

# Bogancloch

A film by Ben Rivers



86 mins / UK /Germany /Iceland 2024 / In English / Ratio 1:2.69 / 5.1

Locarno and Edinburgh Film Festivals 2024

Opening date May 30th 2025

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## SYNOPSIS

A sequel to TWO YEARS AT SEA (2011), charting a subtly changing life of Jake Williams, in a radically changing world.

Bogancloch is where modern-day hermit Jake Williams lives, nestled in a vast highland forest of Scotland. The film portrays his life throughout the seasons, with other people occasionally crossing into his otherwise solitary life. At the heart a song, an argument between life and death, each stating their case to rule over the world. The film is without exposition, it aims at something less recognisable, to a different existence of reality observed in discrete moments.

Download photo set [here:](#)

Further information on our website [here:](#)

## CAST

As himself

**Jake Williams**

## CREW

Director

**Ben Rivers**

Director of Photography

**Ben Rivers**

Sound Recording

**Luke Fowler, Ben Rivers,**

**Becky Thomson, Mark Vernon**

Sound Design

**Chu-Li Shewring**

Björn Viktorsson

**Björn Viktorsson**

Colourist

**Ivan Marković**

Editor

**Ben Rivers**

**John Archer, Sarah Neely, Ben**

**Rivers**

Producers

**Zsuzsanna Király, Hanna Björk**

Co-producers

**Valsdóttir,**

Executive producer

**Mark Thomas**

Production companies

**Urth Productions, Hopscotch Films**

**Flaneur Films, Akkeri Films**

UK, Germany, Ireland 2024

In English

86 mins

Camera: Aaton XTR Prod + Bolex H16

Format: 16mm anamorphic,

B&W& Colour

Screening format: DCP

Aspect Ratio: 1:2.69

24 fps / Sound 5.1 / 2K

## BEN RIVERS



## SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

### Feature Films:

2019 - Krabi, 2562 (co-directed with Anocha Suwichakornpong)

2015 - The Sky Trembles and the Earth is Afraid and the Two Eyes are not Brothers

2013 - A Spell to Ward Off the Darkness (co-directed with Ben Russell)

2011- Two Years at Sea

### Short Films:

For details of all the short films see: [www.benrivers.com/films](http://www.benrivers.com/films)

## Interview with Ben Rivers

### How did the idea for a sequel to TWO YEARS AT SEA come about?

It was an idea that floated around my head not long after TWO YEARS AT SEA was out in the world. I think Jake and I discussed it a few years after, and I made a joke of saying we'll make a film every ten years, and then as ten years approached I couldn't get it out of my head and started to take it more seriously. It seems to me to be a real privilege to be able to go back to a very unique person's life every now and then, to not try to do anything outrageous, and not directly talk about the world outside, because that's present everywhere, we don't need to be shown it, we're all living it, so we're spending an hour and a half in Jake's world, but that outside world is always there. I fully intend to go back in another ten years.



### How has your collaboration with Jake Williams evolved in the course of a decade?

It's not so different because Jake was always up for performing a version of himself for my films. I suppose this time around he was more aware of the kind of film I was making, unlike TWO YEARS AT SEA, which I think was more of a surprise when he saw it. When we were filming, he thought there was nothing happening and the film would mostly be him walking about, but when he saw it, and also heard people's reactions, he then saw that there was something else going on. With BOGANCLOCH perhaps he was more aware of my method. I tell him about things I'd like to film, ideas for scenes, and sometimes ask him if he has any fun jobs he wants to do, and we incorporate them somehow. I went five times over the year, in the different



seasons, and each time I go with certain scenes in mind, but always open to find new things while I'm there.

**Different from TWO YEARS AT SEA which was shot entirely with Jake, in BOGANCLOCH, there are moments when other people occasionally crossed into his solitariness. Why is there a shift?**

I think one of the presumptions when people see TWO YEARS AT SEA is that Jake is perhaps misanthropic, and has separated himself completely from other humans, but in actual fact he is very friendly and loves visitors. I thought it was time to introduce that in different ways, but they're also not explicit, the reality of those scenes is questionable, I think.



**Please elaborate on the use of colour shots in the film.**

I love timing photos, they are a very direct way of thinking about memory, of a life before. The colour photos in the film are from Jake's travels when he was working on ships, travelling to different countries, and also where he went to markets and bought the tapes we hear in the film. I like telling his story elliptically, without explicit narration, so the story is murky, like memories. I found this set of photos and loved the way they had degraded and been water damaged over the years, and wanted to use that as chapter breaks. I wanted to introduce colour into this world slowly, just a little this time, in preparation for the film in ten years time, which may be full colour. Like Jake, I'm thinking on a unrushed time scale.

### **What's your consideration behind the choice of the aspect ratio?**

When I was preparing the film I was wondering about whether I should really change from TWO YEARS AT SEA, like the aspect ratio especially, as well as the question of colour. In the end I decided to stay with the very wide 16mm anamorphic, because he is a person in the landscape, it allows for so much feeling of space, it's not claustrophobic. It also allows for a freer movement for a non-professional performer, which I think is helpful. And then there's the house, it fits the screen perfectly, and in some senses the film is as much about this place, which is called Bogancloch.

### **A choir singing "The Flyting o' Life and Daith" deepens our connection with the character, who are they in Jake's life and how was it orchestrated?**

Another change from TWO YEARS AT SEA was that I wanted words in the film, but not really conversation, so I thought about using songs. With the choir we actually filmed quite a few more songs, all arranged by the brilliant singer and songwriter Alasdair Roberts. I gave him poems and he arranged them into songs, but in the end it was this one song "The Flyting o' Life and Daith", which he suggested, that did everything I hoped for in one go. The battle between life and death, central to everything, sung by this group of people who are welcomed around a faire at Jake's, though we're not sure if they know each other or not. I wanted it to be almost like a dream, and filmed with very little light from one fire, pushing the film as far as it would go.

### **Though a documentary, the film seeps out a sense of poetry through not only Jake's way of life, but also the audio-visual language, how did you position the camera and decide what to capture? Was there a script or vision in mind when filming?**

I wrote a treatment rather than a script, ideas for scenes I had thought about and pictured in my head. Some are very clear beforehand, and I have to find a way to make them real, some scenes get lost along the way, and then I find others. I don't storyboard, I find the shots while I'm there, looking through the camera helps me think. The important thing is having plenty of time, which is possible because the crew is me on camera and someone else recording sound (or just me). It's hard to put my finger on how it works, why I put the camera in one place, it's so much to do with feeling, and trusting myself. Then in the edit it's more consciously trying to organise those feelings, especially working with

Chu-Li and Björn on the sound design and mix, this is where the film becomes solidified as it's own world.

**The bathtub and long aerial scene is mesmerizing, please share more about this particular design.**

This was always my ending, I dreamed about it.

