

Press Release

DREAM BOAT

A film by Tristan Ferland Milewski

Produced by gebrueder beetz filmproduktion

In coproduction with ZDF, in association with arte.

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Once a year the DREAM BOAT sets sail for a cruise only for gay men. About 3,000 passengers have prepared themselves for this journey for months. Far from their families and political restrictions, we follow five men from five countries on the quest for their dreams. The cruise promises seven days of sunshine, love, and freedom – but on board are also their personal stories, their doubts and uncertainties. How many hopes will the DREAMBOAT fulfil?

It's raining men. They come from 89 nations and float on a cruise ship along the Spanish east coast. Sun, sea, naked skin, and lots of testosterone stoke the vibes. The countdown is on for seven days of hunting for love, happiness, and eternal youth: the promise for gay men of the DREAM BOAT.

For months, the passengers have been eagerly waiting for this journey. They pump up their bodies, purchase push-up swimwear and fill their suitcases with hot outfits and glamorous costumes. For the men the trip on the DREAM BOAT is a liberation from political, social, or internal boundaries. Day and night, time and space melt with the rhythm of party music. In the floating state of this dreamy journey, the protagonists are confronted with their own reality all the harder for it. Basic themes of their lives shine through the seemingly paradisaical surface: the question of old-age lifestyles, of family, the search for belonging, the desire for self-acceptance and love. At the same time they are confronted with the body cult of the gay community and feel that they can also be quite lonely among 3,000 potential future partners. The holiday trip unexpectedly turns into an inner odyssey, a trip to everyone's own core.

Judging by his appearance, **Marek**, 24, from Poland, has everything he needs to stand out on the men's market, thanks to his trained body. However, he has not found his big love yet - that is to be changed now on the cruise. In the crowd, one of overly staged masculinity and sexuality, true feelings for him are hardly tangible: "I want someone who loves me as a person and not as a product from the supermarket," Marek says, alone, after a big night out.

Two years ago, **Dipankar**, 32, from India, was pushed into an arranged marriage. Then he began to openly defend his homosexuality, but he never had a permanent relationship. In his current home of Dubai, homosexual acts are liable to imprisonment. On the DREAM BOAT he believes to find his dream man. Full of euphoria, he throws himself into the action – but the gay community's ideal of masculinity increasingly becomes a tight corset for him, and the question of self-acceptance grows: "I never felt lonely, never. Until I went on this journey."

The Frenchman **Philippe**, 47, has been bound to a wheelchair for about 20 years. Since his parents and former friends withdrew from him, he finds it difficult to open up to new people. All the more important is his long-term relationship with his partner, and his gay substitute family. On the DREAM BOAT he enjoys the feeling of being part of the community and his excellent view on the bulges in the bathing trunks. Nevertheless he wonders if he could be sexually successful in this physical world at all.

GEBRÜEDER BEETZ FILMPRODUKTION

Ramzi, 31, was persecuted by the police in his home country, Palestine, due to his homosexuality. To protect his family, he fled to Belgium and was left with nothing. Now he lives in a loving relationship that has gone through ups and downs. Together they even overcame his partner's cancer. For the couple, the DREAM BOAT is a holiday before they both have to deal with the next challenge. Ramzi wants to visit his family in Palestine – this time together with his partner.

The photographer **Martin**, 42, from Austria, dances on the DREAM BOAT in the first row and enjoys the hedonism and abundant choice of men to the full. "I'm gay, I didn't have a choice– I was lucky", he says with a grin on his face. As a young man he couldn't imagine living his life full on. Martin is HIV positive and offers perspectives on how to deal with the topic today – without stigma, fears, or victimization.

For the first time ever, a film crew discloses the world of Europe's only gay cruise, along the Mediterranean coast, and dives into the on-board microcosm. The documentary film gives a remarkable insight into a universe that usually remains a mystery to the outside world, and in which most passengers are united by one theme: the wish to live life authentically as themselves in a protected place.