

PRESS RELEASE

**South African filmmaker Amy Jeptha receives the fifth Baumi Script Development Award
Jury and guest juror Małgorzata Szumowska choose the treatment for „Have you seen Rita“**

Düsseldorf/Berlin, 25. February, 2020. The jury decided among 51 international submissions: The South African playwright, screenwriter and theater director Amy Jeptha receives the fifth Baumi Script Development Award, endowed with 20,000 euros, for her feature film project "Have you seen Rita?".

The award founders Pandora Film, the Baumgartner family and the Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, supported by an annually changing guest juror, present the award in memory of the producer Karl "Baumi" Baumgartner.

"I can imagine a very original film: the voice of a young African woman. The topic is very relevant and deals with problems that we still have to struggle with today", says this year's guest juror Małgorzata Szumowska.

Jury motivation:

HAVE YOU SEEN RITA? Is one of the most incredible stories we have ever read. Amy Jeptha effortlessly translates Rita Hoefling's true experiences into a captivating drama. She describes her main female character and the atmosphere of the 1970s in South Africa in a way that her story has relevance to this day. The film can initiate a broader discussion about racism not only in South Africa, but worldwide. We are happy to honor such a great project from a versatile and dedicated author.

Synopsis:

The skin color of the forty-year-old housewife Rita Hoefling from Cape Town, who had until then enjoyed the privileges of being a white South African, began to darken in 1973 due to an illness. Expelled from the white community, she was welcomed into homes by the residents in the segregated townships. And then, one day in 1978, Rita spontaneously turned white again. She tried to go back to her old life, but her family deleted her from their life as if she had never existed.

About the award-winner:

Amy Jeptha is an award-winning South African screenwriter and playwright. Her theatrical work has been published in South Africa and performed in Cape Town, Stockholm, London and New York and directed by Danny Boyle among others. She wrote the screenplay for the biopic "Ellen: The Ellen Pakkies Story", which premiered at the IFF Rotterdam and was South Africa's submission for the best foreign language film at the Golden Globes in 2018. Amy has been recognized as one of Mail & Guardian's 200 top Young South Africans. In 2019 she received the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for theater, one of the highest art awards in South Africa. She is a co-founder of the African Women Playwrights Network.

About the award:

The Baumi Script Development Award was presented for the first time in February 2016 in memory of the film producer and distributor Karl "Baumi" Baumgartner. Endowed with 20,000 Euros, the award was initiated by the founders **Martina** and **Sandra Baumgartner**, the company he co-founded, **Pandora Film**, and the **Film-und Medienstiftung NRW**. German and international writers can apply for the award with a synopsis in English. A jury consisting of the founders and an annually rotating international filmmaker choose one story idea from all of the submissions. The winner of the first award was the Egyptian filmmaker **Omar El Zohairy** with **Fatih Akin** as guest-juror. Second winner was the Polish filmmaker **Kuba Czekaj**, whose award was presented by guest juror **Aki Kaurismäki**. In the third year, Syrian filmmaker **Soudade Kaadan** received the award from guest juror **Martina Gedeck**. Last year, German author Martin Rehbock won the Baumi Award, which he got from guest juror **Bent Hamer**.

The founders would like to extend a special thanks to **Katja Clos** for the graphics, including the award logo, **Friederike Zeit** for the design and the production of the prize sculpture, and to **Fritz Erler** for programming the award website.

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