

A BORIS GERRETS film

SHADO'MAN



PIETER VAN HUUSTEE FILM AND IKON present in coproduction with les Films d'Ici and pippaciné and in association with ARTE FRANCE — LA LUCARNE a BORIS GERRETS film. This film is supported by the NETHERLANDS FILM FUND, the DUTCH CULTURAL MEDIA FUND, CoBO, IKON, ARTE, PROCIREP-ANGOA.

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SHADO'MAN

Shot in Freetown, Sierra Leone

87 min, feature length documentary

Available on DCP

Original language Krio

Subtitles English, French or Dutch

LOGLINE

A community of friends, each facing severe physical and psychological challenges, survives on the nocturnal streets of Freetown, Sierra Leone. The film delves deep into their life, telling a story of humanity and dignity in a world that otherwise offers little consolation.

SYNOPSIS

A bitter logic lies in the fact that those whom the society does not care to see are living by night. At the junction of Lightfoot-Boston and Wilberforce in downtown Freetown, Sierra Leone the streets of the city are covered in darkness. Only a few street lamps and flares of light from passing cars and motorcycles sporadically illuminate the Dantesque scenery. This is where a group of friends live. They call themselves the Freetown Streetboys, even though some women are among them. They each face enormous physical and psychological challenges. From early childhood when they endured the neglect and scorn of their parents until the present day, their life has been one of social abandonment by the world around them. With no place but the bleak and sleepless streets of the capital city, they are condemned to a life of begging. Shado'man is a cinematic journey undertaken by the filmmaker together with the 'Streetboys': Suley, Lama, David, Alfred, Shero and Sarah. The camera becomes a nucleus around which their life unfolds, unlocking a space for previously unshared pains, dreams and aspirations. Blind man, Lama yearns to meet a female companion, desiring tenderness in his life. His friend David, who is also blind, struggles to find money for his sisters' education. Shero is battling with his demons and Sarah, who is pregnant by him, anxiously looks into the uncertain future of their child. Alfred is by their side to mediate and Suley with his captivating voice reveals his painful childhood experience directly to the viewer. The film delves into the inner world of each character to reveal the dignity of humans surviving under inhumane conditions.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Cinema is a play of shadows. If one follows the well-known allegory of Plato's cave, according to which man only sees the shadow of reality, then film would be the shadow of another shadow. The Bible talks about the shadow of St. Peter healing the sick, Masaccio painted it in a church in Florence. Ancient magical traditions see the shadow as an external manifestation of the soul. Its rich metaphorical connotations are used across the arts. It was the play of shadows that first drew my attention, when I was exploring Freetown by night.

In thirty years, I had not been back to the city where I spend a part of my adolescence. Since then many things had happened. Most notably, the 11 years of civil war that ended only a decade ago. As a result of the war Freetown's population significantly increased, but the city's infrastructure never adapted to this demographic change. At night the chronic lack of electricity means the city is plunged in semi-darkness. The only light sources are the many cars and motorcycles circulating and the pale light of mobile phones that are used by pedestrians to find their way in the dark streets. As I was going around the city I became interested in a group of people at a street corner gathered under one of the few street lamps. They were there every night, living from handouts and sleeping rough. Each one of them was facing enormous physical and mental challenges. Among them were my protagonists: Suley, Lama, David, Alfred, Shero and Sarah.

Something in their world reminded me of the universe of Beckett: the cosmic darkness of a stage, the absence of life's ornamentations, the waiting for a salvation that won't come, a sense of timelessness; and the fact that, like in a Beckett play they have their tragedy written on their body. I felt that to get close to my protagonists I should concentrate on understanding them physically rather than psychologically or biographically. As they live as outsiders at the periphery of society, I feel that their lives reveal our human condition more truthfully. They understand the extreme margins of our existence. Outsiders are often people who are scarred, who need to create their own relational ecosystem with other 'outsiders' in order to survive and more often than not there is a strong pragmatic element in that. These relationships are fragile because they are under a lot of duress, but that is also what makes them more passionate and more revealing about the essence of human behaviour.

As we gradually got to know each other better the film's central question began to transpire: In a society where all manner of prejudice against the physically challenged is rife, the most important repercussion is how this prejudice impacts on their self-esteem and their sense of dignity. By entering into this world with a camera, I had to ask myself: if film is indeed shadow and if shadows heal, can the film restore the human dignity of which the protagonists have been deprived?

