



Photography by: Mattias Klum

The Baltic Sea

Feature Film - Half Way

Director: Mattias Klum

In collaboration with: Peter Östlund fsf,
Marianne Gustavsson, Lisa Belfrage m. fl.

Format: RED 4K

Length: 57 min

This visual journey, directed by Mattias Klum, will take us above and below the Baltic Sea from a fascinating point of view. We will get to know handful of people and their personal fates with different relationships to the sea. Nature being as most generous. Amazing imagery and grasping life stories. The Baltic Sea is still rich, but needs our care now more than ever. This film gives us the power and motivation to do so.

OPENING – the idea of the film

Waves hitting the rocks.
Storm and foaming water. Seagulls cry.
We sense a female face in ecstasy, eyes shut.
A swelling tear glistens. A blissful moan.
A scene of human desire.
The sea calms. A pleasant voice.
Everything he says sound like poetry.
He is our guide throughout the film.
The voice speaks as if everything is definite, even things we do not know of.
He speaks of happiness and of the ocean, he speaks of life and importance. He speaks of passion and why we are alive. Why we want to live.
The sea again. Archipelago.
Flying closely between islands.
He speaks of this place on earth, this place for mankind.
This sea. The Baltic Sea.
A baby eagle hatches and climbs out of its shell.
The adult eagle treads lightly in the nest.
A newborn baby seal suckles its first meal ever.
Life.

A city adjacent to the sea. A newborn baby girl is put to rest on a woman's chest. Her skin is still fatty and her hair is tangled. She gazes with amazement. A wave rolls in over the beach. We plunge down and see microscopic organisms sweeping about.

The voice conveys the starting point for this story. These three lives will guide us for the coming years. The eagle moves us through the air, the seal in the water. The young girl will be our timekeeper.

PARTICIPANTS – the ones we will be following

A lighthouse proudly sends its beam straight towards us. Reflection in the water. The ray of light travels over a young woman's face. A fast cavalcade of faces flash by, young and old. The voice makes it clear that the story includes the fate of many. They all have the Baltic Sea in common, in one way or the other.

The eagle is struck by the beam and disappears. Left standing on a cliff face on Understen, is Marianne. The voice tells us that she has lived her whole life on a lighthouse cliff. She is 80 years old.

A seal breaks a school of herring in half. Torben pulls his trawl on the surface, alone outside of Bornholm. We learn that it is getting tougher for him to get by. The eagle sores closely above the water. A grey seal dives. Microorganisms swim by, most likely to a fate of becoming fish food. A pike lurks in the reed.



The sound of a plane. Bertil works away on a frame that he is building for his boat. Rib after rib is put in place. He is retired and lives outside of Karlskrona and has built boats his entire life.

The eagle flies on to dark clouds. Two boys in Kaliningrad play by a polluted stream. We hear about their mother and grandmothers insistent fight for the environment. Heavens roll by. One of the coastguards airplanes cut through the air. Kerstin by her instruments. She looks down on us down below.

The eagle from above, the sea below. He spies on Jarno in Finland who glides across the waves on his sailboard in 20 knots. The voice speaks of the importance of play and having fun. The sound of seagulls fade into dance music. Cheslaw dances under a rotating disco ball somewhere in Krakow. The lyrics are about the ignorant, the ones who don't care.

POETIC IMAGERY - time for reflection

Back to the ocean moving beneath us. Poetry. Always close to the necessary ocean. It glistens in the background. The surroundings are tangible. Small insects meet our gaze. The vegetation moves ghostlike under the surface. A cry from a seagull. The now adolescent eaglet sits in its nest. The white-tailed eagle soon arrives with more food.

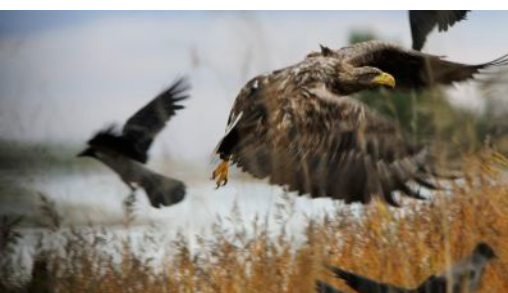
The seaweed's brown fingers pass by, right by the edge of the beach. We circle a buttercup. All while in the salty sea breeze. We hint an eye behind the bright grass, but not until it opens. The baby seal has grown, and it waddles around on the cliff. The sky arches into twilight. Another lighthouse fires its beam.

The girl is christened Dominica under a church roof, proud parents. A couple of mute swans graciously hit the water. The lyrics are about our dependancy of nature, not directly but in between the lines. Music that opens the mind to the magic of living. Just living.

