

**...sangoma of the silver screen...**

**Jamie Uys**

1921-1996



*“Ek kan nie ‘n gedig skryf nie – so ek maak maar flieks.”*

**Jamie Uys.**



**...sangoma van die silwerdoek...**

## **BIOGRAFIESE SINOPSIS**

**Jamie Uys**

30 Mei 1921 – 29 Januarie 1996

*“Ek’s sommer net Jamie.”*

**Jamie Uys.**

### **‘n Uyslike gawe:**

*Die lewe is ‘n lied – een van vreugde, soms verdriet. Sy lewenslied was een oor vreugde – waarvan die woorde hy wou hê almal moes kon saamsing. Genoeg stroewe droef. Hy het gestreef om die gewone mens met humor te troef. Hy kon die allemintige in die alledaagse koester. Grootseid, vir hom, was in eenvoud vergestalt. Sy stories was op hartsnare gespeel. Sy beelde – monumente aan die gesaghebbendheid van ‘n goue oog. Gevriesde mondhoeke kon hy in eerbied aan humor laat buig; koue oë met warm tranes lawe. Die mooi, die goed en die vreugde van alle lewe was sy brood en botter – ‘n daaglikse brood wat hy met gans die mensdom wou breek. ‘n Lewensvreugde wat hy suksesvol oor gans die aarde gesmous het. By die reënboog en rook van sy kampvuur, in die dampkring van sy verbeelding, het hierdie sangoma van die silwerdoek sy*

*gehoor op sleeptou geneem na 'n ander wêreld: Die wonderwêreld van Jamie Uys.*

### **Teen Wil en Dank:**

Thomas Edison het op 17 Oktober 1888 die Kinetoscope gepatenteer as 'n toestel wat “vir die oog sal doen wat die fonograaf vir die oor doen.” Met die uitbreek van die Anglo-Boereoorlog het een van Edison se medewerkers, William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, met so kontrepsie onder die arm, saam met Sir Redvers Buller na Suid-Afrika gekom om die stryd op film te dokumenteer. So skop die land se filmbedryf, dalk die oudste in die wêreld, af. Die land se suksesvolste filmmaker is 33 jaar na hierdie uitvinding, in 1921, gebore. Op Boksburg gee die gesin se Skotse bure vir die jonge Johannes Jacobus Uys die ewigdurende bynaam *Jamie* – of te wel: *D'jy'mie*. Hy het 'n onderwyser geword, 'n boer, 'n handelaar, 'n vrederegter, 'n myner, 'n radioman, 'n akteur, 'n kameraman, 'n klankingenieur, 'n stemkunstenaar, 'n draaiboekskrywer, 'n filmvervaardiger, 'n redigeerder en het ook televisieadvertensies vir oorsese groepe gemaak. In die laat 1940's, het Jok, Jamie se broer, voorgestel dat hul 'n fliek moet maak. Sy broer kon 'n kamera leen, maar nie vir lank nie en, het Jamie onthou, “moes ek behoorlik raap en skraap om 'n piepklein *home movie*-kameratjie te koop.” Jamie kon nie professionele akteurs bekostig nie en het sy vrou, familie en vriende ingespring. Daar was geen assistentfotograaf nie en moes sy vrou, Hettie, en hy om die beurt kameraman wees. Wanneer beide voor die kamera verskyn het, is 'n swart seuntjie ingespan. Die knapie was piepklein en moes noodgedwonge die kamera op sy kop vashou en het sommer net sy nek in die rigting van die aksie gedraai. 'n Kolskoot skoot in die donker! Met

sy 16mm kamera (met te min film) het Jamie, sonder enige opleiding, sonder 'n draaiboek, sonder professionele akteurs, sonder 'n tegniese span en sonder 'n begroting – en met 'n gesukkel van haas mitologiese omvang – ***Daar Doer In Die Bosveld*** (1951) die lig laat sien. Ondanks dat dit hom sy Bosveldplaas gekos en finansiëel omgedolwe het, was dit 'n sukses.

***Vyftig-Vyftig*** (1952), ook as ***Fifty-Fifty*** bekend, volg waarin hy, nie vir die laaste keer nie, met die Afrikaner-Engelsman politiekery van daardie tyd draaksteek. Hy maak ***Daar Doer In Die Stad*** (1953) vir African Film Productions. Jamie ontwikkel ***Hensop*** vir African Film Productions, maar die magtige IW Schlesinger beskou dit as gevaarlik omstrede en draai dit nek-om: “Dis toe dat ek maar bedank om my eie maatskappy te stig.”

***Jamie Uys Filmproduksies*** word in 1954 gestig en 'n rits suksesvolle vollengte-prente, asook inligtingsprente vir verskeie staatsdepartemente, volg. Jamie was 'n vernuftige raakvat dokumentêrmaker. ***Jabulani Afrika*** oor Suid-Afrika se verskeidenheid musieksoorte (wat geen dialoog, slegs musiek, bevat) was reeds in 1954 'n buitelandse sukses. Tussendeur sy filmmakery speel hy saam met André Huguenet in ***Paul Kruger*** (1955). In 1961 verskyn ***The Hellions*** wat Jamie in samewerking met oorsese geld gemaak het – 'n loket sukses, maar vir Jamie 'n finansiële verwoesting. Verligting kom toe die FAK opdrag gee dat hy ***Doodkry Is Min*** oor die geskiedenis van Afrikaans maak. Die opelug première by die Voortrekkermonument, op 29 April 1961, word deur Staatspresident CR Swart bygewoon en Mimi Coertze sing *O Boereplaas* vir die 50 000-sterk gehoor. Klassieke Uys'e soos ***Rip van Wyk*** (1960), ***Hans en die Rooinek*** (1961), ***Lord Oom Piet*** (1962) verskyn. Hy en sy maatskappy maak ook Jim Reeves se enigste rolprent, die uitspattige, musiekblyspel ***Kimberley Jim*** (1963). Volgende op sy kerfstok: ***Dingaka*** (1964) met Juliet Prowse en

Stanley Baker in die hoofrolle (Jans Rautenbach was produksiebestuurder; Elmo de Witt was musiekregisseur). 'n Groot sukses vir die geldbase in Hollywood, maar dit sou jare duur voordat Jamie sy R300 000 se verliese kon opmaak. ***All the Way To Paris*** (1966), 'n verwerking van ***Hans en die Rooinek***, wat in amper tien Europese lande geskiet is en waarin Genl. Charles de Gaulle en Georges Pompidou verskyn, word uitgeryk. Ten spyte van die aaneenlopende ketting van suksesse, sit Jamie en sy eie direksie vas. Onuithoudbare frustrasie laat hom bande sny.

### **Bloedbroers, Mimosa & Miljarde:**

“Hulle het net by my huis uitgeslaan,” het Jamie vertel oor die dag toe twee broers van Bloemfontein, **Boet** en **Bill Troskie**, hom onverwags trompop geloop het. Met 'n enkele prent op hul naam (Al Debbo se ***Wonderwêreld van Kammie Kamfer***) het die stigters van die groentjie **Mimosa Films** te hore gekom dat Jamie *loslopend* was en terstond by Suid-Afrika se mees populêre filmmaker gaan kersopsteek om by hulle aan te sluit. “So 'n week later,” het Jamie vertel, “toe bel ek hulle en sê OK.” Boet-hul en Jamie begin met 'n dokumentêre-film: ***The Three Wise Men*** (1967) wat binne 'n jaar na vrystelling **4 000** keer op Amerikaanse televisiestasies gebeeldsaai is. (Ander suksesvolle dokumentêre prente, onder die Uys-Mimosa vaandel sou gou volg, insluitend ***The Great Adjustment***, 1968, en ***Marching To Pretoria***, 1969). Jamie was op vakansie en, as werkolis, verveeld toe hy aan sy eerste vollengteprent vir **Mimosa** aan die werk spring. Op 'n keer was hy 'n beoordelaar by 'n skoonheidskompetisie op Springs, die uiteinde van daardie ervaring: ***Die Professor en die Prikkelpop*** (1967). Bo en

behalwe die fliek se reuse loket sukses (+/- R250 000 in 3 maande), het **Four Jacks and a Jill** asook Carike Keuzenkamp massale munt(e) uit die temaliedjie, **Timothy**, geslaan. In Desember van dieselfde jaar was hy in Namibië vir promosie van **Die Professor en die Prikkelpop** – en om geskikte plekke uit te soek vir sy volgende **Mimosa** fliek. Die rooидуine van die Kalahari betower hom. Wynand Uys, Jamie se seun, word aangekondig, gaan ‘n hoofrol in sy fliek oor ‘n verdwaalde seuntjie in die Kalahariwoestyn vertolk...

**Dirkie** (1969) was ‘n plaaslike treffer en is deur Columbia Pictures as **Lost In The Desert** met welslae regoor die wêreld versprei. Jamie en **Mimosa Films** was nou midde groot internasionale belangstelling – *Jamie se kameras moet hardloop*. Boet gee opdrag: *Dink perkeloos!* Gefassineerd met die fauna en flora van Suider-Afrika se natuurlike praalsug, besluit Jamie om ‘n fliek oor hierdie geharde paradys te maak. Hy ry 160 000km regoor Suid-Afrika, Namibië, Botswana, Zimbabwe en die Kalahari om 152 000m film te skiet. Daarna spandeer hy meer as 18 maande in sy plaaslike ateljees en ook in die VSA aan redigering. Maande aan een werk hy van voor sonop tot laatnag. Hy kan dit *vat* – sy hart nie; hy werk homself tot in die intensiewe waakeenheid. Hy’s ‘n kanniedood en kortvoorlank weer besig met bloedsweet. Nuus van wat hy mee besig was versprei internasionaal. ‘n Amerikaanse akteur vra of hy die verteller mag wees: Bop Hope. (Die diere, meen Jamie, is die enigste sterre – g’n groot-naam uit *Tinsel Town* nie.) Boet vat dit na Cannes: Applous van die wêreldwye filmindustrie. **Beautiful People** (1974) het eers die plaaslike loket gemoker (in Durban-alleen draai dit 31 weke; in Port Elizabeth, by een teater, stormloop 46 000 kaartjiekopers) soveel so dat die Uys-Troskie span besig



was om die staatsubsidiestelsel, vir plaaslike rolprente, bankrot te maak. ***Beautiful People*** was 'n internasionale uitklophou. In Los Angeles verdien dit in 21 dae: \$525 000; in Dallas: \$450 000; Hongkong: \$618 905 (meer as George Lucas se ***Star Wars***). Selfs in anti-Suid-Afrika lande maak dit geld by die trein-vrag: In Helsinki gaan kyk 545 968 mense. Teen 1980 het die prent, nagenoeg, \$15 miljoen verdien; in dieselfde jaar het NBC dit uitgesaai en was 20 000 000 Amerikaanse televisiekykers oopmond en vasgenaai. 'n Jaar later het die BBC dit as deel van hul *Royal Wedding* skedule, saam met ***Sound Of Music***, gebeeldsaai. Behalwe geld, val eerbewyse hot en haar: Dit strek van die gesogte **Golden Globe** en die **Golden Scissors Award** (redigering) tot 'n eerbewys van Argentinië se dierebeskermingsorganisasie tot die **World Wildlife Foundation** wat Jamie uitnood na Frankryk (waar hy saam met die Nederlandse Koningin Juliana en Prins Bernhard, by die Paleis van Versailles, 'n dinee bywoon). Die lys hou net aan. Die wêreldberoemde filmmaker bly eg Suid-Afrikaans. Hy vergeet nooit sy wortels nie en midde sy barstende dagboek het hy sommer gou-gou 'n dokumentêr vir en oor sy alma-mater, die Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit, gemaak. **Die Volksblad**, in 1975, skryf dat Jamie blykbaar besig was om poetse op Bloemfonteinse te bak. Oënskynlik was dit vir sy nuwe flik – 'n prent sonder 'n storie of draaiboek...“Eintlik het ek my personeel sommer 'n paar komiese skote laat skiet om hulle besig te hou nadat ons ***Beautiful People*** voltooi het,” het Jamie verduidelik, “Toe ek die resultaat sien, los ons alles net so en begin werk aan wat later ***Funny People*** geword het.” ***Funny People*** (1976) was op die Amerikaanse TV-reeks, ***Candid Camera***, geskoei. Jamie se truuks werk soos 'n bom. 'n Atoombom. Die ganse Suid-Afrika staan tou om die lekker lawwigheid te sien. Dis so super sukses dat **Mimosa Films** besluit om die

fliëk wêreldwyd te vertoon. (Dit was ook die eerste prent wat **Mimosa** self internasionaal versprei het, in plaas van om dit aan Hollywood se grotes te oorhandig.) Op Cannes word ***Funny People*** vir meer geld as ***Beautiful People*** verkoop. Teen 1979 het ***Funny People*** wêreldwyd \$8 miljoen verdien; in Swede draai dit – ononderbroke – vir 2 ½ jaar (en word in 1980 die suksesvolste film om daar te wys tot op daardie tydstop); dit draai in Stockholm vir drie jaar. In 1982 het ***Funny People*** al in 40 lande gedraai en verskeie buitelandse rekords geknak en was steeds vêr van uitgeput. *Nog!* eis die publiek. “Dis so bietjie van als – komedie, patos, spanning,” het Jamie sy volgende fliëk beskryf. Die storie is moeilik om te beskryf, dit handel oor ‘n *Boesman* wat tot by die einde van die wêreld stap...

### **Toe giggel die gode: The Gods Must Be Crazy:**

***The Gods Must Be Crazy*** bly steeds ‘n vergulde mylpaal in die rolprentgeskiedenis van Suid-Afrika. In wese ‘n oormak van ***Daar Doer In Die Bosveld*** met Jamie se fassinatie met die Khoisan vermeng. Die storie oor ‘n, sogenaamde, *Boesman* wie se pad met ‘n onaardse Cokebottel kruis was geniaal in oorspronklikheid. Jamie en **Mimosa** het hul katswink gewerk. Met ses 4x4’s het Jamie 50 000km rondgery na moontlike plekke vir verfilming en meer as 20 000km opsoek na ‘n geskikte San vir die hoofrol (uiteindelik, die onvergeetlike N!Xau). Die proses, van idee tot vrystelling, duur nagenoeg sewe jare en baie miljoene het in die ontwikkeling van die fliëk gegaan. Almal betrokke was met ondenkbare sukses beloon. Op die basis van Jamie Uys se naam en die storie het buitelandse filmgroepe, lank voor bekendstelling, miljoene in verspreidingsregte vir **Mimosa** aangebied. Die opgewonde gegons en harwar was nie misplaas nie. Binne 96 uur (vier dae!) na nasionale

vrystelling het ***The Gods Must Be Crazy*** (1979) alle Suid-Afrikaanse filmbywoning rekords gebreek. Oornag word ***The Gods*** 'n sosiaalkulturele fenomeen – tot Madiba en sy mede-gevangenis het dit in die tronk te siene gekry. By een Potchefstroomse bioskoop moes die polisie waghou om te keer dat kaartjiekopers nie met mekaar gewelddadig raak nie. Dit was die eerste fliek wat in Suid-Afrika \$5 miljoen gemaak het. ***The Gods*** het in die buiteland 'n veldbrand veroorsaak. Een van die Top Twintig suksesvolste prente, 1981, in Spanje (die Koninginmoeder gaan kyk drie kere daarna). Binne 12 dae het dit \$3 miljoen in Japan verdien. Teen Februarie 1982 het 450 000 Japanners dit gaan kyk; in die Tokiose bioskoop waar dit draai word tot staanplekke verkoop. 'n Jaar later het 1 000 000 Fransmanne, in grootoog verwondering, dit gesien – dit klop Steven Spielberg se ET en word 1983 se suksesvolste fliek in Frankryk. Dit wys tot – deels wederregtelik – in die USSR. Die Portugese gaan kyk omtrent 'n jaar aaneen daarna. In tien weke verdien dit meer geld in Montreal as enige en alle Hollywood prente. Binne sewe dae het 1 000 000 Swede daarna gestroom. In Maleisië draai dit vir 100 weke. In Singapoer maak dit meer dollars as wat daar inwoners is! In New York trek dit rekordgetalle – word die buitelandse prent (1984) wat nog die langste daar sou draai. In 1985 word ***The Gods Must Be Crazy*** die suksesvolste prent wat nog in Los Angeles vertoon is. In Miami wys dit vir 5 maande en in Beverley Hills vir etlike jare. Dit word, in 1984, een van die suksesvolste prente wat (nasionaal) in die VSA draai. Vanaf Wes-Duitsland tot Indië tot Nieu-Seeland lê loket-rekords in flarde. Reeds teen 1983 het ***The Gods*** (wat +/-R4 miljoen gekos het) omtrent R50 miljoen verdien: Slegs die begin. Teen 1985 het dit omtrent \$90 miljoen wêreldwyd ingehark – in 2001 het dit op neffens R950 miljoen gestaan. Dit vertoon, ononderbroke, tot

1989, in 'n bioskoop êrens op aarde. Behalwe geld word Jamie met eerbewyse van regoor die aarde bestook. Van die Southern California Motion Picture Council se Golden Halo Award of Special Merit tot pryse by die Noorweegse filmfees in Haugesund tot die Grand Prix toekenning by die 1982 Chamrousse humorfees ensovoorts. Terwyl **The Gods** die aarde op horings het, verskyn **Funny People 2** (1983) met, nes die eerste een, groot sukses. Jamie word deur Hollywood met hemel-op-aarde aanbiedinge oorval. Hy oorweeg om 'n Amerikaanse weergawe van **Rip van Wyk** in Las Vegas te maak, maar skuif dit opsy – die wêreld eis nog **Gods**. “Die tweede een moet altyd beter as die eerste een wees,” sê Jamie. Terug na die boendoes het Jamie gegaan om die skitterende – en reuse sukses – **The Gods Must Be Crazy 2** (1989) te maak. Met sy Suid-Afrikaanse vrystelling verdien dit R1 miljoen per week! Binne 14 dae was dit die suksesvolste fliek wat ooit in Suid-Afrika gedraai het, weereens het Uys die wêreld oorrompel. In die wêreld se filmgeskiedenis het **The Gods** 'n kultusagtige legende-status bereik met verstommende uithouvermoë. Teen vroeg in die een en twintigste eeu het **The Gods Must Be Crazy 1** en **2** 'n, gesamentlike, lokket-inkomste van +/- \$600 miljoen of te wel +/- R6 miljard (of te wel +/- R6 000 000 000!) gehad. Dit is die fliek wat die langste, ononderbroke, in Amerika gewys het – ooit! In 2000 het 'n Yahoo!-meningspeiling dit as Amerika se sewende mees populêre buitelandse fliek (van die twintigste eeu) aangewys.

