

# Callsheet

Africa's Leading Film Industry Magazine

## + RIDING WITH SUGAR

Sunu Gonera's Future Afro Piece de Resistance

## + LOCAL IN NYC

Being an Expat Freelancer in a Pandemic



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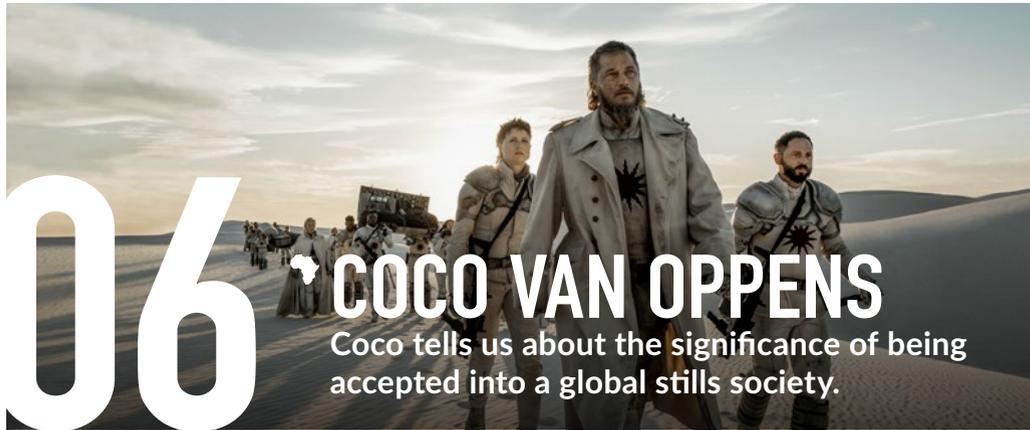
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06

## COCO VAN OPPENS

Coco tells us about the significance of being accepted into a global stills society.

02. Industry Snapshot

06. Coco van Oppens Joins Stills Society



10

## FREELANCER IN NEW YORK

SA expat Beth Ribeiro talks candidly on what it's like living and working through a pandemic.

08. Loeries Celebrates the Best in Creativity

10. Freelancing in New York in 2020



16

## RIDING WITH SUGAR

Sunu Goner's feature film - more than seventeen years in the making - has arrived.

11. Business as Usual in the Music Biz

16. Netflix Riding with Sugar Exclusive



20

## FAREWELL TONI

Toni Monty has resigned from the Durban Film Office but plans to return to local film independently soon.

19. Nina Morris Lee Takes Over MLA

20. Toni Monty Leaves Durban Film Office



Russ Stern by Talon Clamow

# INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

We dig into the hot topics in the local animation, film production, festival and distribution industries.

## MUSE AWARDS CALLS FOR ENTRIES

The Writers Guild of South Africa (WGSA) invites screenwriters to enter the 2020 WGSA Muse Awards. Launched in 2013, the WGSA Muse Awards are the only awards in South Africa honouring performance writers. The awards celebrate and promote local content production by acknowledging the creativity and craft excellence of South Africa and African writers. The awards ceremony is set to take place on Saturday, 15 May 2021.

The 2020 Muse Awards categories cover film, television, documentaries, stage, radio, animation and

mobile or webseries. Entry deadlines for the 2020 Muse Awards are as follows:

- 30 November 2020 - Early Bird - R150.00
- 31 December 2020 - Standard Entry - R250.00
- 31 January 2021 - Final Entry - R400.00

The Muse Awards have also opened calls for judges for next year's event. The first round of judging will commence on Monday, 15 February 2021 and conclude on Monday, 8 March 2021. The final round will commence on Saturday, 20 March 2021 and conclude on Friday, 23 April 2021. To qualify,

potential judges must be available during the above times, must be a full WGSA member, and must have had work produced. Academic trainers, script editors, and script consultants may also apply. Submit your CV, specify which round (first or final) you would like to participate in, and specify the category or categories you wish to judge.

For more information or to submit your project, visit [www.writersguildsa.org/entries](http://www.writersguildsa.org/entries).

## LUPITA NYONG'O RETURNS TO BLACK PANTHER 2

*The Hollywood Reporter* recently reported that Ryan Coogler will be commencing on the *Black*

*Panther* sequel in July 2021. The as of yet untitled film was set to go into production in March 2021, but was delayed due to a combination of the coronavirus pandemic and the untimely death of its star, Chadwick Boseman.

Expected to return to the franchise are Letitia Wright, Lupita Nyong'o, Winston Duke and Angela Bassett. Wright's character, Shuri, is expected to take on a greater role. Although Marvel has yet to confirm how they will continue without Boseman, they have made it clear that CGI will not be used to feature him in the film.

Lea Vivier in *Dam*Pallance Dladla in *Dam*

## NETFLIX AND REALNESS LAUNCH AFRICAN SERIES LAB

Netflix and Realness Institute have partnered to create a content development lab for writers in South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria. The opportunity will be open to writers from South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria with film and TV experience in any genre (fictional or factual) or language.

Six writers will be selected from these submissions to work on projects that will be developed and commissioned by Netflix. The selected writers will be paid a stipend of 2000 USD per month to participate and will be expected to be available full time for a period of 3 months, from June to September 2021.

"We had fun shaping the programme with the Netflix team. We all share a love for storytelling and Netflix's writer-centric approach is very much in line with our ethos," says Elias Ribeiro, Co-founder and Creative Director of Realness Institute. Keep an eye out for submission details from the end of November onwards.

## FILMING WRAPS ON DAM, A SHOWMAX ORIGINAL

Filming has wrapped on the Showmax Original *Dam*, a small-town psychological thriller shot in the Eastern Cape. Silwerskerm Best Actress winner Lea Vivier (*Wonderlus*, *Fynskrif*) stars as Yola Fischer, who returns from Chile to the Eastern Cape to bury her father, only to be tormented by spirits in the farm house she has inherited. Two-time South African Film and Television Award (SAFTA) winner Pallance Dladla (*Shadow*, *Isibaya*) co-stars as Themba, her love interest, and a biker on the run.

"It's the story of a family – and a town – with dark secrets, and about how what you push down will eventually rise up," says Alex Yazbek (*The Wild*, *Unmarried*, *Isibaya*), a four-time SAFTA winner who is writing and directing the eight-part series. *Dam* premieres on Showmax in February 2021.

Other upcoming Showmax Originals include the reality series *Lebo M: Coming Home*, due 2 December 2020, as well as Jahmil X.T. Qubeka's ancient

Africa series *Blood Psalms*, a co-production with Canal+ International; the long-awaited second season of the SAFTA-winning comedy, *Tali's Wedding Diary*; the Cape Flats neo-noir murder mystery *Skemerdans*; and *Uthando Lodumo*, a reality series about controversial celebrity couple Babes Wodumo and Mampintsha, all expected in 2021.

