

“The first and unique documentary spoken entirely
in the original Soqotri language”

*“Extraordinary, beautiful and passionate,
this melancholic journey to the forgotten
island of Sindbad”.*

Jacinto Antón. El País.

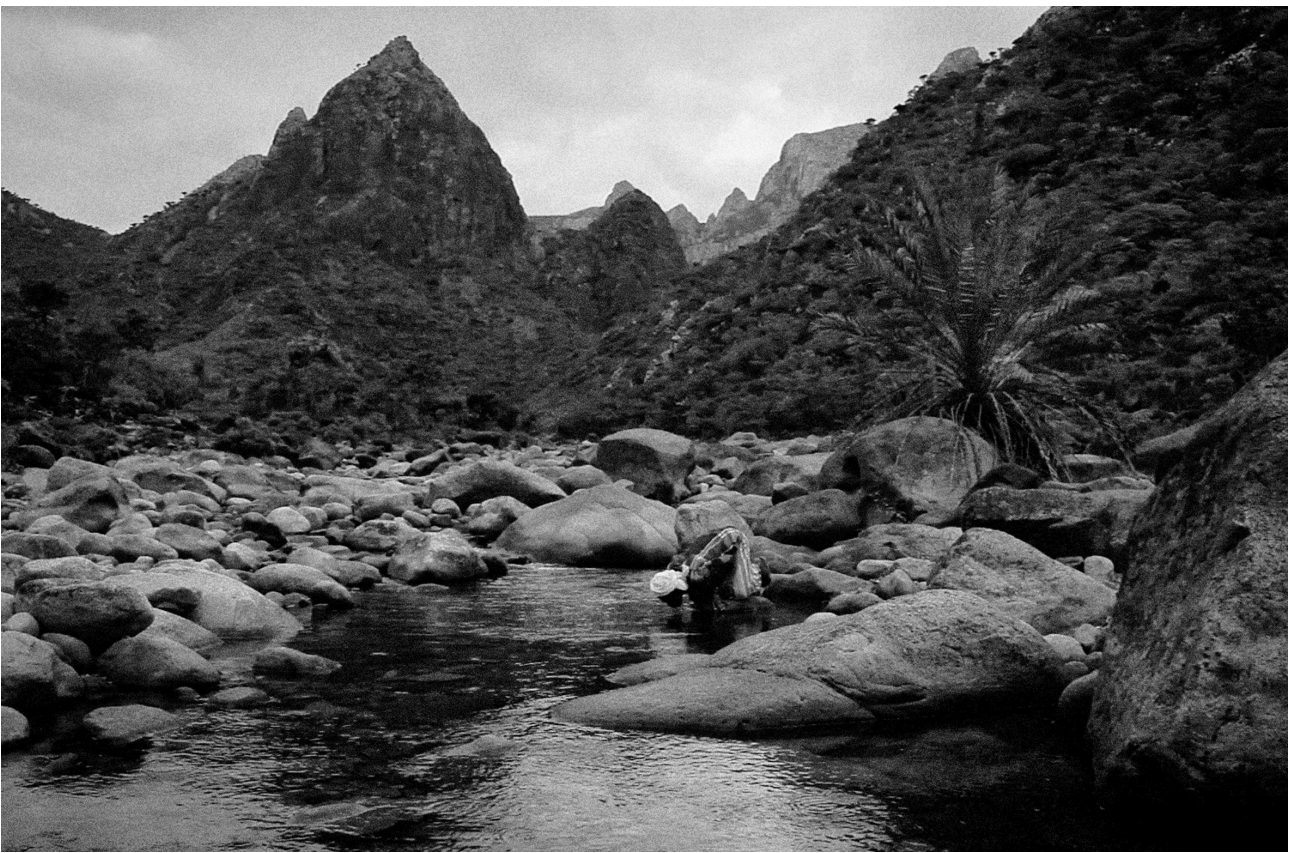


SOCOTRA

THE ISLAND OF DJINNS

BY JORDI ESTEVA

SIWA PRODUCTIONS



Extraordinary, beautiful and passionate, this melancholic journey to the forgotten island of Sindbad”.

Jacinto Antón. El País

"In this surprising film of ethnographical observation, the aesthetic choice of black and white not only takes us back to ancient times—when the legends were true and people kept them alive by believing in them—but also to the time of cinema’s first explorers, who would film their exotic “travelogues” so as to present them to audiences hungry for discovery".

"An introduction to a long-disappeared world, the film keeps the sense of an inaccessible mystery until its final image".

Luciano Barisone. Director of Visions du Réel

LINK TO THE TRAILER OF “SOCOTRA, THE ISLAND OF DJINNS”

English Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/134824821>

SHORT SINOPSIS

The film is the story of a trip on the remote island of Socotra in the Indian Ocean, known in antiquity for its Phoenix and Rukh birds. In the rest of the Indian Ocean, the monsoon winds, have propitiated commerce and civilisation. Without any bay or natural port and surrounded by reefs, Socotra is isolated during the monsoon when is imposible to land. This isolation has preserved a unique environment.

Frankincense and myrrh trees grow freely on Socotra. The dragon blood tree unique to the island has sap that is a red as blood. It was used by the gladiators of Ancient Rome to cover their skin and to protect it from injuries. The varnish that gave a unique and precious touch to Stradivarius violins, is also credited to the sap of the tree, a secret kept by the luthiers of Cremona.

On the journey are Ahmed Afrar, youngest son of the late sultan of Socotra, some companions and three cameleers with their animals. They trek to the mountains before the rainy season.

