

12 of the biggest African series and films on Showmax

Showmax has some exciting African films and series for you to catch up on.

The Snail and The Whale

The Snail and The Whale is currently shortlisted in the Oscars' Best Animated Short category. The nominees will only be announced on 15 March 2021, but *The Snail and The Whale* is an early favourite, with *Variety* predicting a two-horse race between the 'audacious', 'beautiful', 'adorable' and 'charming' Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler adaptation and the 'emotional' *If Anything Happens I Love You*.

Animated in Cape Town by Triggerfish, with South African Daniel Snaddon as co-director, *The Snail and The Whale* follows the amazing journey of a tiny snail who longs to see the world and hitches a ride on the tail of a huge humpback whale. It's a joyous, empowering tale about our wonderful world and discovering that, however small you are, you *can* make a difference.

The Real Housewives of Durban

The first episode of *The Real Housewives of Durban* (RHOD) broke Showmax's first-day viewing record at the end of January and the reality series has remained the most popular series on Showmax ever since until finally being pushed into second place this week by Mark Ruffalo's 2021 Golden Globe-winning performance in *I Know This Much Is True*.



The Real Housewives of Durban breaks viewing records on Showmax

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The drama started from the first episode, when Nonku Williams revealed she had a child with gospel legend Sfiso Ncwane, whose widow, Ayanda, is also part of the show. With LaConco having waited until episode four to make her grand entrance, the drama has just kept escalating, setting Twitter alight every Friday as new episodes drop.

Also featuring Annie Ludick, Kgomotso Ndungane and Sorisha Naidoo, *RHOD* is the 24th international – and second South African – instalment of *The Real Housewives* franchise, which is distributed internationally by NBCUniversal Formats, a division of Universal Studio Group. Seasons one and two of *The Real Housewives of Johannesburg* is also available on Showmax.

Dam

Early reviews for the Showmax original *Dam*, a small-town psychological thriller set in the Eastern Cape, are glowing. YFM's resident critic Yazz the Student compares *Dam* to HBO's *The Outsider* and says the "eerie" and "unsettling" show feels "different to the South African television landscape"; *Sunday Times*' Tymon Smith calls it "chilling... well-acted, eerily realised and intriguing"; *Fortress of Solitude* says "it rivals any international production... a must-watch show that promises to fester in your mind long after the credits roll"; and *Watkykky* hailed it as the "best South African series I've seen to date."



Showmax original *Dam* now streaming; drawing comparisons to HBO's *The Outsider*

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Silwerskerm Best Actress winner Lea Vivier (*Wonderlus*) stars as Yola, who returns from Chile to bury her estranged father. To her surprise, and her sister's irritation, he's left his farm to her, but this may be more of a curse than a blessing, as the house seems to be trying to tell her something. But with her mother institutionalised, and her own meds running out, Yola has to wonder if the spirits are real or just in her head?

Tali's Baby Diary

In *Tali's Baby Diary*, an unexpected pregnancy forces Tali (Julia Anastasopoulos aka SuzelleDIY) into a desperate pivot from Insta-influencer to wholesome 'momfluencer'.

Early reviews are loving the new Tali. In a five-star review on *Channel24*, TV critic Thinus Ferreira hailed *Tali's Baby Diary* as “the best South African TV show of 2021 so far, and 100% guaranteed to make you literally laugh out loud.



Tali's Baby Diary: 'The best South African TV show of 2021 so far'

Showmax 1 Mar 2021



Raised By Wolves

The biggest TV series ever shot in South Africa, *Raised by Wolves* is an HBO sci-fi show that centres on two androids tasked with raising human children on virgin planet Kepler-22b after Earth was destroyed in a great war.

Raised by Wolves has already been nominated for three 2021 Critics' Choice Super Awards: Best Science Fiction/Fantasy Series, Best Actor: Sci-Fi for Travis Fimmel (*Vikings*' Ragnar) and Best Actress: Sci-Fi for Danish actress Amanda Collin.

Four-time Oscar nominee [Ridley Scott](#), who directed the sci-fi classics *Alien*, *Blade Runner* and *The Martian*, executive produces and directs the first two episodes. *Inverse* hails the show as “Ridley Scott's best sci-fi since *Alien*... there's no TV show quite like it.”

Kingdoms of Fire, Ice & Fairy Tales

Kingdoms of Fire, Ice & Fairy Tales has been nominated for Best Feature at The International Wildlife Film Festival in the US, one of the genre's top festivals globally, and recently won Best Nature/Travel Film at The New York Cinematography Awards.

Missing travel? This awe-inspiring documentary will transport you to three of Earth's iconic wildernesses: Yellowstone National Park in America; the Black Forest in Germany; and the Arctic Circle in Swedish Lapland. These are lands where waters boil, trees talk and the skies light up as if they are on fire. Lands where bears and wolves rule, where the planet never forgets to remind us of its power. Timeless lands that reveal what life was like a million years ago.

