

wide
presents

66^e Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Panorama

A YOUNG MAN AT THE CROSSROADS BETWEEN
TRADITION AND AMBITION

NAKOM

A FILM BY KELLY DANIELA NORRIS
AND TW PITTMAN



RASQUACHE FILMS PRESENTS JACOB AYANABA IN NAKOM

WITH GRACE AYARIGA ABDUL AZIZ JUSTINA KULIDU JAMES AZUDAGO FELICIA ATAMPURI

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER SEEMANT MENON PRODUCED BY ISAAC ADAKUDUGU GIOVANNI XIMENEZ DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY BOB GEILLE EDITOR TOMAS VENGRIIS MUSIC BY DABY BALDE
SCREENPLAY BY TW PITTMAN KUSAAAL DIALLO DIALOGUE BY KELLY DANIELA NORRIS TW PITTMAN

EYE ON FILMS

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Presents

NAKOM

By Kelly Daniela Norris & TW Pittman

PRESSKIT

«When a man dances then the drums are beaten for him.»

SYNOPSIS

After his father's sudden death, Iddrisu, a talented medical student, returns to his home village in northern Ghana. Faced with a debt that could destroy his family, Iddrisu has no choice but to turn their farm and fortunes around. Over the course of a growing season, Iddrisu confronts both the tragedy and beauty of village life, and must finally choose between two very different futures.

Jacob Ayanaba
as Iddrisu



SIGNIFICANCE

NAKOM aims to shift perspectives on a little seen or understood way of living.

By focusing on the remarkable characters and challenges of a family of subsistence farmers, NAKOM paints an intimate portrait of a region that's too often dismissed or stigmatized. Instead, the film strives for a story that feels universal : one young person's journey to reconcile the lifestyle of his forefathers – difficult, beautiful and disappearing – with his own interests and future. We see family dynamics play out – sometimes serious, sometimes playful. We see the contrasts between village life tradition and city life ambition. We see gender politics, tired hierarchies, dorm room romance and so much more that inspires connection.

As the story unfolds, the filmmakers hope that the audience – like NAKOM's protagonist – begins to question its own pre-conceptions, and opens itself to the simple realization that one life can be as good as another.





*Kelly Daniela Norris
(Director)*

Kelly's debut feature, *SOMBRAS DE AZUL*, won the Audience Award at its premiere at the 2013 Austin Film Festival, and has screened at more than a dozen domestic and international festivals. She cofounded Rasquaché Films in 2008, also directing the award-winning short film *SINNERMAN*. Her second feature *NAKOM* has garnered assistance from Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah University, the Austin Film Society, and the Global Film Initiative.

*TW (Trav) Pittman
(Writer/Director)*



Trav is a writer and producer with Rasquaché Films, and makes her feature directorial debut with *NAKOM*. She codirected the film on-location in Ghana, largely in the rural village where she once served with the US Peace Corps. Previously, she produced the Cuba-set feature *SOMBRAS DE AZUL*, which is among the only Cuban-American coproductions in 50 years of US embargo.



*«What happens to one of us
happens to all of us.»*

PRODUCTION NOTES

Production took place over 4 months on location in Nakom, a rural village without electricity or running water.

Core crew stayed in tight quarters for the duration of production – in the two-room “headmaster’s quarters” of Nakom’s primary school.

NAKOM is the first ever feature film in the Kusaal language. Kusaal is not standardized in its written form, so most actors learned their lines orally during rehearsals.

The cast is comprised of talented non-actors, nearly all from Nakom.

Combined international and local crew reflect (and reflect on) themes of globalization, westernization, and disappearing modes of living.



Women of Color co-directors Norris and Pittman co-run the small production house that oversaw every aspect of production.

Nakom’s subsistence farmers rely on an annual millet harvest to feed their families through the year – a modern example of an ancient way of living.

A successful harvest hinges on a timely rainy season – a two-month downpour that’s the lifeblood of northern Ghana.

Featured in the film, ‘pito’ is a local alcohol brewed from fermented millet.

There may not be electricity in Nakom, but locals can easily access Facebook on their mobile phones.

The film was blessed by elders and traditional priests of the Kusasi tribe.

