

# **Dr Nikki Comninos S.A.G.E.**

*Editor - Director - Ad hoc lecturer*

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I have been in the industry for 16 years, working in genres ranging from documentary to drama, reality, advertising, news, corporate, lifestyle, wildlife and shorts. In 2022 I was recognised by the American Cinema Editors (ACE) as an experienced and well-established editor as part of their International Partnership. The projects I have worked on as editor have been consistently awarded both local and international prizes and have screened all over the world. Most recently, in January 2021, I won best editing at the Beirut Shorts Film Festival for *Cause of Death*, an experimental short about femicide. The film was also awarded Best Film at the Vienna Shorts Film Festival qualifying it for the academy awards. Amongst SAFTAS nominated and awarded for films I have edited, I have also been personally awarded two South African Film and Television Awards for editing (one in documentary in 2011 and one in drama in 2015) as well as a third nomination for documentary short editing in 2016. In 2014 I was awarded the South African Editors Guild (S.A.G.E.) acronym for distinguished editors. I was selected as one of 6 directors for the Encounters Documentary Filmmaking Lab in 2007. In 2006 I was selected to attend the Berlin Talent Campus and in 2005 for the Sithengi Talent Campus. To add to my professional experience I have a strong academic background giving me a critical thinking approach to my work. In 2015 I completed my Ph.D. focusing on home video, personal history and memory. I have worked at universities like Wits, ADFA and I was also the training manager for Big Fish School of Digital Filmmaking. I am a swift and collaborative editor, earning the nickname comrade supercuts :)

## **Education**

**[2019-2020] Psychology undergraduate, University of South Africa**

**[2018] Sediba Spark, NFVF 6 month screenwriting course**

**[2011-2015] PhD, University of the Witwatersrand**

Creative Arts - written thesis + 60-min documentary, *Fraternal*: Cambridge African FF, 2015

**[2007] MA, University of the Witwatersrand**

Intensive theory and practice, *Triptych of Her*: Durban International Film Festival, 2008

**[2001-2004] BA in Film + Media with Honours, University of Cape Town**

Final film, *Algemeen Befokte Afrikaans* - Official selection DIFF and NYIFVF, 2005

## **Awards**

**[2022]** recognised as part of the ACE International Partnership

**[2021]** Best Short: Vienna Shorts Film Festival (*Cause of Death*) - Academy Awards qualifying

Best Editor and Best Experimental Short: Beirut Short Film Festival (*Cause of Death*)

Best Documentary: WRPN Women's Int film festival, Festival Napoleon on Champs-

Élysées, Africa Human Rights Festival, Impact Docs Award, Docs without Borders

(*Someone to Blame*)

**[2020]** Jury Prize: Festival Des Cinemas Differents Et Experimentaux De Paris (*Cause of Death*)

SAFTA nominee: Best Youth Programme (*MTV Shuga IRL Season 2+3*)

**[2019]** Best Documentary: Zanzibar Film Festival (*Someone to Blame*)

Best Documentary: Jozi Film Festival (*Someone to Blame*)

Best Documentary: Coalition of South Asian Film Festival (*Someone to Blame*)

INPUT Africa Selection: *Someone to Blame*

- SAFTA Winner: Best Documentary Short (*Someone to Blame*)
- [2018] SAFTA nominee: Best Current Affairs (*Life Esidemeni*)  
SAFTA Winner: Best Youth Programme (*MTV Shuga IRL Season 2*)
- [2016] SAFTA nominee: Documentary Short editor (*Indians Can't Fly*)  
SAFTA Winner: Best Documentary Short (*Indians Can't Fly*)
- [2015] SAFTA winner: Drama editing (*End Game*)  
Best Short: Slamdance Fusion Doc Challenge, NYC (*I am Juli*)
- [2014] Best Documentary Short: California International Film Festival (*Hyena Boys*)  
Best Post Graduate Student: Film & TV division, Wits University  
Best Short Film: Independent Mzansi Short Film Festival (*iBhokwe*)
- [2013] South African Editors Guild (S.A.G.E.) acronym for distinguished editors  
ATKV Feather award (*Tibbie Steyn*), ATKV nomination (*Emily Hobhouse*)
- [2011-2014] Mellon Postgraduate Mentoring Award
- [2011] SAFTA winner: Best documentary editor (*Fish Out of Water*)
- [2009] South African Academy for Science and Art: Medal of Honour (*The Heart is Beautiful*)
- [2007] Selected director for the Encounters Documentary Filmmaking Lab  
Postgraduate Merit award for MA degree (academic merit)
- [2005-2006] Selected for the Berlin Talent Campus and Sithengi Talent Campus
- [2004 - 2001] Graduated with a First Class pass in Honours, Class medal - Video Production, Class medal - Media studies, Placed on the Dean's List for undergraduate degree, Scholarship for undergraduate and Honours degrees (academic merit)

