

Category : Fiction/Documentary
Length : 70'
Language : English & Afrikaans
Shooting format : HDV
Shooting location : Cape Town (South Africa)
Shooting dates : March – May 2015
Stage of production : Development stage

Budget : 115 000 €
Financing in place : 13 000 €
Source of financing : Hot Docs Blue Ice Fund, National Film and Video Foundation
Workshops or markets attended : Hot Docs Blue Ice Lab 2013 (Canada), Encounters with IDFA Bertha Fund 2013, Doc Circle/Durban FilmMart 2013
Current situation : Seeking for additional financing, European coproducer, international sales agent



Jean MEERAN – PRODUCER (Team Tarbaby)



Jean Meeran lives in Cape Town and is a co-member of the film and art collective, Team Tarbaby. He has a film MA from UCT and NYU with residencies at the Binger Institute and a Hot Docs Blue Ice Fellowship. Awards include the Best Pitch at the Sithengi Film Market in 2001 (*P-I-G*) and the Newcomers Award in 2005 (*Katechetik*), the AVA Award 2007 (*The Brown Europe Pageant/Round One*) and IDFA's most Promising Documentary and Paris Project Awards DFM 2013. He has screened at ZIFF 2005, DIFF 2006/2012 and IFFR 2005. He developed his fiction screenplays with DV8 (*The Concubine*, *P-I-G*), the SABC and Binger Lab (*Gazelle911*) and Flying Moon Filmproduktion (*P-I-G*). He is currently also producing the fiction feature, *Riot Waif*, with Zinaid Meeran and the documentary, *Waithira*, with Eva Munyiri.

Sarah Ping Nie JONES – DIRECTOR



After a childhood in Africa and Asia, Sarah Ping Nie Jones studied politics and film at Cambridge, UCT and Harvard universities. She works as an independent filmmaker in association with Team Tarbaby, producing films with a specific focus on identity and freedom. *Umbilical Cords*, Sarah's first feature documentary, screened at London's Film Africa, Durban IFF, Encounters Documentary IFF, Zanzibar IFF, Cambridge African FF and a wide range of organisational/community platforms. Her second feature, *Mrs Popplestone*, won her a Hot Docs Blue Ice fellowship, and the Paris Project and IDFA Award for most promising documentary at the Durban Film Mart. She is also developing *Ystervark*, a fiction feature telling the love story between a Chinese shop worker and her Zulu partner.

SYNOPSIS

Reinette Popplestone, née Du Plessis, had her eyes removed as a baby, due to a genetic flaw that makes her susceptible to cancer. Growing up in the farming heartland of Apartheid, she began to piece together a puzzle of a society divided along lines she could not see – in which she was master, yet always outsider.

Now 60, Reinette is raising her adopted son Rowan, her 'little brown boyjtjie'. The cancer that took her eyes as a baby has returned. We journey with Reinette to find the ghost of her childhood self, and see if she can find a place for herself and her son in a society where skin colour and dis/ability still determine who does and doesn't belong.

CONTACT :

Company office : +277 22 78 14 71
 Jean Meeran: teamtarbaby@gmail.com
 Sarah Ping Nie Jones: teamtarbaby@gmail.com

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT (extract)

« Race and racism have had deeply scarring effects on the lives of myself and Jean Meeran, creative producer of the film. Born to brown-skinned parents, immigrants and exiles, our lives have been defined by the struggle to reconcile our sense of selves with the images projected onto us by family and wider society. This struggle has motivated much of our past work, and this film, for us, is the ultimate enquiry into the very concept of 'race.' [...]

The journey of this film began as I tried to understand what 'race' *actually* means, to dig beneath the surface and find out what 'race' is when the factor of 'skin colour' is removed. I decided to ask those who literally cannot see skin colour what 'race' means to them and how they came to understand something they could not see. I began a series of conversations with blind individuals across South Africa, from a range of cultures and backgrounds. [...]

One of my most compelling discussions was with Reinette Popplestone, now the main character in the film. Blinded as a baby, Reinette grew up in a rural Afrikaner farming community in the old South Africa.»