

RELAY PRESS RELEASE

***A Fire in Africa* Expands Its Global Reach with Online Presence**

Pretoria, South Africa – What began as a modest student production has evolved into a cinematic triumph with international resonance. *A Fire in Africa* is being hailed as a visually striking, high-art film that fuses history and human endurance into a universal story.

Set against the breath-taking expanse of the Namib — the oldest desert on Earth — the film follows the OvaHimba, one of the last semi-nomadic tribes of southern Africa. Through mythic storytelling, it evokes an ancient lineage to Queen Nefertiti herself: “*The OvaHimba are the children of the red earth — the blood of Nefertiti still flows in their veins.*”

As the first dramatic feature ever made about the OvaHimba, the film weaves a timeless tale of endurance, legacy, and the search for equilibrium in an unforgiving world.

A Production Nurtured for Decades

The film’s creator, South African producer-director **Dr. Gerhard Uys**, holds the distinction of being the first South African to earn a PhD in Motion Picture Production. Conceived in 1987 as a student project, *A Fire in Africa* lay dormant for more than three decades before being revived and upgraded into a work of rare cinematic authenticity.

Remarkably, Dr. Uys reunited his original lead actors — **Rod Alexander** and **Japan Mthembu** — thirty-four years later, allowing them to age naturally into their old-age roles as required by the story. The result is one of cinema’s rarest achievements: *an authentic portrayal of time itself.*

What began under film-school conditions and a shoestring budget grew into a remarkable testament to artistic persistence. Twice abandoned and twice revived, its completion stands as proof that creative conviction can outlast even the passage of decades.

A Director’s Vision

“This film offers an intellectual challenge,” says Dr. Uys. “It invites us to reflect on what unites us as humans — our ability to adapt and find harmony in adversity.”

This sense of equilibrium unfolds through evocative visuals and layered symbolism. *A Fire in Africa* explores how the OvaHimba’s balance with one of the world’s harshest landscapes mirrors a universal truth: *human survival depends not only on strength, but also harmony.*

Every image carries intention — from the delicate jingle of Lady Kaazemua’s ankle bracelets, suggesting femininity, to the fading of colour in moments of looming tragedy. The Namib moon watches from the sky like a silent narrator: when full, it celebrates prosperity; when crescent, it foreshadows anxiety. Even Kolmanskop’s ghost town transforms into visual metaphor — its decaying buildings reflecting not just desolation, but a deeper human search for meaning, as the protagonist’s pursuit of water becomes a haunting symbol of futility.

International Recognition

Unable to secure local distribution, Dr. Uys turned abroad — where film festivals quickly overturned South Africa’s indifference.

With a modest budget of just **\$200,000** spent over seven years, *A Fire in Africa* burst onto the international festival circuit in 2023, winning **39 awards**, including **13 Best Picture** titles at festivals in England, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Croatia, Mexico, Italy, and Australia. Even more impressively, it competed not in student categories but against fully professional productions with budgets four times larger — and won.

Critics have praised its poetic imagery and emotional depth. The **Arctic Film Festival** called it *“insightful and deeply moving,”* while **FilmmakerLife** described it as *“a directorial milestone in South African high-art cinema.”*

In 2024, Dr. Uys was named one of **Beyond Hollywood’s “Top Independent Creators of the Year”** ([Nickelodeon Films](#)) and inducted into the **FilmmakerLife Hall of Fame** ([filmmakerlife.com](#)).

Now Streaming Worldwide

Distributed by **Filmhub** in Los Angeles, *A Fire in Africa* is now streaming on eight major video-on-demand platforms, including **Amazon Prime Video**, **TUBI**, and the **Africa Diaspora Network** — reaching more than **200 million viewers in 133 countries**.

Why It Matters

In a world where spectacle often overshadows substance, *A Fire in Africa* stands apart.

- It gives rare visibility to the **OvaHimba people**, whose traditions remain largely untouched by modernity.
 - It transforms the **Namib Desert** into a living character of endurance and beauty.
 - And it embodies a creative journey that honours not only story, but time itself.
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A Film That Fills Hearts and Minds

If you’re looking for a film that lingers long after the credits roll, *A Fire in Africa* deserves a place on your list.

Explore the full story at [afireinafrica.com](#) or stream it directly via [PickRelay](#).

As Dr. Uys concludes: *“I don’t produce dramatic films simply to offer superficial entertainment — I produce them to try and make the world a better place.”*

And this one truly does.
