

# BRIDGES NOT BORDERS: STORIES THAT UNITE



16<sup>TH</sup>

**Durban FilmMart**

**PROJECT DOSSIER**

[www.durbanfilmmart.com](http://www.durbanfilmmart.com)

**18-21 JULY 2025**



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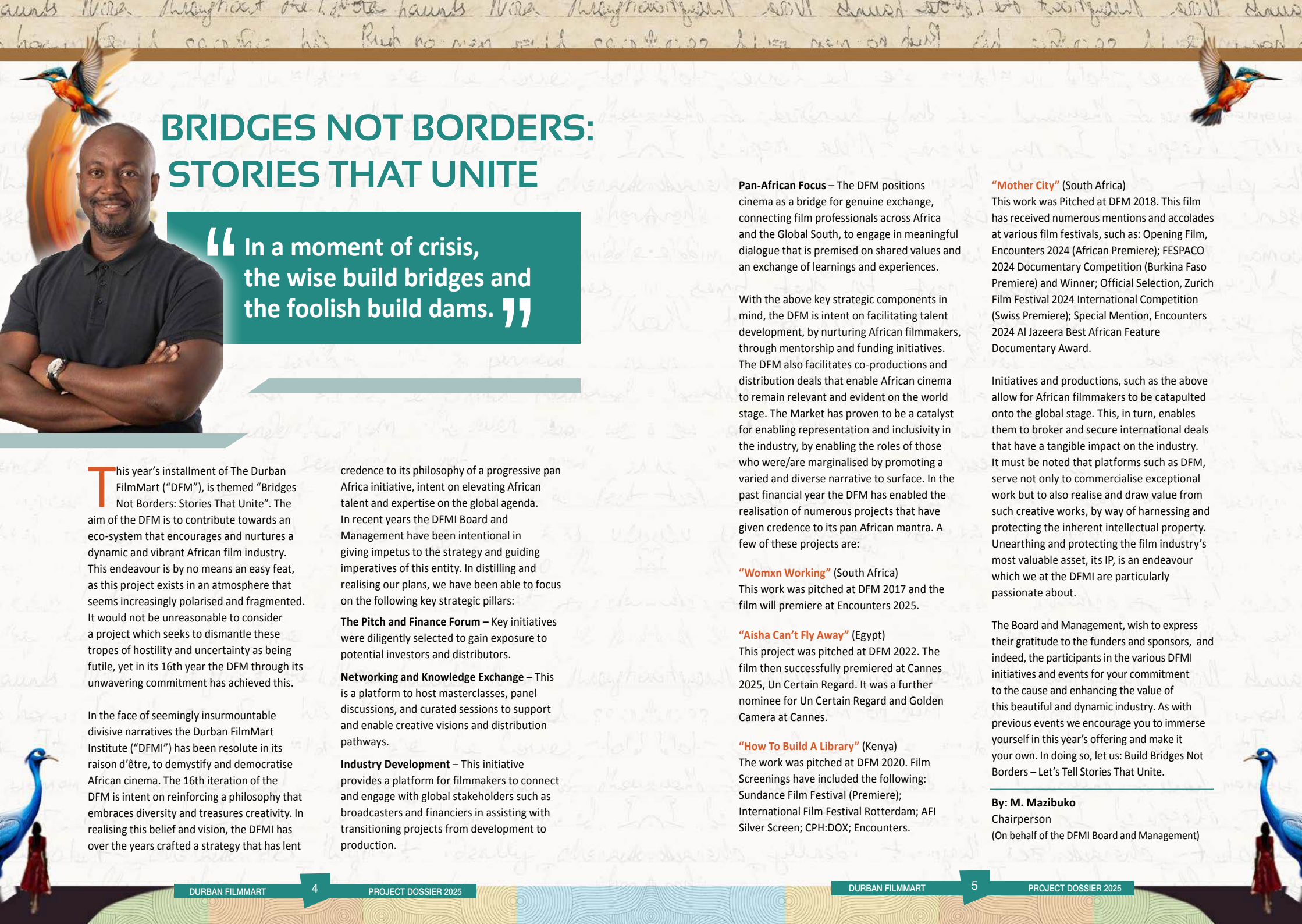
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# BRIDGES NOT BORDERS: STORIES THAT UNITE

“ In a moment of crisis,  
the wise build bridges and  
the foolish build dams. ”

This year's installment of The Durban FilmMart ("DFM"), is themed "Bridges Not Borders: Stories That Unite". The aim of the DFM is to contribute towards an eco-system that encourages and nurtures a dynamic and vibrant African film industry. This endeavour is by no means an easy feat, as this project exists in an atmosphere that seems increasingly polarised and fragmented. It would not be unreasonable to consider a project which seeks to dismantle these tropes of hostility and uncertainty as being futile, yet in its 16th year the DFM through its unwavering commitment has achieved this.

In the face of seemingly insurmountable divisive narratives the Durban FilmMart Institute ("DFMI") has been resolute in its raison d'être, to demystify and democratise African cinema. The 16th iteration of the DFM is intent on reinforcing a philosophy that embraces diversity and treasures creativity. In realising this belief and vision, the DFMI has over the years crafted a strategy that has lent

credence to its philosophy of a progressive pan Africa initiative, intent on elevating African talent and expertise on the global agenda. In recent years the DFMI Board and Management have been intentional in giving impetus to the strategy and guiding imperatives of this entity. In distilling and realising our plans, we have been able to focus on the following key strategic pillars:

**The Pitch and Finance Forum** – Key initiatives were diligently selected to gain exposure to potential investors and distributors.

**Networking and Knowledge Exchange** – This is a platform to host masterclasses, panel discussions, and curated sessions to support and enable creative visions and distribution pathways.

**Industry Development** – This initiative provides a platform for filmmakers to connect and engage with global stakeholders such as broadcasters and financiers in assisting with transitioning projects from development to production.

**Pan-African Focus** – The DFM positions cinema as a bridge for genuine exchange, connecting film professionals across Africa and the Global South, to engage in meaningful dialogue that is premised on shared values and an exchange of learnings and experiences.

With the above key strategic components in mind, the DFM is intent on facilitating talent development, by nurturing African filmmakers, through mentorship and funding initiatives. The DFM also facilitates co-productions and distribution deals that enable African cinema to remain relevant and evident on the world stage. The Market has proven to be a catalyst for enabling representation and inclusivity in the industry, by enabling the roles of those who were/are marginalised by promoting a varied and diverse narrative to surface. In the past financial year the DFM has enabled the realisation of numerous projects that have given credence to its pan African mantra. A few of these projects are:

**"Womxn Working"** (South Africa)  
This work was pitched at DFM 2017 and the film will premiere at Encounters 2025.

**"Aisha Can't Fly Away"** (Egypt)  
This project was pitched at DFM 2022. The film then successfully premiered at Cannes 2025, Un Certain Regard. It was a further nominee for Un Certain Regard and Golden Camera at Cannes.

**"How To Build A Library"** (Kenya)  
The work was pitched at DFM 2020. Film Screenings have included the following: Sundance Film Festival (Premiere); International Film Festival Rotterdam; AFI Silver Screen; CPH:DOX; Encounters.

**"Mother City"** (South Africa)  
This work was Pitched at DFM 2018. This film has received numerous mentions and accolades at various film festivals, such as: Opening Film, Encounters 2024 (African Premiere); FESPACO 2024 Documentary Competition (Burkina Faso Premiere) and Winner; Official Selection, Zurich Film Festival 2024 International Competition (Swiss Premiere); Special Mention, Encounters 2024 Al Jazeera Best African Feature Documentary Award.

Initiatives and productions, such as the above allow for African filmmakers to be catapulted onto the global stage. This, in turn, enables them to broker and secure international deals that have a tangible impact on the industry. It must be noted that platforms such as DFM, serve not only to commercialise exceptional work but to also realise and draw value from such creative works, by way of harnessing and protecting the inherent intellectual property. Unearthing and protecting the film industry's most valuable asset, its IP, is an endeavour which we at the DFMI are particularly passionate about.

The Board and Management, wish to express their gratitude to the funders and sponsors, and indeed, the participants in the various DFMI initiatives and events for your commitment to the cause and enhancing the value of this beautiful and dynamic industry. As with previous events we encourage you to immerse yourself in this year's offering and make it your own. In doing so, let us: Build Bridges Not Borders – Let's Tell Stories That Unite.

**By: M. Mazibuko**  
Chairperson  
(On behalf of the DFMI Board and Management)



# Partners and Sponsors

## Principal Funders



## Funders, Sponsors and Exhibitors



## Programme Partners



## Year Round Programmes





# Awards





# OFFICIAL DFM 2025 PROJECTS

**T**he Durban FilmMart Institute is proud to announce the official project selection for its 16th edition. This year's lineup showcases strong diverse voices shaping the future of African cinema, chosen from a highly competitive pool of live-action and animation submissions. As the continent's leading co-production and film finance market, the Durban FilmMart continues to be a vital launchpad for African filmmakers.

For 2025, the selection features 8 animations, 11 fiction titles, and 11 documentaries, all with African creatives in key roles. Each year, through an open application process and 3 independent selection panels, the Institute selects approximately 30 animation and live action projects in development. These projects then undergo a rigorous 6 - 8 week packaging and mentorship programme in preparation for the Pitch and Finance Forum - a dynamic space for public pitching, one-on-one meetings, and industry engagement.

This platform not only celebrates African storytelling excellence but actively builds pathways to funding, co-production, and global distribution. Congratulations to the creative teams behind these remarkable projects, whose stories are the heartbeat of African cinema's next chapter.

## OFFICIAL DFM FICTION PROJECTS

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## BAPTISM OF SILENCE

In a forgotten mining town scorched by sun and silence, siblings Joshua (13) and Isabel (15), share an unshakable bond. They waste their days swimming in murky pools and smoking in abandoned mine shafts. It's a kind of freedom born from being overlooked by their parents. They only have each other and they're happy with that.

But everything changes when Joshua comes back from his all-boys high school initiation weekend. He won't disclose what happened, but something inside him has broken. He's quieter now. Colder. Confused about what it means to be a man. Forced to endure a brutal rite of passage, one of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, which has left him disoriented and ashamed. When Isabel tries to connect, he snaps, blaming her rumoured "promiscuity" for him becoming a target.

Although Isabel is deeply concerned, she is navigating her own troubles. Her boyfriend

has leaked private photos, but after his sincere apology they have sex, trying to move past the betrayal. All the while, Joshua continues to be bullied and finally lashes out at another boy, beating him brutally. Joshua's bruised hands are spotted by other boys, and approved, it gives him a twisted sense of belonging. Isabel however confronts him about it and tries to warn her parents.

When Isabel learns she's pregnant, she knows what she must do. Alone, she travels to the city for an abortion. On her return, Joshua must face the truth: she no longer trusts him. He's betrayed her. In that fracture, he's forced to confront the violence he's buried, while Isabel begins to claim the freedom she has found within herself.

### Reel Previews

Password: JOSHUA

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

As a female directing duo, *Baptism of Silence* is our way of confronting the toxic masculinity woven into the culture we grew up in. Rooted in Afrikaans traditions and sibling bonds it speaks to the silences we were taught to keep in schools and churches, the quiet violences we survived when it came to being initiated into adulthood, and the questions we can no longer ignore around us.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE


**Emilie Badenhorst** and **Kanya Viljoen**, writer-directors, craft honest, female-led stories across film and theatre. Their short *Ekstasis* won the Cannes YDA Silver in 2023, and *'n Doop om Stille* earned Silwerskerm's Best Short Film in the same year. *Baptism of Silence* secured the IEFTA Award at DFM Talents 2024 and JETS' Best Pitch in 2025.

With producer **Casey Diepeveen** working across projects, *Unusual Bones* creates raw, visceral, socially resonant work through collaborative storytelling.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Unusual Bones is a female-led collective exploring alternative, collaborative approaches to creating provocative, culturally resonant work across film, theatre, and live art.

### Company Profile

 @caseydiepeveen / @kanya.viljoen  
@emiliebadenhorst / @unusual\_bones



Emilie Badenhorst  
DIRECTOR



Kanya Viljoen  
DIRECTOR



Casey Diepeveen  
PRODUCER

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 18+

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** Unusual Bones (SA) x AGILE Films (UK)

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 749 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 103 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Financing
- Co-Producers
- Distribution and Sales
- Industry Networking and Feedback



## BUPLYA (RENEWED)

When a middle-aged woman facing a triple crisis disrupts a spiritual seminar, she begins an unexpected journey of transformation guided by the very guru she initially rejected.

“BULLSHIT!” Katie Kalungi shouts from the crowd at a well-being seminar in the vibrant Afro-urban metropolis of Kampala. The audience gasps in astonishment as the room falls silent. Mukulu, the keynote speaker, looks down at Katie from the stage, his expression calm yet intrigued. “Not what you signed up for?” his voice thunders through the microphone. Standing awkwardly before the stunned crowd, Katie hadn’t meant to cause a scene. But how could she silently accept what she perceives as false promises? How could this man imply she somehow chose the chaos derailing her life? Standing at a critical crossroads with a collapsed career, fractured relationship, and devastating medical diagnosis, Katie finds herself at her lowest point.

What follows is Katie’s transformative journey as she navigates these destabilising life events under the unlikely guidance of the unconventional spiritual teacher. Supporting her through this metamorphosis are Dr Dave, her handsome and compassionate oncologist; Dora, her loving but worried mother; and Liz, her fiercely devoted best friend.

In today’s culture of linear success, *Bupya (Renewed)* offers a compelling counter-narrative: that some of life’s most profound discoveries emerge precisely when we’re forced to abandon the scripts we’ve been following.

*Bupya (Renewed)*, an original work by writer and director Claire Sheila Birungi, explores human resilience and spiritual awakening in a contemporary African setting.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*Bupya (Renewed)* is uniquely Ugandan yet universally resonant—delving into how traditional wisdom and modern challenges intersect at moments of personal crisis. Visually, the film will contrast Kampala’s vibrant energy with intimate moments of transformation, using light and composition to mirror Katie’s evolving inner landscape.

### DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Oge Obasi** is an award-winning producer with over a decade of experience in film production. Her credits include the Sundance award-winning *Mami Wata*, Nigeria’s official submission for the 2024 Oscars, and the Locarno award-winning *Juju Stories*.

**Claire Sheila Birungi**, writer and director, is a recipient of the Mashariki Film Mart Development Fellowship (2024).

### COMPANY DETAILS

Fiery Film Company is committed to creating genre-based films from an African perspective, with productions ranging from the zero-budget zombie feature *Ojuju* to the Sundance award-winning *Mami Wata*.

Company Profile



@simplyoge / @dipo\_abdul  
@claireshinebirungi



Oge Obasi  
PRODUCER



Claire Sheila Birungi  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 16+

**Country:** Rwanda, Uganda

**Production Company:** Fiery Film Company

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 500 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 11 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Production Partners
- Development Financing
- Distributors and Sales Agents





## HIGH FLYERS

When rolling blackouts spark outrage in Elsies River, a highway protest erupts, causing a multi-car fender-bender on the airport exit. Stuck in the melee, a panicked Lamborghini driver shoots at the protestors and flees on foot with his baby in his arms. Locally loved Lieutenant Colonel Anthea Arendse arrives to find the abandoned Lambo filled with drugs and an innocent teen killed in the crossfire.

Drug squad superstar and community outsider Captain Anathi Sindo is called in to assist, but when the shooter is identified as Max Slater – drug mule for the notorious Lamberti crime family – hotshot Hawks Agent ‘JJ’ angles to kick the case upstairs. Amidst growing unrest, Arendse and Sindo team up to capture Max and rescue the baby. They strike a deal, wiring Max to take down mob matriarch Leonarda Lamberti, but he is killed on site by a tossed weapon that implicates the vengeful father of the murdered teen.

As the detectives follow a trail of petty crimes, a bigger picture emerges: Leonarda is working with Marius van Rensburg, a filthy rich tycoon, bidding to privatise Cape Town International Airport. Evidence starts disappearing and Sindo, smelling rot in the ranks, questions station commander, Major Manzi, causing a fiery fallout between her and Arendse, who owes Manzi a personal debt. Meanwhile, Arendse’s new boyfriend, ward councillor Cedrick January, is shockingly revealed to be on van Rensburg’s payroll.

Just as anti-cop journalist Bradley le Grange is poised to expose van Rensburg’s dirty dealings, JJ murders him and kidnaps Sindo’s son for leverage. With time running out, Arendse and Sindo take on the criminal underworld to save him – and the city – earning them an invitation to join the elite, national *High Flyers* task force in Season 2.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Cold crime meets hot climate in the contested Mother City, where silence is survival and the underworld is ruled from mountainside mansions. *High Flyers* centres two troubled but formidable police women – bound by duty, divided by loyalty – who take on the untouchable criminal elites plaguing their precinct and pulling their lives and loved ones into the line of fire.

### DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Ian Gabriel** is a seasoned director whose work spans political thrillers, crime dramas, and character-driven stories grounded in socio-political complexity. His *Four Corners* was South Africa’s submission for Best Foreign Film at the 86th Oscars and received international acclaim. Alongside an established commercials career, Ian has directed feature films and series with credits across Netflix, Prime Video, eVod, and Showmax. *High Flyers* creators **Gabe Gabriel** and **Kelly-Eve Koopman** are representing the project at DFM.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Giant Films is a Cape Town-based production company known for bold, cinematic storytelling across long- and short-form work that bridges craft innovation with social impact and global reach.

Company Profile



@gabe4gabriel / @thenightbeforekelly  
@loren\_loubser / @iangabriel\_giant



Gabe Gabriel  
PRODUCER



Ian Gabriel  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Series

**Audience Age Range:** 25 - 49

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** Giant Films

**Running Time:** 8 episodes, 45 minutes each

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 2 000 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 0 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Seeking Active Narrative Producer To Drive Development Toward Sale/License/ Distribution
- Financing Partners
- Broadcast Partners





## NOMVULA

*Nomvula* is a powerful coming-of-age musical drama set in a South African coastal village in the 1950s. Nomvula, a spirited 15-year-old, defies traditional barriers by pursuing education and musical passion. After a secret romance with Mandla leads to pregnancy, she is separated from her newborn child by the village King and exiled.

