

ON THE SAME BOAT

a film by Stefania Muresu

Italy, 2017 - 71' - documentary

Synopsis

A video camera bursts into a reception centre for asylum seekers in the Mediterranean island of Sardinia. Toni came from Libya on a boat, one that would bind friendships and destinies and upon which lives seeking freedom are entrusted. In another part, a hut in the woods is being built, an emotional representation of a journey crossing frontiers. They're all floating on "the same boat", however, as their common destiny is to seek recognition, granted by a document which bestows them the dignity of self-determination and free movement within European borders.



Director's notes

On the Same Boat is the result of an encounter, the inner voice of memory: moving from a country to another is a human need for freedom, just like breathing. In the current context of forced migration, where physical and political barriers have marked the death of thousands of persons in the Mediterranean Sea, the movie offers an opportunity for pondering on the contemporary biographies of those who are forced to migrate and risk their lives because of the blockade policy of “Fortress Europe”.

The dream of freedom of movement gets restricted within the confines of the refugee camps and the asylum seeking process, in a place with natural borders like those of an island such as Sardinia, where the protagonists arrive and are given a bed place on which they're consumed by the wait, in lingering conditions lasting days, months, years...

The static images of empty landscapes full of routine life around the refugee camps are disrupted by an unusual encounter: a video-camera used to piece together the fragments of one's memory, capturing forever one's own passage on this side of the European frontiers, singing the nostalgia for one's country, living next to the sea from which one came and its horizon line along which dreams are sown. The subjective frames educe the emotions of the protagonists who lend their gaze to the participatory camera: the fear, the dangers in Libya, the crossing, the rescue, the disillusionment of the dream of freedom, the hope of gaining the refugee status.

On the Same Boat is also a film on 'making documentaries' and on the search for new audio-visual languages. It is a long-term observation project and a collaborative film, in which the characters are also co-authors of the narration.

In an intense black and white that eliminates time and place of the film, the “truth” of the story is entrusted to the colour cell-phone images taken by the co-author Usman from Pakistan. The memory of the mounts of Gurugu in Marocco, land border in the Spanish enclave of Melilla, is instead entrusted to the filmed reconstruction of a hut made of canes and plastic. Toni, of Syrian origin but a Libyan resident for over 15 years, recounts the story that united the destinies of the protagonists who left Libya “on the same boat”, the representation of a shared experience on the trafficking of human beings and the violence which now place Libya at the centre of the issue about forced migration in the Mediterranean, the negotiations of human rights and the responsibilities of European politics.



Production notes

On The Same Boat collects personal life and travel stories of asylum seekers who arrived in Sardinia, through the use of an original cinematographic language which unites the reality of video interviews with a black-and-white photography that filters the reality's observation and gives room to the emotions of memory.

The story is composed of woven narratives that search for the paths taken by the protagonists who lived different moments within the same journey up to Sardinia.

With great difficulty, the video-camera has been a journey and research companion within the refugee camps: considered invasive, disrespectful, superficial, blatantly expensive, useless tool of inconvenient captures. The only way of using it with respect has been that of sharing it and leave it in the hands of those who wanted to tell about themselves.

Contacts

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Director's Bio

Stefania Muresu is a visual sociologist, photographer and film-director. Educated at the University of Seville and University of Urbino, she has a strong background in visual ethnography and social issues, and she has participated in several workshops and masterclasses in documentary cinema and visual storytelling in Europe. Since 2007 she collaborates with Roda Film/ 4Caniperstrada as director and visual researcher developing and producing reportage and social documentaries. Together with Fabian Volti, she has directed the anthropological documentary *Lights at sea* in 2015 (70', ITA-SIEFF 2014, Festival Pecheurs du Monde, Life After Oil). Currently she is coordinating a visual project called Participatory Video in Sardinia, a long term research on new cinema languages and collaborative film, which so far has produced three documentary shorts films, and is sponsored and supported by the Sardinian Film Fund and conducted in collaboration with the Archivio Memorie Migranti and Zalab. "On The Same Boat" (2017, ITA, 71') , is her first feature film she has conducted as single director, and it has been screened in competitive selection at Visioni dal Mondo Film Festival in October 2017.



Credits

Italy, 2017 - 71' - documentary

Duration 71'

Country Italia

Year 2017

Format HD 16:9 B/W

Original languages arabo, urdu, mandinke, inglese

Production Roda Film

Supported by Associazione culturale 4CaniperStrada

In collaboration with Archivio delle Memorie Migranti

Director Stefania Muresu

Co-director Usman Aziz, Toni Khalifa, Sulayman Suwareh

with Usman Aziz, Toni Khalifa, Sulayman Suwareh, Kissima Touray, Saidou Sonko, John Cina, Waqas Ahmed, Adulai Baldeh

Cinematography Usman Aziz, Alessandro Fanari, Pavlo Hntenko, Stefania Muresu, Valentina Spanu, Fabian Volti

Editing Alessandro Fanari, Stefania Muresu, Marco Testoni

Sound Alessandro Fanari, Pavlo Hnatenko, Stefania Muresu, Valentina Spanu

Music Marco Colonna

Audio mix Carlo Doneddu

Color grading Luigi Bosio

Production assistant Fabian Volti

Arabic translation Mustafa Marchych

Urdu translation Usman Aziz, Waqas Ahmed

Mandinka translation Sulayman Suwareh

English translation Gabriel Tzeggai

Italian subtitles Daniela Piu

Consultant Gabriel Tzeggai

Graphics Diego Ganga