Poppie Nongena

From Christiaan Olwagen (*Kanarie*) comes *Poppie Nongena*, a multi-award-winning adaptation of Elsa Joubert's classic novel. It tells the moving true-life story of the title character, a domestic worker desperately trying to keep her family together while navigating the day-to-day struggle against inhumane government pass laws in 1970s South Africa.

Clementine Zita (aka Clementine Mosimane, aka Mama Rose Tladi in *The Wild*) won Best Actress at both the South African Film and Television Awards and Silwerskerm, where *Poppie Nongena* took home 12 awards, including Best Film. Anna-Mart van der Merwe also won the 2020 Safta for Best Supporting Actress, while DoP Vicci Turpin (*Four Corners*) was nominated at Camerimage, the biggest international festival dedicated to the art of cinematography. *Poppie Nongena* also won Best Picture at the Brics Film Festival in Russia last year.

Jungle Beat: The Movie

Produced in Cape Town by Sunrise, *Jungle Beat*'s adorable animations have become a YouTube phenomenon, racking up nearly five million subscribers and over two billion views, as well as a host of awards. Now the animation's stars, Munki and Trunk, have their own movie, with an 85% audience rating on Rotten Tomatoes, and a Best Feature award nomination from the 2020 edition of Annecy, the world's most prestigious animation festival.

When a homesick alien crash-lands his spaceship near their jungle home, Munki, Trunk and their animal friends need to get him back to his ship and teach him about friendship and fun - before his father can take over Earth.

I Am Laycon

In February 2021, *I Am Laycon* broke the Nigerian record for the most-viewed show on its first day on Showmax. Weeks later, the reality series remains in the number one most-popular spot on Showmax in Nigeria.

The first Showmax Original shot and produced in Nigeria, *I Am Laycon* follows the *Big Brother Naija* season five winner, Lekan Agbeleshe aka Laycon, as he settles into a life of stardom and chases his music career. The show features cameos from fellow Big Brother Naija Lockdown housemates including Lilo Aderogba and Victoria Adeyele, aka Vee.

Crime and Justice

Crime and Justice is both Kenya's first Showmax original and Showmax's first co-production with global broadcaster Canal+. The Nairobi-set police procedural and legal drama stars Sarah Hassan (*Plan B, Just In Time*) and Alfred Munyua (*Poacher, The First Grader*) as Makena and Silas, the Nairobi Metropol Police detectives at the heart of the show. The eight-part series follows one ripped-from-the-headlines case per episode, all the way through to the courtroom verdict.

In the first episode, Silas and Makena investigate the gruesome murder of Abuya (Muhugu Theuri, *Pillow Talk*), a university student who was entangled in an illicit affair with the powerful politician Barasa (John Sibi-Okumu, *The Constant Gardener, The First Grader*).

One Night Kwa Mxolisi

In Joburg dramedy *One Night Kwa Mxolisi*, when a once semi-successful rugby player opens a new restaurant, his friends come to celebrate his success. But after one too many vodkas and a few too many truth-bombs, friendships are tested...

Actor Sisanda Henna (*Trackers, Rogue, Griekwastad*) makes his feature film directorial debut and stars as Mxolisi, opposite an all-star cast that includes Linda Mtoba (*The River, Isibaya*), comedian Donovan Goliath, Nyaniso Dzedze (*Black Is King*), Buhle Samuels (*Kings of Jo'burg*), Africa Movie Academy Award winner Fulu Mugovhani (*Seriously Single, Still Breathing*), and four-time Safta nominee Motlatsi Mafatshe (*How To Ruin Christmas: The Wedding, Isidingo*).

Griekwastad

Arnold Vosloo (*Bosch*, *24*, *The Mummy*) and rising teen star Alex van Dyk (*Die Stropers*) lead the cast in *Griekwastad*, which recounts one detective's investigation into the horrific 2012 murder of Deon and Christel Steenkamp and their teenage daughter, Marthella, on their farm Naauwhoek.

Written and directed respectively by Safta winners Tertius Kapp (*Rage*, *4 Mure*) and Jozua Malherbe (*Slot*, *Wolwedans in die Skemer*), the chilling film is based on Jacques Steenkamp's best-selling true-crime novel *The Griekwastad Murders: The Crime That Shook South Africa*.

The all-star cast includes *Trackers* stars Sisanda Henna and Rolanda Marais, Safta winners Deon Lotz (*Skoonheid*, *Tali's Baby Diary*), Crystal-Donna Roberts (*Arendsvlei*, *Krotoa*) and Jody Abrahams (*Die Byl*, *Hard Copy*) and rising star Jane De Wet (*The Girl From St. Agnes*, *Rage*).