Twelve years later, Nomvula returns to her village, establishing a girls' choir that challenges societal norms. She discovers her long-lost sister Fezeka and forms a profound connection with Thobile, a talented young singer. Her determination to empower village girls through music and literacy transforms the community's perspective.

In a climactic moment, Nomvula and her choir gate-crash a regional competition, delivering a breathtaking performance that wins over even their harshest critics. The story culminates in her reunion with Mandla and a wedding that symbolises resilience, forgiveness, and hope.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*Nomvula* is inspired by my grandmother's stories of educational inequality and tells the tale of a woman who educates village girls while searching for her child. Drawing from *The Letter Reader*, this film celebrates South African choral traditions and pioneers like Charlotte Maxeke, honouring the resilient African women who have shaped my identity and creative vision.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Award-winning director who wrote and directed *The Letter Reader*, sweeping SAFTAs, Rapid Lion and African Movie Academy Awards. Recently writing for Netflix's *Kings of Joburg*, *Bare* and creating *Code 13* for Mzansi Magic.

Producer leading Fuzebox created Netflix's award-winning *Inkabi: The Hitman*, *Love Lives Here* and *Mrs Right Guy*. Directed *1001 Days* and produced *Mother City*, which won Best African Documentary at AFFRIF 2024. Currently directing *And She Didn't Die*, premiering at Sheffield Doc Fest.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Fuzebox Entertainment is an award-winning South African media company, producing diverse African content from documentaries, dramas and feature films, since 1997, that captivate global audiences.

Company Profile



@andshedidntdie\_film / @kethiwe64  
@sibusiso\_ka\_sonsele



Kethiwe Ngcobo  
PRODUCER

Sibusiso Khuzwayo  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** Women, 25-45 years old

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** FuzeBox Entertainment

**Running Time:** 100 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 1 000 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 11 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Secure Funding for Script Development
- Connect with Story Labs
- Identify Early Development Partners
- Identify Co-Producers





## STERO

Twelve-year-old Koech has been living in a fragile, unspoken pact with his mother, Priscilla. Ever since his father disappeared during a military mission in Somalia, Koech and Priscilla have preserved the rhythms and rules he left behind, clinging to the hope that he might return.

Beneath the surface, cracks are widening. The village has long assumed that Koech's father is gone for good, and with each passing year, they face a looming threat of auctioneers claiming their unpaid debts since the disappearance. Both mother and son are trapped by their grief, unable to speak the words that would set them free. Koech finds refuge training Kung Fu with Drunken Master, an outcast fighter pilot reduced to a drunkard - a ghost of the man he once was. As his peers obsess over their virtual interactions, Koech spends more time with Drunken Master, who fills the gap left by Koech's father, filling the silence that Priscilla cannot.

She watches their bond with growing alarm, her anger fuelled by the fear that Koech might slip away. Drunken Master - who might not even be real - becomes a dangerous reminder of a life they should have left behind. The threat of losing everything forces Priscilla to find a new home, while Koech retreats further into fantasy, resisting the painful reality waiting outside the door.

Their world collapses when an official military report confirms the death of Koech's father. In the wreckage, mother and son must face each other for the first time, not as keepers of a memory, but as two wounded souls unsure how to begin again.

As they settle in a new home, they face an uncertain, frightening journey ahead - but for the first time, it may be real.

[Reel Previews](#)


### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

We grew up in a cruel world with little room for imagination, play, and rebellion. We often built imaginary worlds to detach & protect ourselves. One day we went to play, it was the last time but we didn't know. This film is an attempt to return to that time.

To play one more time.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Millan Tarus** is a writer/director and alumni of Berlinale Talents.

**Tevin Kimathi** is a filmmaker whose work includes *Amandla*, a feature commissioned by M-Net.

Millan and Tevin's practice is a mediation with the self, attempting to find their place in the world. Their short film, *Stero*, premiered at IFFR 2024.

**Juliana Kabua** tells stories of identity, grounded in realism and evoking a sense of home. A 2024 Creative Producers Indaba alumna, her latest short *Stero* premiered at IFFR 2024, with previous work screened internationally.

### COMPANY DETAILS

LBx Africa is a Nairobi-based production company. Our work includes the Oscar-nominated film *Watu Wote* (2017) and *Softie* (2020), which won a Special Jury Award for Editing at Sundance.

[Company Profile](#)

[@stero\\_film](#)


Millan Tarus  
DIRECTOR



Tevin Kimathi  
DIRECTOR



Juliana Kabua  
PRODUCER

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 12+

**Country:** Kenya

**Production Company:** LBx Africa

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 300 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 15 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Introduce The Project To Market
- Find Suitable Project Partners
- Secure Production Funding



GOREE ISLAND CINEMA present

# THE BOAR

A FILM BY  
MAMADOU SOCRATE DIOP



## THE BOAR

After years of incarceration and exile, Wilson Faye returns one morning to Diamaguene, a fishing village in Senegal. Haunted by his past crimes, he tries to reconnect with this place and those he has disappointed and abandoned.

His ex-wife, Angele, runs a downtown cabaret where Christ, the sole survivor of the disaster caused by Wilson, is staying. During his absence, Bara, the mayor, teamed up with Lassana, his old friend turned loan shark, to negotiate an oil drilling contract off the village coast - a windfall for the rapacious politician, ever since fishing was forbidden by traditional laws.

Wilson will request a hearing with the Council of Elders to reauthorise fishing in Diamaguene. This endeavor quickly clashes against the mayor's greed, preferring profits over the solidarity principles of traditional rites.

In this mystical night, Wilson will have to sacrifice his honor to give his village a chance of healing.

Reel Previews

Password: SOCRATE2023

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

The Boar is a haunting tale in the style of a modern West African Western, blending mystical intrigue with socio-ecological and political realities.

This approach combines a well-known and internationally appealing genre with an author-driven style that invokes magic realism to bring forward singular narrative forms from the African continent.

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Mamadou Socrate DIOP** is a Senegalese filmmaker, director and screenwriter. His second short film, *Baby Blues*, is presented at the Festival Vue d'Afrique in Montreal. It also won the Jury Prize at the Luxor Film Festival in Egypt. He participated in the Durban Talents in 2022, as well as in the Berlinale Talents 2023 (Short Form Station program).

**Yanis Gaye** is a French-Senegalese producer. His companies, Gorée Cinema and Strange Fruit Production House, facilitate coproductions for African and Diasporic films. His films premiered at festivals such as Clermont-Ferrand ISFF, Hamburg Short FF, and FESPACO.

## COMPANY DETAILS

Gorée Cinema is a Senegalese production house. In 2023, the company co-founded YETU (Un)Limited, a unique multi-venture African film studio.

Company Profile

@mamadou\_s\_diop / @goreecinema



Yanis Gaye  
PRODUCER



Mamadou Socrate Diop  
DIRECTOR

## PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 18+

**Country:** Senegal

**Production Company:** Gorée Cinema, Yetu (Un)Limited

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

## FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 726 034 USD

**Finances Committed:** 43 312 USD

## GOALS AT DFM

- Meet African and International Producers
- Connect with Investors and Passion-Driven Potential Partners
- Raise the Stakes





## THE GUARDIAN

In the vast desert of southern Libya, an old Tuareg man named Assouf lives alone among ancient rock carvings, tending to his goats and preserving the memory of a vanished world. Once a boy who survived starvation, colonial conscription, and mythic visions, Assouf now serves as the silent guardian of the sacred Wadi Matkhandoush.

His isolation is broken when two armed strangers arrive in a dust-covered Land Rover. Qabeel, tense and hollow-eyed, and Massoud, smoother but no less dangerous, claim to be searching for the Waddan — a rare mountain sheep thought extinct and deeply sacred in the local tradition. Assouf refuses, but their presence is not a request.

What follows is a journey across one of the most hostile terrains on Earth: massive dunes, cracked pits, and wind-split rocks. As they travel, Assouf observes Qabeel slowly unravel. The hunter is not just sick — he is cursed, haunted by a past transgression: eating Waddan meat without spiritual protection.

A Ghibli sandstorm strikes mid-journey. In the chaos, Qabeel hallucinates visions of death, spirits, and lifeless animals. When they finally reach the mountain, he is delirious. He imagines a herd of Waddan and fires into the rocks, only to collapse. Storm clouds gather.

They return to the Wadi, defeated. As Massoud fills water and Assouf begins herding his goats to higher ground to avoid the flood, Qabeel — fevered and broken — sees Assouf not as a man, but as the Waddan. He shoots him, drags his body up a rock, and performs a ritual slaughter.

The desert responds with a violent flood, reclaiming everything. In the silence that follows, a real Waddan appears atop the ridge, watching, then disappears.

Reel Previews

Password: donga23

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

This film is a return to the mythic storytelling I grew up with - deeply rooted in our culture but often pushed aside. Inspired by Al-Koni's writing, I want to portray the desert not as cliché, but as a living, spiritual force. It's a chance to honor a neglected literary voice and reclaim imagination in Arab cinema.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Muhannad Lamin** is a Libyan director and editor. His short film *The Prisoner and the Jailer* was selected at Clermont-Ferrand and Carthage Film Festival (JCC). His documentary *Donga* premiered at IDFA, screened at the Red Sea International Film Festival, and was selected for the official competition at FESPACO in 2025.

**Lynda Belkhiria** is a producer and artistic director of the Oran International Arab Film Festival, and a programmer for Oslo Arab Film Days. With over 20 years of experience in the industry, she has headed major industry platforms including Cairo Film Connection and Carthage Pro, and has worked on several productions across the Arab region.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Established in 2023, N'dirou Film ("Let's Make a Film") focuses on Arab talent and socially engaged storytelling. Current projects include *The Guardian* and the short documentary *Al-Hawiya*, which is currently in post-production.

Company Profile



Lynda Belkhiria  
PRODUCER



Muhannad Lamin  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 12-99

**Country:** Algeria, Libya, Canada

**Production Company:** N'dirou Film

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 1 300 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 42 450 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Development Funds
- International Sales
- Distributors





## THE SECOND COMING

*The Second Coming* is a provocative, darkly comedic TV series that follows Morena, a troubled man who wakes from a dream convinced he is the new Messiah. Diagnosed with schizophrenia following a failed suicide attempt that caused the death of his unborn child, Morena struggles to separate spiritual calling from delusion. But when he seemingly performs a miracle during a courthouse riot, he is thrust into national fame and becomes the unexpected figurehead of a new religious movement.

Recognising his influence, two powerful businessmen, Calvin Phillips and Sanjeev Pillay, founders of the shadowy conglomerate Humex, offer Morena financial and media support. With the help of Mr Mzolo, a disgraced former pastor seeking redemption, Morena begins performing viral “miracles” and preaching a surreal gospel that blends personal trauma, pop theology, and performance art. He names the movement “Morena-ism.”

Meanwhile, Morena’s estranged partner Lindiwe Mkhize begins her own journey of self-discovery. Disillusioned with corporate life and haunted by Morena’s decline, she crosses paths with Fikile Ngubane, leader of *Umkhonto Omusha* — a radical liberation group that sees Morena as a pawn of capitalism and a threat to the revolution.

As Morena’s mental state deteriorates and his messiah complex deepens, the country spirals into confusion: is he a prophet, a fraud, or simply unwell? What begins as satire evolves into a gripping and darkly comedic social commentary on belief, power, race, and the performance of salvation in a media-driven world.

*The Second Coming* interrogates what happens when faith, fame, and madness collide - and whether a broken man can save a broken nation.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*The Second Coming* is a meditation on madness, faith, and the fragile myths we inherit to survive. I’m drawn to the absurdity and tragedy of belief in a world unravelling. This series merges realism and surrealism to confront South Africa’s haunted past and precarious present - a deeply personal, darkly poetic reckoning with history, hope, and collective delusion.

### DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Michael James** is a Durban-based filmmaker and artist whose work spans film, photography, installation, and performance. His award-winning plays and films explore the blurred lines between history and myth. His acclaimed documentary *Free Education* won awards internationally, while his latest feature, *God’s Work*, explores homelessness in post-apartheid South Africa. Influenced by Tarkovsky and Malick, his work challenges dominant narratives and expands cinematic language.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Maverick Resistance is a creative studio producing daring films and documentaries that challenge norms, spark dialogue, and connect with audiences worldwide.

@siya\_xaba / @godard0905



Siyabonga Xaba  
PRODUCER



Michael James  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Series

**Audience Age Range:** 18 - 35

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** Maverick Resistance

**Running Time:** 10 episodes, 30 minutes each

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 44 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 0 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Secure Funding For Writers’ Room
- Build Final Scripts
- Meet Co-Producers And Financiers For Production Phase





## THE SPACE MAASAI

At the age of 16, Saitoti Losenyari, a Maasai orphan, carries a passion for astronomy that was kindled by his grandmother, Bibi (60), who regaled him with ancient Maasai tales of the sky and its stars.

However, Bibi's life takes a dramatic turn when she receives a diagnosis of stage 3A cancer, forcing her to undergo surgery and multiple rounds of chemotherapy. Despite the family's limited financial resources, Bibi bravely sells her plots of land to help cover the substantial hospital bills, as her small shop business proves inadequate.

Overwhelmed by his grandmother's distressful situation and the shortfall of funds, Saitoti decides to become the breadwinner of the family, taking up work in gravel mines until an unexpected landslide catastrophe permanently shuts down the mines. It is then that his science teacher, Mr Marungi, introduces him to an international science competition, with a generous cash

prize and the possibility of a scholarship, urging him to compete and help cover some of Bibi's expenses. Supported by his friends Pendo and Laiban, Saitoti decides to take on the challenge.

However, midway through his preparation, Saitoti faces a significant traditional obstacle: he is scheduled to attend his circumcision ceremony on the day before the competition.

As Saitoti persists through his journey of trials, failures, and triumphs, he channels his imagination and resourcefulness, creating a sophisticated telescope for the competition, determined to save his ailing grandmother with the prize money that will finance her chemotherapy treatments.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*Space Maasai* is inspired by my childhood in Arusha, Tanzania - torn between cultural expectations and personal dreams. Winning an astronomy art contest led me to the South African Space Agency and ignited my passion for stories like Saitoti's: a boy who builds a telescope to chase his dreams and save the only family he has left.

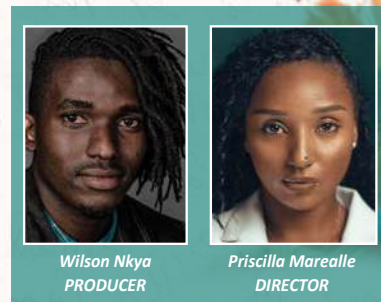
### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Wilson Nkya** is a Tanzanian film and television producer passionate about telling Africa's untold stories. As co-founder of 4 Creations Entertainment, he creates impactful and inspiring content that empowers young Africans. His recent works include the fiction film *Space Maasai*, which won the 2024 Durban Talents Award. In 2025, he joined the Berlinale's European Film Market Toolbox programme. Wilson is committed to showcasing Africa's beauty and creativity to the world.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Four Creations Entertainment is a Tanzanian media company that uses storytelling to inspire, educate, and empower African youth. Through content that celebrates culture and sparks change, the company champions narratives that reflect the continent's richness, resilience, and creativity.

@willynkya / @prissymarealle



Wilson Nkya  
PRODUCER

Priscilla Marealle  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 14 - 45

**Country:** Tanzania

**Production Company:** 4 Creations Entertainment Company

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 560 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 10 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Producers
- Development and Production Funding
- Lab Opportunities (Emerging Trends and Networks)





## THE SUNFLOWERS OF THE MOON

January 9, 2001, while there's a lunar eclipse, Hayet is born in the red-light district of Tunis - and so is a black sphinx cat. As soon as she gives birth, Hayet's mother is stabbed to death by an unknown man. Hayet spends her entire childhood in semi-confinement, raised by Kmar, a sex worker.

Drawn by the unrest of the revolution in January 2011, a few days after her tenth birthday, Hayet flees the red-light district on the day of the historic January 14 demonstrations. She will never return and will live alone in the street, with no other companion than her black sphinx cat who talks in charades and whom she calls Sboui.

In the near future, in 2033, Tunis is like a post-apocalyptic city: deserted, in ruins, and ghostly. The city is witnessing its last days because a massive demolition and reconstruction plan will soon be undertaken.

Hayet's path crosses that of Wahid. He is younger. Together, they pull off heists

and rob rich young women in posh neighbourhoods. Samy, the detective in charge of investigating these robberies, ends up tracking them down. A confrontation ensues between the three. Hayet kills Samy, gets shot in the stomach, and leaves Wahid for dead.

Wounded and hunted by the police, Hayet returns to the red-light district to find it empty and deserted. She bleeds to death in her room as Sboui watches. Wahid, wounded but alive, searches for Hayet in a Tunis that is being evacuated before it is destroyed.

Wahid is forcibly evacuated by the army. From afar, he witnesses the last buildings destroyed by explosives and falling like a house of cards.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*The Sunflowers of the Moon* didn't start from an idea. It started, as it always does for me, from an image - an image that came to me and haunted me for a while: that of a woman being stabbed right after giving birth. I couldn't think about anything else for a time. So I started looking to know more about this woman, and even more about this newborn child.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**ismaël** directed 373, *Pasteur Street* (Competition, Jakarta Short and Documentary IFF 2024), *Hackers of the Borders* (Competition, Carthage FF 2024), *Black Medusa* (Tiger Competition, IFFR 2021), *Fragments of Self-Phone-Destruction* (awarded at the Experimental and Different Cinema Festival, 2019), *Leila's Blues* (premiered at Cannes Director's Fortnight 2018), *Babylon* (Grand Prize, FID Marseille 2012)... He also produced *The Last of Us* directed by Ala Eddine Slim (Lion of the Future, Venice 2016).

### COMPANY DETAILS

Since 2018, Utopia Films has produced several feature and short films, both self-produced and international co-productions, narrative, essay, experimental and documentaries.