## Manjifieke Meetsnoere:

Terwyl Jamie flieks gemaak het, het Boet Troskie van **Mimosa** (waarvan Jamie 'n direkteur was) 'n multi-miljard inter-kontinentale sakereus gemaak. Boet Troskie en sy **Mimosa Films** het vir Jamie, 'n verstrooide perfeksionis, vryheid en veiligheid gegee om flieks te maak soos en hoe en wanneer hy wou – Uys hoef nooit weer na die gewraakte horlosie of beursie te gekyk het nie. Hy was, werklik, heel moontlik die enigste filmmaker *ooit* wat sonder 'n nougesette tydskaal of begroting gewerk het. Die vervlegte kopbreking wat dit vir die vervaardigers geskep het, is mateloos dubbel en dwars deur sy agtereenvolgende wêreldwye suksesse gedelg. Soos die miere wat in Jamie se kilt, in **Lord Oom Piet**, *sports* gemaak het, was sy verbeelding 'n peinsende miernes. Sy enigste kriteria – *Sal die mense daarvan hou?* Hy het nie veel aandag aan resensente se opinies (of toekennings) gegee nie. Vir Uys was sy sogenaamde “Van der Merwe,” Jan-alleman wat vir 'n kaartjie moet opdok, die belangrikste en enigste barometer. Verslaaf aan die publiek se regmerk vir sy films – maar glad nie aan hul aandag nie. Jamie wou sy storie vertel – nie *die storie* wees nie. Hy het die kalklig verpes. Premières was vir hom 'n naelbol van senuagtigheid. By een glans galageleentheid waar hy die eregas was, vra hy vir die gashere: “Gee my sommer net 'n *hotdog* en dan staan ek in die hoek êrens.” Hoogdrawendheid, sarkasme, venyn, pretensie – was hy nie tot in staat nie. “*Noem my maar net Jamie*,” daarin het sy menswees geklop. In die 1990s was sy brein 'n byekorff van gedagtes, idees en stories vir sy volgende flieks. Hy was druk besig aan draaiboekskryf toe hy op 29 Januarie 1996, in die arms van sy geliefde vrou, Hettie, aan sy hart beswyk het. Sy bloedbroer, Boet, sê baiekeer: “Die een wat altyd Wes kyk sal nooit

die son sien opkom nie.” Jamie Uys het sy lewe aan die uitdeel van sonsopkomste gewy.

- Samesteller: Dr. Jan-Ad Stemmet, Departement Geskiedenis (Universiteit van die Vrystaat). Epos: [stemmetj.hum@ufs.ac.za](mailto:stemmetj.hum@ufs.ac.za) // Sel: 083-451-3-778.



## ***Sangoma of the silver screen***

**Jamie Uys: Film maker**

**Pioneering a foundation, 1950–1966<sup>\*</sup>**

Jan-Ad Stemmet

Department of History, University of the Free State, Nelson Mandela Avenue,  
Bloemfontein.

Jamie Uys. South African film industry. Daar Doer In Die Bosveld. Dingaka.  
Kimberley Jim. Lord Oom Piet.

**Sangoma van die silwerdoek. Jamie Uys: Filmmaker. Grondslag van ‘n pionier,  
1950– 1966.**

Baie min akademiese werke (ongegag die dissipline) het al verskyn oor Suid-Afrika se rolprentgeskiedenis. Dit is selfs meer ontmoedigend wanneer in ag geneem word dat die Suid-Afrikaanse rolprentbedryf een van die oudste ter wêreld is. ‘n Verdere skok is die feit dat Suid-Afrika se suksesvolste filmmaker tot op hede – Jamie Uys – feitlik heeltemal geïgnoreer word. Hoewel Uys nie die bedryf gevestig het nie, sal dit nie oordrewe wees om hom as die vader van die moderne Suid-Afrikaanse rolprentbedryf te beskryf nie. In sy loopbaan van byna ‘n halwe eeu was hy verantwoordelik vir meer as 40 rolprente: vollengte-rolprente, dokumentêre rolprente en opvoedkundige kortprente. Sy nalatenskap sluit Suid-Afrika se enkele suksesvolste rolprent tot op hede in: *The gods must be crazy*. Sonder enige opleiding was sy eerste rolprent, hoewel ‘n lokettreffer, maar ‘n

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<sup>\*</sup> With absolute gratitude: Dr Boet Troskie (founder: Mimosa Films) and mrs Mireschen Troskie-Marx (board member: Mimosa Films) for their gracious co-operation.



mankolieke poging – teen die jare sestig was Uys egter Suid-Afrika se voorste kenner op professionele en tegniese gebied. In 1966 het hy met Mimosa Films saamgespan en saam die een ná ander internasionale treffer gemaak. Hierdie artikel is nie 'n analise van die artistieke meriete van Uys se rolprente nie. Dit bied 'n oorsig van Uys se loopbaan vanaf sy eerste rolprent totdat hy by Mimosa Films aangesluit het (die Mimosa Films-tydperk, 1966-1996, word in 'n volgende artikel bespreek). Jamie Uys was 'n uiters private persoon. Geen (outo)biografieë, geskiedenisboeke of akademiese verhandelings wat spesifiek oor Uys handel, is al gepubliseer nie. Die skrywer was dus afhanklik van koerant- en tydskrifknipsels. Mimosa Films het toegang tot sy privaatargief en geskiedenis lêers verleen.

Very few academic works (irrespective of discipline) have appeared on South Africa's cinematic history. Taking into consideration that South Africa has one of the oldest film industries in the world it is even more disheartening. Still more of a shock is that South Africa's most successful film-maker to date – Jamie Uys – has been neglected almost entirely. Although Uys did not establish the local industry, it would be no exaggeration to describe him as the founding father of the modern South African film industry. In his career, spanning almost half a century, he was responsible for more than 40 pictures: full-length features, documentaries, and educational shorts. His legacy includes South Africa's single most successful film to date: ***The Gods Must Be Crazy***. Having absolutely no training, his first film, albeit a box-office success, was a ramshackle affair – by the 1960s Uys' professional and technical know-how was unsurpassed in South Africa. In 1966 he teamed-up with Mimosa Films and together made one after another international sensation. The article does not propose an analysis of the artistic merit of Uys' films. It presents a survey of Uys' career, from his first picture till the time he

joined Mimosa Films (the Mimosa Films era, 1966-1996, will be addressed in a follow-up article.) Jamie Uys was an intensely private individual. No (auto)biographies, history books, or academic theses dealing specifically with Uys have ever been published. The writer was forced to focus on newspaper and magazine clippings. Mimosa Films allowed access to its private archive and historic folders.

### **A profound parvenu: Venturing into films**

On 17 October 1888 Thomas Edison patented the Kinetoscope as a device that will do “for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear”. With the outbreak of the Anglo Boer War one of Edison’s co-workers, William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, clutching the abovementioned apparatus, joined Sir Redvers Buller and set sail for South Africa. Dickson was to document the military struggle on film, and in the process founded the country’s film industry. Some 33 years later, on 30 May 1921, South Africa’s most successful film maker was born: Johannes Jacobus Uys.<sup>1</sup> The family’s Boksburg neighbours were Scottish and hence dubbed little Johannes, *Jamie* (pronounced *Dj’ay’me.*)<sup>2</sup> Having finished school Uys enrolled for a B.Sc. degree at the Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit (RAU) and received his Higher Education Diploma from the Pretoria Normal College. His father was a principle and the Uys brothers followed suit. “I don’t think we had a vocation,” Uys later said.<sup>3</sup> (The educationalists apparently felt that he was too wet-behind-the-ears to command a class and as such to *mature* Uys interrupted his studies and worked as a gold miner.)

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<sup>1</sup> Mimosa Films: Private Archive: Jamie Uys Biographical Document.

<sup>2</sup> Mimosa Films: Private Archive: Jamie Uys Biographical Document.

<sup>3</sup> K. Sutton, Film game paying off, *Eastern Province Herald*, 1983-05-06, s.p.

In 1945 he married Hettie van Rooyen. Together with his wife, also a teacher, the couple taught for a while in Boksburg before joining his farther-in-law who farmed near Olifantsdrift next to the Palala River in what was then known as the Transvaal. He managed his in-laws' trading posts along the riverbanks and at one stage also acted as Justice of the Peace. An avid filmgoer, especially the silent comedies of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, Uys dreamt about movies but never dreamt that he would ever actually make one. After some years on the farm he received a letter from his brother, Jok.<sup>4</sup>

"I was at the trading posts for three years when my brother Jok wrote to me that he could borrow a movie camera. And soon he would be on holiday," Uys reminisced. "I had to write a story and he would write a story and then we would choose the best one and make a movie of it. Well yes, I wrote a story and it was *Daar Doer In Die Bosveld* (Deep In The Bushveld). My brother was a school photographer and at least he knew something about *snaps*, but nothing about movie cameras. But he came and we decided that we were going to make this story... We were raw..."<sup>5</sup> *Daar Doer In Die Bosveld* (Deep In The Bushveld) tells the story of a prosperous, but befuddled farmer, which was completely out of his depth in courting the new school mistress. Against all odds the bumbling hero wins the lady's heart.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Mimosa Films: Private Archive: Jamie Uys Biographical Document.

<sup>5</sup> C. Barnard, Geselsportret: Die outjie wat uit die bosse gekruip het met 'n kamera, Die Huisgenoot, 1977-02-04, p.37.

<sup>6</sup> J. Uys. *Daar Doer In Die Bosveld*. 1951. Copyright: M-Net.

Jok Uys, camera in hand, visited his brother during the 1949 winter school holidays. The Uys brothers thought that the cinematic exercise would take about 14 days and would not cost too much.<sup>7</sup> They had absolutely no idea how to make a film. There was a story, a primitive camera and plenty of enthusiasm. No script and no set dialogue. They had a lump sum, but no actual budget. Not a single professional artist was involved; Jamie Uys and his wife starred in the leads, while family, friends, and neighbours took on all the other roles. There was no technical production team whatsoever. The Uys brothers and Hettie Uys took turns in manoeuvring the camera. When everybody were in the shot a small black boy from the farm stood in as cinematographer. The tiny youngster could not see through the lens and either looked over the camera or held it on top of his head and looked in the direction of the action. Incredibly he never missed a shot. Because Uys had not written any dialogue, at least one actor (Uys' neighbour) stood around and just opened and closed his mouth – Uys later decided what the character ought to say and, using his own voice, added appropriate dialogue.<sup>8</sup>

After weeks of shooting the film makers drove to Johannesburg to develop the few minutes of film. Disaster: The film was old and defective; some of it came out blue and other bits were purple.<sup>9</sup> The holiday was over and Jok Uys had to return to his job and had to return the camera. His brother, for the first time as film maker but not the last time, had to decide whether he was to continue. With much effort he scraped together £30 and bought a *home movie*-like 16mm

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<sup>7</sup> H. De Villiers, Jamie Uys Film Pioneer, *South African Panorama*, 1970-12, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Jamie Uys Biographical Document.

<sup>9</sup> C. Barnard, Geselsportret: Die outjie wat uit die bosse gekruip het met 'n kamera, *Die Huisgenoot*, 1977-02-04, p.37.

camera.<sup>10</sup> Uys (poverty driving him to buy film on the black market) had to reshoot everything from the start. Eventually finishing filming, he was forced to move to Johannesburg for, crucial, specialist postproduction treatment. Uys was compelled to sell his farm to further finance the picture (his in-laws were selling their land to the government's homeland development scheme).<sup>11</sup> What had started as a *holiday hobby* was now destroying Uys financially. Editing, sound production and distribution weren't cheap. The family was in a financial crisis. They rented a minute home in Bezuidenhoutvallei as Uys desperately tried to complete the production in its entirety. "Now you've got to realize: in those two years there was no income; only expenses. Later we had to borrow everywhere and had to sell our clothes and our vehicle, just to stay alive," recalled Uys.<sup>12</sup>

He might have had a film now, but the impoverished movie maker was still clueless as how to turn it in to a proper feature. Never mind knowing how it worked, Uys did not even realize that something like an editing table actually existed. He figured out that the reels of film had to be spliced together. Laboriously screening rolls and rolls of rough film on a wall; painstakingly scrutinizing the tiny film (permanently damaging his eyes) he cut and pasted the material in to a logical whole. Not only time consuming, but gut wrenchingly tense work as Uys only had one single copy of the film. One mistake could mean the end of his first feature before it was even released.<sup>13</sup> He had the visuals and now struggled for audio. The system to create magnetic soundtracks had earlier

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<sup>10</sup> P. Meiring. Ek het hulle op pad ontmoet, *Hoofstad*, 1982-10-25, s.p.

<sup>11</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Condensed Chronology.

<sup>12</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: 1977. Topic: Jamie Uys; C. Barnard, Geselsportret: Die outjie wat uit die bosse gekruip het met 'n kamera, *Die Huisgenoot*, 1977-02-04, p.37.

<sup>13</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: 1986. Topic: Jamie Uys

been discovered and Uys wanted to import it for his picture. The bureaucrats in Pretoria were not keen on supplying the permits. The picture's financial viability had to be assessed first. A small committee of the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings, FAK (The Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Associations) was shown the film. Committee members burst out with laughter. However, despite the thumbs-up, Pretoria was notorious for taking its time with the permits.<sup>14</sup>

On advice from his neighbour Uys held a special screening for the press so as to draw attention to the film (possibly spurring the authorities to grant the permits). Around 200 people showed up but only two newspapermen. a Reporter from *Die Transvaler* and James Ambrose Brown who, at that stage, worked for the *Sunday Times*. Both raved about the (as yet unpolished) picture and gave it a big write up. Uys sent their newspaper reports to the responsible authorities in Pretoria. Finally he received the official documents. Having received the permits at last, Uys now lacked sufficient funds to import the desired equipment (he never got the magnetic soundtrack). As the South African film industry (more-or-less still undiscovered by the Afrikaners) was run by English executives, the struggling, aspirant, Afrikaner film maker had to forget about receiving investments. More than ever before, the Uys family was facing severe impoverishment.<sup>15</sup>

A new film company, Swan Films, had heard of *Daar Doer In Die Bosveld* and its courageously determined creator. Uys could work for them and instead of drawing a salary the company would assist Uys in finishing the picture.<sup>16</sup> There

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<sup>14</sup> Anon. Daar doer in die Goudstad het sukses gewag, *Finansies en Tegniek*, 1986-05-23, p. 109.

<sup>15</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Condensed Chronology.

<sup>16</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: 1973: Topic: Jamie 21.

were some snags though. Swan Films was fundamentally English. They did not understand the film they had opted to wrap up. As such Uys could rely on Swan Films' technological resources but had to do everything himself. When finally redubbing and synchronizing the soundtrack of the original version, Jamie and Hettie Uys had to stand in for all the voices. (Luckily the sound quality was so inferior that audiences never actually noticed). Another predicament was that Swan Films was in the midst of a severe financial crisis. The production company would not be able to distribute the picture.<sup>17</sup>

Jannie Raath, a rich businessman, made arrangements with Swan Films for the movie's distribution. Raath, who imported operatic films from Italy, had the necessary infrastructure. He had a couple of projectors and organised drivers to crisscross South Africa with ten copies of the film. It was shown in every conceivable type and size of venue throughout the country.

Released in 1951, the popularity, irrespective of its many technical flaws, of *Daar Doer In Die Bosveld* especially in the rural farming areas, spread like a bushfire.<sup>18</sup> The picture's music was composed by Anton de Waal. He also composed its theme song (sharing the film's title) which turned out to be a big hit.<sup>19</sup> The Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns (South African Academy for Science and Art) gave its official praise.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Condensed Chronology; Anon, *Daar doer in die Goudstad het sukses gewag, Finansies en Tegniek*, 1986-05-23, p. 109.

<sup>18</sup> Mimosa Films: Private Archive: Jamie Uys Biographical Document.

<sup>19</sup> J. Uys. *Daar Doer In Die Bosveld*. 1951. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>20</sup> Anon. Van bosveld-ateljee tot Hollywood, *Die Transvaler*, 1973-09-29, s.p.

Instead of two weeks the picture had taken two years to make. Instead of being a bit of frivolity during the vacation, it had wrecked the family financially. Instead of costing a few hundred, *Daar Doer In Die Bosveld* had cost £3 000 to make. In spite of the picture's extreme popularity, it was not a financial grand-slam.<sup>21</sup> In the end Uys made a fabulous debut but his successes, not to mention troubles, were far from over.

### **Fame without fortune: Searching for producers and protection**

An Englishman and an Afrikaner go on a bus tour. They cannot stand each other but constantly end up in each other's affairs. Eventually they are forced to get along. Such was the basis of Uys' second film – a comedy that was a cross between a *road movie* and a *buddy movie*.<sup>22</sup> In *50/50*, South Africa's first bilingual feature film, Uys tackled the animosity that existed between the Afrikaners and English of that period for the first time.<sup>23</sup> The scorching loathing that existed between these two groups might have thawed somewhat since the days of Jan Smuts and J.B.M. Hertzog but there remained a good deal of political animosity and cultural squabbles. Throughout the 1950s, Uys would repeatedly return to this theme.

As with his first film, Uys approached the picture as something of a one-man show. He was producer, director, scriptwriter and editor and he also played the lead role of the Afrikaner character. Hettie Uys once again starred as the love of his life. The film was shot entirely on location; not a single studio-scene. *50/50*

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<sup>21</sup> Anon. Jamie Uys, *SA Financial Mail*, 1985-11-01, p. s.p.

