

OFFICIAL SELECTIONS



idfa

Officially selected to 2020
IDFA FORUM ITALIAN SHOWCASE

SEA SISTERS

A FILM BY BRUNELLA FILÌ

A DOCUMENTARY FEATURE FILM PROJECT IN DEVELOPMENT BY BRUNELLA FILÌ
SUBJECT BY BRUNELLA FILÌ | WRITTEN BY BRUNELLA FILÌ AND ANTONELLA GAETA
PRODUCED BY OFFICINEMA DOC SRLS IN COPRODUCTION WITH REIN FILM FINNMARK
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BRUNELLA FILÌ AND FORTUNA MOSCA
WITH SANDRA EIRA AND ANTONIA CAPANI

INFO: officinema.produzioni@gmail.com | www.officinemadoc.com



Production Companies: OFFICINEMA DOC SRLS (ITALY) and REIN FILMS (NORWAY)

Status of the project: Middle of Development | **Format:** 6K | **Est. length:** 90' - 72' - 52' - **Proposed delivery:** June 2022

Contacts: officinema.produzioni@gmail.com | mathis@reinfilm.no | **TEL** +39 3409138363

<https://www.reinfilm.no/> | <https://www.officinemadoc.com/>

Visual materials selection: <https://vimeo.com/508071529/a3039a21f2>

LOGLINE

Is freedom possible for two women, living at opposite poles of Europe, who desire to be fisherwomen, in a male world? Following them, we'll reveal the hidden machismo inside European culture, in a film about everyone's right to fulfill their dreams.

SYNOPSIS

After a conflict with her family, **Sandra**, a Sami woman from Northern Norway, realized the dream to captain her own boat, becoming one of the few fisherwoman in her region. "This is not only a job, for me, it's a way of life. It means to be free, and in the best office in the world: at sea". Still today, at the port, some fishermen think she is there just to clean the boats. But Sandra didn't let herself to be confined in any established role. She is a combination of feminine grace and wild force. Sandra is also a member of the Sami Parliament, in charge of fishing policies: with her colleagues, she fights to gain equal opportunities for other fisherwomen, in what is supposed to be one of the most equal country in Europe.

Antonia, 26 years old, lives in Gallipoli, a popular fishermen's village in Apulia, Southern Italy. She lost her father, a fisherman, in a shipwreck: she never knew him, and his body was never found, but he's always present in her daily life, as much as in the film. She dreams to become a fisherwoman to continue her family's tradition and keep the memory of her father alive and close. Despite her desire is so strong, in this patriarchal society, only her brother Franco is allowed to work on the family boat. Her mother says: "It would be wonderful if you could join the family business. But you were born a woman". And her brother confirms: "This is not a job for women". While she can barely try to oppose this decisions, the whole family expects to be Franco's youngest son to take over as captain after him. Maybe Antonia will never fulfill her desire, until she would decide to rebel to her family's prohibition, as Sandra did.

The film will follow them revealing the hidden machismo of European society, which is stopping them from achieving their dreams. We'll find out how far a passion can take, in a cinematic journey – without interviews or voice-over - to the discovery and evolution of two female identities, towards their emancipation.

VISUAL APPROACH

The settings of the stories, including the underwater world, gives me a great stylistic freedom, imagining poetic and visionary scenes, with powerful look and sounds, determined by contrasts between the diametrically opposing locations. The soundscape envelope the viewer, adding an immersive layer and feelings of dreams. I'll film these women in action at sea, showing their strength and the pure relationship with nature. On the background, ancestral traditions come alive: Sami customs, myths, legends and Mediterranean fishermen with beliefs and rituals, subtly pulsate. Sea sisters will have a full cinematic approach, experimenting a language that wanders along the borders between reality and fiction. An hybrid film. I will also focus on a experimental use of archive materials, fluently integrated in the narration, for example to unfold the storyline of the shipwreck and the sea's traditions and legends, beliefs, also connected with the Sami culture and the Mediterranean folklore. **There will be no interviews, nor voice over.** The film could be also edited as separate episodes, a diptych with a common heart, that inevitably connects this two women with millions of other women in the world:

