

# JOBURG PARTY:

A snapshot of South Africa's  
new youth underground

A film by Roderick Stanley & Chris Saunders

Starring

Dirty Paraffin

Richard the Third

Desmond & The Tutus

MJ Turpin

Jamal Nxedlana (CUSS)

Khaya Sibiyi AKA Bhubessi.

Joburg... It's like a movie.

*"Everybody wants a piece of this African cake..."*

– Chocolate (rapper, entrepreneur, party animal)

*"Two days that look more like a week..."*

*Really interesting"* – Die Zeit



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## IN THE MEDIA

“*Un magnifique projet...* A beautiful project illustrating the artistic richness of Johannesburg, often subject to violence and crime...”

– *Gradient Magazine*

“All too often Jo’burg is depicted as a dangerous and crime-filled city. However, over the last couple of years gentrification has swept through the city started by a movement of young creatives who are moving back to the centre of Johannesburg to live and work – proving that there is more to the city than meets the eye... This film is an interesting look at a city where young people from different cultural backgrounds are making it through a new wave of art, music and creativity.”

– *Connect / ZA*

“Two days that look more like a week...”

Joburg Party lasts just eight minutes. You would like to learn much more, because it seems really interesting what is being built there.”

– *Die Zeit*

## WORD ON THE BLOGS

“Check out this amazing brief documentary about the new youth underground movement in South Africa...”

– *AfroSuperstar*

“Chris Saunders and Rod Stanley made this great mini documentary on the Joburg street scene, check it out, it probably features some of your favourite South African artists.”

– *We Are Awesome*

“Cool story about the new youth movement in Johannesburg / South Africa... Super interesting, definitely check it out.”

– *WhuDat*

“Some fun reporting on the new urban underground subculture and the music it’s spawning in South Africa... Genuinely super interesting. I think they catch a bit of Jozi’s go-getter energy... A must see.”

– *YakShaving*

“I stumbled across the most wonderful video this morning highlighting Joburg’s growing youth subculture and the changes within the city.”

– *She Said She Said*

“The result of all of that is a great piece of work that sheds light on a scene that is far too often overlooked.”

– *True Vagabond*



Bhubessi





Dirty Paraffin

## LOGLINE

A snapshot of South Africa's new youth underground, shot over a whirlwind two days and nights at warehouse raves, rooftop parties and street fashion shoots in Johannesburg.

## SYNOPSIS

Over two days and nights in Johannesburg, South Africa, the filmmakers travelled to rooftop parties, warehouse raves, street fashion shoots and poolside jams to meet some of the young musicians, DJs, zine publishers and artists set on taking the SA scene global, and asked them how the city's youth culture is changing.

Features great music and interviews with Dirty Paraffin, Richard the Third, Desmond & The Tutus, MJ Turpin, Jamal Nxedlana (CUSS) and Khaya Sibiyi AKA Bhubessi.

Joburg...It's like a movie.

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Run-time: 07:56. Digital, HD, stereo. 16x9 / 1920x1080. Language: English.





Chocolate

## DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

Chris Saunders and Roderick Stanley met in Johannesburg when the magazine Rod was editing at the time (Dazed & Confused) produced a special issue about South Africa ahead of the 2010 World Cup. Working at a frenetic pace, they produced so much material and had so much fun doing it they decided to work together again. Six months later they travelled to Lagos, Nigeria for the MTV Africa Music Video Awards, where on a similarly exhausting schedule, they interviewed, photographed, filmed and partied with many top performers from the worlds of hip hop, R&B and kuduro from countries such as Nigeria, DRC, Uganda, Angola and Kenya.

JOBURG PARTY was shot on the fly over a weekend in Johannesburg at the very end of 2011. Roderick Stanley was mentoring young writers at the Live Magazine project in Cape Town for a month, which is where Chris Saunders was living at the time and also volunteering at the same project. They travelled to Johannesburg for a weekend

and decided to make a short film about the young, cutting-edge creative scene they knew was happening in Johannesburg. They hit up Facebook and invited themselves to as many events as they could, shooting and interviewing along the way.

