

# KINSHASA NOW

AN INTERACTIVE VIRTUAL REALITY MOVIE  
BY MARC-HENRI WAINBERG



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE  
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA  
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2020  
Venice VR Expanded



A PRODUCTION WAINBROSSE PRODUCTIONS PRODUCED BY MARC-HENRI WAINBERG CATHERINE BOES SCRIPT MARC-HENRI WAINBERG DIRECTOR MARC-HENRI WAINBERG WITH MIKA BANGALA VAINQUIEUR KANGA CHANCELVIE KAPONGE DAVID LEMBA PATRICK MAKAMBO  
A COPRODUCTION RG & CRÉATIFS ASSOCIÉS WIM FORCEVILLE EDITING LUCAS DOPPELT REALITY SOUND DEMUTE STUDIO MUSIC STROMBO WITH THE SUPPORT OF LE CENTRE DU CINÉMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL DE LA FÉDÉRATION WALLONIE-BRUXELLES CREATIVE EUROPE MEDIA  
LE FONDS AUDIOVISUEL FLAMAND PRODUCTION COFINANCED BY WALLIMAGE CREATIVE AND THE CANADA MEDIA FUND WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF OUFETI PRODUCTIONS BELGA PRODUCTIONS BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TAX SHELTER UNICEF BELGIUM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

# KINSHASA NOW



## CONTENTS

- 03 Introductory note from the director, Marc-Henri Wajnberg
- 04 Synopsis
- 04 Presentation of the project
- 06 Interview with the director, Marc-Henri Wajnberg
- 09 Specification and artists list
- 10 CV of the director, Marc-Henri Wajnberg
- 11 Contacts and partners



# INTRODUCTORY NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR MARC-HENRI WAJNBERG



In 2013, after direction *Kinshasa Kids*, I realized how unknown the street children phenomenon is, and the interest that this problem raised among teenagers. I decided to tell this situation with what I imagined being their tools : internet, new technologies, virtual reality, and that's the virtual reality movie with interactive choices *Kinshasa Now*.

The movie *Kinshasa Now* is an experience where the viewer is immersed, with the help of a virtual reality headset, in the middle of the streets of Kinshasa. During the movie, propositions are given to the viewer who decides how the story continues.

Children's right is at the main topic of *Kinshasa Now*. The secondary themes are family, gender issues, poverty, hunger, religion, violences against children (rape, underage labour, ...), transports, health, the underground economy, natural resources, conflicts, solidarity, resilience through music, sport, the right to education.

As I did with the actors of my movie *Kinshasa Kids*, I took care of the rehabilitation of the five child actors of *Kinshasa Now*. I placed the four boys playing themselves in a centre where they're learning how to read and write, and Chancelvie, the girl actress of the movie, in another centre for young street girls.

I keep in touch with those kids and I follow their educational development. We're preparing a tour of *Kinshasa Now* in schools, rehabilitation centres, public places in Democratic Republic of the Congo, but also in Belgium.

The child actors of the movie will take part in the tour, as the young actors from *Kinshasa Kids* took part in debates during the tour of their movie. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7S7tdK-ljK4>

With this movie, and other movies I directed in Kinshasa, I want to pay tribute to those kids. I also want to give honor to the artists, visual artists, performers, musicians of the local scene who invent, create in disastrous living conditions. That's why they are part of all of my projects.

This street children phenomenon isn't unique to Congo, it is found in many other parts of the World. Poverty, beliefs, wars, migrations make those groups of children all the more common.

Making a movie in virtual reality requires sophisticated equipment, cameras with several lenses filming at 360° all around the camera, but also towards the sky and the ground. We therefore need to put the scene in sequence, not at 90° like a standard 2D movie, but at 360°. Then, to record the sequence, we need to hide so we don't appear in the field and observe if the action is correctly played all around the camera, while staying hidden.

Very complicated, especially when the stage is set in real life situations, such as animated streets, market, churches. This movie is the most complicated I've had to direct.

The technical complexity, mixed the crowd sequence in a tight pre-election period that worked the police up, helped making this project very risky. But I managed and I'm very happy that the movie is selected in competition at the VR Expanded at the Mostra of Venice, the most prestigious virtual reality festival in the World.

