

# Krotoa, Baby Driver and Japanese Art



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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The remarkable local drama, *Krotoa* tells the story of a feisty, bright, young eleven-year old girl who is removed from her close-knit Khoi tribe to serve Jan van Riebeeck; in the action crime-comedy *Baby Driver*, a talented getaway driver relies on the beat of his personal soundtrack to be the best in the game; in *Girls Trip*, four lifelong friends travel to New Orleans for the annual Essence Festival. Sisterhoods are rekindled, wild sides are rediscovered, and there's enough dancing, drinking, brawling, and romancing to make the Big Easy blush. The western thriller, *Brimstone* is a triumphant epic tale of survival, powerful womanhood, and resistance against the unforgiving cruelty of a hell on earth; whilst the documentary *Hokusai: beyond the Great Wave* focuses on the work, life and times of Japan's greatest artist, Katsushika Hokusai, who influenced Monet, Van Gogh and other Impressionists.

## Krotoa

Krotoa was inspired by real-life historical events and tells the story of a feisty, bright, young eleven-year old girl (Charis Williams), who is removed from her close-knit Khoi tribe to serve Jan van Riebeeck (Armand Aucamp), her uncle's trading partner. She is brought into the first Fort, established by the Dutch East India Company in 1652. There she grows into a visionary young woman, who assimilates the Dutch language and culture so well that she rises to become an influential interpreter for van Riebeeck, who became the first Governor of the Cape Colony. Krotoa (Crystal-Donna Roberts) ends up being rejected by her own Khoi people and destroyed by the Dutch when she tries to find the middle way between the two cultures.

The film, written by Kaye Ann Williams and Margaret Goldsmid, was created by a dynamic team of women, with acclaimed filmmaker Roberta Durrant as director and producer. Durrant is the creator of various award-winning South African television series and sitcoms, as well as the children's film, *Felix*, which won seventeen international film awards.

"Identity, a sense of belonging and reconciliation are strong, universal themes in this powerful tale. Especially because the identity of someone, who is in between two cultures, is very relevant in any multicultural society. More specifically, discrimination between conflicting cultures and the (both strong and weak) position of a woman standing in between these cultures, are the two main threads of this story," says Durrant.

"It is not only important to tell her story because of all these great achievements, but it is also necessary to highlight that she was caught between two ways of life and constantly forced to choose between these two cultures. The tension and mistrust created between Krotoa and her people, because of her skill as an interpreter that was frequently used by Jan van Riebeeck and the VOC (The Dutch East India Company), led to the tragic end of this influential woman, but also to the great beginning of a nation."

## **Baby Driver**

Full of reversals, rewinds, fast forwards and heart-stopping skips, inspired by the types of crime-and-chase movies that have thrilled moviegoers since Steve McQueen in a rewed-up Mustang changed car pursuits forever – Baby Driver is a game-changing, lane-changing, hard-charging blast.

Baby (Ansel Elgort), is an innocent-looking getaway driver who gets hardened criminals from point A to point B, with daredevil flair and a personal soundtrack running through his head – that's because he's got his escape route plotted to the beat of specific tunes that go from his well-curated iPod straight to his ears, which translates into expertly timed hairpin turns, gear shifts and evasive manoeuvres that take his passengers on the ride of their lives.

Baby works for Doc (Kevin Spacey), a kingpin on a lucky streak of brash daytime bank heists, thanks in part to his faith in Baby's auto acumen. Doc's go-to professionals include former Wall Street type turned outlaw Buddy (Jon Hamm), Buddy's young, lawless and scandalous partner in crime Darling (Eiza Gonzalez), and the impulsive, gun-slinging Bats (Jamie Foxx), whose suspicions about Baby – from his attitude to his aptitude – begin to create a dangerous rift in an until-then smooth-running operation.

The Baby we meet at the beginning of the movie – hidden behind sunglasses, dialled into his iPod playlist, then a hellion at the wheel – is like the greatest gang apprentice ever.

"This kid's a hotshot, but he's also on the fringes of the gang. He literally sits as far away from them as he can, because he really doesn't want to be part of the group. He thinks, wrongly, that he can be a getaway driver but not be a criminal, like, 'I'm just the courier. I don't have anything to do with the bad stuff.' The action scenes are kind of like Baby's day job, and I think a lot of people that work in a job sometimes shield themselves in a different persona. Then when they're home, they're a different person," says Wright.