<sup>22</sup> J. Uys. *50/50*. 1952. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>23</sup> Anon. Jamie Uys se prestasie, *Gemsbok*, 1973-08-10, p. 10.



was released by Raath Films in 1952.<sup>24</sup> Uys was so excited about the new film that he and Raath rented Pretoria's huge Afrikaanse Koffiehuis for the première (it turned out to be a comedy of errors). The fact that cabinet members and other South African luminaries attended, keeping in mind this was only his second film, illustrates the impact of *Daar Doer In Die Bosveld* but also how quickly Uys was making a name for himself.<sup>25</sup> Although his second film was another popular success, Uys was still desperately trying to recover from the past few years' poverty and debts. Money-matters and an overactive imagination obligated him to work without rest.

The next feature was a sort of sequel to his first. *Daar Doer In Die Stad* (Deep In The City), released in 1953, tells of a happy Bushveld family whose lives are turned upside down by the mother's death. The father, his young daughter, and their pet dog have to move to the big city so he can try and patent a bean-machine. The urban world is foreign and foreboding with many danger. The father perseveres and, comically, triumphs. The credits of this Jamie Uys film read like a family tree: He starred as the dad; his real wife (again) starred as his onscreen wife; his daughter, Marietjie, starred as his onscreen daughter and even the dog was the Uys' family dog.<sup>26</sup> It was the first time that Uys worked with a 35mm cine-camera and he eagerly explored its various possibilities. Once more the Uys' cinematic recipe was a success. The public loved it.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> J. Uys. *50/50*. 1952. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>25</sup> S. Joubert, *Van doer in die Bosveld...Tot die stad, roem en geld, Hoofstad*, 1968-06-28, p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> J. Uys. *50/50*. 1952. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>27</sup> Anon. Jamie Uys se prestasie, *Gemsbok*, 1973-08-10, p. 10.

Uys made the picture for Killarney Film Studios / African Film Productions. In 1954 Uys was awarded The Schlesinger Drum Award (then the local version of the American Academy Award, or Oscar). The award was named after the Schlesingers' who controlled African Film Productions, the first company in South Africa to produce feature films.<sup>28</sup> Although Uys' films were increasingly proving to be *box office gold*, the film maker still suffered financially. The Schlesinger organisation was paying him (irrespective of the various positions he held when making a film) a flat rate of £100 a month – less than what a professional sound technician was paid. He endured the treatment as the pittance was at least guaranteed and since he was addicted to his storytelling. Uys' next film, his second for African Film Productions, was to deal with a traitor during the Anglo Boer War.<sup>29</sup>

The Schlesingers and their board evaluated *Hensop* and regarded it as too dangerously controversial (in other words not a money spinner). The picture was already passed the developmental phase when the Schlesingers summarily killed off the production. Uys had had enough. "That's when I decided to quit and form my own company," Uys said. He abruptly resigned. Money was one thing but interference and limitations on the creative process was crossing the line. The rich and imposing Schlesingers summoned Uys and fiercely berated him for his

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<sup>28</sup> A. le Roux and L. Fourie, *Filmverlede* (Pretoria, 1982), p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Condensed Chronology.



impertinent resignation. As the bombast grew more fiery Uys just kept silent. At the end of the marathon rebuke, the film maker stood up and walked away for good. (Three months later they tried to entice him back, without success.)<sup>30</sup>

### **Calling his own shots: Jamie Uys Films**

As one of the country's most popular film makers, Uys finally took the decisive step to launch his own production house. As he was doing basically everything else while making a movie, he could produce it as well. Friends advised that he link it with his celebrity and so the new company was christened Jamie Uys Films. Jok Uys joined his brother's business venture. Irrespective of its creator's box office triumphs, Afrikaner consortiums were not interested in backing the company. The movie industry was too unpredictable for their liking. The Uys bothers ferociously marketed small bundles of shares and begged for investments. Quite arguably those that did give money were doing so more for Uys' *cinematic cause* and from cultural convictions than for business reasons. The brothers collected about £14 000 and in 1954 Jamie Uys Films Limited was operational.<sup>31</sup> Time was money and there was no time to spare. Uys hastily got underway with his company's first picture.

Jok Uys starred with his brother in the 1954 comedy *Geld Soos Bossies* (Money To Burn). Two road workers, also brothers, are determined to make a fortune. They devise a scheme using a chain letter... As usual Jamie Uys took on various

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<sup>30</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Condensed Chronology.

<sup>31</sup> Anon. Jamie Uys – S.A. se grootste rolprentman, *Die Oosterlig*, 1973-11-2, p. 5. Mimosa Films: Private Archive: Jamie Uys Biographical Document.

responsibilities, including that of lead actor, scriptwriter, director and producer.<sup>32</sup> Uys, who in retrospect would frown on the film (feeling it was obvious the picture was a rushed job) made South African history with it. *Geld Soos Bossies* was supplied with English subtitles and re-baptised as *Money To Burn*. In a marvellous coup for the small production company it was the first South African-made picture to be sold for overseas distribution. The movie was screened in Britain and New Zealand. Production costs were covered by local ticket sales, the R15 000 which it made abroad meant clean profit. Jamie Uys Films used the international earnings to buy cutting edge cinematic gear and technology.<sup>33</sup> Uys' international breakthrough was born out of desperation. South African tax laws of the time had a suffocating stranglehold on the local film industry.

According to the stipulations of the Entertainment Tax Law, Jamie Uys Films would have to pay R6 000 tax on *Geld Soos Bossies* which cost roughly R10 000 to produce. The system was in effect targeting local films; imported movies were exempt from the particular tax. Uys *the activist* made an appointment to see the Prime Minister.

He held talks with J.G. Strijdom and relevant state officials. The result was a subsidy scheme for home-grown movies. Uys was at once overjoyed and sceptical. He believed (in part correctly) that such a system would trigger scallywags to suddenly enter the industry with second-rate movies just to cash in on the system. Nonetheless, the government subsidies – thanks to Uys' historic

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<sup>32</sup> J. Uys. *Geld Soos Bossies*. 1954. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>33</sup> Anon. Jamie Uys se prestasie, *Gemsbok*, 1973-08-10, p. 10. H. van Deventer, Wat Jamie laat lag het dat die kamera skud, *Volksblad*, 1985-06-21, p. 9. Mimosa Films: Private Archive: Jamie Uys Biographical Document.

lobbying – marked a turning-point in the South African industry. The local film world, in the period after Uys' change of the legal status quo, would experience vigorous and forceful growth.<sup>34</sup>

Along with *Geld Soos Bossies* Jamie Uys made a unique (20 minutes long) short film, released in 1954, about South Africa's distinctive multicultural indigenous music. *Jabulani Africa*, ingeniously edited, featured astounding visuals and beautiful music – no dialogue whatsoever. South Africa's Department of Information saw it and took it to the international film industry's most revered trade show at Cannes, France. The international distributors were bowled over and bought the short for about R12 000. *Jabulani Africa* was (measured both in popularity and critical acclaim) successfully screened throughout England, France and Germany. Jamie Uys was starting to attract international attention.<sup>35</sup> After the success of *Jabulani Africa*, Uys frequently ventured into making short films. He was also regularly commissioned by various state departments to make educational pictures and documentaries on a remarkably diverse number of topics.

He would go on to make almost 20 short films. This creative avenue allowed Uys to experiment technically and develop his creative flexibility. (In his Mimosa Films period, Uys would utilize his documentary-maker skills in making Africa's most successful pictures.) Furthermore, it heightened Uys' already high profile as film

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<sup>34</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Condensed Chronology. Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: 1973: Topic: Jamie 21.

<sup>35</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Condensed Chronology. Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: 1973: Topic: Jamie 21.

maker, attracted critical acclaim and supplemented the company's (usually strapped) finances. As with commercial features Uys would excel in this cinematic genus. In 1956, tasked by the Department of Information, Uys made *The Condemned Are Happy* (also known as *The Urgent Queue*). It dealt with a family living amidst squalor in a Port Elizabeth slum. It was dramatic and its impact effective. The picture was hailed by the jury at the Edinburgh Film Festival as 1956's *Outstanding Film of the Year*.<sup>36</sup> Apparently a workaholic, Uys in this time not only *made* films.

Amongst the local acting legends that starred in Werner Grünbauer's *Paul Kruger* (1955) was André Huguenet, James Norval, Siegfried Mynhardt – and Jamie Uys.<sup>37</sup> It was exceptionally rare to see Uys in a film he did not make himself. The famed actor-director detested acting even in his own pictures; never mind someone else's. When Uys started his career the struggling storyteller could not afford to pay professional artists. Now that he could, Jamie Uys had become such a well known and loved screen personality that commercial logic dictated that he had to act.<sup>38</sup> If he had no choice about acting then he would rather star in his own films. Jamie and Jok Uys' next film was a proper remake of *Daar Doer In Die Bosveld* – entitled *Die Bosvelder* (The Bushvelder): Shot in 35mm film, and colour, with decent production facilities, not to mention budget. Tried and tested, South Africans in 1955 once again flocked to see Uys' fumbling-but-loveable Bushveld farmer.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Jamie Uys: List of awards.

<sup>37</sup> W. Günbauer. *Paul Kruger*. 1955. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>38</sup> H. van Deventer, Wat Jamie laat lag het dat die kamera skud, *Volksblad*, 1985-06-21, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> J. Uys. *Die Bosvelder*. 1955. Copyright: M-Net.

As the popularity and critical acclaim, at home and abroad, of his works (of whatever kind) kept on escalating, both wannabe and budding film makers jostled for an opportunity to work with and learn from Jamie Uys. In 1959 Uys gave one such aspiring film maker his *big break*: Elmo de Witt (who had joined the Uys team as assistant cameraman in 1954) made his debut as director with Uys' *Satanskoraal* (Satan's Coral). Uys wrote and produced this adventure-drama which told of illicit coral poaching. Quite a feat for that time was the many underwater scenes, which were shot by cameramen Judex Viljoen and Vincent Cox.<sup>40</sup>

After having completed some documentaries, Uys created one of his most memorable films: *Rip van Wyk* (1960). Based on the American folktale of Rip van Winkle, the film is about a farmer who sleeps for a hundred years and wakes to find a vastly different world from the one he fell asleep in: Sasolburg now stands where his tranquil farm was. The script of this Jamie Uys Films' production was Emil Nofal's, who also directed, while Van Wyk was played by Uys.<sup>41</sup> The production was exceptional in the sense that it was filmed twice – once in Afrikaans and once in English.<sup>42</sup> Apart from its local success, the film had quite a decent reception in England where it was shown in London's National Film Theatre. The picture was officially heralded at the subsequent London Film Festival as the *Outstanding Film of the Year*, and awarded the *Commonwealth Film Award* by the Royal Society of Arts.<sup>43</sup> (Decades later, following the astounding worldwide success of *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, Uys seriously

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<sup>40</sup> E. De Witt. *Satanskoraal*. 1959. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>41</sup> J. Uys. *Rip van Wyk*. 1960. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>42</sup> N. Cave. 'Mr Cinema' looks back, *P.E. Evening Post*, 1973-10-27, s.p.

<sup>43</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Jamie Uys: List of awards. A. le Roux and L. Fourie, *Filmverlede* (Pretoria, 1982), p.80.



considered remaking the picture, having been offered a vast Hollywood budget. Instead, by popular demand from the USA he had to make a sequel to his so-called *Coke bottle movie* and passed away before he could resurrect his *drowsy boertjie*.)<sup>44</sup> With an unprecedented upshot in the number of new production houses (wanting to cash in on the lucrative subsidy system) Uys had to be quick in delivering a new picture.<sup>45</sup> Uys (who financially could not afford to take long pauses pondering new movie concepts) again made a remake: *Hans en die Rooinek* (also released in English as *Sydney and the Boer*) which was a replica of his earlier *50/50*. It premiered in 1960.<sup>46</sup>

Having had some success overseas Uys was contacted by Warwick Films in England. They wanted the South African to make a feature for them. *The Hellions* (1961), starring, amongst others, Richard Todd, Ann Aubrey, Patrick Mynhardt and Jamie Uys, was an action-thriller set in the pioneering days of South Africa: The small town of De Wylt is terrorised by a gang of ruffians until some townspeople take a stand.<sup>47</sup> Thought to have the potential to be Uys' overseas breakthrough, the picture, directed by Ken Annkin and co-produced by Jamie Uys Films, almost destroyed the film maker forever: "I suppose I was naïve...They offered me a contract in terms of which they were responsible for above the line expenses (lead actors and producers fees), while I carried the below the line expenses (everything else) – without having any control over what was spent. It looked good to me. I suppose I was flattered, too. So I signed."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: The Gods Must Be Crazy.

<sup>45</sup> S. Joubert, Groeipyne van ons filmwese, *Die Vaderland*, 1968-11-30, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> J. Uys. *Hans en die Rooinek*. 1960. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>47</sup> J. Uys. *The Hellions*. 1961. Copyright: Sony Entertainment.

<sup>48</sup> K. Sutton. Film game paying off, *Eastern Province Herald*, 1983-05-6, s.p.



Warwick Films made a bundle while Uys was stuck with bills in excess of R250 million. Jok Uys left the uncertain financial see-saw of film making and returned to the old school corporate world.<sup>49</sup> The renowned film maker – despite his sustained box office hits and across-the-border popularity – once again faced financial ruin.

The Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings, FAK (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies) was organising a national festival, *Die Wonder van Afrikaans* (The Wonder of Afrikaans), commemorating the birth of Afrikaans. Uys was commissioned to make a film on the language's history. *Doodkry Is Min* (Never Say Die) combined weighty history, light-hearted humour, and striking visuals. The open-air premiere on 29 April 1961 was staged at the Voortrekker Monument. State President C.R. Swart sat next to Uys. Opera diva, Mimi Coertze, sang *O Boereplaas* to the staggering audience of 50 000.<sup>50</sup> The organisation awarded the film maker R20 000 (which he desperately needed) and its Besembos Award for cinematic excellence.<sup>51</sup>

### **Lights, camera and (renewed) action: Jamie Uys Films, 1961-1964.**

Tommie Meyer, who had commissioned Uys' *language film*, had joined his board. Meyer and Uys convinced Afrikaner-dominated consortiums like Bonuskor and Sanlam to invest. "When I was making money they wouldn't touch me. Now that I was in trouble they had a change of heart," the film maker recalled.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Condensed Chronology.

<sup>50</sup> P. Breytenbach, 'n Lang pad sedert 'Modertjie', *Die Transvaler*, 1975-08-14, s.p.

<sup>51</sup> S. Joubert, Groeipyne van ons filmwese, *Die Vaderland*, 1968-11-30, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Mimosa Films: Private Archive: Jamie Uys Biographical Document.



In 1962 Uys' company released a sort of Western, set in the immediate aftermath of the Anglo Boer War: *Voor Sononder* (Before Dusk) starred Vonk de Ridder as the hero and was written and directed by Emil Nofal.<sup>53</sup> While producing that, Uys and Nofal were busily conceiving a South African highlight. They co-wrote the script and Uys directed *Lord Oom Piet* (also released as *Lord Uncle Piet*). Again lampooning the complexities of South Africa's Afrikaner/English relationships, the story revolves around two affluent farmers. The Afrikaner is a staunch Nationalist (Uys); the Englishman is a staunch United Party disciple (Bob Courtney). They are simultaneously quarrelsome, neighbours and fervent opponents in an upcoming election. The Afrikaner learns – to his shock – that he has inherited a British Lordship. At all costs it must remain a secret but, of course, leaks out and so the hilarity commences.<sup>54</sup> The 1962 film was a national phenomenon. No other picture (up till then) had sold as many tickets in its first month. Within six months half a million South Africans saw it – which was another South African record. English South Africans, as a rule, did not care for local pictures and definitely not Afrikaans movies. This one they flocked to see in record numbers – another South African record.<sup>55</sup> Jamie Uys and his production house next ventured into musicals.

Jim Reeves, the famous American country singer, played the lead in 1963's *Kimberley Jim*. In the pioneering days of Kimberley two shady card players scam miners out of their money and get in a lot of trouble. Emil Nofal, assisted by Jans Rautenbach, was scriptwriter, and director. Uys oversaw an elaborate show: a budget of R250 000; some 1 000 period-costumes; 18 original songs (composed

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<sup>53</sup> E. Nofal. *Voor Sononder*. 1962. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>54</sup> J. Uys. *Lord Oom Piet*. 1962. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>55</sup> S. Joubert, Blink publisiteit, maar baie kon nie skyn nie, *Die Vaderland*, 1968-12-07, p. 4.

by Nico Carstens, Gilbert Gibson and Anton de Waal).<sup>56</sup> After starring in his only musical, Reeves died in 1964 (giving the film a certain sentimental appeal.) The picture became one of the most successful locally made films of that period and also thrived abroad.<sup>57</sup> While making *The Hellions* Jamie Uys discovered a young black actor: Kan Gampu.<sup>58</sup> He would cast the future celebrity in one of the leads in his next movie.

*The Fox Has Four Eyes* (a short film Uys made in 1958) served as the basis for *Dingaka* (Witch Doctor). A black man's daughter is murdered during a tribal ritual and he hunts down the killer to take revenge. The father's quest takes him to the big city where his and the white man's ideas of justice clash. Actors included Gordon Hood (father of Oscar-winner Gavin Hood) and Paul Makgoba. Jans Rautenbach, Ivan Hall, Manie Botha and Elmo de Witt were all involved. Bertha Egnos supplied enthralling traditional music.<sup>59</sup> Uys' film making on this picture made him be compared to the likes of Cecil B. de Mille because it was filmed, partly, in winter. Uys wanted the scenery to be green and so got the extras to paint a *koppie* green. Once more Hollywood winked. Paramount Pictures and Embassy Pictures were to manage overseas distribution. The Americans demanded *big names*. Juliet Prowse (then Frank Sinatra's love interest) and Stanley Baker starred in the leads.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> A. le Roux and L. Fourie, *Filmverlede* (Pretoria, 1982), p.83.

<sup>57</sup> Anon. Afrikaanse rolprente raak al gewilder, *Die Volksblad*, 1967-11-27, s.p.

<sup>58</sup> Anon. Africans have a rosy future in film industry, *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 1976-07-31, s.p.

<sup>59</sup> J. Uys. *Dingaka*. 1964. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>60</sup> J. Uys. *Dingaka*. 1964. Copyright: M-Net. A. le Roux and L. Fourie, *Filmverlede* (Pretoria, 1982), p.78.



