

Category : Fiction/Relationship Thriller
Length : 90'
Language : Xhosa
Shooting format : HD
Shooting location : Eastern Cape (South Africa)
Shooting dates : May 2014
Stage of production : Development stage
Expected date of completion : December 2014

Budget : 500 000 €
Financing in place : 0 €
Source of funding : Department Of Trade And Industry (on South african expenses)
Coproducer : Cool Take Picture
Current situation : Seeking for international coproducer, international sale agent



Elias RIBEIRO – PRODUCER (Urucu Media)



Elias is a Brazilian who has lived and worked around the world. Prior to basing himself in Johannesburg in 2011 to pursue a Masters degree, he spent 12 years between Spain, USA, Germany and UK. He speaks four languages fluently and has worked in media in different capacities. He started as a floor-runner, then production assistant, talent scout, casting director. He also trained as an editor, worked as a videographer and started directing and producing over the years. His travelling gave him great understanding of universal themes. Having worked in all departments within production affords him the ability to effectively communicate with his team. He has delivered content for broadcast, theatrical and VOD.

John TRENGOVE – DIRECTOR



John Trengove grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa, and has lived in Cape Town and New York, where he completed a Masters in filmmaking at NYU. His career spans theatre, television, documentary, commercials and experimental film. His groundbreaking mini-series, Hopeville garnered much critical acclaim and several international awards including the Swiss Rose d'Or for the best drama and an International Emmy nomination for the best mini-series. He is currently developing a feature film, The Wound, about traditional male circumcision rituals in the Eastern Cape. John directs theatre in his spare time and is a member of the art collective Against Jealousy.

SYNOPSIS

Kwanda, an affluent and urbanized teenager, returns to his father's rural village to be circumcised during Ukwalukan, an age-old Xhosa initiation ritual that marks a young man's passage into manhood.

During the painful healing process, Kwanda is ostracized by the other initiates, but finds support from Xolani, a closeted young caregiver from the village. Vitcha, a volatile young rural man, grows suspicious of the special bond between Xolani and Kwanda and acts out a series of increasingly dangerous and violent power games within the group of initiates.

When Kwanda finally discovers the reason for Vitcha's cruelty, a secret relationship between Xolani and Vitcha, a tragic chain of events are set in motion.

CONTACT :

Company office : +27 718 445 435 - www.urucumedia.com
Elias Ribeiro : er@urucumedia.com
John Trengove: trengove@gmail.com

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT (extract)

« Ukwaluka is an ancient rights-of-passage circumcision ritual that is still widely practiced among the Xhosa people of South Africa. Boys between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three are traditionally taken up a mountain where they are circumcised. [...]

The initiation is seen as the only means by which a Xhosa boy can rightfully transition into manhood. It is believed that, amongst other things, the ritual "cures" » an initiate of any gay desire. In Xhosa culture (as in most traditional African cultures) homosexuality might be tolerated in adolescence, but not in adult years. [...]

Due to sensitive nature of the initiation, which to this day remains shrouded in secrecy and taboo, the politics around representing Ukwaluka are significant. Add to this a second taboo – homosexual desire – and the film is set to provoke rigorous debate, not just about the subject matter, but around the ethics of making such a film in the first place.

It is our position that is precisely the kind of film that should be coming out of Africa. In a time where homophobic violence is sweeping the African continent and homosexuals face the death penalty in countries like Uganda and Zimbabwe, the time is ripe for a film that charts the unspoken intersection between gay sexuality and traditional culture, a film that proceeds on the premises desire and intimacy men is as ancient, and as African the culture itself. The Ukwaluka initiation provides a rich and layered arena for examining the nature of what it means to be a man, and for challenging traditional (and sometimes limited) representations of African masculinity. »