



# LOVE THE ONE YOU LOVE

a film by  
jenna bass

## **SYNOPSIS:**

Terri (Chi Mhende), a sex-line operator, and Sandile (Andile Nebulane), a dog handler, seem to have the perfect romance – too perfect: Terri secretly yearns for freedom, while Sandile dreams of the day his girlfriend will admit that they’re meant to be. When Terri decides to teach English in Korea, the couple agree to take a break, but to their horror, they encounter unexpected resistance: their friends and family are intent that they stay together, at whatever cost. What starts as innocent advice and isolated events soon become more sinister, and Terri and Sandile begin to suspect that there is a conspiracy at work to keep them in love, involving strangers, the city, the country and maybe the government – but why? Together they embark on an investigation that takes them across the city, consulting witchdoctors, priests, private investigators, and eventually into the frightening heart of their love for each other.

On the other side of town, Eugene (Louw Venter), a love-lorn computer technician struggles to get over his ex-fiancée, Micheline, striking up an unlikely friendship with her teenage brother, lonely smart aleck, Mo (Mogamat Dayaan Salie). When Eugene’s late night internet searches uncover concrete proof that he and Micheline are destined for each other, Eugene sets off to win back the love of his life.

‘Love The One You Love’s parallel stories question the ideals we hold too sacred: love, happiness, and the New South Africa, the pursuit of which makes truth impossible.

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SOUTH AFRICA | 2014 | English & isiXhosa with English subtitles | 88min | Colour  
DCP & HDCAM

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## **FESTIVALS & AWARDS:**

DURBAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2014

Best South African Feature Film

Best Direction in a South African Feature Film

Best Actress (Chi Mhende)

BUSAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2014

Nominated for the Flash Forward Award

FESTIVAL 3 CONTINENTS 2014

Youth Jury Award

GÖTEBORG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2015

Nominated for the Ingmar Bergman Debut Award

JOZI FILM FESTIVAL 2015

Best Feature Film

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:**

Love The One You Love began as an investigation into the 'conspiracy' or 'control' behind the idea love, bombarding us, every day life from all sides: culture and society tell us what love is in the films we watch, the books we read. Magazines tell us how to tell if we're in love, or what to do when we are. Governments determine what we can and can't do with love, and how to use it for the betterment of all. Our family and friends give input into who is right for us, when to hang in there, and when to let go - and of course, when to get married and have children. Even our own bodies are plotting against us - rewarding us with the chemicals of attraction. Both farcical and horrific it may be, but deeply important to us all - there is no one we can appeal to when we're in love, we are stuck in a feeling, at the mercy of another person - and worse, at the mercy of ourselves. We're trapped in a Kafka-esque fugue of neuroscience and social conditioning. 'Midsummer Night's Dream' may be a comedy, but I've always seen it as a horror, illustrating the indiscriminate capriciousness of attraction. With Love The One You Love I wanted to explore this idea, through a couple who have attained everything from intimacy and togetherness, but for whom even this is not enough - they want to 'understand' it - and once they do, they have to decide if they can ever go back to what they had before.

This course of thinking applies on a grander scheme to the city of Cape Town, a place so many citizens profess to love, and are intensely loyal to: and yet there is no ONE 'Cape Town', the city is made up of many worlds, ages apart economically, culturally and socially. We all have our illusion of this place, the ideal city, and we accept it for what it is... or else, how can we live here? In the same sense, I often feel that South Africa is a form of propaganda state - adverts, presidential addresses, bad films, all tell me I live in a country that is united in vision and purpose, where people of all races gather to watch soccer, and drink a particular brand of beer. We are a nation on the rise in all idealistic respects. And yet when I look around, this is not what I see - frequently, far from it. At least, it is not quite so simplistic. In this way, these two complementary themes are bound up: A conspiracy may be afoot to make us love a country that doesn't exist... but that doesn't mean we should cease to love her. And love may very well be a fabrication, at least in terms of the ideal. But that certainly doesn't mean we can stop loving, even if we ever wanted to.

## **PRODUCTION NOTES:**

The innovative, improvised debut feature of Capetonian film director, Jenna Bass is soon to be unveiled at its World Premiere In Competition at the Durban International Film Festival.

