

# From inquisitive Karoo girl to acclaimed director

**Award-winning documentary filmmaker and anti-fracking activist, Jolynn Minnaar, who tracked her own journey across the US to investigate the effects of fracking will be featured on 21 Icons this Sunday.**

The 21 Icons short-film will showcase how the young, inquisitive girl from the Karoo became the acclaimed director of the groundbreaking film "Unearthed" that aims to unite South Africans against the exploitation of the Karoo. It traces how she transitioned from documenting events to changing them through direct involvement in her film.

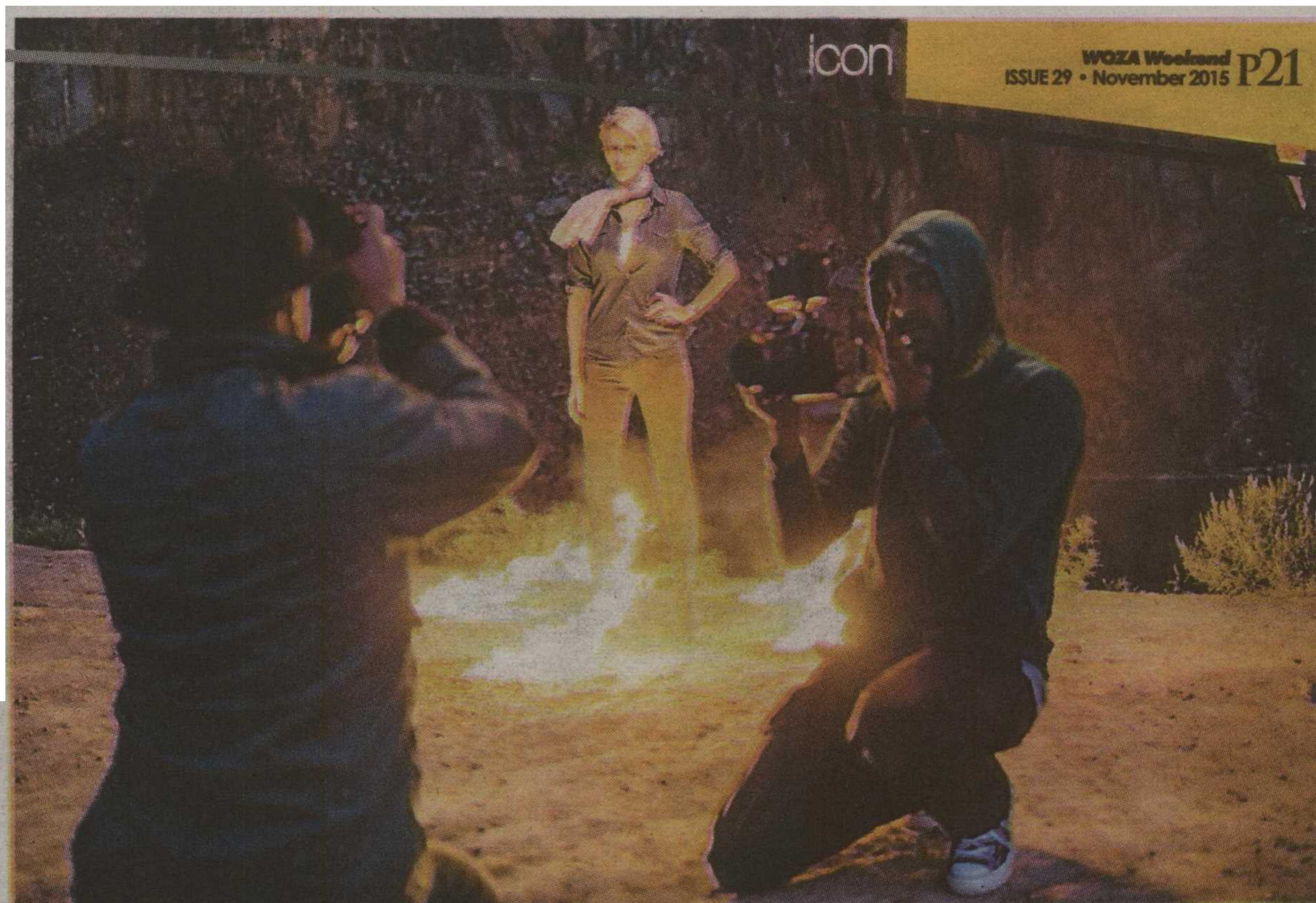
"Unearthed" was written, directed and shot by her alone and received critical acclaim at the Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival, winning the coveted Green Award for her work. She has been chosen for her work in the fracking arena where she works with several

community coalitions from the Karoo and throughout Africa as well as her associations with international grassroots organisations to uncover the darker side of the fracking industry.

Through the establishment of the Voices of the Karoo campaign, she seeks to re-address this imbalance and ensure that the voices of citizens in the poor, rural area are heard.

In 2011, after graduating with distinction from the University of Cape Town with a triple major BA degree in film, media and media production, Minnaar specialised in cinematography and editing at AFDA, the South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance.

She works as a director, photographer and cinematographer as well as communications strategist in the local film and media industry.



Minnaar said that there are great responsibilities that come with being a documentary filmmaker. "It's a powerful medium, and very persuasive. You have to work with integrity. I will always be a filmmaker who will have sleepless nights if I know I didn't spend that day committed to the truth."

Commenting on her early days growing up in the Karoo she says: "I've always had a really interesting relationship with the Karoo, at first I could not get out of there fast enough, and now I am making a film about it."

When news first surfaced that

multinational companies were interested in a potential shale gas reserve beneath the Karoo, she discovered that the local communities have been largely sidelined or secluded from the debate.

The motion picture investigates fracking and its harmful effects in North America in order to understand what this new method of gas extraction could mean for the semi-arid Karoo and other countries, which are considering its implementation.

"The Karoo is a very rural area with low literacy levels, and fracking is such a complex issue. I made the commitment to "Unearthed" to

ensure that I could empower people with information." She explained about how she uses film as a mouthpiece for social causes: "Never before has a generation been so empowered. Our access to information is huge. Already we're seeing the power of social media. I think it's amazing we can actually use those tools for the good as well."

"This young generation of South Africans has been born into an incredible country and I'm so encouraged by their optimism and vibrancy. It's such an exciting time to be alive in South Africa and to open yourself up to what's happening around us."