ELABORATION - issues and expectations

Marianne gives us her story about how it used to be in Understen. She goes for a swim outside the lighthouse with her grandson. She speaks of the lighthouse people and how they used to stick together. Images different lighthouses around the coastline.

The lighthouse on Bornholm. Torben is worried about the future. He tells us about the pipeline they are building at the bottom of the sea, where the best fishing is found. How did it come to this? Why is it so hard to be a fisherman, one of the oldest professions of all time. Underwater images, fishes. Images of the boat working with the pipeline.





Bertil gazes across the water. He tells us about his boat project and how he wants to cross the sea when it is done. The other side of the horizon. If he gets to live on of course. The craftsmanship of him putting pieces together and bending the first rib. His gaze filled with of just as much knowledge as uncertainty. An interested seal listens.

Dead fish. A dark sky. Two boys playfully dancing on a rooftop in Kaliningrad. The mother proudly watches. The threats are just over the horizon, but this is a place of light and hope. Grandmother looks tired but her stubbornness has rubbed off on her daughter and gives the boys power to resist, take over. Dark cormorants stare apathetically without understanding.

Kerstin at her instruments high above. She has just spotted an oil spill outside the swedish coastline. The sensitive camera is locked on the ship that is to blame. She says that everything is documented and that they don't stand a chance once they have been identified. The eagle sees it as well.

Jarno has just opened a rental shop by the sand dunes. He tells us about the necessity of wind surfing. He has finally found a new girlfriend that shares his passion. Everything is looking up - if it weren't for the fact that there are plans to build a nuclear plant nearby. An eye quickly shuts. Cheslaw's eye is also shut. The TV is on. With a beer in his hand he says that he doesn't like the ocean and

it doesn't matter to him what happens to it. Although he has never seen the Baltic Sea. He lives in Krakow so why would he go there? It seems awfully empty and desolate.

POETIC IMAGERY - we are at the crossroads

The ocean spreads in all its beauty. Waves slowly swell, the sun is low. Suddenly a bright figure swims beneath the surface. She breaks the seemingly impenetrable surface with a splash and swims, full of joy, towards the camera. Then she dives back down and disappears, just as naked as the surrounding rocks. A few gulls witness the spectacle. A man's voice is heard in the background.

The journey continues under water. The woman can be seen in the distance but soon disappears again and we are left alone in the deep.

A voice we have not heard before. It sounds like a news anchor. Dry and straight. We listen to the threats of today for a few minutes and learn how we can enhance the life of the ocean and by doing so, our own survival. Simple diagrams and clear outlines guide us, below.

When all is clear again, we see the woman's face close up. She pulls her hair back and her eyes glow of life. A gaze into the camera. Both of happiness and of thoughtfulness.





THE MISSION - it's about us

The grey seal keeps us moving. Then it dives up onto the rocks, first alone but its young soon follows. The ocean as backdrop. The eaglet sits in its nest, we circle it from above. The girl Dominica struts along the beach. The ocean gently rocks us to peace.

Our poetic voice comes back. He discusses what time does to us, how we can use it. That if we use it wisely we can live better "later" and feel better "now" because we know we care about life.

CONCLUSION - we all have the same horizon

Marianne sits by her window and tries to read the skies. She does not look worried. The voice asks how she sees the future. She replies that she turns go in a few years and you can't know anything about the future. But life is still good.

Torben in his hut. The seagulls move in enigmatic patterns beyond the mast. He is asked the same question. He ponders. We will see. If I can support myself with this I will continue. His look tells us that it will.

Bertil seems in pain as he works away on a piece of oak. He doesn't have time to answer but the joy of his hands can't be mistaken.

The boys in Kaliningrad say that they will fight on. They are not afraid. Everything will get better. Kerstin flies high up above. She is furious at people littering her ocean. The future? Well, it might turn up.

Jarno in northern Finland keeps on surfing. He *only* looks ahead. The next wave and then the next. When he falls, his worries are somewhere else. The joy of always getting back up.

Cheslaw seriously considers if he shouldn't go see what that stubborn ocean looks like. It can't be that boring and there are likely to be plenty of women on the ferry over. Or so he has heard...

Dominica sitting on a plastic duck. She is thrilled with excitement. Splashes the water with her hands. The eagle has reached adulthood. Its alert gaze proudly spies over the waters, totally unaware of the condition beneath the surface. Or not...

The seal on the rock follows us with its eyes as we circle it. The voice rounds off our journey. We have gotten to know a few fates around the Baltic sea. We will be back in a few years to see what has changed. Will life be able to thrive in the ocean, and thereby also the life around it?

The sun is setting. The waves swell back and forth over the sand that seem to dry up immediately after every wave.

The shadow of a woman leaving us.
Laughter.

