

Urucu

presents

INXEBA

The Wound

A film by

John Trengove

Starring

NAKHANE TOURÉ

BONGILE MANTSAI

NIZA JAY NCOYINI

THOBANI MSELENI

GAMELIHLE BOVANA

HALALISANI BRADLEY CEBEKHULU

INGA QWEDE

SIBABALWE NGQAYANA

SIPHOSETHU NGCETANE

Written by

JOHN TRENGOVE

THANDO MGQOLOZANA

MALUSI BENGU

Director of Photography

PAUL ÖZGÜR

Production Designers

BOBBY CARDOSO

SOLLY SITHOLE

Costume Designer

LEHASA MOLLOYI

Makeup Artists

SMARTIE OLIFANT

MTHOKOZISI NHLAPO

Casting Director

CAIT PANSEGROUW

Editor

MATTHEW SWANEPOEL

Sound Designer

MATTHEW JAMES

Composer

JOÃO ORECCHIA

Producers

ELIAS RIBEIRO

CAIT PANSEGROUW

Synopsis

Xolani, a lonely factory worker, joins the men of his community in the mountains of the Eastern Cape to initiate a group of teenage boys into manhood. When a defiant initiate from the city discovers his best kept secret, Xolani's entire existence begins to unravel.

About the Film

Directed by John Trengove, 'The Wound' made its debut at 2011's Sundance film festival, before opening the Berlin film festival's Panorama section, and is a ripe-for-controversy exploration of sexuality — more specifically, same-sex desire — within the context of initiation schools.

'The Wound' is a co-production between South Africa, Germany, The Netherlands and France, and was shot on location in the northern region of South Africa. The film was developed with the assistance of The Hubert Bals Fund and ARTE International Prize.

The production of the film was supported by The Department of Trade and Industry (dti) and The National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), as well as The World Cinema Fund, and the film pre-sold to broadcasters ARTE France and ZDF in Germany.

It was originally pitched at the Filmart as part of the Durban International Film Festival offering.

Director's Note

'The Wound' was born out of a desire to push back against clichéd stereotypes of black masculinity perpetuated inside and outside of African cinema. As a white man, representing marginalised black realities that are not my own, the situation is of course complicated. Even highly problematic.

It was important to me that the story mirrors this problem. The character of Kwanda is an outsider to the traditional world; he expresses many of my own ideas about human rights and individual freedom. He's also the problem. His preconceptions create jeopardy and crisis for others who have much more to lose than him. This was my way of saying, "I don't have the answers and my own values don't necessarily apply here".

A film such as this cannot hope to provide solutions for the crisis faced by millions of queer people on the African continent and around the world. What it can do, however, is present the crisis for what it is – a deep and ever widening chasm.

In writing 'The Wound', inspiration came, unexpectedly, from Robert Mugabe. Statements that he and other African leaders have made since the early 90s imply that homosexuality is a symptom of Western decadence that threatens "traditional" culture. And so, we thought ok, let's use that idea. Let's imagine "gayness" as a kind of virus that penetrates and threatens a patriarchal organism, and let's see how that organism responds to being penetrated.

Ukwaluka

Ukwaluka is a traditional initiation into manhood that is widely practiced by the Xhosa people of South Africa.

Twice a year, groups of initiates in their late adolescence leave their communities to live in secluded camps where they are ritually circumcised. For several weeks, initiates are nursed and mentored by young men from their communities (khankathas), after which they return home to assume the privileges and responsibilities of adult men.

Increasingly, the practice faces mounting criticism for reasons of safety and relevance, although it remains a cornerstone of traditional Xhosa culture and is considered the defining event of a man's life.

While Xhosa men are forbidden to speak openly of their experience of Ukwaluka, Nelson Mandela famously broke the secrecy taboo by describing his initiation in his autobiography, 'Long Walk to Freedom'. The ritual is also the subject of 'The Wound' co-writer Thando Mqgolozana's debut novel, 'A Man Who Is Not a Man'.

Q&A with director John Trengove

What drew you to the subject matter?

