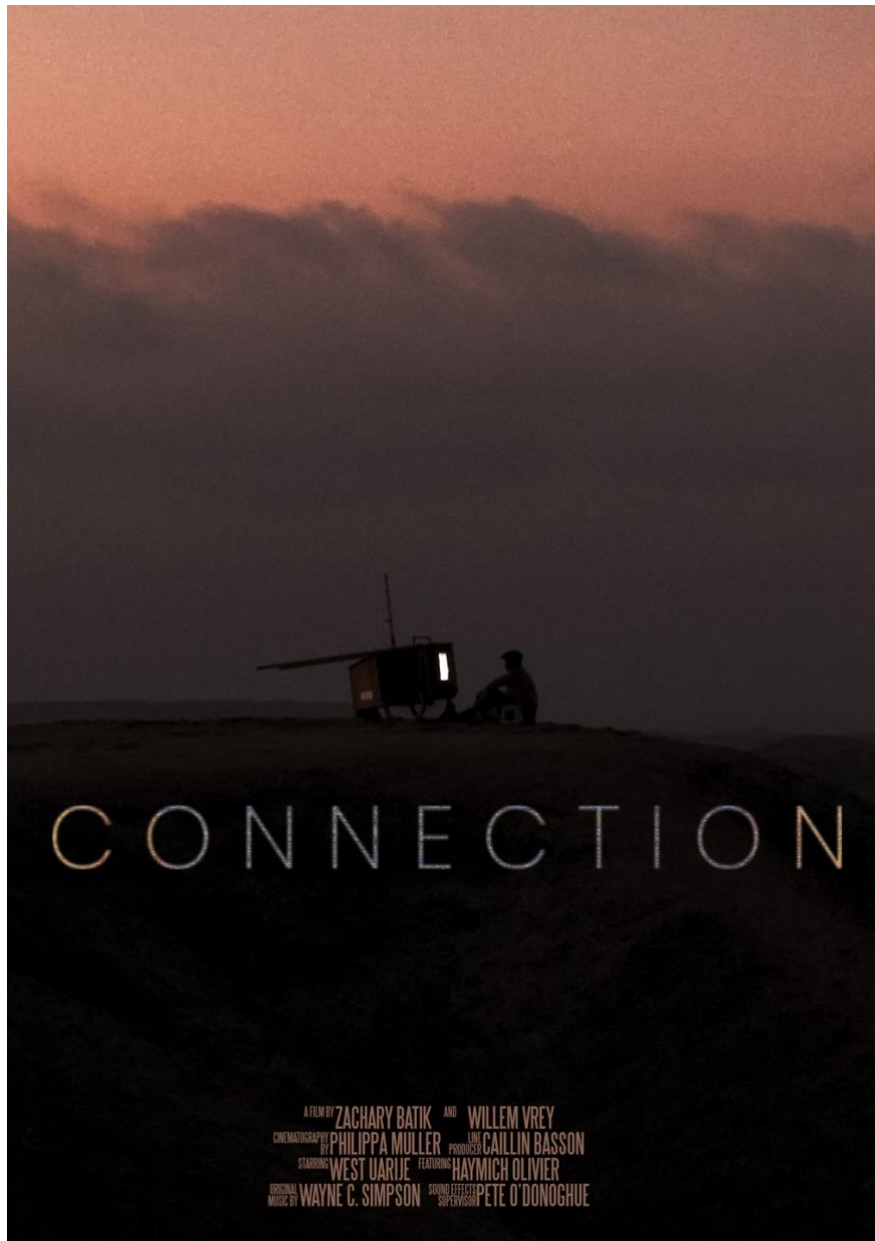


CONNECTION



A film by Zachary Batik and Willem Vrey

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Film Overview

Against the harsh backdrop of the Namibian desert, a lone tech-nomad seeks neither food nor water, but a stable TV connection.

Genre	Drama / Comedy / Road Movie
Themes	Loneliness, human connection, joy, nature
Runtime	11 min 57 sec
Language	No Dialogue — universally accessible without subtitles
Country of Origin	Namibia
Year	2026
Premiere Status	Seeking World Premiere

Synopsis

Short Synopsis

A lone wanderer roams the Namibian desert with a cart-mounted cathode ray tube television and a signal-scanning device seeking, one thing above all else, a stable TV connection. When his signal dissolves into static, he crosses salt pans and mountain ridges in pursuit of reception. Along the way he enters a village, reaching out for human contact, only to be turned away. Deeper into the desert, exhausted and defeated, he destroys the very thing he has been chasing. But a new signal leads him to something he was not looking for, another person. Through music and dance, two strangers become something more.

