



MEDIA RELEASE

May 10, 2023

Best Environmental Film Prize Awarded to Healthy Seas at the Cannes World Film Festival

Healthy Seas won in the Best Environmental Film Category for its short documentary “Journey to Ithaca” at the Cannes World Film Festival - Remember the Future. Directed by Michael Westreicher, the 15-minute film tells the story of the biggest cleanup to date by Healthy Seas and its partners.

After it went bankrupt, a fish farm was abandoned on the island of Ithaca in Greece and for ten years it was wreaking havoc to the marine environment, local community and maritime traffic.

A local environmentalist by the name of George Lilas decided to do something about it and publicized photos of the catastrophe on social media, getting the attention of Healthy Seas that was able to mobilise funding and partners to help restore the area. Seventy six (76) tons of marine litter was removed in just 8 days by volunteers underwater and at the surface.

[Hyundai Motor Europe](#) provided funding for the project, that wouldn't have been possible was it not also for the precious support of many other partners such as [Ghost Diving](#), [Enaleia](#), [Kefalonia Fisheries](#), the Hellenic Coast Guard, [Odyssey Outdoor Activities](#), [Aquatic Scuba Diving Club](#), [Scubalife](#), the [Municipality of Ithaca](#) and Prefecture of Ionian Islands, [Kosamare](#) and the [Ionian Environment Foundation](#) and the [Decentralized Administration of Peloponnisos, Western Greece and Ionian](#) that gave the permission for the cleanup. The project was held under the Auspice of the Hellenic Ministry of Maritime Affairs.

“Being part of this project was an eye-opening experience for me. I have dived all over the world but nowhere have I seen such devastation to the marine environment caused by human negligence. I hope that this award will help raise awareness about pollution and inspire many to take action,” says Michael Westreicher, director of the documentary “Journey to Ithaca”.

The "Luciole d'Or" (Golden Firefly), which epitomizes the "Cannes World Film Festival", is on a mission — to unearth rare gems, highlighting a New Generation of emerging talents and a Future Wave of Filmmakers deserving greater visibility and recognition.

Cannes World Film Festival - Remember the Future has become a not-to-be missed cultural event of international scope that is already a huge success with the new generation. Recognized by the professionals of Cinema, Music and the International Press, but not only, it also seduces the older generation.

Among the awarded films at the Cannes World Film Festival are starring some of the world-renowned stars & celebrities such as:

CLINT EASTWOOD, BRUCE WILLIS, YOKO ONO, H.H THE DALAI LAMA, SIR RICHARD BRANSON, JENNIFER LOPEZ, ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR., JON VOIGHT, MALCOLM MCDOWELL, ERIC ROBERTS, TIPPI HEDREN, DAVID LACHAPPELLE, LANCE HENRIKSEN, LINDSAY WAGNER, MICHAEL MADSEN, ANITA EKBERG, LAMBERT WILSON, to name a few.

[Watch the Journey to Ithaca trailer](#)

[Watch the Journey to Ithaca documentary](#)

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Notes to Editors:

Photos:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/rmcfi0t0lxlgpt9knxfvy/h?dl=0&rlkey=f68x1mfyxw6rtdhbm5pvalvb0>

About the Director

Michael Westreicher was born in the early 80s in Tirol, Austria. His first love was music, which is still an important part in his life and also his films. He started his diving career in 2011 while on vacation. Back in Austria, he did a lot of specialty dive education, always taking his action cam with him. In 2015, he started his diving education at Global Underwater Explorers, a leader in the field while he also focused on filming. In 2019 he switched from an action cam to a high quality video cam.

Michael is a self-taught filmmaker, first using freeware and later on Adobe software. In his films, music is still the most important creative aspect.

About Healthy Seas

Healthy Seas is an international non-profit organisation whose mission is to remove waste from the seas, in particular fishing nets, for the purpose of creating healthier seas and recycling marine litter into textile products. The recovered fishing nets will be transformed and regenerated by Aquafil, together with other nylon waste, into ECONYL® yarn, a high-quality raw material used to create new products, such as socks, swimwear, sportswear or carpets. Since its founding in 2013, Healthy Seas has collected over 905 tons of fishing nets and other marine litter with the help of volunteer divers and fishers.

<https://www.healthyseas.org/>

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