[www.vimeo.com/utopiafilmstn](https://www.vimeo.com/utopiafilmstn)



Sarra Maali  
PRODUCER



ismaël  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 18 - 48

**Country:** Tunisia

**Production Company:** Utopia Films

**Running Time:** 150 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 753 844 USD

**Finances Committed:** 60 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Producing
- Distribution





## VIGILAUNTIES

When community organiser Auntie Cassandra gathers her lifelong besties, Auntie Haley and Auntie Khadija, to dramatically mourn her grandson Jason's departure to university, they stumble upon a rogue joint in his drawer. One puff leads to another and soon menopausal hot flushes, heart palpitations, giggles, and escalating paranoia take over.

Desperate for eye drops and Relicalm, the aunties head to the corner pharmacy, run by their judgemental frenemy, Auntie Fatimah. But on their way out, a group of teenagers attempt to mug them of their munchies. In a panic, they hijack an idling car, only to discover it's an already-stolen vehicle and the boot is packed with poached perlemoen!

Soon, the police - who are in cahoots with local gangsters tied to the Chinese Triad - try to pin them for smuggling. Determined to clear their names, they launch a chaotic, koeksister-fuelled DIY investigation. What begins as backyard sleuthing becomes a full-blown community crusade as they uncover a

mafia-esque perlemoen smuggling network drowning the youth of Ocean View.

The aunties' snooping leads to a midnight stakeout at Sweet Waters Beach and a scandalous discovery: Auntie Fatimah is in deep. They tail her delivery bakkie to a lavish Llandudno mansion, where Cape Town Premier, Holly Harvey, hosts a bougie perlemoen party with the Triad and their French business associates.

Cornered and outnumbered, the aunties send out a secret signal and in the nick of time, Jason's crew, local fishermen, and rival gangsters roll to back them up. A wild seaside showdown erupts, Auntie Haley recording everything from her bosom. The footage goes viral, the syndicate falls. Vigilant justice has been served sweet. But as headlines swirl, whispers emerge of a global Auntourage abroad with sharper heels and deeper pockets.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*VigilAunties* is a love letter to fierce aunties, fishy politics, and the spirit of South African women. The show centres older, hilarious, brave, wild heroines who kick ass in real life but seldom on screen. *VigilAunties* brings us home. It's mad and thrilling with a whole lot of laughs and even more heart. Because everyone loves an auntie.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Dominique Jossie** is a multi-skilled filmmaker with over thirteen years of experience across documentaries, feature films, and TV. She produced the SAFTA short *Address Unknown*. A 2022 Film Independent Global Media Makers Fellow and Realness Netflix Episodic Lab alumna, Dominique is passionate about storytelling that reflects diverse South African voices. She co-founded Blended Films and has produced three feature films for Showmax with creative partner Quanita Adams. She also wrote on the Showmax series *Breekpunt*.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Blended Films is the brainchild of Quanita Adams and Dominique Jossie. A production company that celebrates diversity through authentic storytelling, it has produced three feature films.

Company Profile +

@blended.films / @loren\_loubser



Dominique Jossie  
PRODUCER

Loren Loubser  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Series

**Audience Age Range:** 35 - 65

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** Blended Films

**Running Time:** 8 episodes, 30 minutes each

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 400 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 0 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Full Commission From a Streamer or Broadcaster
- Development Funding or Co-Producers
- Secure Financing





## OFFICIAL DFM DOCUMENTARY PROJECTS

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## AKAL

As a young filmmaker and former alpine ski champion, I embark on a personal journey of discovery when I stumble upon old VHS tapes in my father Aziz's library. On the tapes, I see myself at age three, strapping on my first pair of skis in Oukaïmeden, a snow-capped mountain just 70 kilometres from my hometown of Marrakech.

Carried away by childhood memories, I return to Oukaïmeden. But this time, no snow covers the mountains. The ski lifts, abandoned, creak in the wind like set pieces left behind in a vast landscape.

As I explore, I discover that the resort where I learned to ski is actually a summer pasture, where shepherds from nearby villages graze their flocks. I begin to wonder how a ski resort ever emerged in this region, where skiing now feels like an unimaginable activity.

I meet people who shaped my early years in Oukaïmeden.

Fadma, the only female café owner in the village, tells me the history of the land through tales passed down from generation to generation.

I speak with Outalat, caretaker of the Royal Moroccan Ski Federation chalet and a shepherd in the summer. He tells me about the colonial origins of the resort, built in the 1930s at the request of a French marshal.

I also reconnect with Abdessamad, a childhood friend who, faced with the lack of snow, switches from alpine skiing to roller skiing, symbolising the transformations undergone by the region and its inhabitants.

### Reel Previews

Password: louka\_engsub\_24

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

From a childhood dream lost on the snowy slopes of Oukaïmeden to a growing awareness of a land transformed, I trace the thread of my personal story against a larger backdrop of memory, history, and climate change. This film explores the changes within me and the changes in the land that shaped who I am.

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Basma Rkioui** is a Moroccan documentary filmmaker. A graduate of ESAV Marrakech and Filmakademie Stuttgart, her short film *Louka* (2023) was selected for the Carthage and Trento Film Festivals and won Best Short at the Rabat International Author Film Festival.

**Karim Debbagh** is a Moroccan producer who graduated in producing from Filmakademie Stuttgart. In 2005, he founded Kasbah Films, now a leading Moroccan production company. He has produced and co-produced numerous internationally acclaimed films.

## COMPANY DETAILS

Kasbah Films is a leading Moroccan production company known for producing and co-producing acclaimed films and series showcased at major international festivals and cinemas worldwide.

### Company Profile

@karim.debbagh



**Basma Rkioui**  
DIRECTOR + PRODUCER



**Karim Debbagh**  
PRODUCER

## PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** N/A

**Country:** Morocco

**Production Company:** Kasbah Films

**Running Time:** 75 minutes

## FINANCING PLAN

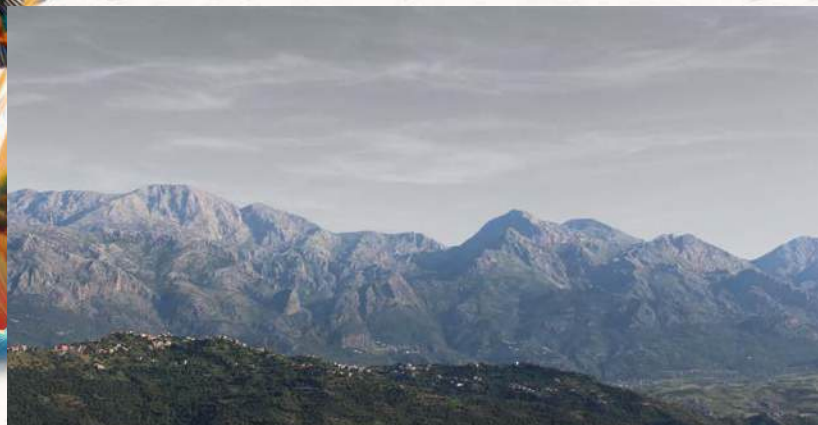
**Total Budget:** 233 285 USD

**Finances Committed:** 37 785 USD

## GOALS AT DFM

- Sales Agents
- Film Funds





## CLIMBING THE MOUNTAINS

For generations, the women in my family have experienced nightmares. I dream of French policemen who come to arrest me, as my mother did before me. I realise that my nightmares affect my days, taking away my energy and strength.

I choose to face that fear by taking my camera and climbing the mountains of my native region in Algeria, where these traumas of the night started. The guardians of my culture are there, welcoming me into their world.

With my mother and the grandmothers of my native region, Kabylia, we address the traumatic colonial legacy by discussing the systematic violence they endured and the ways they resisted.

Gida Djouhar, Na Louiza, Na Hadjila, Na Zahoua and Haddja Louisa share their stories and memories in different ways: sometimes by talking while picking olives, sometimes using traditional chants, called Achewiq. These ancestral songs resonate deep within

me, like a doorway to a world that I've been cut off from by exile and colonialism. I realise that the nightmares stem from unaddressed realities, such as the war crimes committed by France against civilian populations.

I follow the path of the grandmothers. I go to the summit of olive trees where Na Hadjila still climbs at over 80 years of age. I realise that they have found ways to overcome their traumatic wounds. With them, I climb these mountains that nourished our ancestors and shaped our culture - the same mountains that concealed the resistance fighters and echoed our songs and hopes.

The sounds of ancestral melodies pierce the silence and the weight of time. I reconnect with the scents of my childhood, with my mother tongue, inspired by the courage of these women who took the path of resistance. Would I find the chants that liberate us from the shadow of the past?

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

This documentary is a personal journey to explore the transmission of trauma that I experienced and a testament to the resistance of Kabylia grandmothers who are the living guardians of our traditions and history. I aim to portray them in all their complexity, grounded in authentic memories and culture that hold the universal power of dignity, courage and resilience.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Sabrina Chebbi** has worked for 15 years as a producer, director, and distributor. She has made several films, including *Les coups de leurs privilèges*, which she distributed in seven countries in Europe and Latin America. Her work aligns with Third Cinema, foregrounding resistance through powerful cinematic projects.

French-Canadian producer **Kenji Accard** works in film-for-impact distribution. He uses cinema as a powerful tool to promote social and cultural justice through moving cinematic narratives.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Idurar Production, based in France, partners with Algeria's Asaru Production to support new narratives driven by a decolonial gaze and strong, impactful cinematic approaches.

[www.sabrinachebbi.com](http://www.sabrinachebbi.com)



**Sabrina Chebbi**  
DIRECTOR + PRODUCER

**Kenji Accard**  
PRODUCER

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** Suitable for all audiences

**Country:** Qatar, Algeria, France

**Production Company:** Idurar Production, Asaru Production

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 495 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 115 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Seeking Collaborators: Production and Impact Partners
- Film Funds
- Sales Agents and Broadcasters





## DRY SKY

Ibrahim returns to his village in eastern Sudan after completing his film studies in Egypt, accompanied by his childhood friend Amer – who, like him, was displaced from the region – and their donkey, affectionately known by the villagers as the sacred animal for its rumoured ability to detect landmines and navigate difficult terrain. Ibrahim carries an old dream: to make a film about the 1997 massacre, during which twelve civilians from the village were executed by the state amid the war.

The village has remained under emergency law for over twenty-five years, and no one is allowed to enter without a security permit. Ibrahim faces numerous obstacles – he is forbidden to film by the lone policeman, and the village elder opposes the project, seeing it as a violation of religious tradition. Despite this, Ibrahim is determined to make his film. He resorts to alternative methods, secretly filming testimonies and relying on the village's collective memory.

In an effort to resurrect the memory of the victims, Ibrahim persuades some of their families to have their children portrayed on screen, blending documentary and fiction.

Though fear runs deep, he uses creative techniques to help villagers overcome their silence. He trains them to act out scenes, offering a safe space through cinema for expression and confrontation – transforming fear into a cinematic act of resistance.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I'm Ibrahim Omar, a filmmaker from eastern Sudan. In 1997, I witnessed a brutal war and the execution of twelve civilians – an event erased from official history. *Dry Sky* is my response to that silence. Through cinema, I reclaim memory, confront trauma, and offer a space for healing in a region where truth was long suppressed

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Ibrahim Omar** is a Sudanese filmmaker and founder of the Sudan Film Institute and Port Sudan Film Days. He has directed documentaries for Al Jazeera, including *Blank Screen* and *Ride-on Cinema*.

**Aya Tallah Yusuf** is an Egyptian producer and co-founder of Shoghl Cairo Pictures. Her work includes *Samar... Before the Final Picture* and *Dry Sky*. She is also an award-winning editor (*From Cairo*, Netflix).

### COMPANY DETAILS

Shoghl Cairo Pictures produces bold Arab cinema. Sudan Film Institute supports emerging Sudanese filmmakers.

@shoghl\_cairo\_pictures / @ayatallah.yusuf



Aya Tallah Yusuf  
PRODUCER

Ibrahim Omar  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** Adults

**Country:** Sudan, Egypt

**Production Company:** Shoghl Cairo Pictures

**Running Time:** 85 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 480 187 USD

**Finances Committed:** 89 187 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Funders
- Distributors
- Investors
- Sales





## GOLDEN

*Golden* is a feature documentary that traces the Zimbabwe women's national hockey team's road to the 2025 Women's FIH Hockey Junior World Cup - 45 years after the country's only Olympic medal in a team sport.

In 1980, as Zimbabwe gained independence, an all-white women's hockey team shocked the world by winning gold at the Moscow Olympics. It was a symbolic victory at a pivotal moment - a win for the future. Set against the backdrop of post-independence Zimbabwe, *Golden* weaves together the journeys of three women across generations. Gender inequality and systemic neglect still shadow the sport, but each woman fights to push the game - and the nation - toward an elusive victory.

At the film's heart is Tino, a gifted young Black player with World Cup dreams. She represents a new generation carving space in a sport long sidelined by football. Patricia Davies, one of the 1980 Olympic champions, returns to the pitch as a mentor,

guiding a diverse squad. Her presence stirs questions about legacy, inclusion, and the weight of history.

Joice Mujuru, the revolutionary turned stateswoman, was Zimbabwe's first Minister of Youth, Sport and Recreation - and the force behind sending the 1980 team to Moscow. Now living in obscurity, her story reflects the erasure of women's contributions to liberation and nation-building.

Their paths converge at the Golden Girls Tournament, honouring Zimbabwe's Olympic pioneers. Through their stories, *Golden* explores race, resilience, and reconciliation in a post-colonial African nation still writing its identity.

In a world saturated with struggle, *Golden* reframes Africa through triumph - celebrating women who dared to make history.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

This documentary is a personal journey into Zimbabwe's overlooked 1980 Olympic gold - won by an all-white women's hockey team at independence. Though born in a segregated era, the victory became a powerful symbol of national unity. As I celebrate my daughter's selection to a junior national team, this film reclaims and honours African women's stories in sport.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Director Rumbi Katedza** is a Zimbabwe-based filmmaker and founder of Mai Jai Films. Her award-winning work spans fiction and documentary, with credits including *Asylum*, *The Axe and the Tree*, and *Transactions*. She has produced for BBC, Arte and Al Jazeera. [linktr.ee/rumbikatedza](https://linktr.ee/rumbikatedza).

**Producer Ingrid Martens** is a South African filmmaker and media strategist. An African CNN award-winner, she has delivered for Al Jazeera, BBC, Fox, CGTN and M-Net and champions African stories through Women in Doc and I'M Original.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Mai Jai Films is a boutique production company crafting bold narrative and documentary content, and delivering independent and commissioned work through smart global collaborations.

Company Profile



Ingrid Martens  
PRODUCER



Rumbi Katedza  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 18 - 35

**Country:** Zimbabwe, South Africa, Chile

**Production Company:** Mai Jai Films, I'M Original

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 329 945 USD

**Finances Committed:** 20 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Secure Development Funding
- Build Strategic Partnerships
- Attract Co-Producers and Distributors to Amplify our Film's Reach and Impact



## KIVU

What's the point of rebuilding if everything will be destroyed again? Ally, 26, lives in Goma, a city threatened by three major dangers: the Nyiragongo volcano, explosive methane gas under Lake Kivu, and armed militias. Passionate about local cinema, Ally had invested all his savings in renovating his inherited house. But his life is upended by a violent volcanic eruption.

Left with nothing, Ally takes refuge with Salambongo Victorine, "Grandma", a resilient woman who helps keep him from sinking. Determined, Ally wants to rebuild at any cost. He dreams of marrying Rebecca, his fiancée living in Butembo, but time and money are running out. As the only son of a sick mother who never recovered from a caesarean, Ally also carries the weight of family responsibility.

Torn between survival, love, and duty, Ally finds unexpected clarity when visiting his plot of land destroyed by lava. The silence

and wind seem to guide him. Despite a degree in social techniques and work as an actor, his self-funded films bring in no income. Forced by necessity, he turns to construction - first as a concrete worker, then as a driver for his friend Gaspard.

Through this work, he meets other victims of disaster: families collecting gravel from lava flows, and men transporting sand from Idjwi Island. Their resilience echoes his own. In 2025, M23 militias once again destabilise Goma. Yet amid violence and natural disaster, Ally's story reveals the daily heroism of a community that refuses to give up. Despite fear, destruction, and loss, they rebuild again and again.

### Reel Previews

Password: Kivu2024

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I live in Goma, where volcanoes, methane gas and conflict threaten daily life. Through Ally's journey to rebuild after repeated loss, I explore the power of human resilience. This film preserves the memory of a city on the brink, while reflecting a universal question: how do we keep rebuilding when everything around us keeps collapsing?


### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Élisé Sawasawa**, born in 1994 in the DRC, lives in Goma. A self-taught photographer, he trained through various workshops, including the Salaam Kivu International Film Festival (2013) and the Yaoundé Film Lab (2021). He has directed four short films, including *Les Scieurs*, selected at the Carthage Film Days (Tunisia). He is currently working on the documentary *Goma*, selected for the Massa Mare 2024 workshop, while developing the script for his next project, *Kivu*.

**Christian Bitwaiki** is a director and producer working in the city of Goma. He has developed an international profile and acquired a diverse range of skills in film production, having trained in documentary filmmaking through the Eurodoc 2024 programme and the Yaoundé Film Lab in Cameroon (2020 and 2021).

### COMPANY DETAILS

Founded in 2023 in Goma, Molakisi Films produces and co-produces African films while promoting training, local distribution and the international visibility of African cinema.

 @elisesawasawa / @christianbitwaiki



Christian Bitwaiki  
PRODUCER

Elise Sawasawa  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** All ages

**Country:** Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Cameroon

**Production Company:** Molakisi films, Films du Bilboquet, Tara

**Running Time:** 70 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 309 675 USD

**Finances Committed:** 88 580 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Sales Agent
- Find Distributors
- Financiers
- Connect with Production Funders





## PLANET CARNIVAL

Join us on an extraordinary journey across five iconic carnival celebrations around the world. In "Planet Carnival," we dive into the heart of Cape Town, Rio de Janeiro, New Orleans, Trinidad, and Notting Hill Carnival, uncovering the powerful stories of resilience, resistance, and cultural pride that define these festivals.

Through personal interactions, vibrant festivities, and intimate portraits of the communities that sustain these traditions,

viewers will witness how carnival serves as a beacon of hope and defiance against the backdrop of historical and ongoing struggles. This series uniquely draws connections between these festivals, highlighting their shared themes and collective significance.