I was interested in what happens when groups of men come together and organise themselves outside of society and the codes of their everyday lives. I wanted to show the intense emotional and physical exchanges that are possible in these spaces and how repressing strong feelings leads to a kind of toxicity and violence. As an outsider to this culture, it was important that I approach this story from the perspective of characters who are themselves outsiders, who struggle to conform to the status quo that they are a part of.

What was the process of writing 'The Wound'?

We started with a lot of research. Spent time in the Eastern Cape which is where the ritual is mostly practiced. We listened to many testimonials and conversations with Xhosa men who had been through the ritual. Gay men, straight men, some urbanised and affluent, others from remote rural areas. These stories sparked our earliest ideas about the narrative. Researching the ritual brought up conflicting feelings in me. You hear stories about how it can be a breeding ground for homophobic and hyper-masculine behaviour. At the same time, I got to see first-hand the transformative effect it had on some men who went through it. In a world that is under-fathered, there is something profound about a ritual that shows a young boy his place in the world of men.

How do you navigate the politics of being a white filmmaker depicting marginal characters with realities different than your own?

As much as possible I tried to disrupt my own preconceptions. Like most middle-class audiences who watch the film, it would be easy for me to look at Xolani and say, here is a gay character who is repressed and deserves to be emancipated from his oppressive community and express himself as an individual. I resisted those kinds of resolutions for his character and tried instead to present his problem for what it is, which is big and difficult, without clear answers. The character of Kwanda comes closest to expressing those values, but he's also the problem. His preconceptions create jeopardy and crisis for others who have much more to lose than him. This was my way of saying, 'I don't have the answers and my own values don't necessarily apply here.'

Given the controversy of the ritual in South Africa, how do you think it will be received?

Ukwaluka is a taboo ritual and representing it in the way we have is contentious. We knew from the start that we'd spark strong reactions from traditionalists. But there was also a lot of encouragement from a younger Xhosa generation who seems eager to break the silence around the initiation which is seen to perpetuate some of the dangers associated with it. It's a vast and very nuanced practice and there remains a lot to be said about the ritual that is not my place to talk about. Things that need to be said from within the culture. Hopefully 'The Wound' could spark some of that. Maybe a gay Xhosa kid will look at it one day and go, 'actually, that wasn't my experience at all', and be inspired to write his own story.

How did you come to work with Thando Mgqolozana?

I approached Thando when I read his first novel 'A Man Who Is Not a Man', which deals with the initiation. Meeting him was a turning point because he clearly got what I was trying to do. I don't think he was necessarily interested in working on a project about the initiation again, but he responded strongly to the idea of depicting alternative African masculinities. Thando wrote his own version of the treatment, filtering my ideas through his own experiences and opening up narrative possibilities within the frame of the ritual. We also collaborated on a short film, *The Goat*, based on a chapter from his novel.

Can you describe your process on set?

We had a few rules that were there to help us stay connected to the truth. All the roles including speaking extras had to be first language Xhosa men who had their own first-hand experience of the ritual. The only exception to this was Niza Jay Ncoyini who plays Kwanda, which made sense because his character challenges and defies the ritual. The larger community of Xhosa men and elders in the film are all non-actors. We asked them to perform the different aspects of the ritual as they would do it, and to react to the rehearsed scenarios in any way they felt was right. If they didn't approve of a character's behaviour, they would say so during takes. Sometimes we wouldn't call cut and scenes would just carry on and we'd be rolling as these men were offering up the most incredible material, completely unscripted. Bongile Mantsai who played Vija is a very experienced theatre actor, was particularly good at encouraging this free flow interaction with the group. It was very exciting to watch and it really kept us on our toes. We shot the group scenes chronologically, in the order that they would happen in the ritual.

On working with Nakhane Touré

I met Nakhane about 2 years ago and I was instantly a fan. I secretly started writing the lead character for him after our first meeting. Even though he didn't have any professional acting experience I had a feeling that he would be hypnotic on camera. Nakhane is a fearless and multifaceted artist in his own right and understands intrinsically that you have to put yourself outside your comfort zone to do interesting work. He does this instinctively without blocking or resisting and allows himself to be very vulnerable and honest in front of the camera. It's very rare to work with an actor like that.

