



WHERE

IS

IN 2017 OVER 170.000 PEOPLE
CROSSED THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

EUROPE?

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY VALENTINA SIGNORELLI

CAMERA AND EDITING LORENZO GIOVENGA | SOUND DESIGN LORENZO PIANI
PRODUCED BY DAITONA SRL | JACOPO SARTORI | VALENTINA SIGNORELLI
SPECIAL THANKS TO SOS MEDITERRANEE AND THE MSF TEAM

DAITONA SRL

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SYNOPSIS

“Where is Europe?” is a 15-min docu-film exploring the role of NGOs in the Mediterranean Sea through the eyes of their crew members. The project is filmed on board the rescue ship “Aquarius”, coordinated by the Italian-French-German NGO “SOS MEDITERRANEE” while the ship is temporarily docked at the Italian port of Catania to restock and crew-change. The film focuses on three core aspects: (i) The impact of the ‘waiting’ by following those everyday activities that surround the preparation of each mission and which are generally underrepresented and undocumented by mass media. (ii) The necessity of redesigning the European political narrative of boat migration by shifting the focus from the body of the migrant to the voices of NGO’s crew members. (iii) The significance of the European identity in these times of unstable international politics.

CONTEXT AND VISUAL REFERENCES

In the past few years, Europe has seen unprecedented changes in its political and economic stability, such as the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union along with the rise of populist right-wing and separatist movements and mass migration from overseas countries, often through unregulated and unsafe routes. In particular, the migration crisis in the Mediterranean has become more and more consistent. According to UNHCR, in 2017 alone over 170.000 people have crossed the Mediterranean Sea.* Parallel to national coastguards, several NGOs intervene in supporting rescue operations. At the same time, part of the public discourse opposes NGOs by claiming for the end of their missions in order to safeguard what some generically call the *real European identity*.

Several filmmakers have addressed the phenomenon of boat migration in their works: among the others, we can recall e.g. Gianfranco Rosi’s “*Fuocoammare - Fire At Sea*”, which won the Golden Bear at the Berlinale in 2016, Jonas Carpignano’s “*Mediterranea*”, presented at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival Critics Week and Corriere della Sera’s 2015 web-series “*La Scelta di Catia - Catia’s Choice*”. The main visual trend of these and other related works puts the body of the migrant at the centre of the action, showing the rescue operations with great pathos and detail and indeed exposing migrants to potential identification and danger. However, very little has been explored of the other side of these operations: what happens before and after each rescue, who are the Europeans involved and why they decided to volunteer on board. This is why “Where is Europe?” focuses on what is often unreported and untold by the media: the other side of the rescue operations. This film hopes to promote international dialogue by redesigning the narrative of migration in the current divided and divisive political and media landscape.

*Data referring to January-December 2017. More information can be found at <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

The morning of the 24th of June 2016 was the worst of my life. The outcome of the Brexit referendum raised quite soon a weird awareness of separation in the public sphere. The media started to talk about the impact of Brexit on the economy, the British prime minister resigned and hate crime rates were randomly rising at disturbing speed. I have been living in London for almost five years, completing my PhD Film and contributing to the education of several students here whilst, at the same time, I was also seasonally teaching at *Sapienza - University of Rome* in Italy and producing films and commercials with my colleagues at Daitona's.

However, that was the first time that a consistent part of the British media changed the identification status of other Europeans from "EU citizens" to "EU migrants" in their articles, videos and communication strategy. It was the first time of my life that I was called by someone else the words "European" and "migrant". I started to question myself about aspects of identity and migration and I was wondering whether there might be a co-relation between these two statuses and concepts. Above all, I was interested in understanding what happens when politics reinforces its narrative around discourses of migration and identity. I was born in 1989. I haven't lived the war. I don't remember the Berlin wall. I have never been hungry a single day of my life. As a *millennial*, I often benefited from my EU status by working, studying, travelling and living in any country of Europe without being afraid of acting illegally. It was, for me - as it's been for an entire generation - easy, natural, taken from granted. It was in this Brexit mood that, during a trip to Sicily - a beautiful island in my native country of Italy - that I witnessed a disembarkment at the port of Palermo. Of course, that was not the first time that I had seen a person migrating through unsafe routes. But it was in that exact moment that I realized that maybe there was something I could do. So, I decided to do the only thing I can do well in my life: to tell a story.

"Where is Europe?" is a story of migration, but without any migrants.

"Where is Europe?" is a story of European politics and its limits, but without any institution involved.

"Where is Europe?" is a story of European identity and the future of the Union, but for the first time experienced through the eyes and voices of the most underrepresented, unheard and untold parts of Europe: its citizens.

I was able to carry and complete this project only thanks to the pivotal support of SOS MEDITERRANEE and their MSF team onboard. Above all, a special thanks goes to my colleagues at Daitona's which produced and contributed to the making of this short film.

I hope this project could help re-design the divisive narrative and visual features of migration in these contemporary times of unstable international politics.

THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

Daitona s.r.l. was born on February 29th, 2016. It was co-founded by Jacopo Sartori, Lorenzo Giovenga, Lorenzo Lazzarini, Valentina Signorelli and Chiara Serangeli. The company specializes in multimedia audiovisual services combining cinematic-style techniques across traditional and digital media. **Intermediality** and **crossmediality** are at the core of the company's ethics and aesthetics. Among its key productions we find the historical short-film "Gemma di Maggio" starring actor Franco Nero, winning over twenty prizes around the world, the award-winning docu-film "Anséra - Trace The Future", the forthcoming comedy feature "Daitona" starring actress Ornella Muti and over twenty advertising campaigns for top brands such as Vodafone and Subito.it. Daitona is based in **Rome** and **Milan** but operates all around Europe.

THE DIRECTOR

Valentina Signorelli (PhD Film) was born in Bergamo, Italy in 1989. She holds a BA in Literature, Music and Performing Arts and an MA in Film Studies from *Sapienza - University of Rome*. In 2012, she won the Silver Prize in the category Reality Tv Concept at the Hollywood Screenplay Contest in Los Angeles. In 2013 she moved to London to complete her PhD Film at the *University of Westminster*, with a thesis which explores the impact of the digital in practices of film adaptation and transmedia storytelling. She has worked for several newspaper, radio, commercial and film projects of both fiction and documentary nature before co-founding Daitona with Jacopo Sartori, Chiara Serangeli, Lorenzo Lazzarini and Lorenzo Giovenga in 2016. In the same year, she co-wrote and co-directed the award winning docu-film "Anséra - Trace The Future". For Daitona she collaborates as one of the key screenwriters and documentary directors along with being in charge as the head of Research and Development. She writes both in Italian and English. She currently lives in London, UK.

TECHNICAL INFO

Title	Where is Europe?
Country of Origin	Italy
Year	2018
Running Time	15'
Genre	Docu-film
Languages	English, Italian
Shooting Format	Video/Colour
Ratio	16:9

Produced by	Daitona s.r.l. Jacopo Sartori Valentina Signorelli
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Written and Directed by	Valentina Signorelli
Starring	"Aquarius"

Camera and Video Editing	Lorenzo Giovenga
Sound Design and Editing	Lorenzo Piani
Music by	Halfchicken Cranberry Sound Publisher: Audio Jungle D. O'Brien, C. Edan Publisher: Audio Network

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