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Katwe

A film by Nima Shirali

PRÅM FILM

Production Facts

Original Title - Katwe
Genre - Documentary
Duration - 97 min
Capture and Final Format - 2K, 1.33
Year of Release - 2025
Language - English and Rutooro
Subtitles - English
Countries of Production - Uganda, Sweden
Production Company - Pråmfilm AB
Co production Uganda - Savannah Moon

Contact and distribution

Patrik Öberg
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Synopsis

In the Ugandan salt lake town of Katwe, the factory has stood deserted for the past 40 years while the politicians promise to free the community from poverty.

Election promises turn into hearsay, and it's an open secret that the salt lake revenues disappear through middlemen with deep pockets. The corruption permeates everyday life in Katwe and political blackmail exists side by side with deep religiosity. Against the backdrop of a history infused with colonial and imperial exploitation, a mosaic of characters gives us insight into the salt workers' historical plights.

In the foreground to the local politics we meet Abooki among others. She provides for her three daughters through her work in the salt lake. The economic crisis makes her everyday life a daily struggle, as all her living expenses are measured in the amount of salt she needs to break and sell.

Perspective and form

The film tells the local history of Katwe through the memories and lives of the indigenous salt miners. The narrative is built around intimate and contemplative conversations with the main characters as they reflect on their community. Their testimonies are interspersed with observations of community life through collective gatherings. Political rallies, burials, independence celebrations and religious ceremonies are juxtaposed with archival montage and scenes of everyday life and salt workers labouring. The various forms and formats are used in order to show how the ghosts of the past are directly connected to the present with a continuation of the same power imbalances. The aim of the film is ultimately to portray a complex and honest depiction of a community that has fallen into the shadows of a nations professed path to development.

Director

Nima Shirali is a former post office worker with a Master's degree in social anthropology from the University of Stockholm. He studied film at the Red Cross Film School in Sweden and graduated from the New York Film Academy with the short Farewell Riege lmann (2008). Katwe is his first feature documentary.

Director Producer - **Nima Shirali**
Executive Producer - **Patrik Öberg**
Co-producer - **Mónica Hernández Rejón & Meme Kagga**
Editors - **Joanna Montero & Kalle Jansson**
Photographers - **Kristoffer Klarén, Simon Forsberg, Simon Stanford & Nima Shirali**
Editing Consultant - **Alexandra Strauss**
Color grade - **Kalle Jansson**
Sound design & mix - **Kristoffer Kronander**
Original music - **Brenda El Rayes, Victor Badel & Erik Nelson**
Additional photography - **Sebastian Ahlqvist**
Dramaturgy Assistant - **Rebecka Bülow**
Graphic Design - **Lucien Garin & Kalle Jansson**
Trailer - **Lucien Garin**
Translation: **Gerald Lubega**
Research Assistant - **Malachi Mubiru Muyinza Kabaale & Gerald Lubega**
Subtitles - **Nima Shirali**
Export DCP - **Luciano Quinteros & Kalle Jansson**
Accountant - **Torbjörn Jansson**

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Directors Statement

I’m a child to political immigrants from Iran living in Sweden. Through family stories and experience I have learnt to always be grounded with the grass-roots people; that the reality and perspective of working class and poor people is the truth of any society. In my work I am dedicated to this prin-ciple.

The salt workers of Katwe have been witnesses to political forces, both external and internal, that come to their community in order to profit from it, and who all leave as soon as they have succeeded or failed in their pursuits. This film is about tho-se who are left behind, to labour, to wait, and to live their lives day to day struggling to not fail get-ting something to eat. Its about their hopes and dreams and their views of the larger forces that want to shape their lives, both past and present. As such, it is an attempt to tell history from below through the perspectives of the indigenous and grassroots people whose voices, although mar-ginalised, radiate with deep knowledge and truth. And I feel it is a perspective that is ever more ur-gent during these dangerous times when we are faced with a monopoly oligarch threat to dominate world politics while pretending that they represent the working class.