Can you speak about your collaboration with Urucu Media?

Until recently there was a shortage of South African film producers willing to take risks on non-formulaic projects. When I joined forces with Elias Ribeiro at Urucu Media, the first thing we decided was that this is exactly the niche the company would occupy. We wanted to create a space for films like 'The Wound', to encourage original voices in local cinema that could hopefully also reach an international audience. People thought we were crazy when we started developing this film, but Elias's incredible optimism and ability to embrace less conventional ways of financing, particularly international co-production, meant that it finally got made. Today we are seeing more daring films coming out of South Africa, and I like to think Urucu has been a significant part of that shift.

Biographies – Cast

Nakhane Touré – Xolani

Nakhane Touré is a musician, author and actor. He was born in Alice, a small town in the Eastern Cape, and spent most of his formative years in Port Elizabeth.

Drawing influence from traditional African music as well as modern alternative rock, Touré released his debut body of work called *Brave Confusion* in 2013 which won the Best Alternative Album award at the 20th SAMAS ceremony.

Touré was chosen as Rolling Stones SA's October cover artist in the same year. In September 2015, Touré published his first novel called *Piggy Boy's Blues*. He stars as the lead actor in 'The Wound'.

Bongile Mantsai – Vija

Actor, dancer and musical director Bongile Mantsai grew up in Khayamandi, on the outskirts of Stellenbosch. His career began at the Phambili Theatre Project in 1997. He is the 2013 winner of the Best Performance in a Play in a Male Leading Role for his performance in *Mies Julie* at the 11th annual Naledi Theatre Awards. In 2016, he starred in Lara Foot's award-winning play *Karoo Moose*.

Niza Jay Ncoyini – Kwanda

Niza Jay Ncoyini is an actor who hails from Mthatha in the Eastern Cape. 'The Wound' is his first feature film.

Thobani Mseleni – Babalo

Thobani Mseleni is an actor and musician known for his role as Bhutana in the second season of the SABC1 drama series *Intersexions*, in 2013. Originally from Fort Beaufort, Thobani moved to Johannesburg in 2009 to pursue his dream of becoming an actor. He guest-starred on several television shows including *Generations* and *Moferefere Lenyalong*. In 2012, he auditioned for a role on *Intersexions* and won the part. It was his first major screen acting role. In 2015, he had a starring role as Bhonyongo, Nontle's older brother who is all brawn and no brain, in the e.tv drama series *Matatiele*.

Biographies – Crew

John Trengove – Director, Writer

John Trengove is a Johannesburg based writer/director with an MFA in film from New York University. One of the Mail & Guardian's 200 Young South Africans, his career spans theatre, television, documentary, commercials and short film.

A Loerie and SAFTA recipient, John is best known for his acclaimed miniseries Hopeville, which received the Rose d'Or for best drama and was nominated for an International Emmy.

His short film 'The Goat' premiered at the Berlinale and Toronto in 2014 and went on to play at more than 20 international festivals. John directs fringe theatre in his spare time (Including the cult hit 'The Epicene Butcher') and heads up the development wing of Urucu Media. His debut feature film, 'The Wound', had its world premiere in competition at The Sundance Film Festival and went on to open Panorama at the Berlinale. The film will continue to travel to festivals around the world in 2017.

Thando Mgqolozana – Writer

Thando Mgqolozana is a Mandela Rhodes Scholar, a recipient of the Golden Key International Honour for Scholastic Achievement, and one of the Mail & Guardian's Top 200 Young South Africans of 2010. Mgqolozana is the author of 'Hear Me Alone' (2011), 'A Man Who Is Not a Man' (2009), a novel that enjoyed critical success and was long-listed for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, and 'Unimportance' (2014).

Cait Pansegrouw – Producer, Casting Director

Cait Pansegrouw is a multitalented producer and casting director who has worked in South Africa and Brazil. She is an AFDA Film School, Durban Talents, Berlinale Talents and Durban Film Mart alumna.