## BASOTHO FILM STARTS OSCAR-QUALIFYING RUN

In the wake of South Africa selecting *Toorbos* as its official Academy Awards entry, Lesotho has also made the news. *This is Not a Burial, It's a Resurrection* began its Oscar-qualifying run on 27 November to 4 December at Ster Kinekor in Cape Town. The film will be the first-ever Oscar entry from Lesotho, according to Producer Cait Pansegrouw of Urucu. "It was made under such humble and challenging circumstances, but it continues to amaze us as it takes on a life of its own. I am exceedingly proud and so thankful for everything that it has achieved."

The film is directed by Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese, and was viewed by critics as one of the best films at this year's Sundance Film Festival, held in January. The visually striking drama, set in the mountains of Lesotho, opens with an elderly widow named Mantoa (the late Mary Twala), grieving the loss of her son. 🎬

## NEWS BYTES

- Ladima Film Academy has opened for online and onsite registration in Lagos, Nigeria. Courses include animation, cinematography, directing, documentaries, editing, producing and scriptwriting. [www.ladima.africa](http://www.ladima.africa)
- Anecy Submissions have opened for 2021. Taking place from 14-19 June, Anecy will pay tribute to Africa and celebrate its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Register for the market, or submit your film by 15 March. [www.anecy.org](http://www.anecy.org)
- Wavescape Surf and Ocean Festival will take place from 4-12 December as a hybrid event, with Slide Night going online, while Oceans Alive Surf Night will be a hybrid global event broadcast live from the Aquarium. [www.wavescapefestival.com](http://www.wavescapefestival.com)
- Kings of Joburg will premiere on Netflix on 4 December. It is the most recent African series to land on Netflix, who has partnered with Connie and Shona Ferguson alongside Samad Davis of U.S based Visionary Media Inc. to produce. [www.netflix.com](http://www.netflix.com)

*This is Not a Burial, It's a Resurrection* - Mary Twala



Behind the scenes of the #JerusalemChallenge © Bevil Schwartz

# WESGRO SUPPORTS INDUSTRY VIRTUALLY AND IN PERSON

## A SERIES OF WEBINARS

Over the last few weeks, Wesgro's Film and Media Promotion Unit (FMP) hosted a series of five webinars which took place at the virtual Garden Route International Film Festival (GRIFF).

These webinars focused on a range of current topics that are important to help grow investment and employment from this sector. The first webinar which was produced with help from the Wesgro District Unit team, focused on growing the "film-readiness" of each of the five districts in the Western Cape: Cape Overberg,

Cape West Coast, Cape Karoo, Cape Winelands, Garden Route and Klein Karoo. It featured a number of industry experts with the intent of educating municipalities, the district and local economic development offices, and tourism offices on how to make their regions more "film-ready" in order to maximise the economic benefit of film and media productions in their region.

*The Importance of Using Film to Promote Your Destination* followed and was moderated by Wesgro's Rob Peters who drove a conversation and presentations from a panel of industry experts who spoke to

the importance of using film in destination marketing, trends in virtual tourism and the importance of film in business-tourism. The two successful companies (Sledgehammer and Socommunity) who were on the panel also spoke of their journey into the industry.

Aimed at mitigating risks in the film industry, and discussing the status quo in the tourism industry, the third webinar in the series was *The Impact of COVID-19 on Film & Tourism*. Head of Film Afrika production Marisa Sonemann-Turner spoke of the expert protocols that the industry developed in safe

practice. Judy Lain, Manager of Wesgro's COVID-19 Content Centre discussed the amazing platform and its support business function, its PPE marketplace and the future of the site as we head into economic recovery.

## YOU CAN STILL WATCH THE GRIFF WEBINARS

If you missed out on these webinars you can catch up in your own time by clicking through to this link or visiting Wesgro events link: [rb.gy/aecy00](https://rb.gy/aecy00)



Head of Wesgro's Convention Bureau, Corne Koch also spoke on Tourism recovery, business tourism and the links to film tourism.

The fourth webinar to take place at GRIFF provided an opportunity for the global film industry to *Meet South African Film and Media Associations*. Eighteen associations showcased the professional power of the industry and highlighted why the country is a leading film destination. Closing out the series of webinars was *A Showcasing of Cape Town and Western Cape Locations*. Featuring each district in the Western Cape as well as popular locations in Cape Town, this webinar sought to display the diverse locations that our beautiful province has to offer!

### WAVESCAPE SURF AND OCEAN FESTIVAL

Despite the on-going global pandemic, everyone's favourite ocean festival will take place as a hybrid event in Cape Town from 4-12 December 2020. From a pop-up drive-in movie night to beach clean-ups to outdoor screenings and short film contests, as well as an online film festival, the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the Wavescape Festival is going to be the perfect antidote to the national lockdown.

Using the ocean as a muse to advocate change, a group of ocean-conscious South Africans - including scientists, conservationists, influencers, surfers, authors, and activists - have come together to showcase the ocean through art, creativity and science.

For more information visit [wavescapefestival.com](http://wavescapefestival.com)

### AFRICA GAMES WEEK

Cancelled as a result of COVID-19, Playtopia 2020 will not take place this year. However, the Make Games Africa conference will still take place from 3-4 December 2020. The all-virtual festival will include a two-day online business to business event where attendees can arrange meetings with international funders, publishers and investors. The conference will also feature notable thought leaders in the African game development scene.

Off the back of the last two years' physical events, Make Games Africa continues to drive exposure, opportunities, knowledge and investment to African Game Developers connecting them to the world. The event will include international speakers, workshops, roundtables, pitching competitions and B2B matchmaking.

In collaboration with their Investment Promotion unit, Wesgro's FMP unit will once again be sponsoring the Make Games Africa conference as it fulfils their mandate to promote Cape Town and the Western Cape as a premier destination for investment. The conference also creates exposure for international investors and companies looking to have a footprint in Africa.

For more information, on Make Games Africa's virtual meeting spaces visit [www.gamesweek.africa](http://www.gamesweek.africa)

### #JERUSALEMACHALLENGE

On Heritage Day, 1 600 professionals from the film industry in South Africa took to the Cape Town Film Studios to answer the President's call to take part in the popular

#JerusalemChallenge as a way to celebrate our diverse culture.

