

The background of the poster is a composite image. The upper half shows the back of a person with dark skin, with their arms slightly away from their body. The lower half shows a vast, deep blue ocean with a small sailboat with a blue and white sail moving from left to right, leaving a white wake. The sky is a pale, hazy blue with some light clouds.

الأطلنطي Atlantic.

A film by Jan-Willem van Ewijk



Atlantic.

A film by Jan-Willem van Ewijk

Nederland, België, Duitsland, Marokko | 2014 | 94 minuten

In zijn verlangen naar vrijheid is de jonge visser Fettah vastberaden om op zijn surfplank via de Atlantische Oceaan naar Europa te reizen. Een poëtische en visueel overweldigende speelfilm over het verlangen naar vrijheid om te gaan en staan waar je wilt en te zijn wie je wil zijn.

ATLANTIC. van regisseur (en surfer) Jan-Willem van Ewijk wordt geproduceerd door Bero Beyer (PARADISE NOW), de cast bestaat onder andere uit Thekla Reuten, de Marokkaanse acteur Mohamed Majid (INCENDIES, SYRIANA) en de surfer-acteur Fettah Lamara.

VANAF 23 APRIL 2015 IN DE BIOSCOOP



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SYNOPSIS

Fettah, een jonge visser woont in een kleine geïsoleerde Marokkaanse gemeenschap aan de Atlantische kust. Elke zomer trekt hij op met de jonge Europeanen die naar zijn dorp komen om er op de machtige golven van de Atlantische oceaan te surfen. Tijdens de winters oefent hij met het materiaal dat de surfers achterlaten en hij ontwikkelt zich tot een geweldige surfer, elk jaar weer beter dan de vorige zomer. Maar de winters zijn ook eenzaam en Fettah droomt van een leven buiten zijn dorp dat onbereikbaar is omdat hij zijn oude vader niet wil achterlaten.

Tijdens een zomer brengt een Nederlandse vriend, Jan, zijn vriendin Alexandra mee. Fettah wordt verliefd maar opnieuw realiseert hij zich dat haar wereld buiten zijn bereik ligt. Dit keer breekt zijn hart als het surfseizoen voorbij is en de toeristen weer vertrekken. Fettah neemt het besluit om zijn dorp te verlaten om op zijn surfplank via de Atlantische Oceaan naar Europa te reizen.



CAST & CREW

Crew:

Writer & Director	Jan-Willem van Ewijk
Producer	Bero Beyer
Co-Writer	Abdelhadi Samih
Director of Photography	Jasper Wolf n.s.c.
Editor	Mona Bräuer
Sound Recordist	Christian Monheim
Sound Editor	Gervaise Demeure
Sound Mixer	Franco Piscopo
Composer	Piet Swerts
Songs by	Mourad Belouadi
Line Producers	Marianne Lambert
	Souâd Lamriki
Associate Producers	Nöelle Haitisma
	Steven Novick
	Aron Thompson
	Philip Meyers
	Karl Dillon
	Hans Oerlemans
Associate Producers for NTR	Marina Blok
	Sandra Beerends
	Astrid Prickaerts
Co-producers	Marion Hänsel
	Fabian Massah
	Jan-Willem van Ewijk

This film was made possible in part with support from the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program and the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art. Participant of the Binger Filmlab. Presented at Cinemart of the International Film Festival Rotterdam. Presented at Les Arcs Works in Progress. Recipient of NPP Kodak development award. Recipient of Filmmore Works in Progress award.

**Cast:**

Fettah Lamara	as	Fettah
Thekla Reuten	as	Alexandra
Mohamed Majd	as	Hakim
Boujmaa Guilloul	as	Boujmaa
Hassna Souidi	as	Rahma
Soufyan Sahli	as	Soufyan
Wisal Hatimi	as	Wisal
Driss Hakimi	as	Old fisherman
Jan-Willem van Ewijk	as	Jan



DIRECTOR

Jan-Willem van Ewijk

Born in Holland and raised partly in California, Jan-Willem van Ewijk became fascinated with spaceships after seeing *Star Wars* as a child. He went on to study aerospace engineering and graduated as an airplane designer from the Delft University of Technology. He worked for Airbus in France, Beechcraft in the US and Bombardier Aerospace in Canada, before being lured away to the world of big business and big money in London, where he worked as a business consultant and investment banker.