Cait is passionate about spotting budding talent and nurturing it so that it can be cultivated to its true potential. Along with her business partner, Elias Ribeiro, she runs Realness, an African Screenwriter's Residency that is a pan African initiative for emerging auteurs.

Cait is a SAFTA-nominee with work that has travelled to Sundance, Berlinale, Tribeca, Durban and FESPACO, to name a few. She has played an integral role in developing projects which have received grants and accolades from some of the most prestigious institutions in the world: World Cinema Fund, Hubert Bals and ARTE/ZDF.

She was recently given a full scholarship to attend the EAVE Producer's Workshop where she aims to hone her knowledge and skills in international co-production. Cait's passion for development makes her adept at fostering both projects and people and, no matter the scale, she thrives on the adventure of bringing script to screen.

Elias Ribeiro – Producer

Elias Ribeiro is a Brazilian film producer who has lived and worked in more 10 different countries and is fluent in English, Portuguese, Spanish and German. After relocating to Johannesburg in 2010, he pursued his MA in Film Producing and founded Urucu Media in 2011.

His body of work spans a wide range of documentary and fiction projects that have premiered in competition at Berlinale, Tribeca, Montreal, Beijing, Stockholm, London and Durban, to name a few.

Specialising in international co-production and distribution, his work has attracted funding from Hubert Bals, Torino Film Lab, Arte, ZDF, SABC, MNET and National and Regional Funders.

In 2016 he launched Realness, an African Screenwriters Residency where five screen-writers are invited to attend a seven-week residency to develop a new draft of their original feature screenplays. The residency aims to provide the continent's best emerging writing talents with the necessary time, space and support to develop their unique cinematic vision. Elias is an alumnus of EAVE, Producer's Network, Talents, TFL, La Fabrique des Cinema du Monde, L'Atelier Cinefondation and Produire au Sud.

Paul Özgür – Director of Photography

Born in The Netherlands, Paul Özgür studied Fine Arts for two years at the School of Arts in Amsterdam. After that he specialised in cinematography at the Netherlands Film School. In 2013 his graduation film 'Magnesium' premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival and won the Cameraimage Prize at the 2013 Cameraimage International Film Festival of the Art of Cinematography in Poland.

João Orecchia – Composer

João Renato Orecchia Zúñiga is an artist and composer. Through experimentation and improvisation Orecchia explores sound's connective capacities through both its physical properties and material preconscious properties, seeking a balance between computer technology, hand-made electronics and real-world sounds like the human voice, field recordings and traditional musical instruments.

Orecchia's background as a self-taught musician is in improvised performance and composition for video art, film and theatre. His practice extends to public performance and his recently completed Master's degree in Digital Arts brought a shift towards a more spatial and physical approach to composition, where sound, vibration, space, music and audience become connected in experience.

CAST

Xolani	NAKHANE TOURÉ
Babalo	THOBANI MSELENI
Kwhalo	GABRIEL MINI
Elder 1	ZWELAKHE MTSAKA
Kwanda	NIZA JAY NCOYINI
Elder 2	MENZELELI MAJOLA
Sicelo	GAMELIHLE 'GAME' BOVANA
Lukas	HALALISANI BRADLEY CEBEKHULU
Ncedo	INGA QWEDE
Zuko	SIBABALWE NGQAYANA
Nkosi	SIPHOSETHU NGCETANE
Dompas	LUYANDA L. VONQO
Ninja	THANDO MHLONTLO
Lesego	ANGA NTSEPHE
Vija	BONGILE MANTSAI
Vija's Inities	HELLMAN HLOMUKA
	LOYISO 'LLOYD' NGQAYANA
	ZIMI BANISI
Caregivers	LUXOLO NGQUNGE
	REFILOE RAMATLAPENG
	MONDE BAMBELO
Farmer	JAN BLOXHAM
Community Men	CASWELL SABELO MABONA
	TIFO BETHUEL METHOLA
	CONOSBY BEKITHEMBA MABONA
	TOBILE CLIFORD MVUMVU
	MNTHAKALAHLWA DAVID TSOTSO
	TRAYISHILE MTSHOFENI
	MPHO DIAMOND
	VUYISILE WILSON BUDAZA

