

LAMPEDUSA IN WINTER

A DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH ON THE BORDER OF EUROPE
DIRECTED BY JAKOB BROSSMANN



Best Documentary
Austrian Film Award

A, I, CH 2015 | 93 min. | color | 5.1 surround sound
digital 4K&2K | 24fps | 2K Digital Cinema Package DCP

Finali Film & Wortschatz Produktion
Nela Märki, Miramontefilm
www.finali.at



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for further information, video material, photographs or interviews.

A DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH ON THE BORDER OF EUROPE

"observed with great sensitivity"

SEMAINE
DE LA
CRITIQUE

FESTIVAL
DEL
FILM
LOCARNO

Marco Zucchi
Semaine de la Critique



LAMPEDUSA IN WINTER

DIRECTED BY JAKOB BROSSMANN

EDITOR NELA MÄRKI CINEMATOGRAPHERS SERAFIN SPITZER & CHRISTIAN FLATZEK SOUND RECORDISTS AXEL TRAU, JAKOB BROSSMANN
INTERPRETER & TRANSLATOR STEFANIA SCHENK VITALE SOUND DESIGNER MAXIMILIAN LIEBICH COLOR GRADER MATTHIAS HALIBRAND PRODUCTION MANAGER SUSANNE BERGER
DIRECTED & PRODUCED BY JAKOB BROSSMANN COPRODUCERS NELA MÄRKI, VALERIO B. MOSER

BUNDESKANZLERAMT
ÖSTERREICH

KULTUR
NIEDERÖSTERREICH

ZukunftsFonds
der Republik Österreich

Das Land
Steiermark
Kultur, Europa
Austrian Film Commission

finali film

wortschatz produktion

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Lampedusa in Winter

Presskit – updated 2.3.2016

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*List of Awards and Festivals, Credits, Synopsis
Critique of Marco Zucchi from Semaine de la Critique,
Blog of Tue Steen Müller about the Film
Interview with the director, Vita and Filmography*

download link for pictures and portraits:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/z1k59u2at0n9oic/AABceXMCCNLGaHi-IH4ILKGBa?dl=0>

Awards

- **"Boccalino d'Oro"** Award of the Independent Critics Jury for **Best Film in all Competitions**, Locarno 2015
- **MehrWert-Award** of Erste Bank, Viennale
- **Vienna Film Award** for Best Documentary, Viennale 2015
- **Audience Award** of Duisburger Filmwoche, donated by Rheinischen Post for the favorite film
- **Austrian Film Award** for Best Documentary
- **Bel Medic Award For creative emphasis of humanistic values**, Magnificent 7, Belgrade, Serbia
- **Special Mentions** "One World Filmclub" and "Zeichen der Nacht"
- **"Premio Jean Vigo a la Mejor Dirección"** for the Best Directing, Festival PUNTO DE VISTA Pamplona, Spain

Festivals (Selection)

Festival del film Locarno 2015 – Semaine de la Critique

Viennale – Vienna International Film Festival

DOK Leipzig – International Competition

São Paulo International Film Festival – Young Directors Competition

Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival

Duisburger Filmwoche, Germany

Stockholm International Film Festival, Sweden

CPH:DOX, Copenhagen, Denmark

IDFA 2015 – selected for Best Of The Fest and Movies That Matter, Amsterdam

Doc Point Helsinki, Finland

Europa Cinemas Biental Conference, only screened film, Prague

Premier Plans Angers – European Competition, France

Magnificent 7, Belgrade, Serbia

Cinema For Peace, Nomination at the Gala 2016, Berlin

PUNTO DE VISTA Pamplona, Spain
Diagonale – Festival of Austrian Film, Graz
Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, Greece
Salem Film Festival, USA

And many more.

