

# “ATLANTIC”

A revealing documentary film about the devastation of the Atlantic Ocean

**With a Q&A discussion afterwards with Director Risteard Ó Domhnaill**

**CLADDAGHDUFF COMMUNITY HALL, FRIDAY 11th AUGUST, 7.30**

**A NIGHT NOT TO BE MISSED!**



'MADE MY BLOOD BOIL" – The Sunday Business Post \*\*\*\*\*

"VITAL VIEWING" – The Sunday Independent \*\*\*\*\*

'EXPLOSIVE " – The Globe & Mail



**Risteard Ó Domhnaill:Director**

From the maker of the award-winning documentary *The Pipe*, **Risteard Ó Domhnaill's** film *Atlantic* takes on the powerful interests carving up Ireland's ocean resources. Emmy Award-winning actor **Brendan Gleeson** narrates the film shot across Ireland, Norway and Newfoundland (Canada) by Scannáin Inbhear (Inver

Films). Atlantic was awarded Best Irish Documentary at the Dublin International Film Festival 2016.

Atlantic follows the fortunes of three fishing communities in Ireland, Norway and Newfoundland, as they battle for control of the resources in their waters and struggle to maintain their way of life in the face of mounting economic and ecological challenges. As the big oil companies drive deeper into their fragile seas, and the world's largest fishing companies push fish stocks to the brink, coastal people and the species they rely upon may be reaching a point of no return.

**Brendan Gleeson: Narrator:**



**“Atlantic is an engrossing piece of truth-seeking, visually stunning and crafted with clarity and insight. It was an honour to be involved.” – *Brendan Gleeson***

**The post-screening Q&A** with the film's Director Risteard Ó Domhnaill on the topics raised by the film is sure to further the much needed local debate on this important issue of our time.

After previously taking a behind-the-scenes look at Ireland's Corrib Gas controversy, Ó Domhnaill realised that a wider story of resource mismanagement was emerging — one that needed to be told for the sake of coastal communities everywhere.

In Norway, fishermen and their resource have historically been aggressively protected by national authorities. But as oil fields dwindle and the country now looks to add to its reserves, Arctic cod fisherman Bjørnar Nicolaisen is campaigning against seismic testing by the oil explorers criss-crossing his fishing grounds. On the outer edges of Norway's five-star economy, seismic blasting is threatening to blow Bjørnar's livelihood out of the water as Norwegian acoustic specialists warn about the effects of marine oil exploration on fish spawning grounds!

Across the ocean in Newfoundland, where an oil boom has hit, fisherman Charlie Kane will likely be the last of his generation to work the sea, after a cod fishing ban in the 1990s brought a world-renowned industry to a halt overnight. Yet Charlie is thankful his sons can now make a good living on the oil rigs, and won't need to toil in small boats on Newfoundland's perilous Grand Banks. But now, as oil prices plummet, their village is once more taking on water, as the quick money of the black gold rush begins to run dry.

Meanwhile on the west coast of Ireland, Jerry Early has seen the heart ripped out of his island after a ban on drift netting for wild salmon. As he fights to regain his fishing rights, he's up against a government which takes orders only from the European Union.

As foreign super-trawlers operate with impunity just offshore, Jerry is convicted of fishing with a net "with the potential to catch a salmon" as EU super-trawlers fish his waters. He feels like a criminal on his own boat. The circumstances could be dire if he defies the new order of the ocean, but as the unofficial "mayor" of a dying island, Jerry feels he has to face up to powerful interests before it's too late.

Atlantic charts the politics of resource management of the North Atlantic; from strong State control in Norway, mixed fortunes in Newfoundland, to a more liberal, privatised system in Ireland. Through the experience of these coastal neighbours, Atlantic poses the question: who will benefit from the exploitation of these resources, and what the consequences will be for communities and the environment?

Atlantic's aim is to empower local communities and individuals so that they can better contribute to this vital debate. We want people to engage in live and uncensored discussions between people on all sides of the Atlantic.

This film can be watched for its beauty; it is replete with lush coastal landscapes, aerial shots of Norwegian fjords and tumble-down clapperboard Newfoundland houses. But there's no separating film from its message that our Atlantic resources of fish and oil are being criminally mismanaged for profit, and the voices of small coastal communities are being drowned in a tide of greed, big business and EU quota deals.

Atlantic forms an intricately woven net heavy with nuggets of archive footage. In one of the film's dramatic highlights, 1992 news footage shows Newfoundland fishermen battering at the locked doors of the room where their fisheries minister is nervously announcing a moratorium on cod fishery and the loss of their livelihood.

Sourcing footage from CBC, RTE, Greenpeace and Statoil archives was expensive and time-consuming, but worth it, says Ó Domhnaill.

"When you tell a retrospective story it can get very talking heads and very boring so it was great to reach back into the records and bring out the drama. In that particular moment, you really feel the dread of the fishermen that just by signing a piece of paper someone can take their livelihood away."

The film purposefully juxtaposes the experiences of Norway and Newfoundland against the Irish story to deliver a salutary message to an Irish audience. There's a real sense of impotence amongst the Irish fishermen, who feel marginalised and unrepresented.

"Fishing isn't done at sea anymore; it's done at tables in Brussels," says skipper Máirtín Éanna O Conghaile with a sad smile and a shrug as he catches the last of his

quota for the season. "But these Dutch super-trawlers will be out until May, and we'll be in tied to the wall looking out at them."

In Newfoundland and Norway, Ó Domhnaill saw very different politicians in comparison to their Irish counterparts. "They were very strong on natural resources and had stood up against big powerful interests and fought for their local communities," Ó Domhnaill says. "I don't know if it's a historical thing or a cultural thing in Ireland but we seem to turn our backs on the ocean and undervalue our coastal communities."

The waste and corporate greed revealed in the film is terrifying. A former super-trawler second mate describes how unofficial logbooks reveal that in four weeks, his ship threw 4,000 tonnes of dead herring back into the sea and landed 5,000 tonnes of larger fish, a practice known as "high-grading" that saves the processing costs of smaller fish.

This is not detached and dispassionate film-making. Ó Domhnaill believes that his film's message needs to be heard, and yet he's reluctant to be labelled an activist, describing his film as a kind of long-form investigative journalism. "I don't want to be labelled an activist because I try to tell the story fairly; this is in the realm of fact, but it is about informing people so they can take action. I want this to be a movement."

Struggling to fund his project, Ó Domhnaill tried to get a broadcaster on board to attract Irish Film Board funding.

"Everywhere I went I hit a brick wall," he says. Yet two crowd-funding campaigns on FundIt.ie raised €56,000 (the highest Fund-it amount ever raised!).

With the involvement of the North Norwegian film centre and Newfoundland and Labrador Film Board and their state broadcasters, Ó Domhnaill was able to re-approach the Irish Film Board, who agreed to match the amount he had crowd-funded and complete the project.

To honour the marginalised fishing communities his film depicts, Ó Domhnaill has been touring fishing towns for screenings in a Cinemobile. So far he's had screenings in Union Hall and Castletownbere in Co Cork, and Cahersiveen and Dingle in Co Kerry, and he'll continue that journey making his way to the Cleggan | Claddaghduff Festival of the Sea screening on August 11.

Once made, Atlantic came to communities everywhere as we screened at cinemas, theatres, lighthouses, arts centres, in thatched cottages and on beaches across the country! "By driving the cinema down onto piers and into fishing villages having screenings right there between the piles of fishing nets and boats, we're giving some recognition to the fact that this story needs to be heard because these communities are often ignored by mainstream media outlets."

**For more information on this important event:  
Contact: Ann Higginson. Telephone: 089 700 7772**