



Film Africa 205 - Celebrating 5 years of the Best African Cinema

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Film Africa, the Royal African Society's annual film festival, returns for its 5th year running celebrating the best African cinema from across the continent and the diaspora.

Film Africa 2015 will take place from **Friday 30 October to Sunday 8 November** in 10 venues across London, including the Hackney Picturehouse, Ritzy Brixton, BFI Southbank, ICA, Ciné Lumière, the British Library and the South London Gallery.

With over **60 titles from 27 different African countries**, the festival programme once again presents an abundant crop of feature, documentary and short films, including several London, UK, European and World Premieres.

From African classics through bold and daring experimental narratives to socio-political commentaries on LGBTI rights, civil war and the human stories behind the migrant 'crisis' gripping the headlines, this year's diverse programme will capture all tastes and moods.

In addition, Film Africa 2015 will host **15 visiting filmmakers** - representing Rwanda, Angola, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Nigeria and the Diaspora - who will take part in post-screening Q&As, master-classes, panels and other events.

Opening this year's festival is *Run*, the debut feature from Ivorian director **Philippe Lacôte**. Fresh from its Cannes *Un Certain Regard* screening and Jury Prize win at FESPACO, *Run* is an extraordinarily cinematic and poetic work on Ivory Coast's historical conflicts. For the closing, Film Africa hosts the UK premiere of **Lyès Salem's** *The Man From Oran*, an epic expose of Algeria's turbulent political history following independence from France in 1962. Both directors will be presenting their films in person at the festival.

To mark 40 years of independence for Africa's Portuguese-speaking nations, Film Africa presents **Lusophone Liberty: 40 Years On**, a major strand featuring *The Blue Eyes of Yonta* and *My Voice* by veteran Guinea-Bissau director Flora Gomes, as well as Zeze Gamboa's *The Hero*, amongst other contemporary titles.

Love is in the air at Film Africa this year with a UK-wide season of films that promises to immerse you in tales of passion, tenderness and lust from across the continent. ***From Africa, With Love*** is presented by the UK African film festival network - Film Africa, Africa in Motion in Scotland, Afrika Eye in Bristol, Watch Africa in Wales, and the Cambridge Africa Film Festival - in association with the **BFI UK Audience Network's Love Blockbuster Season**.

To illustrate the fresh and poetic shift in Ethiopia's cinematic landscape, Film Africa presents three new features in **New Narratives: Ethiopia in Transition**. Yared Zeleke's debut *Lamb*, the first Ethiopian feature to be screened in competition at Cannes; Ethiopian-Israeli Bazi Gete's



debut *Red Leaves*; and the London premiere of *Price of Love*, from reputed Ethiopian director Hermon Hailay.

Music on film will take a central role again at Film Africa with the beautiful and subtle *Beats of Antonov*, from Sudanese director Hajooj Kuka; *Tango Negro: the African Roots of Tango* by Angolan director Dom Pedro, which dispels the myths surrounding one of the world's most infamous dances in; and *I Shot Bi Kidude* (Andy Jones), which charts the last days in the life of the oldest performer on the world stage, followed by live music from two of Zanzibar's modern musical icons Mim Suleiman and Matona, both close friends and collaborators of Bi Kidude.

Film Africa 2015 will also spotlight the life and work of one of African cinema's greatest visionaries, **Ousmane Sembène**, with a double bill at The British Library, featuring new documentary *Sembene!* (Sama Gadjigo) and his celebrated 1976 satire *Xala*.

Other titles to highlight in this year's festival programme include: *Things of the Aimless Wanderer* (dir. Kivu Ruharahoza), *Eye of the Storm* (dir. Sékou Traoré), *Necktie Youth* (dir. Sibs Shongwe-La Mer) and *The Blue Elephant* (dir. Marwan Hamed). Notable documentaries include *Mandela, My Dad, And Me* (dir. Daniel Vernon) starring **Idris Elba**, *Black President* (dir. Mpumelelo Mcata), *The Dream of Shahrazad* (dir. Francois Verster) and *La Belle At The Movies* (dir. Cecilia Zoppelletto).

The short film programme this year highlights 12 shorts from 10 different African countries, which are vying for the **5th Baobab Award for Best Short Film**, supported by MOFILM and judged by a panel of industry experts, and a collection of shorts from the Diaspora.

This year festival audiences will also have their say through a the new **AUF Audience Award for Best Feature Film**, presented by Film Africa's lead supporter, the African Union Foundation.

