Hamburger describes:

It is very significant that Celan found it possible to maintain an intense intellectual relationship with Heidegger despite the philosopher's notorious record of public support for the Hitler regime , and Heidegger's adamant refusal right up to his death to take back one word he had spoken or written in praise of the regime. Celan's poem enacts his hope that Heidegger might after all, speak the

word that would acknowledge the survivors wound – an act of atonement, if not of healing, since Celan's wound could not be healed.

16. SILENCE

An interior space with subdued lighting. Two characters are seated: Siri Hustvedt and her husband Paul Auster - both American writers of very different idioms. They are in the middle of a conversation on solitude and silence in art.

Siri Hustvedt is talking about the quality of the 'gaze', in which 'the object' is transformed into something more than the object. She refers to Chardin's still life *A Glass of Water and a Coffee Pot* - which we see on screen - and describes how "the glass, the herbs the water and the coffee pot in this still life are not simply those objects as a series of nouns describes. They become figures, timeless, 'which' or perhaps more pertinently 'who' interrelate to one another."

Paul Auster - who has written on Celan and whom he considers to be "... one of the essential poets - not just of the twentieth century, but of all time..." - echoes this thought "Celan handles words as if they have the density of objects, and he endows them with a substantiality that enables them to become part of the world, his world - and not simply its mirror."

Hustvedt and Auster go on to consider Celan's description of a poem being 'lonely and in motion'.

Together they recite a Celan poem: *Argumentum e Silentio [Argument from Silence] - for René Char*

*Chained up
between gold and oblivion:
the night.
Both reached out to seize her.
Both she left to their ways.*

*Lay,
you also now lay down that which seeks
to rise dawning beside the days:
the word overflown by stars,
drenched by the sea.*

*To each the word.
To each the word that sang for that one
when the pack attacked from behind –
To each the word that sang for that one and froze*

*You, the night,
the overflown by stars, the sea drenched.
You the won by silence
whose blood did not clot when the poison fang
pierced the syllables.*

You the word won by silence.

*Against those others who soon,
whored about by the bloodsucker ears,
climb time and eras too,
it bears witness at the last,
at the last, when chains only sound,
bears witness to her who lies there
between gold and oblivion,
sister to both from the outset –*

*For where
but with her does it dawn, tell me,
who in the river zone of her tears
shows the seed to submerging suns
again and ever again.*

17. SAINTE-ANNE

4 November 1965 - During an episode of delirium, Paul Celan tried to kill Gisèle with a knife. Gisèle leaves the apartment with Eric - taking refuge with their friends and neighbours and Jacqueline and Jacques Lalande.

30 January 1966 - Celan attempted suicide with a knife (or a paper cutter), which passes close to the heart. Gisèle found him and he was taken to the hospital Boucicaut for surgery - the left lung was severely injured.

Between 1966 and 1968 Celan spent much of the time in Centre Hospitalier Sainte-Anne - a psychiatric hospital in Paris.

His friend René Char knew the head of the psychiatric service and negotiated for Celan to be given an individual room in the first floor of the Benjamin Ball building at the hospital.

This film will be made up of footage shot through the windows of the building - now, temporarily derelict... and also a slow track along the entrance road to Centre Hospitalier Sainte-Anne, which is disturbingly similar to the approach to Auschwitz. There are also strong archive photographs of Celan's clinicians, Drs Deniker and Delay, and archive photographs of the building taken around the time Celan was held there.

The sound will be Eric Celan and Bertrand Badiou in conversation - commenting on the events of this period... Eric drawing on his faint memories of this time.

Eric reads a letter his father wrote to his mother on 24 May 1966

Ma Chérie,

Mardi – encore deux jours avant votre visite.

Il est deux heures, je suis dans ma chambre, mon voisin fait marcher son transistor, c'est un programme plus ou moins "beatle", les deux autres, allongés sur leur lit, dorment malgré le bruit.

Mon traitement, ce matin, s'est passé normalement – vers dix heures et demie, après somnolence et transpiration et, cette fois, sans accompagnement de "divagations" – je cite le rapport de l'infirmier, M. Mann (comme Thomas) –, j'étais ressucré et debout. Pour mon voisin ce fut plus long et, de nouveau, assez pénible à voir. On lui fait "le choc comateux",

alors que pour moi c'est le "choc humide". (J'apprends, tu vois.) On l'a ressucré par piqûre intraveineuse pour le ramener du "paradis". (Sorry for this cruel language.)

Ma Chérie, j'attends jeudi. Je m'excuse d'être, une fois de plus, un peu exigeant, mais il me faut ceci : 1 pyjama, 3 slips, 3 paires de chaussettes, un maillot de corps, de l'eau de Cologne "Florilège", du Panthène. Merci de bien vouloir vous en charger.