En route to visit relatives, the socotrians speak tell stories by the fire. During the night, conversation turns to legends of djinns and monstrous snakes that dwell in the cavernous interior of the island. A surprising and vanishing world is revealed.

Is the first and only movie spoken entirelly in the genuine socotrian language, A southern arabian language related to the old language of the Kingdom of Sheba.



LONG SINOPSIS:

The film is the story of a trip to the remote island of Socotra in the Indian Ocean. The expedition is a hard trek to the interior of the island, known in antiquity for its Phoenix and Rukh birds. On the journey are Ahmed Afrar, youngest son of the late sultan of Socotra, some companions and three cameleers with their animals. Enroute to visit relatives, the socotrians speaking in their own language, a descendent of the old language of the Kingdom of Saba, they tell stories by the fire. During the night, conversation turns to legends of djinns and monstrous snakes that dwell in the cavernous interior of the island. A vanishing world is revealed.

The film starts with images of the men and their camels climbing steep, rocky paths. Also present are moments of leisure in the shadow of dragon blood trees or as they bathe in slow streams. As mountain dwellers greet their guests and cook a goat they touch on different subjects: djins, monsters, witches, the late sultan, women and Islam...

“Socotra, the island of the djinns”, pays attention to the extraordinary conditions of the place: the rich and endemic flora and fauna, with their forests of dragon blood tree, chameleons or unique dragonflies. We see how the socotrians still begin their fire with wood sticks, play the bone flutes and sing about their animals. One night, Ahmed Afrar, son of the late sultan explains the tragic fate of his dynasty persecuted by the communist regime of Aden during the late sixties. Conversation turns to the situation of women, sorcerers, and apparitions.

The film ends at the top of Socotra: rock formations in the shape of granitic fingers that point to the sky. Afternoon clouds slowly appear and cover the scene completely reinforcing the

idea of a magic world and vanishing world.

Socotra lies in the Indian Ocean between the African Horn and the Arabian peninsula. Its size is similar to the island of Mallorca. In the rest of the Indian Ocean, the monsoon winds, have propitiated commerce and civilisation. Without any bay or natural port and surrounded by reefs, Socotra is isolated during the monsoon when is imposible to land. This isolation has preserved a unique environment.

Frankincense and myrrh trees grow freely on Socotra. The dragon blood tree unique to the island has sap that is a red as blood. It was used by the gladiators of Ancient Rome to cover their skin and to protect it from injuries. The varnish that gave a unique and precious touch to Stradivarius violins, is also credited to the sap of the tree, a secret kept by the luthiers of Cremona. These products brought Indians, Greeks, and southern Arabs to the island, after them came pirates.

Socotra was the island where Gilgamesh found the plant of immortality. For the Egyptians it was "The land of the genii", the manuscript of the "Wrecked Sailor" tells the story and is preserved in The Hermitage of Saint Petersburg. Herodotus said that the Phoenix dwelled in the mountains of Socotra and Arab sailors thought that the Rukh bird of Sinbad, nested there. According to Marco Polo the socotrians were the most powerful magicians of the known world.

The Portuguese conquered Socotra to defend its maritime route to India. Since the late XIX century Socotra was a British protectorate. Although ruled by a sultan, the British incorporated the island in the new communist government of South Yemen in 1967. During the Soviet era the island was believed to support a submarine base.

The isolation of centuries ended with the arrival of its first commercial flights. Hadibou, the main settlement, and its surroundings, show some changes, but most of the island remains a remote and fascinating place. The Socotra of the old days, can be found on the heights of the Haggar Mountains where the old birds of the ancients nested and where the Uranus god had its throne before being castrated by its son Cronos.

The Socotrans of today know their own legends but have forgotten those of the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, neither do they remember the stories recounted by Renaissance travellers.



TECNICAL INFORMATION:

Title: Socotra, the Island of Djinns

Productora: Siwa Productions

Género: Documental

Lenght: 64 min 30 seg

Nationality: Spain

Based on the book "Socotra, la isla de los genios" by Jordi Esteva (Atalanta Ediciones)

Language: socotrian (Island of Socotra. Yemen)

Subtitles: English, spanish, french and catalan.



Crew:

Director: Jordi Esteva

Camera operators: Albert Serradó, Jordi Esteva y Albert Buendía

Sound: Jordi Tresserras

Edition: Santy Borricón

Video Postproduction: Fromzero

Audio Postproduction: Tacto Sonoro

Sound: Stereo

Proportion ratio: 16:9

Filmed: Island of Socotra (Yemen) during 2014.

End of production: 2015 (September)

Full HD

DCP

Director's biofilmography:

Jordi Esteva (Barcelona 1951). Writer and photograph specialised in Africa and Middle East. Lived 5 years in Cairo and other african cities. In 2010 he started filming documentaries –mostly in Black and White- centered in the worlds that are vanishing like the animism in Africa or the remote island of Socotra.

2010 "Return to the Land of Souls"

2014 "Komian"

2015 "Socotra, the Island of Djinnns"

PRESS CONTACT:

MOVIES FOR FESTIVALS

Johanna Tonini

info.moviesforfestivals@gmail.com

prensa.moviesforfest@gmail.com

Phone: + 34 676 560 286

Link Trailer:

<https://vimeo.com/134824821>

Facebook:

[https://www.facebook.com/Socotra-the-Island-of-Djinnns-289143334688/?](https://www.facebook.com/Socotra-the-Island-of-Djinnns-289143334688/?fref=ts)

[fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/Socotra-the-Island-of-Djinnns-289143334688/?fref=ts)

www.jordiesteva.com

siwa1@mac.com