# SYNOPSIS

Mika, 14 years old, finds himself on the streets of Kinshasa. While the story unfolds, options are given. You decide what happens next.

# PRESENTATION OF THE PROJÉT

The movie in virtual reality *Kinshasa Now* is an experience where the viewer is immersed, via a VR 360° headset, in the streets of Kinshasa, and discovers the everyday life of a street child. The movie is shot in real locations, with real actors. The experience exists in a linear version of twenty-five minutes but also in an interactive version where the length varies from seven to twenty-five minutes, depending on the viewer's choices. During the movie, options are therefore given to the viewer who decides how the story will continue. There are more than forty different roads!

The interactive version was selected for the official VR Expanded competition at the Venice Film Festival 2020. It is the only Belgian production at the 77th edition of the festival.



A movie written and directed by Marc-Henri Wajnberg

Photographs taken during shooting : <https://we.tl/t-YVd3lemLbI>

Screenshots of the movie: <https://we.tl/t-Z0yTK6PZ4D>

Movie posters in landscape and portrait display modes (FR + EN) :  
<https://we.tl/t-MmFUfLRfVN>



# INTERVIEW OF THE DIRECTOR

## BEFORE TALKING ABOUT YOUR MOVIE, CAN YOU DEFINE THE PARTICULARITY OF YOUR WORK, WHAT ADVENTURE DOES THAT REPRESENT FOR YOU ?

I would have liked to be an explorer, to discover new worlds. I started biology studies at ULB, to look for other worlds, and eventually I ended up in cinema to invent my own worlds. I like to discover new cultures and to tell their stories. This need to discover new territories that are unknown to me is what keeps me going.

## WHERE DOES YOUR INTEREST/PASSION FOR KINSHASA COMES FROM ?

First of all, from the desire to look elsewhere. In this way, I gave cinema classes in Cuba, directed movies in Moscow, in Denpasar, in the Caribbean, in Mumbai, in Rio de Janeiro, etc.

I have a friend who's a music producer, Michel Winter, who organized a world tour for Congolese musicians, but they weren't getting a visa and, on my side, I had a full-length movie that I had to direct in China and that was suffering a serious blow. So I offered to go film his musicians in Kinshasa to give them this opening to the world that their visas were forbidding. I knew that the artistic scene from Kinshasa was very active, creative, energetic. I went scouting for locations around and the confrontation with the city was a shock. I had to completely adjust my project of a documentary on the musicians. The movie became a fiction, in a documentary style : *Kinshasa Kids*, the story of a group of *shégué* children, regarded as sorcerers, who form a music group to outsmart their fate.

(The kids who live in the streets are called *shégués*, *phaseurs* or *yankees*).

## WHAT DID YOUR MEETING WITH KINSHASA CHANGE FOR YOU ?

Everything ! The discovery of a new culture, relationships with the artists, another way of conceiving my work.

My movies talk about passion, and it's by passion that I keep directing and producing. My past full-lengths, whether it's *Just Friends*, or *Kinshasa Kids*, but also my documentaries on Oscar Niemeyer or the photographer Evgueni Khaldéi talk about passion, about going to the end of one's dream. The movies I directed in Kinshasa are part of this aspect where humanity, relationships, the wish to move, to change things, are the motor of the movie... and my own motor.

## IF YOU HAD TO SUMMARIZE THE INTERACTIVE MOVIE KINSHASA NOW IN A FEW WORDS...

Mika, 14 years old, is thrown away by his family. He has to survive, learn the street codes. Options are given and the viewer navigates the movie. Depending on individual choices, forty different scenarios are possible.

*Kinshasa Now* is a new way of making cinema and a strong sensibilizing tool ! It was important that the movie was a token of reality

## WHY DECIDE TO SHOOT A MOVIE IN VIRTUAL REALITY ?

I took part in many debates after the screenings of *Kinshasa Kids*, in movie theatres and in schools. I realized the interest around the movie, but especially the ignorance of the street children phenomenon.

This social reality isn't specific to Congo, it's found in all the countries where the Reawakening Churches proliferate, in Latin America, in Europe or in Asia.