MZIWEKHANA COLBERT MRALI
WALAZA MATSHAYA
NKOSINATHII MICHAEL TSOTSO
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ROLAND MVUSE ZIQHU
ZAMA BATYI
SOYISILE NICHOLAS GQONGO
ANDILE MBOLELWA
NTEMI GQANGO
ASANDA ROLANI
ROWLAND ZIQHO
ATHENKOSI PANGA
SAM NYANDANA
AYANDA MENZELELI
SANDILE MANQU
BONISILE NGQOKOMA
SANDILE ZIKALI
DUMO NIKANA
SERHULANE SINOTHANDO
GEORGE QHAJANA
SICELO NYATHI
LINDIKHAYA SEZILE
SIMAMKELE QWESHA
LUCKY MILA
SIZWE BADI
LULAMA MANANA
SONSABILE NQASANA
LUNGELORHASI
STEPHEN MKHALA
MASIBULELO MGUXUSO
TABO TIKELO

MDUMISO NQOLOMBE
THEMBINKOSI HLANA
MGEBISI GQUBILIZWE
THEMBINKOSI ZWEZI
MTHETHO GQONGO
TIFFO NETHOLA
MTHUNZI ROLANI
VUYISILE BOOI
MUSA DUMEZWENI
WADE STOFIE
MVIKELO MBANA
ZUKO MAKABANA
MVUNVU CLIFFORD
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CREW

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THANDO MGQOLOZANA
MALUSI BENGU

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THANDO MGQOLOZANA

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BONGA VINQI
XOLISA GUZULA

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MTHETHO TSHEMESE

Script Consultants

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ANITA VOORHAM
MARCO DUTRA
GWYDION BEYNON

Director

JOHN TRENGOVE

Producers

ELIAS RIBEIRO
CAIT PANSEGROUW

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Associate Producers	DOMINIQUE WELINSKI THANDISWA TWECU NOLITHA MKULISI NICOLE KITT
Line Producer	BIANCA ISAAC
Creative Producer (Germany)	ANETTE UNGER JOHANNES JANCKE
Assistant to Producer (Germany)	PAULINA TOENNE
Line Producer (Germany)	CHRISTIAN VENNEFROHNE
Line Producer (France)	ROBIN ROBLES
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Second Assistant Director	DANIEL NKOMO
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Unit Assistant	WANDA MAKAULA
Production Coordinator	DONNA SIBANDE
Production Accountant Supervisor	DEBBIE BURT
Production Accountant	ANEL KRUGER

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	JESSICA KUBHEKA
Casting Director	CAIT PANSEGROUW
Casting Assistant	ERROL NDOTHO
Director of Photography	PAUL ÖZGÜR
Focus Pullers	MICHAEL HOBDELL
	JACQ TERBLANCHE
Gaffer	PHUMLANI NGWENYA
Best Boy	THABO LEHLOKA
Sparks	JEFFREY THABETHE
	JUSTICE MOKGABUDI
Key Grip	EMMANUEL THABONGA
Camera Assistant	AYANDA SUNDUZA
Camera Trainees	OCTAVIAN PHILLIPS
	ISAAC THABO MAWAJA
Data Wrangler	CANDICE FRANK
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	MPHELANE MARELETSE
Makeup Artists	SMARTIE OLIFANT
	MTHOKOZISI NHLAPO

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	STHATHU DEMA
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Second Unit Focus Puller	JUAN WHITE
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Second Unit Grip	WERNER NORTJE
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	HANKYEOL LEE
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Mastering Technician	ARMIEN BARADIEN
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Sound Assistant	CHARL MOSTERT
Composer	JOÃO ORECCHIA
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JENNIE REZNEK

WIM TRENGOVE

KALEY MEYER

ZWELI OYENA GWEBITYALA

LOUISE GELDENHYS

MUSIC

“SOMAGWAZA”

“UYINGWE”

Performed By The Cast

Performed By The Cast

“UYANGCANGCAZELA”

“SIPH’UMENTABENI”

Performed By The Cast

Performed By The Cast

“RITES” (edit)

Composed By João Orecchia

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