

Fulu Mugovhani is caught in a love triangle with a twist in Umakoti Wethu

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Umakoti Wethu is now streaming first on Showmax, just in time for Heritage Day. SAFTA and Africa Movie Academy Award Best Actress winner Fulu Mugovhani gives another prize-worthy performance as Khathu, a Venda woman struggling to conceive, who finds herself in crisis when her Zulu husband's new job takes them back to KwaZulu-Natal, his overbearing mother, and his old flame.



SAFTA nominee Melusi Mbele (*Isibaya*) co-stars as her husband Sizwe, with rising star Kwanele Mthethwa (*Isithembiso*, *Abomama S2*) delivering a breakthrough performance as Nobuhle, the woman caught in the middle of this love triangle with a twist. Duduzile Ngcobo (*Durban Gen*, *eHostela*, *Uzalo*) also features as Khathu's disapproving mother-in-law.

"*Umakoti Wethu* is about family matters," says Fulu, who's acted in everything from *Ayanda* to *Happiness Is A Four-Letter Word*, *One Night Kwa Mxolisi* to *Seriously Single*, *Ring of Lies* to *Still Breathing*. "It follows a couple who are going through a transformation in their relationship. They want to grow their family in every way but with that comes challenges."

Fulu jumped at the chance to speak her language on screen. "I've played many Venda characters but not a lead," she says. "So it's great to see a minority language represented on a bigger scale."

Beyond Black Productions executive producer Moeketsi Moeketsi says *Umakoti Wethu* is an attempt to "pay homage to a beautiful part of the isiZulu culture while in the same breath giving voice to those individuals that may not always be heard within that same culture."



In particular, Kwanele hopes *Umakoti Wethu* creates more understanding about “what queer people go through almost every single day of their lives.”

She describes her character Nobuhle as “a young lady who comes from a well-respected family. She grew up under this immense pressure to do good and be perfect. Nobuhle discovers that she is lesbian but she doesn’t have the courage to act on it. She finds it difficult to come out because of how taboo homosexuality is in her community.”

Fulu adds that South African audiences will recognise the family dynamics in *Umakoti Wethu*. “All of us in one way or another know somebody who is in that position of being unaccepted by the family.”

Umakoti Wethu is the feature film directorial debut of Nozipho Nkelemba, who starred in *The Forgotten Kingdom*, directed *Gomora* and wrote *Emoyeni*. Christopher Mashile co-directs and executive produces. Moeketsi, Christopher and writer Nandisa Mkize, the co-founders of Beyond Black Productions, are all MultiChoice Talent Factory graduates.



Fulu says she respects her character Khathu’s “ability to find contingency plans in her life and to be adaptable... That’s a good quality to have because sometimes, what you wrote down as your five or 10-year plan, it changes for the better.”

She adds, “I also appreciate that she had the courage to follow her heart. She allowed love to just be love and break down

the confines of what society says love is.”

Kwanele agrees. “I hope that our audience will learn that sometimes you should do what you want because life is too short. You don’t want to regret not doing what you’ve always wanted to do, just because you’re worried about other people’s opinions.”

This Heritage Month, also look out for SAFTA Lifetime Achievement winner Thembi Mtshali-Jones in [Goodbye Gogo](#), executive produced by Quinton Jones and Minnie Dlamini Jones, who also co-wrote the original story; the documentary [United Apart SA - Lockdown Remembered](#); and [Flatland](#), the Karoo Western that opened the Berlin Panorama.

Watch and embed the *Umakoti Wethu* trailer:

Watch *Umakoti Wethu* on Showmax:

<https://www.showmax.com/eng/movie/dut7qttu-umakoti-wethu>

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