Reel Previews  + 

Passwords:

amigo2025 / neighbourhood3000


### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Planet Carnival is a personal and political journey. Growing up with Carnival in Cape Town, I saw resistance move through rhythm and street theatre. From Rio to New Orleans and Salvador, Carnival defies erasure. This series pulses with sound, colour, and memory, a tribute to communities who turn survival into celebration and boldly reclaim culture in the face of power.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Kurt Orderson** is an award-winning filmmaker and visual artist with over 20 years of experience with 25 films to his name. His work draws deeply from historical, archival, and political traditions, exploring African legacies and global solidarity. He founded Azania Rising Productions, a decolonial film company. His acclaimed film *Not in My Neighbourhood* has screened at over 50 festivals. He executive produced *What the Soil Remembers* and is producing *Notes from the Underground* and *ApeTown*, slated for release in 2026.

**Thandi Davids** has spent over 25 years working across the media industry. She began her career in PR and moved on to produce for live TV broadcast, worked in the print media industry and with the United Nations to deliver major events. She is an award-winning marketer and ran her own marketing agency that included various multinational clients. She served as Africa Regional Director for Fox International Channels and National Geographic Channels. She is a founding partner and Executive Producer at StoryScope producing content for BBC, SABC, Netflix, CGTN etc Thandi served as Co-Chair of the Independent Producers Organisation, and on the boards of the Durban Film Mart and the Lionel Ngakane Foundation.

Company Profile 



Kurt Orderson  
DIRECTOR



Thandi Davids  
PRODUCER

### COMPANY DETAILS

StoryScope seeks to unlock the freshest energy of creative Africa to develop original stories for local and global content markets, working across genres, cultures, and time zones.

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Series

**Audience Age Range:** 25+

**Country:** South Africa, Brazil, United States of America, United Kingdom, Trinidad

**Production Company:** Storyscope

**Running Time:** 6 episodes, 58 minutes each


### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 3 300 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 10 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Funding
- Co-production
- Distribution Partnerships

 @thandiad / @ota\_benga





## PLASTIC ATLANTIS

On the northern shores of the Cape Verdean archipelago, a new invader arrives on the sand and rocks: plastic. However, this is not the first time that these islands serve as a gate of middle passage. Guided by the Atlantic currents and winds, this shared space of the Atlantic has served as a common grave through three distinct moments in history: the slave trade of the past, the contemporary challenges of illegal migration and plastic waste spread, as well as the future consequences for humanity if we continue polluting our oceans at current rates.

Cabo Verde, the world's first 100% mixed nation, harbors the pains of an unresolved past, haunted by colonial ghosts hidden beneath smiles of exoticism. For nearly four centuries, countless humans were enslaved along the African coast and transported to the islands, where they were dehumanized, repurposed, recycled, and treated as commodities. Many were then sent to the "New World." A lot of those souls who

perished during the brutal crossing now rest in the depths of our ocean, their stories forever entwined with the waters that carried them.

Ana Veiga, a 34-year-old marine biologist and Executive Director of the local NGO Lantuna, and António Correia e Silva, a renowned sociologist and historian, introduce us to these haunting realities of this shared transitional space.

Through parallel narratives, they explore the complexities of Cape Verdean and Creole identity, asking fundamental questions: Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we headed? As they delve deeper into the archipelago's past and present, they confront a chilling possibility: Are we, as a society, becoming plastic, as our oceans fill with the very material that now threatens our existence?

Reel Previews 

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT


Shaped by a Creole identity questioned across continents, I explore the link between our history of slavery and today's ocean pollution in Cabo Verde. This documentary connects environmental crisis with ancestral trauma - seeking healing and conservation by confronting the intertwined legacies of colonization and ecological harm.


### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Samira Vera-Cruz** is a Cape Verdean film director and producer based in Cabo Verde. Samira's most recent short documentary, *Sumara Maré* (2023), was part of the NEWF Producers' Lab — an initiative by Africa Refocused (a collaboration between NEWF and the National Geographic Society). Through the Africa Refocused initiative, Samira has participated in the African Science Film Fellowship and has become a dive master, working towards becoming an underwater cinematographer.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Kriolscope (KS) is a Cape Verdean audiovisual production company dedicated to cinema projects from Cabo Verde that explore the identity of Creole people.

Company Profile 

 @samira.veracruz / @pedro.g.d.soule



Pedro Soulé  
PRODUCER

Samira Vera-Cruz  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 13+

**Country:** Cabo Verde, Senegal, Brazil

**Production Company:** KS Cinema

**Running Time:** 70 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

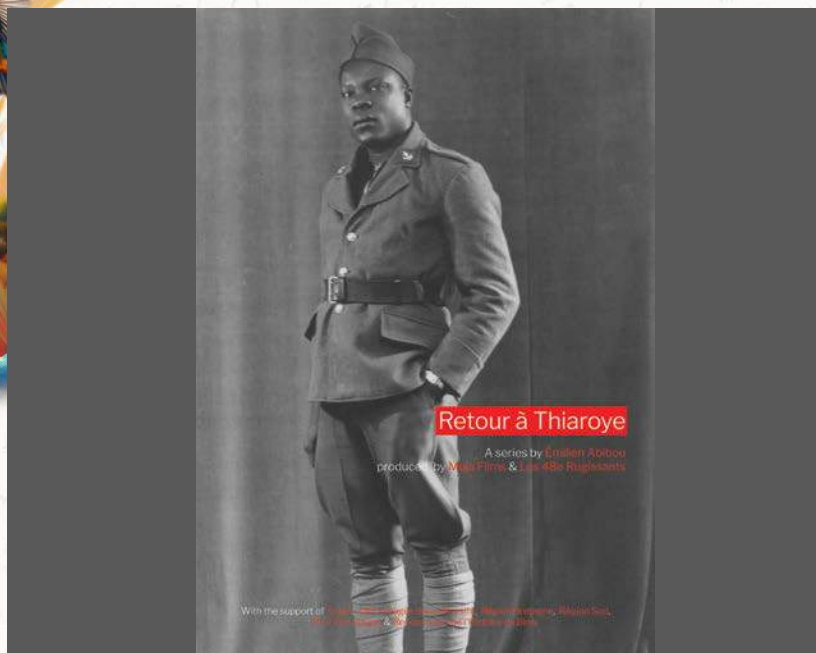
**Total Budget:** 355 611 USD

**Finances Committed:** 100 582 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Find Distributors
- Find Financiers
- Connect With Production Funders





## RETOUR À THIAROYE (RETURN TO THIAROYE)

In the aftermath of France's Liberation, so-called *Senegalese tirailleurs* (colonial infantrymen) are repatriated to a camp near Dakar. On 1 December, their French officers open fire on them. Among the survivors of what is now known as the Thiaroye massacre, Antoine Abibou is condemned as the leader of the so-called *tirailleurs'* rebellion. With only two photos as keepsakes, Émilien, a filmmaker, embarks on an investigation to trace the footsteps of his grandfather.

From one discovery to the next - from German camps to the French Resistance - he reconstructs the journey of this tirailleur,

who left Togo at the age of 24 in 1938 to defend France. Along the way, he uncovers a story intertwined with war godmothers, protectors, and comrades-in-arms, spanning from Aveyron to Senegal.

Drawing on various materials, including film excerpts, the series retraces the history of the *tirailleurs* during World War II and delves into the anatomy of the Thiaroye massacre, whose many unanswered questions still challenge historians. The investigation echoes into the present day, as the descendants of Thiaroye continue their fight for recognition of this chapter in France's colonial history.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I grew up knowing little about my grandfather, Antoine, a Togolese soldier who met my French grandmother during WWII. At 13, I learned he survived the Thiaroye massacre. That war, which enabled their meeting, also shaped my existence. This paradox of survival and violence became central to my identity and my relationship to history.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Dhia Jerbi** is a Tunisian director and producer. He co-founded Muja Films, focusing on creative documentaries and equitable co-productions between Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. His work explores political memory, heritage, and marginalised voices.

**Émilien Abibou** is a French filmmaker with extensive experience in styling, art direction for films, commercials, and art installations. He collaborates with renowned brands and artists, exploring hybrid forms between fiction, documentary, and visual arts.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Muja Films is a Franco-Tunisian company producing bold, author-driven films across genres. It fosters equitable North-South collaborations and amplifies voices from the Global Majority.

@dia\_jrb



### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Series

**Audience Age Range:** 15+

**Country:** Tunisia, France, Sénégal

**Production Company:** Muja Films  
(Tunisia&France) - Les 48e Rugissants

**Running Time:** 5 episodes, 26 minutes each

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 544 330 USD

**Finances Committed:** 71 210 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Connect with African partners, co-producers and financing, explore Africa-focused distribution, and mentorship on storytelling.





## THE SALT OF THE SOUTH

*The Salt of the South* begins with Fathia, a tenacious clam harvester in Gabès, Tunisia, whose life is deeply intertwined with the sea. Once abundant with marine life, the waters now suffer from the slow poison of the nearby chemical complex. As the sea withers, so does the future of Fathia's family. Her husband, Abdekrim, once a fisherman, now searches the shores for crabs. Her son, Moez, drops out of school to support the family by scavenging dead sea creatures.

Fathia's connection to the sea runs deep, not just as a source of livelihood but as the heartbeat of her community. Yet, the industrial pollution has turned the water she relies on into a toxic wasteland, destroying the ecosystem that has sustained generations. Despite this, Fathia continues her labour, harvesting clams and praying for the return of the waters' former vitality.

Her son Fadhel, once filled with the hope of following in his mother's footsteps as a fisherman, watches the sea lose its vibrancy.

As his family's struggles intensify, his dreams begin to fade. In a desperate attempt to escape the deadening reality, Fadhel leaves Gabès, embarking on a treacherous journey to Europe in search of a better life for him and his family. Yet, like his land back home, exploited by multinational corporations, he finds himself trapped in a cycle of exploitation and despair.

Meanwhile, back in Tunisia, Fathia's heart breaks as she watches her family deteriorate under the weight of poverty and environmental collapse. She holds on to her rituals, her faith in the sea, and the belief that one day her son will return. But as Fadhel's journey unfolds, the distance between them grows, and Fathia is left to confront the harsh, irreversible changes in her family's life.

Reel Previews 

Password: SALT

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*The Salt of the South* explores the fragile bond between humans and their environment, revealing how pollution fractures nature, families, and futures. Through a poetic lens, it reflects on humanity's place in the natural world and the consequences of its actions. The film speaks to climate justice, exposing how local communities endure harm shaped by distant powers.


### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Tunisian filmmaker **Rami Jarboui** (b. 1990) blends documentary realism with poetic, experimental forms. A graduate of ISAMM, his short *Soup* won the Grand Prix at the 2017 Mobile Film Festival. He has made several short films selected in international festivals around the world. His latest project, *The Salt of the South*, explores ecological degradation and resistance in Tunisia and won the Unifrance Award at CPH:DOX 2025 in Copenhagen.

Producer and climate activist, **Ramzi Laamouri** combines his scientific background with a deep passion for arts and culture. Former president of the Tunisian Federation of Film Clubs and a pioneer in cultural initiatives, he co-founded PHI FILMS in 2024 to produce impactful works like, *The Salt of the South*. Ramzi's vision champions cinema as a tool for resistance, dialogue, and social change.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Phi Films is a film company dedicated to exploring new forms of storytelling, focusing on climate and ecological themes, while pushing boundaries in visual and narrative expression.

 @ramzi\_laamouri / @roquentin00 / @phifilms\_prod



### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 16+

**Country:** Tunisia, France, Belgium, Denmark

**Production Company:** Phi Films, Backstory Media, Daarna Production, Northern Souls

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 492 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 136 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Refine Project Writing
- Enhance Networking Opportunities
- Secure New Avenues for Project Growth





## UN/SETTLED

In *Un/Settled*, South African filmmaker and photographer Sydelle Willow Smith embarks on a personal journey across South Africa, Australia, and the United States to explore the uncomfortable legacies of whiteness, land inheritance, and belonging.

The film was sparked by a pivotal moment during the 2015 *Rhodes Must Fall* protests, when student activists challenged Sydelle's presence as a white documentarian. That rupture prompted her to turn the lens inward and interrogate the privileges and contradictions she grew up with.

Raised in a liberal Jewish household on the outskirts of Johannesburg, she believed her family were the "good whites." Her grandmother cooked meals for the Treason Trialists, and her home was filled with anti-apartheid sentiments. Yet she lived in comfort made possible by structural inequality.

Tracing her Jewish-Lithuanian ancestors who fled pogroms and later became landowners

in South Africa, the film grapples with the paradox of victims becoming beneficiaries. In Australia, Sydelle meets First Nations Aboriginal leaders and white settlers confronting the unfinished business of reconciliation. In the U.S. Deep South, she encounters echoes of slavery and segregation still felt today.

Using vérité footage, animated collage, and staged satire, *Un/Settled* doesn't offer tidy resolutions. Instead, it invites viewers to sit with the tensions and ask:

What does it mean to reckon with a past you didn't choose but still benefit from?  
What does healing look like when you are both complicit and seeking repair?

Reel Previews 

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*Un/Settled* isn't about closure - it's about asking difficult questions. I made this film to better understand the stories I've inherited and the systems that shaped me. It's not about seeking forgiveness, but about being honest with the past. If we want to contribute to a different future, we need to engage with the legacies we carry, however uncomfortable that may be.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE


**Sydelle Willow Smith** is a South African storyteller exploring whiteness, land, and memory through poetic, engaged storytelling. She co-founded and runs Sunshine Cinema.


**Dr Mehret Mandefro** is an Emmy-nominated Ethiopian-American producer and co-founder of Realness Institute. With a background in medicine and anthropology, her award-winning work bridges storytelling and social impact.

Together, they bring a multidisciplinary, cross-continental approach to cinematic inquiry, injustice, and repair.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Makhulu Media is an award-winning production company creating bold, socially driven films. Focused on impact and ethics, it specialises in documentary storytelling across Africa.

Company Profile 

 @sydellewillowsmith



Mehret Mandefro  
PRODUCER



Sydelle Willow Smith  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 16+

**Country:** South Africa, United States of America, Australia

**Production Company:** Makhulu Media

**Running Time:** 70 - 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 650 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 25 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Production Partners
- Production and Post-Production Funding
- Archival Storytelling Consultation



HOT  
DOCS

## VUKA

Deep within the layered streets of Gugulethu, an impoverished township on the outskirts of Cape Town, lies an unimposing public school called Fezeka. With only a keyboard and an empty classroom, this school consistently produces some of the country's best choral talent. These young voices are fuelled by a culture of music that seeps through broken homes, where the resistance to their struggles finds its form in notes and sheet music.

Monde, a son of Gugulethu, abandons his own singing career to return to his alma mater and lead them to the national championships, a life-defining event for many students across the country. But Monde is well aware he signed up for more than that. Beyond teaching complex compositions without any resources, he is a father figure in a community where absent fathers are prevalent. Monde now has to balance being the disciplinarian and the sounding board for the kids' endless daily struggles.

In an interweaving narrative, we move from the high stakes of choral competitions to the intimate lives of several students, including a rising opera star, an aspiring pianist, and a young conductor. Their stories reveal how the language of music, and the collectivist mind-set of the choir, enables them to navigate the harsh realities of township life and find their footing in the world.

With such remarkable talent within his ranks, Monde seeks to dominate the national championships, not just to take home the trophy, but to help the students realise the power of their own voice. But in doing so, Monde pushes the learners to their limits, revealing the painful undercurrents that drive the meaning behind the music.

Reel Previews



## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

This is not a film about music but rather about the role of music. It's about harmony and belonging in the context of social discord - music as a means to survive by keeping one's soul intact. Through an intimate, character-driven approach, we provide a portal into a unique world that spotlights the value of community and our shared humanity.

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Rehad Desai** has directed and produced numerous feature-length documentaries, many of which have seen international broadcast, theatrical release, festival prizes, and critical acclaim. Rehad won an International EMMY for *Miners Shot Down* in 2015.

**Matthew Robinson** is a documentary director and cinematographer based in Cape Town. A graduate from UCT and CityVarsity, he has directed short documentaries for *The Mail & Guardian* and lensed projects with Rehad for Uhuru Productions.

## COMPANY DETAILS

Trevendy Films, based in Cape Town, is dedicated to character-driven non-fiction. Uhuru Productions creates high-quality documentary productions for local and international audiences.