Credits

Directed and produced by	Jakob Brossmann (A)
Editing by	Nela Märki
Cinematography by	Serafin Spitzer & Christian Flatzek
Sounddesign by	Max Liebich
Location Audio	Axel Traun & Jakob Brossmann
Color Correction	Matthias Halibrand
Coproduced by	Nela Märki (CH) Velrio B. Moser (I)
Supported by	Bundeskanzleramt Kunst und Kultur Österreich, Land Niederösterreich, Zukunftsfonds Österreich, Cine.Art Steiermark
Production Companies	Finali Film & Wortschatz Produktion (A) Miramontefilm (I)
World Sales	Taskovski Films Ltd., United Kingdom
World Premiere	Semaine de la Critique, Festival del Film Locarno 12.8.2015 – 11:00 Cinema Theatro Kursaal 13.8.2015 – 14:00 Palavideo
Distributor Austria	Filmladen
Rightholder Italy	Miramonte Film

Synopsis (short)

The Italian “refugee island” of Lampedusa is in the firm grip of winter's tristesse. Tourists have left, the remaining refugees fight to be taken to the mainland. As a fire destroys the worn down ferry, that connects the island to Italy, the mayor Giusi Nicolini and the local fishermen struggle for a new ship. The tiny community at the edge of Europe is engaged in a desperate struggle for solidarity with those who many consider the cause of the ongoing crisis: the African boat people.

Synopsis (long)

The Italian “refugee island” of Lampedusa is in the firm grip of winter tristesse. The Tourists have left, the remaining refugees fight to be taken to the mainland.

As a fire destroys the worn down ferry, that connects the island to Italy, the mayor Giusi Nicolini and the local fishermen struggle for a new ship. While the refugees are finally transferred by plane, the fishermen occupy the port in order to protest. The island is isolated and as food supplies run out the protesters start to disagree with each other.

The coast guard tries to prevent the tragedies of the upcoming season out in the sea, while many islanders try to describe the role of Lampedusa to the never ending stream of reporters that step by on the island.

The tiny community at the edge of Europe is engaged in a desperate fight for dignity, and for solidarity with those who many consider the cause of the ongoing crisis: the African boat people.

from the Catalogue of Semaine de la Critique Marco Zucchi about “Lampedusa in Winter”

Seen from the north, the affluent part of Europe, it seems like an Achilles' heel. Viewed from the south, it is a door of hope for countless destitute migrants, for the persecuted seeking to save themselves. These are two sides of the same coin, glittering in the Mediterranean: Lampedusa, only 20,2 square kilometres in size but renowned the world over. The island is the destination of many ramshackle boats crammed with migrants who set sail in North Africa. If they are lucky, the refugees will reach the shore, or they will be apprehended at sea by the Italian coast guard. Often, however, they are in distress at sea – a sea that has become an anonymous grave. In the media, the stories of the (in)human tragedies of Lampedusa spread like wildfire. The international community, governments and civil society are all called upon to find solutions but these are still a long way off. Apparently, it is very hard to reconcile the humanitarian obligation to help those in need with the protectionist isolation demanded by the vox populi of the wealthy states.

But the stories covered by the media only represent a part of reality. We only hear of the global role of Lampedusa, this “rock in the sea”, but next to nothing of its local reality, the roughly six thousand resident Sicilians. They were there long before the migrants arrived; now they measure their daily lives according to the presence of their “guests” – and continue to deal with their everyday problems after these have moved on. It is this third side of the coin, so to speak, the one hardly ever visible, that the Austrian Jakob Brossmann observed and documented with great sensitivity. His gaze as a director is cautious and unobtrusive. We witness the fishermen's peaceful protest against the ferry company that has proven too incompetent to guarantee the ferry service to the mainland. We watch the junior football team training diligently in order to prepare for the next season. We look behind the scenes at the small museum of maritime tragedies, established by someone who painstakingly assembles all the possessions found from shipwrecked refugees, ranging from letters to life jackets. And then there is also the pugnacious mayor who takes a stand for everyone, locals as well as migrants. The film accompanies the daily lives in winter of many simple people who still call all foreign newcomers “turks” in their local dialect that is reminiscent of the early days of piracy. However, they try to care for these “turks” with great humanity.

“7 Documentaries for Locarno”
Tue Steen Müller about “Lampedusa in Winter”
on filmkommentaren.dk

7 films are selected to be screened at Festival del Film Locarno in the Semaine de la Critique that takes place August 7–14. They are world or international premieres. I know about three of them, have watched two and am very happy for the choice of “Lampedusa in Winter”, directed by Jakob Brossmann with former Zelig Film School student Cornelia Märki as editor. She sent me the film a couple of months ago to have my opinion and I answered “I have no objections, I think this is an important film to get out now, it is very well put together, an impressive piece of observational documentary filmmaking that stays away from dramatizing but IS dramatic anyway – the strike of fishermen, the refugees, the humanistic Paola, the same for the mayor... good rhythm...” yes, it is indeed a very timely film that for sure will travel on from Locarno to other festival destinations. [...]

