

My Octopus Teacher wins Oscar for Best Documentary

South African film *My Octopus Teacher* has won Best Documentary Film at the 93rd Academy Awards, hosted in Los Angeles on 25 April 2021.



Pippa Ehrlich, James Reed - © Chris Pizzello/AFP

The film, which has won more than 20 international awards, including Best Documentary at the British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA) and Producers Guild of America Awards, becomes the first nature documentary to win an Academy Award since *The Cove* in 2010.



SA film *My Octopus Teacher* wins Best Documentary at the 2021 Baftas

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Co-director Pippa Ehrlich, who accepted the iconic gold statuette at the Academy Awards in Los Angeles with co-directing colleague James Reed, said she was “utterly overwhelmed” with “an honour we never dreamed possible”.

“ In many ways this really is a tiny personal story that played out in seaforest at the very tip of Africa, but on a more universal level I hope that it provided a glimpse of a different type of relationship between human beings and the natural world. ”

In a personal letter before the ceremony, President Cyril Ramaphosa congratulated the production team of the film, saying it was “documentary storytelling at its best, with a deeply resonant conservation message”.



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Last year the film became the first South African documentary to become a Netflix Original. It was released to instant acclaim during the global Covid-19 lockdown, which Ehrlich acknowledges as partly serendipitous to the film’s stellar rise in popularity: “In a difficult year, where many of us were stuck inside, feeling afraid and confused, a positive story that transports you to a magical world has a powerful appeal.”



South African documentary *My Octopus Teacher* nominated for an Oscar

17 Mar 2021



Foster, a documentary filmmaker for 28 years, says the Oscar victory brings life-affirming kudos to the media advocacy work by the film’s producing entity the Sea Change Project, which he co-founded with *My Octopus Teacher* Associate Producer Ross Frylinck in 2012.

“The Academy Award elevates the Great African Seaforest and surrounding ocean of South Africa into global iconic status. This is excellent news for us, because it underlines what we have been aiming for: to show the world that we are sitting on a biodiversity treasure trove that is deeply worthy of protection.”

During his journey he invited fellow filmmakers to join him in sharing the extraordinary experience. Award-winning cameraman Roger Horrocks would become director of photography, while eventual co-director Ehrlich would stand emotionally before the world grasping an Oscar.

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