



Digital Press Notes “Who I Am Not”

RO/CA/

From Executive Producer Patricia Arquette, a Double 4 Studios Romania production, in co-production with Filmoption International (CA), in association with South Africa. A recipient of grants from The Breathe Project, Docs Up Fund, and Frameline.

tagline

There is male, there is female, and then, there is **i**.

logline

A beauty queen and a male-presenting activist, both born male and female within one single body, break the intersex taboo through a personal and intimate exploration of truth, faith, and belonging.

synopsis

What makes a male, and what makes a female? Where do we draw the line, and does it really matter? Sharon-Rose Khumalo, a South African beauty queen, plunges into an identity crisis after finding out she is intersex. She needs the guidance of somebody just like her. The only person who will help is Dimakatso Sebidi, a male-presenting intersex activist who turns out to be her complete opposite. The two parallel but divergent stories are an intimate look at the struggle of living in a male-female world, when you are born in-between.

Marketing

At the age of 21, both of our characters unexpectedly discovered that they were born intersex. Until that moment, they had taken for granted the sex assigned to them at birth. In the 'blink of an eye', everything they believed about themselves was erased and replaced by their worst fears. Approximately 150 million people worldwide are born with intersex traits and might have similar experiences.

Sexual identity is something most of us take for granted. Who or what defines it? Are sex and gender concepts constructed by society, primarily for the convenience of the 98% of the world's population who fit within traditional categories? What about the remaining 2%, who are then rendered invisible? At the heart of our film is this important contemporary discussion, which is relevant to a universal audience. It is particularly significant for today's youth, for whom gender and biological sex are defining topics.

However, this film is also crucial for parents, who are often pressured by the medical community to choose between male and female when assigning the sex of their newly born intersex child. 'Who I Am Not' will be an eye-opener for them and will change many minds and hearts.

POV director

Who I Am Not is my debut documentary. When I first dove into the intricate world of the intersex community, it was like unearthing stories that had been waiting to be told. When I met Sharon, the first openly intersex beauty queen, through her eyes, I felt the weight of emotions, struggles, and joys of those who exist beyond societal binaries.

Then there's Dimakatso, a beacon of hope for countless silent voices. Do you know that nearly 150 million intersex individuals exist worldwide? Dimakatso's passion for change, evident in initiatives like their Summer Camp for intersex children in South Africa, became a driving force behind our documentary. Their dedication is the kind of tangible change we wanted to spotlight. But our journey was more than just about filming; it was about bonding. Over four incredible years, Sharon, Dimakatso, and I became storytellers together, blending our experiences and emotions. It was crucial for me to ensure they felt seen and heard. This is why we delved into unique techniques like group therapy, psychodrama, and dream interpretation. These methods transformed our storytelling, adding layers of depth both visually and emotionally. Speaking of visuals, "Who I Am Not" is a canvas painted with the actual dreams, raw emotions, and vulnerabilities of Sharon and Dimakatso. We wanted the audience to not just watch but feel, question, and introspect about their understanding of sex, gender, and identity. The world has started noticing our tale. From international festivals to intimate screenings, every viewing sparks conversations and challenges age-old beliefs. Through this film, I want to shine a light on the 'I' in LGBTQIA+, reminding everyone that Intersex isn't just a concept but a beautiful biological reality.

In essence, "Who I Am Not" is both a deep dive into personal stories and a call to the world. It seeks not only to inform, but to transform, urging society to embrace the full spectrum of human identity.

EP Patricia Arquette

"Who I Am Not is a very important film. The subjects in the film are heartbreakingly honest as they take us through their journeys of overcoming insurmountable challenges in the quest for self-love and societal acceptance.

While many people know the term LGBTQIA, they may not understand that the “I” stands for “Intersex.” It’s not a gender identity, it’s a biological reality. Intersex variations are a natural part of human diversity. It is estimated that almost 2% of people worldwide are born intersex. This important film illuminates the often underexamined sector of the population with love, hope, dignity, and respect. Who I Am Not teaches us the resilience of the human spirit and the healing power of “love and acceptance.”

