

THE AQUANAUT

"Thirsty! I'm thirsty", repeats a strange voice from far away and far above the Earth.

The film **The Aquanaut** shows us scenes from the life of Zenon (he is the one we hear talking). Zenon is an extraordinary creation — a product of the latest generation of computers equipped with biological chips, which make him conscious!

He has been placed on board a satellite orbiting the Earth as part of an advanced research program to examine drinking water on our Blue Planet. He is programmed to send scientific data back to the Almeda base. From there Estelle, who is responsible for communications, maintains contact with Zenon. Between them, a special relationship develops which goes far beyond the mere exchange of numerical data.

Through Zenon, the film gives basic information (chemical formula, properties, reserves, uses and problems) on a vital natural resource: water. Striking images add to the impact.

As he takes stock of the current situation and the disquieting picture it presents, Zenon thinks out loud. This surprises Estelle, but it will not be her only surprise.

We witness a gradual change in Zenon, as his planetary consciousness begins to override the computer program. Staggered by the extent and the urgency of the problem, he feels helpless. Faced with the bad faith and bad management which many of us show towards this precious resource, he rebels.

Estelle is a helpless witness to this sudden change of mood. She tries to talk about it with one of her colleagues, but he is very dismissive. However, she does find someone who is more interested: Zenon's creator, the mysterious Professor Nguyen. But had the Professor predicted Zenon's, to say the least, bizarre behaviour?

The action leads directly to the point where Zenon refuses to send back data for fear it will be used for ends not intended by the program.

Then there's a break. Zenon cuts off all communication with the Earth, leaving a bewildered Estelle staring at an ambiguous message on her computer screen. What does Zenon really intend to do?

Why has he made this decision?

What will he do?

See inside for
suggested activities ▶

Bio-filmography of Michel Murray

Born in 1959 in Montréal, Michel Murray completed his college studies in graphics and earned a degree in film communications. • He has been involved in several films on the level of initial ideas and as an animator and scriptwriter. • At the NFB he has directed *Sylvia* (1985), *Tocade* (1987), *La Débâcle* (1989), co-directed with Yvon Provost, and *The Aquanaut* (1990). He is preparing two follow-up films to the latter for the MEDIA-SPHERE program.



The essential aim of this film is to stimulate discussion. As such it does not claim to give all possible information on the subject. Above all, it is meant to be thought provoking and help change attitudes towards major global problems.

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The film *The Aquanaut* is a science fiction story which uses various film techniques (computer-generated images, documentary footage, animation, photographs) and a documentary section giving basic information about water.

It emphasizes global interdependence: pollution and the supply of drinking water are not merely other people's problems.

The language is always accessible and the subjects examined in the film fit nicely into fields such as geography, ecology, history, science, ethics and mathematics.

Like many adolescents today, Zenon shows an awareness of the major problems facing the planet. In fact, like them, both his reactions and his questions are often... troubling.

The aim of *The Aquanaut* is not to provide solutions. There may be many of them, but none of them are ready-made. *The Aquanaut* gives us a unique opportunity to reflect together, to reach the common conclusion that it is up to each of us to deal with the Earth's water problems, acknowledge our responsibility and find our own solutions.

But perhaps that was exactly what Zenon was getting at.

NFB films about water

The following is a partial list of films available in all video formats from NFB video libraries. They are basically scientific and informative in nature and would appeal to a wide audience. They are described in the NFB Film and Video Catalogue.

Acid Rain: Requiem or Recovery.....	27 minutes.....	1 0181 527
Element 3 (<i>Film only</i>).....	46 minutes.....	1 0165 126
Gulfstream	28 minutes.....	1 0180 032
A Handle on Health	27 minutes.....	1 0186 079
The Intertidal Zone.....	17 minutes.....	1 0185 040
Not Far from Bolgatanga	28 minutes.....	1 0182 530
Not Man's to Command (<i>Film only</i>).....	14 minutes.....	1 0174 508
The Other World	19 minutes.....	1 0176 001
Second Frontier (<i>Film only</i>).....	21 minutes.....	1 0174 597
Top Priority	9 minutes.....	1 0181 065
Wastewater Technology Center (<i>Film only</i>).....	25 minutes.....	1 0178 542
Water - The Hazardous Necessity	26 minutes.....	1 0177 662
"Water, water, everywhere..."	5 minutes	1 0171 024

Coproduction Films

Bengladesh: Land of Earth and Water	57 minutes.....	1 0187 142
SRC in collaboration with CIDA		
River People	29 minutes.....	1 0186 160
Productions du Regard in collaboration with CIDA		

Additional Information

The Magazine UNDER THE SAME SUN - WATER (distr.: MEDIA-SPHERE) (publ.)*

Other MEDIA-SPHERE films available :

The Invincible (Mali-Africa) by Monique Crouillère, 16 minutes 2 seconds

Silence the Earth by Catherine Fol, 13 minutes 11 seconds

African Journey by George Bloomfield,

6 episodes of 25 minutes 50 seconds each

Episode 1 : Under One Sun

Episode 4 : Chasing a Dream

Episode 2 : Brothers

Episode 5 : A Deadly Business

Episode 3 : The Price of a Bride

Episode 6 : One World to Share

* (For Publications): **MEDIA-SPHERE**

Youth Editions, P.O. Box 1310, Postal Station B, Hull, Quebec, J8X 3Y1, Fax: (819) 953-6381

* (For Films): **MEDIA-SPHERE**

D-50, P.O. Box 6100, Postal Station A, Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3H5, Fax: (514) 283-4300