LONG BIOGRAPHY

Boris Gerrets is an internationally acclaimed documentary filmmaker and an accomplished visual artist and film-editor. Born into a Bulgarian-German family, he grew-up in the Netherlands, Spain, Sierra Leone and Germany. Boris Gerrets' films are close-ups of local environments, which he describes as 'biotopic explorations'. He delves into the anonymity of the urban space, bringing to light life on the fringes, which often remains obscure to the passing person. This leads him to unexpected encounters that drive the narrative of his films. Gerrets sees the camera as a tool that creates a social dynamic between him and his protagonists. The editing process is for Gerrets a way of stripping down and reconfiguring what has been garnered in reality, into a phenomenological space that speaks about the human condition. His role as filmmaker and the process of filmmaking are always at issue - either implicitly or explicitly - while he intentionally explores the gap between the factual event and its fictional and poetic meaning. Gerrets' cinematic approach contains a strong performative component and relies heavily on his multidisciplinary background in fine arts, dance and theatre.

Boris Gerrets' film, *People I Could Have Been and Maybe Am* (2010) has garnered critical acclaim worldwide, receiving more than 12 international awards in a wide-range of categories - among them: IDFA Best Mid-Length Doc Award (Amsterdam, 2010), VISIONS DU RÉEL, Best Direction Mid-Length Doc (Nyon, 2011), FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI, Best Ethno-Anthropological Film (Florence, 2011) and TIDF, Grand Prize International Mid-length & Short (Taipei, 2012). Gerrets has lectured and given Master Classes in Film in a number of venues internationally - most recently at Centro de Capacitacion Cinematografica, Mexico City (2011), EDN Seoul, Korea (2011), EICTV, Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión Cuba (2013) and University of Edinburgh, UK (2013). His teaching and advisory commissions include DasArts (Amsterdam School/Advanced Research in Theatre and Dance), Rijksakademie, Amsterdam and AKI-ArtEZ (Academy for Visual Arts Enschede, University Twente). Gerrets was a member of the jury at the Visions du Réel, Nyon (2012) and International Film Festival Amsterdam, IDFA (2011). As a film-editor, Boris Gerrets - who is a member of the Dutch Society of Cinema Editors - has worked on over 30 documentaries, feature films and/or shorts.

Prior to working primarily in filmmaking, Gerrets versatile art practice included drawing, installation, video, animation, book art and physical-theatre. He is interested in the dramaturgy of montage, exploring the relationship between performativity and perception. Sparked by several journeys to post-war Lebanon and Iraq in the mid-1990s, Gerrets investigated political and cultural dynamics of conflict zones and their relation to perception. He has toured and shown his theatrical and visual artwork internationally in exhibitions at the Camden Arts Centre, London (2008); Kiasma Museum of Modern Art, Helsinki (2002), Centre d'Art Contemporain, Caen (1995); Videopositive, Tate Gallery, Liverpool (1995), Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (1989), documenta 8 Kassel (as member of Cloud Chamber, 1987) and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1986). His current solo exhibition titled, *3 Films* at the Visual Research Centre, Dundee, UK (14 April -20 May 2012) includes a unique in-conversation event with internationally respected art critic and curator Guy Brett. Boris Gerrets lives between London and Amsterdam.

For more information, see personal website: <http://borisgerrets.org>

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Boris Gerrets is an internationally acclaimed documentary filmmaker and an accomplished visual artist and film-editor. Born into a Bulgarian-German family, he grew-up in the Netherlands, Spain, Sierra Leone and Germany. Boris Gerrets' films are close-ups of local environments, which he describes as 'biotopic explorations'. He delves into the anonymity of the urban space, bringing to light life on the fringes, which often remains obscure to the passing person. This leads him to unexpected encounters that drive the narrative of his films. Gerrets sees the camera as a tool that creates a social dynamic between him and his protagonists. The editing process is for Gerrets a way of stripping down and reconfiguring what has been garnered in reality, into a phenomenological space that speaks about the human condition. His role as filmmaker and the process of filmmaking is always at issue - either implicitly or explicitly - while he intentionally explores the gap between the factual event and its fictional and poetic meaning. Gerrets' cinematic approach contains a strong performative component and relies heavily on his multidisciplinary background in fine arts, dance and theatre. Boris Gerrets' film, *People I Could Have Been and Maybe Am* (2010) has garnered critical acclaim worldwide, receiving more than 12 international awards in a wide-range of categories - among them: IDFA Best Mid-Length Doc Award (Amsterdam, 2010), VISIONS DU RÉEL, Best Direction Mid-Length Doc (Nyon, 2011), FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI, Best Ethno-Anthropological Film (Florence, 2011) and TIDF, Grand Prize International Mid-length & Short (Taipei, 2012). Gerrets has lectured and given Master Classes in Film in a number of venues internationally - most recently at Centro de Capacitacion Cinematografica, Mexico City (2011), EDN Seoul, Korea (2011), EICTV, Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión Cuba (2013) and University of Edinburgh, UK (2013).