But he felt something essential was missing from his life. At the age of 33, he decided to quit his job, sell his apartment and pursue another passion that had been with him ever since he saw *Star Wars*. He wrote a script, bought a video camera, casted his friends and family as actors and crew and made his first feature film *NU*. Shot on a shoestring budget of \$20,000, the film won awards for best debut feature at the Dutch Film Festival, best feature at the European Independent Film Festival and was selected to compete at the Montreal World Film Festival and the Seattle International Film Festival. *Variety* called it “A small gem.”

Jan-Willem was invited to join the Sundance Lab with his second feature *Atlantic*, about a Moroccan windsurfer going on a long ocean journey. *Atlantic* was awarded the Kodak / NPP Development Award and the Filmmore Works In Progress Award at the Dutch film festival. Jan-Willem has just finished shooting and editing this film, which features non-actors in the lead, alongside experienced actors like Thekla Reuten (*THE AMERICAN* / *IN BRUGES*) and the late Mohamed Majd (*SYRIANA* / *INCENDIES*).

Director's Statement

In the spring of 2002, I visited Morocco for the first time and was immediately taken by this beautiful country. In search of good windsurf spots, I ended up in the small fishing village of



Moulay Bouzarqtoune. There was a group of children and young men hanging around us most of the day. Some of them had learned how to windsurf exceptionally well, sharing old, damaged equipment left behind by the tourists.

Years later, I returned to Morocco and became friends with several of these local windsurfers. The better I got to know them, the clearer it became how confusing their living circumstances were. On the one hand they lived in this beautiful surfer's paradise. On the other hand they lived on the brink of poverty in the face of all our wealth and freedom. They were better surfers than we were but could not afford good equipment. They were friends with European women who wore bikinis on the beach, but they were too poor to marry the women from their village. Western culture had infiltrated every aspect of their lives, yet they could never truly be part of it. They watched us come and go, but for them the borders were closed.

It was during this visit that I first had the idea to make a film about these Moroccan windsurfers. I imagined what would happen if one of them would windsurf to Europe. I worked with my friends from the village to come up with a story which I then developed into a script at Robert Redford's Sundance Lab and the Binger Filmlab. I also knew that I wanted people from the village to act in the lead roles as much as possible, and was extremely lucky to find that the person who had been the inspiration for the main character, Fettah Lamara, had a real, raw acting talent.

Together with an international crew of Moroccans, Dutch, Belgians and Germans we set out on the epic journey to shoot the film. I wanted everything to feel as real as possible, so we spent three weeks chasing Fettah on his windsurf board through the gigantic waves of the Atlantic. It was a gruesome adventure that pushed everyone to the edge of what they could take and beyond, but it was also an incredibly deep and rewarding spiritual experience that led to a very special film.



Jan-Willem van Ewijk, *Atlantic*.

16 December, 2014 | By Melanie Goodfellow

www.screendaily.com

Dutch director Jan-Willem van Ewijk explains to Melanie Goodfellow how a passion for windsurfing in Morocco was the inspiration for his film *Atlantic*.

Dutch filmmaker Jan-Willem van Ewijk's *Atlantic* follows a Moroccan windsurfing enthusiast who sets off from his fishing village for Europe, some 300 kilometres away across the sea.

The nail-biting tale of self-discovery, which premiered at TIFF earlier this year, has been praised as a "visual tour de force".

The film was produced by Dutch producer Bero Beyer of Augustus Film, alongside Belgium's Marion Hansel and Berlin-based Fabian Massah.

In January, the film will kick off the International Film Festival Rotterdam's new IFFR Live! Series, which will screen five films in European cinemas and on VOD platforms at the same time as they show in the festival. Prior to that, *Atlantic* has been playing to enthusiastic audiences in the Arabian Nights section of the Dubai International Film Festival this week, where Screen International caught up with van Ewijk.

