



Drowning dry



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Drowning dry

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a Film by
Laurynas Bareiša
produced by
Klementina Remeikaitė
co-produced by

Matīss Kaža



©Vizmante Ruzgaite



To celebrate Lukas' victory at the martial arts tournament and Tomas' birthday party, two sisters organize a weekend at the country house. With their kids, they go swimming in a nearby lake, relax and discuss family finances. After the near tragic accident of one of the children, the sisters become single mothers.

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"The film essentially is about a group of people dealing with an almost tragic event that causes them experience emotional trauma in different ways.

I used irregular repetition borrowed from dry drowning condition as a structural element of the story in order to highlight the various ways of receiving and dealing with trauma. It helped me organically merge story, subject and theme into one."

Laurynas Bareiša

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Dry drowning or secondary drowning is a rare drowning complication that happens if water gets into the lungs. Small amount of water can irritate the lungs' lining and fluid can build up, causing a condition called pulmonary edema.

This condition is important not only as plot device in the film, but also as the basis for the whole structure of the story. The concept of this perverse iteration of escaping drowning in the water and then experiencing drowning on dry land connected with me personally.

A couple of years ago I had to resuscitate my two year old son. This event was followed by increased anxiety and panic attacks. Working through this experience was the beginning of this project. The whole incident could not have taken more than one minute even though the sight I remember best is the blue stiff face of my kid. Fortunately everything ended well and with no further complications.

Going back to that near fatal event, repeating it over and over I realized that my mind went on different though paths simultaneously during that relatively

short time. Based on this I created main four adult characters that represent different aspects of my own reactions towards the incident.

Repetition or doubling, as most cases in the film are repeated twice, accentuates different emotional aspects of the events. Like for example when we see a real fight and a spar. Or a dinner with organ recipient and a recollection of it between the sisters. Or the most important instance of repetition when we see the whole scene repeated identically only with a different song. In the last instance it should help create an uncanny feeling that something is the same, but different which sometimes follows a person after trauma.

Furthermore every time doubling occurs in story it is done with the intention to transform an act that serves as a plot device into an emotional experience. Sometimes resulting in a feeling of dissonance between a brutal fact and a comic situation.

This method of merging theme inspired practices with filmmaking techniques I also wanted to extend to the framing and staging of the film. I shot the film from stationary positions, but not in static shots. Preferring long takes and free panning camera movement on tripod mimicking a person present, but not involved in the action. As if remembering an experience over and over in your mind when, you have distance to linger and are not obliged to move in sync with the events.

Winter and autumn periods that tell the aftermath of the crash are located in the future of the narratives internal timeline. The weekend is the present time of the story. In particular until the second day of the weekend when Urte goes underwater. It is from this traumatic moment when the characters minds start racing in different directions that the story branches out. This results in two flash forwards where we see what could have happened afterwards resulting in more confusion than clarity in what actually happened during the weekend.

This is important to setup the repetition of the afternoon scene. Watching it for a second time looking for clues, but hearing similarly sounding only different song should result in cognitive confusion that eventually should translate into emotional dissonance through music and subsequent resuscitation process mimicking the traumatic experience.

The film ends in a double sight of garbage heap. First is the view of the smashed car under the lorry and the second is the rotten birthday feast on the terrace table. Symbolically Juste and Ernesta get to clean up the later one and the viewer will get the chance to observe it in real time stretching the end and cutting to black only when we see a clean terrace ready to be sold on.





2024 Lithuania, Latvia 88 min 1.85:1 5.1 Lithuanian
Original title: **SESĖS**

written & directed by **Laurynas Bareiša**
cinematography by **Laurynas Bareiša**

produced by
Klementina Remeikaitė
co-produced by
Matīss Kaža

production design by **Sigita Šimkūnaitė**
edited by **Silvija Vilkaitė**
sound design by **Julius Grigelionis**
costumes by **Laura Kraukle**
make-up by **Beata Rjabovska** and **Ieva Sebre**

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Gelminė Glemžaitė (Ernesta) is Lithuanian film, theatre, and TV actress. Her notable works include "The Saint" by A. Blaževičius (winning the Silver Crane Award for Best Supporting Actress) and M. Kavtaradze's "Summer Survivors". Gelminė is also a popular podcast creator and host and continues to work in both cinema and theatre.

Agnė Kaktaitė (Juste) is a Lithuanian theatre actor who studied acting at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. She has performed in various theaters across Lithuania. "Drowning Dry" marks her debut as the lead in a feature film.

Paulius Markevičius (Lukas) is a film and theater actor, theater director, and interdisciplinary artist. He has starred in films such as M. Kavtaradze's "Summer Survivors" G. Tamoševičius and V.V. Landsbergis's "The Poet", and L. Bareiša's "Pilgrims", earning nominations for the National Silver Crane Awards in 2020, 2022, and 2023. He has also created installations and performances, receiving multiple awards for his work.

Giedrius Kiela (Tomas) is an actor and musician. His lead role in L. Bareiša's debut feature "Pilgrims" earned him the Silver Crane Award in 2021. He has performed at various theaters, winning the Golden Stage Cross in 2014. Giedrius is also a member of the popular Lithuanian band "Solo Ansamblis"

Laurynas Bareiša (b. 1988, Lithuania) graduated in Applied Mathematics and Cinematography, and earned a MA in Film Directing (2016). He recently worked as cinematographer on the feature film “Summer Survivors”, “Slow” by Marija Kavtaradze.

He directed the short films “By the Pool” (Venice IFF 2017), “Caucasus” (Locarno FF 2018), “Dummy” (Berlinale IFF 2020).

His first feature film “Pilgrims” was awarded for the best film in Venice IFF, Orizzonti Competition 2021. It was selected in competition in Thessaloniki, Jeonju and in New Directors /New Films in 2022.



The film production company **AFTERSCHOOL** based in Vilnius, Lithuania, was established in 2014 by director/cinematographer Laurynas Bareiša and producer Klementina Remeikaite.

Since then, the company has created and produced over 10 short films, including Laurynas Bareiša's shorts "Dummy" (Berlinale Shorts 2020), "Caucasus" (Locarno 2018) and "By the pool" (Venice 2017), Vytautas Katkus short film "Places" (Venice 2020).

With Lithuanian-based company m-films, Afterschool co-produced Marija Kavtaradze's debut feature film "Summer survivors" (TIFF 2018).

TRICKSTER PICTURES is an international creative studio based in Riga, Latvia. Our carefully curated projects focus on the development of young, brave and diverse voices in author-driven fiction and documentary film, creating cinematic experiences which resonate beyond national borders.

Our latest works include "Neon Spring" (2022) by Matīss Kaža and "Sisters" (2022) by Linda Olte, as well as the co-production film "Drowning Dry" (2024) by Laurynas Bareiša.





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