

# Directing *In Defense of My Art*

 By Ruth Cooper 11 Nov 2014

Tumi, featuring Reason and Ziyon, recently released their music video for *In Defense of My Art*. With a visually and provocatively strong African aesthetic the video has already received a fair amount of feedback. We chatted to award-winning director Kyle Lewis from [Arcade Content](#) to find out more.



■ ***How did you come up with the concept for the *In Defense of My Art* music video?***

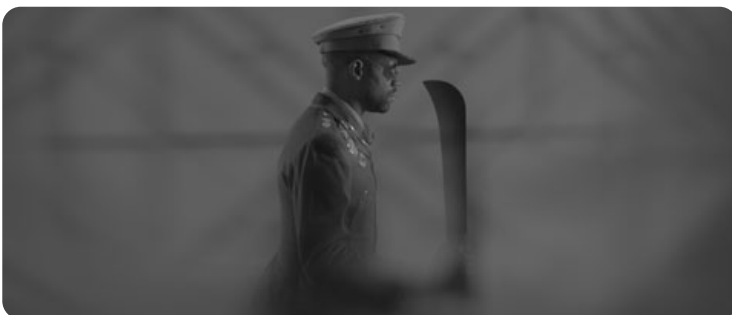
The song itself spoke to me immediately. The fight to defend who you are and what you stand for. The concept is a visual piece that expels Western ideas to rather focus on the beauty of a South African setting.

■ ***What was the filming process like; what was it like working with Tumi?***

Tumi was incredible. He trusted me 100% and for the first time I was able to express my creativity as a director without having to compromise at any point.

■ ***What were the main messages you wanted to convey behind the iconography used?***

The main goal with each image is to push a point, to show how as South Africans we are so influenced by American hip h culture, but we have the strongest, most powerful aesthetic right here in South Africa. The concept is to show how this influence has corrupted us and clouded our true voice - and it's time we stand up and take control of this.



■ ***In only a few days the video has already received a fair amount of views and praise. What do you think makes an eye-catching and popular video these days?***

I think if you truly have something to say and express, an audience will respond. The fear that a video will not be well received is the main contributor to the visual becoming diluted and like everything out there. Think big. Think different.

■ ***Released on the same day as Die Antwoord's Ugly Boy, a [few comparisons](#) are being made. What are your thoughts on this?***

Any time an artist has a controversial comment to say it will definitely be compared to other things. Die Antwoord have pushed the local aesthetic to an international platform, thereby almost creating a new genre. I am proud that there are comparisons as I feel that they are true artists and visionaries. (Also, in our defence, our video was shot at the beginning of May).



■ ***You seem to have quite a distinct motif when it comes to your music videos. How would you describe your style***

I like to vary my style as much as possible, but I am a big fan of composed, high-fashion-type aesthetics. The reality of the world can be depressing, so I always add a sense of surrealism in all I do, because at the end of the day as filmmakers we must offer our audience a sense of escapism.

■ ***Congrats on winning a SAMA for [The Parlotones Sleepwalker video](#). What was this like? Did winning make any impact on your career?***

The SAMA award has definitely given me a bit of street cred and has brought me some very exciting artists to work with! It was such a great honour to be noticed, but my greatest honour is to continue to create beautiful images and the SAMA definitely awarded me this.



■ ***There has been some really great production and videos coming out of South Africa recently. What is some of your favourite local work?***

The local scene is on fire at the moment and I couldn't be happier. My favourites out there are by directors [Ryan Kruger](#) and [Tristan Holmes](#).

■ ***What's your background? How did you get into directing?***

I knew I wanted to direct from the first time I saw a 'making of' *Jurassic Park* as a child. So, from a young age, I knew my direction and pushed for it! I studied at AFDA Cape Town, where I completed my Honours BA in directing and writing.

■ ***Any interesting forthcoming projects you can share with us?***

Got a big video for Danny K coming up, as well as a feature, which is in development.

View Kyle Lewis's [showreel](#)

## ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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