Love the One You Love, starring Louw Venter (Semi-Soet, Jimmy In Pienk, Corne & Twakkie) with the new talent discoveries of Zimbabwean-born thespian Chi Mhende (Waiting For The Barbarians, Nothing But The Truth) and newcomer, 17-year-old Mogamat Dayaan Salie, is the creation of Jenna Bass whose previous short film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. Produced over many months, this micro budget film saw the director fulfilling six roles in the production and drawing stylistic inspiration from John Cassavetes, Harmony Korine, Mike Leigh and Wong Kar-Wai. Choosing to work without a script, Bass cast a diverse ensemble of professionals and non-actors, improvising all the scenes within the high-concept narrative, resulting in exceptional performances and rapid-fire dialogue.

Born out of a desire to pioneer a new kind of South African independent film, Love The One You Love proves that nano-budgets and big ideas can co-exist in a country still looking for its cinematic voice. Shooting on multiple formats and cameras ranging from DSLRs, point-and-shoots, handycams, and a Japanese toy camera and using Cape Town as a giant set, the film covers the length of the Mother City, behind closed doors and into chambers inside our hearts that we don't understand.

Bass was supported by executive producers Lawrence Mattis (The Matrix Trilogy, The Walking Dead) and Steven Markovitz (Viva Riva!, African Metropolis) with sound design and composition by Ross Dorkin from the hugely popular local band Beatenberg.

"This is the kind of film that doesn't come up very often for most actors and I relished the opportunity" said actor Louw Venter

"Jenna Bass is a rare talent that is about to be recognized on the world cinema stage. She has excelled in every department she worked on in this film, a remarkable achievement. We are proud to be launching the film in South Africa first at the prestigious Durban Film Festival" said Executive producer Steven Markovitz.

### **ABOUT THE FILMMAKER:**

Jenna Bass (b. 1986) is a South African writer, filmmaker and ex-magician. An alumnus of the Focus Features Africa First Short Film Program, her Zimbabwe-set short film, The Tunnel, premiered at the Sundance and Berlin Film Festivals and continues to screen internationally.

In 2013, Jenna shot and self-produced her nano-budget directorial debut, Love The One You Love, and is currently developing her second feature, Flatland, a feminist Western, as well as several other projects.

In 2014 Jenna joined forces with DoodVenootSkap, a hip-hop collective from Lavender Hill on the Cape Flats, to collaboratively workshop the first a-cappella rap-musical in Kaapse Afrikaans slang, entitled 1Z. The project will result in a four-part mini-series, for community TV station CTV.

Jenna is the editor and co-creator of Africa's only pulp-literary magazine, Jungle Jim, published in South Africa, and soon to be syndicated in Nigeria. In 2012, under pen name, Constance Myburgh, she was shortlisted for the Caine Prize for African Writing, the continent's leading literary award.

### **ABOUT CHI MHENDE ("TERRI"):**

Zimbabwean born actress and voice artist, Chiedza "Chi" Mhende moved to Cape Town in 2006 to study at AFDA - the South African School of Motion Picture Medium and live Performance. She was introduced to Cape Town's theatre scene as Lady Capulet in a 2010 Artscape production of "Romeo and Juliet".

Other theatre credits include K. Sello Duiker's "The Quiet Violence of Dreams", JM Coetzee's "Waiting for the Barbarians", Titania in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (performed at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival in July 2012), "Taming of the Shrew", "The Comedy of Errors", and "Richard III".

Her theatre training extends to Drama Therapy having worked with organisations such as the Bonfire Improv Theatre Company and the Zakheni Arts Therapy Foundation.

She is the voice of "Siyaya" and Al Jazeera's global health series "Lifelines".

Film and Television credits include "Evil in Our Midst", "The Tunnel", "Stokvel 6", "Mad Dogs 3", and "Love the One You Love" which made its debut at the 2014 Durban International Film Festival and for which she was awarded the Best Actress award in the International Category.



### **CREDITS:**

TERRI - Chi Mhende  
SANDILE - Andile Nebulane  
EUGENE - Louw Venter  
MO - Mogamat Dayaan Salie  
TSEPHO - Mzu Ntantiso  
NOLLY - Thenji Stemela  
NELSON - Nelson Das Neves  
LAURA - Lise Slabber