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Like my previous efforts, this story is born from a personal urgency. Sea Sisters stems from my desire to tell stories of extraordinary women, who challenge themselves moving in male territories, with strong motivations to explore, whose stories could create a dialogue and be inspiring for other women, as it's been for me. In particular, in view of their personal and family background, Antonia and Sandra, soon became an example for me to treat the themes of the '**gender discrimination**', which I feel close, as female director. Questioning the culture of machismo in Europe hidden in our daily lives, SS aims to be a film about emancipating women but, most of all, about everyone's right to self-determination. Sea Sisters explores the complexity of the feminine identity today in modern Europe, and for me, representing this two different women can be not only a way to testify the status quo; they could also be door-openers for younger women all over the world, in order to change the dominating culture and deliver a call for action,

TREATMENT

It's wintertime. Snow crystals are blades and the northern lights paint a celestial dance of alien colors. We are in the Arctic Ocean, and, aboard her boat, **SANDRA** is not frightened by the cold, nor by the solitude of the fjord, while she fiercely sails. She is a 34 years old Sami woman from the Russenes, a village of 49 inhabitants in Finnmark, Northern Norway.

In her family they have been fishermen for 150 years, true heirs of a Viking progeny. Men, of course: no woman had ever tried to do it. But Sandra did not let herself to be confined in any established role. Before she had her own boat, many fishermen's crews refused to hire her because they fear that, as men, they could sexually assault her while being at sea. And still today, at the pier, some fishermen think she is there just to clean the boats. So, after a conflict with her family, she realized the dream to captain her own boat. She works almost every day of the year. We will witness her life between whales and ice storms, discovering how she confronts this rough profession and the great loneliness of being so few fisherwoman there compared to men; we'll discover her political activities as a member of the Sami Parliament in charge of gender equality in the fishing industry with her colleagues Inge and Silje, trying to gain the same rights as men for fisherwomen of her region. Since Sandra and her women colleagues managed to do it, other Norwegian younger girls are starting to follow her example. Like her 13 years old daughter, who love to spend time with Sandra, despite Maternity leave for fishers was only settled in 2018 in Norway.

"I've been spellbound by the sea and there's no going back " she says. We learn from her the freedom of growin up in the wild, and the scary stories grownups told kids to keep them away from dangerous areas. The fear of missing the loved ones who are fishing is part of the spellbound too. Sandra knows this well. We understand this when she reaches her favorite point, the Ocean's View, her "gateway to the sea", to freedom as she understands it. She is in Stavern, in the south of Norway, to visit her father, who lives here. In Stavern, just in front of the huge gateway, there is also a plaque in memory of Robert Skaanes: this Norwegian boy was sailing with the crew of the famous "Berserk", whose expeditions had become a TV series.

From that terrible shipwreck, which occurred in the Antarctic Sea on February 22nd 2011, only Captain Jarle Andhøy survived, a Viking adventurer, great friend of Sandra. His expedition had to travel around the globe before reaching the Antarctic waters, following in the footsteps of the Norwegian South Pole explorer, Roald Amundsen, one hundred years after his venture.

They found themselves in the middle of the worst ice storm of the past 20 years, while Jarle had gone ashore, in exploration. The wreck of the "Berserk" and the 3 crew members were never found again. "Berserk Missing" was on the front page of all major newspapers in Norway, it was at the center of a mystery that even its captain could not solve.

And it's him that Sandra goes to see, to be told, once again, what's the spell of the sea. Captain Jarle is a treasure trove of tales that do not even seem real, and he smells like salt: "When Antarctica hits you with the worst storm in decades, sinks your boat, and drowns your crew, there's only one way to react: get another ship and go back for more", he says. From one pole to the other, we feel the mysteries of the Sea. Here, immersed in its depths, small and big fishes swim through the waters, old and new wreckages lie asleep, and souls, left here by shipwrecks, are entangled in the silent wave's motion.

We dive into the Sea, following one of these floating souls: the shadow of a **MAN**, swimming, who seems to guide us, until he re-emerges and looks at a young woman, **ANTONIA**, sitting on a sunny beach, staring at the horizon; he looks at her, but she can't see him. Large, sweet black eyes, framed by short curls:she's 26 yo girl from Gallipoli, a popular sea-village in the deep Southern Italy, so crowded by tourists during summer, as much as isolated and beaten by winds and storms in winter."



TREATMENT

Antonia lost her father, a fisherman, in a shipwreck: she never knew him and his body has never been found. So, being near the sea helps her to keep his memory close. A sadness irradiates from her eyes, lost while she stares at the sea. She strongly desires to work as a fisherwoman aboard her family's boat, but, while the Sea calls her, only her brother Franco is allowed to work on board, because 'this is not a job for women', as her family say. In the patriarchal society of this Mediterranean culture, all the members, especially women, are subjected to their family's ruling. Women must stay at home, waiting for men, and have barely rights to oppose the status quo, without starting a conflict with the entire community only to be heard. I could help on the fishing boat, like my brothers are doing: after all, it is our thing, it's family business" she says to her mother. "Of course. And if instead of female you were born male you would", her mother replies.

