

“The Book of the Sea”

Animadoc by Aleksei Vakhrushev



Sinopsis

In the frigid waters off of Russia’s Bering Strait, Inuit and Chukchi hunters still seek out the giant sea mammals that sustained their people since time immemorial. Life meets myth as a new generation of hunters sets out to sea to hunt the whales, walrus, and seals that have tied them to these remote shores since the beginning of time.

The contemporary story of elders Alexander and Alexei blends seamlessly with that of “the woman who gave birth to a whale” and other ancient myths, told here in vivid animation, in this ongoing struggle for survival and preservation of a traditional lifestyle in one of the most remote places on earth.

A spectacular and visually impressive cinematic story about the vitality of the ancient Arctic culture.

Official Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/294771208>

Credits

Script Writer and Director	Aleksei Vakhrushev
Directors of Photography	Vyacheslav Makaryev, Ruslan Fedotov
Art Director and Lead Animator	Eduard Belyayev
Music by	Alexander Tavrizyan
Edit by	Julia Trofimenko
Sound by	Mariya Ushenina, Sergei Ovcharenko
Executive Producers	Svetlana Yakovleva, Lyudmila Veber
Producer	Aleksei Vakhrushev

Data

Duration 85 min
Year of Production 2018
Original languages Russian, Inuit (Siberian Yupik), Chukchi
Video HD 16:9
Sound Dolby Digital 5.1
Theatrical format DCP
Production High Latitudes ltd

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/TheBookOfTheSea/>



Directors Statement

The history of the indigenous peoples of Chukotka of the last hundred years – is the story of the alienation of these peoples from their roots. Our film is about overcoming of this alienation, weaving together two storylines and techniques: Documentary and Clay Animation.

I am strongly convinced that preserving the Cultural identity and spiritual heritage is one of the most important topics of a modern human.

Contacts

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Aleksei Vakhrushev
(Director, Script Writer, Producer)

Festivals and Screenings

- 61. DOK Leipzig 2018 (International and German Premiere Nov 1st, 2018)
- 21. Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival 2019
- Hot Docs 2019 (North American and Canadian Premiere May 2nd, 2019)
- San Francisco DocFest 2019 (U.S. Premiere June 6th, 2019)
- 12. Artdocfest IFF 2018 (Latvia, Riga)
- Russian Film Week in UK and Golden Unicorn Awards 2018 (UK)
- 15. EURASIA International Film Festival (the Republic of Kazakhstan)
- 27. Russian Film Festival "Window to Europe" (Russia, Vyborg)
- 29. Montréal First Peoples' Festival Présence autochtone (Canada)
- MakeDox Documentary Film Festival (Macedonia)
- International Film Festival of Asian-Pacific countries "Pacific Meridian" (Russia)
- Russian Film Week in Iceland 2019
- Film by the Sea IFF 2019 (the Netherlands)
- Barents Ecology Film Festival (Russia, Archangelsk)
- 16. Annual Indigenous Film&Art Festival (USA, Denver)
- Asia Pacific Screen Awards 2019, in Competition
- etc.

Awards

- Russian National Documentary "The Laurel Branch" Award 2018, nominee in the Best Art Film category
- RAI Anthropological Film Festival 2019. Winner. The Material Culture Film Prize
- 16th International Ethno Film Festival (Croatia). Winner. The Golden Heart of Slavonia Main Prize
- 12. International Film Festival in Cheboksary, Chuvash Republic. Winner. Best Direction.
- Rome Independent Cinema Festival 2019. Semi-finalist
- 18th Baikal International Film Festival "People and Environment" (Russia, Irkutsk). Winner. Best Cinematography
- 20. imagineNATIVE Film+Media Arts Festival (Canada). Winner. Best Indigenous Language Production



Review by the 61. DOK Leipzig



Two hunters in the Bering Strait in deepest north-east Russia. They are hunting to provide for their families and the inhabitants of their village. In the midst of the white expanse of ice they stalk the seals, circle the whales in the sea in their boats until the right moment for the harpoon has come. For the inhabitants of this icy region hunting is part of a special coexistence with nature. Not as a phrase to describe a peaceful co-existence despite everything but as an inextricable link – at least from the human point of view.

The past and present of this way of life are interwoven in the ancient stories that accompany them. In “The Book of the Sea”, the filmmaker Aleksei Vakhrushev, son and cinematographic herald of the Inuit and Chukchi culture, intercuts ethnographic and landscape shots of the icy expanses with animated sequences in warm earth colours which resonate with an archaic but ever-present echo of the myths of the indigenous population of far east Russia. These elements combine to produce a haunting testimony of life in the Arctic.

Fabian Tietke