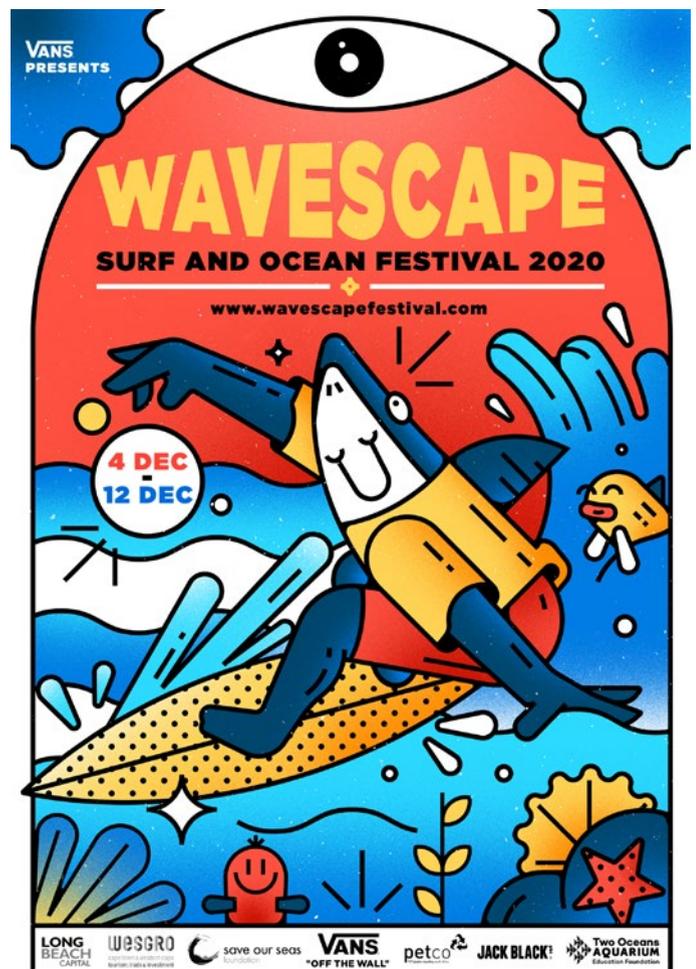
To raise their spirits and let the world know that filming in South Africa is open again, the cast of actors and crew members signed up and under strict COVID-19 protocols did the business at the custom-built, high-tech studios in Faure, Cape Town for a two-day shoot. The film was directed by Calvin Hayward and Abongwe L. Booï and produced by Cheryl Eatock and James Muringani.

The result was a nine-minute short film which highlights all aspects of film production from stunts to pyrotechnics, to special effects, and camera work of the highest order including drones and helicopter shots. The film opens on an imaginary

film shoot with featured cast driving through the famous backlot where many top films are shot, engaging in a spectacular shoot-out with human traffickers, and under a blazing finish successfully rescued a child who was kidnapped. After the scene wrap, the short film transitions to the participants of the challenge in the various places at the studio, and all dancing to the global hit, an upbeat gospel-inspired song, produced by one of South Africa's most popular House DJs, Master KG featuring singer Nomcebo Zikode.

### WATCH THE #JERUSALEMACHALLENGE

If you haven't seen the inspiring dance challenge yet, go to: [youtu.be/jVgp23G1qRA](https://youtu.be/jVgp23G1qRA)



MAKING IT HAPPEN

**CAPE TOWN & WESTERN CAPE**  
 FILM & MEDIA PROMOTION  
 a division of WESGRO





# COCO VAN OPPENS

## ACCEPTED INTO STILLS SOCIETY

**A renowned stills photographer in her own right, Coco Van Oppens has stepped onto the global stage as the newest member of the prestigious Society of Motion Picture Still Photographers.**

**R**enowned unit stills photographer Coco Van Oppens has made South Africa proud once again with her induction into the Society of Motion Picture Still Photographers (SMPSP) in early November. Van Oppens has for the last 25 years photographed over 40 films for South African and international productions companies. Some of her most recent exploits include *The Odyssey*, *The Crown*, *Dr Who*, and Ridley Scott's *Raised by*

*Wolves*. Warner Brothers, Universal, Netflix, HBO Max, Sony Pictures, Hulu, Sky1, BBC, ITV, BBC Discovery, and DNA Films are among the major companies she has worked with. She shares her thoughts on this and more in a quick catch up with *Callsheet Africa*.

### **What is the significance of this for yourself and the industry?**

The significance of this is huge for me. This year, two of us were chosen David Charles

Lee from New York and myself. Personally, being the first Africa based member is a huge honour.

It is said that on set photographers are the most published photographers on the planet, yet no one knows who they are! You will know the titles of these films and series but not the photographers who created the images. Film set photographers often work on their own. Being part of an international society like SMPSP would invite a

sharing of ideas with other photographers whose works have inspired my career.

As for the industry at large, South Africa and in particular Cape Town, is becoming known as the Hollywood of Africa. Our incredible locations, talented crew and diverse pool of artists is drawing attention worldwide with more A-list projects landing on our shores. This gives crew like myself the opportunity to sharpen our particular craft and win these types of accolades.



**How has your year been, how have you kept going during tough times of lockdown?**

Stopping to take a breath, to reassess one's career, was equally scary and empowering at the same time. You had no idea when life would get back to normal and at the same time there were pockets of time during lockdown which offered and opened up other possibilities.

For instance, I was approached to do a presentation at Photo fair Africa 2020 just before lockdown. During level 5, I was fortunate enough to have collaborated with Nicky Newman, a documentary photographer. We captured everything from the deserted streets in the Mother City to portraits of the homeless community – and even did a piece on the Pathcare testing labs at the height of the lockdown.

In May 2020, I did a Zoom presentation for Hunters of Light, a lockdown group of photographers started by Quintin Mills in Johannesburg.

**What has your experience been on set in the 'new' normal?**

Recently I have been lucky enough to be working on a TV series for Showmax. Shooting during COVID with protocols in place takes some getting used to! There are strict regulations, which go as far as checking in with a medic for temperature tests when arriving and leaving set, compulsory mask wearing, and prepacked lunches. Luckily for me, I am working on a comedy, so more than a few laughs are shared during the long shooting days on set!

**Tell us briefly about working on Raised by Wolves.**

Raised by Wolves for HBO Max has been the highlight of my career. It's a formidable piece of filmmaking, guided by world-renowned directors and DOPs. It's a dream come true for any stills photographer to work on a project of this calibre.

We started filming RBW S1 in January 2019 with Ridley Scott at the helm directing his first TV series and wrapped in September 2019. Everything from the incredible sets, locations and performances offered a me a breath taking opportunity to not only capture the magic of the filmmaking process but also the cinematic imagery of this much loved science fiction

series. No matter where I pointed my camera there was something beautiful to capture! I believe we will resume shooting in 2021.

**What are your top 3 tips learned on set?**

Being a team player who is reliable and professional will get you places in the film industry! 🎬





Loerie Awards

# 264 LOERIES AWARDED

**Taking place virtually from 16-20 November this year, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Loerie Awards has awarded the best in brand communications across Africa and the Middle East.**

**A** total 264 Loeries were awarded across 16 categories including 5 Grands Prix, 28 Golds, 63 Silvers, 110 Bronzes, 14 Craft Golds and 44 Craft Certificates. Over 5 200 entries were received, with 18% of entries from outside South Africa. Overall, 1 217 brands were represented by 470 agencies from 20 countries across Africa and the Middle East. The awards were judged by over 140 regional and international industry leaders in their fields including international Jury Presidents Swati Bhattacharya, Till Hohmann, Dennis Lück, Katherina Tudball, Nicholas Hulley and Alan Kelly.