Company Profiles



@rehaddesai / @matt.robinson.film



Rehad Desai  
PRODUCER



Matthew Robinson  
DIRECTOR

## PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 16+

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** Trevendy Films & Uhuru Productions

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

## FINANCING PLAN

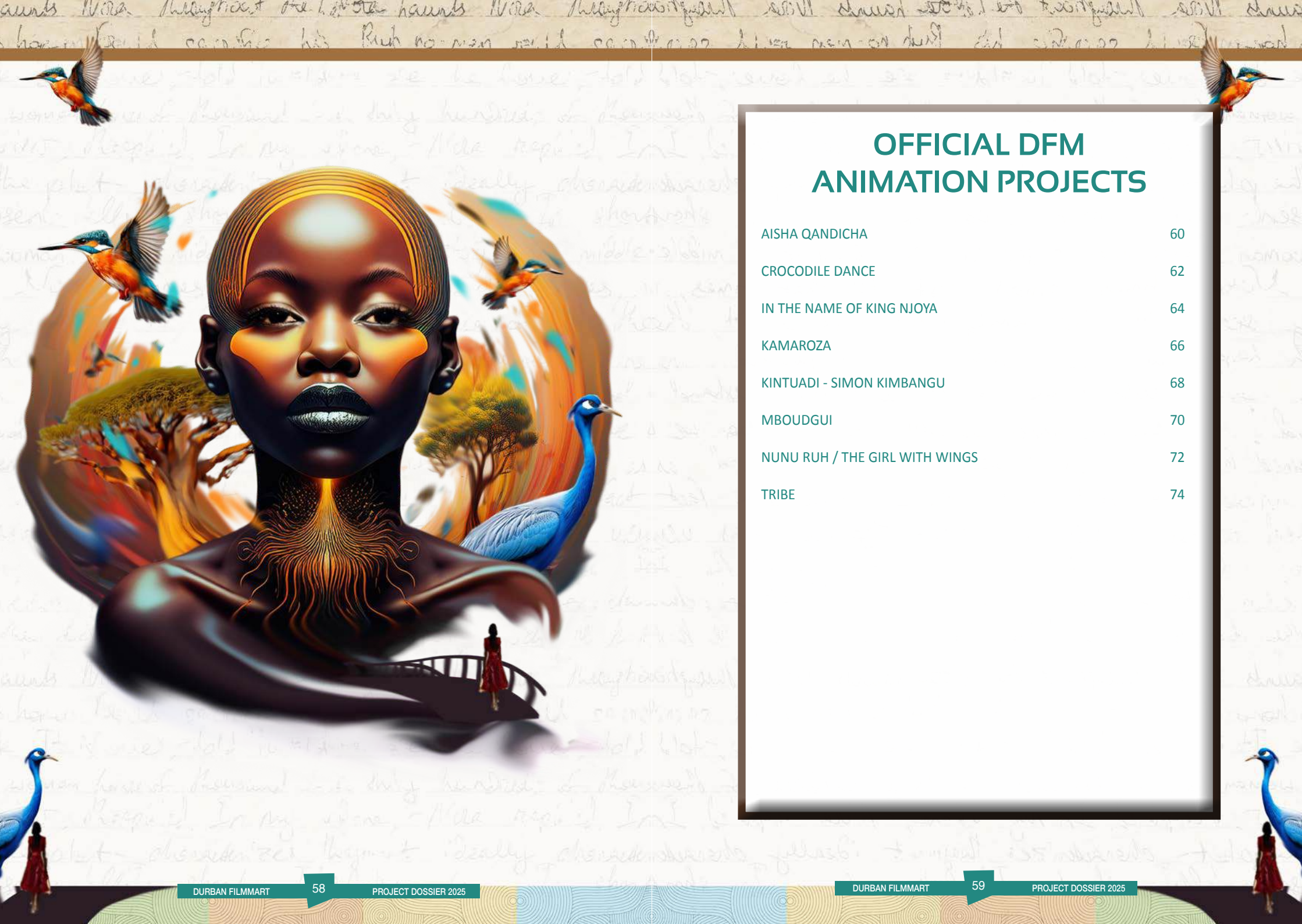
**Total Budget:** 250 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 45 000 USD

## GOALS AT DFM

- Production Finance
- Partners and Co-Producers
- Develop Relationships Across Value Chain





## OFFICIAL DFM ANIMATION PROJECTS

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## AISHA QANDICHA

*Aisha Qandicha* is known in Moroccan folklore as a vengeful demon who kills men - but this fantasy/sci-fi tale tells another side of her story. Set in the year 2100 in Casablanca, Morocco, Aisha Qandicha is actually a mother who is torn apart by loss. Aisha's daughter, Amina, was killed by humans, and every day since, Aisha has been consumed by grief, wanting to cast a spell that will bring her daughter back to life.

For years, Aisha has been locked in a cycle of killing anyone who reminds her of the people who killed her daughter - until one night, when she crosses paths with Leila, a small, frightened little girl with unexpected magical powers. Leila is the result of an experiment carried out by her parents, two brilliant yet deeply flawed scientists, who want to use Leila's superpowers for their own gain.

On Aisha's journey to find several magical talismans that will help her cast a spell to bring Amina back to life, she finds herself slowly growing to care for Leila as only a mother would. When she is forced to make the ultimate choice between saving Leila or bringing Amina back to life, Aisha must pick which daughter to fight for and perhaps learn to move on from grief in order to live a life of love.


### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I've always believed that fantasy unveils the truest essence of humanity, so *Aisha Qandicha* combines a fantastical story with a cyberpunk setting. We draw on anime-inspired visuals, evoking a strikingly modern feeling while bringing to life Morocco's rich traditions. Aimed at a 12+ audience, the film explores identity, loss, and love, wrapped in magic and myth.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Fatima Ezzahra Mahdar** is a neurodivergent producer, director from Morocco. She's held shopping agreements with HarperCollins and Simon & Schuster and built relationships with studios like Disney and Netflix. Fatima is the co-creator and creative producer of *Aisha Qandicha*.

**Alyssa Harden**, co-creator and producer of *Aisha Qandicha*, is a U.S.-based animation producer, writer with previous experience at DreamWorks, LAIKA, and Illumination Entertainment. She is also a member of Women in Animation.

 @alyssaisawizard



Alyssa Harden  
PRODUCER



Fatima Ezzahra Mahdar  
DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Kris Pearn

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animated Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** Family Film

**Country:** TBD

**Production Company:** NA

**Running Time:** 80 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

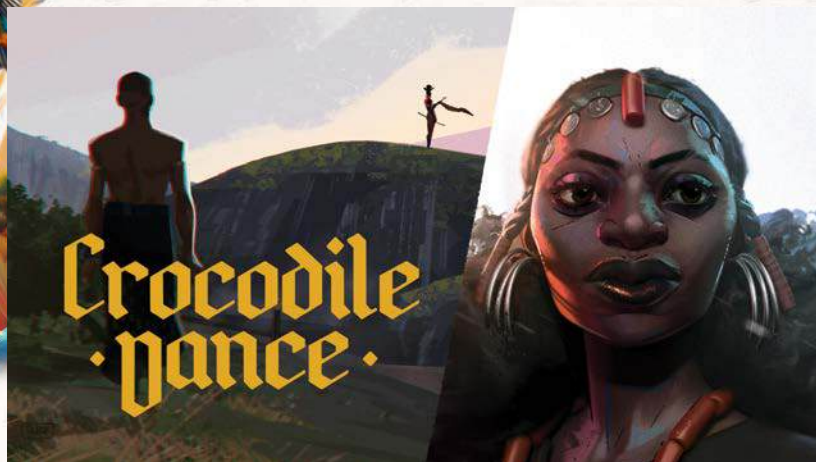
**Total Budget:** 4 000 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** TBD

### GOALS AT DFM

- We are Looking to Attach a Production Company and Creative Collaborators who are Equally Passionate about this Story.





## CROCODILE DANCE

*Crocodile Dance* is the origin story of the dreaded yet much-revered monster/goddess, the Mami Wata! She is 10 feet tall, possesses fishtails for legs, a deadly voice, blood-red eyes, and a favour that might make you beautiful or wealthy. From the shores of Senegal, Nigeria and Angola, mythic beings of the sea have influenced African psychology for millennia in a manner equally dark and alluring. This story is a modern interpretation of the Mami Wata's ancient folk tales told from the perspective of Roukia, a griot (musical storyteller).

After years on the road, Roukia settles in the seaside town of Itesi after performing a gripping opera. She shares a fateful, magnetic encounter with a local man-stirring romance and a new sense of home. Itesi's soulful inner-city streets cast neon light onto pristine beach sand whose languorous tides rise higher with every generation. Afro high-life pulses from the radios of surfers who tell tales of ancient water creatures that

steal men's souls. However, in this seeming promised land lies a terrible secret legacy - a once-in-a-generation curse: a sacrifice.

The town's dreadful secret looms over Roukia and its denizens, but she has a striking secret herself. Her music might be the key to unravelling the tension surrounding it all. She must reclaim her voice to break this curse, save herself, her family, and the community. Combining myth, dance, and music in traditional and modern forms, the story expresses themes of awakening, self-belief, and hope.

### Reel Previews



Password: queenmoremi

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Akin to how *Frankenstein* cemented the Jewish Golem in pop culture, *Crocodile Dance* aims to elevate the story of the most well-known African supernatural being to animation pop culture. **Shofela** and **Nadia** grew up in coastal cities and are inspired by the relationship of Africa's sea, its myth, traditions, and how they influence modern spirituality and psychology.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Shof Coker** is an Emmy and Annie-nominated Nigerian director of the Disney+ short film *Moremi*, and the art director for the animated documentary *Liyana*.

**Nadia Darries** is a South African Annie-winning director of *Aau's Song*, a *Star Wars: Visions* short film on Disney+. She is a musician, a passionate storyteller, and co-founder/partner of *Goon Valley Animation*.

**Ingrid de Beer** is an Emmy and Annie-nominated South African producer and partner at *Lucan Animation*. She is dedicated to telling underrepresented stories of meaning and substance.

### COMPANY DETAILS

*Lucan Animation* is an award-winning Cape Town animation studio renowned for delivering creative excellence for film and games. Their projects include the short film *Moremi* on Disney+.

### Company Profile



@shofcoker / @asyn\_sa / @lucan\_studio



Shofela Coker  
DIRECTOR



Nadia Darries  
DIRECTOR



Ingrid de Beer  
PRODUCER

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animated Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** Teen+, Adult

**Country:** South Africa, Nigeria, USA

**Production Company:** Lucan Animation

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

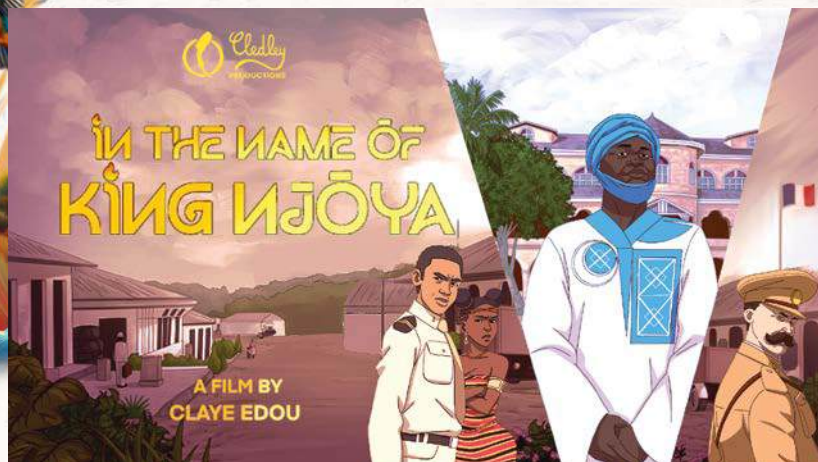
**Total Budget:** 10 000 000 - 12 000 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 12 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Funding to Complete Development
- Potential Co-Producers
- Sales Agents/Distributors





## IN THE NAME OF KING NJOYA

In 1933, in Yaoundé under French occupation, Sergeant Essono is assigned to guard a political prisoner. With the help of the young and spirited servant Pemboura, he discovers that the prisoner is none other than Ibrahim Njoya, the exiled ruler of the Bamoun kingdom. Through Pemboura's storytelling, he learns that this visionary king, long before German and then French colonisation, had created an alphabet, crushed a rebellion led by his uncle, modernised his administration, and built a capital worthy of an empire. Gradually, Essono grows closer to Pemboura, which greatly displeases his superior, Captain Blanchard.

*In the Name of King Njoya* is a historical film that questions colonisation, identity, and memory. This film is for all those whose histories have been told by others, and who now seek to reclaim their past. It is a unique project—at once intimate and political, a journey between memory and emancipation.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

This project fulfils a deep need: to tell the story of an exceptional figure, largely unknown outside Cameroon, despite his remarkable destiny. King Ibrahim Njoya was an inventor, builder, reformer, and artist; he created an alphabet and modernised his kingdom with a unique vision. He deserved to be celebrated through an epic historical narrative.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Claye Edou** was born in Djoum, Cameroon. In 2016, he founded Cledley Productions in Douala and directed *Minga and the Broken Spoon*, the first animated feature made in Cameroon. The film was screened in over 40 countries and won Best International Film at the KingstOOOn Festival in Jamaica in 2019. In 2024, his second animated feature film *The Mystery of Waza* was released and won several awards in Cannes, Luanda, Toulouse, and was named Best Film of the Year at the LFC Awards.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Cledley Productions is a production company specialising in animation and fiction. Among its productions: *Minga and the Broken Spoon* (2017), *Kankan* (2022), and *The Mystery of Waza* (2024).

Company Profile



▶ Cledley Productions



Claye Edou  
DIRECTOR and PRODUCER

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animated Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 10+

**Country:** Cameroon

**Production Company:** Cledley Productions

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 2 000 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 50 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Financing
- Industry Networking
- Distribution/Marketing
- Pre-Sales





## KAMAROZA

In this captivating animated tale, *Kamaroza* follows Laila, an energetic and rebellious young girl who dreams of a life filled with daring escapades. When she stumbles upon a mysterious object from the eccentric town madman, Gambari, she unknowingly becomes trapped in a magical story where she transforms into Kamaroza, a powerful and mythical girl.

As she navigates the treacherous city ruled by a monstrous tyrant known as the Ghoul, Laila learns she is the only one who can stop him—if she can find a mystical jewel hidden in a forgotten cave. But as the journey unfolds, Laila discovers painful truths about herself, her choices, and the consequences of her actions.

With the help of new friends, including a kind-hearted baker named Gaber, Laila must confront the truth behind the Ghoul's corruption and the dark magic that binds him. With time running out, Laila faces a choice that could save or destroy not just the city, but her own identity. *Kamaroza* is a tale of growth, self-discovery, and the power of stories to shape our destiny, filled with vibrant characters, magic, and heart-pounding action.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

We grew up watching stories inspired by our culture—but told from the outside. We are creating a new *Arabian Nights*, told through Gambari, a mysterious storyteller with a box of wonders. His tales blend heritage with imagination, inviting audiences into a world that is bold, authentic, and timeless.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Islam Mazhar** and **Ahmad Abdelhameed** are directors and co-founders of Samaka Studio, a leading animation studio based in Cairo and Abu Dhabi. Known for their bold storytelling and visual style, they focus on authentic, culturally rooted narratives. Their work includes acclaimed short films and the upcoming animated feature *Kamaroza*, selected for Animasyros, MIFA, DFM, and Digital Lab Africa. They also mentor emerging talent across the MENA region.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Samaka Studio is MENA's leading animation house, crafting authentic brand stories and cultural content with top-tier quality, creativity, and speed- without compromise.

@samakastudio



Islam Mazhar  
DIRECTOR



Ahmad Abdelhameed  
DIRECTOR



Nouran Abdallah  
PRODUCER

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animated Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 8+, Family

**Country:** Egypt

**Production Company:** Samaka Studio

**Running Time:** 75 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 4 500 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 20 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Find Co-Producers
- Find Co-Production Companies





## KINTUADI: SIMON KIMBANGU

Belgian Congo, early 1920s. As Central Africa groans under the weight of brutal colonial rule, a voice rises in the night of the oppressed. It is the voice of Simon Kimbangu, a humble and quiet man, a factory worker and former catechist, whose destiny changes forever when he receives a divine vision. A sacred mission is revealed: to heal, awaken, and liberate.

In the remote village of Nkamba (western Congo), this man, with no title or power, begins to perform the impossible: restoring sight to the blind, enabling the paralysed to walk, and stirring sleeping souls. Crowds from across Congo and Angola flock to what becomes known as the Black Nazareth. Plantations are deserted, colonial schools abandoned, and churches emptied. A wind of hope blows, and fear takes root in the hearts of the colonisers.

Kimbangu preaches no hatred, only light. He calls for the dignity of Black people, the

rejection of enslaving superstitions, and the elevation of the spirit. However, in a world where dreaming is a threat, his words are deemed a crime.

Declared the colonial order's first public enemy, Kimbangu becomes the target of a ruthless manhunt. Entire villages are burned, followers murdered, and hundreds imprisoned. Kimbangu flees, refusing violence, bearing alone the burden of his persecuted people. After 55 days in hiding, he chooses sacrifice over further suffering and surrenders.

Following a sham trial, he is sentenced to death, later commuted to life imprisonment. Deported 2 000 kilometres from home (to Élisabethville, now Lubumbashi), he dies in total isolation after thirty years, never again seeing his children, his people, or daylight. Yet his fire lives on. Kimbangu becomes a prophet, a symbol of resistance, and the spiritual father of a movement that

Reel Previews 

paves Congo's path to independence, with his mythical phrase: "One day, Black will become White, and White will become Black."

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT


Cinema is memory. It is our way of telling the stories that were never allowed to be told. With *Kintuadi: Simon Kimbangu*, we are not making a religious film; we are making a film about resistance, courage, and the power of belief. We chose animation because it allows us to visualise the invisible, to dive into the spiritual dimension that defines African storytelling. This is a film that speaks not only to the Congo, but to the world.


### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

I began creating comics with schoolmates, and in 2016, I joined a workshop by Comics Chrétien and later the Lamuka collective, scripting multiple stories. In 2017, I discovered animation with Gilson Kitoko and Reddy Goma, co-directing two short films. I then trained in directing with Target-Prod (2018). I directed *Manga-Geek* (2019) and a COVID-19 awareness short (2020). In 2022, I joined an animation scriptwriting workshop with Afrikatoon in Kinshasa, further deepening my passion for storytelling through animation.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Gikas Films produces fiction, documentary, and animation with bold, authentic African narratives. We collaborate locally and globally to tell creative, inclusive stories that empower and inspire.

 /Giresse Kassonga

Company Profile 



### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Feature Length Animation Film

**Audience Age Range:** 5+

**Country:** Democratic Republic of the Congo

**Production Company:** Gikas Films

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 4 128 132 USD

**Finances Committed:** 108 457 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Find Strategic Partners
- Secure Financing
- Connect with Broadcasters and Distributors
- Secure Residencies for Animation Film Development





## MBOUDGUI

Égré (12), prince of the Tupuri clan, awakens from a three-year coma to find his kingdom in ruins. An unexplained drought grips the land, his parents have been tragically murdered, and his twin sister, Mbéréba, has been kidnapped. Entrusted by Chief Wang Doré with the mission of retrieving five sacred artefacts to restore balance and save his people, Égré chooses to focus first on rescuing Mbéréba, held captive by the fearsome Elephant Men clan.

As he embarks on a perilous, transformative journey, Égré faces powerful enemies, harsh natural elements, and deep spiritual challenges. Each step of his quest brings him closer to uncovering the truth behind the chaos. He learns that his uncle, Rikichi—a cunning traitor and false ruler—stands at the heart of the devastation.

To reclaim his rightful place, save his sister, and honour the legacy of the Tupuri clan, Égré must confront his destiny in an epic final battle. Armed with courage, wisdom, and the teachings of his ancestors, he rises as a young hero shaped by adversity, destined to become a beacon of hope for his people.