PRODUCTION

A Ghanaian-American coproduction, NAKOM was conceived by writers Isaac Adakudugu (a native of the title village) and TW Pittman (who lived and worked there with the US Peace Corps), and realized by directors Pittman and Kelly Daniela Norris.

In 2013, with the help of hundreds of its residents, NAKOM completed a 4-month production in Ghana, discovering a revelation in lead actor Jacob Ayanaba. The diverse production team timed the shoot to capture the dramatic seasonal transformation of Nakom's landscape.

Post-production has seen collaboration with acclaimed Senegalese composer Daby Balde, as well as the support of Austin Film Society, the Global Film Initiative, and Wrocław's US in Progress.

NAKOM will have its World Premiere at the 66th annual Berli-nale – **the first fiction feature from Ghana ever to play the festival.**

Giovanni Ximénez (Producer)

Giovanni has spent the last few years working as an assistant to producers Sarah Green, John Ridley, and Michael McDonald on various productions including Terrence Malick's KNIGHT OF CUPS and UNTITLED PROJECT, and Jeff Nichol's MIDNIGHT SPECIAL. He manages NAKOM's festival and marketing phase.



Daby BALDE (Composer)

Daby is one of Senegal's best-kept musical secrets, with his albums "Introducing Daby Balde" and "Le Marigot Club Dakar" receiving widespread critical acclaim. His intricate arrangements are based on Fula traditions from southern Senegal and feature the fiddle, flute, kora, acoustic guitar, and percussion.

Tomas VENGRIS (Editor)

Tomas has written, edited, and directed numerous films while pursuing an MFA from the American Film Institute in Los Angeles, and his thesis film was a National Finalist in the 2013 Student Academy Awards. Tomas is an editor on Terrence Malick's KNIGHT OF CUPS and UNTITLED PROJECT, and his short film SQUIRREL premiered at Berlinale in 2015.

Isaac ADAKUDUGU (Producer/Kusaal Dialogue)

Isaac is a writer, producer, and filmmaker from Nakom, and is currently based in Bolgatanga, Ghana. His mastery of Kusasi history, language, and culture was invaluable in the development and execution of NAKOM. On set, Isaac managed translations, casting, and community relations. His passion for this story propelled the momentum of the entire village behind the production.

Bob GEILE (Director of Photography)

A one-of-a-kind cinematographer, Geile's keen eye and DIY ingenuity produce beautiful images in extreme environments. His work ranges from Japanese music videos to hyper-local web documentaries to consulting and producing original content for PBS national. Bob previously collaborated with Norris and Pittman on SOMBRAS DE AZUL and SINNERMAN.



*«We need someone who knows both
the new ways and the old ways.
Without that, I fear for the village.»*

CAST

Jacob **Ayanaba**.....Iddrisu Awinzor
Grace **Ayariga**.....Damata Awinzor
Abdul **Aziz**.....Kamal Awinzor
Justina **Kulidu**.....Senior Mother
Shetu **Musah**.....Junior Mother
James **Azudago**.....Chief of Nakom
Thomas **Kulidu**.....Uncle Napoleon
Felicia **Atampuri**.....Comfort

CREW

Kelly Daniela **Norris**.....Director
TW **Pittman**.....Co-Writer/Director
Isaac **Adakudugu**.....Producer/Co-Writer
Giovanni **Ximénez**.....Producer
Bob **Geile**.....Director of Photography
Alicia **Sully**.....Production Manager
Tomas **Vengris**.....Editor
Daby **Balde**.....Music
Chris **Keyland**.....Sound Design
Seemant **Menon**.....Executive Producer

DCP - HD | 2016 | GHANA / USA | 90' | DRAMA



CONTACTS

WIDE

WORLDWIDE SALES

9 Rue Bleue

75009 Paris

France

+33 1 53 95 04 64

+33 1 53 95 04 65

infos@widemanagement.com

www.widemanagement.com

Loic MAGNERON

President

lm@widemanagement.com

+33 6 60 43 96 86

Frédéric GENTET

International Sales

fg@widemanagement.com

+33 6 84 26 06 73

Georgia POIVRE

International Sales

gp@widemanagement.com

+33 7 61 57 96 86

Paul BOUCHARD

Business Affairs & Acquisitions

pb@widemanagement.com

RASQUACHÉ FILMS

Giovanni Ximénez -Producer

+1 773 354 9431

gvnn.xmnz@gmail.com