

Daries Shines in 'Baxu and the Giants'

On Screen | 2019-09-27

by [Anne Hambuda](#)

Page no: 1



'Baxu and the Giants'

'Baxu and the Giants' is too short. That's the first thing that comes to mind as the film wraps just 29 minutes in. But that is always the impression I get when I can't get enough of something.

The brainchild of writers Girley Jazama ('The White Line') and Florian Schott ('Katutura'), the film sees Schott putting on the director's hat to bring the story to life.

Commissioned by the Legal Assistance Centre, 'Baxu and the Giants' is a cautionary tale to small communities about the downsides of collaborating with foreigners to poach wild animals.

The film follows the day-to-day stirrings of nine-year-old Baxu, played by Namibian Theatre and Film Awards (NTFA) best actress nominee and first-time performer Camilla Daries; her older brother Khata, played by Grade 9 Windhoek High School pupil Wafeeq Narimab, and their Ouma, an elderly woman battling loss with alcoholism, played expertly by the late Anna Louw.

Throughout the film, set in the Kunene region, little Baxu grows concerned when a neighbour starts displaying suspicious behaviour. She begins investigating him and uncovers more than she ever thought she would about the world around her.

Baxu is also haunted by mysterious dreams and a deep connection to the fauna of her village. Without knowing exactly what she can do to help make things better for everyone around her, her big heart and unwavering spirit set the film in motion.

Daries' portrayal of Baxu is brilliant. The young actress is focused, while also coming off as carefree and lovable.

Ashwyn Mberi's voice as King Rhino was the perfect fit – authoritative and powerful, but also slightly paternal.

The storyline was short, sweet and straight to the point, while the set was so realistic, you couldn't tell that the house interior and exterior were shot in different towns.

The transitions between scenes and moods were also handled well. From Baxu falling down somewhere in the desert to waking up abruptly in her room from a dream, it was cinematically cool to witness.

The film perfectly captures life through Baxu's eyes and it is exciting, fun and heartwrenching at times. I would have loved to see a full-length version of the film, which would allow for more development in terms of Baxu and Khata's characters. Narimab certainly stunned in his role as the 'man of the house' trying to do the right thing.

This story worked because it felt authentic. From the characters speaking Khoekhoegowab and drinking tea on their stoep in tin cups to Baxu's untamed mane – it all felt very real, helping us relate to the issue at hand.

What Schott wanted people who watched the film to take away from it was the understanding of how socio-economic circumstances can drive communities to commit certain acts, he said, and it did just that.

"I feel that sometimes it's easy to vilify poachers, especially coming from a place of privilege. I want to show that poaching is wrong and that there are better ways, but I also want to create some understanding to why someone might do it," Schott said.

'Baxu and the Giants' premiered on 14 September at the San Francisco Independent Short Film Festival in the United States, where it also bagged an award for best foreign narrative.

It had its Windhoek premiere last Thursday, and aired again last Sunday as part of the NTFA Film Week at The Barn.

The film will further be aired at the Knysna Film Festival in South Africa, the Silicon Valley African Film Festival in the US and the Hague Global Cinema Festival in the Netherlands.

– @MissAnneDastood on social media