

Corona Studios' second production focused on defying prejudice

The second local production from Corona Studios, *Free Surfer*, an original, digital content series featuring South African surfers Cass Collier and Khanyisa Mngqibisa - now available on YouTube.



Image supplied: Cass Collier and Khanyisa Mngqibisa feature in *Free Surfer*

Free Surfer deals with challenging stigmas of belonging, including defying prejudices based on race and gender, in finding freedom in the ocean.

“I’ve spent my entire life in the ocean and that’s where I find my freedom. Once you experience that first wave it changes everything. I think the ocean is all about healing – and there’s no greater feeling of freedom than this. Everyone has a place in the ocean,” said Collier, the world’s first, Black, big wave surfing champion.



Corona Studios launches in South Africa

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Winner of the Reef ISA Big Wave Championship in 1999 and one of the top surf coaches in the world, today surfers come from around the world to be taught by Collier in his surf school out of Muizenberg, from where he teaches children from disadvantaged communities how to surf.

“My father Ahmed Collier was the first black surfer to go to all the “white” Cape Town beaches and take on the apartheid government. Often, we would go to the beach to surf and leave in a police van, but he realised the freedom that surfing would give me,” said Collier. “It did and it still does.”

The second episode of *Free Surfer* recognises the internationally qualified lifeguard and surfing coach, Mngqibisa, who grew up in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, in a single-parent household. She fell in love with swimming aged 12, got into lifesaving in high school and started surfing at 21.

“One of my favourite highlights from my passion for the ocean is seeing more black people taking part in a sport they may once have thought was not for them. When the community sees a surfer who is black and a girl, coming from the same, disadvantaged community as they are, the perception changes that surfing is for only white or rich people,” said Mngqibisa, whose dream is to start a young, black girls surfing programme.

“In our community, we face a lot of challenges – GBV, poverty, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancy. When the youth I train surf with their peers it gives them a sense of belonging, self -confidence and purpose. I want my community to feel motivated and encouraged to free themselves from the negative and go to any beach and enjoy nature just like I do. When I started surfing, with the support of my mother, I changed. I wasn’t the same Khanyisa as before.”

Melanie Nicholson, Corona SA marketing manager, said, “*Free Surfer* is about two homegrown heroes who motivate people, especially their communities, through their deep connection to the ocean. We’re proud to present a short format series that represents the triumph of the human spirit by becoming their best selves in the ocean, outdoors, in nature.”

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