«On Lampedusa you see very clearly that the danger isn't in the refugees who arrive there but in the way Europe treats these people»

Interview with the Director Jakob Brossmann

Interview by Karin Schiefer, AFC, July 2015

Jakob Brossmann on Lampedusa in Winter, the vivid portrait of a tiny island obliged by virtue of its position on the southernmost edge of Europe to confront issues which the rest of the continent attempts to avoid. World premiere: Locarno – Semaine de la Critique.

What issues did you have in mind when you first set foot on Lampedusa?

JAKOB BROSSMANN: It was my intention to gain an understanding of the inhabitants and the structural context that went beyond the usual media approach, and to take a look at the encounters between refugees and locals. How does that appear? Lampedusa is probably more influenced by the influx of refugees than anywhere else in the world. I wanted to know what effect that had on a society. On top of that came the factor of winter, when an island is thrown back on itself in a state of insularity. The tourists and the media vanish, fewer refugees arrive, and existential questions and issues become visible. It very quickly emerged that it isn't the refugees that are the problem on the island. You discover that the situation on Lampedusa isn't a breeding ground for racism and xenophobia – though you might conclude this as a consumer of European media – but precisely the opposite. A form of solidarity has developed here; it isn't always apparent, but it's basically there. Because the inhabitants of the island regard themselves as victims of the same cynical politics as the refugees. The Lampedusani are experiencing at close quarters how a small change in the law can suddenly bring incredible suffering to the world, and how apparently "natural phenomena" are "created" at a political level.

What would be an example of that?

JAKOB BROSSMANN: When I first started work I didn't fundamentally question the issue of refugees arriving by boat; I just regarded it as a kind of phenomena of nature. My experiences on Lampedusa, and all the conversations I had with the inhabitants, showed me the background to the whole situation. The problem of refugees travelling to Europe by boat could be resolved very quickly. All you would need to do is re-establish the system of embassy asylum applications and again authorize secure travel routes for people who have a claim to asylum, or at least the right to apply for it. The dangerous journeys by boat are the direct consequence of the border fences at Ceuta and Melilla, and similar structures that have been erected everywhere. They are the immediate effects of laws which make airlines responsible for transporting anyone who doesn't have immigration documents. The Lampedusani have experience for themselves how the situation on their island has been manipulated in order to create images of an "invasion". But that doesn't correspond at all to the perception they have of encounters with the refugees.

That appears to be partly due to the extraordinary personalities who are active there, especially the mayor, Giusi Nicolini.

JAKOB BROSSMANN: Giusi Nicolini has been mayor since May 2012. I knew her from the time before the election, and I was at her side during the first major ferry crisis in her first winter as mayor. She is an extraordinary person. She definitely had a powerful influence on the film. The first time we met I was considering trying to portray Lampedusa separately from the whole issue of refugees and the associated problems. To consciously exclude the subject of refugees. Her response was loud and clear: "That's impossible. You can't talk about Lampedusa without speaking about refugees. That question is part of our identity and part of the whole situation." She just couldn't conceive of a project that focused purely on the inhabitants of Lampedusa. And that was despite the fact that Lampedusa desperately needs attention drawn to its own problems! One of the major reasons Lampedusa is so relevant for us is the experience of being helpless and powerless.

Documentary film-making is primarily a question of developing trust with the people involved. Was that difficult on an island, where communities are generally

considered to be closed? The camerawork in this film certainly suggests there was a powerful atmosphere of trust.

JAKOB BROSSMANN: There are lots of camera crews on Lampedusa, especially in the period immediately after any tragedy. They generally adopt the same approach and ask the same questions. In our case, people noticed that we came in winter, and that we stayed – and if I asked any questions at all, they were not the usual ones. I had a fantastic interpreter; without her I wouldn't have been able to overcome the language barrier. People came to appreciate the fact that we really wanted to understand the situation and the people.

You focus on separate, individual aspects of life on the island – the football club, the radio, fishing – in order to create your portrait.