With zero budget and little in the way of equipment other than Chris's Canon 5D, they approached the filming with a playful, DIY spirit, conducting open-ended interviews with the one consistent line of questioning being whether people should be excited about what is happening culturally in the city at the moment. The aim was to allow each person to talk about what interested them, to speak purely on their own terms, and not allow any overly thought-through agenda on the part of the filmmakers to dictate the narrative. The result is a spontaneous, energetic and uninhibited enthusiasm on the part of the interviewees as each attempts to convey exactly what it is that they personally find exciting about how their city is changing.

When working together, Chris and Rod have shared an ambition to present alternative, positive viewpoints from places that are typically reported on in terms of violence, poverty or crime. While remaining aware of undeniable realities, they hope that JOBURG PARTY continues those aims by giving an unexpected taste of the excitement, energy and creative ambition of young people in a city that is more often than not painted in a negative light.



MJ Turpin





MJ Turpin



Bhubessi and Rod Stanley



Desmond & the Tutus



MJ Turpin



Jamal Nxedlana





## INTERVIEW ON GRADIENT MAGAZINE

1 | First of all, could you introduce yourselves?

Roderick Stanley (journalist) – I was the editor of Dazed & Confused for seven years. I now live in New York where I work. I met Chris in South Africa when I was working on a special issue of Dazed ahead of the 2010 football World Cup, and we've worked together on a few magazine features and short films. This last one is a personal project that we started on when I was in Cape Town at the end of 2011. This film was shot during a weekend trip to Johannesburg. There was zero money and it was just the two of us. He filmed, I asked questions. Our friend Rob Hannah helped us edit it.

Chris Saunders (photographer / film maker) – I am a photographer and filmmaker from South Africa, I live in Johannesburg South Africa. It was a pleasure to have such an experienced, knowledgeable and adventurous partner.

2 | This gentrification process and emerging subculture in South Africa already happened in New York or Paris. Can we compare? You already heard about this culture thanks to Chris?

Rod – I don't think you can really compare those places in that sense... Joburg and SA's history is unique, really. Chris knows the city well. We thought it would be interesting to shine a light on a few young, aspiring musicians and artists and ask them, basically, why should people be excited about what they are doing? Joburg of course has a rich and longstanding musical and cultural heritage. This film conveys some of the excitement and shows digital connectedness and a willingness to collaborate, a desire for international/global recognition maybe even more so than national...

***“IT IS A CITY WITH CITIES IN IT, EACH PLACE WITH ITS OWN ATMOSPHERE AND CULTURES...”***

Chris – I agree with what Rod said, its difficult to compare Johannesburg to Paris. Everyone who is here is here to work, so the city essentially feeds on itself. The city also has so many elements to it, it is a city with cities within it, each place with its own atmosphere and cultures. I have covered many different cultures in Johannesburg during my career and this project was a brief look at some of the cultures that exist. If you look at my other work I have covered many others from the music, fashion and dance scene which show how diverse culturally this city really is.

3 | How did you met these people? How did they react to this project?

Rod – Facebook. Existing contacts. Friends, friends of friends and so on, just following connections and seeing where they ended up. Hearing about the video shoot and inviting ourselves along. Going to the warehouse party and interviewing the band after they finished playing. Grabbing the DJ when he was outside having a smoke. People were generally only too happy to talk and were excited about the project. Plus Chris can be very persuasive and doesn't give up easily!



Chris – A lot of the characters in the documentary are friends and colleagues of mine from around Johannesburg. Most people that I've spoken to about the project enjoyed it and thought it was a positive and different perspective on the city that we live in.

4 | At the beginning, you are at “a rich girl’s house”. These people get together only by social networks? How people reach to do “rooftop illegal parties” without being stopped by the police or some judicial measures?

Rod – I guess Facebook features quite prominently. And as for the rooftop party, I believe it was actually legal or perhaps semi-legal... Police were keeping an eye on it. The band organised it all anyway, I don't know the exact details... It was very impressive, though. Great setup! Though I felt a bit sorry for the people in the apartments it overlooked.

Chris – The first party we where at was a house party made for a scene in the ‘Papap! Papap!’ music video for Dirty Paraffin. The second party was in a popular venue in



Johannesburg called the Alex Theatre, the cops wanted to close it down because loads of people were complaining about the noise on the rooftop and it carried on. Facebook and social media are a huge help in a city the size of Johannesburg. Social media is the most common way of finding out what's going down.

