

# SA film students break into video-on-demand business

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*Broadcast TV isn't an option and using self-publish platforms like YouTube means competing with millions of videos from across the globe, so how do SA film students get their work noticed? A recent deal between the video-on-demand service Showmax and African film school AFDA is set to showcase local talent in an entirely new way.*

Thanks to the growing popularity of video-on-demand services, there's a new opportunity to help kickstart the careers of local filmmakers.

Numerous Hollywood blockbusters (*District 9*, *Tomb Raider 2018*, and *The Avengers: Age of Ultron* to name a few) have featured substantial shoots in Johannesburg and Cape Town. While providing great opportunities for SA's production talent, aspiring writers and directors don't get the same benefit.

So where can local creatives showcase their work? Broadcast TV isn't a natural home for unknown short films, and while self-publishing platforms are readily available hosting options, it's tough to get noticed and get traffic when competing with videos from across the planet.

But with the emergence of video-on-demand services into the mainstream, there's now a solution. The African film school AFDA has teamed up with the streaming service Showmax to give local talent a much larger platform than ever before. From 18 February, eighteen of the best recent short films made by AFDA students from their Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth campuses will be live on Showmax. Drama, documentary, fantasy, and animation are all represented, in pieces running from under eight minutes to almost half-an-hour long. The full list of movies is included below.

Teresa Passchier, CEO of AFDA, said:

"AFDA, Africa's number-one school for the Creative Economy, is proud to kickstart this exciting and meaningful journey with Showmax and AFDA students, ensuring emerging young African filmmakers' voices are heard and given a platform. It's ground-breaking to share young, local, culturally relevant content on the same platform as Hollywood blockbusters. I am certain that this unique initiative will serve to boost and develop the African film industry and the careers of many young South African and African students alike."

Included in the short films coming to Showmax are the award winners *Junior* and *O-Puncha*. *Junior*, directed by Bert Dijkstra, picked up the Audience Award in the Made in South Africa Competition at the shnit Worldwide Shortfilmfestival Awards 2017. *O-Puncha*, directed by Adam Hansen, won two awards at the 5th annual Eldorado Film Festival: Best Student Made Short, and Best Editing - Alexander La Cock.

Another celebrated film is *Sicela Amanzi* directed by Mlu Godola, which talks to the subject of water shortage. The film's heroine Zoleka is a mild-mannered young woman forced to go to extreme lengths when a small community's only source of water unexpectedly collapses. The power of films like this is they shine a light on critical topical issues in new ways.

Speaking about working with the film school, Candice Fanguero, Head of Content for Showmax, said:



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“There’s immense depth of filmmaking talent in Africa and it’s a privilege to be able to give that talent a home and a platform. Showmax is becoming part of the fabric of film and TV production in Africa, and importantly we’re doing this as a partner rather than just as a consumer. This is a key competitive advantage of being local and something we aim to continue to work on.”

AFDA is an Academy Award-winning institution, founded in 1994, and the first and only African film school to win an Oscar - for the Best Foreign Student film in 2006, the postgraduate film *Elalini*, directed by Tristan Holmes.

The full list of AFDA short films coming to Showmax is as follows:

Film title	Director	Genre
Lullaby from the Crypt	Keenan Lott & Raven Davids	Animation
Ko Ga Cherenyane	Sibonokuhle Myataza	Documentary
Izilwane	Kyllian Roux	Drama
Mallemeule	Jaco Van Bosch	Drama
Canal Street	Brodie Muirhead	Drama
On the Fence	Warrick Bews	Drama
The Righteous Few	Lindo Langa	Drama
Hlogoma Peak	Luke Ahrens	Drama
Frozen Flame	Cameron Heathman	Animation
Wolf	Brett van Dort	Fantasy
The Walk Home	Sisanda Dyantyi	Drama
Bear	Wesley Roodt	Drama
Junior	Bert Dijkstra	Drama
O-Puncha	Adam Hansen	Drama
Umngeno	Siphosethu Ndunge	Drama
Doreen	Luvuyo Equiano Nyawose	Drama
Forever	Lindo Langa	Musical
Sicela Amanzi	Mu Godola	Drama

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