*Mboudgui* is an initiatory tale blending fantasy, mythology, and adventure, rooted in African culture. It explores universal themes of resilience, identity, and the fight to protect what matters most.

[Reel Previews](#)


## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I'm **Wanso Tissala Bienvenu**, a writer-director passionate about visual storytelling and African culture. *Mboudgui* is a fantasy tale rooted in African mythologies, exploring resilience, identity, and our bond with nature. It turns suffering into strength while addressing environmental issues and celebrating the richness of African heritage.

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Wanso Tissala Bienvenu** is an author and director focused on African storytelling. His work, including *Mboudgui*, blends innovative visuals and cultural exploration.

**Betty Sulty Johnson** is a visionary producer passionate about culturally rich storytelling. She co-produced *Kenda*, officially selected at Annecy, and now champions *Mboudgui*, an epic rooted in African mythology.

**Lamissa Ouattara**, producer at Zivi Productions, supports innovative African narratives through bold animation projects.

## COMPANY DETAILS

Habebo Studios and Zivi Productions champion bold, authentic African and Afro-descendant stories, supporting emerging talents and sharing powerful narratives with the world.

[Company Profile](#)


Bienvenu Wanso Tissala  
DIRECTOR



Betty Sulty Johnson  
PRODUCER



Lamissa Ouattara  
PRODUCER

## PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animated Series

**Audience Age Range:** 8+

**Country:** Cameroon, France

**Production Company:** Habebo Studios,  
Zivi Productions

**Running Time:** 12 episodes, 6 minutes each

## FINANCING PLAN

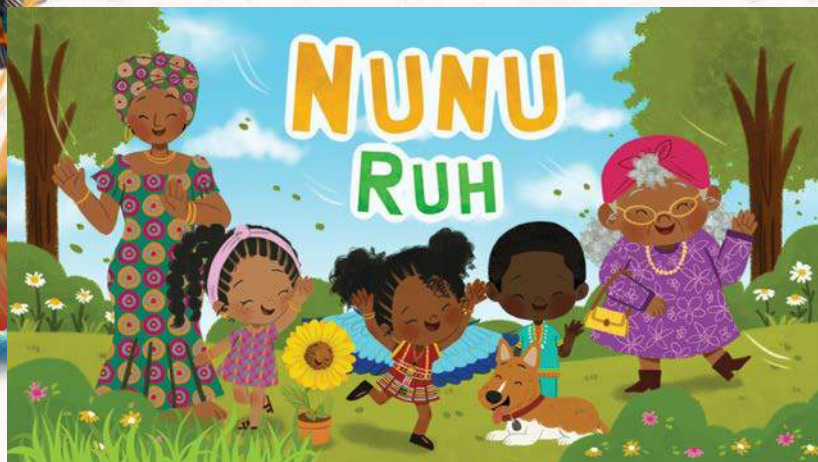
**Total Budget:** 1 400 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 35 000 USD

## GOALS AT DFM

- Secure Funding
- Gain Support
- Distribution Deals





## NUNU RUH/ THE GIRL WITH WINGS

Adapted from the beloved children's book, *The Girl With Wings*, comes *The Adventures of Nunu Ruh* - a 2D preschool transmedia series about Ruh, a stubborn, enduring, selfish yet charming six-year-old girl, who wishes upon a star to become an angel. She wakes up the next day with big, beautiful, powerful yet delicate angel wings. She is delighted that her wish has come true, but she soon realises that her wings are invisible to others. They are not just invisible; they are also big and bulky and make her very clumsy. She is no longer pleased with her gift until she learns, with the help of a magical sunflower, that being an angel has nothing to do with wings at all. To be an angel, she has to behave like an angel, and that means genuinely recognising the needs of those around her and finding ways that she can help her family, friends, and community. And when she does, her wings appear and she can fly.

Each five-minute episode tells the story of a good deed, where Ruh lives the values of kindness and compassion through action. Creating positive results in her community gives her the power to fly.

This heartwarming transmedia series celebrates integrity, authenticity, and living your values through the adventures of Ruh, in her quaint, idyllic farm town surrounded by golden sunflower fields. Alongside her brother Zaza, best friend Noor, loyal dog Vlad, wise magical sunflower Sanna, caring mum and elderly neighbour, Ruh explores timeless themes like birthdays, harvest time, and rainy days - delivering gentle life lessons with the relatable charm of Bluey.

Designed for preschoolers' sensory learning, this transmedia series spans 52 x 5 minutes

Reel Previews 

(for broadcast/streaming) and expands into interactive games, activity books, songs, puzzles, and toys - turning everyday kindness into tangible play.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

In a world where Ubuntu (the spirit of community) is challenged by scarcity, despair, and selfishness, this series shows children how small daily acts of kindness create ripples of joy that uplift both others and themselves. For in helping those around us, we discover the simplest truth: being kind and compassionate lightens the heart and cultivates inner peace.


### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Ameera Faber** is a seasoned producer and entrepreneur, having produced over 600 hours of series for broadcast on TV and streaming platforms, for local and global audiences. As founder of I Love That (2009), she combines her expertise in business psychology with a passion for storytelling to drive commercially lucrative and innovative creative projects.

**Clare Louis** is a visionary director with a unique blend of fine art sensibility and 3D animation mastery to craft emotionally resonant and unique stories.

### COMPANY DETAILS

I Love That is an award-winning content and digital marketing agency founded in 2009. We craft impactful storytelling for global brands, driving conversions through creativity and strategy.

 /Ameera Faber



Clare Louis  
DIRECTOR



Ameera Faber  
PRODUCER

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animated Series

**Audience Age Range:** for children aged 3–6

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** I Love That!

**Running Time:** 52 episodes, 5 minutes each

### FINANCING PLAN

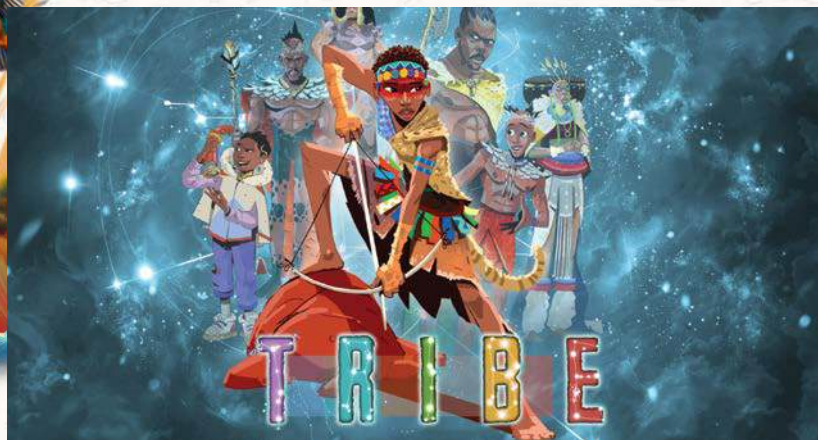
**Total Budget:** 2 500 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 250 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Secure Financing or Co-Productions
- Secure Distribution and Licensing Deals
- Build Industry Relationships
- Gauge Market Interest





## TRIBE

In a divided galaxy where only royals can wield magic and planets are ruled by fear, the paths of three unlikely teenagers—a timid girl with a dangerous gift, a spoiled prince out of his depth, and an unpredictable warrior with everything to lose—collide on a high-stakes mission that reveals they might be the key to saving their world.

When Timba, an awkward teen's forbidden ability to unlock magic in others is discovered, Moto, a lowly chief, decides to use her to build a magical army to destroy rival King Ipa and control his Eden-esque planet of Huchiland himself. But when Ipa's reckless son, Basi, and his friends attack Moto in a hazing ritual, their mission fails. Fearing being turned into a weapon, Timba uses the chaos and takes Basi hostage. She demands that he smuggle her into Huchiland, where a cure for her dangerous powers is rumoured to exist.

They launch forward but are cornered by Nyezi, an explosive girl from a rival planet. Nyezi mistakes the duo for Huchiland troops that kidnapped her sister, whom she must rescue before King Ipa uses her for nefarious ends.

As Basi grapples with his family's role in their broken world, this riotous adventure of forced allyship will push Timba out of her comfort zone and encourage her to trust others. Hot-headed Nyezi's chaotic powers make it impossible to move undetected, but she learns that strategy, not just emotion, matters. And the coddled, larger-than-life Basi unlocks a resourcefulness and compassion that enables him to connect with his true purpose.

Reel Previews



With every obstacle and victory, Timba, Basi, and Nyezi clash. Still, as they lean into vulnerability and collaboration, this messy crew of found family becomes the key to saving the world.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*Tribe* is inspired by my grandmother, who at 15 years old defied extraordinary odds when she fled a forced marriage, survived a civil war, and gave her newborn and herself a better life. I exist because of her, and *Tribe* is my attempt to reimagine what strengths and connections she drew from that helped her win. If an overlooked orphan achieved the impossible, we can too.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

With a 15-year career, **Tendayi Nyeke's** multi-genre creative work has been celebrated internationally, including Children's Emmy nominations, an Annie Award, SAFTAs and more. A former broadcast executive on award-winning shows and with an MBA in Creative Industries, she is passionate about the intersection of business and art.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Tenye Creates' mission is to create vibrant and dynamic creative ecosystems, where people from all walks of life can collaborate and deliver premium projects for global markets.

Company Profile



@tenyecreates



**Tendayi Nyeke**  
DIRECTOR



**Debbie Crosscup**  
PRODUCER

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animated Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 13+

**Country:** South Africa, United Kingdom

**Production Company:** Tenye Creates

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 8 000 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 80 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Producing Partners
- Sales Agent
- Distributors
- Funding to Complete Project
- Broadcasters



# 2025 TALENTS DURBAN

The Durban FilmMart Institute, in partnership with Berlinale Talents, presents the 18th edition of Talents Durban: a dynamic platform for emerging African film professionals. This initiative offers a vital space for skill-building, industry access, and project development.

Over 6 weeks, selected participants receive mentorship and the opportunity to present their work to key industry professionals. Following a highly competitive adjudication process, **26 projects and 5 film critics** representing 18 countries across the continent were selected for the 2025 edition. The final lineup includes **4 animations, 6 documentaries, 7 feature fiction films, 4 series, 5 short films and 5 film critics.**

Talents Durban is structured into four distinct categories:

- **Storytelling Lab:** script development and mentoring for features, shorts, and series
- **Doc Lab:** practical guidance for documentary filmmakers
- **Animation Lab:** tailored mentorship for animators focusing on African visual narratives
- **Talent Press:** critical writing training for up-and-coming African film journalists

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Talents Durban:

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Series 87  
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## ALICE JOHNSON

Alice Johnson is a Ghanaian cultural journalist, multimedia producer, and founder of *AJ4short*, a digital platform dedicated to reviewing and celebrating cinema and theatre from Africa and its Diaspora. Through essays, reviews, interviews, and vlogs, *AJ4short* offers a grounded lens on African storytelling, with a focus on precolonial narratives, cultural memory, and underrepresented voices. Alice's original works which include stage plays, radio dramas, articles, and screenplays, explore contemporary African experiences with nuance. She is an alumna of the Multichoice Talent Factory West Africa and a 2023 Inside Nollywood Film Journalism Fellow. Her film criticism work was featured at the British Museum's 2024 British Empire Exhibition Conference. As a host, panel moderator, and festival collaborator, she bridges digital, live, and broadcast platforms. At the heart of her work is a commitment to expanding critical discourse on African storytelling and amplifying its global presence.

COUNTRY: Ghana



## GLORIA NKATHA

Gloria Nkatha is a Kenyan film critic whose work amplifies African cinema through sharp insight, cultural context, and deep respect for storytelling. She is the voice and ink behind *Talk Film to Me*, a platform where film reviews, filmmaker interviews, and industry conversations come together to spotlight African stories and the people who tell them. Known for her engaging presence both on and off screen, Gloria has moderated Q&As, led watch parties, and hosted red carpets, creating space for meaningful dialogue between filmmakers and audiences. Her criticism blends honesty with accessibility, making film analysis feel personal and purposeful. Alongside her criticism, Gloria is a co-founder at Fourthwall film marketing and she brings a touch of marketing strategy – often supporting filmmakers with audience-facing campaigns that honour the heart of their stories.

COUNTRY: Kenya

## MOHAMED SAYED ABDEL REHIM

As a film critic, programmer, Golden Globes international voter, and member of FIPRESCI and the Egyptian Film Critics Association, I write in Arabic and English for *Al Ahram*, *Daily News*, *Al Manassa*, and major festival newsletters. My reviews explore global cinema's themes and cultural impact, promoting deeper appreciation through analysis and thoughtful commentary.

COUNTRY: Egypt



## RILEY HLATSHWAYO

Riley Hlatshwayo is a Joburg-based writer and blogger from Durban. She is a writer who considers herself multifaceted, seamlessly blending her roles as a researcher and reviewer of various media as a way of spreading awareness on the queer experience, personal development, and mental health. With a keen eye for representation and visibility, Riley crafts compelling pieces that resonate with people simply because they are written with the reader in mind, told with honesty and care.

COUNTRY: South Africa



## TSHI MALATJI

Tshi Malatji is an emerging film professional who participated in the 2024 Southern Africa Locarno Industry Academy (SALIA) and is a 2023 alum of the *Encounters Community Festivals: Doc Activate* season. In 2023, they founded the *CineBa!* Film Club and have since directed three editions of the *CineBa!* Film Festival and two editions of the *Adisi* Film Festival in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Previously, Tshi worked as a television editor for *Culture Review Magazine* before launching *Afroma*, a dedicated African film magazine.

COUNTRY: South Africa



## AKIKI'S ADVENTURES IN AZANIA

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animation

**Country:** South Africa

**Language:** English

**Running Time:** 20 minutes each

**Socials:** @fatumastories

*Akiki's Adventures* is a dynamic animated TV series set in a futuristic Africa - Azania, 2100. Akiki, a cultural explorer and natural leader, travels with her crew - Tatenda the tech genius, Jabari the chilled comrade, Fatima the treasure hunter, and Kwame the fun-loving journalist. As they travel across Azania's diverse regions, they confront social issues from justice, the environment to cultural diversity. Akiki and the crew keep learning life-changing lessons in empathy, teamwork, and resilience. It's fast-paced fun packed with purpose - where tradition meets tomorrow.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Akiki's Adventures in Azania* is a natural evolution of a journey I began with the Akiki storybooks and the Akiki doll - born from a desire to create representation that African children can truly connect with. Too often, our kids grow up without seeing themselves reflected in the stories they consume. This series is my contribution to changing that narrative - by offering something fun, inspiring, and rooted in the richness of Africa.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Fatuma Abdullah** is a business consultant turned creative force, driven by a passion for storytelling that reflects the richness and diversity of African identity. Fatuma is also the producer of *Azania Rises*, an animated TV special that was nominated for Best Animation across the African continent.



Fatuma Abdullah  
DIRECTOR

## RUTU

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animation

**Country:** Kenya

**Language:** English, Swahili, Kikuyu  
(with English subtitles)

**Running Time:** 10 minutes each

*Rutu* is a 7-part animated series set in the dying land of Tasi, where gold coins are survival and the Bumbo machine takes its cut. Apollo, a young girl, risks everything to save her sick grandmother. But a failed heist throws her into Rutu - a lush, vibrant world where hope lives. To return home with answers, she must first uncover Rutu's secrets and fight for the future of both worlds.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Rutu* explores contrast - scarcity and abundance, control and freedom - through animation grounded in African storytelling. Apollo's journey mirrors real struggles within oppressive systems. I want young audiences to feel seen and inspired, to believe in their agency. This series is my act of resistance and imagination, blending Afrofuturism, folklore, and hard truths.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Nduruka** is a visionary filmmaker and founder of Blaak Ink Studio. Her Afrofuturist animation blends folklore and social commentary to tell bold, character-driven African stories that challenge, reimagine, and empower.



Mary Njoroge  
DIRECTOR + PRODUCER

## SISONKHE KIDS HABITS

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animation

**Country:** Eswatini

**Language:** siSwati, English

**Running Time:** 25 minutes

**Socials:** /Purple-Butterfly Nest

*Sisonkhe Kids' Habits* is a vibrant animated series for children aged 3 to 15, told in 70% SiSwati and 30% English. Featuring characters like Lulu, Bobo, Andile, and Aunt Gugu, it teaches vowels, health, counting, and values. The show celebrates African culture and promotes inclusive education by featuring children with disabilities, blending traditional storytelling with fun, accessible learning that inspires pride and curiosity in young viewers.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Sisonkhe Kids' Habits* was created to celebrate Swazi culture and teach life skills to all children, including those with disabilities. Inspired by traditional stories and my own childhood, I want to create joyful content that uplifts, educates, and encourages inclusivity - ensuring every child sees themselves represented and valued on screen.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Mfanelo Viktus Masuku** is a self-taught Eswatini animator. He created *Siyakhula Kids' Castle* and produced content for TV BRICS. His passion blends African storytelling with 2D and 3D animation.



Mfanelo Masuku  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER +  
PRODUCER

## ZEIN

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Animation

**Country:** Egypt

**Language:** Arabic

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

**Socials:** @nermeen.salem

*Zein* is a hedgehog whose spines shoot out hurting others. His only way to control them is a magical bag. When the bag is taken away, he finds himself in a world of monsters which he has to fight to save everyone.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Zein* was born from the quiet devastation of feeling "not enough." I made this film for every child who hides their magic to fit in. It's a love letter to misfits, a protest against moulds, and a reminder that our so-called flaws are often our greatest strengths.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Nermeen Salem** is an Egyptian filmmaker and Fulbright scholar. She manages Rufy's Films and founded Limelight Art School, creating award-winning films and leading storytelling workshops for children and teens across Egypt.