5 | Do you have some anecdotes to tell us?

Rod – We both once found ourselves on the dance floor in a nightclub at 4am in Lagos, Nigeria, with a bottle of tequila and the Angolan kuduro crew Cabo Snoop for company. It's not the safest of cities and I'm not 100% sure how we got back to our hotel...

6 | Since you've been there to do this short film, what happened for artists you've met? Is that subculture strong enough to last and to be exported in other countries?

Rod – Dirty Paraffin have had a bit of notice in the UK. But they're all different, I don't





really think it's a coherent (sub)culture as such, rather different artists doing their thing and being judged on their own merits. Personally, I really like Dirty Paraffin, it would be great to see them do well. They're cool, talented and have an original sound.

***“THIS VIDEO SERVED AS A TASTE OF SOMETHING DIFFERENT IN A CITY WHERE PEOPLE EXPECT NEGATIVITY...”***

There are other great contemporary South African artists that have had international success, too, of course, like BLKJKS, Spoek Mathambo, DJ Mujava...

Chris – Well, things are different for me, I live here. The documentary has aided an awareness towards certain groups here in Johannesburg, I also believe that it has painted a different image of Johannesburg. The CUSS collective (Jamal, Okmalumkoolkat inc. ) have started a new studio downtown, M18J92t (MJ Turpin) has started a new gallery called the Kalashnikov in Braamfontein, Bhubessi and his group BoyzInBucks are releasing an album soon. I also agree with Rod when saying



that we didn't really feature a specific sub-culture, it was more focused on certain individuals who are talented and had interesting perspectives on the city.

7 | The media still talk about crime, racism and poverty in South Africa and Johannesburg. But you show the best side of this country and South African people. What do you think about these two opposites? What kind of future for this new generation?

Rod – Well, these are still serious issues. There are important problems that are of course rightfully discussed and we don't pretend they don't exist. Yes, Johannesburg can be violent but it's also a really exciting, fun and creative place to be. Why shouldn't that aspect be shown? This film came in for some criticism on one website because, as far as I could make out, some interviewees weren't political enough and came over as shallow and materialistic or whatever. But, you know, they are who they are and they said what they said. Chris and I just wanted to make a short film that gave a sense of the many cool, generous, creative and talented people we'd both encountered there. If we'd had more time and some money, we could do something that goes deeper. But, you know, it's a snapshot. Much thanks, love and respect to all those who appeared in it and supported it.

Chris – I think that the media paint a vision of South Africa that is unfortunately brutal and true. This environment however breeds creativity, people are forced to be inventive to figure out solutions. There is a definite future for our generation here, we all want to build a better country. Most of us have chosen to live here because we love our home and want to show the world what we have to offer as a generation of creators. This video served as a taste of something different in a city where people expect negativity – where we are exposed to press about a terrible reality every day, it's important to have a different and positive perspective without being ignorant.

Interview by Leslie Queyraud, included here by permission.

<http://www.gradientmag.com>



## CAST & CREW

### Chris Saunders – Co-Director, Co-Producer

Chris Saunders is a South African photographer from Johannesburg, as well as a short film and video director. In 2010 he won the year-long grant at Fabrica, Benetton's Creative Research Facility in Italy. He had his first solo show in 2011 with his S'Phara Phara series, a documentary series about the Real Actions Pantsula dance crew from Orange Farm. He recently completed his first exhibition in New York at the Wallplay Gallery with his show NOTXCS, a collaborative series on unique South African processes in fashion realized in collaboration with New York fashion designer Jenny Lai (NOT). Chris's work is multidisciplinary and his main focus lies in different and original subcultures of South Africa (Pantsula, Izikhotane, Shangaan Electro) and is currently working on a book on Pantsula culture with art historian Daniela Goeller (to be completed in 2015).

<http://www.whatwasparadise.com>

### Roderick Stanley – Co-Director, Co-Producer

Roderick Stanley is a British writer and editor who now lives in New York. He was the editor of the influential London-based fashion and culture magazine Dazed & Confused for seven years (2005–2012), and his exclusive interviews with the likes of Bjork, Daft Punk and Vivienne Westwood have appeared in various other magazines and newspapers. He has also edited several books, including D&AD 50, a 300-page celebration of the best of the last 50 years in design and advertising, published by art powerhouse Taschen.

