



69th Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Panorama

FLATLAND

a film by Jenna Bass



FLATLAND is a contemporary Western, a journey of self-discovery for three different but equally trapped women.

It paints a vivid and unique portrait of femininity against a hostile frontier land and questions what it means to be a woman today in South Africa and the world at large.



CAST

Faith Baloyi	Beauty
Nicole Fortuin	Natalie
Izel Bezuidenhout	Poppie
De Klerk Oelofse	Bakkies
Eric Nobbs	Jaap
Brendon Daniels	Billy
Clayton Evertson	Branko
Albert Pretorius	Theunis
Kim Goncalves	Sanie

CREW

Writer/Director	Jenna Bass
Producer	David Horler
Producers	Désirée Nosbusch Alexandra Hoesdorff Roshanak Behesht Nedjad
Co Producer	Titus Kreyenberg
Director of Photography	Sarah Cunningham
Production Designer	Sara Hartinger
Editor	Jacques de Villiers
Costume Designer	Chantell Lungiswa Joe
Original Music	Bao-Tran Tran “Mobilegirl”
Casting	Belinda Kruger Monique Murray du Plessis



SYNOPSIS

When her disastrous wedding night leads to an accidental killing, Natalie flees her husband and her small, rural town in South Africa's desolate Karoo region.

Reuniting with her rebellious best friend Poppie, who is heavily pregnant, the two young women escape together on horseback across the endless winter landscape.

Hot on their trail is Captain Beauty Cuba, a lonely policewoman intent on proving the innocence of her long-lost fiancé, who has been framed for Natalie's crime.

The fate of these three different, yet equally desperate, South African women will eventually converge as they ride towards self-discovery in the face of the ever-present threat of violence, psychological as well as physical.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

'What is a Western?' I used to think this was a simple question. True, there are tangible signifiers – horses, guns, wilderness – but I challenge anyone to prove the Western genre hasn't transcended its colonial, American origins over the course of the past century. It seems rather a tableau upon which we can thrash out fundamental human concerns away from modern distractions, in a place where rules can be broken. Another, not-so-simple question: 'What is a woman?' Femininity has become equally indefinable, it's old rules broken. In our times,

the necessity for women's solidarity is as great as ever, while other boundaries like race and class ensure that unity and understanding will always be complex. Then, there's 'What is South Africa?' the country I live in, which has 11 official languages, countless more peoples, yet is named by its place on a map. I grew up thinking these questions were simple and it took a long time for me to realise they are not. My original intention with FLATLAND was also simple: To set a Western narrative in South Africa's heartland of the Karoo; an endless wilderness

of semi-desert dotted with small towns, boiling in summer and freezing in winter, near-mythical. On further interrogation, I realized that though I loved Westerns as much as my father did, I couldn't identify with them. I knew Clint Eastwood would survive, but what about me? What would I do, shot at by enemies, alone? I wanted adventure for myself and for others who were ignored by these films. Women have just as much right to be in the saddle, and I was sure that women audiences had the same desires I had, as well as the spirit to act them out. If I want-



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ed to make a Western, I'd have to take a long, hard look at the Western and ask myself what is it about this frequently racist, misogynistic genre that I want to hold onto? Maybe the same things that make South Africa such a perfect setting for the Western are exactly what makes it so problematic. How different is our present from our colonial past? Maybe the rules of the Western itself need to be broken. For me, the starting point was three different women, on their own terms: A lovelorn policewoman, a pregnant teenager, and a naive young bride, all of whom

are trapped, by circumstances, their environment and by their own misconceptions of what they must be. I soon realized that the film's themes were inextricable. If FLATLAND were to climax with anything approaching the Western's obligatory, final shoot-out, then it would have to be a show down not just between some men in a desert, but a battle between genre, gender and the psyche of South Africa. And so we made FLATLAND, a strange film about some strange people and places that can't begin to encapsulate the whole, complicated country. Then

again, these characters are no more strange than the picture-perfect images of urban wealth, smiling poverty, photogenic violence or exotic landscapes that we usually present in our national cinema.



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Jenna Bass is a South African writer, filmmaker and former magician. Her award winning films include the short, *THE TUNNEL* (2010), and the collaboratively-created features *LOVE THE ONE YOU LOVE* (2014) and *HIGH FANTASY* (2017), which have screened around the world, including at the Sundance, Berlinale and Toronto Film Festivals. Together with, Wanuri Kahiu, Jenna co-wrote the coming-of-age romance, *RAFIKI*, which premiered in Cannes Un Certain Regard in 2018. *FLATLAND* is Jenna's third feature film as a director and writer.