At R975 000 – in 1964 – *Dingaka* was Uys' most expensive film (until the *Mimosa* period). It was regarded as one of the best produced films ever to have come from South Africa. Popularly and critically it fared exceptional both locally and beyond. In some overseas countries, Uys was thought to be black and it was hailed as a bold stand against Apartheid. An international production meant international rates. Although the film was a hit, it would take Uys years to make up the tabs. Another disappointing international success.<sup>61</sup> Following the epic, Uys vowed to never again use international stars. He argued that if his cinematic whole could not make good on its own – irrespective of the cast – then it was not worth making. Uys undertook to (and did successfully) write so-called “star proof” scripts.<sup>62</sup> Ironically his next film starred one of the most famous – not to mention powerful – individuals of the twentieth century. *All The Way To Paris* (also known as *After You Comrade*) was the third remake of *50/50*.<sup>63</sup>

Uys, whilst in New York, got the idea completely by chance, examining two (ideologically opposed) diplomats trying to avoid each other in an eatery: A Russian (Uys) and an American (Bob Courtney) challenge each other to walk from Greece to Paris. They detest each other but get to understand each other through their ensuing *adventure*.<sup>64</sup> Uys filmed the picture in almost ten European countries. The logistics were a dumbfounding nightmare; official permission had to be obtained from Italy to Lichtenstein to Greece, etcetera. Filming in France, the Uys team learnt that before the image of General Charles de Gaulle could be

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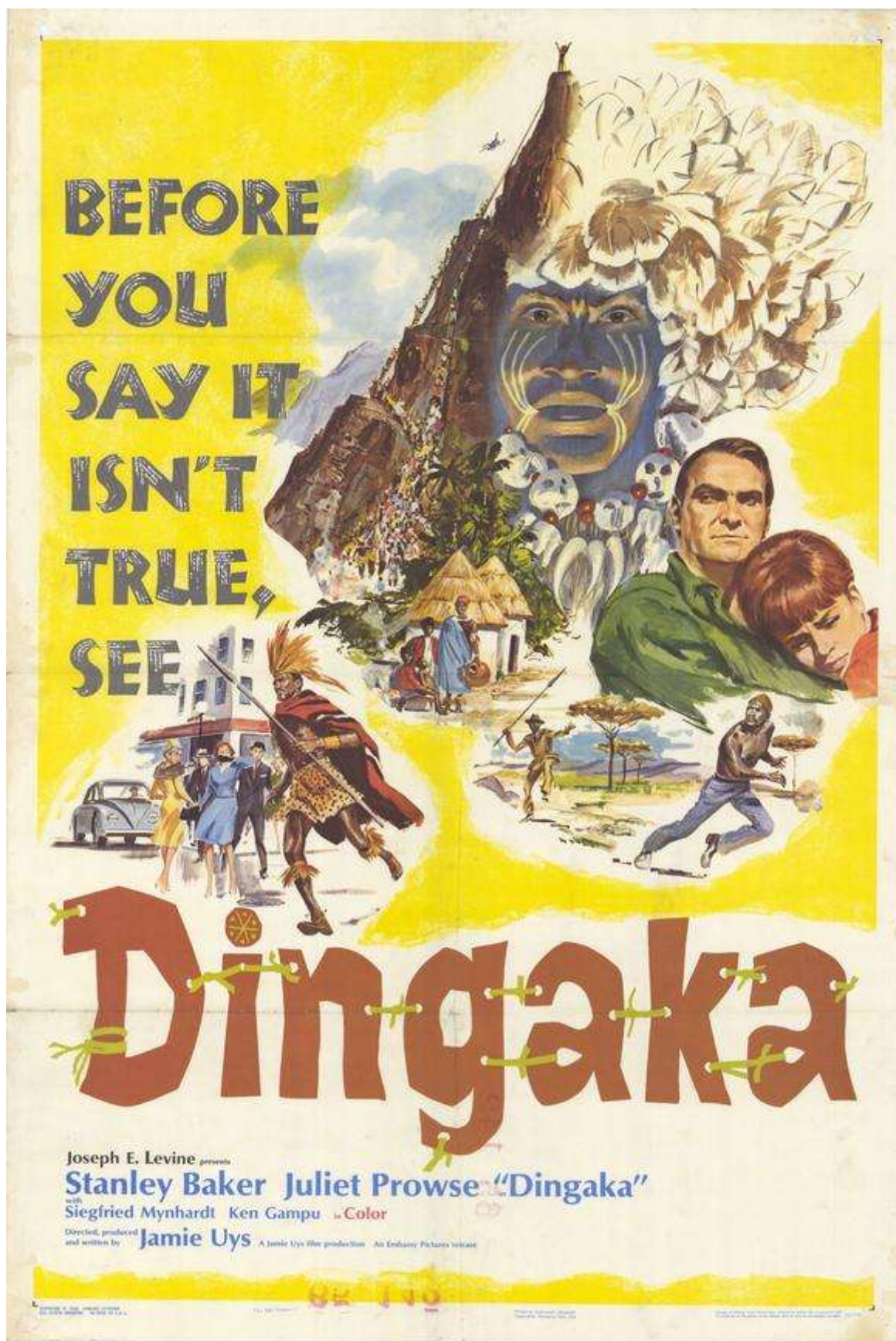
<sup>61</sup> G. Gibson. Vanjaar vra ons filmgeskenke van..., *Dagbreek en Sondagnuus*, 1967-12-24, s.p. S. Joubert, Blink publisiteit, maar baie kon nie skyn nie, *Die Vaderland*, 1968-12-07, p. 4. *Mimosa Films*. Private Archive. Jamie Uys Biographical Document.

<sup>62</sup> Anon. Jamie Uys: film maker and entertainer, *To The Point*, 1980-11-17, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> J. Uys. *All The Way To Paris / After You Comrade*. 1966. Copyright: M-Net.

<sup>64</sup> J. Uys. *All The Way To Paris / After You Comrade*. 1966. Copyright: M-Net.





reproduced in a film (as this script called for) it had to be approved by Paris. Somehow the French President got hold of the script. The presidential offices contacted Uys: General Charles de Gaulle would star as General Charles de Gaulle. In the movie the French legend as well as Prime Minister Georges Pompidou star as themselves.<sup>65</sup> Production costs were recovered from the South African box office while it made R200 000 internationally.<sup>66</sup>

Elmo de Witt directed *Debbie* for Jamie Uys Films. Based on the book, *Groen Koring*, by Tryna du Toit it tells of an unwed teenage girl that falls pregnant. The film caused a ruckus as the censors slammed it with a 2-21 age restriction.<sup>67</sup> Uys convinced the public and the authorities that the picture was harmless; the age restriction was subsequently lessened.<sup>68</sup>

### **And cut: Jamie Uys leaves Jamie Uys Films**

While Uys was making or overseeing one after the other hit of Jamie Uys Films a rift was brewing between him and his board. He was fed-up with the board's insistence that movies be churned out as if it was a factory; longing for thorough and intimate processes, guaranteeing not only box offices successes but high quality. Jans Rautenbach and Emil Nofal had left to make their own brand of films, leaving Uys with more pressure to *produce the goods*, and in quick succession. The board was unimpressed that he had made *All The Way To Paris* – an expensive third remake of *50-50*. Uys was increasingly upset by the pictures the company was releasing, per implication, under his name – especially *Debbie*.

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<sup>65</sup> J. Uys. *All The Way To Paris / After You Comrade*. 1966. Copyright: M-Net. A. le Roux and L. Fourie, *Filmverlede* (Pretoria, 1982), p.84. Mimosa Films: Private Archive: Jamie Uys Biographical Document.

<sup>66</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive: Condensed Chronology.

<sup>67</sup> E. de Witt. *Debbie*. 1965. M-Net.

<sup>68</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Jamie Uys Biographical Document.

These were just some of the factors that prompted Uys to resign from his own production company (with the entire staff following suit). As he exited in 1966, Uys demanded that the company drop his name and so Kavalier Films was born.<sup>69</sup>

In the next three decades, Jamie Uys and his new partners, Boet Troskie and his Mimosa Films, would create the most successful films to come from South Africa – ever.\*

### **That's a wrap: Conclusion**

In the period under discussion Jamie Uys, having struggled to make his first picture, became of South Africa's most productive and prominently popular film makers overnight. In itself his original stories and unique cinematic storytelling contributed to the cultural treasure trove of South Africa. In these troublesome but ground-breaking decades he honed his technical expertise and sharpened his creative abilities – *pioneering a foundation*. With every Uys movie came an increase in the diversity and quality of local films. His contributions and impact almost speak for itself. After joining Mimosa Films, Uys would draw on these pioneering years (both creatively and technically) to make films of global acclaim and worldwide popularity.

He discovered and / or trained some of the country's best and / or best known actors and film makers, including Ken Gampu, Jans Rautenbach, Emil Nofal and Elmo de Witt. He staked a claim for the Afrikaans speakers in a predominantly English-dominated establishment. Furthermore, Uys' films inadvertently

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<sup>69</sup> S. Joubert. Die laaste vier jaar was vol intrige, *Die Vaderland*, 1968-12-14, s.p. A. Van Zyl. Jamie, 'n wenner wat waag, *Die Volksblad*, 1985-06-21, p. 19. Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: The Gods Must Be Crazy. Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Condensed Chronology.

\* Uys' thirty years with dr. Boet Troskie's Mimosa Films will be dealt with in a follow-up article: *Sage and Screen*.

promoted Afrikaans as cinematic language. Having been the first to sell a South African movie (an Afrikaans one at that) abroad, proved that although the locals could not compete with Hollywood's budgets, its stories were unique enough to attract international audiences. His own international productions proved that the country's small film industry could facilitate international productions with professional acumen. As documentary maker<sup>#</sup> he developed the art locally with international success.

The film maker was responsible for Pretoria's subsidising local films and as such was responsible for the acceleration in the development of the local film industry. Together with Jamie Uys Films, he was responsible for drawing mainstream corporations (specifically Afrikaner-dominated consortiums) into the film world.

Jamie Uys' favourite theme in this period was tossing together conflicting cultures (in most cases the Afrikaners/English) in impossible scenarios. Side-by-side in bioscopes across South Africa he succeeded in the bringing together of (antagonistic) peoples. They laughed at each other – and at themselves; proving the power of film (more specifically, humour) in bridging socio-political disparity. As far as film making was concerned, by 1966 Jamie Uys was the local *Sangoma of the silver screen*. In the next decades he would become South Africa's *sage of the silver screen*.

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<sup>#</sup> Constraints on space prohibited even a thorough list of all his works.



*Sage  
and  
screen*

*The Mimosa  
Films Phase  
1966-1996*

## *Sage and screen*<sup>Ⓟ</sup>

### **Jamie Uys: Film maker**

### **The Mimosa Films phase, 1966-1996<sup>\*</sup>**

Jan-Ad Stemmet

University of the Free State, Department of History, Nelson Mandela Avenue,  
Bloemfontein.

Jamie Uys. Mimosa Films. *Dirkie: Lost in the desert. Beautiful People. Funny People. The Gods Must Be Crazy.*

### **Silwerdoek wysgeer. Jamie Uys: Filmmaker. Die Mimosa Films fase, 1966-1996.**

In his career of almost fifty years Jamie Uys made more than forty pictures – feature films, short films and documentaries. Most of his works appeared before he joined Mimosa Films. Between 1950 and 1966 he more-or-less released a film a year. Although this quick pace developed his film making abilities tremendously, Uys detested churning out films just to stay afloat. He longed for the safety and security to make movies meticulously. During his Mimosa Films-phase (1966-1996) he made only seven feature films. His Mimosa-pictures took longer and cost more to make than anything he has ever done. All his films in this period were extraordinary critical and commercial triumphs. Of his six features five would achieve sensational international success on a scale unprecedented in the film history of South Africa. His *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1980) remains the single

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<sup>Ⓟ</sup> “*Sangoma of the silverscreen*. Jamie Uys: Film maker. Pioneering a foundation, 1950-1966” examines Uys’ earlier career.

<sup>\*</sup> With absolute gratitude: Dr Boet Troskie (founder: Mimosa Films) and mrs. Mireschen Troskie-Marx (board member: Mimosa Films) for their gracious co-operation.

most successful film to ever have come from Africa. The article will chronicle the period 1966-1996 (whilst scriptwriting Uys passed away in 1996). During the last thirty years of his life the filmmaker reached his creative and professional apex. In a time when South African television was blooming and as a result the local film industry was waning he made South African (cinematic) history. The article does not intend an in-depth critique of Uys' works. It will explore the film maker's creative and professional challenges and processes in making his landmark contributions to South Africa's (cinematic) cultural history. Jamie Uys was an intensely private individual. No (auto)biographies, history books, or academic theses, dealing specifically with Uys, have ever been published. The writer was forced to focus on newspaper and magazine clippings. Mimosa Films allowed access to its private archive and historic folders.

### **An ace called Uys and the men from Mimosa: Mimosa Films.**

The tiny production team of nine 9, with only the hint of a budget, filmed seven days a week, night and day, winter and summer (without the luxury of sets and studios) to make *Die Wonderwêreld van Kammie Kamfer* (The Wonderful World of Kammie Kamfer). Al Debbo, Afrikaans all-round entertainer from yesteryear, was in charge. It was one of his many movies and the first film from the Free State's Mimosa Films. Boet Troskie, a young Bloemfontein businessman who dealt in vehicles, had seen Debbo's *Donker Afrika* (Dark Africa) and at a variety show starring Debbo asked him why he didn't make movies any longer. Financing was the problem. In fact he had a script (by seasoned actor Gert van den Bergh) at hand but no backing.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: Mimosa se 21 jaar. Topic: Die Wonderwêreld van Kammie Kamfer.



“When Al said to me that it cost almost R60 000 to make a film, I nearly fell on my back. Nonetheless the next day we put our heads together and formed Mimosa Films,” recalled Boet Troskie when, in 1964, he and his brother, Bill Troskie, founded their film company. While the brothers from Bloemfontein were developing their first production, the country’s foremost movie-man, having left his own production house, was a *professional bachelor*: Jamie Uys. The Troskie’s knew Gilbert Gibson who had collaborated with Uys.

Boet Troskie asked and later pleaded with an uncertain Gibson to arrange a meeting. “They just pitched up at my house,” Uys recollected, “They said they’d made one movie with Al Debbo and wouldn’t I like to join them. It so happened that at that time I was a bit fed up with my distributors [Jamie Uys Films] because they took over my name and put some funny things under its banner. So a week later I phoned them and said OK.”<sup>71</sup> The country’s youngest production house and the country’s most prominent film maker had teamed-up. In 1966 Uys became a director of Mimosa Films. Their collaboration spanned 30 years, during which time they would create the most successful films in South African history – there was never anything like a written agreement between Troskie and Jamie Uys. It was all based on trust and comradeship. The, unwritten, agreement was staggeringly simple. The film maker must make films; the businessman will take care of business. Uys was given the creative safety and financial security to just focus on his storytelling. He was arguably the only film maker of all time to work without a narrowly set budget or timescale. “I’ll never forget those years when I had to make films and agonize over the business side, raising money, paying wages,” said Uys, “[Now] I make the films, they [Mimosa Films] look after the

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<sup>71</sup> Mimosa Films: Private Archive: Jamie Uys Biographical Document.



money.”<sup>72</sup> The Uys-Mimosa Films alliance kicked off with a double dose: A feature film and a documentary.

*Three Wise Men* (1967) centered on how three intrinsically different blind South Africans viewed their respective worlds. The original short film was shown in bioscopes in America’s major cities (1968) with critical and popular acclaim and was then re-edited by Uys to a 14-minute TV-insert which was screened across the U.S.A. (within a single year, it was broadcasted by various American TV-stations more than 4 000 times.). Uys was suddenly regarded by America as *master of the short*. Only in 1980 was it withdrawn from circulation.<sup>73</sup>

### **Uys’ angels: *Die Professor en die Prikkelpop*.**

Uys wanted three months off to do anything that had absolutely nothing to do with movies. After three weeks he was bored and abruptly started scriptwriting. The idea for the movie, the first with Mimosa Films, had lingered in his imagination for some 8 years. He had been a judge once at a beauty pageant at Springs and the experience had stayed with him.<sup>74</sup> *Die Professor en*

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<sup>72</sup> Mimosa Films: Private Archive: Jamie Uys Biographical Document. K. Sutton. Film game paying off, *Eastern Province Herald*, 1983-05-06, s.p. W. de Bruin, Jamie Uys se sort is maar dun gesaai, *Die Burger*, 1983-04-23, s.p.

<sup>73</sup> Anon. Uys film turns up trumps in America, *The Friend*, 1968-07-25, s.p. Anon. Wise me na U.S. hit, *The Star*, 1968-07-23, s.p. Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Condensed Chronology.

<sup>74</sup> Anon. Jamie Uys soek S.A. se twaalf mooistes, *Die Vaderland*, 1966-09-03, s.p. Anon. Rus?...Jamie Uys soek al weer mooi meisies, *Die Beeld*, 1966-09-18, s.p.



*die Prikkelpop* (also released as *The Professor and the Beauty Queen*) released in 1967, revolved around a beauty pageant. A contestant's gangster-boyfriend tries to make sure his *dame* will win – no matter the cost. One of the judges (Uys), a rather disorientated professor and single father to a little boy (Uys' son Wynand Uys), gets mixed up with the pageant's dangerous (and funny) intrigues.<sup>75</sup>

The Troskie-team had a masterful publicity plan. Mimosa Films arranged with newspapers throughout South Africa to hold beauty competitions. Twelve winners – picked by the film maestro himself – would star as the contestants in the film. The papers loved the idea and hundreds upon hundreds of hopeful starlets entered. Uys crisscrossed the whole country a few times screen-testing the beautiful hopefuls.<sup>76</sup> (In the process he discovered Tiny de Lange whose onscreen beauty would mesmerize South Africans.) For the theme song Uys had to choose from eight possibilities. Kobus 'Dopper' Erasmus wrote *Timothy* (performed by *Four Jacks and a Jill* and sang, in the picture, by Carike Keuzenkamp; launching her career with a bang) which was a local phenomena and an international hit. Making R250 000 in three months, Uys' only picture focusing specifically on the fairer sex was a winner.<sup>77</sup> Never work with animals or children, the old Hollywood adage goes. In his next film, Uys was going to do both.