<http://rod-stanley.com/>

### Rob Hannah – Editor

Born and started his video career in Durban. Edits promo by day, creative video by night. Lives and works in Johannesburg currently.

## FEATURING

### Dirty Paraffin

A rap/electronic duo from Johannesburg. Okmalumkoolkat (Smiso Zwane) was born in Umlazi, Durban. After graduating from college, he moved to Johannesburg where he met Doctor SpiZee, with whom he formed Dirty Paraffin. In 2012 Okmalumkoolkat worked with the London production trio LV on their album, Sebenza – released on the influential Hyperdub label (home to Burial and others).

(Wikipedia) <https://www.facebook.com/dirtyparaffin>

### Richard the Third

South Africa-based Richard the Third's sets are a roller-coaster ride of the best of modern bass music: grinding 4/4, future kwaito, rinsing bass and everything in between. He puts out his own music on local labels such as African Dope and On A Break, and produced the bulk of the music for Spoek Mathambo's debut album Mshini Wam, including the dark Joy Division cover "Control". (Resident Advisor)

<https://www.facebook.com/richard.the.third.music>

### Desmond & The Tutus

"Three-time award-losing band" (in their own words) based in Johannesburg and Pretoria, the Tutus' have also toured extensively internationally, opening on their 2009 UK tour for The Vivian Girls, The Soft Pack and Women. They played at one of the last, and legendary, Optimo parties at the Sub Club in Glasgow, Scotland, and somehow managed to sell out their first European headliner at Vanner och Bekanta in Stockholm.

<http://www.desmondandthetutus.co.za>

### MJ Turpin

Director of the Kalashnikovv Gallery in Braamfontein, newly established with his partner Matthew Dean. Kalashnikovv functions as a project space and traditional white-cube gallery, hosting "no-brow" work that defies categorisation while collecting and supporting artists left out in the wilderness by the art scene hegemony. As a DJ



he is known as M18J92T and he has also worked as experimental electronica outfit MtKidu with fellow “skelemtion” Nicholas Nesbitt. (Mail & Guardian)

<https://twitter.com/m18j92t>

### Jamal Nxedlana

Jamal Nxedlana is a visual artist based in Joburg. He has worked as a stylist, is a founder and creative director of Cuss and expresses himself through different disciplines – photography, fashion design, performance, blogging and film. His latest film piece, Izikhothane, documents Ubkhothane, the controversial youth subculture sweeping across Johannesburg and its surrounding townships.

(10and5.com) <https://twitter.com/jamalaun>

### Khaya Sibiya AKA Bhubessi

Stylist, designer and hip hop artist from Soweto, Johannesburg, winner of GQ South Africa Best Dressed (2012). Debut album Members Only was released in 2012, and co-owns locally-sourced fashion label Punk & Ivy, tailored to the needs of the Urban African. ‘Punk & Ivy refers to a style of dress that came about in the 80s in Soweto, to describe a style of dress for men. If you where not a Pantsula, you where either called a “IPunk” referring to a street style influenced by London Punks or an IVY, which was the up-market, dapper style of dress.’

<https://twitter.com/bhubesii>



## Music video credits:

Dirty Paraffin in collaboration with CussMonthly

Edited & Directed by: Ravi Govender

Shot by: Justin McGee & Jamal Nxedlana

Animation by: Lex Trickett

Styled by: Jamal Nxedlana & Ravi Govender

Dirty Paraffin – Papap! Papap!

Directed by Smiso Zwane

Footage by Lebogang Rasethaba

Edited by Ravi Govender

MtKidu – Skeleton key

skeleton key 2012

Written and Directed by MJ Turpin

Dop: Chris Saunders and Justin Mcgee

Edit: Malcolm Che

Producer: MJ Turpin

MTKIDU SNUFF HOUSE PARTY ARCHIVE 1992

MtKidu – Zombbie

Written, Produced and Directed by MJ Turpin and Nick Nesbitt

Dop Robyn Nesbitt

Edited Nick and Robyn Nesbitt

Bhubessi – Members Only

Directed by Obrian Manana and Khaya Sibiya

Cinematography Sims Phakisi

Edited By Themba Mbelu





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