FILMOGRAPHY

2019: *FLATLAND*

2017: *HIGH FANTASY*

2014: *LOVE THE ONE YOU LOVE*





FAITH BALOYI *"BEAUTY CUBA"*



Faith Baloyi is a South African actress, writer and designer based in Johannesburg.

She graduated from Wits University with a Masters of Arts Degree, having majored her undergrad in Drama and Film. She started her acting career on stage and has performed in various productions including a leading role in *THE COLORED MUSEUM* (2001), *FOR THE LOVE OF A NIGHTINGALE*, *ROMEO & JULIET* and *SKA NKATAMELA TSOTSI*.

She appeared on the television Magazine Show, *ZOOMING IN ON MEN* and the Parody skit show, *THE PHAT JOE SHOW*. Faith featured in SABC's *91 PLEIN STREET* and popular soapie *GENERATIONS*. Specializing as a Voice Artist for commercials, she also hosted *AFRICAN DIALOGUE* (a radio show on Channel Africa). She broke into film in 2007 when she starred as the lead in a short film, *TRIED TO* which was soon followed by a supporting role in a made for TV film *BLOWING IN THE WIND* (produced for TV channel Mzansi Magic). During 2017 Faith featured in her first International film, *BEAUTIFULLY BROKEN* (USA) after which she landed the leading role of Beauty in the local Indie Film, *FLATLAND* (2019 Berlinale).



NICOLE FORTUIN *"NATALIE"*

Nicole Fortuin is a professional screen and theatre actress who graduated with a BA in Theatre and Performance from the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

Her versatility of both characters and performance mediums extends to theatre, film, series, voice-work and soap-operas. On stage, Fortuin has starred in the Sleeping Beauty pantomime as well as the role of Carol in David Mamet's critically acclaimed OLEANNA.

Her most recent TV work includes the lead role the Warner Bro's A CINDERELLA STORY: IF THE SHOE FITS as Georgie alongside Sofia Carson, for the Disney Channel; and more recently as Kat Vargas in Syfy's DEAD IN THE WATER (2018). Her lead role in FLATLAND is her first in a South African feature.





IZEL BEZUIDENHOUT *"POPPIE"*



Izel Bezuidenhout is a South African actress; having completed training under leading South African and international coaches including Anthony Meindl, Anthony Montes, Marth Munro, Lelia Etsebeth, Jacques Bessenger, and Heidi Mollentze.

Now 20, her first professional role was on stage in the production of *BALKIE, AGED 10*. Her first leading role in a feature film came in 2014 in *AGENT 2000: DIE LAKSMAN*. Following this role, she featured in numerous South African television shows such as *BLOEDBROERS*, *MIGNON "MOSSIE" VAN WYK*, *FLUITERS*, *VASELINETJIE*, *7DE LAAN* AND *DOMINEE TIE-NIE* and was the voice of Felicity Fourie in South African radio drama *RATELS*.

She later portrayed Anna in the South African award-winning film *DIS EK ANNA*, directed by Sara Blecher; where she played the character at various ages between 12 and 16; as well as Ilze Fischer in the Netherlands feature *AN ACT OF DEFIANCE*, directed by Jean van de Velde.

FLATLAND is her most recent feature.

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FAITH BALOYI NICOLE FORTUIN IZEL BEZUIDENHOUT DE KLERK DELOFSE ALBERT PRETORIUS CLAYTON EVERTSON INTRODUCING KIM GONCALVES WITH BRENDON DANIELS AND ERIC NOBBS
WRITTEN BY JENNA BASS PRODUCED BY DAVID HORLER PRODUCED BY DESIREE NOSBUSCH ALEXANDRA HOESDORFF ROSHANAK BEHESHT NEDJAD
CO-PRODUCED BY TITUS KREYENBERG ASSOCIATE ANNA TELFORD LINDA KIRMSE SIMON RATCLIFFE RICHARD WEST
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SARAH CUNNINGHAM PRODUCTION DESIGNER SARA HARTINGER EDITOR JACQUES DE VILLIERS COSTUME DESIGNER CHANTELL LUNGISWA JOE
HAIR DESIGNER BABALWA DJEUTCHEU MAKEUP ARTIST BAO-TRAN TRAN "MOBILEGIRL" CASTING BY BELINDA KRUGER AND MONIQUE MURRAY DU PLESSIS
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