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<sup>75</sup> J. Uys. *Die Professor en die Prikkelpop*. 1967. Copyright: Mimosa Films.

<sup>76</sup> G. Gibson. Mooi nooiens vir Jamie en puik rolprente wat S.A. uitbeeld, *Die Landstem*, 1966-12-28, s.p. Anon. Jamie Uys soek S.A. se twaalf mooistes, *Die Vaderland*, 1966-09-03, s.p. Anon. Rus?...Jamie Uys soek al weer mooi meisies, *Die Beeld*, 1966-09-18, s.p. Anon. Uys is on look-out for tars, *Natal Daily News*, 1966-12-09, s.p. G. De Kock, Die Landstem keer nooiens aan vir Jamie Uys, *Die Landstem*, 1967-01-04, s.p.

<sup>77</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: Die Professor en die Prikkelpop.



### **A lost boy and a new kind of fame: *Dirkie*.**

In some way or another each one of Uys' Mimosa pictures sparked the next one. The film maker was flying to Namibia to promote *Die Professor en die Prikkelpop* when he became totally hypnotized by the sprawling red dunes of the desert. As a seasoned cinematic storyteller he realized that, in spite of its majesty, on its own audiences would enjoy images of dunes for a few moments only. He had read of a plane crash in which only a small child had survived.<sup>78</sup> Uys' script told of a sickly boy (Wynand Uys<sup>\*</sup>) that is sent by his pianist father (Jamie Uys) to a dryer climate. The plane, carrying the boy, crashes; he and his doggy is lost in the Namib-desert. The father frantically searches for him...<sup>79</sup> Initially entitled *The Fallen Sparrow*, Uys later decided on *Dirkie* (the English version was released as *Lost In The Dessert*).<sup>80</sup> *Dirkie's* story might have been a simple premise but the production was a grueling epic.<sup>#</sup> Most directors that have filmed in the Namib usually did not venture away from the beaten track but said Uys "we are going to film at even the most inaccessible places." Uys and Mimosa negotiated permission to film at places that are legally off-limits to the public; including parts of Namibia's confined diamond-zone. Uys travelled thousands of miles across Namibia, first by car and then plane, location-scouting.<sup>81</sup> Then the cinematic endurance-race started.

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<sup>78</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: *Dirkie*.

<sup>\*</sup> Wynand Uys, Jamie Uys' youngest, starred in *Die Professor en die Prikkelpop*. He was such a success that Uys decided to cast the eight year old, in the title role of *Dirkie*. "All children under the age of ten are natural actors...It is the adults who are sometimes difficult to direct," the director said. Anon. New film part for schoolboy, *Star*, 1968-05-09, s.p.

<sup>79</sup> J. Uys. *Dirkie*. 1969. Copyright: Mimosa Films.

<sup>80</sup> Anon. Jamie Uys kom maak rolprent in Namib, *Namib Times*, 1968- 04-19, s.p.

<sup>#</sup> Apart from the difficulties in filming in a dessert, what made the picture even more of a feat was that it was filmed twice. Once in Afrikaans. Once in English. Anon. Gaan eentalige rolprente maak, *Rustenburg Herald*, 1968-08-02, s.p.

<sup>81</sup> Anon. Jamie Uys begin werk aan nuwe film, *Victoria West Messenger*, 1968-08-2, s.p. Anon, Jamie Uys begin werk aan nuwe film, *Richmond Era*, 1968-08-02, s.p.

Actual filming stretched from the Kalahari-gemsbok Park to Etosha to Windhoek to Walvisbay, Rehoboth and the restricted diamond zone. The Uys-team would drive 11 000 kilometers in the wilds to make the picture. Challenges abounded: The R250 000-budget didn't allow for a glamorous safari – it was *boendoe bashing* all the way. They would camp far away from civilization (and sometimes water) which made planning for the production an intricate operation. Once a week a plane brought provisions from Windhoek, otherwise the film makers were on their own. The small crew, 11 whites and 5 blacks, had to obey food and water rations. Temperatures were extremists: The nights icy; the days hellish. Only a small window of time existed for optimum filming. Tents, equipment, notes and supplies were constantly blown away by dessert winds. They tented in the Namib wilderness amidst roaming beasts.<sup>@</sup>

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<sup>@</sup> The wild was wild: Once a lion almost devoured Wynand Uys and on another occasion (left alone as his dad shot aerial shots of him) he really did get lost in the desert. Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: Dirkie (4).

**Dirkie ... su Perro...  
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© LOST IN THE DESERT

Animals used in the film, ranging from a leopard to a hyena to a baboon to snakes and scorpions, an Alsatian and 'Dirkie's' pet Cairn-terrier had to be tended to as well.<sup>82</sup> These animals were tamed but not trained which complicated the film making.<sup>^</sup> Furthermore Jamie Uys suffered from a unique medical condition. Intense heat made his lips burst into a (painful) bloody mesh. When Uys (lead actor / scriptwriter / director / principal cameraman) became incapacitated the production stopped, sending costs soaring.<sup>83</sup> Dawid, a local Toppenaar, played a Koi San. He had never even seen a movie, which supplied more headaches.<sup>84</sup> Uys needed an indigenous child to play a part in the movie. Remembering an old legend, the secluded local tribes were convinced "the white one" wanted to buy their kids as slaves. After gentle negotiations (as well as a change of filming-location) the director acquired his *actress*.<sup>85</sup> Nonetheless the two most treacherous challenges facing Uys were: Dunes. Sand.

"At night he has nightmares about those footprints," a concerned Hettie Uys mentioned.<sup>86</sup> The red dunes (the film's muse) were nightmarish. The boy was supposedly alone in the desert. When a *dune-shot* (towering things in the Namib) demanded a retake a different *virgin dune* without inerasable footprints had to be found.<sup>87</sup> Secondly the fine dessert sand got into the cameras. It took only a few

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<sup>82</sup> M. Pienaar. Die keer is Lettie se kombuis in die woestyn, *Landstem*, 1968-10-20, s.p. Anon. 'Nuwe' Uys-trek van 7000 myl deur wildernis, *Die Vaderland*, 1968-09-11, s.p. Mimosa Films. Private archive: Condensed Chronology.

<sup>^</sup> The hyena once almost killed the Alsatian; the baboon bit an actress; one dog almost devoured the snake it was supposed to be terrified of; Lollie, Dirkie's terrier, one night took off over the dunes. Anon. Dog and hyena in real fight – Jamie Uys film, *Namib Times*, 1968-10-25, s.p. Anon. Doggone! – Almost, *Windhoek Advertiser*, 1968-10-28, s.p. Anon. Bit off a bit too much, *Cape Argus*, 1968-10-30, s.p.

<sup>83</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Biographical Document: Jamie Uys.

<sup>84</sup> Anon. Filmster Dawid weet nie wat 'n rolprent is nie, *Caledon Venster*, 1969-01-10, p. 5.

<sup>85</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: Dirkie. Topic: Namib.

<sup>86</sup> Anon. Dirkie se mense kry swaar in Namib, *Die Oosterlig*, 1968-10-18, s.p.

<sup>87</sup> P. Breytenbach. Die filmavontuur in die Namib, *Die Transvaler*, 1968-10-19, s.p. Anon. Dirkie se mense kry swaar in Namib, *Die Oosterlig*, 1968-10-18, s.p.



sand particles to obliterate the delicate film. Uys could not evaluate the filmed material in the desert. The film was flown from Namibia to London where it was developed by Eastman / Technicolor. Only back in Johannesburg could he see the material (making editing a nightmare.) If it was damaged or Uys was unhappy with a scene, the whole production team had to again to trek back and reshoot; prolonging production and wrecking the budget.<sup>88</sup> After long last – and a lot of public anticipation and speculation – *Dirkie* (Lost In The Desert) was released in 1969. It was far more than successful: It set South African box office records. The 13 prints Mimosa Films had made were not nearly enough which meant Mimosa-officials rushing across the country to deliver copies. Boet Troskie and Mimosa Films brokered a masterful deal for *Dirkie's* international distribution with the Columbia Pictures Corporation that screened it in most countries on earth with tremendous success\*, putting Uys squarely on the international studios' radar. In between making *Dirkie*, Uys created two short films, commissioned by the Department of Information for international showing. *Marching to Pretoria* (1969) looked at the country's administrative capitol.<sup>89</sup> *The Great Adjustment* (1969) showed how man and animal co-existed.<sup>90</sup> Animals were his next feature's theme. Uys believed that *Dirkie* would be his most murderous picture ever – but his next one almost killed him.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: Dirkie. Topic: Namib.

\* The picture was also crytically acclaimed, awards include a prize from the 1972 Teheran Film Festival. Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Jamie Uys: List of awards.

<sup>89</sup> J. Uys. *Marching To Pretoria*. 1969. Copyright: Mimosa Films.

<sup>90</sup> J. Uys. *The Great Adjustment*. 1969. Copyright: Mimosa Films.

<sup>91</sup> Mimosa Films. Private Archive. Folder: Dirkie. Topic: Release.

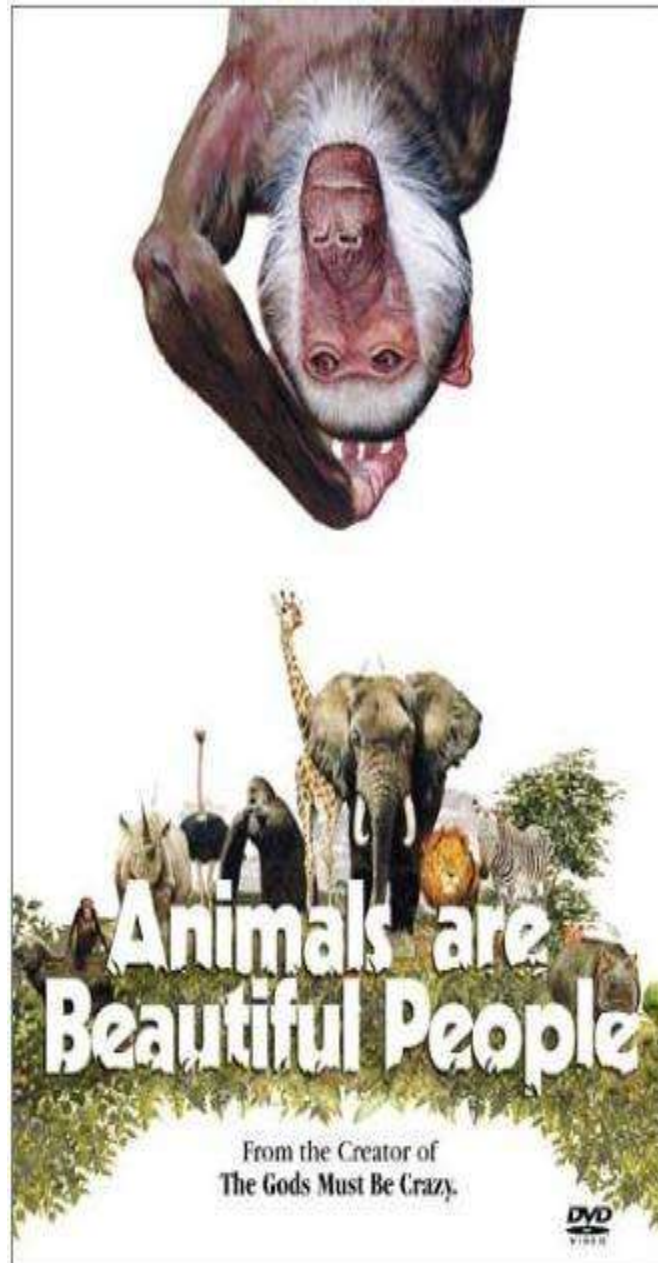
**Only human: *Beautiful People*.**

After the overseas breakthrough with *Dirkie*, Hollywood wanted another Uys-picture. While filming *Dirkie* in Namibia Uys was mesmerized with the desert's fauna and flora. He was to make a full-length feature film about it: No humans.<sup>r</sup> No dialogue. But a cast of thousands. Although styled like a nature documentary *Beautiful People* was an epic feature. Uys revealed Southern Africa's fauna and flora as a lush-dried paradise. He was to *capture* a rainbow of trees, plants, flowers and seeds to birds to fish and insects and reptiles as well as herbivores and carnivores plus his beloved desert in an unimaginable way. *Beautiful People* showed how the wild kingdom and the human world mirrored each other. Part comedy, part drama, part adventure, part tragedy, part romance, part action, part educational – the picture, essentially, was a combination of all genres.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>r</sup> Apart from a few clever Koi San folks.

<sup>92</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Biographical document: Jamie Uys. J. Uys. *Beautiful People*. 1974. Copyright: Mimosa Films.



The most grueling production of his career of almost 50 years, *Beautiful People* was beset with practical impossibilities.<sup>†</sup> The regions Uys wanted to cinematically-explore morphed with the slightest change in the weather – never mind seasons. Nature cannot be hurried; the film maker simply had to wait, film and wait again. The wild is wild: a missed *shot* were lost forever. Furthermore he wanted to capture Southern Africa's natural world almost in its entirety, a rather far-fetched ambition for a man who preferred to work alone. As chief cinematographer, over three years, he traveled about 200 000km throughout the Kalahari, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe.<sup>93</sup> "In spite of the heat, rain, tsetse flies and humidity it was fun for the most of the time," said Uys, "Each change in the weather brought out different animals for me to look at, study and film."<sup>94</sup> In the end he had an astounding 804 672m of film – he was personally going to edit it to 3 000m. Nonstop for 18 months Uys, jetting between his Johannesburg studios and California, edited the labyrinth of film; the overzealousness resulted in cardiac arrest. Rina Venter, from Mimosa Films, said: "He's overextended and moreover he's doing everything himself."<sup>95</sup> Dr. Boet Troskie, backed by Hollywood, managed a million-dollar production (South Africa's first) which was quickly depleted by a drawn out production. The Americans demanded a film or the money. With the one-man movie-maestro in intensive care, the picture had the potential to kill Uys and massacre Mimosa Films. Dr. Troskie persevered and Uys made a miraculously

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<sup>†</sup> While *Beautiful People* was in the making, Dr. Troskie commissioned Daan Retief to compile *Jamie21*. It was a celebration of Uys' career, showing scenes from all his pictures. It ended with a few minutes from Uys' unreleased *animal-movie*. A. le Roux and L. Fourie, *Filmverlede* (Pretoria, 1982), p.142.

<sup>93</sup> Anon. Jamie finds the beautiful people, *Showbiz*, vol. 1, no. 7, 1973, p.45. Anon. Prestasie vir S.A. filmmaker, *Die Volksblad*, 1974-02-19, s.p. Anon. They are such beautiful people, *The Friend*, 1974-02-15, s.p. Anon. Uys fell in love with these Beautiful People, *Mossel Bay Advertiser*, 1974-03-29, p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> J. Keil. Jamie's labour of love, *Rand Daily Mail*, 1974-02-18, p.10.

<sup>95</sup> Anon, Jamie se hart lol, *Die Oosterlig*, 1972-03-1972, s.p. Anon. Jamie Uys ongesteld, *Suidwes Afrikaner*, s.p. Mimosa Films. Private archive. Biographical document: Jamie Uys.

quick recovery.<sup>96</sup> Uys again tackled the picture. The film was presented to experts to explain the animals' behavior and if "they could not tell me I would work it out for myself."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Biographical document: Jamie Uys.

<sup>97</sup> J. Keil. Jamie's labour of love, *Rand Daily Mail*, 1974-02-18, p.10.



Next Uys had to write an absorbing commentary with which to tie-up the, give-or-take, 40 sequences.<sup>▲98</sup> Four years in the making, the feature's success (locally and internationally) was – to say the least – unprecedented.

*Beautiful People* wasn't merely a huge success: By 1975 more than 3 000 000 had seen the picture – more than the country's entire white population. Locally the picture was fast going to make more than R3 000 000. At just one South African bioscope it sold more tickets than an average Afrikaans movie grosses nationally. In November 1974 *Variety*, Hollywood's *daily gospel*, stated: "Beautiful People is an extraordinary African nature documentary, one of the finest examples of its kind and told with a singleness of purpose..."<sup>99</sup> When just released in the USA, its popularity was fantastic: Within three weeks it made \$525 000 in Los Angeles; Dallas \$450 000. In Hong Kong the film (permanently sold out) caused havoc. Large crowds waited (im)patiently for hours to get tickets. In Bangkok – in 48 hours – it had set an attendance record. At three Tokyo theatres, within 84 days, it made more than (US) \$965 000; within 33 days Hong Kong's seven bioscopes sold tickets worth (USA) \$618 905 – eventually making twice as much as the legendary *Star Wars*. Across South America the movie was thrashing records.<sup>100</sup> By 1980 the film had earned some (US) \$15 000 000. In the same year dr. Troskie sold its TV-rights to the giant American network, NBC: 20 000 000 Americans

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▲ Uys' epic had even made news in Hollywood. Bob Hope – that American legend – wanted to narrate the picture. Uys decided that the animals would be the only *big stars* in his film. P. Breytenbach. Jamie loer by Yanks vir filmagtergrond, *Die Transvaler*, 1981-08-19, s.p.

<sup>98</sup> Anon. Jamie finds the beautiful people, *Showbiz*, vol. 1, no. 7, 1973, p.45. Anon. Prestasie vir S.A. filmmaker, *Die Volksblad*, 1974-02-19, s.p. Anon. They are such beautiful people, *The Friend*, 1974-02-15, s.p. Anon. Uys fell in love with these Beautiful People, *Mossel Bay Advertiser*, 1974-03-29, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> Anon. Beautiful People, *Variety*, 1974-11-27, s.p.

<sup>100</sup> Anon. Beautiful People verbyster met sy syfers, *Rapport-Tydskrif*, 1975-09-28, s.p. Anon. Top grosses 'Beautiful People,' *SA Film Weekly*, vol. 14, no. 34, 1975-09-11, p. 1. P. Breytenbach. Jamie Uys se dieretrefte in R2,6 milj., *Die Transvaler*, 1974-09-30, s.p.

watched it in one broadcast.<sup>101</sup> In 2009 the film, bought by Warner Bros., is still shown on television worldwide.<sup>102</sup> Awards proliferated – including America’s coveted Golden Globe for best documentary.<sup>103</sup> Uys was developing a long cherished story about a Coke-bottle, when almost in the spur of the moment he made one of his most successful films.

