

## REVIEW

# 'The Deepest Breath' on Netflix is a breathtaking look at risky free diving

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Most sports have an element of danger and in Laura McGann's stunning documentary, now playing on Netflix, the director essays how men and women dive to the deepest depths of the ocean with no oxygen, playing hide and seek with death. As the documentary reveals "not everyone wants to plunge into the blackness of the ocean without oxygen, pushing the limits of the human body, swimming what is essentially the height of the Statue of Liberty twice — once down, once back up. These people are built different,



'The Deepest Breath' tells the story of free divers Alessia Zecchini and Stephen Keenan. Supplied

and, similar to big-wave surfers or any athlete devoted to extreme sports, are not afraid of the things most humans fear."

"The Deepest Breath" profiles the lives and adventures of two free divers - Stephen Keenan and

Alessia Zecchini. Neatly divided into two separate tracks, the documentary is hauntingly eerie and so engaging that I could not miss even a moment of the narrative. Zecchini from Italy and Keenan from Ireland had different

lifestyles that ultimately led them to become champions in one extreme sport where risks involve burst eardrums, crushed lungs, blackouts and death.

Zecchini met Keenan, who was her safety diver, when he saw her blacking out several times after her dives. He offered to help and under his watchful eye, she rose, or rather dived deeper and deeper, to greatness. She broke record after record and the documentary follows this, as well as the pair's love story. The work swims toward its ultimately tragic end — Keenan died in June 2017 while rescuing his girlfriend Zecchini

when she got lost underwater during a dive into the infamously dangerous Blue Hole in Dahab, Egypt. Zecchini is still a free diver and holds 35 world records.

McGann presents a whole lot of footage from various competitions interspersed with the pair's video recordings, video blogs and Instagram Stories which are telling insights into the mind of a risk-taking diver. The documentary also offers interviews with the fathers of both divers, who knew that despite the huge danger involved in this sport they had to let their children follow their dreams.