

Dear SAGE members,

Rough Cut Lab 2019

SAGE, in collaboration with [Encounters Documentary Festival](#) and [The Refinery](#) Cape Town, launched the second South African Rough Cut Lab for documentary films, which took place in May. Call me Aunty Pat, Rollaball and The Home were selected, and three mentors from SAGE, Megan Gill, Ronelle Loots and Khalid Shamis, advised on how to improve the films. The Refinery generously sponsored post-production prizes for each team. The three films selected for the first Rough Cut Lab in 2017 were all completed and screened at local and international festivals in 2018 and 2019.

Below is more information about this year's participants and their impressions of this invaluable experience.



First day of the Lab



Last day of the Lab

Call Me Aunty Pat



Mentor Megan Gill S.A.G.E. and Yazeed Kamaldien hard at work

Director and Editor: Yazeed Kamaldien

Yazeed works as an independent documentary filmmaker in Cape Town. He has made three short films: *Imagina na Copa* (2014) about protests against the Soccer World Cup in Brazil; *Inside Kobane* (2015) about Islamic State violence in Syria; and *This Was Our Home* (2017) about people waiting to return to homes where they removed from in District Six during apartheid. He has also worked as a production manager on various films, including the award-winning *Miners Shot Down*.

What is your documentary about, and why did you decide to submit it to the Rough Cut Lab?

My film, *Call Me Aunty Pat*, follows the journey of politician Patricia de Lille during her last days as mayor of Cape Town through to starting her new party and finally being named a minister in the South African parliament. It unpacks the politics and personality of this well-known figure in South Africa. I decided to submit to the RCL because I needed professional input on how to complete my film. I need to still secure funds for post-production, including paying a professional editor to work with me. Funding is always a challenge but I want to take my filmmaking career to the next level and this entering the RCL is part of that journey.

How do you regard the role of the editor in a production?

The editor is a role that I have grown respect for. I want to work with an editor who can help me shape the story creatively and visually. I am a very independent-minded person and storyteller, but want to work with another creative mind to enhance my story. And this is where the editor comes in.

Do you think mentorship is important during post-production?

I think so yes, because one works in a bubble and often you need advice on how to make your project better. A solid mentor with storytelling experience can help you improve your film.

For you as a director, what value did the Rough Cut Lab process add to your project?

I had been working on my own for ten months and sharing my work-in-progress with a professional editor helped me find the gaps in my project.

How would you describe the role of a documentary editor?

As someone who has edited my own projects, the editor's role is about getting an idea of the timing and feelings in the film. So the editor can enhance the story by leaving out information or knowing when to cut out or include certain visuals. The editor is also able to add moments of silence or transitions that the director does not always think of.

What were the challenges you encountered when editing the documentary?

I don't regard myself as a professional editor. I have edited my work out of necessity and a lack of funds. My biggest challenge is that I am not primarily an editor, even though I am able to do it, and want to rather work with an editor who does this full time, to enhance my work.

When do you think it is important to have a mentor involved during the editing process?

It would be important to have a mentor who knows the software you are using and who can meet with you once a week for updates or at least when needed, to advise on how to make the project better.

What value did the Rough Cut Lab process add to your project in terms of editing?

I realised that a professional editor who knows how to use editing software expertly can really make your film look and feel so much better.

Rollaball



Editor Stephen Abbott S.A.G.E. and director Eddie Edwards (middle) during the first day of the Lab

Director: Eddie Edwards

Eddie shot his first film, *King for a Knight* in 1991 in Cape Town on a borrowed camcorder. This led him into the world of documentary filmmaking, where he won numerous awards for his films *The Black* and *The Fight*. Eddie then entered the world of broadcast television, directing South African music megastar Zola on a journey around Southern Africa, highlighting social issues in the SABC programme, *Zola 7 in Africa*. His other television work includes series of *It's For Life*, *Rize Mzansi* and *Khumbul'Ekhaya*. In 2011, his short documentary *Once Upon A Day: Brenda Fassie*, premiered at Encounters Documentary Festival.

Eddie's other work includes corporate videos, commercials, brand-funded television and music videos. In recent years, Eddie has been at the helm of Vodafone's telecommunications' Corporate Social Responsibility Project - being series director of the project in Zambia, Niger, and Ghana.

What is your documentary about, and why did you decide to submit it to the Rough Cut Lab?

Rollaball is about a group of polio survivors who live on the streets of Accra, Ghana. Every Sunday they play an extreme version of soccer on home made skateboards. The film charts their progress as they seek international recognition. We are at an advanced stage of post-production and saw the Lab as a god fit for where our project is at.

How do you regard the role of the editor in a production?

The editor as well as the DOP and the director are the main contributors to the look and feel and design of the film. And then there's the structuring and storytelling that the editor will do. In docs, the edit is where the film is really made so a strong sense of story,

structure, mood, style and design are at the forefront of an editor's contribution to the film.

Do you think mentorship is important during post-production?

Yes. By the time a film gets to post-production, it needs other eyes on the project. A mentor then becomes a collaborator as they can bring something new to the film, but must interact with the director and editor so that the mentor then knows what is possible and what other options there are.

What value did the Rough Cut Lab process add to your project?

Besides the obvious value of the gifts of the final mix and grade, it was an opportunity to try something different without the pressures of being in regular post-production. It was also great to work in a facility for a change, where it's easier to focus, and not in a home office where there are often distractions.

Mentor: Khalid Shamis S.A.G.E.

Half Libyan, half South African, former Londoner Khalid manages to both direct and edit documentaries, although at vastly different paces. His own films have taken up to seven years to finish, whereas he constructs and completes numerous films a year as an editor. This becomes a strange place of guiding first time filmmakers, directing directors, imbibing worlds alien to his, containing and creating another's vision, manifesting the dreams of the subjects in the films and being taken by the voice of the material itself.

How would you describe the role of an editor?

Collaborator, instigator, devils advocate, confidant, director, listener, problem solver.

What are the challenges documentary editing face?

The challenges vary from project to project, but they are also usually the same kinds of things. What story are we trying to tell, how are we going to tell THIS story, why are we telling it etc, but mostly for me the big challenge is, can I spend the next six to ten weeks sitting next to this person?

Why do you think mentorship is important?

Mentorship in most things is important if the person wanting to learn is young in the process and has a desire to grow, but when it comes to working with experienced filmmakers, it's less about mentorship and more about collaboration and finding new ways together.

How did you experience the Rough Cut Lab process?

I love this process and having been on both sides of the process I know that it's great to work with experienced practitioners in attaining a shared goal. This year we had an interesting and varied selection of projects, but one can only accomplish so much in three days. Five would be good with a two day break in between.



Mentor Khalid Shamis S.A.G.E.

Kind regards,

Marina du Toit

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