F.A.Q



1-How did the idea for this film come about?

As a teenager, I spent many summers in Sierra Leone where my mother lived for a number of years. My early encounter with the African continent left an important and lasting impact on me. Nevertheless, it took me years to find the right reasons to return. It was in late 2010 when I went to research the idea for a film. Going back was in many ways a shock. A gruesome civil war had taken place and as a consequence Freetown's population had tripled or quadrupled with refugees from other parts of the country. On a purely sensorial level Freetown captivated my attention by the visual and acoustical spectacle, by the constantly moving lights from cars and motorcycles and by the sheer number of people, especially at night when the city is largely covered in darkness. All this had very little to do with my original film idea, but it was the beginning of a new one.

At that time I was in a very peculiar emotional space. My mother had died two months before and in order to start a new film I needed to express my feeling of grief in it. I thought that sharing this very personal but at the same time universal emotion, could be a way of connecting to people in Freetown that had gone through so much hardship. The night of December 18, 2010 I stepped out of a taxi, at the corner of Lightfoot Boston and Wilberforce Street. At that time of the night it is quite unlikely for a European like me to be walking about in that particular area. I immediately found myself surrounded by young men and women who were begging. In the *mêlée*, I heard one voice say: 'We have been waiting for you for a long time.' Those words mark the very moment when this film was born and were said by Suley, who became the 'voice' of the film. It is a brilliant line and one that instantly established a relationship and a kinship from which is hard to escape. I answered that I was a filmmaker, and I had come to make a film with them.

2- How were you able to enter the world of your protagonists so closely?

A crucial moment was our initial introduction. I made it clear from the outset that, instead of making a film *about* them, I wanted to make a film *with* them. It is a subtle but essential difference and it creates a specific kind of environment for the making of the film. Together, we formed a crew and each one of us was committed in his/her own specific capacity and role. Working in this manner, gave my protagonists a sense of agency as it was not *my* project, but it had become *our*

project. Our collaboration was based on a straightforward transaction and everyone got paid according to a transparent and equal arrangement. We went through very serious negotiations about the fees involved and the outcome was satisfactory and fair to all of us.

It was also advantageous that everyone in the crew was Sierra Leonean, with the exception of myself, and the soundperson, Rosalie Gerrets who is also my daughter. Most of the other people involved in some capacity were recruited from the immediate environment of the protagonists of the film. This made for a positive air of complicity. Before we began working, I conducted a kind of 'workshop'. We all stayed in a rented bungalow by the beach. Initially, I had planned to use this time to talk about how I wanted to work, but it proved more important that they should have 'a vacation' from the stressful life on the street. So we talked a lot and through conversation we came to know each other, while enjoying local dishes with fresh seafood. We got close on a personal level and developed a friendship that continued through the making and completion of the film. At the same time we developed a sense of common purpose. Finally it was crucial that the protagonists created their own scenes on the basis of their daily struggle. I might suggest something, but they created the content independently and on the spot. My role was to frame scenes, isolating certain moments, magnify others and provide the narrative framework.

3- How is it to be combining the roles of director as well as author, cinematographer and editor?

It is hard to distinguish between these various roles, as for me they sort of contain each other. My approach as a director is to favour a fluid situation where things develop unexpectedly. There is only so much one can learn from the research phase of documentary filmmaking. Often, once you are ready to start filming, the situation has completely changed. I see these various disciplines or tasks as all part of a single writing process that happens on the spot and in the moment. Decisions of where to place the camera are decisions on content, not only on form or composition. They too are obviously decisions that reflect on the editing. I like to keep as much control as possible within an uncontrollable situation. But this way of working also implies that there is more than one narrative thread you try to pursue in the film. I like to try things out but sometimes this leads me into an impasse and at other moments it brings me to places that I could not have imagined.