Where did you get the idea for the film?

I'm into windsurfing. The place where the film is set, Moulay Bouzertoun, is a small fishing village on the Moroccan coast known for its waves.

I went there in 2002 and immediately fell in love with the place and people and have been going back there again and again ever since. There's a hard-core of 20 to 30 people who turn up every summer and stay in campers or take rooms with locals.

One year, I went back in the winter and was struck by how completely different the village was from the summer.

The young guys from the village, who enjoyed hanging out with us, and our girlfriends, were left behind when we packed up our cars and camper

vans and left at the end of the summer. I saw there was this discrepancy. It seemed like we brought a lot of freedom to their lives but we didn't. We came in and changed their lives and dreams but when we left there was the emptiness of having nothing to do and going back to fishing. Some became very depressed and started using a lot of drugs and I wondered what would happen to them if they just got on their boards and went.

So the locals are into windsurfing too?

We'd leave broken equipment behind which they would fix up. We'd come back a year later and they would have taught themselves how to windsurf. They became better and better and eventually they became better than us. One of them, Boujmaa Guilloul, who makes a cameo appearance in the film, became very famous.

Fettah Lamara, who plays the protagonist, hails from the village. Were you planning to cast locals from the start?

We had many, many casting sessions. We ended up drawing a lot of people from the village but we also saw people from nearby Essaouira as well as professional actors. I really wanted to work with real people. I was told to use professional actors. People were suggesting names like Tahar Rahim but I wanted Fettah from the start. It took me a while to convince everyone that Fettah was the one. Some said he wasn't photogenic, others he wasn't charismatic, so I had to fight for him.

The young actress who plays Fettah's besotted cousin, is also impressive. Was she a professional actress?

Her name is Hassna Souidi. She was amazing, so talented but she's just been rejected by acting school in Morocco. She's poor and doesn't have connections. The thing about her is that she's very quiet and timid in real life so during auditions I didn't really notice her but when I looked back through the tapes, I was like 'Who is this girl?' On the screen she was brilliant. We called her back and she nailed it.

Romanian director Adrian Sitaru, who was also on the set, because I was also in the film, so he would direct the scenes where I was acting, said she was brilliant to work with. Her talent is to really internalise those emotions.

The shoot was relatively short at 37 days – why did you shoot this way?

We had a month of rehearsals and pre-production and we just didn't have the money for a longer shoot. The last two weeks were on the sea, so we needed a helicopter, three boats and jet-skis. It was quite a capital-intensive movie. We stretched it to the maximum.

It was quite gruelling for Fettah. When you're moving on water it's fine but if you sit still at sea for a long time, you can get quite seasick. There's a scene where Fettah throws up, that was for real. We had the helicopter for one day, for which we crowd-funded – raising \$40,000 on Indiegogo. We used the same name crew that worked on Inception and the Bond films. They were brilliant.

The one thing we were dependent on was the wind because we could not change the day of the helicopter, once it was booked. In the morning, there was no wind, so we did all the scenes in the boat and then luckily the wind picked up and Fettah took off. We did all those scenes non-stop. It was beautiful.



"When I felt the sea under my feet for the first time I forgot about everything. It was incredible."

ATLANTIC.'s leading man Fettah Lamara was born in Rabat, Morocco's in 1974. As a young boy, Fettah was interested in everything but school. When he was about twenty years old, his uncle decided to arrange a job for him at the local sailing club. The minute Fettah discovered the ocean he was hooked. It wasn't long until Fettah became a sailing star, winning the top Moroccan youth sailing award several years in a row. He soon discovered windsurfing and it changed his life. "When I felt the sea under my feet for the first time I forgot about everything. It was incredible." At twenty-two, Fettah moved to Essaouira, Morocco's windsurf capital, and then to the village of Moulay Bouzerktoun, a dedicated, hard core windsurfing spot on the Atlantic coast known for its gigantic waves.