Long Synopsis

A lone wanderer roams the Namibian desert. He carries no food, no water, only a cart fitted with a cathode ray tube television and a device that scans for signal. In the heat of the desert sun, watching his favourite sitcom, he is happy. This is enough.

Until the signal dies. Not the familiar flicker of poor reception, but a wall of static, consuming, overwhelming, vacant. The wanderer is thrown into panic; anxiety crackling in the air like electricity itself. He sets off through inhospitable terrain in search of reception.

His search leads him into a nearby village. He approaches two men absorbed in a game of chess and inserts himself, suggesting a move, reaching out the only way he knows how. He is shooed away. As he pulls his cart out of the village, the women sweep the ground behind him, erasing his tracks. He was never there.

His determination drives him deeper, across a near lunar landscape, into the dunes at the edge of the deep desert. When a wall of sand finally defeats him, something breaks. He turns his rage on the television itself, the object of his obsession, and destroys it.

In the static that follows, his scanner picks up a new signal. It leads him out of the dunes and across the gravel plains to the camp of a stranger. What begins as an awkward encounter, dissolves into music and dance and something neither of them was looking for. Connection. The real kind.

Director Statement

The film is absurd from the opening frame - deliberately. The Wanderer washes his face on a mountaintop in the heat of the day. He does not worry about food or water. That absurdity is an invitation: suspend your disbelief and come along for the ride. The Wanderer's journey is an unconventional one. I like to think the joyful meeting at the end comes as a genuine surprise, not a thriller twist, but the unexpected pleasure of running into a friend you haven't seen in a long time.

I felt that in order to give the Namibian landscape the prominence it deserved; the film needed no dialogue. The drama needed to be visual, free of semantic clutter. Only then might we hear the desert.

The film is neither cynical nor moralistic. It is sincere, playful, and beautiful. It does not seek to educate but to delight.

Our lead, West Uarije, is a trained dancer new to acting. It was through West's intimate sense of movement that we developed a fully formed character without a single line of dialogue. The character lives in the weight of the shoulders, a goofy gesture, an innocence that arrives through the body before it registers in the mind.

The film ends in unapologetic joy. Two men, a bubblegum pop track in the spirit of Brenda Fassie, pure platonic love - unironic, unsexualised, and completely unashamed. In a film landscape that defaults to cynicism and self-deprecation, that ending is a statement. It does not diminish the moment with a joke. It does not flinch.

This film simply reminds us that the most valuable human experiences are found in other people.

Production Notes

Connection was conceived, produced, and delivered in four months - from first funding to final master. Made on a budget of N\$150,000 (approximately USD \$8,000), the film was shot over five consecutive days across some of Namibia's most remote and iconic landscapes by a crew of three on location: director/producer Zachary Batik, cinematographer Philippa Muller, and producer/ co-cinematographer Willem Vrey, who also acted as boom operator. Everything, crew, cast, equipment, and one large custom-built cart, all travelled together in a single bakkie.

The Camera

The film was shot on a Fujifilm X-T5, a professional stills camera rigged with a cage, monitor, and Rode VideoMic. The choice began as a practical one but was confirmed in testing; the footage had a quality and texture that suited the film's muted, heat-bleached visual palette. Paired with a 2.39:1 aspect ratio, the X-T5 produced images that feel genuinely cinematic, foregrounding the vastness of the Namibian landscape without the infrastructure of a traditional film production.

The Cart

The Wanderer's cart, the film's most iconic prop, was designed by the director and took approximately one month to build. A local precision engineer welded the metal frame and machined a custom axle. A local woodworker produced the panels. Two 22-inch wheels came from a bicycle repair shop. The director assembled, painted, oiled, and refined the finished object. It was designed to exact dimensions — not for aesthetic reasons alone, but to fit precisely into the back of the production vehicle.

Mounted on that cart was a functioning cathode ray tube television. Finding two suitable CRT sets took weeks of Facebook Marketplace searches and visits to back-alley repair shops across Windhoek. The decision to use practical, working televisions — rather than replicate the effect in post-production — was absolute. The CRT's visual texture, its particular quality of light and static, cannot be convincingly faked, certainly not at an independent short film budget. To make it work in the field, the team ran AV output through an HDMI converter into a laptop, powered by heavy-duty 240V battery packs that provided approximately three hours of runtime per charge. That laptop — a MacBook Pro wrapped in a blanket — was tied down inside the cart for shooting. In one of the production's defining images, West Uarije pulled the entire rig up a sand dune.

