

MEDIA RELEASE

08.03. 15.06.2025

Wakaliga Action! And Cut!

Wakaliga, Wakaliwood, Ramon Film Productions – the low-budget film productions from Uganda have been released under a few different names already. Meantime, however, Wakaliga is their favourite. After all, that is the district in the Ugandan capital Kampala where all those involved live and make their films.

Isaac Nabwana is the founder and head of Wakaliga. It is his enthusiasm for Hollywood action films, martial arts films or series like *Hawaii Five O* that motivate him to take up a camera. He acquires the necessary know-how and digital processing techniques himself through courses and tutorials on the Internet. The Wakaliga film studio Uganda has been producing big action films for about 20 years now, with a lot of inventiveness, a great delight in acting and very small budgets. Bursting with kung-fu battles, wild shoot-outs, bloody moments, huge explosions and witty special effects, the films are highly entertaining. The works actually do show lots of blood: fake blood, but above all, the blood (sweat and tears) of all those involved.

The cast is made up of family members, friends and neighbours. They all sit together in the yard under a shady roof while Isaac Nabwana explains his latest idea for a film. He has made notes in a booklet, there is no real script. The crew – a well-practised collective – listens intently, asks questions and allocates the roles and tasks. Just like in the early years of Hollywood, the actual filming is done spontaneously. The home-made cardboard sets shatter any illusion and prevent any suspicion of reality. Someone's plot of land or the neighbourhood in general serve as the setting. If necessary, other helping hands, extras or know-how from Wakaliga are added.

An important feature of the films, along with the action, is humour. For example, *Rolex Time*, the film made specially for the exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Luzern, wittily links Uganda and Switzerland; "Rolex" in Uganda is an abbreviation of "rolled eggs", referring to a popular street food. The film is about, among other things, street kids and organised crime, with a female Swiss tourist walking straight into it. As in this case, all the films tell us in passing about social problems, wheeling and dealing, and the consequences of deceit, greed or belief in the power of magic.

Thanks to *Who Killed Captain Alex?* Wakaliga reached an international audience in 2010. That film cites Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*, an important model. It is about corruption and mirrors the discussion about the police in Uganda at the time. *Wakaliwood versus the rest of the world. No one escapes Wakaliwood* is an ongoing project involving short films in which Westerners receive a kill order in Luganda and ultimately die as killers. The death list already includes over a thousand names.

curated by Eveline Suter

FILMOGRAPHY

Over 40 films have been made since Ramon Film Production was founded in 2005. The daring passion on which Wakaliga depends has since taken the films from the slums into the world and inspired other film makers. In 2017 *Bad Black* was the favourite of both critics and audiences at the Seattle International Film Festival. In 2019 Wakaliga did a remake of Akira Kurosawa's Japanese film *Rashomon* entitled *Boda-Boda Killer (Trashomon)* for the project of the French artist Louis-Cyprien Rials for *Au bord de la route de Wakaliga* at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. In 2020 Wakaliga worked with the German Melodic-Death-Metal band Heaven Shall Burn on the music video to *Eradicate*. In 2022 at documenta 15 the most comprehensive retrospective to date of Wakaliga was shown. The film *Football Commando* was made in that context.

DATES

Media Preview

Friday, 07.03., 10.15 am

Opening

Friday, 07.03., from 6 pm

Greeting and introduction

Andi Scheitlin, President Kunstgesellschaft Luzern

Fanni Fetzler, Director Kunstmuseum Luzern

Eveline Suter, Curator

Events

All events take place in German. For more press information in English, please contact us:

caroline.glock@kunstmuseumluzern.ch. or hannah.winters@kunstmuseumluzern.ch

Talk in the Exhibition

Sunday, 09.03., 11 am

Guided tour with filmmaker Isaac Nabwana and curator Eveline Suter

Introduction for Teachers

Wednesday, 12.03., 5 pm

Uganda creative

Sunday, 30.03., 11 am

Art historian and ethnologist Fiona Siegenthaler talks about current practices from textile to film.

The Curator as Guide

Wednesday, 14.05., 6 pm

Guided tour with Eveline Suter

Open Studio

Sunday, 01.06., 1–5 pm

There are creative activities for people of all ages in the Art Education Room.

Guided Tour for Generation 60plus

Thursday, 12.06., 3.30 pm

Public Tours

Wednesdays 6 pm and Sundays 11 am according to website

Schools

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