It's important to talk about this phenomenon, through movies, with a technology allowing a strong immersion. Explaining the phenomenon to street children partly via fiction *Kinshasa Kids* (but that has the style of a documentary), but also via a documentary *Enfants sorciers*, *Kinshasa* (that has fictional aspects), or a virtual reality movie with interactive choices *Kinshasa Now*, combines my different interests. Humanly, first, my work makes sense. Then, artistically, as a film-maker, writing and directing a story in virtual reality allows me to discover new places.

We therefore needed to conceive a story that evolves differently depending on the viewers' choices since the sequences are interactives - choices are given during the movie and the viewer decides where to take the movie without interrupting the movie. This story, played by street children in Kinshasa, has to be watched with virtual reality headsets which place the viewers in the centre of the action. I talk a lot about shape, style, that's why the foundation of the thematic choices addressed in the movie is a guaranty of the legitimacy and relevance of my project.

## HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR VR ADVENTURE IN A FEW WORDS ? WHAT DOES SHOOTING IN VR IMPLIE ?

It's the most difficult movie I've had to direct. Shooting a movie in Kinshasa isn't easy. The idea that it's forbidden to shoot or to take pictures is still strong in Kinshasa. This restriction was put in order by Mobutu to avoid showing the decline of the system. Kabila father and son followed. This ban softened a few years ago, an authorization is now subject to prior approval. I shoot the movie during a tense pre-election period. When you shoot in Kin, many passersby come watching the shoot. For a standard movie, in 2D, you can ask them to stay behind the camera, but for a movie with 360° shooting, it's difficult to hide people. It was complicated. Hard to get authorizations, because many of them were needed for every place, hard to explain to passersby or extras that the camera shoot every angle, and hard to stage hundreds of people at the same time. But the result is there !

## KINSHASA NOW IS A TRANSMEDIA PROJECT, CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT OTHER ELEMENTS OF THIS PROJECT ?

There's the movie in virtual reality *Kinshasa Now*, the documentary *Chancelvie*, an educational file co-written with UNICEF as well as Belgian teachers, a book and a website. A tour in Democratic Republic of the Congo will allow us to show the movie in virtual reality, and the documentary. The children of the two movies will participate in the tour and to the debates. A tour in Belgian schools will also be organized. I hope I can install a virtual reality room in a cinema of Brussels so that a maximum of persons can see the movie.

## DID YOU LOOK FOR ACTORS WHO LOOKED LIKE THE IDEAS YOU HAD OF THE CHARACTERS, OR WAS IT THE OPPOSITE ?

*Kinshasa Now* is a fiction, but close to a documentary. Like for *Kinshasa Kids*, it was important, for the credibility of the subject, that the parts were played by kids whose story I could partly tell. Their life journey influence my scenarios. I saw many children to form my group of main actors. The directing approach is close to a documentary. Once the child actors selected, I adapt the story to them, to their life, for fiction and documentary to mix and the border between these types to vanish.

## WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A DIRECTOR IN KINSHASA ?

I've been going to Kinshasa regularly for ten years. I've directed and produced a full-length movie, two documentaries, a web movie for Arte, a movie in virtual reality. I also produced five documentaries and two CDs. I have a group of musicians and artists friends whom I meet everytime with great pleasure. This trust relationship with them allows me to break down barriers with the street children. However, directing the isn't easy. The mutual trust grows along the rehearsals and the shooting.

## DO YOU KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE STREET CHILDREN OF YOUR MOVIE ?

As I did with *Kinshasa Kids*, I put the child actors of *Kinshasa Now* in rehabilitation centres for them to learn how to read and write.

The only girl of the group, Chancelvie, ran away from the centre because she didn't feel at ease anymore. To make sure she was in good health, I went looking for her. I found her after a few months, outside of Kinshasa. Chancelvie was a few months pregnant. We decided to make a documentary about her, her everyday life, her wishes, and of course the birth of her baby. I shot during 6 months and am now editing.

I work with an organization that manages a hundred of rehabilitation centre in Kinshasa : the REEJER (or SCYEN - Street Children and Youth Educators Network). The head of this network is Rémi Mafu, someone who I respect and can trust. It's via him that I kept in touch with the children of my past movies.

