

FILM

Gaëlle's boat

2006. 53 min. Directed by Philippe Lubliner

By **Alain and Danièle le Sann**, associated with Pêche et Développement, France

Philippe Lubliner's 52-minute film "Gaëlle's boat" opens with the story of a fishing couple, Alain and his wife, Gaëlle, in Le Guilvinec, a village in Brittany, France, who are on the verge of retirement. The couple owns a boat—a gillnetter—on which they work along with their two sons. Neither of the sons, though both are keen on fishing and love the sea, want to take over the responsibility of the boat from their parents. The burden of ownership is too much to handle; being crewmembers is easier and more convenient.



Gaëlle's boat is still in a good state, and a young fisherman could very well become its owner but the reality is that the number of boats and fishermen in their port is diminishing everyday—a fact that dismays Alain and Gaëlle. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that what the couple is up against is really no less than European policy, which is aimed at reducing fishing fleets, even if large

sums of money, much more than the worth of the fishing assets, must be paid to achieve this end.

The story builds up to a finale around the couple's desperate attempts to hand down their boat even if it means losing money on it. Although it offers no easy solutions, the film severely criticizes European fishing policy and its support to the Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) regime, drawing our attention to its detrimental human impact.

Gaëlle's life is particularly movingly depicted. She wasn't born into a fishing milieu, yet, at the end of the 1980s, in order to help tide over a crisis in their lives in the middle of a bout of particularly cold and stormy weather, she decides to accompany her husband to work aboard his boat. The story is a testimony to Gaëlle's trials; how difficult and exhausting the job is; how it wears her out; how hard it is to raise children under such conditions, but also, how she grows to love the sea.

Gaëlle's presence in the film is overwhelming. She offers a humorous view, sometimes lucid, sometimes melancholic, of the craze her husband and his friends have for the sea. It makes you wonder how they will ever survive without fishing when they retire.

This film was awarded the first prize in the "Fishermen of the World" film festival held for the first time in March 2008, in Lorient, France. It is a must-watch for policy makers because it will give them an idea of the human impact of the policies they make. It is a must-watch also for every environmentalist who claims that there are too many fishermen out there at sea. The question is, of course, are these people listening? ♣



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Writers and potential contributors to YEMAYA, please note that write-ups should be brief, about 500 words. They could deal with issues that are of direct relevance to women and men of fishing communities. They could also focus on recent research or on meetings and workshops that have raised gender issues in fisheries. Also welcome are life stories of women and men of fishing communities working towards a sustainable

fishery or for a recognition of their work within the fishery. Please also include a one-line biographical note on the writer.

Please do send us comments and suggestions to make the newsletter more relevant. We look forward to hearing from you and to receiving regular write-ups for the newsletter.