## **BONISWA PEZISA INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME**

Boniswa Pezisa, Net#work BBDO's Group Chief Executive is this year's Loeries Hall of Fame inductee. The Hall of Fame was introduced by the Loeries in 2008 to recognise dedicated individuals who have contributed to the building and elevation of the creative and brand communications industry.

"Boniswa is well respected as a committed leader and advocate for transformation in the industry. She is also a former chairperson of the both the Loeries and the ACA commands great love and respect from the industry which she has served for three decades. We are honoured to be able to add her to the Loeries

Hall of Fame," says Preetesh Sewraj, CEO of the Loeries.

The mother, business leader, community builder and activist joined the industry back in the late 80's and already in the early 90's, even before the dawn of democracy, was involved in projects focused on transforming the industry with the simple focus of inclusion for all.

"As a black female I was aware from the beginning, even when I did not have the language for it, that I was part of a revolution and carried a huge burden to be a conduit for change, diversity, innovation, inclusion and integration," says Pezisa. She says while she is happy with the inroads made to date, to which she has contributed, she is well aware that transformation

is not a destination but a continuous journey and there is still a lot of work to be done especially in bringing women and the youth to the fore.

"It's heart-warming to see the prominent rise of the likes of Neo Mashigo, Xolisa Dyeshana and women like Nombini Mehlomakulu (who was once my intern and now taking a seat at the table of transformation), as this is testament to all the efforts towards inclusion. I am thankful to Net#work BBDO, who from the beginning embraced diversity, for the support they have given me, the space to express myself and explore ideas as well as valuable time to serve the industry on various committees and boards," says Pezisa.



**IT'S HEART-WARMING TO SEE THE PROMINENT RISE OF THE LIKES OF NEO MASHIGO, XOLISA DYESHANA AND WOMEN LIKE NOMBINI MEHLOMAKULU AS THIS IS TESTAMENT TO ALL THE EFFORTS TOWARDS INCLUSION.**



### **LOERIES AWARDS CHANTAL SOMBONOS-VAN TONDER**

Chicken Licken's Managing Director and Chief Marketer, Chantal Sombonos-Van Tonder, has made Loeries history by being the first-ever, second-generation award winner of the coveted Marketing Leadership Award, an honour her late father George Sombonos received in 2013.

The award was introduced by the Loeries in 2007, to recognise an individual for their marketing achievements over a sustained period of time. Previous winners have included Andrea Quayle, former

Vice President of Marketing at Anheuser-Busch InBev; Doug Place, Chief Marketing Officer at Nandos; Claudia Waters, Marketing Communications Manager at Mercedes Benz and Yegs Ramiah, former Chief Executive of Brand at Sanlam.

"Chantal's leadership has seen Chicken Licken win numerous Loerie Awards over the recent years culminating in Chicken Licken becoming the number one ranked brand in the Loeries 2019 rankings. Chantal's support of her agency is a testament to how effective brand and agency partnerships can



**Chantal Sombonos-Van Tonder**

create innovative experiences for society," says Preetesh Sewraj, CEO of the Loeries.

An elated Sombonos-Van Tonder says, "It's a huge honour for me on behalf of my creative team and Chicken Licken family, but also on a personal level it's a huge affirmation of the work I am doing in continuing my father's legacy of tenacity, hard work whilst chartering new territories for the brand."

Since taking over the helm, Sombonos-Van Tonder has collected a series of accolades - a total of 49 Loeries including a Grand Prix, eleven Gold awards and both the coveted 'Brand of the Year' and 'Brand Representative of the Year' awards for 2019.

### **GRANDS PRIX AWARDS**

The coveted Grand Prix was awarded to five deserving campaigns this year. They are:

- In the Out of Home - Ambient category a Grand Prix was awarded to First For Women and FoxP2 Advertising for *16 Days Of Light* Campaign

- In the Print Crafts - Art direction category a Grand Prix was awarded to Novomed Allergy Clinic and Impact BBDO for *Hidden Allergy* Campaign
- For SA Non-English Radio Station Commercials, a Grand Prix was awarded to BBC Studios and The Odd Number for *Kasi Sensei* Campaign
- In the Film - Branded Content Film - Single Category a Grand Prix was awarded to Nedbank and Joe Public for *Secrets*
- For Integrated Campaign a Grand Prix was awarded to Mastercard and FP7McCann for *Astronomical Sales*

To see the full list of winners and the latest news from Loeries Creative Week, visit [www.loeries.com](http://www.loeries.com).



**LOERIES**  
AFRICA MIDDLE EAST



**Boniswa Pezisa**



# FREELANCING IN NEW YORK IN 2020

**DOP Beth Ribeiro shares her experience in the international film world, and particularly how she's been living and working overseas during the pandemic.**

The first time I was the Director of Photography (DP) for a project, I used every excuse to try to get out of it. I was in the brilliant Film Production Course at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and it was my turn to be the DP for a class project. I was terrified of the camera and all of its buttons. But something happened when I had the camera in my hands: I understood that so much control was, in fact, beautiful. I knew it was exactly what I wanted to do.

This realisation pushed me to further my education and I was lucky enough to study Cinematography at the New York Film Academy. At NYFA, I quickly became obsessed with understanding the way

that mixing lenses, cameras and filters, can create the product you have in mind. I then began working as a freelance DP and Focus Puller in New York and have been grateful to be successfully working since, despite the pandemic.

During my time here, I have been lucky enough to work a huge range of projects - both big budget and very small, indie projects. As a Focus Puller, some of my favourites have been: *In the Room*, a short film with Denis O'Hare shot in a big brownstone in Brooklyn; a Spotify commercial, which had a brilliant use of colour and a beautiful camera setup; and *Flaky*, an indie feature film shot entirely handheld and mostly with single take scenes.

As a result of COVID-19, the world of film in New York has become a different one. During the height of lockdown in the city, there were no shoots happening, but as the regulations on lockdown began to lift slightly, productions started up again and I was able to immediately jump back into working. My first job back was a webseries I shot called *Little David*. My crew was tiny and we worked constantly with masks on, trying to maintain social distance, but being able to get back to work felt like coming up for air. It was a confirmation that I could adapt to working in new conditions.

Many productions require you to get tested in the week prior to the shoot, some require your temperature on set and few test

you on set. This is a completely different way of working as you come to work being prepared for the possibility of your day being cancelled, and so are constantly prepared for shifting schedules. Crews are minimised to decrease the number of people on set, including the camera team. When working as Focus Puller, I have not had a 2nd AC since work began again after lockdown, which means I have developed techniques to make up for the loss, for example changing lenses on my own.

I can safely say that I have found my passion and I'm proud of the incredible industry that exists in SA. I'm grateful for the experiences I've had here and can't wait to share what I've learnt.



# SYNCHRO MUSIC

## IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL

**Technical Manager Colin Peddie at Synchro Music Management shares their highlights for 2020 and what their plans are for the future.**

**A** local music publisher with a host of international, award-winning composers and music libraries within their fold, Synchro Music Management has weathered the last year rather well, all things considered. Their Technical Manager, Colin Peddie, explains how they have kept clients happy and stayed in business, all the while adding new labels and assisting filmmakers in finding the best musical themes, scores and scene setters for their productions.