The Locations

The film was shot across five locations: the summit of Rössing Mountain, the Moon Landscape, the Walvis Bay dunes, the village at Rooibank, and Mirabib. The production is in good company - the opening sequence of *Mad Max: Fury Road* also shot atop Rössing, and the dawn-of-man sequence from *2001: A Space Odyssey* was filmed at Mirabib, where *Connection* shoots its finale.

The village sequence at Rooibank required its own production. The team worked with a local fixer, Paul, spent a full day locating and receiving the blessing of the village chief, and cast extras directly from the community. Paul also made the brooms seen in what has become one of the film's most discussed shots - the women of the village sweeping away the Wanderer's tracks as he pulls his cart out of town. The sequence, including a scripted chess game the Wanderer interrupts, was prepared in advance and executed with the full cooperation and warmth of the Rooibank community.

The Accident That Stayed

The script called for the cart to break. What the script did not call for was the handles snapping mid-shot during the dune sequence. Philippa Muller called out "keep acting" and West Uarije responded. The organic footage that followed was more convincing than anything the scripted version produced. In the heat of the day, standing in the sand dunes, Zachary Batik called a quick break, reworked the shot list on the spot, and the shoot continued. The following morning, a hardware store run yielded metal curtain rails, and new mounting holes were drilled in the driveway of the production's Airbnb before the next shoot day began.

The Music

The score was composed entirely by Wayne C. Simpson, based in Cape Town. His brief was precise and demanding: match the energy of Brenda Fassie's Weekend Special the track played on set during the dance sequence but deliver it entirely instrumentally. The result anchors the film's final movement with a distinctly Southern African warmth without overpowering it.

The final shots of the dance sequence were captured at sunset on the fifth day. Energy on set was low after a long day in the heat. In an attempt to reset the mood, the director put on Matthew Halsall, orchestral jazz, entirely unplanned. The two dancers responded immediately. Those last two shots, made in fading light to music that was never part of the plan, became among the most memorable in the film.

Technical Specs

Overview

Title	Connection
Director	Zachary Batik
Year	2026
Country of Origin	Namibia
Runtime	11 min 57 sec
Language	No Dialogue
Subtitles	None
Genre	Drama / Comedy / Road Movie
Production Type	Independent
Premiere Status	Seeking World Premiere

Camera & Image

Format	Digital
Camera	Fujifilm X-T5
Resolution	4K
Frame Rate	25 fps
Aspect Ratio	2.39:1 (Cinemascope)
Color Profile	F-Log2

Audio

Recording Setup	Boom Mic + External Mixer
Sample Rate	48 kHz
Bit Depth	24-bit
Final Mix	5.1 / Stereo

Post-Production

Editing Software	DaVinci Resolve
Grading Software	DaVinci Resolve
Grading Pipeline	F-Log2 to Display LUT
Delivery Codec	H.264
Delivery Resolution	4K (UHD) / 1080p

List of Cast and Crew

CAST

WANDERER	West Uarije
STRANGER	Haymich Olivier
CHESS PLAYER 1	Paul Bees
CHESS PLAYER 2	Bartholomeus Goramub
LADY 1	Waehaudia Goramus
LADY 2	Lesma Goramus
LADY 3	Julene Animas
LITTLE GIRL	Mercy Bees

CREW

WRITTEN AND DIRECTOR BY	Zachary Batik
PRODUCED BY	Zachary Batik & Willem Vrey
LINE PRODUCER	Caillin Basson
CIMEMAOGRAPHY	Philippa Müller
EDITED BY	Willem Vrey & Zachary Batik
SOUND DESIGN & MIX	Pete O'Donoghue
MUSIC COMPOSED BY	Wayne Simpson

SPECIAL THANKS

Amakhoe Goabas
Hafeni Frans
Hendrik Vrey
DBikes
Eugene Marais
René and Charl Baard
Gwendolen Ward
Theodore Batik
Piers Vine
Bernd Marting
Gillian Maggs-Köling
Dantago Gaweses
Inchiology
David Benade
Axel Jacobsen
JoeVision
Propaganda
Joel Haikali

Contact Detail

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