

# Namibia

*Jule Selbo*

Namibia gained independence from South Africa in 1990. Before this period, little cinematic data is available. John Marshall, an American working and living in Namibia, released documentaries about the country between 1958 and 1980. In 2000, the Namibian government passed the 'Namibian Film Commission Act' to attract filmmakers to use the country as a film location and to promote native filmmakers such as Cecil Moller and **Bridget Pickering**.

Pickering, born to a Namibian father and a South African mother, attended Syracuse University in the United States and worked for Universal Pictures before returning to Namibia to work in its film industry. She created the Namibian contribution to *Africa Dreaming* (1997) and was chosen in 1999 as one of six women filmmakers in Africa to direct a short story for the *Mama Africa* series (2001), a compilation of short films sponsored by American Queen Latifah. Pickering's short film in the *Mama Africa* series is titled 'Uno's World'. The character Uno (Sophie David) is a sexually inexperienced young woman. She gets involved with a womanizer, Kaura (Muhindua Kaura), and the affair leads to an unplanned pregnancy. When Kaura refuses to take responsibility, Uno leaves the baby in the care of her mother and embarks on a dangerous journey to track Kaura down. Pickering is also credited as a producer on the Academy Award-nominated *Hotel Rwanda* (2004, distributed by the North American film companies United Artists and Lions Gate.).

**Oshosheni Hiveluah**, in 2012, co-wrote (with Onesmus Shimwafeni) and directed the film *100 Bucks*. The film asks: what would someone risk if they had a deep desire for money? The narrative follows a hundred-dollar Namibian note as it makes its way through the various social strata of Namibian communities – and gives insights into the lives of very different characters.

*Tjiraa* (2012), a short film by **Krischka Stoffels**, focuses on Vezuva, a modern ovaHerero woman who completes her studies abroad and returns home. She is told she is to follow the customs of her community and marry her cousin. However, she is in love with another. Vezuva's pleas for understanding and compassion are not rewarded and she realizes that she is left without a choice – and can only hope that, in the future, her sister will be allowed more freedom.

The documentary form, to date, is most popular among the Namibian filmmakers.