I never know what my films are about before I am well into the shooting phase. Evidently, I develop a hypothesis beforehand, but only through the process of looking through the lens and filming do I discover what kind of film I am making, because the only relevant reality is the reality of the film. Someone like Johan van der Keuken or Jonas Mekas for instance uses the camera to think and search and probe and question the reality in front of them. Often, this luxury is passed on to the cinematographer. There is nothing wrong with that, but it implies a different way of filmmaking that is not my own. As far as the editing is concerned, it is really where you discover the DNA of the film. I always need a long editing phase to experiment with the material then, at a later stage, I rely on viewings with some trusted friends to understand what works and what doesn't.

4- Can you speak about the idea of shadows to which the title alludes?

I read about the origin of painting according to Plinius, which occurred when the maid of Corinth traced her lover's shadow on a wall.* Today we might rather say the discovery of the shadow was the birth of cinema. Film has always had a special relationship to the idea of the shadow and the projected image itself is an effect of shadow. But there is also the fact that the protagonists of this film live in a dark world where they appear as shadows. It is a shadow world literally as well as metaphorically. For a long time, the film had a motto that didn't make it into the final version. However, it remains its underlying idea. It is the well-known postulate 'Esse est Percipi' by George Berkeley (1685 - 1753). It translates as, 'To be is to be perceived'. The film is about this urge to exist in the eyes of others, to be acknowledged, to step out of the shadow as it were. That is exactly what the film tries to do, to create a space for its protagonists to exist and be seen.

The chiaroscuro of the pictorial space is what makes the image breathe, what creates a pulsation and atmosphere. This is a world where light is something very physical. It is never stable or taken for granted. Where there is a light there is usually also a noisy generator to produce the electricity. People crowd around light sources, like the gamblers or the schoolchildren doing homework. That is reflected in the expressivity of the image. We spent many days without filming because there was

no light. In the affluent parts of the world you take light for granted, it's elusive, but here light is a thing and also a social space for those who live on the street.

* Victor I. Stoichita, *A Short History of the Shadow* (Reaktion, 1997).

5-Your shots are carefully crafted compositions that have a strong reference to painting. How does painting inform your cinematographic approach?

There are many layers to an image and they all need to come together in the frame. I think that the care taken to frame a scene is an important decision that affects its content. Beyond the reality depicted, there is the visual tension between elements within the frame, between background and foreground, the play of movement, there are symbolic and iconographic references that create and enhance the narrative quality of the image and make it expressive. The spectator should feel that these formal characteristics transmit an intent that challenges him or her to think beyond the factual side of what is depicted. At that point the image begins to enter into dialogue with other images, which already exist in the memory; images that have a cinematic history and are part of the collective subconscious and the history of ideas. So those references to painting are not only aesthetic, they are trying to evoke a certain sensibility within the viewer. While I was filming, certain painters came to mind. I thought of Bruegel the elder for the kinds of medieval characters he depicts and I thought of Rembrandt, which perhaps is rather obvious with the strong emphasis on concentrated light. I also thought of some of Mark Rothko paintings, such as the colour field ones where he gives darkness an intense glow.

There is a part in the film (Shero's fight) where I almost lost control of the image and to a certain degree of the framing, because it was a spontaneous event, where I was following something that could not be contained. Aesthetically that scene stands out in terms of its 'reportage' style. It is also a shocking scene in its crudeness, but this shows the extremes. It shows the other extreme in the negotiation between carefully setting up the parameters of your frame and the unpolished look of a reality beyond the film. This negotiation was the challenge all the time and one which determined the style of the film.

6-How does your background in different artistic disciplines influence your approach to filmmaking?

Perhaps the most important thing is a matter of methodology, particularly the idea of unconditionally immersing oneself into a situation, without any rules, except a rough outline or a few guiding ideas. This is the way I used to work as a dancer, it is also the way certain performance artists work. In linguistics a 'performative act' is understood as a pronouncement through language. Something is called into being that did not exist before it was said. I see my films in a similar fashion: the reality I film exists *because* I film it; things happen that otherwise would not have happened, or would not have happened in that particular way. What interests me therefore is what the conversion from factual reality into film reality can tell us about our being.