### **Monkey business: *Funny People*.**

“Actually I had my crew just film a couple of comical shots to keep them busy after we had completed *Beautiful People*,” explained Uys, “When I saw the result, we just left everything and started to work on what would later become *Funny People*.”<sup>104</sup> Uys first saw hidden camera-comedies, showing ordinary citizens’ reactions to extraordinary situations, as a schoolboy and loved the idea.<sup>105</sup> “It’s fascinating to see how people reveal their personalities in moments of stress,” said Uys.<sup>106</sup> He experimented with the concept while making the 1969-short *Marching To Pretoria*.<sup>107</sup> Dr. Troskie flew to New York to meet with Allan Funt, legendary creator of *Candid Camera*, to negotiate permission to use the premise.<sup>108</sup> The Uys-team compiled a list of almost a hundred sequences from which they chose about 50 to stage. The scenarios had to be planned with precision catching humorous reactions meant precise timing; camouflaging the

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<sup>101</sup> Studios offered dr. Troskie fortunes for the unused film-material. K. van Rensburg. Jamie se Funny People vol snaakse mense, *Hoofstad*, 1976-03-25, p. 35.

<sup>102</sup> Anon. Twintig miljoen in VSA sien Beautiful People, *Die Volksblad*, 1980-07-11, s.p.

<sup>103</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Jamie Uys: List of films.

<sup>104</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Jamie Uys: List of awards.

<sup>105</sup> Anon. Funny People het uit oefening ontstaan, *Die Volksblad*, 1976-04-01, s.p.

<sup>106</sup> Anon. Jamie Uys in Kaapstad vir Funny People, *Die Burger*, 1976-03-27, s.p.

<sup>107</sup> A.Ferreira. Jamie Uys, *Cape Argus*, 1976-03-30, s.p.

<sup>108</sup> J. Uys. *Marching To Pretoria*. 1969. Copyright: Mimosa Films.

<sup>109</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Condensed chronology.



cameras and microphones were also tricky. Filming, across the country, took 18 months. They hilariously *snared* hundreds of South Africans of all ages and races. Uys then sat with 5 hours of usable material which had to be edited into a 90 minute picture, taking him 6 months.<sup>109</sup> *Funny People* (1976)<sup>110</sup> was to break the record-breaking *Beautiful People*'s historic records.

Uys personally took the picture for its first screening, March 1976, to thousands of South African troops stationed in Grootfontein, Namibia, and the next day showed it to (almost) all South Africa's parliamentarians including State President Nico Diederichs, Prime Minister John Vorster and a full cabinet – the stern politicians cried with laughter.<sup>111</sup> Public anticipation for South Africa's first hidden camera-film was ablaze. Nationwide theatres were sold out for days – before its release. In some cities all sessions were sold out weeks in advance. In its first week alone, grossing about R250 000, one in every 19 white South Africans had bought a ticket.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> K. van Rensburg. Jamie se Funny People vol snaakse mense, *Hoofstad*, 1976-03-25, p. 35. Anon. Funniest ever, *Springs & Brakpan Advertiser*, 1976-03-26, s.p. Anon. Amusing situations, *Natal Witness*, 1976-04-01, s.p. Anon. Jamie Uys' film costly to make, *Pretoria News*, 1976-05-06, s.p.

<sup>110</sup> J. Uys. *Funny People*. 1976. Copyright: Mimosa Films.

<sup>111</sup> Anon. Hulle skiet toe op Jamie, *Die Burger*, 1976-03-27, s.p. Anon. Ons soldate lag 2 uur, *Rapport*, 1976-03-28, s.p.

<sup>112</sup> R. Jarvis, Smash it even before opening, *P.E. Evening Post*, 1976-04-02, s.p. Anon. Funny People sit TV koud, *Die Oosterlig*, 1976-04-09, s.p. Anon. 'Funny People' was no joke on the pocket, *Natal Daily News*, 1976-05-10, s.p. R. Greig. 'Funny People' on way to record, *Star*, 1976-04-24, s.p.

From the director of  
"THE GODS  
MUST BE  
CRAZY I & II"



A  
Hysterical  
Film!

FUNNY  
PEOPLE

No other film had ever achieved that.<sup>113</sup> The spur-of-the-moment comedy provoked such a national circus of popularity that dr. Troskie decided to take it to the Cannes Film Festival (the global cinema industry's most important trade fair). He successfully sold the film for distribution in most countries on earth.<sup>§</sup> They bought the movie without having seen it – the name *Jamie Uys* clinched the deal.<sup>114</sup> After engulfing South Africa, once more depleting the state's film subsidy scheme, Uys' *People* annexed box offices across the world raking in millions for years to come.<sup>∩</sup><sup>115</sup> While selling *Funny People* at Cannes dr. Troskie was besieged by interest in Uys. Some of the world's largest film-financiers demanded the right to bankroll his next three productions.<sup>116</sup> Uys knew exactly what his first one was to be. Already in 1975 he hinted at "my next big picture – it takes place in the desert – will be considerably more expensive and more ambitious than *Beautiful People*."<sup>117</sup> Meanwhile, in 1976, South Africa finally, got a TV-service. Movie attendances immediately dropped with a third. In 1976 some 32 local movies were released, the next year only 18 and in 1979 only 12 and it would keep on dropping.<sup>118</sup> By 1980 Uys was one of only a handful full-time film makers in South Africa. His last three pictures each set records, surely Uys could not do it again? Whilst making *Dirkie* and *Beautiful People* he had become intrigued by the serene and wise so-called *Bushmen*. "A name I haven't got yet. It's about a white and a

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<sup>113</sup> Anon. Jamie-prent is los voor, *Rapport*, 1976-04-25, s.p.

<sup>§</sup> For international distribution Uys edited, and had dubbed, a British / European / American / Spanish version. C. Slabbert, Triomf vir SA sakevernuf, *Rapport*, 1976-05-30, s.p.

<sup>114</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Folder: Funny People. Topic: Cannes.

<sup>∩</sup> In Sweden alone it showed – uninterruptedly – for 2½ years (showing for three years in Stockholm). Mimosa Films. Private archive. Condensed chronology.

<sup>115</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Condensed chronology.

<sup>116</sup> C. Slabbert. Triomf vir SA sakevernuf, *Rapport*, 1976-04-30, s.p.

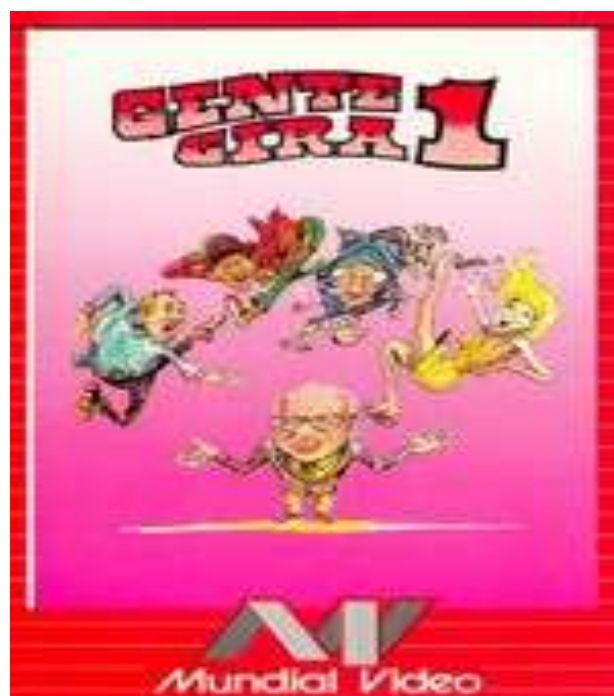
<sup>117</sup> H. Van Zyl, Van filmmaker tot filmmeester, *Die Burger*, 1975-12-03, s.p.

<sup>118</sup> G. Garden, SABC's stranglehold on the film industry, *Rand Daily Mail*, 1983-08-13, s.p. Mimosa Films. Private archive. Condensed chronology.

Bushman and will take place in Botswana...” and “It’s a bit of everything – comedy, pathos, tension...” a secretive Uys divulged.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Condensed chronology.



### **And the gods giggled: *The Gods Must Be Crazy*.**

Uys first spoke about his *Bushman*-Coke movie-idea and his fascination with these enigmatic desert people in 1976.<sup>120</sup> A pure documentary about the Khoi San, as was the case with *Beautiful People*'s red dunes, was too bland. He needed to intertwine documentary with entertainment. He returned to his cinematic genesis. Uys would use the essence of his first picture, *Daar Doer In Die Bosveld* (Deep In The Bushveld). From there other themes sprang up.<sup>121</sup> "There are only 13 000 Bushmen left in the country and I saw as many as I could find," said Uys who went on the hunt for his ideal desert hunter.<sup>122</sup> Uys drove and flew tens of thousands of kilometres searching for his undiscovered leading man. "[T]hey live over a vast area...and they don't have addresses," the film maker described, "I took 50-60 photos of prospects, marking the longitude and latitude where they were located."<sup>123</sup> Back in Johannesburg Uys had to pick one from hundreds. A lot (including a budget of millions) rode on his choice. "When I looked at the photos, one of them stood out."<sup>124</sup> The film-man said about his star's *X-factor*: "There is a word *adeldom* in Afrikaans that describes him exactly. It's sort of aristocracy...though that sounds too pompous."<sup>125</sup> Having found his star and his core storylines, Uys needed *something* to tie it all together; something ordinarily every-day that everyone will recognize. "I simply used a Coke-bottle because it is such a recognizable form," Uys spoke of his cinematic eureka-moment.

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<sup>120</sup> Anon. Uys in wolke oor drie prente vir wêreldmark, *Die Volksblad*, 1976-05-31, s.p.

<sup>121</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Jamie Uys: Biographical document.

<sup>122</sup> B. Thomas. The gods may be crazy, but Uys has his feet on the ground, *Star*, 1985-05-02, s.p.

<sup>123</sup> Anon. Uys' methods amaze US, *PE Evening Post*, 1985-05-03, s.p.

<sup>124</sup> Anon. Uys hits the top wit ha click, *Pretoria News*, 1985-05-03.

<sup>125</sup> Mimosa Films: Private archive: Folder: The Gods Must Be Crazy: 1980: N!Xau.



“When I make a film, I first work out the dance steps. The dialogue comes later.”<sup>126</sup> Uys found scriptwriting grueling but always wrote his own: “Scripts – good scripts – are rare. I would like to once film another guy’s script, but I am too full of nonsense to be pleased. Even with my own scripts the end-result is never what I had imagined when I wrote it and then I am really unhappy.”<sup>127</sup> He would write a few lines for ten or so minutes and then played scrabble or cards. He pondered every word; when finished he rarely changed anything. “There is one only way how Jamie writes scripts,” Sue Antelme, Uys’ assistant revealed, “when he works in the garden and spades for all he’s worth, I stand at his side with pen and notepad at the ready.”<sup>128</sup> The result was *The Gods Must Be Crazy: A Coke-bottle falls on a Bushman’s (N!Xau)♥ head*. The tribe believes it’s heaven sent. Soon it disrupts their serene lives. *The gods must be crazy* to have given them it... Xi abruptly walks to the end of the earth to throw it away. En route he gets mixed up with a bumbling macho man (Marius Weyers) and his love interest, a school teacher (Sandra Prinsloo). They get involved with the intrigues of a guerilla group (Louw Verwey played its leader). N!Xau’s character saves the day.<sup>129</sup> Uys’ fantastically exploited his devastating professional experience: Nutritious family fair. A uniquely simple premise (brilliantly, guaranteeing its universality). Directorial skillfulness. Overwhelming nature scenery. Documentary-making skills. Creating enduring cinematic moments. Hilarious comedy.

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<sup>126</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Jamie Uys: Biographical document

<sup>127</sup> E. Gous, Noem hom maar Jaamie of Djeimie, *Rooi Rose*, 1983-10-05, p. 68.

<sup>128</sup> Anon. Nou is dit Jamie en die Boesmans, *Rapport*, 1979-12-02, s.p.

♥ N!Xau Kganna (different versions of spelling exists) of the Zjoen-Whasie (‘the only people’) tribe. Mimosa Films. Private archive: Biographical document: Jamie Uys.

<sup>129</sup> J. Uys. *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. 1979. Copyright: Mimosa Films.



Uys, with his six 4x4s, drove 50 000km location-scouting throughout Angola, Botswana, the Kalahari, Namibia and across South Africa.<sup>130</sup> The film maker (as usual himself doing almost

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<sup>130</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Folder: *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, 1979.



everything) and his permanent technical crew of roughly six *young chaps* now embarked on creating the multi-million production. The perfectionist used young apprentices because “it does not help if the people are too smart for their own good and does not do as I say.”<sup>131</sup> Legends abound of Uys’ tenacious perseverance while making this movie.<sup>132</sup>ϕ He filmed on a scale of more than twenty to one (more than twenty takes of a single scene). He – unlike his cast and crew – apparently never got tired; whatever it took to realize his vision, he would do it (driving his team nearly bonkers). Any premise of a deadline and budget<sup>±</sup> quickly vanished.

Nobody knew when the picture would be finished or how many millions it would actually devour. Uys calmly persisted. Mimosa Films never lost faith. “I am the world’s worst to pin down to a budget and a schedule,” Uys declared, “I need complete freedom to go out and shoot.” Said his executive producer, dr. Troskie: “It is Jamie’s best yet but he has given me some headaches.” Apart from a smorgasbord of production challenges, Mimosa Films could not pre-sell the picture to overseas interests as a delivery date was impossible to set.<sup>133</sup> In May 1979 dr. Troskie took a specially edited 20 minutes-segment from the picture to show at the Cannes Film Festival. Irrespective of delivery date, the international

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<sup>131</sup> E. Rossouw, Jamie Uys maak wêreld-treffers op die ou manier, *Sarie Marais*, 1983-09-28, p.114.

ϕ Filming across Southern Africa; nature, as always, a moody actor; animals that were difficult to direct; a star that had never seen a movie in his life and that communicated only through a translator – as usual, the *ringmaster* was up against huge odds. Mimosa Films. Private archive. Folder: The Gods Must Be Crazy: 1979.

<sup>±</sup> Apart from being in the millions, the exact costs had never been verified.

<sup>133</sup> R. Hay, A nose for a winner, *Screen International*, 1980-09-27, s.p.

movie-men went wild for it – 26 countries, from Germany to Israel to Indonesia to Venezuela, offered millions for distribution rights (of the yet unfinished movie).<sup>134</sup>

By the end of December 1979 Uys had been editing *The Gods Must Be Crazy* for months on end, for 14 to 18 hours a day, without a single day's rest – in between jetting to America to polish the soundtrack. He suffered his second heart attack. He recuperated while a concerned Mimosa Films contracted a top-notch editor, from Hollywood, to assist the workaholic.<sup>135</sup> In the end Jamie Uys had slaved for his picture for 4½ years.<sup>136</sup> After one after another announcement and subsequent postponement regarding the première, *The Gods Must Be Crazy* was locally released on 8 September 1980.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Anon. Jamie-prent is klaar treffer, *Die Beeld*, 1979-05-16, s.p. Anon. Jamie does it again, *S.A. Digest*, 1979-06-01, s.p. Anon. Jamie Uys, *Die Volksblad*, 1979-12-01, s.p.

<sup>135</sup> I. Steyl, Jamie Uys' new film, *The Star*, 1980-03-07, s.p. Anon. Uit die bynes, *Die Burger*, 1980-04-05, s.p.

<sup>136</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Folder: The Gods Must Be Crazy: 1980.

<sup>137</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Folder: The Gods Must Be Crazy: 1980.



**The gods gave them  
earth,  
wind,  
fire,  
water  
...and this.**

**THE GODS MUST BE  
CRAZY**

**An epic comedy of absurd proportions.**

A TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX RELEASE  
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### **Heaven sent: An historical triumph.**

The commercial success, locally and internationally, of *The Gods Must Be Crazy* is almost impossible to summarize within a single article. It wasn't even a phenomena – it was an historical event. It took only 96 hours to break all South African box office records of all time.<sup>138</sup> Theatres squeezed in extra screenings and still couldn't accommodate the frenzy. At one Potchefstroom theatre police stood guard as people who could not buy tickets became violent.<sup>139</sup> Percy Tucker, famed chief of the booking agency Computicket, was amazed: "I have never seen such business...In Pretoria one of my switchboard operators lost her voice." Even by the second Saturday that it was on circuit 99% of all seats of all sessions – nationally – was sold out in advance.<sup>140</sup> Not only were bioscopes sold-out. Drive-in theatres were a spectacle: Outside drive-ins it was common to see throngs of people (who couldn't get tickets) standing along the fences just watching. Frustrated for not obtaining tickets in the bigger cities groups clubbed together, hired busses and travelled to neighbouring town's drive-ins.<sup>141</sup> Throughout the country the film's initial run was repeatedly extended. Even Nelson Mandela, very much still in jail, saw it.<sup>142</sup> It became the first film to make \$5 000 000 in South Africa.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> R. Christie. Jamie Uys movie packing them in, *The Argus*, 1980-09-19, s.p. Anon. 'Gods' an all time box-office champ, *Pretoria News*, 1980-10-01, s.p.

<sup>139</sup> Anon. 'n Treffer soos min, *Beeld*, 1980-09-18, s.p.

<sup>140</sup> R. Christie. Crazy? New Uys film hits the jacpot, *The Argus*, 1980-09-16, s.p. Anon. Crazy ru non Uys film, *The Daily News*, 1980-09-17, s.p.

<sup>141</sup> Anon. 'Mal gode' mania!, *Witbank News*, 1980-10-17, s.p.

<sup>142</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Folder: Mimosa Films: General: 1998.

<sup>143</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Jamie Uys: Biographical document.



Instead of selling *Funny People* to American majors for distribution, Mimosa Films itself had sold it from country to country. *The Gods Must Be Crazy* was to be circulated in the same way.



Movie: TheGodsMustBeCrazy1 DVDrip by riskman.avi

File Size: 698,76 MB

Resolution: 576x240

Duration: 01:48:49



Dr. Troskie and a small team of representatives criss-crossed the globe, more than once, with their *Coke-movie*.<sup>144</sup> They were, to say the least, successful.

