

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

A Plastic Ocean: First Look

Adam Leipzig · Wednesday, February 3rd, 2016

“What are you working on?” people always ask me. For the past three years, I have been telling my friends about *A Plastic Ocean*. Today we’re sharing our trailer for the first time.

How did this project start? You may have heard media stories about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. You may even think you have seen pictures of it. Jo Ruxton, an adventuresome soul who has produced for BBC, heard the stories too and started thinking about making a documentary. She joined a scientific expedition to the center of the Pacific for a month of research. Jo discovered there is no floating plastic island... instead, there a truth far more insidious. The doc she wanted to produce became her mission.

That was seven years ago. Documentaries take time! Jo and her colleague Sonjia Norman embarked on a fundraising drive. It was another two years before they had raised enough for the first filming trip to seek the elusive Pygmy Blue Whales in Sri Lanka.

Production continued in stages of fundraising and filming, resulting in trips to twenty locations around the world, all the time accruing more and more information as research was building within the scientific community. Journalist Craig Leeson became an on-camera explorer and the film’s director, and world record-holder free diving champion Tanya Streeter joined the team. I came on board as a producer as well. In *A Plastic Ocean*, Craig and Tanya investigate how plastics enter the environment and affect wildlife and human health. They join expeditions by world-leading scientists, diving to the bottom of the ocean, visiting first-world countries as well as the remotest island communities blighted by excesses of waste. Most importantly, they share solutions that are real and practical. The film will make you aware, present optimistic choices and, we hope, incite social and political action.

[embedvideo id=”6zrn4-FfbXw” website=”youtube”]

We have locked picture and will have the film completed in a matter of weeks. At that point we will start to reach out to possible distributors to complete this journey with us. If you’d like to get updates along the way, [please sign up here](#).

Every year humans produce more than 300 million tons of plastic, half of it designed for single use, and more than 8 million tons of it ends up in our oceans. Because the Earth is a closed system, we can’t throw things away: *there is no “away.”* Plastic does not biodegrade, and almost all the plastic ever manufactured still exists here, somewhere, in some form.

Perhaps the most poignant of all sequences, certainly in Jo’s eyes, was the situation in Tuvalu, a tiny island nation few people have visited. Once part of Kiribati and now independent, the islands that make up Tuvalu lie along the rim of an extinct volcano in the southern Pacific Ocean. Surely they should be everyone’s idea of a tropical paradise, with palm-fringed, white-sand beaches. Yet, as *A Plastic Ocean* reveals, they resemble an unregulated landfill of plastic waste. There is no space to bury it, more and more is building up daily and the only solution is to pile it up – or worse,

burn it, forcing toxic fumes to permeate the air. In many ways, Tuvalu is a microcosm of our entire planet.

We are all extremely proud of this film, and I think it will astound you – just as it did our adventurers, who captured never-before-seen images of marine life, plastic pollution, its ultimate consequences for human health, and viable, practical solutions that are already working and just need to be put into global action.

Please share this trailer with your friends and all who will be interested.

Website: <http://aplasticocean.film/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aplasticoceanfilm/>

Twitter: [@awaveofchange](https://twitter.com/awaveofchange)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/aplasticocean/>

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From left: Free diver Tanya Streeter, producer Jo Ruxton, explorer/director Craig Leeson (photo: David Jones)

[embedvideo id="6zrn4-FfbXw" website="youtube"]

Top image from the film's key art. Courtesy Plastic Oceans Ltd.

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