Nermeen Salem  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER



## GHANA MUST GO!

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary

**Country:** Ghana

**Language:** English

**Running Time:** 75 minutes

**Socials:** @joewacke

In 1983, over two million immigrants were deported from Nigeria. More than half were Ghanaians. *Ghana Must Go!* explores this historic moment through several small chains of urgent, intimate and real human stories. It is a multi-dimensional portrayal of this mass exodus. *Ghana Must Go!* is a deeply humanist film that combines the brutal realities of life: migration, deportation and loss with themes of love, hope, family, joy, and the everyday human experiences that transcend socio-cultural barriers and colonial borders.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Set against this intriguing historical backdrop, this documentary takes a bold, refreshing and intimately human spin on a significant moment in Ghanaian history. It is more than a recount of historic events; it is a microcosm of the world. An important exploration of migration's inability to confine the universality of the human experience to artificial geographical boundaries.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Joewacke J. Kusi** is a Ghanaian multidisciplinary artist and founder of *Church of Stories*, known for bold, inclusive films like *Nyame Mma* and championing cinema culture through *Reel Fellowship*.



Joewacke J. Kusi  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER

## GREEN ISLAND GIRLS

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary

**Country:** Egypt

**Language:** Arabic

**Running Time:** 75 minutes

**Socials:** /Rogytarek

*Green Island Girls* follows Hanaa, a young girl in a remote Egyptian village, whose dream of becoming a pediatrician is crushed by child labour and early marriage. Forced to work in brick factories for survival, she must choose between breaking the cycle or surrendering to a fate shared by generations of girls before her. The film offers a haunting look at silenced dreams and lives shaped by hardship.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

While researching brick factories, I met Hanaa, a girl forced to trade her dreams for domestic work and marriage. I saw her in myself. *Green Island Girls* is for every girl whose future is decided too soon. I want to give voice to their quiet strength before their dreams are lost forever.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Rogena Tarek** - born in Egypt, is a filmmaker known for *Where's My Home!*, *She Doesn't Sleep*, and *The Suitcase*. Her film *Green Island Girls* won The Factory Award, presented by Red Star Films. She also edited *No Land in Sight* as part of the AFAC x Netflix Women in Film.



Rogena Tarek  
DIRECTOR

## KUMFOGA

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary

**Country:** Togo

**Language:** Nawdm, French

**Running Time:** 60 minutes

In Nawda culture, "Kumfoga" means "wife of death" - a word that defines widowhood for women in northern Togo. While men complete mourning rituals in days, women endure year-long rites. Through personal reflection and her mother's experience, the director investigates the gendered disparity in grief. *Kumfoga* examines tradition, silence, and inequality - questioning how culture can both protect and harm those it claims to honour.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When my father died, I discovered the widowhood rites imposed on my mother - painful, prolonged, and unequal. *Kumfoga* is my personal quest to understand these traditions and the burden placed on women. I want to give voice to widows and question why mourning must be harsher for women than for men.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Jeannine Dissirama BESSOGA** is a Togolese filmmaker and writer. A laureate of multiple residencies, her work spans theatre and film, including *Subtil* and *Werga*, supported by OIF TV5MONDE.



Jeannine Dissirama  
Bessoga  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER

## MWIBA (A THORN)

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary

**Country:** Tanzania

**Language:** Swahili

**Running Time:** 80 minutes

**Socials:** @gwantwa\_lucas

*Mwiba (A Thorn)* follows Moreen, a young Tanzanian musician confronting sexual exploitation in the music industry. After a mental health break, she fights to relaunch her career on her own terms. Through Moreen's story and interviews with established artists, the film exposes systemic abuse, industry silence, and the cost of resilience. It's a raw, urgent documentary about reclaiming voice, power, and creative space in a broken system.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Mwiba* was born from witnessing how silence protects predators and punishes principled women. In Tanzania's music industry, talent is not enough - submission is often expected. I want this film to expose that truth and honour women who choose dignity over fame. It's a call for conversation, accountability, and lasting change.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Gwantwa Lucas Mwakalinga** is a Tanzanian filmmaker and creative director known for bold, socially driven storytelling. With a background in film and animation, she champions underrepresented voices - especially women - across East African narratives.



Gwantwa Lucas  
Mwakalinga  
DIRECTOR + PRODUCER



## ONE MAN'S DREAM

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary

**Country:** Malawi

**Language:** Chewa

**Running Time:** 30 minutes

**Socials:** [f](#)/Director.SawMore

Napoleon Dzombe's journey from a struggling student to a transformative entrepreneur and philanthropist is a testament to resilience and vision. Born in Mtalimanja Village, Malawi, he turned financial hardships into an opportunity by venturing into business at a young age. His philosophy, Grow big or go home, reflects his belief in thinking beyond immediate gains and building a sustainable future for generations to come. This hybrid documentary captures his inspiring story, blending real-life accounts and cinematic storytelling to showcase how one man's vision is reshaping an entire nation.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This documentary is about the power of community-driven change. Dzombe's projects - whether they are empowering farmers through his agricultural school, building a hospital, or creating jobs through his industrial park - are a model for sustainable development. I want to immerse viewers in the world he has created, showcasing not only the scope of his impact but also the heart behind it.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Chisomo Kawaga** is a Malawian filmmaker, cinematographer, and editor. A MultiChoice and NEWF alum, she works across genres to tell bold, authentic stories that elevate African voices and inspire global connection.



Chisomo Kawaga  
DIRECTOR

## DESIGNING DIVIDE

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary

**Country:** South Africa

**Language:** English

**Running Time:** 62 minutes

**Socials:** [@jessieayles](#)

Designing Divide traces how the legacy of the Group Areas Act shaped South Africa's built environment - and how that environment continues to shape us. Through conversations with residents, planners, and artists, the film exposes spatial injustice and highlights communities resisting division. It challenges viewers to see their surroundings not as fixed, but as living spaces they can question, reclaim, and transform.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a social impact filmmaker, I'm deeply interested in injustice in any form. Designing Divide reveals how built environments assert power and shape our lives. Inspired by my architect father, I examine how history has shaped the present and how communities resist marginalisation. This film invites viewers to see design as intentional - and to reclaim space in the pursuit of justice.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Jessie Ayles**' films explore the intersection of personal narrative and systemic structures, with a particular interest in space, memory, and justice. She studied Screen Documentary at Goldsmiths and has directed work for clients including Netflix, Discovery Channel, and Universal Music. Her short film *Waves* won a Social Impact Media Award (SIMA), and she was awarded a Webby for her documentary series *Bob Marley: Women Rising*, produced for Universal Music.



Jessie Ayles  
DIRECTOR

## LET THIS DAY END

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Feature Fiction

**Country:** Tunisia

**Language:** Arabic

**Running Time:** 100 minutes

In a Tunis brothel, Fadoua endures exploitation by her abusive mother while clinging to dignity and survival. Her closest ally, Shakira, is also marginalised for her identity. When Fadoua kills a man to protect herself, she, Shakira, and their friends scramble to cover it up. Set over one harrowing night, *Let This Day End* reveals the emotional weight of queer friendship, resistance, and hidden strength in impossible circumstances.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I am drawn to dark, human stories that reveal the invisible and vulnerable. *Let This Day End* challenges stereotypes around sex work and queerness, while exploring mother-daughter bonds, survival, and self-worth. Through Fadoua, the film honours marginalised lives - often dismissed - with honesty, emotional depth, and feminist and LGBTQ+ intention.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE



Karim Berrhouma  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER

**Karim Berrhouma** is a self-taught Tunisian filmmaker. His short films screened internationally before he directed his debut feature in 2021. His work explores universal themes through emotionally rich, visually distinct storytelling.

## MENELIK III

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Feature Fiction

**Country:** Kenya, Sudan, Rwanda

**Language:** Swahili, English, Italian

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

**Socials:** [f](#)/hassan.zaroug

*Menelik III* follows Amin, a sharp-witted underachiever hustling to survive Malindi's criminal underworld. After stealing drugs from an Italian mafia boss, Amin's gang gains power - but at a brutal cost. When the violence spirals, Amin is forced to confront the system, his past, and himself. In a final act of resistance, he takes justice into his own hands - only to realise the price of revenge may be more than he can bear.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Menelik III* is a visceral, character-driven story about survival, guilt, and the thin line between justice and destruction. It's a portrait of a young man caught in a collapsing system - forced to choose between his humanity and his survival, and ultimately unable to reconcile the two. The inspiration for this film comes from a deeply personal place. I see myself in Amin. Like him, I'm a filmmaker living on the edge, inside a crumbling system that constantly puts you in conflict with your own values.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Hassan Zaroug** is a Sudanese writer-director and Head of Creative Development at Compass Creative Productions in Rwanda. With 12+ years of self-taught experience and a Master's from Milan, he crafts bold African stories for co-productions, festivals, and global platforms.



Hassan Zaroug  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER +  
PRODUCER



## NO MAN'S LAND

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Feature Fiction

**Country:** South Africa

**Language:** English, Afrikaans, French, Setswana

**Running Time:** 110 minutes

**Socials:**  @changeofsean

On a rocky island between South Africa and Namibia, undocumented Christelle lives in solitude with her mother - until her death forces Christelle into a fight to claim the land through a legal loophole. As enemies close in, Christelle shelters displaced women, turning her home into a sanctuary. With her past in ashes and eviction imminent, she leads a final stand - only to realise community, not land, truly roots her.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*No Man's Land* is about borders — not just national ones, but those between memory and responsibility, belonging and exile, human and citizen. It's a quiet rebellion against the walls we place between ourselves, exploring how people navigate the spaces where grief, identity, and state power collide.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Sean Mongie** is a writer-director and educator. His debut, *The House that Never Sleeps*, premieres at the 2025 Durban International Film Festival. He is a script editor and writer on hit SABC 1 dramedy, *Amalanga Awafani*.



Sean Mongie  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER

## NUUSIKU

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Feature Fiction

**Country:** Namibia

**Language:** English, Oshiwambo (Oshindonga)

**Running Time:** 100 minutes

**Socials:**  /yandangii

In *Nuusiku*, queer Namibian filmmaker Nekomba uncovers a forgotten history of queer love in pre-colonial Oshiwambo culture. Her journey leads her to a live-in museum trapped in time, where she falls for *Nuusiku*, a girl destined for sacrifice. Torn between love and heritage, Nekomba must decide: save *Nuusiku* or preserve her people's legacy. *Nuusiku* is a magical realist tale of queerness, ancestral memory, and resistance.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Nuusiku* was born from my own struggle to reconcile queerness with tradition. As a queer Oshiwambo filmmaker, I've often felt unseen. This story is my reclamation - of heritage, identity, and the queerness hidden in African histories. It asks how we honour our past without being imprisoned by it, and who gets to tell our stories.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Laudika 'yaNdangii Hamutenya** is a Namibian filmmaker from Ohangwena. A graduate of ADFA Cape Town, he has written and directed films across Africa and Europe, exploring masculinity, identity, and belonging.



Laudika 'yaNdangii"  
Hamutenya  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER

## THE MOST HIGH

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Feature Fiction

**Country:** Uganda

**Language:** English, Luganda, Luo, Gishu, Rutooro, Kiswahili

**Running Time:** 120 minutes

**Socials:**  /kizitosamuelsaviour

On a homophobic island, 20-year-old Abigail searches for a cure for her mother's mysterious illness. Defying her devout father, she journeys to *The Most High*, a sacred site rumoured to heal all ailments. Gaining access disguised as a man, she retrieves a powerful herb. But healing comes at a price—her mother recovers but loses her memory. Abigail must face the emotional cost of saving the person she loves most.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*The Most High* symbolises addiction - what some call medicine, others poison. The film explores how far we'll go to heal, love, and escape pain. Through themes of belief, betrayal, and family, it invites viewers to confront their dependencies and asks: when healing is possible, what are we willing to sacrifice for it?

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Kizito Samuel Saviour** is a celebrated Ugandan filmmaker and educator. With films like *The Forbidden*, he champions African storytelling through mentorship, juries, and development work with Netflix and UNESCO.



Samuel Kizito  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER +  
PRODUCER

## THE PROPHECY

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Feature Fiction

**Country:** Senegal

**Language:** Wolof, French, English

**Running Time:** TBD

**Socials:**  @reh.eye

Plagued by haunting visions, Tabara travels from America to Senegal, where she learns she is possessed by a djinn born from ancestral trauma. Guided by rituals and a marabout, she journeys to defeat the spirit. In *The Prophecy*, Tabara must confront colonial violence, her mother's death, and inherited pain - learning that only love can heal her family and break the curse that haunts generations of women.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*The Prophecy* is a spiritual and emotional journey, born from my desire to heal and honour Black identity in all its forms. It reclaims ancestral memory and African mythology, showing that even inherited pain holds beauty and wisdom. This film is my offering - a reminder that our stories deserve grandeur, magic, and healing.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Rehanna Ngom** is a Senegalese director and founder of Studio Réveil. Her bold, myth-infused storytelling blends African folklore with mental health themes. *The Prophecy* is her acclaimed horror-fantasy short.



Ngom Rehanna  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER +  
PRODUCER



## THE SOIL'S SILENT SMELL

## PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Feature Fiction**Country:** Ethiopia**Language:** Amharic**Running Time:** 90 - 110 minutes**Socials:** @erichailee

Melkamu Haile  
DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER

*Silent Scent of the Soil* follows Solomon, a devoted taxi driver whose dreams for his daughter collapse when he discovers her university degree is forged. Torn between love and betrayal, he takes her to court, igniting a powerful confrontation. Through courtroom drama and emotional flashbacks, the film explores broken trust, parental sacrifice, and the enduring roots of love and reconciliation in the face of shattered dreams.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The current state of our country's education system casts a shadow over youth. Many graduate without direction, their abilities stifled. Parents, desperate for their children's success, face helplessness. They watch potential waste away in a system plagued by shortcomings—one that neither nurtures talent nor prepares them for the modern world.

## DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Melkamu Haile** is an Ethiopian writer-director trained at the MultiChoice Talent Factory. His credits include *Pen Name* and the adaptation of *Love unto Crypt*. He crafts stories rooted in human complexity.

## MAD BOUNTY AND THE MIDNIGHT GUN

## PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Series**Country:** Uganda**Language:** English, Runyoro, Luganda**Running Time:** 60 minutes**Socials:** @talemwapius

In 1885, Western Uganda, outlaw Mad Bounty hunts the British commander who killed his mother only to uncover the Midnight Gun, a native weapon of raw power. To claim it, he must outwit the British and rival factions. *Mad Bounty & The Midnight Gun* is a story where a man must confront grief, legacy, and history itself to protect what still remains.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Mad Bounty & The Midnight Gun* is a period Western rooted in my personal search for identity and Uganda's erased histories. It re-imagines the genre through Uganda's spiritual legacy, reclaiming ancestral myths and resistance with unforgettable characters, action, and magic. Set in the land of Ntembuzi, it explores the impact of colonialism, the human cost of ambition and one outlaw's fight to rewrite history.

## DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Talemwa** is a Ugandan writer-director and AMVCA winner. A New York Film Academy alumnus who explores genre storytelling to challenge and break African stereotypes.



Talemwa Plus  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER

## WATCHING OVER YOU

## PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Series**Country:** South Africa**Language:** English**Running Time:** 270 minutes**Socials:** @thesnagel

After losing her mother as a teenager, Isabelle witnesses the Angel of Death, Azrael. She grows up to become a doctor, in an attempt to save every life she can, but after losing many patients, she is about to give up on her own life. She is then visited by Azrael, who bends spacetime, taking them both to the moments of death of several people. We journey with her as she experiences the meaning of death, and life, and fights to save the entire universe from her arch nemesis; the personification of Fate itself.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Watching Over You* is dedicated to my grandmother, who I lost 25 years ago. I was young - only 10 years old at the time - and couldn't understand why she was suddenly gone. It took me many years to reckon with her death. As I grew older, I realised that grief doesn't ever really end; rather it ebbs and flows as one moves through time. *Watching Over You* is my dedication to grief, love, legacy and remembrance: the complex kaleidoscope of emotions one feels when losing a loved one.

## DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Stephen Nagel** is an award-winning South African screenwriter and director. His character-driven films span genres and explore authentic human experiences with heart, imagination, and bold visual storytelling.



Stephen Nagel  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER



## GUESS WHAT?

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Series

**Country:** Egypt

**Language:** English, Arabic, French

**Running Time:** TBD

**Socials:** @xhayatyx

Thirteen-year-old Shams, months after the Egyptian Revolution, moves to New York's suburbs. Struggling to fit in at her new private school, she finds solace in an obsession with *Daydream Drive*, an emerging British boyband. Joined by newfound friends Cici, Jeanne, Camille, and Lourdes, Shams embarks on a journey of self-discovery and delves into her wildest dreams and fantasies.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Just like Shams, *One Direction* was my salvation when I first moved to New York in the 2010s. They helped me make friends and find my voice. My whole life revolved around them - so much so that I'd tell my mom what "the boys" did that day instead of talking about school.



Hayat Aljowaily  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER  
+ PRODUCER

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Hayat Aljowaily** is a filmmaker exploring migration, identity, and social change. She founded Kalam Aflam and heads CineGouna Emerge at El Gouna Film Festival.

## SURVIVORS OF TROMELIN

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Series

**Country:** Madagascar

**Language:** French, Malagasy

**Running Time:** 312 minutes

**Socials:** @raissa\_ioussouf

After a deadly shipwreck, Malagasy slaves and the French crew who own them get stuck on a tiny island. That's only the beginning of the troubles for the Malagasy people who get left behind by the French sailors. Isolated, the now marooned Malagasy have to survive in a place not made for humans. They must also confront the secrets and the demons within themselves. Here is their story, based on true events.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This story is to put a spotlight on a forgotten part of colonial history and to share it with an international audience. I want to pay homage to these Malagasy men and women who survived against all odds, refused their slave status and are giving us a lesson in humanity. It's long overdue to get them out of anonymity. This period survival mixes adventure, drama, fantasy and echoes modern series conventions.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

I've devoted my entire professional life to telling stories from the African continent. First as a journalist in West Africa, then in Madagascar, my country of origin. I am now a screenwriter and director for live action and animation. My first short film *Madame Morel* was released last year on Canal+.



