



REEL VS REAL

SETTING THE SCENE

Watch the films, then check out their real-life locations – five filmmakers at this month's Jozi Film Festival reveal all

landscape of Freedom Park (freedompark.co.za), and recommends a visit to the Union Buildings to see the new bronze statue of Nelson Mandela.

THE BEAR SUIT

A darkly comical road trip story about a guy who picks up an odd hitchhiker.

Filmmaker Adam Donnelly chose the area around Kalbaskraal, near Malmesbury, as his location – a wheat and sheep farming region that ushers in the Swartland as you leave Cape Town. 'It really is a one-horse town; a blink-and-you'll-miss-it place – a town that people forgot after the new highway was built.' The crew used the local rugby club as their base camp:

'Even though there wasn't money in the community, they'd built the facilities themselves and were in the process of paying for upgrades to the rugby pitch.' He says there was 'quite a bit of interest in the cars' used in the film (a 1972 Ford Capri, vintage Mustang and 1950s-style Chevy pick-up truck) from the locals, who hung around the rugby club while the cars were being rigged.

Check out: The old train station in Kalbaskraal is 'really graphic and interesting' to photograph. The town and surroundings make for a great road trip, Donnelly says, offering a wide range of visual possibilities for photographers – 'in summer, it's a dry, almost Karoo-like landscape; in spring, the fields come alive with yellow canola flowers.' Another location of the film was Aces 'n' Spades bar in Cape Town (62 Hout Street, +27 (0)21 424 1620).

THINA SOBALILI (THE TWO OF US)

Siblings Thulani and Zanele journey through life with no one but each other to lean on.

For Ernest Nkosi's drama – 'a story that needed to be told simply because it's a mirror of what is happening in society' – he chose Alexandra township in Jo'burg, which is separated by a highway from Sandton, 'one of the richest places in Africa'. Nkosi, who grew up in Kattlehong,

Compiled by Caroline Webb. Photographs: supplied



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE
Thina Sobalili (The Two of Us) was shot in Alexandra and features an original soundtrack by Bongaziwe Mabandla (who, director Ernest Nkosi says, is 'big in Japan'); the mysterious hitchhiker in *The Bear Suit*, stranded in the Swartland; Aces'n'Spades bar smartens up for a scene from *The Bear Suit*; the abandoned housing complex of Schubart Park in *Flies*; scenes from *Chip*, set in Cape Town – moving the story to SA required careful thought about casting, says the American filmmaker

LOVE THE ONE YOU LOVE

Three characters suspect that their romantic relationships are part of a bizarre conspiracy.

Jenna Bass was 'desperate' to make her first feature film, and had to come up with a story around the resources, people and places available to her – her hometown, Cape Town, provided 'an incredible variety of locations I could access'. She chose ones that meant a lot to her, such as the Labia Theatre in Gardens and the College of Magic ('the only magic school of its kind in the world'). The tiny crew also did a shoot in Gatesville 'where there's often drag racing up and down the main road, and it's quite a scene on a Saturday night'; passersby thought actor Mogamat Daayan Salie, who is from the area, was actually being beaten up – 'that caused some interesting misunderstandings'.

Check out: Bass wrote a few scenes for places she wanted an excuse to visit, such as Dreams Sports Bar in Main Road, Woodstock – 'it has this inviting blue illuminated door' – and Call-A-Pizza in Sea Point (57 Regent Road, +27 (0)21 434 0818), which 'may be the world's only psy-trance pizza place'. Bass describes Cape Town as 'multiple towns, villages, even worlds – a place that has to be seen in motion'. Use public transport, she says.

FLIES

A retired architect is the sole inhabitant of a large, derelict social housing complex he designed as a young man.

Artist-filmmaker Michael MacGarry shot the entire film at Schubart Park in central Pretoria, the 'largest, singular example of Modernist social housing design in apartheid SA'. It was completed in 1976, and consists of four 21-storey apartment tower blocks. 'It is a monument to a very particular and distinctly peculiar way of thinking; the oppressive proportions coupled with the sheer conceptual "weight" of it [intended to be a utopian holistic living and working environment] make for an uncanny environment.' In the early 2000s, it was abandoned following health concerns and high crime, and fell into serious disrepair. A week before its renovation started (it will now be used for student accommodation), MacGarry got permission to shoot his film there.

Check out: While working in the area, MacGarry explored Church Square, 'which has a number of key 20th century architectural icons and bizarre historical monuments' [such as the Old Capitol Theatre, Café Riche, Tudor Chambers and the General Post Office]. He was also intrigued by the abstract exhibitions and

said the people of Alex were warm and the place welcoming, 'quite the opposite of what the rest of the country thinks of it'; during the shooting of one action scene at night, about 2,000 people came to watch and applauded every time he shouted 'cut!'. Some of the crew and cast were locals, so seeing them being treated as stars in their own town was 'amazing and really moving', he says.

Check out: Club Neh! and Joe's Lifestyle & Butchery – both locations in the film – are 'must-see places with a vibrant atmosphere, where visitors can mix with residents and experience a night out with the locals'. Joe's (corner Eleventh Avenue and Roosevelt Street, +27 (0)83 623 2770), a *shisa nyama*, regularly hosts some of the hottest musicians and DJs in SA. Neh! (57 Fourth Avenue, Marlboro, +27 (0)11 262 6656) boasts a cigar lounge and Jo'burg skyline views, plus interesting traditional African bar snacks.

CHIP

Inspired by a Chekhov short story, in which a successful young man receives a visit from his low-life father.

Chinese-American Nancy Kiang was originally set to film in New York, but was invited to Cape Town by a friend – and

ended up shooting there, in diverse neighbourhoods and several private homes. 'In Brooklyn [Cape Town's version], our hosts influenced how we interpreted one of the characters: we decided to make her more gracious, like them.' While shooting in Observatory, the crew had the 'World's Largest Roti from Sunrise Chip'n Ranch (94 Main Road, Mowbray, +27 (0)21 689 3250) – very tasty. Indian food in Cape Town is worth coming out for.' Kiang was also intrigued by District Six and the Bo Kaap, 'with their colourful townhouses and mixed population'. The city felt 'a lot like southern California, the people just as laidback but with a more intense sense of nature and cultural awareness'.

Check out: The opening scene was shot in Dunkley Square, where Kiang loved Maria's Greek Restaurant (+27 (0)21 461 3333) – 'Owners Cleon and Kate Romano are the loveliest people, the café is sunny, open and beautiful, and the *ravani* (semolina) cake is divine.' The closing scene was shot in front of Camps Bay's Theatre on the Bay (theatreonthebay.co.za); Kiang recommends taking in 'Cape Town's wealth of arts and local theatres with top-notch original plays'.

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