

WATERCOLOURS

10 F.A.Q.'S



DIRECTOR-PRODUCER
TEAM
GUY & ANITA CHAUMETTE
TALK ABOUT LIFE & THEIR
NEW 'WATER COLOURS'
SERIES



Q: What first inspired you to make underwater films?

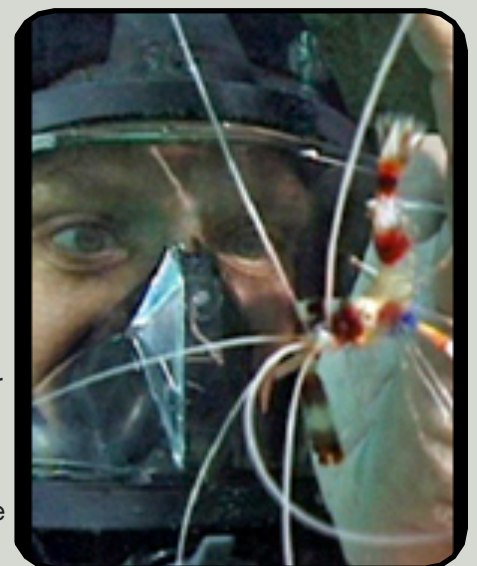
Guy Chaumette: Undeniably, Jacques Yves Cousteau filled my youth. Since the first time watching the underwater world of Cousteau on a black & white TV, I remember dreaming of being one of these Frogmen. Going round the world diving the seven sea's has been a child's dream, a fairy tale that has become reality. Hopefully my scuba tank will not transform into a pumpkin in the end...

Anita Chaumette: Adventure at first, then I have to be honest - credit goes to Guy... My earliest memories involve him making me stay in one place, not move for a whole hour, just breathe! Eventually you become one with the environment and the fish accept you - And suddenly there's Guy, caressing a huge, toothy moray eel, like it was his pet cat - the eel just loving it and keeping coming back for more, rubbing his head on Guy, asking to be stroked! And this wasn't a tame moray eel, this was way off the beaten track in the Indian ocean, That moray eel probably hadn't even seen a human before. And I've seen him doing the same bonding with poisonous Scorpionfish, Groupers, shrimps, even sharks. It puts fish in a completely different perspective.

Q: What made you choose the subject of fishes colours for your new 'WATER COLOURS' series?

GC: The coral reef is the most colourful ecosystem on our planet. Yet nobody really knows why! We just accept it as such. Looking at the coral reef for so long, trying to get to understand the behaviour of fish, and seeing the colour change in these creatures, it came to us that the colours had to be there for a reason. We also realized that, to have a chance to understand, we should look at them from a fishes point of view. A film subject on the most colourful environment when filming in colours is not only fascinating but also graphically aesthetic.

AC: Marine animals can change colour like a chameleon and we started wondering what it was all about. We did a lot of research. We learnt about their eyes, that they see differently to us and to each other, that compared to some of them (like the Mantis Shrimp) we're blind! And we realized that underwater, what we see is an illusion. A lot of time, study and research papers later, we discovered that the fishes language is built entirely colour - and it's a language that we can maybe learn to understand. WATER COLOURS brings it all together - it's a mind-blowing revelation, about a language built on colour -





filmed in the most visually stunning environment on the planet!

Q: What's it like, having fish as Actors?

GC: Like any actor they have a mind of their own, show up when it suits them and have their temper! As a director I have to get to know them and make them accept us in their environment. You never get to say 'Take 2', you either get it right first or forget about it. We don't have to pay them though..

AC: Unpredictable! Sometimes they do nothing for hours.. days.. then suddenly you turn the camera off and they ballet dance in that split second. They all have their unique characters – some are pretty feisty, but they never argue! He probably wouldn't want me to quote him, but as 'one' of the worlds leading Marine Scientists said to us: "I much prefer fish to humans; if they don't behave, I can just eat them"!

Q: What's it like working with the worlds leading Marine Research Scientists?