FESTIVAL PARTICIPATIONS:

United States:

SXSW - Documentary Spotlight Section- North American Premiere
Doc NYC - US East Coast Tri-States premiere
Frameline (San Francisco) - Centerpiece presentation, Ca. South Bay premiere
Seattle Queer Film Festival
Wicked Queer: The Boston LGBT Film Festival
Provincetown International Film Festival
Crested Butte Film Festival
Atlanta Out on Film
Reel Affirmations, Washington, DC
Pan African Film Festival, LA

United Kingdom:

BFI Flare - Centerpiece presentation, UK Premiere
Afrika Eye Film Festival
Queer Vision Film Festival

Denmark:

CPH:DOX - Denmark premiere, Highlights section
MIX Copenhagen

Spain:

DocsBarcelona - Spain premiere, International Competition
Bilbao International LGBT Film Festival
CinHOMO Muestra de Cine Internacional y Sexualidad - Castilla y Leon

Poland:

Krakov Film Festival - Poland premiere, International Competition

Romania:

Transilvania International Film Festival - Supernova section, Romania premiere
For You International Film Festival, Bistrița

Greece:

Thessaloniki Documentary Festival - World Premiere
CineDOC Festival

South Korea:

Seoul International Pride Film Festival - South Korea premiere

Hungary:

Verzió International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival - Hungary premiere

New Zealand:

Doc Edge Festival - South Pacific premiere, Being Oneself section

Serbia:

Beldocs International Documentary Film Festival - Serbia premiere

Sweden:

Cinema Queer International Film Festival - Sweden premiere
Malmö Queer Film Festival

Finland:

Helsinki International Film Festival – Love & Anarchy - Finland premiere

Israel:

TLVFest - Israel premiere

Germany:

Queer Scope Hamburg - Germany premiere
Perlen - Queer Film Festival Hannover
Pride Pictures: Karlsruhe Queer Film Days
Queer Film Festival Bremen
Queer Film Festival Bremerhaven
Munich International Queer Film Festival (Munich)
Queer Filmfest Weiterstadt
QueerFilmFest Rostock
Queerfilmfestival Esslingen
Queerstreifen Münster
Braunschweig International Film Festival
B3 Biennial of the Moving Image

Australia:

Sydney Film Festival - Australia premiere
Melbourne Queer Film Festival

France:

Festival de Cinéma de Douarnenez - France premiere
Chéries-Chéris - Paris LGBTQ+ Film Festival
Les Rencontres de Figra- avant-premiere

Ireland:

Gaze LGBTQ International Film Festival - Ireland premiere

Galway Film Fleadh

Italy:

Gender Bender Festival - Italy premiere

Rome Independent Film Festival

Festival dei Popoli - International Documentary Film Festival

Czech Republic:

Mezipatra Queer Film Festival - Czech Republic premiere

Portugal:

Queer Lisboa - International Queer Film Festival - Portugal premiere

Norway:

Oslo/Fusion International Film Festival - Norway premiere

China:

Hong Kong Lesbian & Gay Film Festival - Hong Kong premiere

Switzerland:

Everybody's Perfect - Geneva International Queer Film Festival - Switzerland premiere

Pinkapple Film Festival

Cyprus:

Queer Wave - Cyprus LGBTQ+ Film Festival - Cyprus premiere

Moldova:

Queer Voices Film Festival- Moldova premiere

Belgium:

Millenium International Documentary Film Festival- Belgium

South Africa:

Joburg International Film Festival

The Netherlands:

Rose Filmdagen – Amsterdam Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

Canada:

Image+Nation Montreal LGBTQ+ Film Festival – Canadian premiere

Calgary Black Film Festival

Salt Spring Film Festival – British Columbia premiere

Toronto Black film Festival

AWARDS

Silver Alexander Award - International Competition, Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival

Mermaid Award Best LGBTQ+ themed film- Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival

Women in Film & TV Association Award Greece to dir. Tünde Skovrán – Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival

Filmin's New Talent Award - International Competition, DocsBarcelona

Silver Horn Award for High Artistic Value to dir. Tünde Skovrán – International Competition, Krakow Film Festival

Best Documentary "Being Oneself" Category - International Competition, Doc Edge Festival New Zealand

Audience Choice Award Best Feature Documentary 2023 – Frameline San Francisco International LGBTQ+ Film Festival

Best Feature Documentary Award - GAZE International LGBTQ+ Film Festival

Lili Award for Best Documentary - MIX Copenhagen LGBTQ+ Film Festival

Audience Award for Best Film - Pride Pictures Queer Film Festival Karlsruhe

QueerScope Debut Film Award for the Best Queer Movie of the Year - Bremen Queer Film Festival

Audience Award for Best Documentary - Wicked Queer LGBT Film Festival, Boston

Jury Prize for Best Documentary - Image+Nation LGBTQ+ Film Festival, Montreal

ECHT 2023 Queer Film Award - Braunschweig International Film Festival

“GOLDEN PERLEN 2023” for Best Documentary and Audience Award - Perlen Queer Film Festival, Hannover 2023