When Wright was dreaming up the role, he envisioned a riff on the strong silent type personified by Clint Eastwood and Steve McQueen, but with the tension that it might all be a front. "You meet him, and he's a badass in his profession, and then immediately afterwards you start to meet the real kid. It's an interesting dichotomy, that he's really good at a job that he should not be doing," continues Wright.

## Girls Trip

The new comedy from director/producer Malcolm D. Lee (*The Best Man* franchise, *Barbershop: The Next Cut*) follows four lifelong friends - Ryan, Dina, Lisa and Sasha - as they travel to New Orleans for the annual Essence Festival, where sisterhoods are rekindled, wild sides are rediscovered and there's enough dancing, drinking, brawling and romancing to make The Big Easy blush.

The all-star cast is led by Regina Hall (*When the Bough Breaks*) as Ryan Pierce, a successful author at a crossroads in her marriage; Tiffany Haddish (*Keanu*) as the hot-headed, free-spirited and fiercely loyal Dina; Jada Pinkett Smith (*Bad Moms*) as Lisa Cooper, a conservative nurse and mother of two children who desperately needs a weekend getaway; and Queen Latifah (*Miracles from Heaven*) as Sasha Franklin, a gossip blogger who is circling a life reset of her own.

Malcolm D. Lee introduces us to the story of this "Flossy Posse," characters he feels all of us can see ourselves in.

"We have this group of women who went to college together and are best friends. They've become a little estranged in the past couple of years because life has happened to them—whether it is a career, friendships, babies or family time.

They used to go to Essence Festival annually, but in the past couple of years they haven't, and it's time to reconnect," Lee continues. "Due to a couple fractures in their relationships, there are unspoken words that get revealed at this particular time - in the midst of all the chaos, fun and debauchery that ensues. I believe everybody, especially women, are going to recognise themselves in these characters," says Lee.

# Brimstone

The western thriller, *Brimstone* is a triumphant epic tale of survival, womanhood and resistance against the unforgiving cruelty of a hell on earth.

Our heroine is Liz (Dakota Fanning), carved from the beautiful wilderness, full of heart and grit, hunted by a vengeful preacher (Guy Pearce) - a diabolical zealot and her twisted nemesis. But Liz is a genuine survivor; she's no victim - a woman of fearsome strength who responds with astonishing bravery to claim the better life she and her daughter deserve.

Fear not. Retribution is coming.

The film was conceived, written and directed by Martin Koolhoven.

"Westerns are usually pretty macho, and there aren't many examples of female leads. In the cases where that has happened, the films were usually the same kind of story, but then with a female gunslinger, like in *The Quick and the Dead*. *Brimstone* actually has a female point of view, not only literally, but in terms of actual content too. That's fairly unique for a movie set in the Old West," says Koolhoven

## Hokusai: Beyond the Great Wave

Filmed in Japan, the US and the UK, British Museum presents *Hokusai*, which focuses on the work, life and times of Katsushika Hokusai, painter and printmaker of the Edo (Modern Tokyo) period. Hokusai is regarded Japan's greatest artist, who influenced Monet, Van Gogh and other impressionists.

The film uses spectacular close-ups and expert insights to show his wide-ranging influence and legacy. Using pioneering 8K Ultra HD video technology, Hokusai's paintings and prints are examined by world experts who are at the forefront of digital art history. The famous volcano Mount Fuji, which was a model for Hokusai in his quest for immortality during his later years, appears in the background of his most famous painting, 'The Great Wave', an image depicting an enormous wave threatening boats off the coast. Known as the father of manga, his drawings, prints and paintings show Hokusai's generous, all-embracing view of humanity. Interestingly, he is the only painter with his own emoji.

Through much tragedy and poverty, he never stopped striving for perfection in his work. The documentary is introduced by arts presenter Andrew Graham-Dixon, and features artists David Hockney, Grayson Perry and Maggi Hambling, along with leading scholars of the day. He was a master, and as Hockney put it, "He was a prodigy, like Picasso." The running time is approximately 90 minutes, including an interval.

The Hokusai releases on Saturday, 5 August, for four screenings only, on 5, 9 and 10 August at 7.30pm and on 6 August at 2.30pm at Ster-Kinekor's Nouveau cinemas in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town, and at Ster-Kinekor Gateway in Durban.

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## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co.za](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)

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