What becomes very important with this approach is one's relationship to the here and now, similar to being on stage in an improvised dance piece for instance. You must constantly be alert to the possibilities of the situation. This requires a certain mindset, to enter into a situation without any rehearsals, without any guarantee that it will create an interesting dynamic. In the case of this film it was much more important to trust the human aspect of the situation than on a tangible dramatic potential. There was no prospect of development, except perhaps the birth of Sarah's baby. There was no guarantee that the characters of the play so to speak, would have enough 'text' to work with and that a drama would unfold. There was no guarantee. I am actually not so much interested in drama, but I am interested in emotion and I knew that the circumstances of their life were so challenging that whatever would happen would be punctuated by the intensity of the situation. I am therefore extremely grateful that those who backed this project were so supportive. In this regard, I want to thank my commissioning editors, Margje de Koning from IKON and Luciano Rigolini from ARTE's La Lucarne.

7- You come from a polyglot family and have expressed an interest in linguistics. Did you learn Krio for the making of the film?

I grew up in a multilingual environment where due to migration German, Bulgarian, French, Russian, Dutch, Spanish and English were spoken in the family, but I am not a linguist. I am interested in how language connects to identity, to behaviour and thought and how one is able to switch between behavioural modes, by switching language. Perhaps the least part of what is communicated through language is rational content. The far bigger part is the attitudes, intentions and sub-textual content that cannot be translated but that define a particular reality and historical experience, which is retained in the language. In this case, the Krio language is a direct consequence of the slave trade.

Krio is a very interesting language, very organic and flexible. One thing can mean its opposite depending on the context. It retains some archaic expressions and it is a physical language often relating directly to the senses and the body. It is also full of sounds that have no other function than to express different emotions. I still had some of the 'vibe' of the language from my childhood, when I spend summers in Freetown. But, I made it a point to learn as much as I possibly could during the preparation phase of the film with the help of Mohammed Foday, who also became part of the crew. What is hard to learn in Krio and what can come only with spending lots of time inside the environment of the language are it's many idiomatic expressions. It was a big challenge to try to retain Krios' idiosyncrasies in the subtitles which follow a very rigorous protocol. Unfortunately that wasn't always possible.

8- How did you maintain your relationship with the protagonists of your film?

During of making the film I went to Freetown about 6 times, staying between one and three month. The first time I went was when I encountered the protagonists and decided to start this film journey with them. At that time, I hadn't filmed yet and the film was still in its conceptual stage. I later learned that my protagonists were quite sceptical about me ever coming back. Obviously filming or photographing in that particular environment is a touchy subject. Especially right after the war, many foreigners went to photograph or film there and in their eyes made a lot of money, never to be seen again. They told me about concrete cases where a woman had used their image for a fake NGO to solicit money in the West, which she pocketed herself. I made it very clear from the beginning that with the film I was creating a job for them and that they would be paid. It was very important for me to stay away from the human rights film genre. In the beginning, they thought I wanted them to act like a sorry lot and present themselves as victims. Victimhood was the only model they knew, as that is how they would be approached by the NGO's working around Freetown. But I told them that I wasn't interested in that side of their identity, because that was not how they acted among themselves.

Everything took much longer than anticipated, but Ernest Mannah, my Freetown producer was extremely committed. He continuously kept them informed about the progress of the project. The second time, I came back to Freetown I continued researching, but did not start filming. They very much appreciated the fact that I had returned as promised, it gave them a sense that something was moving. Ironically, after a week or so I fell and broke my kneecap. Everyone was very concerned about me and it was funny that we were all walking around on crutches now. It turned out to truly be an exercise in bonding. On that visit, I gave everyone a mobile phone, so we could call each other from time to time and keep in touch. That was quite surreal, being in the comfort of Europe to receive a phone call from people living in utter poverty on the streets of Freetown. However, this allowed us to remain connected. My experience working with Sierra Leoneans are that they are loyal people and that in turn creates a responsibility on both sides. In spite of the asymmetry of our life, there was a sense of mutual affection and commitment that continues beyond the film.

10- Do you think the film will have an impact of some sort on their situation?

Every film has an impact of some sort, sometimes negative, sometimes positive, mostly it is a very subtle impact. I wanted to make a film that affects you emotionally because it speaks about life. Of course one want to change things, but before one can change anything you have to imagine the change and that is what film and art can do. The biggest problem with the protagonists in my film I would argue, is not the abject poverty, the lack of healthcare, their disability and the lack of

access to any facilities. These problems are enormous. After all, we are talking about a country that is number 4 from the bottom of the world poverty scale. But these issues are solvable within the realm of politics and the creation of institutions. The biggest problem the protagonists of the film - and the 450, 000 or so disabled people of Sierra Leone - is the neglect and the undermining of their self-worth by their society and their next of kin. It prevents them from playing a constructive role. They are not being accepted as equals, having normal concerns and normal conversations and normal lives. Changing that doesn't necessarily cost money, but it needs imagination. When I showed the film to Babah Tarawally, an exiled Sierra Leonean writer living in the Netherlands (who translated most of the dialogues), he was convinced the film would create opportunities for debate in Sierra Leone and internationally on the manner in which many people will see the disabled. I hope he's right and I am looking forward to that.

