

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**15th October 2011**

## **Film Africa Heralds a New Dawn for the Best of African Cinema**

[www.filmafrica.org.uk](http://www.filmafrica.org.uk)

Showcasing more than 50 of Africa's best films and 15 UK premieres, Film Africa 2011 presents an exciting programme of screenings, Q&As, panel discussions and live performances from the **3<sup>rd</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2011**.

Film Africa will open with the multi-award winning film *Microphone*, featuring a special presentation by the Egyptian actor, director and human rights activist **Khaled Abol Naga** and a live performance by Dele Sosimi and Dudu Sarr.

Guests in attendance include filmmakers and actors Zina Saro-Wiwa, Sarah Maldoror, Rasselas Lakew, Ariane Astrid Atodji, Dorylia Calmel, Sara Blecher, Matthieu Bron and Kamauwa Ndung'u, who will all be present to talk to audiences during the festival.

A riveting programme of African experimental film is one of the unique highlights of the festival, with five UK premieres in this programme alone, which includes work by artists such as John Akomfrah, ZinaSaro-Wiwa and Akosua Adoma Owusu.

This year there is also a special focus on Africa's foremost women filmmakers. We are particularly delighted that Sarah Maldoror - the first woman to make a feature film in Africa- will be in attendance to present her film *Sambizanga* and do a Q&A with audiences. This will be the first time that a festival in the UK has had such a focus, and is also pioneering on the international level, where the work of African women directors has often been overlooked.

Other programme highlights include the inauguration of **The Distribution Forum**, with panellists who are committed to trying to mainstream African film discussing ways of improving the distribution and exhibition of African film in the UK (Sunday 6 November, SOAS, free and open to the public); and **The Silver Baobab Award for Best Short African Film**, with EcoBank sponsoring a prize of £2000 for the winning film, which will be presented by filmmaker Sarah Maldoror.

There will also be live entertainment throughout the festival, with 9 nights of infectious grooves from some of London's most exciting African-inspired musicians and DJs, including Grupo Lokito, the Krar Collective, Mashasha&Sam, Namvula Rennie, Bumi Thomas, Muntu Valdo, Kadialy Kouyate, Sona Jobarteh (tbc), and DJs Rita Ray, Africathy, Volta 45 and Suga Kan'n.

Film Africa Co-Director and Senior Lecturer in African Film at SOAS, Dr Lindiwe Dovey, comments: *'There has never been greater interest in African film, and Film Africa aims to celebrate and participate in this movement. A half-century after Africans started making their own films, supplanting the patronising iconographies evident in colonial cinema set in Africa, African Cinema is finally being recognised across the globe.'*

Film Africa will be hosted by the brand new Hackney Picturehouse, and also take place at The Ritzy (Brixton), the Rich Mix (Shoreditch), the Frontline Club (Paddington), Screen on the Green (Islington), and the School of Oriental and African Studies (Bloomsbury).

Film Africa is brought to you by the **Royal African Society**, in association with the **School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)**, University of London.

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### Notes to Editors

1. **Film Africa 2011** marks a re-launch of the inaugural London African Film Festival initially held in December 2008, which hosted more than 35 screenings in 10 days at leading cultural venues across the capital (including the BFI, Barbican, and ICA).
2. **The Royal African Society** is Britain's prime Africa organisation, working to foster a better understanding of Africa in the UK and throughout the world; to disseminate knowledge and insight to make a positive difference to Africa's development; and to celebrate the diversity and depth of African culture. The Society publishes *African Affairs* and *the African Arguments* book series, works in Parliament through the Africa All-Party Parliamentary Group, and organises meetings, discussions and festivals.
3. **The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London**, is the only Higher Education institution in the UK specialising in the study of Asia, Africa and the Near and Middle East. Uniquely combining language scholarship, disciplinary expertise and regional focus, it has the largest concentration in Europe of academic staff concerned with these regions.