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Cannes favourite The Zone of Interest director says it is not a museum piece

By [Gautaman Bhaskaran](#)

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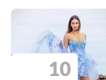
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A still from The Zone of Interest.

Jonathan Glazer's The Zone of Interest at the ongoing Cannes Film Festival's 76th edition has turned out to be an early favourite. What is more, the movie set during the horrific World War II shows that the period and the atrocities that were committed then in the name of ethnic cleansing, which wiped out six million mostly Jews, still holds interest and, perhaps, even a sense of curiosity. Also read: Aishwarya Rai's fans defend her as Shobhaa De slams her Cannes outfit: 'She can wear a sack, make it look like couture'

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He quipped at a press conference on May 20: "This is not a museum piece. It needed to be presented with a degree of urgency and alarm." The Zone of Interest was screened on May 19 night.

The film is a loose adaptation of Martin Amis's novel with the same title. It narrates the story of Rudolf Hoss, the commandant of the dreaded Auschwitz concentration camp, and his family of wife and several children, who live next to the torture chamber. It is incredible how they survived; actually shows how unfeeling the Germans, nay Nazis, had gotten to the intense pain and suffering of Jews.

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His features include Sexy Beast, Birth and Under the Skin.

He averred that he read a lot about the Holocaust and then visited Auschwitz." It was a profound trip". Reflecting on the wall which ran all round the camp, he said "it became a manifestation of what we tell ourselves. We compartmentalise for our own convenience."

He and his team of researchers read up the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, and he learnt a lot about the Hoss family.

Asked about releasing The Zone of Interest in light of the worldwide uptick in antisemitism, neo-Nazism, and white supremacy, he answered: "What it's trying to do is talk to the human capacity for violence, wherever you are from. Just [trying to] show these people as people and not as monsters was a very important thing to do because the great crime and tragedy is that human beings did this to other human beings, it's very convenient for us to try to distance ourselves from them but I think we should be less certain than that."

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The director remembered a talk he had about Auschwitz with his father, who said "let it rot," or leave it in the past. The moviemaker countered, "It's very important we do keep talking about it, to try to make it as familiar as we can."

The film's lead actress, who plays the commandant's wife, Sandra Huller (best know for her performance in Toni Erdman), said " it never is about being good at something or doing something extraordinary. It didn't have anything to do with ambition at all. I never really felt familiar with her but, at the same time, I felt that there was no real way to do it right."

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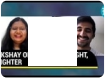
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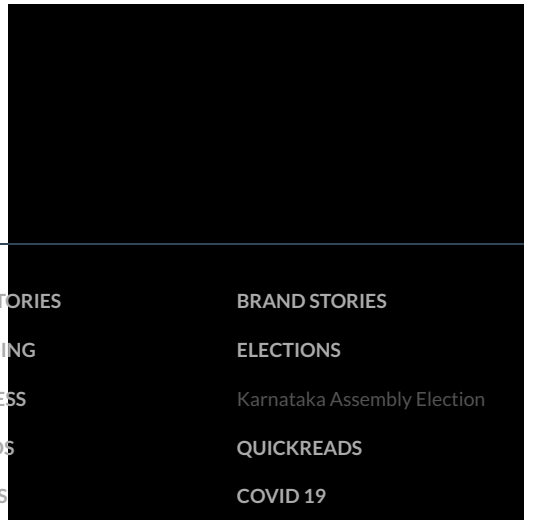
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