

The world's best eco films at the South African Eco Film Festival

The South African Eco Film Festival (SAEFF) will bring the world's best documentary films with environmental themes to South African audiences from 26 March to 2 April, 2015.



"We've branched out," said Andreas Wilson-Späth of While You Were Sleeping, the non-profit organisation behind the event. "After last year's enthusiastic reception of the Cape Town Eco Film Festival, we've gone nationwide, sprouting offshoots in three additional venues around the country. Our mission remains the same: to raise awareness about the many pressing environmental issues the planet is facing through the amazing medium of documentary film. We've put together a world-class selection of films that both entertain and educate."

MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet, one of South Africa's biggest community fundraising programmes, has come on board as the festival's headline sponsor. "For the past 18 years MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet has been working with schools and charities, helping to raise funds for education and social development. By partnering the SAEFF, we aim to create additional platforms through which to encourage community engagement on crucial issues and also to inspire parents and children to become active citizens," said Helène Brand, Marketing Manager of MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet.

How can parents get their kids away from electronic screens and into nature? What are the thousands of industrial chemicals we are constantly surrounded by doing to our bodies? Will sharks survive humanity's seemingly insatiable hunger for shark fin soup? These are just some of the questions the films in this year's festival line-up ask and try to answer.

International festival guest

A special international festival guest will be conservationist Stefanie Brendl, who was producer of *Extinction Soup*, a highly acclaimed documentary film that supports her fight to educate lawmakers and legislators, both in the US and around the world, to help create and pass ground-breaking legislation that aiming to curb the wholesale slaughter of sharks for their fins and the consumption of shark fin soup. Brendl is a passionate and colourful character, an environmentalist, adventurer and conservationist.

The programme includes more than 25 beautifully shot, thought-provoking short- and feature-length documentaries - 12 of which have never been seen in South Africa before. Members of the audience will have the opportunity to vote for their favourite film, which will be decorated with the Silver Tree Audience Choice Award.

"We think that documentary films are an excellent way of learning about environmental issues, but unfortunately, they tend to be rather neglected on the mainstream cinema circuit," noted *While You Were Sleeping's* Dougie Dudgeon. "This year's festival includes a number of South African productions and we want to share these magnificent and important films with as many people as possible. We are also proud to announce that this year's festival will be hosted at four intimate and independent venues around SA: The Bioscope Independent Cinema in Joburg, the Asbos Teater in Pretoria, Khula Dhamma Retreat Centre & Ecological Farm near East London, and, of course, the Labia Theatre in Cape Town, which remains our spiritual home."

The Eco Kids Film Initiative

For Cape Town and Eastern Cape audiences, the Eco Kids Film Initiative (EKFI) is an exciting new addition to the festival programme, featuring films made for - and in some cases even by - children. "In order to nurture a social culture that is responsive to youth's environmental concerns we need to ensure that children are aware of the relevant environmental issues and have a vehicle through which to voice their concerns in a creative and empowering manner. I believe this vehicle should be film," explained EKFI director Tarien Roux. Each EKFI screening is made up of a careful selection of short films, which will be followed by a dynamic group discussion. This year the screenings will be aimed at children aged three to six, seven to 11 and 12 to 17. The selected films include a mix of documentary and narrative type films, both live action and animated.

Tickets for the Cape Town, Pretoria and Joburg screenings cost R45. For each ticket sold, R5 will be donated to Greenpop, the Cape Town-based tree-planting organisation.

To peruse the complete festival programme, including summaries and trailers of the films on show, go to www.southafricanecofilmfestival.com

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>