JAKOB BROSSMANN: The fact that Giusi Nicolini would be a protagonist in the film was apparent to me before she was elected mayor. Previously she had been the head of an environmentalist group. I was trying to use these cornerstones of island life to define the reality there in the 90 minutes available to me. The football training is extremely important, because football always represents the dream of another life, bigger and more meaningful. That relates to the other stories that you associate with the island. The fact that such clear conflicts arose on the island while we will present there, and we were allowed to witness that, changed a great deal in the structure of the film. Things like that can't be planned; all I can do is be grateful. The strike had the effect of making the football story far more about how we get along with each other: within the team, with opponents and with defeat. The football team is a small narrative element that appears repeatedly, making it possible to show that people have their own lives separate from the tragedies, catastrophes and existential emergencies. For me there's something comforting about that.

The fact that the island is so small also makes it harder to look away.

JAKOB BROSSMANN: Lampedusa is a beautiful place, a fantastic holiday destination; there are people there who understand life, even though at times they have to struggle with the very basics. And they have an awareness of the circumstances, which really have

to be understood everywhere. Those people are repeatedly confronted with evidence of the misery in the world. At regular intervals the Lampedusani meet people from all over the world, hear their stories and then lose these friendships because they can't be maintained. And again and again they see how the happiness of people who have been rescued, the survivors, is transformed into sheer despair about the European asylum system.

Lampedusa in Winter speaks out clearly in opposition to the discourse that is dominant in the mainstream media. Now that the film is finished, what kind of message would you like it to convey?

JAKOB BROSSMANN: When you have gathered together so much material, you develop something like a sense of obligation to make it accessible to people. That feeling had a crucial effect on the narrative style. My experience of Lampedusa made me realize that whatever my own approach to making films, I wanted to reach as many people as possible – while knowing it's very difficult to achieve that. This material, which developed from a long period of observation, contains a message and a political dimension that I'd like to communicate to a large audience. On Lampedusa you see very clearly that the danger isn't in the refugees who arrive there but in the way Europe treats these people: they are turned into objects and numbers, forced through an inhuman system, deprived of all dignity – and the few of them who have the good fortune to achieve asylum status are then hardly given any opportunity of integration. But at the same time the way I see it, Lampedusa also represents our treatment of all people who have been marginalized at the edges and the borders of our society. There is a lack of overall social cohesion, and those at the periphery are left to themselves. That's the real source of the danger. Not the refugees.

Curriculum Vitae of Jakob Brossmann

Jakob Brossmann, born 1986 in Vienna, Austria
director, stage designer, artist

2006 – 2012 studied “art of film and stage” at Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien (Vienna) in the class of Prof. Bernhard Kleber

2012 *spec_script Award* of the Drehbuchwerkstatt Salzburg for the best not yet produced screenplay “GEHEN – Ein Heimatfilm”

2013 artists book SCHWANZERTRAKT – purchased by the collections of dieAngewandte, Bibliothek dieAngewandte and Belvedere Research Center ESSENCE annual exhibition 2013 | won the FÖRDERPREIS DES LANDES NIEDERÖSTERREICH UND DER UNIVERSITÄT FÜR ANGEWANDTE KUNST

2013 Ö1 / Radio Österreich 1 / radio feature "Lampedusa – a winters diary" for the program "Moment am Feiertag"

Filmography as Director

LAMPEDUSA IN WINTER

Documentary / 93 min / A, I, CH 2015

funded by Bundeskanzleramt BKA / Land Niederösterreich / Zukunftsfonds der Republik Österreich / Cine.Art Steiermark
SEMAINE DE LA CRITIQUE LOCARNO

TAGWERK – A Day's Work

Documentary / 52 min / A 2011

Funded by Land Niederösterreich, Land Salzburg, Stadt Salzburg
SALZBURG:FILM:EDITION 2013, Festival der Regionen 2015

#unibrennt–Bildungsprotest 2.0

Documentary / 90 min / A 2010 / Coop99 / Thimfilm

Director and DOP (as part of the filmmaker collective AG Doku)

DIAGONALE 2009 (work in progress), Openingfilm FILMRISS Salzburg 2010,
BIARRITZ FIPA d'argent Special Price 2011

RÜCKRUF – call back

Experimental Short Documentary / 11 min / A 2010

JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL Vienna 2010, EAST END FILM FESTIVAL London 2011, FEST DER FILME International Film Festival Detmold 2011, COLUMBIA GEORGE INTERNATIONAL FILMFESTIVAL official selection 2011, ETHNOCINECA Wien 2012 / TOPKINO 33 days of regular cinema with CINEMA NEXT 2013