Other Film Africa programme features include: **The Industry Forum** at BFI South Bank, a free event which sheds light on the business of African cinema; **Film Africa Family Day** at the Rich Mix and a **School Screenings** programme, in partnership with Picturehouse Education; Westminster University's 7th African Film Conference, **African Film & Social Change**; and a four-day **Re-Creative Film School** for budding filmmakers at the South London Gallery.

Rachael Loughlan, Film Africa Festival Producer, said: "*Film Africa has observed the quality and volume of films emerging from Africa and the Diaspora increase each year, further cementing the importance of having a robust platform to showcase this work in London and across the UK. More than anything we are keen to see more African cinema distributed in the UK, tackling the 1% market share it currently holds.*"

Zeinab Badawi, Chair of the Royal African Society, said: "*In these five years Film Africa has carved a space for African film in the UK. The inclusion of the AUF Audience Award will also help African filmmakers to connect even more with these audiences and farther afield.*"

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Notes to Editors

The Royal African Society is a membership organisation that fosters a better understanding of Africa in the UK and throughout the world. Our goal is to promote Africa globally in the spheres of business, politics, academia, arts and culture. We disseminate knowledge and insight to make a positive difference to Africa's development and celebrate the diversity and depth of African cultures.

Film Africa 2015 will take place at the following venues: Hackney Picturehouse, Ritzy Brixton, BFI Southbank, Ciné Lumière, the British Library, the South London Gallery, the ICA, SOAS – University of London, and University of Westminster. Film Africa 2015 supporters and sponsors include: the African Union Foundation, the BFI **Film Festival Fund**, Miles Morland Foundation, Ethiopian Airlines, MOFILM, the Centre for African Studies, Brockmans, Aduna, Sab Miller and Divine Chocolate.

Rachael Loughlan is a freelance film festival consultant and project manager. She has worked in the film industry for 8 years, providing strategic support, event production, programming and venue management to a range of venues and film festivals, including the Glasgow Film Festival, TIFF and EIFF.

Zeinab Badawi is Chair of the Royal African Society. An award-winning broadcast journalist, Zeinab has extensive experience in television and radio, working on a range of programmes. In 2009 she was awarded International TV Personality of the Year by the Association of International Broadcasters, and in 2011 was named in Powerlist 2012 as one of Britain's top 100 most influential members of the black community, as well as being awarded an honorary doctorate by SOAS, London University, for her services to international broadcasting. She has been a board member of the British Council, a former Chair of the London based freedom of speech campaign organisation, Article 19, and a board member of the Overseas Development Institute.

The African Union Foundation is an institution emerging from the African Union established as part of promoting domestic resource mobilisation for African development. The Foundation promotes programmes in human resources and skills development, youth development, the empowerment of women and the management of diversity and integration. It also mobilizes resources for the programme budget of the AU Commission, and works in support of Agenda 2063, the AU's 50 year mission to establish 'the Africa we want'.

MOFILM has built a privately held, creative crowdsourcing platform for filmmakers to develop their careers by connecting them with iconic brands. It's headquartered in London with offices in Los Angeles, Bangalore, Mexico City, Beijing, Sao Paulo and Sydney.

The full list of **visiting filmmakers and festival guests** for Film Africa 2015 is:

Philippe Lacôte, Director, *Run*
Lyès Salem, Director, *The Man From Oran*
Kivu Ruhorahoza, Director, *Things of the Aimless Wanderer*
Antonio Ribeiro, Producer, *Things of the Aimless Wanderer*
Bazi Gete, Director, *Red Leaves*
Maria Hope Pascoal, Director, *All Is Well*
Sara Blecher, Director, *Ayanda*
Dom Pedro, Director, *Tango Negro: The African Roots of Tango Music*
Tunde Kelani, Director, *Dazzling Mirage*
Nana Obiri Yeboah Director, *The Cursed Ones*
Oris Erhuero, Lead Actor, *The Cursed Ones*
Andy Jones, Director, *I Shot Bi Kidude*
Matona, Musician, *I Shot Bi Kidude*
Mim Suleiman, *I Shot Bi Kidude*
Mpumelelo Mcata, Director, *Black President*
Anna Teeman, Producer, *Black President*
Cecilia A Zoppelletto, Director, *La Belle at the Movies*
Sekou Traore, Director, *The Eye of the Storm*