



ages that build this film.

Ancestral heritage. Occasionally there is voice-over from the director. But interestingly it never attempts to further comment on the action of the film. Instead, it speaks of the making of the film itself in concise clear statements: «The images I make are a record of the times and the people working in this creek».

There is no music in the film,

also with minimal editing and dialogue. During the night-fishing scenes, only the flashlights they themselves hold illuminate the men and their nets. We just watch what is going on. We often only see the backs of the fishermen. These men were taught by observation over many years. And that's what this film mirrors for us. We feel as if we ourselves are youth, let in on this secret of ancestral heritage.

One of the themes in the film is a sustainable blue economy. A young man remarks, «A friend once said to me, we should take up our traditional business – fishing. I told him, traditionally fishing is not a business, our ancestors just made a living out of it».

Patience, skill, luck. Big-business fishing is rampant these days and it is rapidly depleting the oceans and lakes around

the world. Bycatch occurs at a staggering volume with hundreds of species caught and killed in order to catch only one species of fish. This film shows us that fishing was not meant to be an activity played out on a mass scale. It is a form of hunting, originally meant to help humans survive. «Fish are a natural wealth, for the poor», says a fisherman. Fishing is not meant to cause the destruction of marine environments as bottom trawling and overfishing do, leaving a barren landscape in its wake.

Ancestral techniques passed down from father to son over many generations are still being used for survival.

This film is powerful in its simplicity and remarkable in how it touches on many themes in a concise way over its short runtime. *The Ebb Tide* is not perfect, nor is it trying to be. It is a quiet, contemplative and calm film. Fishing is a languid activity taking patience, skill, and luck. The film is a reflection of this in its slow unhurried nature.

Screened at **Dok Leipzig documentary film festival** and other festivals.

tristen@fastermilesanhour.com

Ada's story

TRAUMA: A certain kind of trauma more common than we're willing to admit **BY BIANCA-OLIVIA NITA**

That Which Does Not Kill

Director Alexe Poukine
Belgium, France

In 2013, at the end of a screening of Alexe Poukine's first feature film, a woman (Ada) approached her and told her a story. It was the story of what happened to her nine years earlier, something that almost a decade later she still struggled to come to terms with. She was 19 back then and had freshly embarked on the adventure of life, having moved to Lille to study and live with a friend. But shortly after, a man she knew raped her three times within a one-week period, and it changed the course of her life. After meeting her again and having her write down what happened, Poukine turned Ada's story into a film.

Embodying. Its structure is so simple but so powerful. Several people narrate Ada's story in the first person, like it's theirs, while Poukine films and interacts with them at times. The result is a visceral portrait of what happened to this woman, and its collective narration goes beyond the limits of what the story is. «Embodying» Ada's words awakens the narrator's own feelings and experiences. Their emotions unfold to reveal their own process

of embodying her, their judgments, and how they came to understand the young woman deeper. This turns everything into a mosaic that illustrates just how commonplace sexual abuse actually is.

Becoming. The narrative is captivating, arresting and extremely intimate, alternating facts with feelings and introspections, keeping the viewer wanting to know what happened next. Beyond that, it is the storytellers' own reflections on what «becoming Ada» meant to them that opens up a new dimension in the film. Their experience comforts the viewer with just how easy it is to judge the victim, for example, when the story does not comply with the commonly understood idea of what rape actually means. Even though such an experience is complex in many ways, it is most often reduced to basic facts. It is by adding all the definitory micro-elements usually unseen – of thoughts and actions unfolding at the moment in real-time – that others can truly begin to empathize and understand.

It's these exact elements that make *That Which Does Not Kill* so vivid. Not only those of Ada's story but all those personal ones that surface from the storytellers' points of view. None of the women in the film



is Ada yet all of them become parts of her. So, the sum of the collective telling of an unseen woman's story becomes a portrait of the sexual relations of power between people, and of how commonplace – intentional of not – sexually traumatic experiences are among all of them.

At the fine line between what we desire and what we don't, between unspoken wants and questions not asked, there seems to lie a shared, scarred past. Some of the narrators have been sexually abused, while some others have struggled to find boundaries, inflicted pain themselves, or have gone through experiences that left them searching in the ambiguity and discomfort of what they meant. What they all have in common, however, is the reality of how those moments changed them. Witnessing what they have to say about their feelings and the recalling of their past is confrontational, as these experiences are relatable - as parts of what they tell are the parts of stories many of us have lived or heard.

Ada's story opens a common human space, revealing how abuse can actually lie in the familiar

A common human space. It is by finding this common ground that the film challenges the idea of sexual trauma as it is socially defined – an ill-intended abuser, eventually a stranger, inflicting hurt by force. By relating, one can no longer instinctively say «this never happened to me». Ada's story opens a common human space, revealing how abuse can actually lie in the familiar, in common people's instincts, in not asking, not saying or not having the power to say no, or simply in not recognizing what is happening as unwanted or traumatic, until sometime after the damage is done. At the end, *That Which Does Not Kill* is not a film reflecting only on her story, but a film reflecting society as a whole. And that opens an unexpected space for empathy, for introspection and for mindfully looking at sexual trauma as an experience that is more commonplace than we are willing to admit.

olivianita@outlook.com