



RAFIKI

PRESS KIT

RAFIKI



A BIG WORLD CINEMA PRODUCTION IN CO-PRODUCTION
WITH AWALI ENTERTAINMENT (KENYA), MPM FILM (FRANCE),
SCHORTCUT FILMS (LEBANON), APE & BJORN (NORWAY),
RINKEL FILM (NETHERLANDS), RAZOR FILM (GERMANY)



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RAFIKI is a love story about Kena and Ziki who live in a housing estate in Nairobi. The girls are unlikely friends and their fathers are rivaling politicians. When they fall in love and the community find out, the girls are forced to choose between love and safety.

SYNOPSIS

Kena and Ziki live very different lives in the Highrise Estate in Nairobi. Kena works in her father's shop and awaits the start of nursing school, while Ziki passes the days hanging out with her friends and making up dance routines. Their paths cross when their fathers run against each other for seats in the County Assembly, and they find themselves drawn to each other.

Soon their interest grows to affection and the girls find ways to love each other despite the ever-watching gaze of the neighborhood gossip and the homophobic sentiments of their community. However, once discovered by their family and attacked by the community, Kena and Ziki must choose between what they feel and what others want them to do.

RAFIKI



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

"Rafiki" is inspired by the 2007 Caine Prize winner, 'Jambula Tree' by Monica Arac de Nyeko, a coming of age story about two girls in love, set in Uganda.

Making a film about two women in love, set in Kenya, means challenging deep-rooted cynicism about same sex relationships among actors, crew, friends, and family. Over the past 5 years of developing this script and project, we have seen worrying developments in the anti-LGBTI climate in east Africa: Our neighbour, Uganda's government has an ongoing crusade to pass the so-called 'Kill the Gays' bill, which is an extreme (but terrifying) example of the battle this community faces. My producers executive-produced THE NEST's 2014 LGBTI Kenyan fiction film, Stories of Our Lives; besides much international success, the film endured a banning, cast and crew harassment and the arrest of their local producer. While these examples illustrate the challenges of producing a film about a lesbian love story in Africa, it also highlights how urgent and necessary a story of this kind is.

"Rafiki" is a story about all that is good and difficult about being in love, so that for those fortunate moments we are lifted above our prejudices and make ourselves ready for "the work for which all other work is but preparation" (Rilke).



ABOUT THE TEAM

DIRECTOR

WANURI KAHIU

Wanuri is part of the new generation of African storytellers. Her stories and films have received international acclaim. Her films screened in numerous film festivals around the world. To date, Wanuri has written and directed six films and is working on her second feature length film.

PRODUCER

STEVEN MARKOVITZ

Led by Steven Markovitz, Big World Cinema has produced many award-winning fiction and documentaries. Big World has an extensive production and distribution network across Africa and has co-produced extensively internationally. Their titles include *Stories of Our Lives* (TIFF 2014, Berlin), which won Berlinale Teddy Jury award; and *Winnie* (Winner: Best Director, World Documentary Competition, Sundance, 2017) and *Viva Riva!* (TIFF, Berlinale).

CONTACT

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THANK YOU