Fettah trained hard and won several Moroccan wave windsurfing championships. He also started his own restaurant and inn, the Lawama, and this where he met Jan-Willem van Ewijk for the first time in 2008. Jan-Willem frequently visited Moulay to set up his film project and soon he involved Fettah, who by that time had become a close friend. During the casting for ATLANTIC. Jan-Willem started including Fettah in the auditions and rehearsals it soon became evident he had found his man. None of the more experienced actors had the emotional baggage needed for the role, nor could they pull off the intense physical acting involved, let alone the actual windsurfing on the ocean. ATLANTIC. will be Fettah's feature film debut.



Thekla Reuten studied acting at the *Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten in Amsterdam*. After her studies, she assumed leading roles in Dutch film and theater productions, and was discovered soon after by European film productions. She has appeared in Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands in award-winning works such as *DE TRIP VAN TEETJE*, *KRUIMELTJE*, *ROSENSTRASSE*, *UNA BELLEZZA CHE NON LASCIA SCAMPO* (An Inescapable Beauty), and the Oscar nominated film *IEDEREEN BEROEMD!*.

Right at the beginning of her career, she was recognized as new outstanding talent in Europe with the *Shooting Star Award* of the Berlinale for her portrayal of Lotte in the film *DE TWEELING*, which was nominated for an Oscar for *Best Foreign Language Film*.

Important roles followed in film hits such as *IN BRUGES* with Colin Farrell, *HOTEL LUX*, *HET DINER* and *THE AMERICAN* (dir. Anton Corbijn) alongside George Clooney, as well as in the multi-award winning political thriller *WAFFENSTILLSTAND*.

Thekla Reuten speaks five languages (German, English, French, Dutch and Italian) and alongside her film career, she also appears in ambitious television series such as *HIDDEN* (BBC, Great Britain), *RESTLESS* (BBC, Great Britain), and *SLEEPER CELL* (Showtime, USA). Thekla Reuten also returns often to the theater in order to further refine her acting: Johan Simons' production - *FALL DER GÖTTER* (Fall of the Gods) and Rufus Norris' *BLOOD WEDDING* alongside Gael Garcia Bernal.

Both audience and press celebrate her extraordinary versatility and the precise sensitivity with which she brings her characters to life. Coming next, she can be seen in the Dutch movie *ATLANTIC*. and the British/Irish film production *THE LEGEND OF LONGWOOD* (release 19 April 2015) in the role of Lisa Miller. January 18 and 19, 2015 is the premiere of the *Rai Uno* tv-show *L'ANGELO DI SARAJEVO*. Furthermore in 2015 she will be seen in the Dutch movies *SCHONE HANDEN* and *DE REÜNIE*, and in the final season of the Dutch series *OVERSPEL*.

Thekla Reuten actively supports the organizations *The Green Film Making Project*/ *Strawberry Earth Academy* and *Terre des Hommes*.



Bero Beyer is an independent producer based in the Netherlands. Through his company *Augustus Film* (created in 2000) he has produced and co-produced a number of award winning films, like *RANA'S WEDDING*, which premiered in the Semaine de la Critique of the Cannes film festival 2002 and the first Palestinian Oscar nominated feature film *PARADISE NOW* (2005). In 2008 Bero co-produced the *Un Certain Regard* entry and Palestinian Oscar submission *SALT OF THIS SEA* by director Annemarie Jacir, which was lead produced by JBA, France.

Other co-productions include *Lifelong* by director Asli Ozge (*MEN ON THE BRIDGE*) set in Istanbul, produced by the Turkish Bulut Film with the German Razor Film and with ZDF/ARTE. The film had its international premiere in the Panorama section of the Berlinale 2013. The Indian-European coproduction *QISSA* by director Anup Singh set in Punjab was produced with Cologne based production house Heimat Film, coproduced by Thierry Lenouvel's CineSud, NFDC and ARTE. The film starring Irrfan Khan won the NETPAC award after its premiere at TIFF 2013. As of January 2013 Bero has commenced a three-year term as Film Consultant for the Dutch Film Fund, with priority Arthouse films and International Co-productions.





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