

ITEM 7 & STUDIO SHEN PRESENT



62nd Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Competition

WAR WITCH

A FILM BY **KIM NGUYEN**



métropole Films Distribution ITEM  & SHEN PRESENT

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WAR WITCH

A FILM BY **KIM NGUYEN**

CANADA - 2012 - 90 minutes - French and Lingala

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Somewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, in a small isolated village, Komona, a twelve-year-old girl, lived peacefully with her parents until the day the rebels came. They pillaged the village, captured Komona and forced her to commit an irreparable act: slay her parents.

In the rebels' camp, the training is merciless: Komona is hungry, scared, and the Rebel Leader, who has no pity for her tears, repeatedly beats her if she cries. She quickly learns to endure, to fight and above all, to survive. During a battle waged against the government's army, only Komona is spared. The rebels chief sees this as a sign and declares she is the new sorceress. She is soon brought to Great Tiger, the supreme leader of all the rebels, who makes her his war witch.

Only one person is willing to help and listen to her, a 15 year-old-boy named Magician. With the passing months, Magician and Komona fall in love. They experience an all too brief moment of what happiness can be. The war catches up with them.

Time passes... Komona is now 14 and pregnant. She wishes to forget the past, but her parents' ghosts keep reappearing. She soon realizes that if she doesn't want her parents' ghosts to haunt her baby, she must undertake the long journey that will lead her back to her birthplace.

WAR WITCH is a life lesson, a story of human resilience.

SY- NOP- SIS





KIM NGUYEN

Director and writer

BIOGRAPHY

In 2002, Kim Nguyen wrote and directed his first feature: *LE MARAIS*. The film received 6 Jutra nominations including *Best Film* and *Best Director*. His second feature, *TRUFFE*, which he wrote, directed and produced, stars Roy Dupuis and was the opening film at Montreal's FANTASIA Film Festival in 2008. It also garnered international awards including *Best Film* at the Karlovy Vary Fresh Film Festival. In 2009 he directed *LA CITE*, an international co-production starring Jean Marc Barr.

WAR WITCH, his latest feature was entirely shot in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in July 2011 and will have its world premiere in competition at the Berlin International Film Festival.





DIRECTOR'S NOTES

It has been now 10 years since I started writing this film, just about the same time that I started writing my first feature film. It was on a peaceful morning when, as is my habit, I was skimming through news headlines, getting ready to write. And then, almost accidentally, I saw on my screen, in the list of search engine results, the name "Johnny and Luther Htoo," ten-year-old or so twins who had become sacred figures for rebel groups, whom they guided spiritually and strategically. They were chain smokers, and legends said they had 250,000 invisible soldiers at their command. That was how I started my research on child soldiers and their imaginary world. After several years, a screenplay was born; one that would attempt to pay homage to the real African heroes - men, women and children whose human resilience will always be able to overcome the tragedies of war. And in order to do so, the film had to be shot in one of the most paradoxical places on earth: Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Once in the DRC, we entered into a parallel world, a universe that is at the very boundary between real and surreal, in constant mutation, filled with extremely powerful paradoxes. Even if our story isn't specifically located in the Congo, the parallels between this country and War Witch are omnipresent. The decision to film in this country was also imposed by Rachel, a girl from the streets whom we discovered, and who has a raw natural talent as an actress. It was an exceptional encounter.

I wanted this film to break away from my former films, and to shoot scenes as if there had never been a before; nor was there to be an after. As though only the present moment was real. My actors were not allowed to read the screenplay before the shoot, and we shot the film in sequence. In this way, the actors never knew what was going to happen to their characters the next day...

"So Kim, what scene are we shooting next?"

"Roll the camera, something's happening..."



CAST

Komona
Rebel Lieutenant
Magician
The butcher
Great Tiger
School camp coach
Great Tiger's sorcerer
Komona's mother
Komona's father
Coltan dealer
Biker
Butcher's mother
Kind policeman
Exorcist
Brawny albino
Clinic nurse
Worrying man in clinic
NGO man
Strong man
Laughing farmer
Laughing farmer's wife
Old woman in truck
Hearse driver
Jordan
Great Tiger's guard
Kid soldier school

Rachel MWANZA
Alain BASTIEN
Serge KANYINDA
Ralph PROSPER
Mizinga MWINGA
Jean KABUYA
Jupiter BOKONDI
Starlette MATHATA
Alex HERABO
Dole MALALOU
Karim BAMARAKI
Sephora FRANÇOISE
Jonathan KOMBE
Marie DILOU
Gauna GAU
Renate WEMBO
Alexi SABWÉ
Nicolas FRANSOLET
Kazadi ZADIO
Bonaventure KABAMBA
Angèle OKITO
Agnes MUJINGA
Moïse ILUNGA
Jordan N'TUNGA
Diplôme AMEKINDRA
Papa MICHEL



CREW

Director, writer
Producers

Kim Nguyen
Pierre Even
Marie-Claude Poulin, *Item 7*

Co-producer
Cinematographer
Production designer
Costume designer

Kim Nguyen, *Studio Shen*
Nicolas Bolduc
Emmanuel Fréchette
Éric Poirier

Editor
Sound Editor
Sound

Richard Comeau
Martin Pinsonnault
Claude La Haye

Sound mix
1st assistant director
Line Producer

Bernard Gariépy-Strobl
Pierre Magny
Anne-Marie Gélinas

Location Manager
Casting

Sébastien Maître
Josa Maule (Quebec)
Kiripi Katembo Siku (Congo)

Produced with
the financial
participation of

Téléfilm Canada
SODEC
Cinema and Television tax credits
Gestion SODEC
Canadian Tax Credit
Vision Globale



