



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



London's biggest celebration of African cinema, Film Africa, kicks off this week with foodie & film experience + partnership with Deaffest



30 October - 8 November
Physical screenings: BFI Southbank & Rich Mix
Online screenings: BFI Player
filmafrica.org

New announcements:

- Online film & foodie experience in partnership with Eat Ethio
- Deaffest & BSL Zone partnership brings British Sign Language, Hip Hop and Visual Vernacular Art Form into the Mainstream
- Female-led festival achieves 50% of films featured directed by women

London, Monday 26 October 2020

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Film Africa, London's biggest celebration of African and African diaspora cinema presented by the Royal African Society, returns for its 9th edition this week from **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.

This year Film Africa will feature a **Dine & View online foodie experience** on Friday 6 November in partnership with by food and culture curator Helina Tesega, who created **Eat Ethio** - an online and events platform that celebrates the ingredients, artisans and culture of Ethiopia. Audiences are encouraged to make and share their own dishes from Ethiopia – the country of origin of the featured documentary Finding Sally - while watching the film online on the BFI Player with friends and family. Eat Ethio is creating a special recipe for audiences to follow that will be posted on the Film Africa and Eat Ethio social channels on Friday 30 October.

Film Africa has also partnered with the UK's leading Deaf-led Film and Arts Festival 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**. There will be a special Online Watch Party¹ on Saturday 31 October where audiences will have the opportunity to watch HERE / NOT Here online on 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. Panellists include director Bim Ajadi, writer Jonzi D, cast member Asnath Losala and Visual Vernacular consultant Brian Duffy, with moderation by David Ellington.

This year's selection of films mirrors the combined minds and sensibilities of three curators, based in three corners of Africa - **Aseye Tamakloe** in Accra, Ghana (West); **Nyambura M. Waruingi** in Nairobi, Kenya (East); and **Katarina Hedrén** in Johannesburg, South Africa. The films – feature-length and shorts, fiction and documentary – reflect a multitude of experiences, subject matters and styles, with stories unfolding on the African continent as well as in its Diaspora. In addition to this year's curators being women, **50% of the films featured at Film Africa have been directed by women**.

¹ 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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The festival launches on Friday 30 October at BFI Southbank with the European premiere of award-winning Nigerian director Akin Omotoso's ***The Ghost and the House of Truth***. Set in Lagos, Nigeria, the film follows Bola Ogun, a dedicated counsellor who brokers reconciliation sessions between convicts and their victims. The film recently won *Best World Narrative Feature* at the Urban World Film Festival in New York. The European premiere of ***Barakat***, by emerging director Amy Jephta, is the first Afrikaaps Muslim film to be produced in South Africa, and will close the festival on Sunday 8 November at BFI Southbank. The Opening and Closing films will also be available on BFI Player and audiences will be able to join Live Director Q&As on Facebook, which will be British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreted, as part of the films' planned Watch Parties.

Alongside the partnership with Deafest, the **BEYOND NOLLYWOOD** strand will be presented by guest curator Nadia Denton and celebrates new wave audio-visual content from Nigeria. The strand includes an evening of short films at the BFI Southbank on Saturday 31 October, which presents a vibrant West African perspective on the human experience from digital love to the loss of religion.

At Rich Mix in East London, Film Africa will screen a selection of features and documentaries including a Double Screening of Kenyan documentaries ***I am Samuel*** and ***Kenyan, Christian, Queer (UK Premiere)*** with live Director's Q&A. Filmed over five years, *I am Samuel* follows the story of a young man who struggles with his new life in Nairobi, while *Kenyan, Christian, Queer* introduces us to the first LGBT church in Nairobi, the Cosmopolitan Affirming Community, which seeks to promote an inclusive and progressive form of Christianity, in a rather conservative society.

Film Africa's mission remains the same - to offer a platform to showcase and celebrate the best contemporary African cinema in London and the UK. As in previous years, the festival will once again present a programme of innovative shorts in competition for the annual **Baobab Award for Best Short Film**, judged by a panel of industry experts. The **Film Africa Audience Award for Best Feature Film** also returns to give festival audiences a vote. Both awards carry a cash prize of £1,000 and will be announced on Sunday 8 November.

Film Africa 2020 has been made possible thanks to the support of the BFI Audience Fund, awarding funds from the National Lottery, and the Miles Morland Foundation.

Click here to watch the [Film Africa 2020 trailer](#)

For full programme information and online booking, please visit: filmafrica.org.



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Book tickets to physical screenings at the BFI Southbank at bfi.org.uk and Rich Mix richmix.org.uk. Watch online screenings on BFI Player player.bfi.org.uk/ and join our free Online Watch Parties and Dine & View screenings on the Film Africa Facebook page.

You can view the Film Africa collection on BFI Player <http://bit.ly/FABFIPlayer>.

For Film Africa 2020 publicity materials, please visit our [Dropbox](#). For further information and to request a screening link, please contact Beth O'Connor at press@filmafrica.org.uk or 07495 941 893.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

1. **The Royal African Society** is a membership organisation that provides opportunities for people to connect, celebrate and engage critically with a wide range of topics and ideas about Africa today. Through our events, publications and digital channels we share insight, instigate debate and facilitate mutual understanding between the UK and Africa. We amplify African voices and interests in academia, business, politics, the arts and education, reaching a network of more than one million people globally.
2. **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.
3. **BFI Player** <https://player.bfi.org.uk/> is the greatest global cinema on demand; the go-to destination for all film lovers in the UK, that offers a different type of streaming experience. There are brand new releases to watch on rental and a subscription service expertly curated by BFI programmers and special guests, offering classic and cult films. Recent collections include selections by Tilda Swinton and Bong Joon Ho and a huge range of Japanese cinema in JAPAN2020. Also available, completely free for anyone to view, are films and collections from the BFI National Archive and regional archives, including 120 years of BRITAIN ON FILM. BFI Player is accessible through the BFI website and through a range of video platforms, including Amazon Prime Video and Apple TV.
4. The **Miles Morland Foundation** is a London-based registered charity, which makes grants in areas reflecting its founder's interests. The Foundation's main aim is to support entities in Africa, which allow Africans to get their voices better heard with a particular focus on contemporary African writing. The Foundation awards a small number of annual writing scholarships for works of fiction and non-fiction. The scholars receive £18,000.00 paid over the course of a year.
5. The **BFI Audience Fund** invests £5.6m of National Lottery funding each year to expand access and encourage greater enjoyment of cinema by connecting audiences with great films - in venues, at events and online. We do this by supporting:
 - a. leading exhibition organisations, including film festivals, to deliver culturally rich and nationally significant programmes and events on a year-round basis
 - b. projects which help exhibitors and distributors bring the best of UK and international cinema to audiences across the UK through events, distribution releases, multiplatform distribution proposals, touring film programmes and more
 - c. initiatives that address under-representation and are innovating audience development bfi.org.uk/audience-fund
6. The **National Lottery** Thanks to National Lottery players, up to £600 million of funding has been made available to support communities across the UK during the Coronavirus crisis. The National Lottery is playing a critical role in supporting people, projects and communities during these challenging times. By



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playing The National Lottery, you are making an amazing contribution to the nationwide-response to combatting the impact of COVID-19 on local communities across the UK.

7. **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.
8. 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.
9. **Eat Ethio**, was created by food and culture curator Helina Tesega, and celebrates the ingredients, artisans and culture of Ethiopia. One of OkayAfrica's 100 Women, Helina has created a movement that provides a modern insight into the food, coffee, music, designs, and culture of Ethiopia.