Jury Prize for Diversity and Human Rights and Lesbianism and Gender Award- Special Mention - Zinegoak Bilbao International LGBT Film and Performing Arts Festival

Jury's Special Mention - Joburg International Film Festival

Audience Award for Best Documentary – 2nd place - Pinkapple Film Festival, Switzerland

Young Vision Award - Millenium Documentary Film Festival – Brussels

Best Documentary Award - CinHomo Muestra Internacional de Cine y Diversidad Sexual – Castilla y Leon

Special Mention - SIMA Awards for Best Social Impact Campaign – USA

Shortlisted for Best European Documentary - European Film Academy

WHO I AM NOT

Characters

Sharon-Rose Lehlohonolo Khumalo (She/Her), a dynamic 31-year-old marketing professional, is currently making waves at a major multinational pharmaceutical company in Johannesburg

Born into a devout Christian family in Mamelodi, Sharon-Rose's early life was rooted in traditional values and beliefs. However, her life took an unexpected turn at the age of 21.

While pursuing a degree in bio-genetics and experiencing the joys of a budding romance, Sharon-Rose faced a life-altering revelation during a routine medical examination. She discovered that she was intersex, possessing a chromosome pattern typically associated with males, including testosterone-producing testes, and lacking traditional female reproductive organs. Faced with rejection and misunderstanding, Sharon-Rose confronted a crossroads in her life. In a brave and bold move, she chose to embrace her unique identity rather than conceal it. Her decision to compete for the title of Miss South Africa was more than a beauty pageant ambition; it was a statement of courage, a refusal to be defined by conventional norms, and a step towards broader acceptance and understanding of intersex individuals.

Born in a society that failed to recognize their anatomy and identity, **Dimakatso Sebidi** (they/them) is a 41 year-old intersex activist, whose journey stands as a testament to resilience, advocacy, and change.

Subjected to medical genital normalization (mutilation) as an infant, they channeled their personal trauma into a tireless mission for intersex and LGBTQIA+ rights. In a world where intersex children in some rural regions face infanticide, Dimakatso's advocacy has been instrumental in shifting the narrative around intersexuality from misunderstanding to inclusion, amplifying intersex voices in academic and social spheres. Their determination, passion and honesty became a great source of inspiration for intersex youth in particular, but also for all those who feel unseen, misunderstood and marginalized.

Dimakatso cherishes a loving relationship with their lesbian partner, **Khanyisile Ngobeni** (she/her). Their relationship further fuels their commitment to creating a world where everyone is celebrated for their authentic selves.

WHO I AM NOT Credits

DIRECTOR-WRITER: Tünde Skovrán
PRODUCER (RO): Andrei Zincă
CO-PRODUCER (CA): Paul Cadieux
CO-PRODUCER: Patrick Hamm

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Patricia Arquette
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: M.J. Peckham
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Andrei Zincă
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Tünde Skovrán
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Marc Smolowitz
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Jafta Mekgoe
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Danielle Turkov
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Maryse Rouillard

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Amy Shepherd
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Edith Weil
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Dániel Szandtner
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: János Kovács
CINEMATOGRAPHERS: Dániel Szandtner and
Felix Striegel & Guillaume Beaudouin
EDITOR: Marianna Rudas HSE
ORIGINAL SCORE: Luc Sicard
SONGS: Bongesiwe Mabandla, Desiree, Brian Bibb
SOUND: Blaise Rival, Ádám Vadász
SOUND DESIGN: Martin Cadieux- Rouillard

a Double 4 Studios România production, in co-production with
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Region Normandie - Normandy For Peace
When East Meets West Pitching Forum, Trieste
European Works In Progress, Cologne
SEEFest Accelerator Program, Los Angeles

Bio Director

Tünde Skovrán was born in Transylvania, Romania. After graduating with a BFA in Drama, she joined the Hungarian Theater of Cluj as a repertory actress, starring in over 30 productions. Her talent and dedication as a film and theater actress have earned her numerous national and international awards. In 2014, Ms. Skovrán was recognized as one of the most outstanding young actresses in Central and Eastern Europe and was invited to participate in the Sarajevo International Film Festival Talent Campus in collaboration with Berlinale.

During the same year, she relocated to Los Angeles, where she co-founded Voxx Studios, an audio post-production facility. While in Los Angeles and New York, she produced and starred in acclaimed theater productions and also established herself as a filmmaker. Her name is associated with several internationally-traveled short films. In 2023, she premiered her debut feature documentary, "Who I Am Not," which was screened at numerous international film festivals, and winning 22 awards so far.

TRAILER:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1cIkcXltPE>