This is how Emma, of the children of *Kinshasa Kids*, to whom I had gifted a camera, directed a documentary on her life. He helped me for the casting of *Kinshasa Now* and was an assistant on set. Another one, Samy, who wanted to learn music, could fulfil their dream by joining the percussion group Beta Mbonda of Master Tschamala (who was the topic of Marie-Françoise Plissart's movie, *Kinshasa Beta Mbonda*)

## WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL VIEW ON STREET CHILDREN ?

The topic of resilience is important to me, it's the huge capacity of those kids to make it out of the streets, to be able to rise up stronger each time. The eyes have to be near them without being intrusive or voyeur. The children take us by the hand, show us what they want and we follow along. Moreover there's no comments in my movies. They're directed at child height, without any adult's intrusion. I don't want to lessen this children phenomenon to my only gaze.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BOY AND A GIRL IN THE STREETS OF KINSHASA ?

The children in Kinshasa move in groups they call stables. Those clans are gendered, the boys together, the girls together. At least during the day. The girls are less visible in the streets, that's why the group in *Kinshasa Now* is made of four boys and a girl. There are more boys than girls in the streets. An exacerbated violence and a need to prove one's manliness through domination are highly conveyed in boy groups.

But in my next movie, a documentary titled *Chancelvie* that I'm currently editing, there are only girls. This documentary will show the difficulty of being a young street woman, without protection, in Kin like in other countries where women isn't respected. The situation of the street girls, indeed less numerous than boys, is a catastrophe. Often forced to prostitution, many of them are already mothers.

## WHAT'S THE INTEREST OF A MOVIE IN VIRTUAL REALITY ?

To find ourselves in the heart of Kinshasa, in a market, at Victoire Square, at the Huilerie roundabout, is an experience that's impossible to understand without living it physically. Virtual reality is especially well adapted to dive into the universe in which the children live day and night. Virtual reality allows us to immerse more intensely than with a 2D movie.

## YOU'VE CREATED MANY POSSIBLE ROADS TO LIVE THIS MOVIE, WHY WRITE FORTY ?

There are financial conditions that draws limits in directing such a project. Then, we are also limited by the technical capacities of the VR headsets and computers. The staging with actors and real-life set is heavier - in octets - than for animation. I wasn't aiming to create a catalog of the life or death options the children are confronted to, but to show some ways, to suggest réflexions depending on the choices the viewers will have made.

## HOW LONG DID YOU TAKE TO WRITE, DIRECT, SHOOT AND COMPLETE KINSHASA NOW ?

It took me five years to write, test the operating of virtual reality by shooting a scale model in Kinshasa, find partners, financing, shoot the movie, edit it, and finally complete it with the beautiful gift of being selected in Venice.

## DO YOU HAVE A CURRENT PROJECT OR IS IT TOO SOON TO TALK ABOUT IT ?

I have many projects ! Outside of the documentary *Chancelvie* in postproduction as explained before, we are leaving Kinshasa ! A full-length movie, a comedy about the passion (once again) to pursue one's dream : *The Perfect Movie. Flebelep*, an animated series for children, with small characters who evolve in the real world. *Resist*, a documentary series on communities who chose alternatives to our consumerist living system...

## YOUR FEELING WHEN HEARING ABOUT YOUR SELECTION ?

Very happy. The possibilities to show a movie in virtual reality are limited. A selection to compete in the Mostra of Venice immediately gives an international visibility to the movie. I'm already being called from other festivals.

# SPECIFICATION SHEET

A production	Belgium - Democratic Republic of the Congo
Type	Social
Year	2020
Lenght	60 minutes of movie with some various lenght experience
Type de projet immersif	from 7 to 25 minutes depending on the viewer's choices seated VR 3DoF
Available on	Oculus Rift & HTC Vive

## TECHNICAL LIST

Written and direct by	Marc-Henri Wajnberg
Producer	Marc-Henri Wajnberg
Executive producer (Belgium)	Catherine Boes
Executive producer (RDC)	Théophile Djwa Mbane
Coproducer (Belgium)	Wim Forceville
Coproducers (France)	Vic Demayo ; Guilhem Olive & Pierre-Emmanuel Legoff
Production manager (Belgium)	Catherine Boes
Production manager (RDC)	Théophile Djwa Mbane
Cinematographer	Wim Forceville & Jimmy Abidts
Sound engineer	Philippe Fabbri
Translator	Théophile Djwa Mbane
Music	Fabrice Kayumba ; Strombo & The Stromboli
Editing	Lucas Doppelt
Sound edition	Demute Studio, Christian Esteves