DIRECTED, WRITTEN AND FILMED BY  
Jenna Bass

#### PRODUCERS

Jenna Bass  
Steven Markovitz

#### EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Lawrence Mattis

#### ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Shaun Swingler

#### EDITORS

Jacques de Villiers  
Jenna Bass

#### SOUND DESIGN & COMPOSITION

Ross Dorkin

#### PRODUCTION DESIGN

Jenna Bass

#### POST-PRODUCTION SERVICES

Upstairs Post  
UCT Film Production Department

#### AUDIO POST-PRODUCTION

Sound & Motion Studios

## REVIEWS & PRESS:

### DURBAN 2014 REVIEW: LOVE THE ONE YOU LOVE IS A LUMINOUS, PERPLEXING, ENGROSSING DEBUT // BY TODD BROWN, TWITCH FILM

"...Jenna Cato Bass delivers a sparkling debut feature with *Love The One You Love*, an entirely improvised film built around a concept and twenty page treatment document to provide the spine of a story and structure - a spine that reportedly shifted considerably as they made their way through production - driven by simply outstanding, emotionally bare and truthful performances from the entire cast a wonderfully fluid edit and Bass' intimate cinematography.

In the early going *Love The One You Love* plays less as a conventional narrative than it does as a series of snapshots, sequential moment in time in the lives of its major characters and while it certainly does cinch up considerably as the film proceeds that sense that we're sharing in intimate, authentic moments rather than a constructed tale never departs which at times makes things almost uncomfortably personal as you partake in the private emotional meltdowns of people you've come to care about.

This sort of film is absolutely nothing without a strong cast and Bass' core players here are truly remarkable. Andile Nebulane plays Sandile as a sort of gregarious teddy bear, masking the growing disquiet beneath the surface with the sort of outgoing personality that pours itself out to make sure everyone around him is happy and taken care of until he himself is simply spent and exhausted. Chi Mhende does remarkable work as Terri, a complex woman who recognizes the good thing she has in Sandile and yet can't get around her own fear of intimacy. Equally strong is Louw Venter as Eugene, his more graphic expressions of loss pushing him in a direction that could have easily slipped into mawkish sentimentality in lesser hands but here presents a striking portrait of a deeply fractured man.

The conspiracy element provides a welcome element of ambiguity and uncertainty to affairs. Bass utterly resists the urge to explain what may or may not actually be happening behind the scenes instead choosing to present just enough information on this front for the mysterious behind the scenes manipulations to resonate as any one of a number of possible metaphors, allowing every individual audience member to bring something of themselves to the film.

In the post screening Q&A Bass explained that she undertook her debut fast and cheap, embracing this improvisational format because she felt driven to make a movie to prove she could make a movie. Having experienced the long development time involved in going down more traditional routes only to see it come to nothing she chose a different path hoping to get herself over that first time hump. She's done considerably more than that, proving herself not only capable but also the possessor of a unique and compelling voice and an uncommon gift with actors. Expect good things from Bass in the future."



**LOVE THE ONE YOU LOVE IS AS FRESH AS A NEON DAISY // BY CHARL BLIGNAUT, CITY PRESS**

A new young female voice burst onto the South African film scene last night with the premiere of the unique and intriguing *Love the One You Love*. It is Cape Town writer and director Jenna Cato Bass' debut feature and it enthralled the auditorium, which was so packed people were sitting in the aisles.

The film is a singular vision of love as a supernatural haunting. It plays out mostly in nightclubs, on the streets of Cape Town and in the apartment of Terri (Chi Mhende) and Sandile (Andile Nebulane). She's a phone sex operator, he's a dog handler. They're in love – but she can't say the words. She doesn't want her happiness to be determined by someone else. In a curious mix of lurid, cheesy art department and raw, intense emotion, the film is as fresh as a neon daisy.

The story plays out like a conspiracy theory. Men in Mandela masks keep passing by and external factors like hearing a bad Eighties song determine the lead couple's fate. Woven into their story is the tale of one of her clients, a computer operator, and his friendship with the young brother of his ex-girlfriend (Louw Venter and the brilliant, offbeat kid star Dayaan Salie). Bass shot the film with an intimate, all-seeing camera and even co-edited it. The dialogue was improvised by the cast.

It all sounds a little odd, but *Love the One You Love* is unlike any film before it and it is utterly compelling from beginning to end, somehow extracting the weirdness of living in the bubble that is Cape Town in a country like South Africa. Its story is universal. Is there a bigger plot out there that causes our lives to intersect?

Afterwards Bass had the audience eating out of her hand as she described the process behind the film. "We cling to illusions to get by with life, but often they're the things that hold us back," she said of the film's themes, adding that her own experience of love was like a horror movie.

Bass, who is known for her speculative and historical short stories and short films, is the founder of *Jungle Jim*, a local pulp fiction magazine. She has – under her pseudonym Constance Myburgh – been shortlisted for the Caine Prize for short fiction. She left film school seven years ago and couldn't believe she hadn't yet made a feature. So she threw caution to the wind and – on a ridiculously low budget – birthed her debut.