While Sandra did not let herself to be confined, Antonia thinks: "the sea water flows in my veins," and she craves to work aboard her family's boat, to honour her father's memory. Her father Antonio is not only the old photograph that she always carries with her. He existed and she need to understand how he lived, who he was, if he would encourage her. That's why she began to ask everything about fishing, trying to learn, asking the permission to go on board, as her brother Franco. But her family firmly opposed her desire, denying her to have access to the boat.

As the film unfolds, we discover that FELICE, Antonia's step-father, is also the uncle of Antonia, her father's brother, who married her mother, putting into practice the ancient custom of the LEVIRATE; we touch the pain of Antonia's family, searching for the truth about the causes of the shipwreck; we witness the commemoration of their deads by throwing crowns into the water, in the exact point where the wreck lies. The Sea, source of life, amniotic fluid that releases positive energies, but which can suddenly capsize and turn into an archaic force that drags towards the bottom, in a turbid and liquid tangle, in which past and future are indistinguishable – as the memories of a child, who can only get a sense of the past from the stories of aunts, sisters, and cousins. The images remain caught in the net like crustaceans, the words are lost like jellyfish vanishing in the sun.

The Sea, keeper of entangled souls, is a sanctuary of memories and faces for those who love it.

Throughout these years there have been enormous gaps in the many things that Antonia's family has told her about her father, and in the reasons why they oppose her wishes. We will try to uncover it during the family gatherings, and through the conversations between Antonia and her mother, until we get their final face to face to get to the truth and give a rest to the dead and alive.

Perhaps Antonia will never realize her desire to become a fisherwoman, but she will try with all her strength. We don't know yet if that will be enough to transform her life and a whole culture. But her struggle is the same that many other European woman have to face today, in a world where equal opportunities are declared only on papers.

Antonia dips into the water. As we swim with her, to an undefined point at the horizon, we feel that some element of the film are unreal. But they could have been real: different dates, different futures, different ideas. Dreams. Like the one of Antonia, who imagine that her father is still alive, somewhere. And, while she swims, we really see him alive, in a ruined footage. Her father did not drown but, driven by the waves, arrived in a land where he still lives. Sooner or later Antonia will reach him. With her boat. And he will be proud of her.

All these stories are kept by the Sea, in its silent, underwater world.

Sea sisters, they look at Sea from two antipodes: there is nothing they love most.



OFFICINEMA DOC PRODUCTIONS | COMPANY PROFILE

We produce international auteur films with strong appeal for a global audience, experimenting non-fiction languages beyond the traditional documentary's forms, with which to relate to the complexity of reality. Powerful stories, with a cinematic vision, can have an impact on our society, so we pursue connections between countries, around important issues and unique characters, to reach and inspire a transnational audience. Our previous works, the many awards-winning "**Emergency Exit**" - filmed in Europe and Usa, co-produced with USA and screened at EU Parliament and on Netflix - and "**Alla Salute**" - about the pursuit of happiness during cancer, winner of 2 Awards at Biografilm Festival and 'Audience Pick' at HotDocs - directed by Brunella Fili, were both internationally distributed in theaters, TV and VOD platforms, following screenings at Festivals, events, schools&ong. "**Sea Sisters**" will be an international co-production, with the same potential of reaching a wide range of territories and audiences, confirmed by the official selections at industry events/pitch such as IDFA Forum 2020, Sunny Side 2020, MIA Market 2019, London PFM 2019 and Lisbon Docs.

BRUNELLA FILÌ | AUTHOR, DIRECTOR, PRODUCER (ITALY)

She's an awarded Director & Producer from Italy. Brunella was selected for MEDIA talents 2020. In 2014, she founded her production company, Officinema Doc . She collaborates with University Ca' Foscari in Venice, where she teaches Documentary Cinema. "Sea Sisters" will be her 3rd international feature film, after the multi-awarded "Emergency Exit" (Coproduced with USA, distributed on Netflix, Amazon and Google) and "Alla Salute" (distributed on SKY Channel after many Festival's screenings) and winner at Biografilm International Festival 2018 of two awards, Audience pick Winner at HotDocsToronto 2019, Best Documentary at Houston WorldFestival 2020, and winner of other awards.