### **Firstly tell us about 2020.**

#### **How has Synchro Music Management weathered the pandemic?**

Should we really discuss 2020? Obviously this has been a tough year all round, but most of our work has continued online without much disruption. There have not been any added challenges, most of our clients are still working. We did not close, but the initial lockdown kept most of our

clients at home, so we had a slowdown where only current work was being carried over.

#### **What are some of the trends in film genres and music tracks/requests that you've received this year? What kind of music do you foresee being in demand in 2021 and beyond?**

It's always tricky to make predictions or opinions on production music as it is directly linked to the production at hand. However, the move away from heavy rock sounds in our territory is evident, EDM still seems to dominate most advertising that I have seen. But again, each production should demand its own unique sound. I try and stay away from trends.

#### **Tell us about the Synchro library. What are the new releases, most popular additions this year, or special projects you've been able to assist recently?**

Synchro is a production music publisher. We represent labels

from around the globe and license in SA. We have signed a few new labels and our database is continuously expanding. The Perfect Music Library, Atom Music and Vibrant are a few of the new partnerships, and obviously all our labels are still available and new albums are constantly being added.

#### **With a rise in the demand for streamed content, where do you see the future headed?**

There is much continued discussion on how best to manage the online content game. There are new players with new models coming out all the time. Synchro along with the other publishers are in meetings with the relevant players to find the best solutions going forward, but there are no concrete answers at the moment.

#### **Any last words?**

From all of us at Synchro we wish you the best festive season and pray for a more stable 2021.

### **TOP TIPS FOR DIRECTORS IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT MUSIC OR THEME**

1. Speak to a publisher about bespoke music for the production. Synchro has award-winning songwriters and producers that can create exactly what you need. The music industry is going through financial changes and you may find you can afford more than you think.
2. Let the scene decide the music. If you are creating anything beyond a "bed", it's best to let the emotional content of the scene decide the kind of music needed. Many of the requests I get seem so open-ended because the content of the scene is not described, like an "I want something funky" type of request, which is not really enough to go on.
3. Work with a music publisher or with a musical director to decide what you need before searching the libraries. There are so many options and you can get lost if you don't have a clear vision.



### **PRODUCTION MUSIC FOR PROFESSIONALS**

#### **Who are we?**

An independent South African music publishing company representing international and local labels.

#### **How does it work?**

Visit our website at [www.synchro.co.za](http://www.synchro.co.za) to explore our catalogue of music.



**SYNCHRO MUSIC**  
MANAGEMENT



# CITY OF CAPE TOWN LAUNCHES NEW FILM STRATEGY

The City of Cape Town has a film fund, an expansion of the film office, and more planned for their new strategy.

## FILM FUND PART OF CITY OF CAPE TOWN'S NEW FILM STRATEGY

The City of Cape Town's developmental Film Fund is closer to realisation. The Cape Town council recently approved the **City's Film Strategy** which also paves the way for the expansion of the film office and the introduction of economic incentives such as a reduction in film-related tariffs.

The City previously announced the intention to establish the fund during the annual film industry engagement. The fund is intended to provide support to film projects focused on development, transformation and empowerment.

Over the last year, the City's film office has been at work

drafting the Film Strategy – a document which will guide local government and film industry stakeholders in building a resilient and highly competitive industry not only on the continent but globally.

## EXPANDING THE FILM OFFICE

In order to further position Cape Town as a premier film and media destination, the City's Film Strategy proposes the strengthening of the Film Office. The reinforced Film Office would focus on promoting Cape Town to local, national and international clients while also working with other City service departments to cut red tape and support the local film industry with funding and incentives.

In addition, the office would

nurture home-grown talent, advance the development of local content and cultivate new and extend co-production treaties and partnerships.

## CAPE TOWN'S FILM-FRIENDLY TARIFFS

The approval of the Film Strategy has also kicked off the process for the reduction of the film tariffs. For the last three years, the City has frozen tariffs to assist the industry in reducing costs.

In addition, the municipality has also frozen all location fees for filming on City property

and it is no longer charging production companies fees to set up base and holding areas. With the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic still being felt across many sectors, the financial relief incentives will be critical in ensuring the industry can keep the cost of filming low as it recovers from the crisis.

The City of Cape Town will keep the industry updated on the progress of the Film Strategy, the film policy as well as the review of the municipality's film by-law.

**More information can be found on [www.filmcapetown.com](http://www.filmcapetown.com)**



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MAKING IT HAPPEN

# MIPCOM ONLINE+

## A VIRTUAL SUCCESS

Originally set to take place in Cannes in mid-October, MIPCOM organisers had to make the difficult pandemic decision to take the show online.

Despite announcing in July that the show would go virtual for 2020, MIPCOM still managed to provide a useful and engaging platform for filmmakers, distributors, producers and everyone in between to connect. Taking place from 12-16 October, the show offered 1-to-1 video meetings and live chats for delegates, while MIPCOM Online+ insights were available for catch up until 17 November. Hailed as "a very valuable development, with lots of business tips", this most unique edition welcomed over 6000 delegates including 2 200 buyers and commissioners from over 100 countries.

### KOREA, STORY CONNECTS US

A fitting moment given the world's current K-drama craze, MIPCOM chose to focus on Korea as their country of honour with the theme 'Story Connects Us'. The Korean Communications Commission hosted a conference on Korean content in order to share more on the subject. "I believe there still aren't enough opportunities for the world to gain comprehensive information about Korean content," said Han Sang-Hyuk, Chairman of the Commission.

They also supported an online networking programme to connect Korean producers and creatives with overseas firms interested in partnering with them. "Korean content producers have both creativity and technical excellence, I hope that Korea can join hands with

the world to create a new model of co-operation in various areas of broadcasting content, including production and distribution," he added.

### A SURPRISING VIRTUAL SUCCESS

MIPCOM is already one of the biggest television content markets in the world, and going entirely virtual was no easy feat – but very well done nonetheless. Over 3 700 programmes were featured by 800+ virtual exhibiting companies. Running concurrently was MIPJunior with over 1 400 programmes and projects presented in their online digital screenings library. A total of 230 sessions, keynotes, screenings and showcases were programmed,

50 of which were content showcases.

One of the highlights of this year's event was Tyler Perry's keynote presentation. A playwright, actor, director, and media mogul, Perry is an inspiration to see. But, as many of the greats, his passion for entertainment was born out of pain and a need to escape reality. "How do I write so much content? It's because in trauma, I developed this place to go in my brain to escape, into these different worlds, and inside these different worlds I could actually stay there for hours. Which is how I write now. I can still tap into that place in my brain," he said.