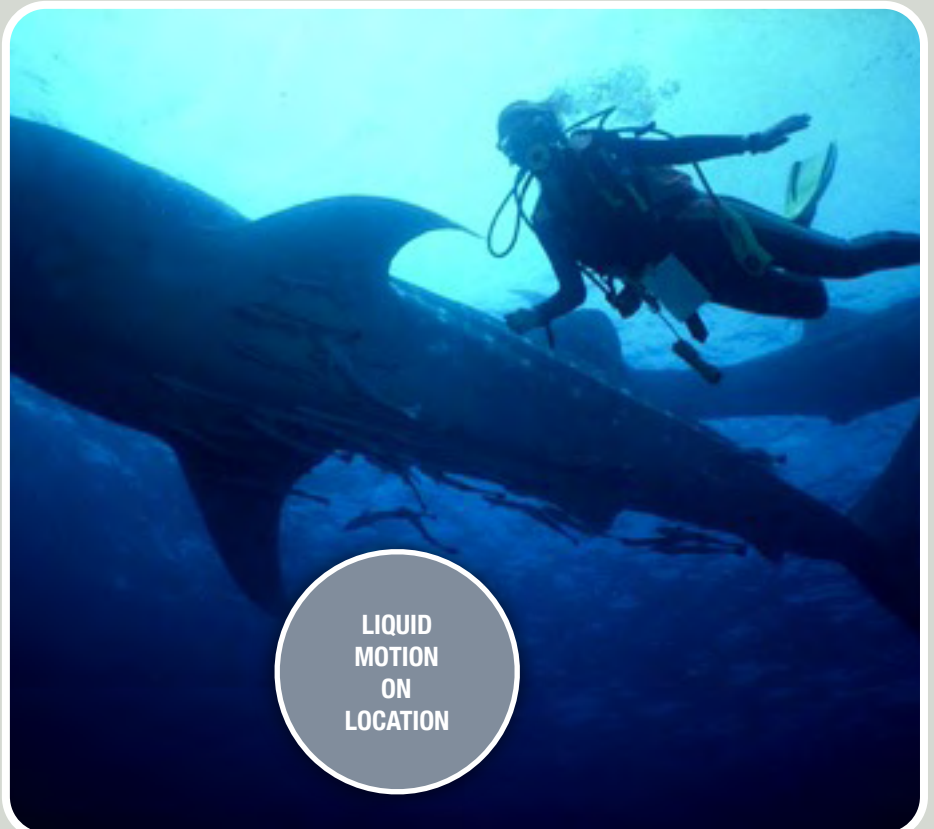
GC: When we first decided to approach the world's leading Marine

Scientists, I was a bit worried that they would not want to cooperate with us. But I found them to be very much like us. They are extremely passionate about what they do. They have been as interested in our filmmaking as we were in their research. Also they truly value our experience in the field and always were interested in our findings through observation. From Bermuda to Australia we had a fantastic time with them.

AC: Totally fascinating! At first, I thought they may look down on us, but they really love what we do and respect the time we spend researching our subject. Often they know something for certain - that fish have feelings, hurt, are traumatized when they are fished for example – but they can't say it, because they have to spend years proving it irrefutably, again and again. We can show the world what we and they know, without losing our reputation – although it does put the pressure on for us to be 100% accurate!

Q: What were the high points about shooting WATER COLOURS?

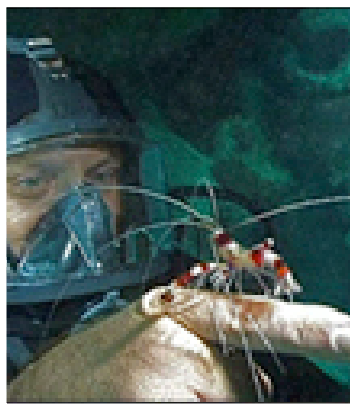
GC: Physically, filming the aerial footage - hanging out of low-level



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helicopters, Microlite's and sea planes in Fiji and Australia was exciting. The trip to Heron Island and our stay at the Biological Marine Research Station was phenomenal. Working and diving with the worlds leading Research Scientists was awesome. Also diving in one of Jacques Cousteau's favorite places many years later was a bit emotional. AC: Well, we had to live in the tropics for 3 years, which sounds like paradise, but, like making a film, is just full of challenges! The time with

Scientists at the Marine Research Station was inspiring – we had access to special equipment so could 'listen' to the fish speaking... We could 'see' their secret language and watch them using UV and polarization channels to communicate with each other! Using film to express the excitement the scientists can't generate about discovering 'the fishes language' was exhilarating.



Q: There are a lot of underwater films these days – why are yours generating such press and winning so many Awards?

AC: Guy's professional background is photography & film, he's an incredible Director, Editor & Photographer and he took that gift into the underwater world. Often it's the other way round and certain filmmaking skills are missing.

AC: Changing the trend; entertaining in a different way - and the result is there. The films conquer the hardest audience - people don't just want 'danger', they want to understand. Even restless young children watch our films without moving or saying a word, then ask hundreds of excited questions at the end! That's the greatest compliment of all!

GC: The approach and the making is different. We make a 'film' first, not really a documentary. Even though we make documentaries, we treat them like a motion picture. Making documentary like a motion picture seems to be the key.

Q: Did you attend film school and have you studied marine biology?

GC: I have been to photo/film school a long time ago but this is truly irrelevant. As Quentin Tarantino said so well, 'no, I went to film'... This is where you learn the craft.