## ARTISTS LIST

Mika	Mika Bangala
Vainqueur	Vainqueur Kanga
Kid with a mility pattern t-shirt	David Lemba
Patrick	Patrick Makambo
The girl	Chancelvie Kaponge



# MARC-HENRI WAJNBERG

WRITER, DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER

## BIOGRAPHIE

Marc-Henri Wajnberg studied cinema at the INSAS, Brussels. He's a writer, director, actor and producer.

His productions are

His productions are eclectic: 1200 shorts of 8 seconds, 1000 of 11 seconds, 40 of 20 seconds, 365 de 50 seconds: in total, he produced 3000 very short movies – including the very famous collection of Claps, broadcasted internationally.

His short film *Le Réveil* with Jean-Claude Dreyfus was rewarded at Cannes and received 22 awards worldwide.

He directed and produced many documentaries including *Oscar Niemeyer, un architecte engagé dans le siècle*, which was awarded in several international festivals. He coproduced a film by Lars Von Trier: *The Five Obstructions* and directed two full-length movies ; *Just Friends* and *Kinshasa Kids* (selected in Venice, Toronto, Busan, New York...).

## FILMOGRAPHIE SELECTIVE

### KINSHASA KIDS

FICTION

60 FESTIVALS (VENISE, TORONTO, NEW YORK, ...) - 8 AWARDS INCLUDING THE MAN'S RIGHTS PRICE

### OSCAR NIEMEYER, UN ARCHITECTE ENGAGE DANS LE SIECLE

DOCUMENTARY

3 PRICES

### EVGUENI KHALDEI, PHOTOGRAPHE SOUS STALINE

DOCUMENTARY

3 PRICES

### LE REVEIL

SHORT

21 PRIX DONT LE RAIL D'OR - SEMAINE INTERNATIONALE DE LA CRITIQUE, FESTIVAL DE CANNES

### JUST FRIENDS

FICTION

MUSIC COMPOSED AND INTERPRETED BY MICHEL HERR AND ARCHIE SHEPP \* CHOSEN TO REPRESENT BELGIUM AT THE OSCARS (HOLLYWOOD 1994), 13 PRICES

### ALMANIAK

SERIES - 365X50"

DAILY BROADCASTS FOR SEVERAL YEARS IN 25 COUNTRIES

### WOLINSKI

SERIES - 40X20"

BROADCASTED IN MORE THAN 40 COUNTRIES

### CLAP

SERIES - 1200X8"

DAILY BROADCASTS FOR SEVERAL YEARS IN 50 COUNTRIES, 5 PRICES

# CONTACT



Marc-Henri Wajnberg - director and producer - +32 4 96 219 280

Catherine Boes - production manager - +32 4 77 673 416

wajnbrosse@wajnbrosse.com

+32 2 381 28 31 | 8, Place Communale - 1630 Linkebeek

# OUR PARTENERS

A PRODUCTION WAJNBROSSE PRODUCTIONS PRODUCED BY MARC-HENRI WAJNBERG CATHERINE BOES SCRIPT MARC-HENRI WAJNBERG DIRECTOR MARC-HENRI WAJNBERG WITH MIKA BANGALA YAMOUJOUR KANDA CHANCELVIE KAPONDE DAVID LEMBA PATRICK MAKAMBO  
A COPRODUCTION RG & CRÉATIFS ASSOCIÉS WIN FORCEVILLE EDITING LUCAS DOPPPELT REALITY SOUND UEMUTE STUDIO MUSIC STROMBO WITH THE SUPPORT OF LE CENTRE DU CINÉMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL DE LA FÉDÉRATION WALLONIE-BRUXELLES CREATIVE EUROPE MEDIA  
LE FONDS AUDIOVISUEL FLAMAND PRODUCTION COFINANCED BY WALLIMAGE CREATIVE AND THE CANADA MEDIA FUND WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF OUFETI PRODUCTIONS BELGA PRODUCTIONS BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TAX SHELTER UNICEF BELGIUM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