The people in Shado'man are outcasts who live on the lowest subsistence level of the social scale, shunned by their family and the society at large. There are many complex reasons for that, from illiteracy, lack of healthcare to economy, politics, war and religious prejudice, all culminating in the social stigma towards those who are different. However, in spite of all that, they maintain a remarkable level of human dignity. That makes them so fascinating to watch and that is what interests me as a filmmaker, to bring across that charismatic aspect of their personality - Jean Epstein would say their 'photogénie' - which only film can bring about.

CAST

Mohamed Lama Jalloh (31)

Lama was born in Old Warf, one of the worst slum areas of Freetown. At birth his left eye was infected, but for some time he was still able to see with his right eye. Sadly, the infection gradually destroyed both eyes. During the war he was attending a Red Cross school for the blind, but the rebels burned the school down. Lama lost both his parents and only has an older brother. He lives and sleeps in the streets of Freetown and survives as a beggar. He is in constant search of someone, whether a child or another disabled person to lead him, as they go out to beg together. Whatever the proceeds, Lama splits it in half at the end of each day with his helper. When Lama began making some money through the film, his elder brother suddenly re-appeared in his life. He had heard news on the streets that Lama was earning some money. His brother invited him to stay over his place, but then locked Lama up in a room and stole all his savings.

Sahr David Nanoh (24)

David is from the eastern province of Kono. When he was six years old he used to climb-up trees to pick fruits. One day a branch broke and he fell to the ground injuring himself. When they took him to a hospital the doctor exclaimed: 'This boy is blind!' David had been blind since birth, but he never had a notion of it. In fact, his whole family is blind, so no one was aware of his condition. According to David, his entire family was cursed with blindness by the powerful secret society (The Bundo). When his grandmother was young they had demanded she join them, but she refused and this broke the tradition. As a punishment, she was cursed into blindness. They proclaimed that from then not only she, but all the children of her family would be blind. David's mother was indeed born blind, and so were some of his brothers and sisters. He believes that if he has children one day, they too will also be blind. David came to Freetown during the war in 2000 and earns his living from begging.

Suleiman Augustus Koroma (38)

Suley was born in the village of Masinde in the far north. As a toddler he was injected with a contaminated needle, which infected him with polio. His handicap was the reason that his father and his two younger brothers mistreated him. At the age of six, he fled his home together with a physically challenged friend. The two boys survived in the bush gathering cassava leaves and roots. After they were discovered, someone from the village brought Suley back to his family home, but his father rejected him and threatened to kill him if he ever came back. From then on, he was passed along among family members until a German physiotherapist took him under his tutelage. Suley was able to attend school until the war broke-out in 1991. The area he was living in came under attack. He found himself in a fleeing crowd when rebels fired a mortar grenade in their midst. That is when he lost his right leg. During the further course of the war, Suley was advised to try to reach Freetown, which he eventually did in 1999. During four years he only ate every other day, in order to save money to learn the craft of tailoring. The school closed down and he was never able to finish his studies. Today, Suley earns his money during the day helping people park their cars in the busy commercial centre of Freetown.

Sherif Mohamed Abu Kanu (35)

'Shero' comes from a village named Coya, where his father was a fisherman. He was left an orphan after his father was killed in the war and his mother also died. His aunt gave him away and he ended-up in an orphanage at the age of twelve. At fifteen, he was considered to have reached adulthood and had to leave the orphanage. From then on, Shero had to fend for himself. At the height of the war in 1994 he made his way to Freetown where he joined the many physically challenged who had fled there for refuge. He met his girlfriend, Sarah Koroma in 2012. She became pregnant and they now have a child together named, Abdulay. Like his best friend Suley, Shero lives from parking cars in the commercial centre of Freetown.