AC: That, plus we spend countless hours underwater with our 'Actors' and even more hours studying marine biology, researching our subject and talking to leading Marine Scientists. Eventually we see the animals' true character and personality and we can portray them as never before, and as they really are.

As for marine biology, I didn't study it formally in school, but I have probably since read more marine biology scientific papers than is safe for the brain... To make an underwater film, you need 3 things: Be a good diver, be a good Filmmaker, but most of all, know your subject inside out.

GC: Most of the underwater documentaries you see on TV these days are about Marine mammals like dolphins and whales or sharks. Basically the big stuff. On todays TV, wildlife films have to win air time from reality TV, so the broadcaster wants big and aggressive. Having a presenter hyping up the danger of handling such and such dangerous animals has been the trend. We're changing the aggressive portrayal; changing the trend.

Q: How did you manage to get such intricate understanding of marine animals, to the extent that scientists contact you?

GC: Because of the content of our films, we need to spend most of our time on location on small coral islands. This allows us to dive every day and we spend hours studying the behaviour of marine creatures so we can get the interesting stuff on film. This unique approach to marine

biology has given us an invaluable working knowledge of marine life based on repeat, long-term observation. We refer constantly to scientists when making a film to conserve accuracy and they regularly probe us about our findings in the field.

AC: We live on tropical islands while we make our films, so we can return day to day, month to month to the very same creature, and learn things in the wild that would be impossible to monitor otherwise. Sometimes we really bond with the animals and we learn things that would be impossible to learn from study, or from animals in captivity.

Q: What do you ultimately hope your films will bring to people?

GC: The last frontier is underwater. The coral reefs are in big danger and if the current trend continues, they will soon disappear forever. Our world is run by marketing. To get something done, you have to get people to care. To get people to care, you need to generate interest. Our way to help is to make underwater films that are fascinating to watch, have educational values and basically show the people that this world we know so little about is well worth saving. Hopefully our films will not become what remains of the most fantastic and beautiful ecosystem on our planet...

AC: It's very simple. Marine animals are disappearing, because we humans are destroying them. For so many years the media has hyped up the fear, the danger of the large animals, the 'sport' action of pulling large fish out of the oceans. All species are inextricably linked together and now we have to stop, before we destroy our planet. With

'Shark Water' Rob Stewart used the media wonderfully to make the world sit up and pay attention about what we're doing to the sharks. We'd love to achieve the same thing, except we're concentrating on the small guys, the ones people don't pay any attention to – except when they're on their dinner plate... If we can entertain people, they listen. We need to use the media to excite and stimulate, and to turn previous misconceptions around. That's the first step to making a change.

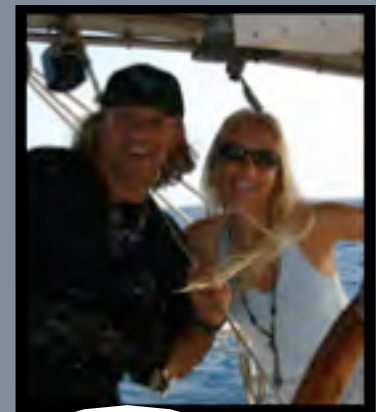
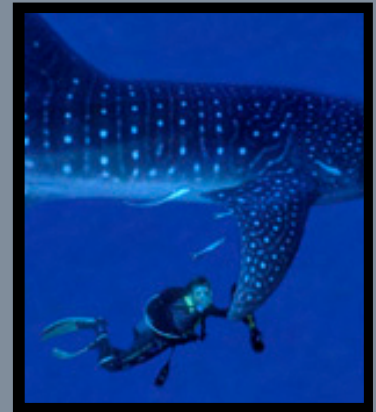
Q: Of all your films, which is your favourite?

AC: 'Talking With Fishes', because that's kind of 'us'; who we really are, what we are about. When we first made it, it was so far off the beaten track that we had to make a series to precede it, introducing the reefs, the marine animals, some scientists – because people thought we were crazy talking about 'intelligent fish' and 'fish with feelings'. One of the leading TV Broadcasters actually said, *'It's brilliant.. but it's so different, we don't know what to do with it'!*.. They couldn't grasp that fish really got to know us, came looking for us like a dog or cat, wanting to be caressed. They thought it was a set up!

GC: The next one...
OK.. if i have to say one of then, probably 'Beyond The Blue' for the sheer effort that went into filming it. Night dives for months on end, diving from shore with 2 tanks strapped on, when everyone else went to dinner. When it started winning top Awards one after the other and the world sat up and saw the excitement of what we felt, it was so rewarding.

Q: What are you working on next?

GC: I could tell you but then I'll have to...*%*!*... We have a few things in preparation. It takes a long time to do film the way we do. So, we have a few things in preparation...



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