Overseas its triumphs were almost breathtaking. It was one of 1981's Top Twenty most successful pictures in Spain (the King Mother saw it three times). Showing in Japan, within 12 days, it grossed \$3 000 000. By February 1982 some 450 000 Japanese had seen it. In the Tokyo bioscope where it was screened even standing room was sold. It amassed such gigantic amounts in Japan that the economic comptrollers refused the Troskie-organization to withdraw all its profits from the country. In 1983, 1 000 000 Frenchmen bought tickets – beating Steven Spielberg's *E.T.* and becoming that year's top grossing film in France. Even in the Soviet Union – where it showed illegally – it was a smash hit. In Portugal it showed, non-stop, for a year. Across ten weeks, in Montreal, it beat all Hollywood pictures' box office business. Within 7 days 1 000 000 Swedes saw it. In Malaysia it ran for 100 weeks and became the most successful film to show there – ever. In Australia it ran for more than a year. (In one Sydney bioscope paramedics were called into to help moviegoers who suffered fits from laughing hysterically. In Brisbane a psychiatrist prescribed tickets to the film for his depression-sufferers). When it finally hit New York City, in 1984, it set new records – becoming the foreign film with the longest, uninterrupted, run in the history of the *Big Apple*.

In 1985 it became the single most successful picture to be screened in Los Angeles; it showed for years in Beverly Hills. In Miami it ran for 5 months. By 1984 it was one of the most popular pictures to show in the U.S.A – nationally. By May 1986 it entered its 93<sup>rd</sup> week on the list of the top fifty grossing pictures in the

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<sup>144</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Mimosa Films: List of films.

U.S.A. *The Gods Must Be Crazy* would become the film with the longest, uninterrupted, run in the United States: of all time. From West Germany to India to New Zealand to South America, the South African picture set records. When N!Xau and Uys was invited to visit Japan and France respectively they were received in a way reserved for statesmen and super stars only.



By 1985 *The Gods Must Be Crazy* had already earned \$90 000 000. By 2001 it had grossed about R950 000 000. From 1980 to 1989 *The Gods Must Be Crazy* was – uninterrupted – screened somewhere on earth.<sup>145</sup>

Apart from millions of dollars, accolades from across the globe streamed in. This included Switzerland's Festival International du Film de Comedie pour: Grand Prix award (1981) and, in the same year, the Norwegian Film Festival's Grand Prix as well as the London Film Festival's Outstanding Film of the Year award. The 1982 French Chamrousse Grand Prix award. In 1984 the Southern California's Motion Picture Council's Golden Halo Award of Special Merit. The American, 1985, Academy of Science Fiction and Horror Films: Golden Scroll.<sup>146</sup>

The immensely popular feature was internationally released as South Africa experienced unprecedented violent political conflict waging over apartheid. Internationally the state was treated like a controversial leper. Anti-apartheid groups throughout the world, desperately, tried to brand the film as fascist propaganda with little use as people in some of the most anti-apartheid places on earth flocked to see it in record numbers. (Nigeria even boasted a Jamie Uys film club.) The film spoke for itself. N!Xau was the wise hero of the film while the so-called civilized characters were the ridiculous ones. Uys was (repeatedly) asked why he didn't make a film denouncing apartheid or at least tackling it. The film maker (repeatedly) retorted that he was in the business-of-humor and there was

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<sup>145</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Condensed chronology. Mimosa Films. Private archive. Jamie Uys: Biographical document. Mimosa Films. Private archive. Folder: The Gods Must Be Crazy: 1986.

<sup>146</sup> Mimosa Films: Private archive. Jamie Uys: List of awards.

nothing funny about *the system*.<sup>147</sup> That's exactly where the movie maestro was returning: *Funny People*.

Whilst the world wailed with laughter at the *Coke-movie*, Uys brought out *Funny People 2* (1983)<sup>148</sup>. The Uys-team compiled a hilarious picture from roughly 4 000 ordinary folks they *filmed* in (about 80) extra-ordinary situations.<sup>149</sup> Repeating his candid camera-recipe the picture was a fantastically fun hit. After its premiere on 26 October 1983, it quickly grossed staggering amounts; countrywide never-ending rows at the box-office characterized its release.<sup>150</sup> In its initial run it earned a R100 000 per day – breaking *The Gods Must Be Crazy's* local record (and as such all box office records of all pictures ever showed in South Africa up until then). Dr. Troskie sold the picture at the 1983 Milan Film Festival with tremendous success to almost twenty countries and from there it just catapulted. Like the first, the sequel was an overseas hit.<sup>151</sup> Jamie Uys was not box office gold anymore – he was pure platinum.

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<sup>147</sup> B. Bright. Apartheid is out for Jamie, *P.E. Evening Post*, 1985-05-14, s.p. Anon. Jamie Uys maak net treffers, *Republikein*, 1985-05-176, s.p. Anon. Apartheid 'verwar' Jamie Uys, *Die Burger*, 1985-05-13, s.p. Anon. Politiek nie Jamie se kos, *Die Transvaler*, 1985, 05-13, s.p. R. Rufus-Ellis. The other side of Uys, *Natal Daily News*, 1983-10-25, s.p.

<sup>148</sup> J. Uys. *Funny People 2*. 1983. Copyright: Mimosa Films.

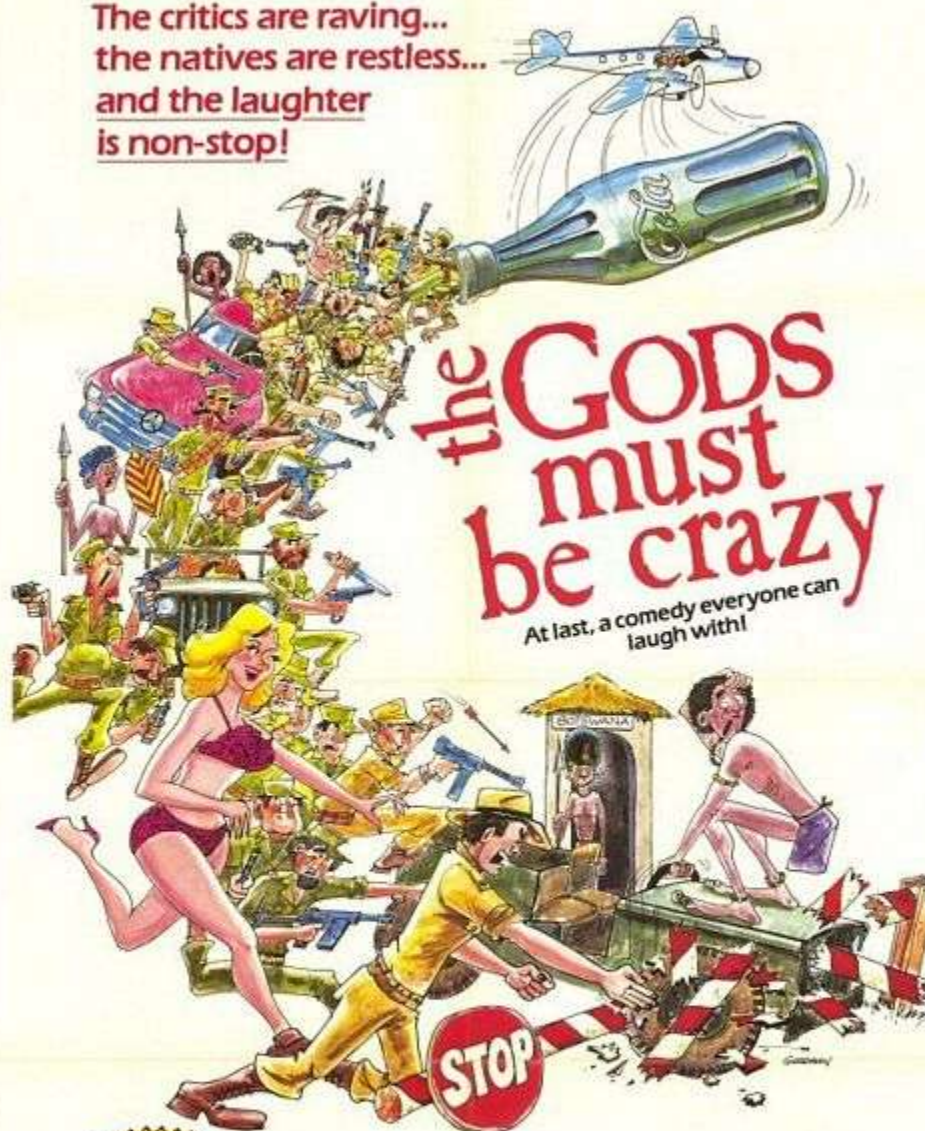
<sup>149</sup> L. du Plessis. 'Candid' boost to acting, *P.E. Herald*, 1985-09-25, s.p. Anon. Jamie lag weer, *Die Burger*, 1983-08-13, s.p.

<sup>150</sup> A. Eales. Another funny Uys winner, *P.E. Herald*, 1983-10-29, s.p. Anon. *Funny People 2*, *Pretoria News*, 1983-10-27, s.p.

<sup>151</sup> W. de Bruin. *Funny People 2* al verby halfmiljoen!, *Die Volksblad*, 1985-11-11, s.p. Anon. Mimosa-treffer laat geld instroom, *Die Volksblad*, 1983-12-12, s.p.



The critics are raving...  
the natives are restless...  
and the laughter  
is non-stop!



# the GODS must be crazy

At last, a comedy everyone can  
laugh with!

**WINNER**  
**GRAND PRIZE**  
The Seventh  
International Humor  
Film Festival.

Jensen Farley Pictures, Inc. and CAT Film Productions present  
XAO the Unknown in **THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY**

with SANDRA PRINSLOO • MARCUS WEYERS • RIC DE JAGER in the  
Sutarak Playhouse

MICHAEL THYS • LUTWY VERWEY • KEN GAMPU • SIMON SABELA

Consulting **STANFORD C. ALLEN**

Written and  
Directed by **JAMIE UYS**

Executive  
Producer **BOET TROSKIE**

Filmed in **SOUTH AFRICA**

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82003  
"THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY"

## **Heavens be praised: The Gods Must Be Crazy 2.**

By now Hollywood offered Uys heaven on earth: Budgets, production teams, cutting-edge technology and super stars – anything the South African wanted the Americans (competing for his creative/professional affections) would deliver. *Tinsel Town* was after him.<sup>152</sup> Never without an abundance of ideas, he contemplated some cherished concepts. Uys, already in 1981, wanted to reshoot his *Rip Van Wyk* (1959) as *Rip McDonald* in Las Vegas. Or possibly make a picture about a *hensopper* in the Anglo Boer War.<sup>153</sup> Nonetheless, the world's movie moguls demanded (with astronomical cash to invest) a sequel to the *Bushman-feature*. In September 1984 dr. Troskie announced that Mimosa Films was making developing a sequel to *The Gods Must Be Crazy*.<sup>+154</sup> the follow-up was far and away Uys' most expensive movie. With a budget of

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<sup>152</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive: Jamie Uys: Biographical document.

<sup>153</sup> W. De Bruin. Die gode is mal, *Kalender*, 1981-05-07, s.p. W. De Bruin. Jamie Uys se soort is maar dun gesaai, *Die Volksblad*, 1983-04-23, p. 9.

<sup>+</sup> Uys remarked that he didn't like the title, *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, and hoped to call the sequel something else. In the end name-recognition was simply too vital to use a different title. W. Richard. Uys to make sequel to 'Gods,' *E.P. Herald*, 1985-03-27, s.p.

<sup>154</sup> Anon. Gods 2 gaan eers geld maak, *Die Volksblad*, 1984-09-15, s.p.





between \$15 million and \$20 million, Uys could afford a huge production team but as always stuck with a tiny team (15) and took charge of almost all aspects.<sup>155</sup>

“In the sequel I am the equivalent of the Coke bottle which dropped from the sky...” said Lena Farugia.<sup>156</sup> Xi (N!Xau) searches for his lost children. A slick New Yorker (Farugia) and a macho nature expert (Hans Strydom) are in a plane crash and – like the Coke-bottle – drops into the wild. Meanwhile inept poachers get lost as well as two soldiers (of opposing sides.) All four stories are knotted together – with riotous results.<sup>157</sup> As dr. Troskie sold *The Gods Must Be Crazy 2* amidst tremendous worldwide interest at the 1986 Cannes Film Festival, Uys started filming the actual picture.<sup>158</sup> The expensive sequel, from concept to release, took 5 years to create; filming on a scale of 60:1. On average the production-team drove roughly 650kms between locations and throughout Southern Africa. Uys also did post-production work and optical illusions at England’s legendary Pinewood Studios.<sup>159</sup>

Two days after its release, 13 October 1989, the Uys-picture, as was the tradition, had broken all South African movie-records. By October 1989 *The Gods Must Be Crazy 2*, locally, was earning +/- R1 000 000 – per week. Once more South Africa and the world could not get enough of Uys’ fun fanfare. At the dawn of the

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<sup>155</sup> Anon. Yanks maak ‘Gods 2’, *Die Burger*, 1985-11-27, s.p.

<sup>156</sup> R. Christie. Now Lena’s set for ‘Crazy’ stardom, *Star*, 1986-08-01, s.p.

<sup>157</sup> J. Uys. *The Gods Must Be Crazy 2*. 1989. Copyright: Mimosa Films.

<sup>158</sup> J. Botha. Jamie pak weer die gode, maar sonder Goldie Hawn, *Rapport*. 1986-05-04, s.p. M. Steenkamp. Jamie raak weer Crazy, *Die Republikein*, 1986-05-13, s.p.

<sup>159</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Condensed chronology.

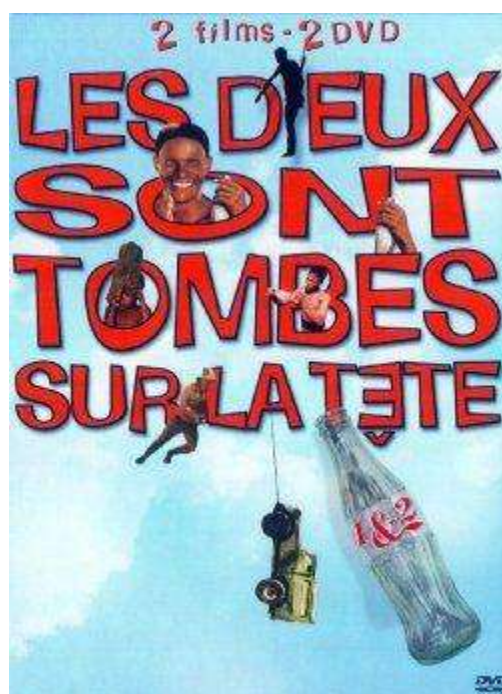
twenty first century *The Gods Must Be Crazy* 1 and 2, collective, had earned more than \$500 million (more than R5 000 000 000).<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Mimosa Films: Private archive. Folder: The Gods Must Be Crazy 2: 1989. Mimosa Films. Private archive. Jamie Uys: Biographical document.

Movie: [Tanrılar Çöldürmüp Olmalı TR. Cd-2]  
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 Resolution: 384x288  
 Duration: [00:50:34]  
 Uploader: [By\_sanalalem]



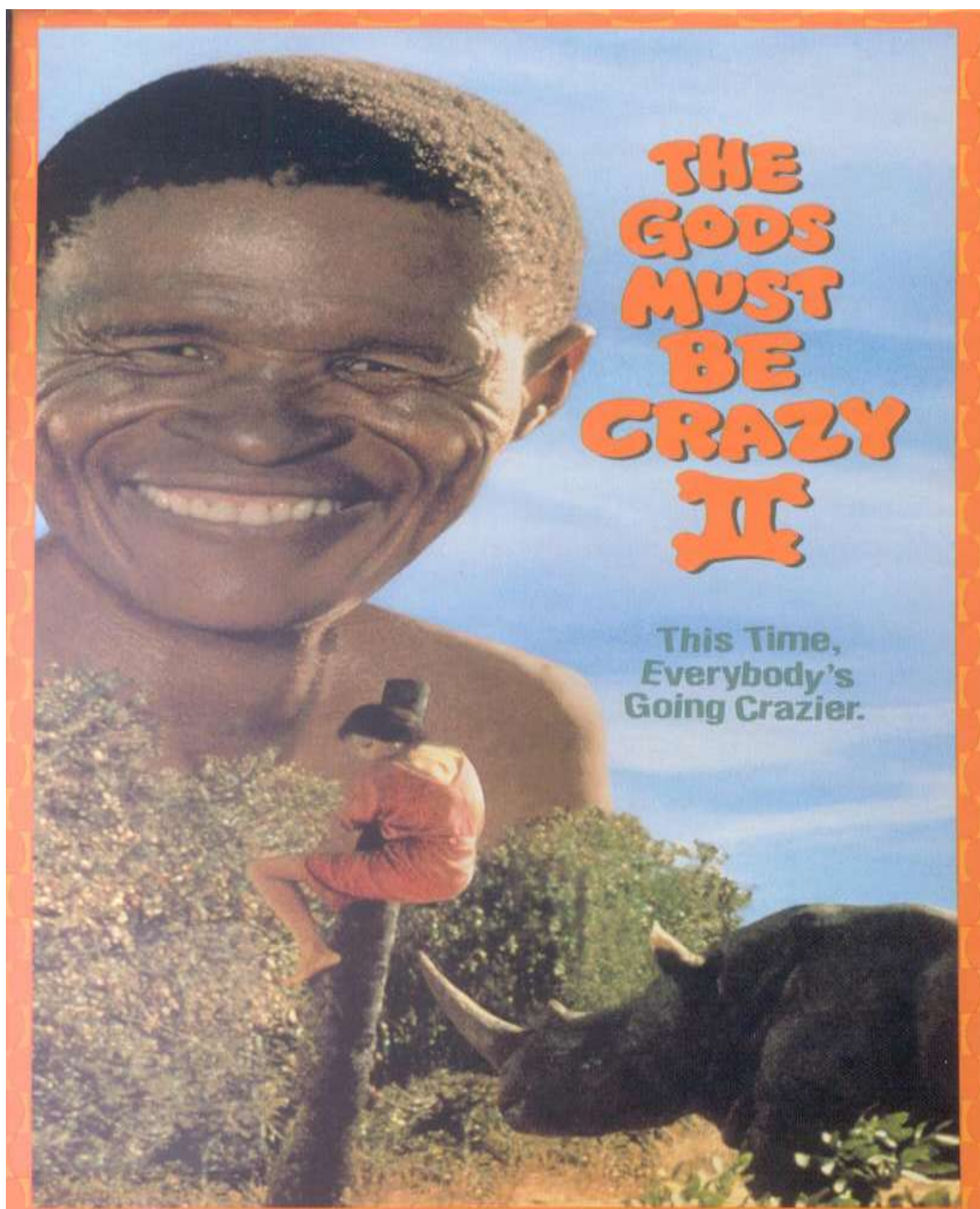


Uys' imagination was an overactive kaleidoscope and soon enough he was toying with various ideas. By 1996 Jamie Uys (75) was the country's undisputed sage of the silver screen: in acclaim, in commercial success and technical knowledge he was unsurpassed. In South Africa only one film maker could break Uys' records – Jamie Uys. By January 1996 he was busy scriptwriting when he suffered his third and fatal heart attack.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Mimosa Films. Private archive. Jamie Uys: Biographical document.