Sarah Koroma (30)

Sarah was born in Freetown and had a very difficult childhood. After an injection, she suffered from polio and endured abuse from members of her family. She was often locked into the house and left unattended, without food or care. Sarah wasn't able to learn any trade and had no access to schooling. From the age of nine, she was abandoned by her mother and passed around to different family members and neighbours. For some years, a woman provided Sarah shelter in her home, but sadly her protector was evicted. The new house she found was too high on a hill, which was not appropriate for a person with a disability. With nowhere else to go, Sarah found herself living on the streets. This is where she would eventually meet Shero. They have a son together named Abdulay and they moved into sheet metal hut where they live together as a family.

Alfred Kamara (43)

Alfred comes from Makene in the north of the country. His father died when he was ten and soon after his mother also passed away. When he was sixteen, Alfred went looking for work in the Kono diamond mines, when the car in which he and others were traveling fell into a rebel ambush at a place called 15 mile. Many were killed. After the ambush was over, Alfred's travel companion lay dead on top of him. He himself was hit in the leg and was left for dead. Initially the wound seemed to heal and he was still able to work in the mines. However, the leg developed Elephantitis and in 2005 it had to be amputated in a Freetown hospital. After Alfred was discharged from the hospital, he found himself penniless on the street. At first he became a street vendor, selling the local rum but that became unsustainable so he became a beggar. He found a room in a charity initiative, but it was in Waterloo, some two hours away from Freetown. As Freetown is the only place where there is any chance of making a living from begging he commutes between the two places to provide for his two wives and send his four children to school.

Abdulai Kanu

Abdulai Kanu is approximately 7 years and comes from a refugee camp near Freetown. Lama pays his parents a weekly sum so that he can guide him in return. Lama takes care of the boy's clothing and food and wants to help him go to school.

CREW

Ernest Mannah, *Line Producer, Freetown, Sierra Leone*

Ernest Mannah co-founded the Sierra Leone National Film Workshop (SLNFW) with Ian Noah. SLNFW's aim is to establish a film industry that can meet international standards, in a country where there is virtually nothing of that sort. Thus far the SLNFW has been a shoestring enterprise where enthusiasm and commitment compensate for lack of funding, space and equipment. Its second aim is to support other filmmakers when they come to work in Sierra Leone. Mannah has worked on a number of documentary and feature projects local as well as international. He is also developing a script for a Sierra Leonean children's film, which he intends to shoot himself. Mannah's commitment to the film from the very beginning was of vital importance for the project to succeed. His contribution as line producer was unparalleled: translator, negotiator, builder, driver, accountant, scout, camera, light, grip assistant and chef of some very delicious Sierra Leonean dishes.

For more information on the *Sierra Leone National Film Workshop* (SLNFW):

<http://slnfw.wordpress.com>

Rosalie Gerrets, *Sound & Assistant to the Director*

Rosalie Gerrets completed her undergraduate studies in documentary filmmaking at Ecole Supérieur Libre d'Etude Cinématographique, Paris, France (2005-09) and followed post-graduate courses in directing at Paris 8, La Sorbonne (2010-11). She was co-director with Frédéric Di Méo, Olivier Tixier and Batiste Stehlin of the short film *Sans Echo* (2007), which received the Ecran D'Argent prize at the Festival Européen des 4 Ecrans. Her assignment for *Shado'man* began as sound person, however during the production phase she also took on the task of assistant to the director, coordinating and planning the daily shooting schedule.

Thomas 'Chairman' Sesay, *Facilitator and Social Co-ordinator*

Thomas 'Chairman' Sesay is a spokesperson for the physically challenged. Candid about neglect one endures in the society in which he lives, he squatted an empty government building in Ecowas Street in 2003, providing shelter for some one hundred and twenty people. While the conditions there are cramped, it nonetheless brings relief from life on the street. Sesay originally trained as an electrical engineer, but it proved hard for him to find a job in that capacity. His work as organizer and initiator make him a well-known and respected person in the physically challenged community. Therefore, he was of great importance in creating a climate of trust and cooperation. Sesay also features in some of the scenes, such as the gambling and the drinking scene.

David 'Komba' N'Dapie, *Production Runner*

David 'Komba' N'Dapie is from Kono. He is part of the nightly street-life as a vendor selling various things like cigarettes and soap. In the film, Komba works as a production runner, assistant for light and he participated in some of the film scenes. He is not physically challenged himself, but he is involved with the handicapped community helping them in a number of ways. It is something he has done since early childhood, as he was caring for his mother, who was blind. After his mother passed away, at the age of ten he travelled to Freetown alone looking for an education. His aim was to go to university. Today however his biggest dream is to make it somehow to Europe and to find work.

