



BROUGHT TO YOU  
BY  
**THE ROYAL  
AFRICAN SOCIETY**  
30 OCT - 8 NOV 2020



## Film Africa and Deaffest partner to bring British Sign Language, Hip Hop and Visual Vernacular Art Form into the Mainstream

London, Thursday 22 October 2020

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

London's biggest celebration of African and African diaspora cinema and the UK's leading Deaf-led Film and Arts Festival are partnering for the first time to present **HERE / NOT HERE**, an online event around Director Bim Ajadi's latest work bringing hip hop, British Sign Language (BSL) and visual vernacular (VV) art form into the mainstream.

Film Africa and Deaffest will host this special Online Watch Party<sup>1</sup> on Saturday 31 October as part of **Film Africa**, which returns to London for its 9<sup>th</sup> edition from **Friday 30 October to Sunday 8 November 2020**. Audiences will have the opportunity to watch **HERE / NOT Here** online at BSL Zone and then hear from the film's cast and crew during a BSL-interpreted panel discussion live-streamed on the Film Africa, Deaffest and BSL Zone Facebook pages.

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<sup>1</sup> Our Online Watch Party encourages you to watch an online film with your family and friends at a specific time and then join our live panel discussion live-streamed on Facebook directly after the screening.



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**HERE/NOT HERE**, is a brand-new British, Deaf hip hop drama exploring British Sign Language, Krump street dance, football and Visual Vernacular – the choreographed and poetic form of sign language. It brings together a diverse creative team and company from Deaf and hearing communities and is directed by award-winning filmmaker and Deaf artist **Bim Ajadi** whose recent works include docu-drama *Dot* and short film *4*. Written by **Jonzi D**, Artistic Director of the annual hip hop dance and theatre festival [Breakin' Convention](#), the film is a unique collaboration with the film's professional and non-professional, Deaf and hearing cast.

**HERE/NOT HERE** is an urban, funny and thought-provoking hip hop drama film, which sees three rival groups - Deaf VVers, footballers and Krumpers - clash over who should use an abandoned warehouse space. Despite their differences, they find and inspire a common language through movement to communicate, collaborate and come together.

As Director Bim Ajadi said: *“HERE/NOT HERE is about fear of invasion of a space. The message of this film is not to be too quick to judge strangers, once you’ve crossed that line in getting to know a person more, you might be surprised by how much you have in common, how you’ve learned something new, how much you feel valued. This is about being open-minded and trying to accept and appreciate new and different people.”*

The Online *Watch Party* will be followed by a live online BSL-interpreted panel event discussing the process of working together as a team of Deaf and hearing creatives. Panellists include director Bim Ajadi, writer Jonzi D, cast member Asnath Losala and Visual Vernacular consultant Brian Duffy, with moderation by David Ellington. Audiences can post questions to the panel in the discussion under the live-stream feed featured on both the Film Africa and Deaffest Facebook pages.

To register for the HERE / NOT HERE event, visit <https://bit.ly/FA20HERE>. Film Africa and Deaffest thank BSL Zone and the British Council for their support with this special event.

Film Africa, London’s biggest celebration of African and African diaspora cinema presented by the Royal African Society, returns for its 9<sup>th</sup> edition on **Friday 30 October to Sunday 8 November 2020**. Showcasing **46 titles** from **14 African countries**, including **25 UK, European and World premieres**, Film Africa will host **12** socially-distanced screenings at BFI Southbank and Rich Mix as well as featuring a selection of **8 narrative and documentary films** on BFI Player - the festival’s first online collaboration with a streaming platform in its 10-year history.



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The festival's Opening and Closing films will be will also feature BSL-interpreted live Director Q&As as part of their Online Watch Parties. For Film Africa's full programme information and online booking, please visit: [filmafrica.org](http://filmafrica.org).

For Film Africa 2020 publicity materials, please visit our [Dropbox](#). For further information, please contact Beth O'Connor at Film Africa, [press@filmafrica.org.uk](mailto:press@filmafrica.org.uk) / 07495 941 893 or Lou Parrott at Deaffest, [info@deaffest.co.uk](mailto:info@deaffest.co.uk) / 01902 421919.

-ENDS-

#### **Notes to Editors**

1. **Film Africa** is the Royal African Society's biennial festival celebrating the best contemporary cinema from Africa and its diaspora. Established in 2011, the festival offers a respected platform for African film and increased film choice for London audiences.
2. **Deaffest** is the UK's leading Deaf-led Film & Arts Festival. Launched in 2006, the biennial festival supports and develops the talents of emerging and established UK and international deaf filmmakers and artists with a showcase of their work through screenings, an exhibition, workshops and more.
3. The **British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust (BSLBT)** commissions television programmes made in British Sign Language by Deaf people for Deaf people. All of these programmes are available to watch on our BSL Zone player.