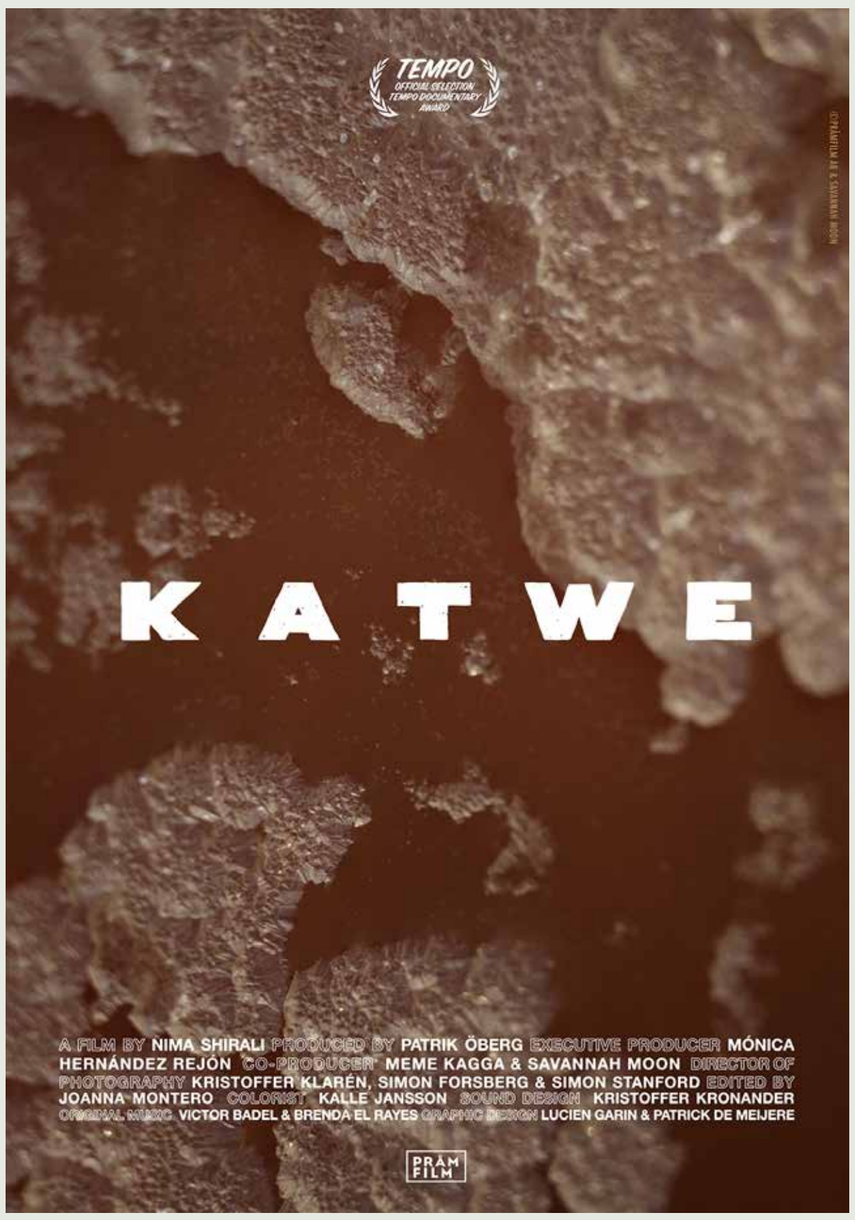
Support

The Swedish Film Institute, Annelie Juliusson
Film Stockholm / Filmbasen, Ivana Lalovic
The Swedish Arts Grants Committee
Röda Korsets Folkhögskola
Gålöstiftelsen
Swedish Television
The Film Collaborative

The project was presented at Tempo Pitch 2022

Nominations

Tempo Documentary Award 2025
Sheffield DocFest-Youth Jury Award 2025



Production Company

Pråmfilm AB is an independent production company based in Sweden. We focus on creating space for new promising film directors who want to explore the world from norm-critical perspectives through creative documentaries. We aim to tell the stories of minorities that are usually underrepresented in film and other media and to facilitate international co-productions that bring diversity to the Swedish film landscape.

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