It paid off in spades. *Love the One You Love* caught the eye of seasoned producer Steven Markovitz, who came on board. The film is sold out in Durban and is in competition for best local feature.

It's part of a new wave of cinema here – one that, like the hardcore sugar daddy film *The Two of Us* is seeing young directors producing independent features on low budgets without relying on state funds or commercial demands. "I needed to make a film to prove I can make a film to show the people who I need to finance my films," she said.

I genuinely can't wait for her next one – and that, she says, will either be about undead security guards or an all-female Western set in the Karoo.

**DIRECTOR JENNA BASS BRINGS MAGIC TO THE BIG SCREEN // BY CHRISTOPHER VOURLIAS, VARIETY**

Before first-time helmer Jenna Bass turned her thoughts to movie magic, she was focused on a different type of sleight of hand. A graduate of Cape Town's College of Magic, the 27-year-old says, "It was probably the best education I could have gotten."

Bass's pedigree isn't just smoke and mirrors. Her first short, "The Tunnel," was a product of Focus Features' now-defunct Africa First program, and screened at Sundance and Berlin. "Love the One You Love," a highly anticipated feature debut which has its world premiere at Durban on July 20, was executive produced by Lawrence Mat-tis.

But magic taught Bass the earliest lessons she would later apply to the bigscreen, where she learned to conjure a world that is both real and illusion. The transition from magic to movies, she says, was "probably the most obvious career move you can make."

In "Love The One You Love," Bass draws on three unlikely protagonists — a phone-sex operator, a dog handler and an IT technician — to look at love and identity in contemporary South Africa.

While at first glance the juxtaposition of her three leads seems odd, Bass says that the radical experiment of the Rainbow Nation after apartheid has created a society where "most people...are outsiders."

"Put people in a room and see what happens," she says. "That's the story of South Africa."

The divisions that still exist 20 years after the end of apartheid have been fertile ground for many South African helmers to explore, and Bass says those fractures helped to bring the story of "Love The One You Love" into focus.

"We're a totally divided society," she says, "but...we all (care) about love. If you really get under the skin of that in an interesting way, people will follow you."

True to her roots as a magician and entertainer, Bass is juggling a host of projects. Currently in development is "Flatland," what Bass calls a "feminist Western" which recently forged a German co-production agreement, and has received support from EAVE's European Producers Workshop, the Rotterdam Lab, Paris Project, and South Africa's National Film and Video Foundation.

She's also working on a "supernatural noir" feature, "Tok Tokkie," and "a collaboratively work-shopped hip-hop musical mini-series," set in Cape Town's gritty Cape Flats. In her spare time, Bass is also the co-founder and editor of an African pulp magazine, Jungle Jim.

"You always have to have five things that you're working on," she says.

## FRAYING RELATIONSHIPS ARE FRONT AND CENTRE IN SOUTH AFRICAN FILMMAKER JENNA BASS' REFRESHING DEBUT //

BY ELIZABETH KERR, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"Films from South Africa that don't deal with the country's lingering race relations issues, rampant crime and political corruption are few and far between but one-woman show Jenna Cato Bass' debut feature *Love the One You Love* does its best to steer clear of anything that topical. A standard relationship drama about the messy intersecting lives of an average couple and a single man who's not over his last relationship, *Love* is refreshingly connective in its subject matter and a welcome alternative portrait of modern middle class Cape Town. Reminiscent of *Miranda July* were she slightly less focused (and, to be fair, far less self-indulgent) *Love the One You Love* could become the beneficiary of curious distributors with the last round of films from South Africa that travelled beyond the domestic market (*Tsotsi*, *U-Carmen eKhayelitsha*, *Beauty*) years in the rearview mirror. A strong festival life should be a given.

What is likely a tight budget is masked by Bass' intimate, rather than irritatingly shaky, hand held camerawork and a dedication to her characters' words and how they relate to each other. The film has more than one sequence that feels like we, as viewers, are eavesdropping as much as watching the romantic drama unfold. Leads Chi Mhende and Andile Nebulane are as handsome a pair as has hit screens anywhere in ages and they nail the ebb and flow of a couple at a crossroads and always feel natural in their roles, absolutely critical in a film where "nothing" in the traditional sense of the word really happens.

... Some will criticize Bass' lack of interest in all matters black and white, but that feels progressive and contemporary rather than like avoidance. Ultimately that's not what *Love* is about."



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