



# Zairia

A film by Machérie Ekwa Bahango



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## Machérie Ekwa Bahango

E-mail: [macherieekwa@gmail.com](mailto:macherieekwa@gmail.com)

Tel: + 243 821 417 470  
D. R. Congo, Kinshasa

## Festival de Cannes

5, rue Charlot, F-75003 Paris  
Tel. 33 (0) 1 53 59 61 20  
Fax 33 (0) 1 53 59 61 24  
E-mail:  
[residence@festival-cannes.fr](mailto:residence@festival-cannes.fr)  
[www.festival-cannes.org](http://www.festival-cannes.org)

Since 2000, the Festival Residence has provided each year accommodation and support to twelve selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film. A jury presided by a film director sits twice a year, selecting these young filmmakers on the basis of their short films, or

even first feature film, and the merits of their feature film project. During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Cannes Film Festival, to bring their project to co-production status.



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With the support of HP. Printed on an HP Indigo Digital Press.



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## Technical Information

Working Title: Zairia

Director: Machérie Ekwa Bahango

Screenplay: Machérie Ekwa Bahango

Nationality: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Genre: Drama

Length: 120 min

Shooting location: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Production Company: Clin d'œil

Email: [bureauclindoel@gmail.com](mailto:bureauclindoel@gmail.com)

## Director's Information

Machérie Ekwa Bahango is a young writer/director from Congo. Passionate about cinema, Machérie is self-taught.

*Maki'la* is her first film as a director. Machérie was invited to the Cannes Film Festival for the first time in 2017 as a young talent invited to a round table organized by the OIF and the French Institute. In December 2017, Machérie was selected to the Berlinale Talents 2018 program but was not able to participate because *Maki'la* was selected the same year at the 68th Berlin International Film Festival in the *Forum* section.

She collaborated on the films *Kimpa Vita: The Mother of the African Revolution* and *Félicité* directed by Senegalese/French director Alain Gomis. She was in charge of the Lingala translation of the screenplay. Machérie develops her second feature film script *Zairia*.



*La famille Ekwa à Kisangani*

### Synopsis

1997, The Republic of Zaire, suffering in the severe economic and political crisis crippling the country, the Ekwa family is split apart. The father, whose business has gone bust, leaves the country in search of a means of survival, the mother remains in Kisangani with some of their children. Hoping the situation will improve, she works hard to reorganise their lives and make up for the absence of the father. Her hopes change when the AFDL war breaks out in the east and advances very quickly towards Kisangani. The danger she faces alone with six children is so intense, she decides to leave and head to the capital Kinshasa, despite lacking the means. With the time it takes to find the means, the city is now under siege. A last boat is about to leave the city, she gives everything she has to leave with her children, but this boat is reported to the rebels and is quickly targeted.

### Statement of Intent

As I am very close to the characters, I would like to focus on childhood innocence, the victimization of the population, the strength and love of mothers and all those who do the impossible to survive and protect theirs. This is an autobiographical film inspired by my childhood. I tell the story of my family's survival, which is separated due to the political and economic crisis.

Instead of talking about the war, I would like to share the survival force of the war victims with the viewer.

This film is a tribute to the victims of the wars in the Congo.

### Synopsis

1997, République du Zaïre, sous l'emprise de la sévère crise économique et politique qui frappe le pays, la famille Ekwa éclate. Le père dont les affaires sont complètement en faillite s'en va à la recherche de moyens de survie à l'étranger, la mère restée à Kisangani avec une partie des enfants dans l'espoir que la situation s'améliore, multiplie les efforts pour réorganiser la vie et combler l'absence du père. Ses espoirs s'envolent lorsque la guerre de L'AFDL éclate à l'Est et avance très rapidement vers Kisangani. Le danger qui pèse sur elle seule avec ses 6 enfants est si grand qu'elle décide de quitter la ville pour regagner la capitale Kinshasa. Cependant elle n'en a pas le moyen. Le temps d'y remédier, la ville est déjà assiégée. Un dernier bateau est sur le point de quitter la ville, elle donne tout pour y prendre place avec ses enfants, mais ce bateau, signalé aux rebelles est vite pris pour cible.

### Note d'intention

À la fois très proche des personnages, je voudrais faire ressortir l'innocence de l'enfance, la victimisation de la population, la force et l'amour des mères et de tous ceux qui font l'impossible pour survivre et sauver les leurs. C'est un film autobiographique qui s'inspire de ma propre histoire, celle de mon enfance. J'y raconte la survie de ma famille qui se retrouve séparée à la suite de la crise politique et économique.

Plutôt que de parler de la guerre, je voudrais amener le spectateur à partager la force de survie des victimes de guerre.

Ce film est un hommage aux victimes des guerres au Congo.

