

'Poppie Nongena', 'The Turning' and 'Dark Waters'

 By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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Films opening in South African cinemas, this week, include Christiaan Olwagen's adaption of Elsa Joubert's award-winning novel, *Poppie Nongena*; Terrence Malick's *A Hidden Life*; *Dark Waters*; *The Turning*, *Like A Boss*; *Mosley*; and the Met Opera Live on The Big Screen.

Poppie Nongena

Based on the beloved true story told in Elsa Joubert's award-winning novel – which is regarded as one of the best African novels of the 20th century – Poppie Nongena's heartbreaking story is brought to the big screen by celebrated director and screenwriter Christiaan Olwagen.



Christiaan Olwagen talks the modern-day relevance of *Poppie Nongena*

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Telling the story of a South African isiXhosa mother (Clementine Mosimane), whose life revolves around finding stability for her family when she is deemed by the law to be an illegal resident in her own country, it captures her struggle with the authorities for permission to stay, moving from house to house, applying for permits, applying for extensions, extensions of extensions and using every means at her disposal to remain with her children.

Caught in the crossfire of her children's needs, her husband's illness, community anger and repressive laws, she is finally forced to surrender just as the 1976 riots for freedom erupt.

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A Hidden Life

Visionary writer-director Terrence Malick masterfully shines the spotlight on humanity with this unforgettable true story.

It is based on the true story of Franz Jägerstätter, an Austrian peasant farmer born and raised in the village of St Radegund, who refused to take the oath of allegiance to Hitler during World War II, sacrificing everything, including his life, rather than to fight for the Nazis.

Malick's film draws on actual letters exchanged between Franz and Fani while Jägerstätter was in prison. The collection *Franz Jägerstätter: Letters and Writings from Prison* was edited by Erna Putz and published in English by Orbis Books. Some lines have been added to the letters, and sometimes the letters are paraphrased.

*Note: If you want to experience this unforgettable film at its best, watch it without knowing too much about the story and avoid spoilers. You won't regret it. It's a soulful story of enduring love.

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Dark Waters

Dark Waters sees critically-acclaimed filmmaker Todd Haynes venture into new territory to tell a gripping story based on the explosive exposé that uncovered an urgent public health crisis and corruption at the highest levels.

Based on *The New York Times Magazine* article, “The Lawyer Who Became DuPont’s Worst Nightmare” by Nathaniel Rich, *Dark Waters* chronicles the one-man crusade that sought justice for a community exposed for decades to toxins in its own backyard. It tells the shocking and heroic story of an attorney (Mark Ruffalo) who risks his career and family to uncover a dark secret hidden by one of the world’s largest corporations and to bring justice to a community dangerously exposed for decades to deadly chemicals.

[Read more.](#)

The Turning

For more than 100 years, a deeply haunting tale has been passed down to terrify audiences. Inspired by Henry James’ landmark novella, *The Turning* takes us to a mysterious, decaying estate where newly-appointed nanny Kate (Mackenzie Davis) is charged with the care of two disturbed orphans, she discovers that both the children and the house are harbouring dark secrets and things may not be as they appear.

The Turning is directed by spellbinding visualist Floria Sigismondi (*The Runaways*, Hulu’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*), from a screenplay by Chad Hayes and Carey W Hayes (*The Conjuring*), inspired by James’s *The Turn of the Screw*.

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Like A Boss

Best friends Mia and Mel (Tiffany Haddish and Rose Byrne) are living their best lives running their own cosmetics company

they've built from the ground up. Unfortunately, they're in over their heads financially, and the prospect of a big buyout offer from a notorious titan of the cosmetics industry Claire Luna (Salma Hayek) proves too tempting to pass up, putting Mel and Mia's lifelong friendship in jeopardy. The beauty business is about to get ugly.

Directed by Miguel Arteta. Screenplay by Sam Pitman and Adam Cole-Kelly.

Mosley

A computer-animated film produced by New Zealand animation company Huhu Studios. The film tells the story of Mosley, a “thoriphant” who rebels against his life of servitude and embark on a treacherous journey to find the fabled city of Uprights.

It was written and directed by Kirby Atkins and marks the first official New Zealand–Chinese co-production and first New Zealand animated film.

Met Opera Live on The Big Screen

The 14th season of the award-winning The Met: Live in HD brings some of the New York Metropolitan Opera's finest performances at Nouveau cinemas and kicks off on 1 February with Berg's Wozzeck, staged by leading SA artist, William Kentridge.

After wowing audiences with his astounding production of Lulu in 2015, South African artist William Kentridge now focuses his extraordinary visual imagination on Berg's other operatic masterpiece, set in an apocalyptic pre-World War I environment.

Met Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin is on the podium for this important event, with baritone Peter Mattei making his highly anticipated role debut as the title character. Soprano Elza van den Heever is Wozzeck's unfaithful mate and the commanding cast also includes tenor Christopher Ventris as the Drum-Major, bass-baritone Christian Van Horn as the Doctor and tenor Gerhard Siegel as the Captain.

[Read more](#) about the new season.

[Read more](#) about the latest upcoming film releases.

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Derksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

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