*Je vous regarde, vous et notre fils, bientôt c'est votre fête, je ne l'oublie pas, je vous embrasse
Paul*

Apportez-moi aussi des enveloppes s'il vous plaît.

In this short letter Celan evokes the qualities of life in the hospital with a touching sense of humour, poetic reflections and a practical account of the actualities of everyday life. He writes about stuff like the cruel effects of the medication and lists how many pairs of new socks he needs... all with the Beatles playing on the radio, in the background. This description of life, creates a powerful juxtaposition with the emptiness and loneliness of the derelict spaces we see on screen.

18. PICTURES

This film is largely observational. We observe the artist Anselm Kiefer working on a painting - the idea of which, is for him, underpinned by a poem of Celan.

In a voice-over he describes his thoughts about the poetry of Celan - how and why he references it in his work.

Anselm Kiefer is an artist whose work both examines and evokes what he calls the 'contaminated cultural heritage' of Germany - that is to say the disturbed and disturbing resonance of the holocaust in German society. He is from a generation of post Second World War German artists who were able to connect with their own history and think about it without illusion - 'Germany maimed itself and its civilization by destroying its Jewish members' he wrote.

From the early 1980's Kiefer started to work on large paintings and sculptural objects which grew out of a deep respect for Paul Celan and which are dedicated to Celan's work in terms of content, form and a fundamental personal respect.

Kiefer responds to the presence of place and land in Celan's writing but it is said that their most poignant meeting place is as artists who are both witness to and agent for history.

Georges Didi-Huberman comments on Kiefer's work - particularly in relation to the words of Celan: *moments when the work of memory becomes corporeal, it becomes a symptom in the continuity of events...*

19. TRANSLATION

This film observes the 'tension' between two translations of the same Celan poem, by observing two translators working and realised on a split screen.

NORTH OF THE FUTURE will sometimes use or refer to Celan's writing in a translated form - from German into English or French. There is almost an impossibility to the 'translation' of Celan's writing: it is so precise and layered in the way language is sculpted.

Michael Hamburger, described both anecdotally and analytically his experience of translating poetry:

The translation of poems involves two distinct functions and processes, which, for simplicities sake I call reading and writing. By reading I mean everything to do with the taking up of the original text, from a merely intuitive grasp of its structural quiddity to a more conscious grappling with any semantic or referential difficulties it might present. By writing I mean the capacity to reconstitute the text in another language.

This film opens with a camera tracking very slowly along rows of books... and we hear a voice over [in German] taken from Peter Handke's short story 'The Afternoon of a Writer' :

Only as a translator – of a reliable text – can I let myself enjoy the workings of my mind and feel intelligent. For now I know, as I did not before, that there is a solution for every problem. Yes, I still torture myself, but I no longer suffer torment and I no longer wait for my torment to cease so I can feel that I have a right to write. A translator has the certainty that he is needed. So, I've got rid of my fear. And when I wake up in the morning, instead of dreading exile as I used to, I'm eager to get home to my translating. As a translator and nothing else, without secret reservations, I am entirely what I am; in my writing days I often felt like a traitor, but now, day after day, I feel that I'm true to myself... .

We then observe and explore a fragment of the process of 'translation' by creating an almost lyrical film in which two English language translators of Celan - Leonard Olschner and Rosmarie Waldrop - are portrayed in the intimacy of that work. They are filmed separately at their own desks working on the same section of a Celan poem. Placing them side-by-side on a split screen creates a synchronicity of time and place - the two translators and their thought process in the same filmic space. Their voices, as voice-over, musing on the different references and associations provoked, the process of making specific choices.... will give the feeling that they are thinking aloud. These voices will be edited and layered as a piece of sound design: sometimes we will hear what they say with clarity and at other times the collisions of their voices will make it more difficult to understand the specifics of what they are saying. On screen we will see close ups of their hands writing; pen nibs scratching their way across the paper... making words, crossing out, doodling... whatever gestures and marks they mark while immersed in that process.

Celan himself was a translator and taught translation at the Ecole normale supérieure. At the same time said "I do not believe in bilingualness in poetry – poetry – that is the fateful uniqueness of language." There is something resonant and poignant about the concept of translation which goes far beyond transposition from one another language to another. There is a sense that 'translation' is a critical component of the 20th Century - that it is something inherent in the modern world of nomads, those people that were once at home everywhere and became at home nowhere. Walter Benjamin wrote in his essay 'The Task of the Translator': *translation kindles from the endless renewal of languages as they grow to the messianic end of their history.*"

It is widely spoken that Paul Celan had maverick methods to teach translation and there are touching anecdotes from his lessons, for example: the day after Camus died, Celan took a text of his into the translation class as a tribute to Camus.

