

6 local micro-budget films launched by joint Netflix and NFVF fund

The National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) and Netflix, in association with Indigenous Film Distribution, have launched six micro-budget films from their Joint Film Fund.



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) The R28m Joint Film Fund of the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) and Netflix has completed and released six micro-budget films

The R28m Joint Film Fund was created to finance each production at 100% of their budget.

The partnership with the global streaming service, Netflix, announced in March 2021, creates new opportunities for emerging filmmakers in the local film industry after many productions locally and internationally had to be halted due to Covid-19 global lockdowns.

Both partners contributed R14m each in support of the production of local films, which will have exclusive debuts on Netflix.

"Part of the mandate of the NFVF is to promote the South African Film industry locally and internationally, so this partnership with Netflix has contributed immensely to achieve this.

"We are proud of, and congratulate the cast and crews of the six films on completing their films and taking the best of who we are as South Africans to the world through their stories, flying the South African flag high on this global streaming

leader, Netflix,” NFVF acting CEO, Thobela Mayinje.



South African film, *Smart Casuals* makes Netflix debut

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The films

“These South African stories by South African filmmakers, demonstrate our commitment to growing and nurturing the next generation of talent and storytellers.

“We remain committed to investing in local storytellers to keep bringing exciting local stories from emerging and established filmmakers to our local and global audiences,” says Ben Amadasun, VP of content for Middle East and Africa at Netflix.

The six local films are categorised into two streams: four feature films with a budget of R4mon each and two feature films with a budget of R6m each.

Under Stream 1, four fictional feature films by emerging filmmakers were funded at a capped amount of R4,000,000.00, while for Stream 2, fictional feature films by established filmmakers were capped at R6,000,000.00.

These are the six films selected:

1. *Runs in the Family*

A film about a reformed con artist, Varun, and his transmasculine son, River, who go on a road trip across South Africa to break River’s estranged mother out of rehab. The film is currently streaming on Netflix.

- Key cast: Ace Bhatti, Gabe Gabriel, Diaan Lawrenson, Rob van Vuuren, Cleo Wesley
- Director: Ian Gabriel

2. *Prime*

A film about a young man trapped by indecision is triggered by his abusive father’s death, shaking up the trauma of his mother’s suicide and cutting into the woman he loves, setting him up for the seduction of an ancient demon. The film is currently streaming on Netflix.

- Key cast: Richard Gau, Nomsa Twala, Jasmine Hazi
- Director: Thabiso Christophe

3. *Inkabi: The Hitman*

This film is about Frank, a retired hitman, who has chosen to disappear and start his life as a private taxi driver. He befriends Lucy, a young woman working at a shady downtown casino. After losing custody of her child Angela, Lucy is back on a downward spiral of drugs and high-class prostitution. One night she witnesses the murder of one of her clients, a prominent millionaire in the city. Lucy manages to escape but the killer is out for her blood. She has no one to turn to except Frank, her only friend. The film is currently streaming on Netflix.

- Key cast: Tshamo Sebe, Michelle Tiren, Dumisane Dlamini, Muzi Mthabela and Kenneth Nkosi

- Director: Norman Maake

4. *Smart Casual*

Two couples in Johannesburg travel equal and opposite paths in the search for love. Taki has sworn off coupledness, that is until he meets Tumi. Mahlatsi and Bheka have been together for years and are looking forward to their third attempt at getting married. As one couple moves towards love and a life together, the other realises that love isn't what they imagined it to be. The film premiered on Netflix in April 2024.

- Key cast: Anga Makubalo, Angela Sithole, Terrence Ngwila, and Mandisa Constable

- Director: Zwo Farisani

5. *Soweto Blaze*

A hyper-stylised stoner-comedy set in Soweto, South Africa. A small-time pot dealer's attempts at making a better life for himself are ambushed when his dim-witted friends sweep him up in a wacky kidnapping scheme involving a feisty young woman with her own plans. The film will premiere on Netflix in 2024.

- Key cast: Matli Mohapelo, Dimpho More, Nhlanhla Masiya, Sydney Ndlovu, Nyeleti Khoza, Sello Sebotsane, Palesa Mosiea

- Director: Brad Katzen

6. *Real Estate Sisters*

This film will take you on a wild ride as two feisty real estate agent sisters, down on their luck and high on sass, aspire to go from selling shabby apartments to high-end real estate in Pretoria. The film will premiere on Netflix in 2024.

- Key cast: Gina Koffman, Leera Mthethwa, Lerato Makheta, Marcus Mabusela, Sibongile Nojila, Jerry Chirindza, Sammy Fever, Jude Ben O'Donovan, Karin van der Laag

- Director: Reabetswe Moeti-Vogt

"At Indigenous Film Distribution we always strive to support new filmmakers to get their content off the ground and their films in front of audiences. Working with the NFVF and Netflix as part of this unique initiative achieved exactly that.

"We are privileged to have worked with such a fantastic ambit of new filmmakers in so many genres and salute our partners at NFVF and Netflix for creating this opportunity for filmmakers," says Helen Kuun, founder and managing director of Indigenous Film Distribution.



Did Beyoncé find inspiration from SA's *Five Fingers for Marseilles* for *Cowboy Carter*?

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