A key focus was placed on making the film industry a more sustainable and environmentally friendly

workplace that respects the inhabitants of earth. "The absolute consensus is that if you produce too much carbon in the air... you're going to have devastating consequences. We need to communicate this over and over, and very clearly," said the United Nations' Melissa Fleming, with Sky's Jeremy Darroch adding that the United Nations SDGs are so important. "They give us an obvious place to think about how we can plug our efforts into the broader global initiative and programme," he said.

**MIPCOM 2021 takes place from 11-14 October in Cannes. For more information, visit [www.mipcom.com](http://www.mipcom.com).**





# VALUE FILM FLEET

## READY TO RIDE

*Callsheet Africa* catches up with Value Film Fleet's Margie Welch to find out how their company has weathered the storm, and what lies ahead for the new year.

**V**alue Film Fleet has served the industry for years and has worked on most of the large-scale international productions, as well as the boundary-pushing local ones. As the company opens shop post-lockdown, we caught up with Margie Welch, Head of the Value Film Fleet, to find out what's in store for them and how they've managed with the new norm.

**Tell us how your year has been, and how you've managed to stay afloat?**

I think that the hard lockdown caught everyone by surprise. Our

company CEO and Directors were amazing and quickly implemented a contingency plan. The safety of our staff was of the utmost importance which resulted in most of our staff working from home.

**Have you had lots of business or requests since reopening? And is the full fleet available for use?**

The industry is starting to open up again and we are getting mainly local production enquiries, which is wonderful for our amazing home-grown talent. Value's vehicles and Unit Gear are fully available to productions.

**How has Value Film Fleet made their staff and their services COVID compliant?**

Value Film Fleet have strict COVID-19 Protocols for our staff as well as our vehicles. Our vehicles are thoroughly sanitised and our staff observe social distancing, the wearing of masks and washing and sanitising of hands.

**What do you foresee for 2021?**

We all hope that 2021 will start with a film business boom, but it is difficult to predict at this stage when one considers the second wave of COVID-19

affecting America and Europe. The question is, is South Africa in for a second wave?

**Any last words of encouragement?**

We would like to wish our amazing crews, actors, producers, directors – and the industry as a whole – a good 2021. This pandemic has affected so many families in the industry and caused hard times for many. Stay strong, stay positive.



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Charles Mene(left) and Simona Brown(right) star in *Riding With Sugar* © Netflix

# RIDING WITH SUGAR

## FLYING HIGH WITH SUNU

A story Sunu Gonera carried in his heart for almost two decades has finally been brought to life. Kim Crowie catches up with the crew as their film is released on Netflix.

Like proud father, Sunu Gonera was beaming from ear to ear when I caught up with him – as well as Hakim Kae-Kazim and Charles Mnene – at the release of his debut feature film *Riding with Sugar*. A wild ride through the streets of Cape Town on a BMX doesn't even begin to describe the thrill of this production, from its bright and futuristic

colour palette to the characters portrayed by Charles and Hakim.

There's something truly beautiful in seeing something like this come together. As a major fan of Sunu's award-winning work in adland, it is encouraging to see his maturity and growth both personally and professionally into longer formats. In this film, one clearly sees his vision for a different,

better, more authentic side of Africa to be revealed on the world stage. That the film was co-produced by the ineffable Helena Spring is clear, too. Sunu has made a great choice in partnering with this industry stalwart to bring her wisdom to this incredible production.

"When you look at this film, it's a licensed Netflix Original – it's something that we all hope

for when we're telling stories," he told me in mid-November. "It was worth the wait. I'm so glad that I didn't make it when I wanted to. I'm like Joshua in the film. I've been through what he's been through, fighting for the dream. To think that I started writing the story in 2002 and now in 2020 it comes out! It's been a long journey, but very exciting."



## CALLING ALL DIASPORA

Originally from Zimbabwe, Sunu has brought the experience of the African diaspora to vivid life in *Riding with Sugar*. The film stars Nigerian-British actor Hakim Kae-Kazim (*Black Sails*, *Hotel Rwanda*) together with Charles Mnene (*The Bill*, *Holby City*). Set in Cape Town's shadowy underbelly, it tells the tale of young refugee Joshua (Mnene) on a quest for BMX glory. Just weeks before he gets his big break, he meets a tragic accident and finds shelter and a mentor in Mambo (Kae-Kazim), a fellow refugee who was once a professor in his home country – with a dark secret, Joshua soon discovers.

"*Riding with Sugar* is definitely the poster child for persistence and staying the course," Sunu explains. "It's also a reflection of us as Africans. We have this incredible resilience and for me, what Joshua goes through in the film is what I've gone through but it's also what the African continent has gone through. What do you do when life throws curve balls at you? We're always making a plan. And that's the story behind the film and for Africa – it explores issues of identity, belonging, family. It's a film that's been trying to find these things just like we have, and I'm so glad Netflix took it on."

"Getting diverse stories out there, getting the African story told from many different perspectives is an exciting



Behind the scenes with Hakim Kae-Kazim © Netflix

thing," Hakim adds. "It's great that Netflix is promoting African stories and African storytellers and allowing films like this with its Afro-futuristic bend to be streamed on their platform." A seasoned actor who has known Sunu for a long time, Hakim brings his effortless charm and abilities to his shady yet magnetic character in *Riding with Sugar*.

After watching it for myself, I am nothing short of amazed by Charles Mnene's incredible performance as Joshua. A young British actor born in Kenya, he too understands the heart of this story – but had to work hard

to keep his character authentic, from mastering a very unique Zimbabwean accent to pulling some incredible BMX stunts.

"The most amazing part about doing the film was just the diverse cultures I could learn from," says Charles. "It's something I'm proud of, being born on the continent, and for me this film is Afro-futurism. We get to tell our own story from our own perspective, shared with the world. There's more richness and diversity in content when we tell diverse stories like this. The film itself is visually very rich, the cast and crew were so hardworking – making the story additionally unique."

## SHOOTING CAPE TOWN... FOR CAPE TOWN

Known for its diverse locations – the world in a city – Cape Town shines as the backdrop for the film, wearing its own skin. The colour palette is captivating, with flashes of Joshua's history filled with deep orange country scenes buried beneath a haze of fast-paced bike manoeuvres through the city's neon-lit streets. Sunu's ability to capture the energy and vibrancy of a place flows through

this film, with each scene coming to life even in the minute details.

Plus, it's a pretty fun city to live in, too. "It's always great for me to shoot in Cape Town," says Hakim. "There are so many different diverse places to be part of and to film in."

"Shooting in Cape Town was a key part of the story," Sunu adds. "Cape Town to me represents Africa in a way. There is just this unbridled beauty – and then there's the underbelly. It's us as human beings: there's light and there's dark, and we try to stay in the light... In *Riding with Sugar*, I always wanted the city of Cape Town to be a key character. To focus on the people who are on the fringes of society, those who are on the outside looking in, the longing, the family that you choose. I feel like the timing of *Riding with Sugar* is perfect with what's going on in the world right now. People are asking who am I? Where do I belong? Who am I safe with? Am I loved? Those are the key themes of the film."

