

‘Baxu and the Giants’ Lands **Netflix**

• Martha Mukaiwa 4 September 2020

Multiple award-winning Namibian film ‘Baxu and the Giants’ (2019) is set to make history when it becomes the first local film to be screened on Netflix.

The streaming giant has a reach of over 190 countries around the world with more than 192 million subscribers.

Cot-written by Girley Jazama and Florian Schott, who also directs the film, ‘Baxu and the Giants’ was commissioned by the Legal Assistance Centre and produced by Andrew Botelle with the aim of sensitising teenagers about rhino poaching in Namibia.

From this noble ambition, the film has exploded internationally, earning best narrative film, actor, production design and cinematography awards for star Camilla Jo-Ann Daries, Tanya Stroh and Kit Hoffmann.

The film has been screened at over 20 film festivals and in 10 countries around the world before landing its Netflix deal with the support of a South African sales agent at the RapidLion Film Festival, where the film was nominated for best humanitarian film.

“It is the first Namibian film to be on Netflix. It is a win for all of us and an indication that our stories have international appeal and that we too can produce content that is worthy of Netflix’s global audiences,” says Jazama, who stresses that the film’s particular magic is a result of the unwavering commitment of its talented cast and crew.

“Let’s continue to create through collaboration, despite the challenges we face as an industry. My hope is that this will create

a demand for more Namibian content, in turn creating consistent employment for us as film-makers in Namibia.”

The short film tells the story of nine-year-old Baxu, who lives with her older brother and grandmother in a village in Damaraland and can speak to rhinos in her dreams.

Baxu and her family live peacefully enough until strange men arrive, disrupting life in the village and in Baxu’s own household where her brother Khata tries to improve their impoverished living conditions.

“Baxu resonates with so many audiences because it covers subject matter that is important. Rhino poaching is a global problem,” says Jazama.

“We purposely chose to tell the story from the perspective of why people poach instead of just vilifying the poachers. Why would someone in rural Namibia resort to poaching? Poverty is at the root of it all. The story is also a reflection of the communities where poaching takes place.

“I also think the final creative execution is appealing. It is a beautiful movie, if I may

say so myself. Thank you to the LAC and GIZ for trusting us to tell such an important story in this way.”

Though 2020 is a year in which many films ground to a halt in the wake of Covid-19 precautions and restrictions, Schott believes it has also been a significant year for film appreciation.

“We hope to reach a whole new audience with this film now that it will be available on Netflix,” says Schott.

“I think this difficult time especially showed us the importance of film and television. People need to get away from their own lives for a bit. Through film you can be anywhere in the world but still, for a short moment, be transported to a different life.

“You can see the world through a different pair of eyes, like the eyes of a nine-year old girl in rural Namibia trying to stop her brother from rhino poaching.”

Ready to show the world Namibia’s incredible landscapes, its wildlife, cultures, the Khoekhoegowab language, the country’s talented film-makers as well as a unique way of advocating against poaching, ‘Baxu and the Giants’ will be streaming on Netflix soon.

“The best thing you can do for this film and the Namibian film industry is watch this movie when it comes out on Netflix,” says Jazama before a final word from Schott.

“We look forward to where this journey will yet take us and the Namibian film industry!”

Follow ‘Baxu and the Giants’ (2019) on Facebook, Instagram and www.baxu-andthegiants.com for more information.

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