

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Princeton, NJ and Brooklyn, NY

Director/editor Andrea Odezynska debuts her new feature-length environmental documentary, *Return Sasyk to the Sea*, which spotlights the destructive legacy Ukraine inherited as a former member of the Soviet Union. The Soviets were obsessed with beating America in every way possible. Boosting agriculture was one “way” and Ukraine was their pawn in this deadly game.

The film tells the story of bizarre Soviet irrigation experiments in Southern Ukraine that created a slow eco-disaster, which continues today. Construction of the irrigation project began in 1972. The goal was to boost agriculture in Southwestern Ukraine by rerouting Ukraine’s major rivers and converting all salt-water estuaries into freshwater reservoirs. Sasyk Estuary was the first in line to be converted to a freshwater reservoir.

In addition to destroying a pristine eco-system, residents in the Sasyk Estuary region lost fresh drinking water, watched cancer rates rise and lost local economies such as fishing. Today, Sasyk Estuary, by the Black Sea, is ground zero for a battle between eco activists vs. poachers, bureaucrats and corrupt officials.

The film screened on March 10, 2022, at the Through Women’s Eyes International Film Festival in Sarasota, Florida. This limited “sneak peek” screening raised money towards the United Nations Women’s Fund. This fund is currently sending over \$900,000.00 to help Ukrainian women refugees and their children as they flee Russia’s latest invasion of Ukraine.

Upcoming 2022 Spring screenings will include the Yale Environmental Film Festival, Princeton Environmental Film Festival, International Wildlife Film Festival, and Paribas Green International Film Festival in Krakow, Poland (Summer 2022).

*In light of the latest brutal invasion of Ukraine, the story of Sasyk Estuary is a metaphor for the history of Ukraine itself.* ~ **Andrea Odezynska**

Andrea has just won a 2022 International Wildlife Film Festival Labs Fellowship. In 2018, she won a U.S. Fulbright Scholar grant to research and film *Return Sasyk to the Sea*, in Ukraine. The film was completed in January 2022 and has a running time of 60 minutes. It is in Ukrainian with English subtitles. In the past, Andrea won “The Best Short Feature Audience Award” at the Princeton Environmental Film Festival (2013). Former movies include *Felt*, *Feelings and Dreams*, *The Whisperer*, *Still the River Flows*, and *Dora Was Dysfunctional*.

Andrea has an M.F.A. in Film Directing from the American Film Institute Conservatory in Hollywood, CA. Contact: [odezynska@gmail.com](mailto:odezynska@gmail.com) | [odezynska.com](http://odezynska.com)

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