***Riding with Sugar* was released online on 27 November 2020. Watch it on [www.netflix.com](http://www.netflix.com).**



Sunu Goneru (far left) directing Mnene on set © Netflix

# ATF ONLINE+ SERVES UP TOP ASIAN CONTENT

Taking place from 1-4 December, the Asia TV Forum and Market brought industry professionals around the world together in a completely virtual event.

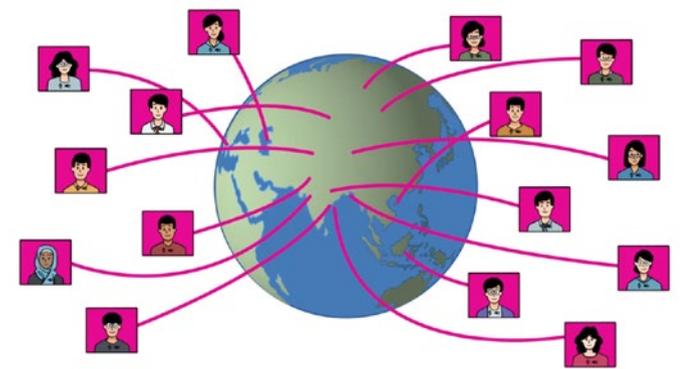
The Asia TV Forum and Market was a sought-after event, virtual or not, particularly with the steady rise in demand for Asian content. That said, the online platform provided delegates with a seamless and comprehensive platform on which to access the forum programme as well as matchmaking opportunities (among many other functions and options). The days were structured into very simple streams, with mornings devoted to industry leader keynotes, as well as production afternoons, speed dating sessions and content showcases. A 90 minute gap during lunch was allocated as buying time as well.

The opening ceremony was held at the Marina Bay Sands Hybrid Broadcast Studio, with the mail message throughout focused on the catalytic

effects of the pandemic in hastening transformations that were already underway in the media industry. Singapore's Minister of Communications and Information, Mr Iswaran, also affirmed their government's faith in the industry and urged the preservation and enhancement of the sector's capabilities in order to emerge stronger post-pandemic. "The challenge would lie in taking a good story and positioning it for the kind of technological innovation where platforms are so diverse," he said.

## CHINA: 2020 COUNTRY OF HONOUR

This year's event honoured China as its focus country. A featured online China Pavilion allowed this content-rich nation to interact and connect virtually. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic



relations between China and Singapore, as well as the first time the China Pavilion participated at ATF as a titled brand sponsor. A record-breaking 40 Chinese companies took part in the show this year, bringing over 300 shows, including over 120 TV dramas, about 120 animations, 20 documentaries, and 40 other types of shows.

The country also hosted a content stream centred on their offerings and capabilities, such as Fresh Content China, a screening for *With You*, a keynote with an industry stakeholder and more. These events told the story of China from multiple perspectives and dimensions.

## A CONTENT-RICH FORUM

The conference programme was packed with a variety of topics related to both the Asian and wider international television market. Some of

the highlights included a talk on India's revenue models and expansions, talks by buyers and producers on current market trends, and several perspectives on digital transformation and the changing landscape of content buying.

There were several unique streams to tap into, such as speed dating sessions for projects in development, content showcases during coffee breaks, mornings with industry leaders, lunchtime buyer sessions, and afternoon production sessions.

ATF Online+ will be available for delegates to catch up on all the content and news after the event. For more information, visit [www.asiatvforum.com](http://www.asiatvforum.com).





# NINA MORRIS LEE TAKES OVER MLA

Internationally acclaimed South African agent and casting director, Moonyeenn Lee, passed away in July of this year and left her 46-year-old business to her daughter-in-law Nina Morris Lee and her daughter, Cindy Lee. MLA has earned the reputation of representing the best of South African acting talent. Morris Lee will lead the talent agency as CEO and Manager.

Whilst Morris Lee may be considered a new player in the film and television industry, she is certainly not new to business leadership. Morris Lee comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience from her background as a leading player and change-maker in the advertising and marketing industry. With decades of experience in running her own

ad agency, she was instrumental in building some of South Africa's most successful brands. Most recently, Nina has been working in the NGO sector.

According to MLA, Moonyeenn and Nina weren't just family, they were friends. They spent many nights over the past 13 years discussing and debating the pros and cons of the industry, dissecting films, breaking down performances and scripts and plotting the course for MLA. For Moonyeenn, Nina was always part of the future of the business.

Says Nina Morris Lee of her new role at MLA, "It feels like a natural fit. At its core MLA is about people, about mentoring them, guiding their careers and selling their talent. All the things I love doing. I am excited



about the new challenges and the opportunities for growth."

Veteran actor Terry Pheto says of Morris Lee, "I cannot think of a more qualified and suitable person to take over from where Moonyeenn Lee left off. Nina

brings a wealth of knowledge and heart to MLA, her vision for the agency makes me excited to be one of MLA's talents. It's also comforting to know that Moonyeenn's legacy of cultivating and nurturing talent will live on." 🗣️

# QUEEN SONO CANCELLED

Diprente's *Queen Sono* saw its second season renewal reversed due to the constraints of the pandemic. The show was Netflix's first script-to-screen original series out of the continent of Africa. Starring Pearl Thusi, the series followed Thusi as a highly trained top spy in SA's intelligence. The new season would have seen Queen search for the truth as her newfound need for revenge takes her on a mission across Africa.

"We wrote a beautiful story that spanned the continent but unfortunately could not



be executed in these current trying times," said Writer and Director Kagiso Lediga.

"We've made the difficult decision not to move forward with season two of *Queen Sono*,"

Netflix said in a recent statement. "We are incredibly proud of the Diprente team for sharing their audacious vision and bringing it to life with Netflix. A huge thank you to our fans across the world for the love shared for our first African Original series."

The *Queen Sono* cancellation follows the axing of *I Am Not Okay with This* and *The Society*, which were also cancelled due to restraints put on production. *Blood & Water*, Netflix's second script-to-screen original out of Africa, was also renewed for season two and is currently in production. 🗣️

# TONI MONTY BEGINS NEW JOURNEY

**Toni Monty, who has headed up the Durban Film Office for 16 years, has announced that she will be stepping down and beginning a new, independent journey.**

**A**fter 16 years at the helm of the Durban Film Office, the eThekweni Municipality's film industry development arm, and 11 years leading the highly successful Durban FilmMart, Toni Monty, has resigned to pursue some long term professional goals, with plans to continue working in supporting filmmakers on the continent with the creation of content.

Toni is currently reading for a Master's degree in intellectual property law. During the next year, she plans to complete this degree and establish herself as an independent film industry consultant.

"I have taken time to reflect on the last 16 years I have worked developing our local film and television industry, and I am humbled by the opportunity bestowed on me to work with the many colleagues across continents," she says. "My work at the Durban Film Office has been an incredible journey, a formidable task and responsibility that I took to heart every waking moment. During this time, I have grown tremendously professionally and personally, and I will be ever grateful to the many colleagues who supported my mission along the way."