Two ex-translation students of Celan, describe their experience of his teaching 'translation' in interviews:

Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, Professor of German Literature, Ecole normale supérieure and Julien Hervier, Translator and Professor of Comparative Literature.

20. NOT MEETING BECKETT

Interview: Peter Handke - Austrian writer - in contention for The Nobel Prize; collaborator with the film maker Wim Wenders; met Celan.

Handke identifies equivalences in the idioms of Beckett and Celan that are difficult to articulate. Perhaps it can be said that both Beckett and Celan used language with a rigour and purity to dissect universal truths of humanity, in particular that precipice between a gusto for life and a sort of contradictory belief that it is better to be dead than alive. Celan and Beckett had an authenticity and significance which is particular to the end of the 20th Century.

Interview: Erika Tophoven who, with her husband Elmar Tophoven [1923 - 1989], were close friends and the translators of Samuel Beckett. They were also close family friends of Paul and Gisèle Celan. After Celan's death in 1970 Elmar Tophoven took over his position teaching translation at the Ecole normale supérieure.

Erika says "As for Beckett's thoughts on Celan, we know that Beckett read his poetry; but the only statement by Beckett on Celan of which I am aware is "il me dépasse", which could be taken to mean that Beckett found Celan's poetry too difficult to understand or that he felt Celan went beyond him aesthetically".

She then tells a comical story about the meeting which never took place between Beckett and Celan: some time in 1970 a friend of both Celan and Beckett - Franz Wurm - invited Celan to go to meet Beckett one afternoon. He did not go – expressing an awkwardness and claiming it was inappropriate to turn up at short notice. Beckett sent his greetings to which Celan responded that he [Beckett] was probably the only person in Paris with whom he could have a sincere understanding.

Eric Celan joins Erika Tophoven - she knew him when he was a small child and remembers him very fondly. Eric shows Erika the only object which was found in his father's jacket when his body was pulled out of the Seine. He gives it to her and asks her to look inside. At first she thinks it is empty, but then discovers one... two pieces of paper - they are tickets for a performance of 'Waiting for Godot'. They talk about the symbolic qualities of this.

21. ANTI-SEMITISM

This film starts with a formal observation of a Brit milah – a ritual circumcision performed by a mohel on a baby boy, eight days after he is born. Juxtaposed with the images will be a voice-over by Bernard Stiegler talking about Derrida's writing on Celan - the Diaspora of the Jews and that language was all they owned.

In Derrida's 'Schibboleth for Paul Celan' he interprets the epigraph Celan writes for the collection 'Niemandrose' starting with poem 'Und mit dem Buch Aus Taussa'. Celan is quoting the poet Maria Tsvetaeva – that 'All Poets are Jews'.

Derrida writes: *The wound the experience of reading itself, is universal... To say that 'all poets are Jews' is a statement that marks and crosses out the marks of a circumcision. It is metaphorical. All those who inhabit language as poets are Jews, but in a metaphorical sense. And therefore, the one who, speaking as a poet and using metaphor, no longer presents himself literally as a Jew.*

Questions of 'Jewishness' - whatever that might mean - tend to polarize Jewish people. There are those who assert that 'identity of Jewishness' defiantly, but also many who express an embarrassment or discomfort, which is manifest by an apparent apathy about that identity. In addition to political, social and cultural reasons for having a complex relationship with the idea of being Jewish... there are also layers of experience or inherited experience of anti-Semitism which are affecting - consciously and unconsciously.

This was clearly a profound experience for Paul Celan and one which he tried to unravel in his work. Perhaps for this reason he cautioned against simply forcing his poems into the confines of Judaism or the fate of the Jews.

From my own experience I know that anti-Semitism is widespread in the UK and France, but is often difficult to register and articulate... particularly in a world of political correctness which often creates a veil over peoples' true feelings. In educated British society anti-Semitism is not even necessarily conscious on the part of its perpetrators. Perhaps it is best described by way of a 'joke':

"What is British anti-Semitism?"

"When someone dislikes Jews more than is absolutely necessary..."

This film asks the question - what is anti-Semitism?

Woody Allen tries to answer the question.

