

# NECKTIE YOUTH

A SIBS SHONGWE-LA MER PICTURE



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URUCU MEDIA, WHITMAN INDEPENDENT AND 100% HALAL PRESENTS A SIBS SHONGWE-LA MER PICTURE "NECKTIE YOUTH"  
PRODUCERS ELIAS RIBEIRO AND JOHN TRENGOVE WITH BONKO COSMO KHOZA, SIBS SHONGWE-LA MER,  
COLLEEN BALCHIN EDITORS MATTHEW SWANEPOEL, SIBS SHONGWE-LA MER AND CANDICE FRANK CINEMATOGRAPHY  
CHUANNE BLOFIELD PRODUCTION DESIGNER RONMARI VAN TONDER SOUND DESIGNER TIM PRINGLE MUSIC EVENINGS, THE MOTHS, 1990  
AND BIG BABY GANDHI ASSOCIATE PRODUCER NICOLE KITT ASSOCIATE PRODUCER DOMINIQUE WELINSKI CO-PRODUCERS GIJS KERBOSCH,  
ROEL OUDE NIJHUIS, GIJS DETERMEIJER, WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY SIBS SHONGWE-LA MER







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## LOGLINE

Haunted by the memory of Emily, a girl who live-streamed her suicide one year ago, Jabz and his best friend September go on a drug-fueled joyride through the affluent suburbs of Johannesburg.

## FACTS

2015, South Africa / Netherlands  
86min - HD - BLACK & WHITE  
ENGLISH, ZULU & AFRIKAANS  
(ENGLISH SUBS)

## CONTACT

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## CAST

Jabz  
September  
Tanya  
Bogosi  
Nikki  
Travis  
Emily  
Rafi  
Tali

Bonko Khoza  
Sibs Shongwe-La Mer  
Colleen Balchin  
Kamogelo Moloi  
Emma Tollman  
Jonathan Young  
Kelly Bates  
Ricci-Lee Kalish  
Giovanna Winetzki

## TEAM

Screenplay & Director  
Producers

Co-Producers

DOP  
Editor  
Sound Designer  
Sound  
Production Design  
Costumes & Make-up  
Assistant Director

Sibs Shongwe-La Mer  
Elias Ribeiro  
John Trengove  
Nicole Kitt  
Gijs Kerbosh  
Chuanne Blofield  
Matthew Swanepoel  
Janno Muller  
Justin Shepperson  
Ronmari Van Tonder  
Tasmyn Hobbs  
Cole Matthews



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## Sibs Shongwe-La Mer Interview

***The film pivots around a suicide, to some extent. In the previous version of the film, the suicide played out differently, why the change up?***

The first version had intense financial restrictions, which made it impossible to shoot the scene in the manner I wanted to. We had to dull many ideas, cut out lots of scenes and photography plans in order to complete the project. On the second version I had a lot more resources, which enabled me to re-examine the sequence.

***How much of the film is fiction?***

All the scenes in the film are a reimagining of situations I've been in, or of stories I've been told by friends over the years. So strictly speaking it is all fiction, but a fiction based on various real occurrences.

***Would you say that there isn't a lot of joy with SA kids at the moment?***

I don't lay any claims on behalf of a generation as a whole. The film portrays a portion of the middle class. I think it can be said that there is a great population of middle class youth that wrestle with the themes inherent in my film.

***You know how critics are always talking about "important films"? Is this film important?***

It's a consequence film. My overriding intention was to illustrate how much society loses through an inability to communicate with one and other, an inability to show affection or empathy. I felt this most in my teen years, having experienced numerous suicides, of friends and acquaintances. I felt very isolated in that grief. This is my reason for making a portrait of that time. Whether the film is important is not for me to say.

***How did you work with your actors? Are you improv or script based?***

I'm mixture of both. I work off script but more as a guideline than map. I give my performers permission to rewrite dialogue and experiment with phrasing as long as the intention is preserved. But I don't spend much time rehearsing the scenes; I spend most of my time having conversations about intentions and the psychology of characters. I see more value in getting the actors to understand the person they are becoming than merely practicing actions.

***Why was black and white a choice here? Does it have racial connotations?***

No racial connotations were intended, I shoot most of my work in black and white. As a new generation African filmmaker operating in a largely unexplored cinematic territory, I have always felt the desire to shoot Africa in a monochrome pallet of nostalgia.

***Is South Africa about to burn?***

I'm pretty sure the world's burning all the time.

***How will the film be received by South African audiences?***

It's very much a departure from the types of films being produced in South Africa. I don't think South African audiences subscribe enough to local cinema to be used to anything. Right now we are focusing on the festival circuit. The film is set to premier at the Berlin International Film festival in the Panorama section of the festival.

***What's your next step after this film?***

Mainly to resume work as a gallery artist for a while, so I can take my time developing my second feature film. As it stands I have no immediate plans to shoot another picture but there are a lot of alternative creative avenues I have a need to explore.



# NECKTIE YOUTH

Sibs Shongwe-La Mer

Sibs Shongwe-La Mer is a 23 year- old South African independent filmmaker, writer, visual artist, and curator, who's debut narrative short film, "Death Of Tropics" received it's first international platform at the Mosaic World Film Festival in Illinois, USA and later competed at the Shnit International Short Film Festival in Switzerland and at Clermont-Ferrand Court Metrage in France.

His rough draft of "Necktie Youth," then called "Territorial Pissings" was selected for inclusion in the 70th Venice International Film Festivals program "Final Cut" to aid the completion of progressive African cinematic achievements. A copy of the film was added to the historical Archives of Biennale Venice.

Necktie Youth's first assembly was invited to participate in the "Open Doors" co-production market at the Festival del Film Locarno where the rough work received a Jury Special Mention for theme and artistry. The project also appeared in at the Agora Film Festival in Greece as a work-in-progress. Shongwe-La Mer was also selected for the 67th Festival Del Film Locarno's Filmmakers Academy.

Shongwe-La Mer is currently developing his sophomore work titled "Foreverland", an off-beat road movie celebrating youthful decadence, obscure rock & roll icons and love.

"The past will always be present [in South African film], but Necktie Youth is significant because it does not focus on the ghosts, but rather the haunted." – Roger Young / City Press

Sib's Songwe-La Mer is already, pre-release, causing excitement in the South African film press because it breaks with a filmmaking style that has come to characterize films from that region; which tend to be either long on hagiography or Hollywood knock offs. While other films that attempt to be outside this paradigm are emerging, Necktie Youth is the first outside the realm of low budget equating low quality that has dogged South African independent films so far.

## SYNOPSIS

Shot in black and white, Shongwe-La Mer's films is a tale of disaffected youth, bad drugs, bravado and suicide, set amongst the leafy suburbs of middle class Johannesburg. It's one year after the death of Jabz's friend Emily who mysteriously live streamed her own suicide on the internet. While a documentary crew tries to make sense of her death, Jabz and others who knew Emily are desperate to forget. Jabz and September float through the city in a borrowed Jaguar, mouthing off about race, politics and bizarre sexual encounters. A series of seemingly random events, from shoplifting pharmaceuticals to picking a fight in a liquor store, to a disturbing visit to their cross-dressing drug dealer, eventually leads them to the home (and the arms) of beautiful bikini-clad Jewish twins, Tali and Rafi. Expensive wine is opened and more drugs consumed as the group descends into a child-like euphoric haze. Through it all Jabz and September cling to each other, trying to express the feeling shared by all the kids in the city; a desire for compassion and identity in large doses.