PRODUCTION

Pieter van Huystee, *Producer*

Pieter van Huystee started his own production company in 1995. Since then he has produced 135 film projects, most of them documentaries, but also feature and short films and single plays - with both renowned Dutch filmmakers like Johan van der Keuken, Heddy Honigmann, Renzo Martens and Boris Gerrets and young talented directors like Sabine Lubbe Bakker and Niels van Koevorden. In 2000, Pieter van Huystee was awarded a Golden Calf, the highest distinction in the Dutch film industry, for his work as a producer.

Van Huystee has been part of several juries all over the world, including IDFA and the Mumbai International Film Festival 2010. Most recently he was asked to join the jury for the Cinekid Festival 2013 in Amsterdam.

By combining daring with decisiveness, Pieter van Huystee Film nowadays has become one of the leading Dutch independent production companies, highly esteemed for the quality and wide range of its projects. Moreover, many of its documentaries and features are screened at festivals all over the world and have been awarded many times.

For more information on *Pieter van Huystee Film*:
www.pvhfilm.nl

POST-PRODUCTION

Dominique Vieillard, *Sound editor and mixer*

Dominique Vieillard is an eminent Paris-based sound designer and mixer. He set-up *Archipel productions*, together with Julien Cloquet, Dominique Dalmasso, Jean Umansky, which is dedicated to sound post-production. Vieillard has worked in a host of documentary as well as fiction projects dating back to 1974. Among the directors he has worked with are: Raymond Depardon, Joris Ivens, Gianfranco Rosi, Claire Simon, Jacques Doillon, Alexandre Sokurov, Alexei Jankowski and Abbas Kiarostami.

Ralph van Raat, *Pianist*

Pianist and musicologist Ralph van Raat studied the piano with Prof. Ton Hartsuiker and Prof. Willem Brons at the Conservatory of Amsterdam and Musicology at the University of Amsterdam. In 2002, Van Raat was admitted to "The Provision for Outstanding Musicians", a special training course offered alongside the regular curriculum. He also concluded his musicology studies with the mention "Cum Laude" in 2003. As a part of the Advanced Programme of the Conservatory of Amsterdam, Van Raat also studied with Claude Helffer in Paris, with Ursula Oppens at Chicago's Northwestern University, with Liisa Pohjola in Finland and with Pierre-Laurent Aimard at the Musikhochschule in Cologne. Van Raat has been distinguished with many international awards, among them: First Prize of the International Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition (1999); the Philip Morris Arts Award (2003); the Elisabeth Everts Prize (2005); the International Borletti-Buitoni Fellowship (2005); VSCD Classical Music Prize (2005); and the Fortis MeesPierson Award of the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam (2006). For Shado'man, van Raat re-interpreted Otte's Book of Sounds Parts I, II, IV, VI, VIII, IX and X.

CREDITS

CAST:

Sherif Mohamed Abu Kanu
Mohamed Lama Jalloh
Alfred Kamara
Sarah Koroma
Suleiman Augustus Koroma
Sahr David Nanoh

and

Abdulai Kanu
Messi Konteh

Script, director, photographer and editor

Boris Gerrets

Sound and Assistant Director

Rosalie Gerrets

Sound design and Mix

Dominique Vieillard

Colorist

Olivier Cohen

Assistant Editor

Sander Kuipers

Film Poster and Website

Alexandra Handal

Web developer

PJ Tan

Interpreter

Mohamed Foday Kamara

Translations

Babah Tarawally

Boris Gerrets

Babah Tarawally

Joshua Duncan

Edward Mannah

Transcriptions

Line Producer, Sierra Leone

Ernest S.T.F. Mannah

Post-Production Supervisor

Martin Bertier

Liaison

Thomas Abdul Sesay

Production runner

Komba David N'dapie

Post-production facilities

Avidia

Archipel Productions

Color'M

Editpoint

CMC

Invision Subtitling

Subtitles

Music:

Das Buch Der Klänge (The Book of Sounds)

Parts I, II, IV, VI, VIII, IX, X

Composed by Hans Otte

Piano soloist Ralph van Raat

Recorded by Lennert Hunfeld

'Love is Blind'

Written, composed and interpreted
by Mohamed Lama Jalloh

'Butterfly in China'

Composed and interpreted
by Oleg Karavaychuk

a PIETER VAN HUUSTEE FILM production

Producer

Line Producer

Publicity Pieter van Huystee Film

Accountants

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