## Academia and Training

- [2020-2022] NFFV Education & Training board
- [2020-2007] Lecturer, Tutor, External Examiner, Supervisor: WITS, AFDA, Johannesburg  
Edit Lecturing, external examiner of essays, dissertations and final film exams
- [2020-2019] Talent Factory Mentor: Multichoice, Zambia  
Edit training and post supervision of final films
- [2019] Newzroom Africa: Nala Media  
Edit training
- [2018-2013] Course Convener: WITS, Johannesburg  
4th year + MA 'National Cinema and Fiction Film' (2018), MA 'Introduction to Production' (2013)
- [2016-2015] Training Manager: Big Fish, Johannesburg  
Course convener and lecturer for 2nd years, project manager for GFC training course (2016)  
Wider managerial and operational duties including creating and implementing training programs, evaluating and overhauling curriculum

## Conferences and Papers

- PARSE Journal, Summer 2020  
'Recollect: Snippets of Self' <https://parsejournal.com/journal/#intersections>
- Journal for African Cinemas Special Edition, 2018  
Comminos, N. (2017), 'Practice-led research: Home video and the autobiographical self'
- CiLECT-CARA The Politics and Poetics of the Practices of Film, 2018 - round table
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Es'kia Mphahlele Postgraduate Colloquium and Arts Forum, Wits, 2011  
'The Politics of Dissemination: Personal Archive and Memory'

## Film and TV Experience

- [2022- 2021] Senior Editor: Idea Candy, Johannesburg  
\*\*\*\* (NDA: release July 2022) 3 part Limited series for Showmax (documentary)

Devilsdorp: 4 part Limited series for Showmax (documentary)

**[2022-2017] Editor: Blackboard Trust, Johannesburg**

Loving In-between (short doc in progress), *Cause of Death* (short doc: Berlinale, IDFA, and many others), *When I Grow Up I Want to be a Black Man* (Two screen projection for the Eye Institute + Wintertur, Rotterdam, Gothenburg Film festival, DIFF)

**[2021] Editor: Ten10 films, Johannesburg**

Senzo: Death of a Soccer Star: 5 part Limited series for Netflix (documentary)

**[2020-2014] Editor: TIA productions, Johannesburg**

Various: Carte Blanche (investigative journalism), MTV Shuga IRL SE1-3 (TV doccies), *MTV Young Moms Nigeria*, *Miss Trans Diva* (eTV, 24min doc), *Timelines* (feature doc, Durban International Film Festival, Jozi Film Fest, Indie Karoo Film Festival), Guardian news, *Hyena Boys* (short doc, California International Shorts Film Festival, Flickerfest, Indie Karoo Film Festival, Mzansi Women's Film festival, Independent Filmmakers Showcase) , *I am Juli* (short doc, Big Sky, Slamdance, Indie Karoo Film Festival), MTV inserts, Talk with Kwangu SE1+SE2 (Zambezi Magic)

**[2020-2011] Editor: Uhuru, Johannesburg**

RedFish stream short doc, *How To Steal A Country* (feature doc, editing team - IDFA, showmax, Africa in Motion, Encounters, Doc Edge, Sydney South African Film Festival) *Everything Must Fall* (feature doc, editing team: IDFA, various other film festivals), Various short films (advocacy), Various doc pitch teasers/trailers

**[2020-2014] Editor: EMS Productions, Johannesburg**

*Murder in Paris* (2 part doc series, SABC, various festivals) *Someone to Blame* (54min doc - Encounters, Input, Zanzibar film festival), *Indians Can't Fly* (48min doc, DIFF, Toronto South African Film Festival, 13<sup>th</sup> Cinemas de Afrique)

**[2020-2009] Editor: Pulp Films, Johannesburg**

Takalani Sesame SE11+SE12, Various corporates, Editor and script-editor of 7x 23-min documentaries about soccer and social issues surrounding the game, *My Beautiful Game*

**[2020] Editor: Blue Zone Media**

*Triologue* (talkshow)

**[2019] Editor: Nala Media**

*Loved Like Crazy* (46 min doc, Lifetime channel)

**[2019-2018] Editor: Full Circle productions, Johannesburg**

Negotiated Settlement (3x50min doc series), shorts for Con Hill museum

**[2018] Editor: The Swank Group, Johannesburg**

*Lagos to London* (online, 22min doc)

