



A FILM BY
KIM NGUYEN

WAR WITCH





**TRIBECA FILM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
AMERICAN EXPRESS PRESENTS**

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KIM NGUYEN

WAR WITCH

CANADA - 2012 - 90 minutes - French and Lingala

**SELECT THEATRICAL RELEASE
MARCH 1, 2013**

**AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE ON DEMAND
BEGINNING FEBRUARY 2013**

Academy Award® Nominee for Best Foreign Language Film

Official Canadian entry for the 85th Academy Award®
for the Best Foreign Language Film

2012 National Board of Review Top Five Foreign Language Films

Nominee for Best International Film - Film Independent Spirit Awards

Winner of the Silver Bear for Best Actress
at the 62nd Berlinale International Film Festival

Winner of the Founders Award for Best Narrative Feature
& Best Actress in a Narrative Feature Film
at the 2012 Tribeca Film Festival

Winner of the Golden Frog at the 2012 Plus Camerimage Festival

DISTRIBUTOR

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SY- NOP- SIS



SHORT SYNOPSIS

Komona (Rachel Mwanza) is only 12 years old when she is kidnapped by rebel soldiers and enslaved to a life of guerrilla warfare in the African jungle. Forced to commit unspeakable acts of brutality, she finds hope for survival in protective, ghost-like visions (inspiring a rebel chief to anoint her “War Witch”), and in a tender

relationship with a fellow soldier named Magician (Serge Kanyinda). Together, they manage to escape the rebels’ clutches, and a normal life finally seems within reach. But after their freedom proves short-lived, Komona realizes she must find a way to bury the ghosts of her past.

SY- NOP- SIS



LONG SYNOPSIS

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.



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..."



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 had its world premiere in competition at the Berlin International Film Festival, North American Premiere at Tribeca Film Festival where it won awards at both.



CAST

Komona	Rachel MWANZA
Rebel Lieutenant	Alain BASTIEN
Magician	Serge KANYINDA
The Butcher	Ralph PROSPER
Great Tiger	Mizinga MWINGA
School Camp Coach	Jean KABUYA
Great Tiger's Sorcerer	Jupiter BOKONDJI
Komona's Mother	Starlette MATHATA
Komona's Father	Alex HERABO
Coltan Dealer	Dole MALALOU
Biker	Karim BAMARAKI
Butcher's Mother	Sephora FRANÇOISE
Kind Policeman	Jonathan KOMBE
Exorcist	Marie DILOU
Brawny Albino	Gauna GAU
Clinic Nurse	Renate WEMBO
Worrying Man in Clinic	Alexi SABWÉ
NGO Man	Nicolas FRANSOLET
Strong Man	Kazadi ZADIO
Laughing Farmer	Bonaventure KABAMA
Laughing Farmer's Wife	Angèle OKITO
Old Woman in Truck	Agnes MUJINGA
Hearse Driver	Moïse ILUNGA
Jordan	Jordan N'TUNGA
Great Tiger's Guard	Diplôme AMEKINDRA
Kid Soldier School	Papa MICHEL

CREW

Director, writer	Kim Nguyen
Producers	Pierre Even Marie-Claude Poulin, <i>Item 7</i>
Co-producer	Kim Nguyen, <i>Studio Shen</i>
Cinematographer	Nicolas Bolduc
Production designer	Emmanuel Fréchette
Costume Designer	Éric Poirier
Editor	Richard Comeau
Sound Editor	Martin Pinsonnault
Sound	Claude La Haye
Sound Mix	Bernard Gariépy-Strobl
1st assistant director	Pierre Magny
Line Producer	Anne-Marie Gélinas
Location Manager	Sébastien Maître
Casting	Josa Maule (Quebec) Kiripi Katembo Siku (Congo)
Produced with	Téléfilm Canada
the financial	SODEC
participation of	Cinema and Television tax credits Gestion SODEC Canadian Tax Credit Vision Globale



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