"Our local industry has grown so much over the past years, particularly in the tough world of independent filmmaking. Local emerging filmmakers are so determined, as one must be, and have grown into an awesome, determined, and supportive community of creatives that I



Toni Monty

am proud and humbled to have worked with. I am confident that they will boom in the coming years, and the vision of a thriving and sustainable film industry will be fully realised."

Toni was instrumental in setting up the Durban FilmMart, and earlier this year, with the support of the City of Durban, ensured the continuance of the Mart in establishing the Durban FilmMart Institute, an NPO which will now run the event independently.

"The DFM Institute has now been established with a capable governing board and management team. It has been a part of my life since its inception and stepping back from driving this amazing initiative after 11 years is bitter-sweet. The journey from the idea to create an African Co-production Market on the Southern tip of Africa (in a city that most had not really heard of), to witnessing the incredible growth of this market, the collaborations and the stories, has been an incredibly gratifying

experience. I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to lead Durban FilmMart this far, and I am confident that the next chapter of the DFM Institute will continue to ascend to new heights."

Over the years, Toni says that her highlights at the DFO have been the introduction of the Durban Film Office development programmes in 2009 that has been instrumental in growing local independent filmmaking community.

And the DFM? "Ultimately the exciting thing for me is to have seen films come into the DFM as a concept, an idea, or the beginnings of an idea, with a producer and director attached. Fast forward a few years and we see films that have gone from market to market and filmmakers networked with investors, agents, distributors and the like, and then seeing the film in cinemas or festivals or winning awards: There are many fine examples, too many to name here but some examples include

*Train of Salt and Sugar, This is Not A Burial, It's a Resurrection, Buddha in Africa, Inxeba, Flatland, Five Fingers for Marseilles, Softie, Mercy of the Jungle and Devil's Lair and many more."*

"It has been extremely gratifying have networked with global players in the industry, and to have watched the eyes of the world shift its gaze to the growing African film industry," she enthuses. "We have learnt so much from the likes of initial partners such as Rotterdam's Cinemart, the International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam, Produce au Sud France, Toronto's Hot Docs and the European Film Market, as well as welcoming new partners in our first online edition this year, like Netflix and IEFTA. And of course the valuable contribution and support that we have received from our local development agencies such as NFVF, DTI, IDC, KZN Film Commission, Gauteng Film Commission, Wesgro and many more."

"On a personal note, I would like to say thank you to all our partners and the filmmakers, in believing in the DFM and supporting it over the years. I leave with fond memories of discussions and collaborations. It is part of my plan to continue work with upcoming African filmmakers as I believe I have a network and knowledge-base to be able to fast track development and support the growth. There is still much work to be done and many stories to be told!"

For now, Toni can be contacted via her LinkedIn profile. [👉](#)



# ROODEBLOEM STUDIOS

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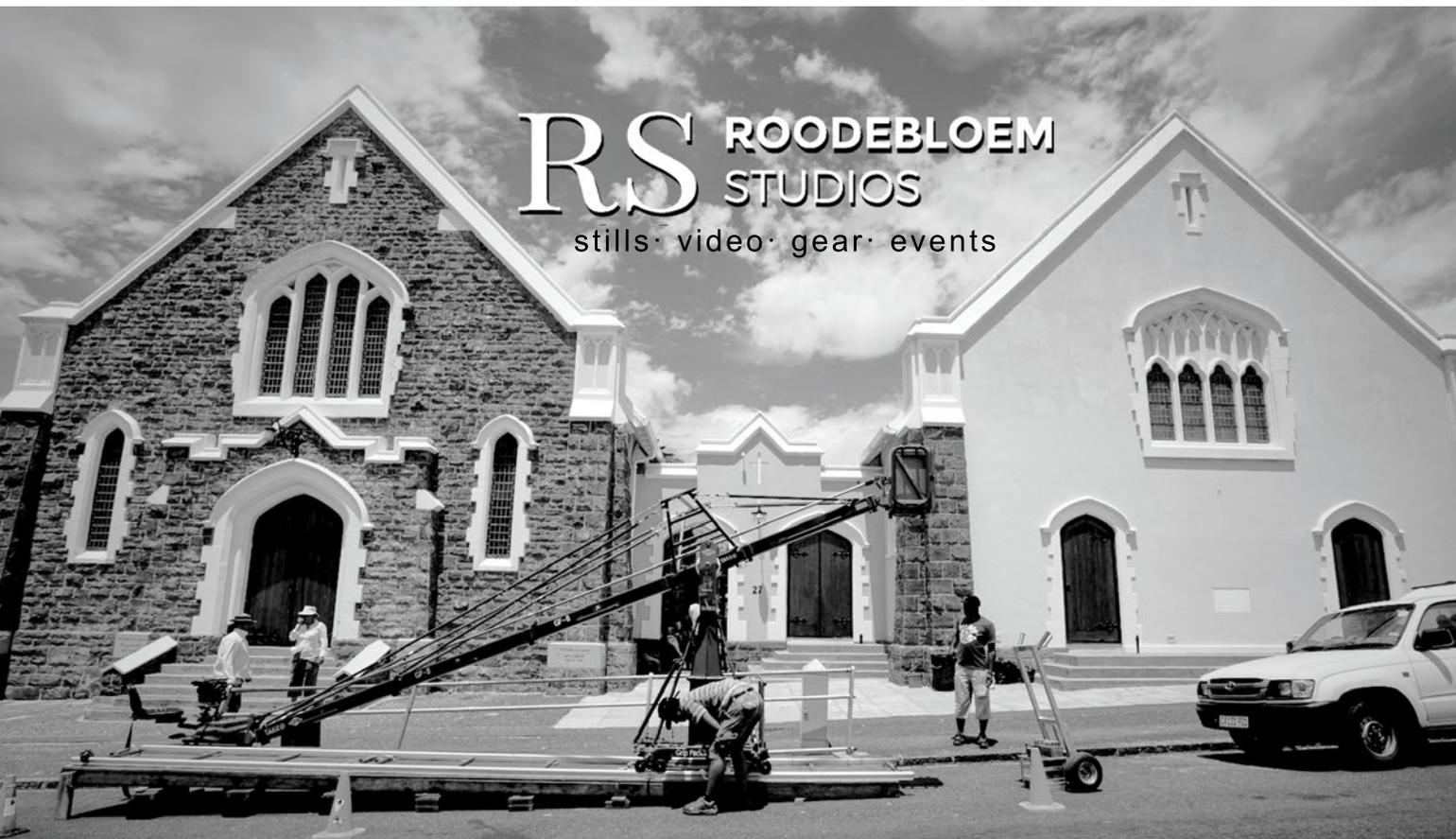
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Raised by Wolves © RBW/HBO Max. Images by Coco Van Oppens. Read the full story on page 6

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*Riding with Sugar* © Netflix. Watch Sunu Gona's feature film debut on [netflix.com](https://www.netflix.com)

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