

Ellen Pakkies film to be screened at Rotterdam International Film Festival

Local film, *Ellen, Die Storie Van Ellen Pakkies*, has managed to cause quite a stir in the international movie arena. It has already been selected to be screened at the Rotterdam International Film Festival on 27 January 2018 and is set to be an even bigger hit with local audiences.



Ellen Pakkies and actress, Jill Levenberg. Image supplied.

“I am humbled that by international standards, a small film has managed to be recognized by such a prestigious festival. We are truly humbled and just want to say thank you to everybody who made it possible, especially Ellen Pakkies,” says executive producer, Paulo Areal.

Input from Ellen Pakkies herself

Told across two timelines, the movie shares the story of Ellen’s (Jill Levenberg) stormy relationship with her twenty-year-old drug-addict son, Abie Pakkies (Jarrid Geduld). In 2007, his death caused a stir worldwide when it was revealed that his mother was the one who murdered him. When advocate Adrian Samuels (Clint Brink) takes on the case, he is determined to prove that Ellen had no choice. But what compelled her to stop seeking help? How does a mother become desperate enough to take her own son’s life?

Award-winning director and founder of Gambit Films, Daryne Joshua, known for the incredible success of his debut feature film, *Noem My Skollie*, was also the creative mind behind this impressive production and the producer is Schalk Burger. The script was created by talented writer and producer Amy Jephta with input from Ellen Pakkies herself. Ellen also helped to recreate some of the scenes in the movie, which was filmed at her home where the actual events took place.

Jill Levenberg, who had several roles in films and television series like *Genadekans*, *Noem My Skollie* (South Africa’s official entry for the 2016 Oscars), *Leemte*, *While You Weren’t Looking*, *Abraham*, *Bekkies Gevind*, *As Ek Huistoe Kom*, *Fluit-Fluit*, *Atlas*, *Uitvlucht* and *Suidooster* (for which she received a *Huisgenoot* Tempo Award nomination in 2017) stars as Ellen Pakkies and has already received positive feedback on her outstanding performance. The film also showcases the talent of actors like Elton Landrew, Shimmy Isaacs and Kay Smith.

Failure to protect the poorest of the poor

“Rotterdam International Film Festival is one of the most prestigious International Film Festivals. So obviously, I am overjoyed that our humble South African project has risen above probably thousands of submissions from around the world and made the Official Selection for 2018. A big congratulations to the producers and crew – I thank you from the bottom of my heart, we should be proud of this great achievement. Now on a world stage, hopefully, the film can help bring an understanding and context to the remarkable story of Ellen Pakkies,” says Joshua.

Ellen, Die Storie Van Ellen Pakkies is the harrowing account of a woman put through the penal system, tried for murder and driven by an unflinching love for her son. It delves into the inner psyche of a family ravaged by drugs in one of the most dangerous communities in South Africa. A scourge that extends beyond the Cape Flats and highlights a systematic failure to protect the poorest of the poor.

This kykNET Films production was produced in association with M-Net, the DTI and The Moving Billboard Picture Company (TMPBC). It will be released in cinemas, nationwide, on 7 September 2018, and is distributed by Ster-Kinekor Entertainment.

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