MATHIS MATHISEN - ALEKSANDER OLAI KORSNES | CO-PRODUCERS (NORWAY)

Mathis is a producer from the Arctic town of Alta, co founder of **Rein Film Finnmark** with Aleksander Olai Korsnes. Mathis was selected at Berlinale Talents 2019, Young Nordic Producers Cannes 2018 and EAVE Producer 2020. He has co produced two international feature films, a television drama, and has produced a feature film with Norway's Hollywood based director Tommy Wirkola, plus documentaries and shorts. Olai and Mathis successfully experienced on international co-productions ("Donne-moi des ailes", FR-NOR), are a valuable resource for SS, sharing with us goals, strategies and a remarkable knowledge of Scandinavian market. <https://www.reinfilm.no/>

PRODUCTION NOTES

SEA SISTERS is a co-production between **ITALY and NORWAY**, with a co-production agreement already signed. We are in the middle of development stage. We are planning to start filming researches in Norway from February 2021 and, also, to involve a Norwegian co-writer to bring in the narrative all the strength of Sandra's Nordic background. In case the pandemic doesn't allow us to travel, the filmed research will be guaranteed anyway thanks to our Norwegian co-producers REIN FILM efforts. The creative contribution of Norway will also be given by: the envisaged original **Sami** soundtrack; the archive materials (thanks to the **National Norway's Film Archive**, with which REIN FILM collaborates actively); the research on gender issues with Prof. Siri Gerrard (**UiT University**). REIN FILM will be also in charge of logistical and technical support in the **Arctic Region**. Sandra Eira guarantee to our team a concrete support from the **Sami Parliament** (she's in charge until 2022), to discuss creative and financing contribution to the project. With the intent of exploiting the cross-border potential of SS, we involved **minority Brazilian co-producer** CONTRAPONTO, to improve creative/financing/distributive chances in IberoAmerica. Our expectations if selected for **North Pitch** are meeting Norwegian funders, broadcasters, sales agents from Europe, pre sales in Scandinavia/Europe and to establish connections with local filming institutions and Scandinavian partners. Also, the pre-pitch workshop guidance could really help us to improve our presentation and pilot to all the decision makers.

FINANCING

ESTIMATED TOTAL BUDGET: € 400.102,83

BRIEF ESTIMATED FINANCIAL PLAN:

ITALY	€	280.102,82	70,0%	
OFFICINEMA DOC - Company Investment, researches, scouting, rights, markets attending, ecc.	€	15.500,00	3,9%	Confirmed
APULIA FILM COMMISSION - Regional Development Fund	€	10.000,00	2,5%	Confirmed
POOYA S.A.S. - Private Investors Contribution	€	5.000,00	1,2%	Confirmed
CITY OF GALLIPOLI - Private Investors Contribution	€	5.000,00	1,2%	Confirmed
CREIS Associazione - Private Investors Contribution	€	5.000,00	1,2%	Confirmed
GAL Terre d'Arneo - Private Investors Contribution	€	5.000,00	1,2%	Confirmed
MiBACT Selective Contribution - Italian Government Development Fund	€	19.199,73	4,8%	Pending
IBERMEDIA PROGRAMME - Development Fund	€	10.000,00	2,5%	Confirmed
Creative Europe - MEDIA Single Project	€	25.000,00	6,2%	To apply
APULIA FILM COMMISSION - Film Production Fund	€	40.000,00	10,0%	To apply
MiBACT Selective Contribution - Italian Government Film Production Fund	€	40.387,67	10,1%	To apply
ITALIAN BROADCASTER (RAI)	€	40.000,00	10,0%	Under consideration
CO-PRODUCERS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES	€	60.015,42	15,0%	Under consideration
Company Financing, National Co-production Funds, Private Investors, Broadcasters				
NORWAY	€	100.000,00	25,0%	
REIN FILM - Technical Equipment, Services, Scouting, Creative team	€	4.000,00	1,0%	Confirmed
REIN FILM - Norwegian Film Institute Co- Production Fund, Nordnorsk Filmsenter Fund, Filmfond Nord, Nordic Culture Point, Sami Film Institute, Sami Parliament, Sami Council, NRK or other Scandinavian Broadcaster	€	96.000,00	24,0%	In progress
BRAZIL	€	20.000,00	5,0%	
CONTRAPONTO - Development Company Financing	€	2.000,00	0,5%	Confirmed
CONTRAPONTO - IBERMEDIA/Co-Production, ANCINE/Prodecine 6	€	18.000,00	4,5%	In progress

