UGANDA

FROM WAKALIWOOD, WITH LOVE

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Wakaliwood. Isaac Nabwana, filmmaker.

The genesis of the latest African movie industry

The average budget for a film: US$ 200. The props: frying pans and pvc pipes forming rocket launchers, condoms filled with red dye for gunshot wounds.
In short, shoestring. Welcome to Wakaliwood. home to Uganda's emerging cinema industry.
In Wakaliga, the ramshackle Kampala neighborhood where most films are shot, each of the roughly 2,000 inhabitants dreams of a glorious destiny in Hollywood.

These days a new film is about to begin shooting: Ebola. It tells the tale of a virus which emerges in Uganda and soon spreads across the world. The director is Isaac Nabwana, a self-taught filmmaker, as well as a screenwriter and producer, who has been called Uganda's Tarantino after the extreme violence that characterizes his movies.

Nabwana recently teamed up with Alan Hofmanis, an American expat who also stars in his films, and together they launched a crowdfunding campaign which raised US$ 13,000. A true fortune, which they say they will use to buy projectors, hard drives, generators (which are crucial to filmmaking in a country plagued by constant power outages) and possibly a plot of land to finally build a proper film studio. Until recently, the room where they edit their movies used to be a pigsty.

A cup marked with the Wakaliwwod logo.

Wakaliwood. Dauda Bisaso, wearing a costume during a scene of the movie “Ebola”.

Wakaliwood. Actor Kizza Manisuru Ssejjemba showing an old-style special effect to simulate a bleeding wound: a condom filled with red liquid.

Wakaliwood. Two "Wakastarz", kids of the neighborhood usually playing in the movies when not at school.

Wakaliwood. Alan Hofmanis, an American working with the crew, is often playing the Jesus role.

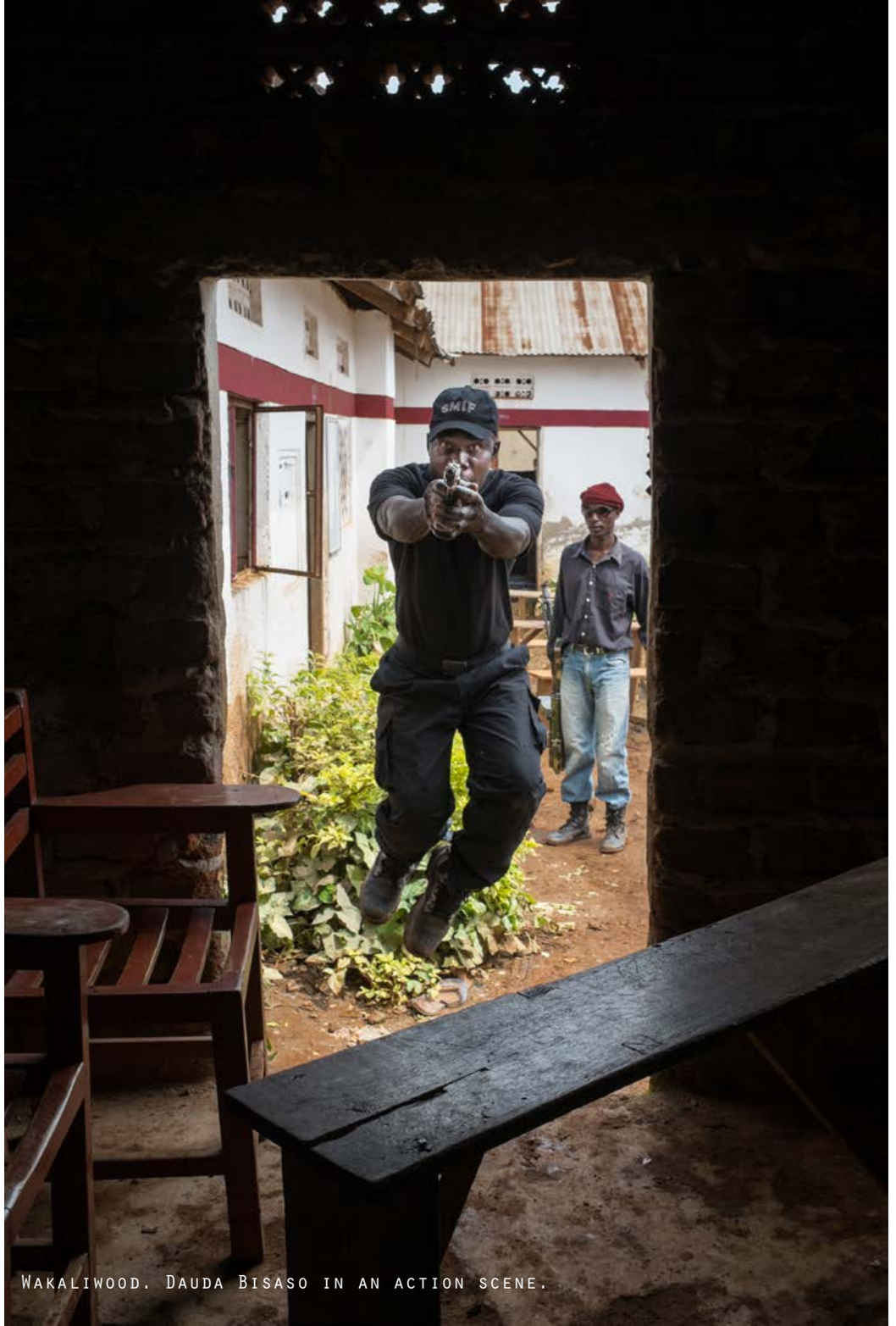
Wakaliwood. Isaac Nabwana, filmmaker.

Wakaliwood. A fighting scene featuring Kizza Manisuru Ssejjemba and Apollo Asiimwe.
Kizza is also a Kung-fu expert.

Wakaliwood. Visitors are often coming to watch movies in Wakaliga.

Wakaliwood. The actors, here Dauda Bisaso, usually go to local hardware stores to find raw materials and objects like paints, frying pans and pipes to build the props needed for their movies.

Wakaliwood. Isaac Nabwana shooting a close-up of Apollo Asiimwe.



Wakaliwood. Dauda Bisaso in an action scene.

Wakaliwood. Alan Hofmanis, an American working with the crew often playing the Jesus role.

Wakaliwood. Isaac Nabwana's partner, Mama Rachel, collaborates on the business side.

Wakaliwood. Newton, Philosophie and Margret, three of the "Wakastarz", kids of the neighborhood usually playing in the movies when not at school.

Wakaliwood. Isaac Nabwana edits all of his movies in his living-room with a very basic computer.

Wakaliwood. Actor Kizza Manisuru Ssejjemba seriously wounded in an action scene.

Wakaliwood. Searchie, an actor, selling DVDs in the streets.

Wakaliwood. Alan Hofmanis, often working with the crew playing the Jesus role.

Wakaliwood. In Uganda, where patriarchal rules are still respected, Wakaliwood makes a stand: there's no difference between men and women – those who bring great ideas are equally welcome.

WAKALIWOOD. AN ACTRESS.

Wakaliwood. Isaac Nabwana, the movie director, briefing the actors ready to act.

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