Keep in mind a significant context:

A word more needs to be said about the mode of Celan's witnessing, as it differs markedly from that of other Holocaust writers, and that difference itself is what makes possible the visionary stance I am so insistent about. Despite the presence throughout the work (or better maybe below the work) of the events of the Nazi years, especially the murder of his mother, there is a strong refusal in Celan to let his writing become simply a repository for a narrative of the Shoah, in profound contrast to most Holocaust writers, a major part of whose endeavor has been to dwell again and again on the past in order to chronicle with as much accuracy as they could muster the events of their lives during those fateful years (Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi come to mind but also poets like Abba Kovener and Abraham Sutzkever). Not only did Celan not write such an autobiographical prosopopoeia, but according to all accounts, he steadfastly refused to speak in public or in private about the events of his life connected with the Shoah. Pierre Joris

22. REMBRANDT



Rembrandt Self portrait 1665 Wallraf Richartz Museum, Cologne

This film is simply a painting on screen and a voice:

A voice being 'Paul Celan' reads this letter:

45 rue d'Ulm, Paris. 10am - Mai 1968.

*de Rembrandt (celui de Cologne),
son regard et sa bouche
distendus par les contingences,
sa tête et un peu de son
manteau dorés par les
contingences, rongés par elles, songés
par elles, son bâton éclaboussé de deux
gouttes, trois gouttes de cette
même substance.*

23. LETTER TO MY SON

Eric is Paul Celan's son from his marriage to the graphic artist Gisèle Lestrangé.

For a while he was a magician.

He commented that his artistry of magic is "my way of writing poems".

He still – almost habitually it seems – rolls coins and small objects through his fingers... creating the illusion of them appearing and disappearing.

Between observed moments of Eric performing magic tricks - filmed in close-up against a plain backdrop - he and Dr. Bertrand Badiou of the Ecole normale supérieure explore and discuss the letters between Eric and his father...

Eric tells anecdotes about his father - for example, a story of walking together through the streets of central Paris during the student riots of 1968, singing the Internationale and other revolutionary songs in different languages – Russian, Yiddish and French. During the interview we cut to archive photographs and footage of Paris in 1968.

Balancing the experience of fatherhood with his own childhood, Celan wrote a poem 'For Eric', which Eric reads out aloud to camera.

*Illumined
a conscience rams through
on this side and that
the Plague-ish leveling...
just like you, son,
my (with you) arrowing
hand.*

He describes how it has... or perhaps doesn't have... a resonance for him.

24. SUICIDE

On 20th April 1970 Celan committed suicide by jumping into the River Seine from the Pont Mirabeau – a bridge, a place which also has associations with the poet Apollinaire, who was important for the young Celan. His body was found 7 miles downstream several weeks later. On his desk in the apartment by the bridge was a biography of Hölderlin. The book was left open and a sentence underlined:

Sometimes this genius goes dark and sinks down into the bitter well of his heart...

This film is a Steadicam shot that evokes Celan's walk from his apartment on 6 Avenue Émile Zola in the 15th arrondissement, to the Pont Mirabeau.... perhaps this will be filmed with Eric Celan. This will be interrupted by several interviews:

The psychoanalyst and essayist Adam Phillips, considers suicide outside of conventional moral constructs: "Suicide violates our sense of ending... nothing makes people more other to us than their suicide. Nothing makes them seem both more and less the authors of their own lives. Every suicide, like every mid-life crisis, is a whodunnit. "

Eric Celan reflects on his father's death and talks about the premonitory significance of the last poem in the collection 'Die Niemandrose' entitled 'Und mit dem Buch aus Tarussa', written in 1962, which contains the following lines:

*From the bridge's
paving stone, from it
he rebounded into Life
flying from his wounds- from
Pont Mirabeau.*

George Steiner, who considers Celan to be one of the world's greatest artists, has specific insights into the circumstances of Celan's death.

Rita Lutrand was a friend of both Paul Celan and Gisèle - who often spent weekends at the country house she shared with her husband Edmond Lutrand (1908-1987). They represented Rowohlt Publishers in Paris. Rita Lutrand was the person who went to identify Celan's body when it was found.

25. INFINITE HORIZONS

Celan wrote: ... a poem is not timeless. Certainly it lays claim to infinity, it seeks to reach through time – through it not above and beyond it.

The camera holds on a composition of a vast open Texan landscape... in the distance a train crosses the screen from left to right.

Terrence Malick - film maker, academic and translator of Heidegger - talks about the infinite horizons, the resonance of landscape in Celan's poetry and landscape as character within narrative forms.

He recites the poem 'Draft of A Landscape' in German - pausing to comment on certain words and phrases.

*Circular graves, below. In
four-beat time the year's pace on
the steep steps around them.*

*Lavas, basalts, glowing
stone from the world's heart.
Wellspring tuff
where light grew for us, before
our breath.*

*Oilgreen, soaked with sea spray the
impassable hour. Toward
the centre, grey,
a stone saddle, and on it,
dented and charred,
the animal forehead with
its radiant blaze.*