**[2016-2009] Editor: Rapid Blue, Johannesburg**

BBC's Great South African Bake Off: Season2+3 (reality), ITV's *4 Weddings*: Season 1 (reality), BBC's *Come Dine With Me*: Season 1-3 (reality), SAMRO film about Music Rights with Sara Blecher (doc), Episode 3 BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are?* (doc)

**[2016-2014] Editor: Fireworx, Johannesburg**

*The Jews of Madagascar* (doc), *Sticks and Stones* (13 ep drama), Ep 7: *End Game* (drama)

**[2016] Editor: Good Cop, Johannesburg**

*People You Might Know* (web-series)

**[2016] Editor: Afrokaans, Johannesburg**

*Shoprite Stories* (corporate)

**[2015 - 2008] Director + Editor: Self produced, Johannesburg**

*Fraternal* (doc, Cambridge African Film Festival), *Triptych of Her* (short film, DIFF)

**[2014] Director: Fireworx, Johannesburg**

1 Episode: *Mzansi Love* (drama, SABC)

**[2014] Editor + Director, VVV, Johannesburg**

Editor Comedy *Central Roast* promos, director-editor for Debonairs in house videos

**[2013] Editor: John Trengove, Johannesburg**

*The Goat/iBhokwe* (short film)

**[2013] Editor: Freeway Productions, Johannesburg**

Second editor on a five part series for MNET entitled *The History of Film in Africa* (doc)

**[2013] Editor: Pantareimedia, Johannesburg**

Various: OXFAM and Red Cross videos (advocacy)

**[2013] Editor: e.News Channel/e.tv Prime Time News/eNCA /eTV, Johannesburg**

News editor and team leader for the launch of South Africa's first 24 hour news channel, current affairs show *Africa 360*, obituaries for Mandela

**[2012] Editor: Born-free Media, Johannesburg**

Docu-reality series *Life's a Stage*, 7 x episodes (doc-reality)

**[2012-2008] Editor + insert producer: Foxwood Films, Johannesburg**

Doc series *Formidabele Vroue*, 2 x 48min eps: Emily Hobhouse & Tibbie Steyn, kykNET, lifestyle series *Celeb se Kind*, Editor/insert producer current affairs show *Robinson Regstreeks*, kykNET, E3x 24 min doc eps *Sewe Sakke Sout*, kykNET. 4x50min doc episodes, *The Heart is Beautiful*

**[2011] Editor: Jungle Works, Johannesburg**

UN films - older women and discordant couples living with HIV/AIDS (advocacy)

**[2009] Editor: Bonngoe Productions, Johannesburg**

Editor of 2x26min episodes of a doc series, *Beyond Positive*

**[2009] Editor: Dzuguda Productions, Johannesburg**

Editor of a 52-min of *Gladiators of Venda* (doc), 1x24 min episode in *Sheroes* doc series

**[2008] Director + Editor: High Rotation, Johannesburg**

50sec Mother's Day Lentswe Poetry Project Poem for SABC2

**[2008] Editor: Road Media, Johannesburg**

Editor of 5-min promo of footage of chacma baboons for pitch

**[2007] Editor: Fusion Films, Johannesburg**

8 x 45sec adverts and other deliverables for the OUTsurance 'Staff Helping S.A. OUT' campaign

**[2005-2007] Director, Editor, Production Manager: Vuleka Productions, Durban**

- **Director+editor** 48min doc for the Encounters documentary filmmaking lab + SABC 1 and Encounters Documentary Film Festival, *Elles Tournent* entitled *Do Girls Want It?*
- **Director, researcher, editor** for 24-min documentary, *Zulu Nation*, for e.tv
- **Director-editor, production manager, researcher** for 5x25min docs for the Cato Manor museum, *eThekwini municipality as well as Mentor under MAPPSETA for two interns (DIFF)*
- **Editor, production manager** on 26min doc for SABC 3, *Pasta alla Shaik*
- **Director-editor** of a 5min film for AIDS Foundation (advocacy)
- **Assistant editor** on 52min doc *A Child is A Child (because of other people) (DIFF)*

**[2004] Co-director and co-editor, UCT**

*Algemeen Befokte Afrikaans* (short doc) (DIFF, New York Independent Film and Video Festival)

## **Extracurricular**

Executive board member of the South African Guild of Editors - Portfolio: Treasurer. Member of the Documentary Filmmakers Association. South African Film and TV Awards Judge

## **References** (contact details on request)

Wim Steyn, Executive Producer at Idea Candy

Jyoti Mistry, Filmmaker and Academic at Valand, Sweden

Enver Samuel, Director at EMS Productions  
Sara Blecher, Director  
Tarryn Crossman, Director/Producer at TIA Productions