**When the laughter died.**

*“I can’t write poetry – so I make movies.”*

**Jamie Uys**

1921 -1996

Jamie Uys’ Mimosa Films-phase represents his creative and professional apex. In his three decades with Mimosa Films, Jamie Uys’ immeasurable creative mind and vast professional experience climaxed. Dr. Boet Troskie supplied the financial safety and creative security and boundless time for Uys to tell his stories in the way that he had dreamt of – and all film makers could but only dream of. Their unique professional understanding and genuine friendship resulted in the collaboration creating the most popular pictures to come from the continent – ever. In the process Uys’ creative genius and dr. Troskie’s corporate brilliance spawned a business entity spanning the globe.

When he joined Mimosa Films new voices within the Afrikaans artistic community painted a wholly different picture of the local society than that which Uys was famous for. Breyten Breytenbach (poetry), Ettienne le Roux (novels), Jans Rautenbach (films), P.G. du Plessis (dramas) showed a South Africa that was worlds apart from the, somewhat pleasantly quaint, depictions of Uys. The storyteller, totally aware of these shifts, did not adapt his style or approach – he rose above it by creating classics. Simplistic in premise or plot although not in impact. Whilst with Mimosa Films the film maker excelled at creating unique cinematic



moments void of messages that could (and would) become (out)dated. Uys' essential contribution to the realm of cultural history is, first and foremost, his ingenious stories themselves. Uniquely original. Beautifully simple and as such, culturally, universally translatable. Captivating imagery – leaving lasting impressions on millions spread across the earth. Furthermore he introduced Southern Africa's overwhelming natural beauty to global audiences in a way that has never before been done. (The impact, directly or indirectly, it assuredly had on international tourism to the south of Africa is of course not quantifiable.) During a time when South Africa's film industry was crumbling, Uys' pictures proved there was hope (the only requirement – *genius*). In the Mimosa Films-phase he succeeded to cement the local film industry on the global map.

Time and again, he proved that a tiny picture could compete with Hollywood's star-studded *majors* albeit not in terms of budget but in imagination and ingenuity and that that was in fact all that counted. Jamie Uys reached his international grandiose success at a time when South Africa was globally a polecat. His films succeeded in transcending age, race and ideologies. Arguably his greatest achievement was being the embodiment of Walt Disney's famous saying: "If you can dream it – you can do it." Jamie Uys never stopped dreaming and never stopped doing: Spectacularly so. Jamie Uys might have passed away more than a decade ago but thanks to his cinematic legacy the world still laughs with him. Maybe the most beautiful monument imaginable.







## **Jamie Uys**

### **Lys van rolprente / List of films<sup>#</sup>:**

**Neem asseblief kennis:** Hierdie is 'n lys van **al** die films waarby Jamie Uys betrokke was (ongeg hoedanigheid.)

**Please note:** This is a list of **all** the films that Jamie Uys was involved with (in whatever capacity.)

#### **DAAR DOER IN DIE BOSVELD** (1951)

Directed, starred and wrote.

© MNet

#### **FIFTY / VYFTIG** (1952)

Directed, starred and wrote

© MNet

#### **DAAR DOER IN DIE STAD** (1954)

Directed, starred and wrote

© MNet

#### **GELD SOOS BOSSIES** (1955)

Directed, starred and wrote.

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<sup>#</sup> Compiled by: Mr Trevor Moses, National Film Archive.

© MNet

**PAUL KRUGER** (1955)

NB: Jamie co-starred in this film, directed by Werner Grunbauer.

© MNet.

**DIE BOSVELDER** (1958)

Directed, starred and wrote

© MNet

**SATANSKORAAL** (1959)

Jamie Uys produced this, Elmo de Witt directed.

© MNet

**RIP VAN WYK** (1959)

Jamie produced and starred in this: Emil Nofal directed.

© MNet

**HANS & DIE ROOINEK** (aka SIDNEY & THE BOER) (1960)

Jamie produced, wrote and starred.

© MNet.

**DOODKRY IS MIN** (1961)

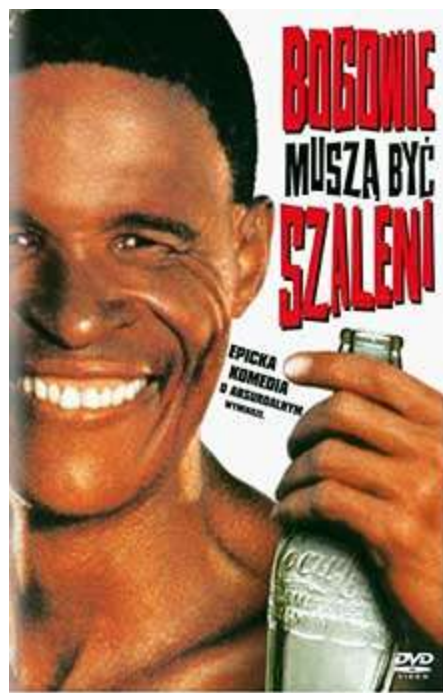
Jamie produced and directed this anti-English propaganda film for the FAK.

© FAK.

**THE HELLIONS** (1961)

Jamie co-produced and co-starred in this, Africa's first Western genre film.  
Ken Annakin directed.

© Sony Entertainment: Please note this production is under contractual restrictions.



**VOOR SONONDER** (1962)

Jamie produced this, the first Afrikaans language Western genre film which is set in SA just after the Anglo-Boer War.

© MNet.

**LORD OOM PIET** (aka LORD UNCLE PETE) (1962)

Jamie produced, directed, co-wrote and starred.

© MNet.

**KIMBERLEY JIM** (1963)

Produced by Jamie Uys and starring Jim Reeves in his only film.

© MNet.

**DINGAKA** (1964)

Produced and directed by Jamie Uys: a feature length version of his propaganda short *The Fox Has Four Eyes*.

© MNet.

**ALL THE WAY TO PARIS** (aka AFTER YOU, COMRADE) (1965)

Produced, co-written, starring and directed by Jamie Uys.

© MNet.



**DEBBIE** (1965)

Produced by Jamie Uys, directed by Elmo de Witt.

© MNet.

**DIE PROFESSOR & DIE PRIKKELPOP** (1966)

(aka THE PROFESSOR & THE BEAUTY QUEEN)

Jamie Uys directed, wrote and starred.

© Mimosa Films.

**DIRKIE** (aka LOST IN THE DESERT) (1969)

Jamie wrote, directed and starred.

© Mimosa Films.

**BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE** (1974)

(aka ANIMALS ARE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE)

Jamie wrote, directed and edited the music.

© Mimosa Films.

**FUNNY PEOPLE** (1976)

Jamie wrote and narrated this candid camera film onscreen. Directed by his son-in-law Kobus Kruger.

© Mimosa Films.

**THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY** (1979)

Jamie co-produced, directed, wrote and co-starred in this.

© Mimosa Films.

**FUNNY PEOPLE 2** (1983)

Jamie wrote, co-produced and directed this.

© Mimosa Films.

**THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY 2** (1989)

Jamie wrote, co-produced and directed this.

© Mimosa Films.

**Kortprente en Dokumentêre / Shorts and Documentaries:**

*Drie Minute Laat*

*Medisyne Sonder Pille*

*Lank Sal Hul Lewe*

*The Urgent Queue (aka The Condemned Are Happy)*

*Three Wise Men of The World*

*The Fox Has Four Eyes*

*Jabulani Africa*

*We Are Marching To Pretoria*

*The Great Adjustment*

*Matieland*

*Citizens of Tomorrow*

*Kaapse Draai*

*Die Ontvoering (The Abduction)*

*Keep The Family Intact*

*Familie In Nood (A Family In Crisis)*

*Speed & You*

*Common Sense Behind The Wheel*

*Southern Suburbs Soccer Trophy*

*Increased Steel Production*

• **Kontakte / Contacts:**

**Mimosa Films:**

Mrs. Mireschen Troskie-Marx: 051 – 444 06 17.



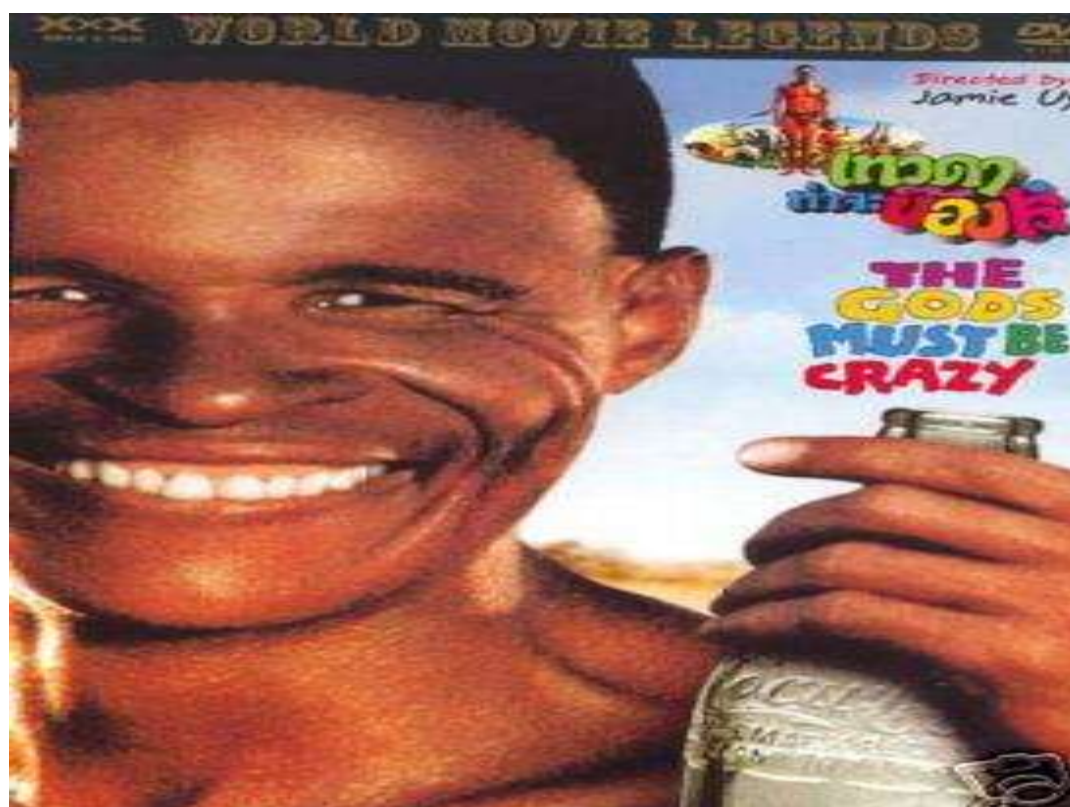
## **Jamie Uys**

### **Lys van toekennings en eerbewyse / List of awards and accolades:**

1. 1953: **The Schlesinger Drum**: Award of Merit: Daar Doer In Die Stad.
2. 1956: **Edinburgh Film Festival**: Outstanding Film of the Year: The Condemned Are Happy.
3. 1958: **London Film Festival**: Outstanding Film of the Year: Rip van Wyk.
4. Statebondstoekenning vir Rip – Filmverlede
4. 1961: **FAK**: Die Besembostoekenning: Skitterende Rolprentwerk: Doodkry Is Min.
5. 1965: **Afrikaanse Studentebond**: Goue Erepenning: Rolprentkuns.
6. 1967: **Edinburgh Film Festival**: Outstanding Film of the Year: Three Wise Men.
7. 1968: **Chicago Film Festival**: Gold Medal The Great Adjustment.
8. 1970: **SA Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns**: Goue Erepenning: Rolprentkuns.
9. 1972: **Teheran Film Festival**: Lost In The Desert (Dirkie.)
10. 1974: **Hollywood Film Company**: Golden Scissors Award: Outstanding Achievement in Editing: Beautiful People.

- 11.1974: **Hollywood Press Association:** Golden Globe: Best Documentary Film: Beautiful People.
- 12.1974: **American Editors Incorporated:** Eddy Award: Best Edited Documentary: Beautiful People.
- 13.1975: **Rapport Oscar:** Spesiaal aan Jamie Uys toegeken.
- 14.1979: **FAK:** Halfeeufestoeckenning: Volgehoue bevordering van die Afrikaanse Rolprentkuns.
- 15.1981: **Switzerland's Festival International du Film de Comedie pour:** Grand Prix: The Gods Must Be Crazy.
- 16.1981: **Norwegian Film Festival:** Grand Prix: Voted the most popular movie by the jury and press and the public.
- 17.1981: **London Film Festival:** Outstanding Film of the Year: The Gods Must Be Crazy.
- 18.1982: **France's Chamrousse Grand Prix:** The Gods Must Be Crazy.
- 19.1983: **Universiteit van die Vrystaat:** Erepennning: Voortreflike Diens.
- 20.1983: **Universiteit van Port Elizabeth:** Grand Doctor Litterarum, Honoris Cause: Bydrae tot die rolprentkuns.
- 21.1983: **Rapportryers Korpse** (Vereeniging): Eretoekenning.
- 22.1983: **South Africa's State President's Decoration for Meritorious Service.**

- 23.1984: **Pretoria University**: Chancellor's Medal: Pioneering work in the South African film industry.
- 24.1984: **Hymie Groer-toekenning**: Bydrae tot die Suid-Afrikaanse filmbedryf.
- 25.1984: **Johannesburg Film Society**: Special award for his contribution to South African cinema.
- 26.1984: **Film Advisory Board**: Award of Excellence: The Gods Must Be Crazy.
- 27.1984: **Southern California's Motion Picture Council**: Golden Halo Award of Special Merit: The Gods Must Be Crazy.
- 28.1984: **Southern California's Psychotherapy Affiliation / Screening Guild**: Courage in Filmmaking Award: The Gods Must Be Crazy.
- 29.1985: **The Academy of Science Fiction and Horror Films**: Golden Scroll: The Gods Must Be Crazy.





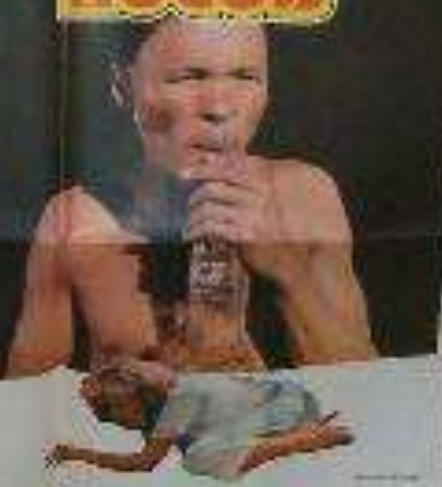
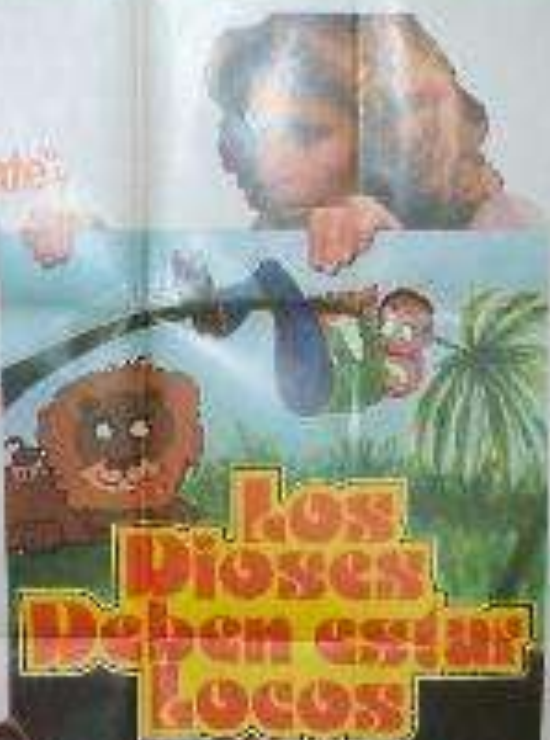
- 30.1985: **The Academy of Family Films and Family Television:** Award of Merit: The Gods Must Be Crazy.
- 31.1985: **Loony's Award:** Contribution to the South African film industry.
- 32.1987: **XVVII Mostra Cinematografica Internzionale Sotto L'alto Patronato del Presidente Della Repubblica premio speciale al Regista Jamie Uys "Natura Uomo Ambiente" Viterbo.**
- 33.1989: **Rotary Club** (Boksburg): Merit Award: Service Above Self to the Community.
- 34.1993: **Cinematographic Ind.:** Special Achievement Award.
- 35.1993: **Stars for a Star:** Honours Award.
- 36.1995: **FAK:** Uitbouing van die plaaslike rolprentbedryf.
- 37.2000: **Yahoo!:** The Gods Must Be Crazy: Nominated as 7<sup>th</sup> best foreign film – ever.

Jamie Uys,  
director de  
"Paraiso viviente"  
"Esta loca,  
loca gente"  
ahora presenta  
la mas  
grande de las  
locuras...

LA PELICULA  
MAS DIVERTIDA  
DEL MUNDO!

1997 100% + 100%  
1998 100% + 100%  
1999 100% + 100%  
2000 100% + 100%

Jamie Uys



**Beware: Cheap imitations...**