Raissa Ioussouf  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER

## BASED ON FUTURE EVENTS: WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Short Film

**Country:** Egypt

**Language:** Arabic (Egyptian)

**Running Time:** 15 minutes

**Socials:** /bassmafarah

In *Based on Future Events: Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?*, Sarah confronts her dying, estranged father after years of emotional neglect. A surreal dream reveals the depth of their fractured bond, forcing Sarah to confront painful memories. Torn between inherited trauma and self-preservation, she chooses to walk away. The film explores grief, reconciliation, and the strength it takes to heal from a parent's lasting absence.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film imagines a future I dread: my mother gone, and only my estranged father left. *Based on Future Events* is not about the past, but the emotional reckoning I fear. It's about cycles of abuse, inherited pain, and the courage it takes to break free without losing yourself in the process.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Bassma Farah Nancy** is a multidisciplinary artist and co-founder of Magic Eye Productions. Her films *Sushi with Kebda* and *V's Secret* have screened internationally, earning multiple awards and festival recognition.



Bassma Farah Nancy  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER

## BUTTERFLIES

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Short Film

**Country:** Nigeria

**Language:** English

**Running Time:** 20 minutes

**Socials:** @tjbrakz

In *Butterflies*, Enajite, a talented artist trapped in an abusive marriage, finds herself isolated on a mysterious island haunted not only by her own fears but by the husband who confines her. Within this metaphysical realm, her art becomes an act of resistance, against the violence that confines her and the societal shackles that seek to silence her. As Enajite confronts the shadows of her past and the chains of her present, she must choose between the safety of a broken marriage or the uncertain, fragile path toward freedom, identity, and survival. In this story of liberation, dreams are a sanctuary and a pathway towards freedom, healing and reawakening.

### SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

*Butterflies* is an exploration of identity, freedom, choice, and the role of artistic expression as a form of healing. For me, writing is my means of expression, a comfort zone just as painting is for Jite, the protagonist. As a feminist, I am drawn to telling stories about women's struggles and *Butterflies* reflects the reality of many women in traditional African homes who give up their dreams and careers, fitting into the secure roles defined by their husbands and society. In Jite's solitude, she discovers a form of resistance - her art.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Aghogho 'Tega' Onobrakpeya** is a Nigerian screenwriter and creative. Her credits include *Night Shift* (TINFF 2025) and she co-wrote the TV series, *Grind* (Prime Video). She's an alumna of EbonyLife Creative Academy (ELCA), with a background in law and finance. Her writing explores complex characters, feminism and stories that challenge stereotypes while amplifying the African strength and diversity.



Aghogho 'Tega' Onobrakpeya  
SCREENWRITER



## DELIVERY MAN

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Short Film

**Country:** Côte d'Ivoire

**Language:** French, English

**Running Time:** 13 minutes

**Socials:**  @ani\_eliam

Arnaud, 26, is a young delivery man who, despite his courage and resourcefulness, is at his breaking point. Between a ruthless boss, demanding customers, and his sick grandmother's medical bills, his life is a daily struggle in a city that offers him no mercy. Yet, despite the hardships and humiliations, Arnaud keeps moving forward, driven by the hope of a better future. *Delivery Man* is an urban journey where every sound and silence tells the story of an ordinary man finding strength in the smallest victories. Through Arnaud's eyes, the audience is invited to rediscover the beauty of simple things while immersing themselves in a universal tale of resilience and humanity.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

**Ani Eliam** is an Ivorian screenwriter and director passionate about animation and visual storytelling. After completing a master's in marketing and management, she pursued cinema, co-writing acclaimed series like *Kenda*, *Les Coups de la Vie*, and *Le Futur est à Nous*, which have earned recognition at international festivals.



Ani Eliam  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Ani Eliam** is an award-winning Ivorian screenwriter and director. Founder of Booya Studios, she co-wrote *Éternel*, the first Ivorian animated film on Amazon Prime, and the acclaimed short *Moyo*.

## THE CHICKEN (HUKU YANGU)

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Short Film

**Country:** Zimbabwean

**Language:** Shona

**Running Time:** 15 minutes

**Socials:**  /dnziyakwi

In *Huku Yangu*, Sabhuku Mazwana, a respected village headman, unravels after developing a disturbing fixation on his daughter-in-law. Powerless and ashamed, he commits an act of sexual violence against a hen, shattering his authority. When the incident is filmed and shared, public disgrace drives him to suicide. The film explores repressed masculinity, shame, and societal pressure in rural Zimbabwe, where identity and power collide with tragic consequence.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Huku Yangu* examines masculinity in crisis through the surreal downfall of a village headman. Blending absurdity and tragedy, the film explores shame, sexual repression, and the fragile link between power and identity. Grounded in rural Zimbabwe, it challenges viewers to confront discomfort, laugh uneasily, and question roles shaped by societal expectation.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Dereck Nziyakwi** is a Zimbabwean filmmaker known for bold, socially charged storytelling. His work spans film, TV, and documentary, tackling issues like gender, corruption, and disaster recovery with authenticity and heart.



Dereck Nziyakwi  
DIRECTOR +  
SCREENWRITER

## TRUCKER MAN

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Short Film

**Country:** South Africa

**Language:** English, Afrikaans

**Running Time:** 18 minutes

**Socials:**  @this\_is\_shiefaa



Shiefaa Hendricks  
DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER

"Dun-dun-dun-daaaa!" Two superheroes whoosh through the air, powered by the hands of little 6-year-old Carla in her bedroom. When unreliable dad Clive is forced to babysit his superhero-obsessed daughter Carla, an awkward truck journey becomes something unexpectedly magical. Amid fields of gold and nighttime confessions, the pair rediscover their bond. By the time Carla returns home, she's created a new superhero: *Trucker Man* - a tribute to the dad who finally showed up.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Trucker Man* was inspired by childhood memories with my dad - of movies, imagination, and unspoken love. The film touches on themes of co-parenting, fatherhood and childhood, and not taking life too seriously. We don't excuse Clive, and we don't ask him to be perfect - we just want him to do better.

### DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

**Shiefaa Hendricks** is a Cape Town-based writer, director, and producer passionate about telling stories from a woman of colour's perspective. Her short films include *Storyteller* and *Cara's Scenario*.



## 2025 MENTORS

All Durban FilmMart Institute projects benefit from the invaluable one-on-one mentorship provided by experienced and knowledgeable mentors. The Durban FilmMart Institute is honoured to welcome back mentors from 2024 and new mentors alike. These industry leaders provide tailored guidance and insightful feedback, fostering the artistic growth of participating filmmakers. Through this collaborative process, DFMI aims to empower creators to refine their work and bring their unique visions to fruition.



Amel Bouzid, a seasoned producer, ventured into film after completing a Master's in European Politics from UCL in Belgium. She honed her skills through production certificate courses at IAD and joined Novak Prod (2008). Her notable works include *Lady Eso* which premiered at La Quinzaine, Cannes (2013); *When Romeo Married Juliette*, which was awarded Best Muhr Short at Dubai International Film Festival (2014); and also co-produced *The Man with the Harpoon* (2015). In 2022, Bouzid co-founded Daarna Productions, which epitomised her dedication to cinematic excellence. Her illustrious career includes affiliations with programs like Greenhouse and Cannes Producers Workshop.



AMEL BOUZID



**BONGIWE SELANE** Bongiwe Selane is an award-winning producer who has worked across several mediums, including commissioned serial content for Africa's largest pay-TV broadcaster, multiple short films, four feature films, and a documentary series. Her credits and accolades include *Culture Shock*, the 2013 SAFTA winner for Best Reality Show; Best South African Short Film at the Durban International Film Festival in 2015 for *UNomalanga and the Witch*; *Great Africans*, a documentary series for Africa Magic Entertainment; and the NFVF's *Female Only Filmmakers Project*, a series of 26 short narrative films by women filmmakers. *Happiness is a Four-Letter-Word* is her debut feature film, released in February 2016. The film went on to break South African box office records, earning just over R14 million (over €1 million), and has since seen two follow-up films in the franchise: *Happiness Ever After* and *Happiness Is...*, both currently streaming on Netflix. Bongiwe also produced *Do Your Worst*, Samantha Nell's debut feature, written by Zoë Laband. She is an alumna of the Durban FilmMart, La Fabrique Cinéma de l'Institut Français Cannes, Produire au Sud, and EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs).



**FEMI ODUGBEMI** Filmmaker and producer Femi Odugbemi is the Academy Director for Multichoice Talent Factory (West Africa). In addition to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (USA), Femi has served as President of The Independent Television Producers Association of Nigeria; co-founded the International Documentary Film Festival Lagos, and is a 4-time Head Judge of the prestigious AMVCA. He has also served as a 3-time Head Judge of the Uganda Film Festival, juror of the British Council 'Shakespeare Lives' project, juror of the Emmy Awards in New York and many others.

Justine Bannister is a trilingual children's media consultant with 25 years of international experience in development, production, acquisitions, distribution, co-production, marketing, and brand strategy. She has worked with major players including 20th Century Fox, Disney Channels France, and Lagardère, and is recognised for her hands-on, holistic approach to guiding content from concept to screen. Through her consultancy, JUST B, she offers strategic and creative services across all stages—development, financing, production, delivery, international commercialisation, and audience engagement.



JUSTINE BANNISTER

She also provides matchmaking support, market-readiness workshops, and co-production mentorships. Additionally, Justine helps shape and moderate conference content and workshops for markets and festivals globally. Her diverse client base includes BBC Children's UK, NHK, TFO, Studio 100 Media, Wild Child Animation, Wind Sun Sky, Go-N Productions, CMPA, SODEC, ICEX, MDEC, and the Durban FilmMart. She regularly serves on international juries, panels, and advisory boards, and is a project evaluator for several global funding bodies. **More on LinkedIn @justine-bannister**





LAYLA SWART

Layla Swart is one of South Africa's most accomplished film and television producers and editors, celebrated for her ability to craft bold, globally resonant African stories. At 37, she has produced over 10 films including critically acclaimed works such as *Sew the Winter to My Skin* and *Knuckle City*, both of which were South Africa's consecutive submissions for the Academy Awards - a historic achievement. As the founder of Yellowbone Entertainment, her work has featured at top-tier festivals including Cannes and TIFF, while her epic series *Blood Psalms* redefined African fantasy. In 2023, Layla was honoured with the 40 Under 40 Award for the entertainment industry, and in 2024, she was recognised by Constitution Hill as one of 30 women who have significantly contributed to transformation during 30 years of democracy in South Africa. In 2025, she was selected for the prestigious EAVE Producers Workshop and is currently in post-production on a highly anticipated Netflix Original thriller. Represented by CAA's Africa division, Layla continues to champion African narratives, foster new talent, and push the boundaries of the global film industry.



OLIVIER CATHERIN

Olivier Catherin is an ethnologist by training. He worked for the French Animation Film Association (AFCA), where he created the International Animation Film Day Celebration. In 2008, he founded the production company *Les Trois Ours*. He has produced more than 40 projects, including *Kiki of Montparnasse*, which won a César for Best Short Animation Film. From 2015 to 2018, he was in charge of the animation sector for the Hauts-de-France region at Pictanovo. Today, he works as a freelance producer on international co-production projects, with credits including *Steakhouse* (Jury Prize at Annecy), *Granny's Sexual Life* (Best Short at the European Film Awards, César for Best Short Animation Film), and *Electra* (Best Short Film at the Toronto International Film Festival). He is also a consultant for various organisations including CITIA and CEE Animation, and was responsible for the African Focus at Annecy 2020. Olivier teaches animation production at INA Campus and Sciences Po, and has mentored over 20 project development and pitching workshops.

Writer, award-winning journalist, playwright and filmmaker. Foreign Correspondent for the Swedish daily *Expressen* in the 1980s and 1990s. Former Commissioning Editor for the SABC. The University of Johannesburg's inaugural Professor of Practice. Awarded Sweden's main journalism prize by the Publicistklubben, the prestigious Nordic academy of writers and publishers. A Knight Fellow as well as a STIAS Fellow (Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies). *The Keeper of the Kumm*, her creative non-fiction novel about Khoi-San identity, won South Africa's prestigious Mbokodo Literature Award. Her short film *JXAU*, on the profound nature of intellectual erasure, was selected for the Hollywood African Cinema Connection Film Festival in LA, 2023. Nomination: Cinema for Peace Award 2021 for *Jozi Gold* (co-director with Fredrik Gertten). South African Producer for the BBC TV mini-series *Mandela: The Living Legend*. Chair of the 2018 & 2019 Alan Paton Literary Award Jury. Member of the 2018 International Emmy Awards Jury.



PROF SYLVIA VOLLENHOVEN



THEMBA BHEBE

Themba is the Diversity and Inclusion lead for the European Film Market (Berlinale) on a seasonal basis. This work includes co-managing the DocSalon Toolbox Programme and working as Indigenous Cinema Coordinator alongside imagineNATIVE to contribute to programmes designed for capacity-building for Indigenous film creatives. Alongside Mitchell Harper and Tiny Mungwe, Themba is the co-founder of Engage, a series of curated think tank conversations on the pertinent, challenging and multifaceted questions facing the African (diaspora) screen sector. He is also one of the founding members of the Programmers of Colour Collective (POC2).

Francis Y. Brown is an award-winning Ghanaian animation director, producer, and creative entrepreneur, known for transforming Africa's animation landscape. As founder and Creative Director of AnimaxFYB Studios, he pioneers globally resonant African stories, blending cultural preservation with innovation. A Fine Arts graduate from NAFTI, Francis made history as the first West African student short-listed at the Student Academy Awards and the first solo African animation director nominated multiple times at Annecy. His acclaimed works include *Jabari* (Best Animation, Africa Movie Academy Awards), *Moongirls*, *Tutu*, and *Mmofo Channel*, Africa's first animated children's content block on Amazon Prime. Beyond production, Francis serves as a jury member for the International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (EMMYS) and speaks at major industry events like Digital Lab Africa. His groundbreaking contributions have earned him global recognition as a trailblazer shaping the future of African animation.



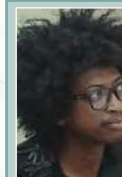
FRANCIS Y. BROWN



JOEL KAREKEZI

Joël Karekezi (born 12 December 1985) is a Rwandan screenwriter, film director, and film producer. His films, such as *Imbabazi: The Pardon* (2013) and *The Mercy of the Jungle* (2018), often explore themes of conflict and war, alongside the possibility of forgiveness and hope.

*The Mercy of the Jungle* received numerous accolades, including the Étalon d'Or de Yennenga at FESPACO, Best Film and Best Actor at the Africa Movie Academy Awards, Best Screenplay at the Khouribga African Film Festival, and the Jury's Best Feature Narrative Award at the Pan African Film Festival (PAFF).



LAZA

Laza is a director, producer, President of APASER (the Pan-African Alliance of Screenwriters and Directors), Founding Director of *Rencontres du Film Court de Madagasikara* (Madagascar Short Film Festival), and a Knight of the Order of Arts, Letters and Culture of Madagascar.

Karabo is a writer and director for TV and film. Her short film *What Did You Dream?* premiered in competition at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival and was also in competition at the Palm Springs International Short Film Festival. It won Best African Short at DIFF (2021).



KARABO LEDIGA

Karabo has written for the first African Netflix Original series *Queen Sono* and the US co-produced teen spy drama *Classified*, which she also directed. Across 12 seasons of the two-time International Emmy-nominated news satire show *Late Nite News with Loyiso Gola*, Karabo worked as a writer, director and performer.

Her directorial work also includes two seasons of the sketch comedy show *The Bantu Hour*. Her TV writing credits include *Lockdown*, *MTV Shuga 5*, and the miniseries *Emoyeni: Insanguluko*.

Karabo's debut feature film *Sabbatical* premiered at IFFR (2025) and in South African cinemas in May 2025 to great reviews.



Specialised in creative documentary filmmaking and Communication for Development (CPD), Mamounata Nikiéma has been working both as a director (since 2007) and as a producer (*Pilumpiku Production*, since 2011). She is very involved in the networks of Burkina Faso filmmakers (Africadoc Burkina, Guilde des Scénaristes, Association des Producteurs du Burkina Faso, Fédération Nationale du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel), and has actively participated for several years in FESPACO, within the Espace Junior until 2017. Since 2014 she has also been a trainer at the documentary writing residencies in Bobo-Dioulasso. In 2018 she launched the event *Ciné-équipement* and the digital platform on cinema *Sulunsuku* ([www.sulunsuku.com](http://www.sulunsuku.com)) in January 2019. During FESPACO 2021, she was awarded the title of Chevalier de l'Ordre de Mérite, des Arts, des Lettres et de la Communication with Clasp "Cinématographie".



MAMOUNATA  
NIKIÉMA



MAYYE ZAYED

An Egyptian filmmaker working between Egypt and Germany, and the founder of Cleo Media for female-driven content production and impact distribution in Alexandria. She is a Fulbright scholar who studied cinema and media studies at Wellesley College and innovations in documentary at MIT.

In 2020, her award-winning feature documentary, *Lift Like a Girl*, had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival and received the Golden Dove Award for Best Film at DOK Leipzig, three awards at the Cairo International Film Festival, and the Best Documentary award at the Critics Awards for Arab Films. The film was co-produced with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel and became the first Egyptian documentary to be distributed on Netflix worldwide.

In 2016, she directed, produced, and edited the short *A Stroll Down Sunflower Lane*, which premiered at the Berlinale and received the Best Experimental Film award at the Sharjah Film Platform.

In her 20-year-long creative journey, Mmabatho has worked as a producer, broadcaster, development executive, and script consultant - roles that have harnessed her deep love for story and her passion for helping writers find their voice as storytellers.



MMABATHO KAU

In 2017, she was invited to co-mentor at REALNESS, a Pan-African writing residency. Since then, she has mentored on numerous international labs, including the Canal+ Poland Series Lab (2021), Full Circle Lab in the Philippines (2019, 2020, 2022), Maisha Producers Lab in Uganda (2019), Jumpstart PRODUIRE AU SUD in South Africa (2019 and 2020), For Film's Sake - Attagirl Lab in Australia (2020, 2022), BoostNL (Netherlands Film Festival/IFFR 2020), Dramatic Producer's Lab in Ethiopia (2019), EAVE Access Canada (2022), and Biennale College Cinema Italia (2022). In addition to her mentorship work, she has had the honour of participating in the Torino Script Lab, EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs), and the Rotterdam Producers Lab.



MOHAMED TAREK

A film critic, programmer, and cultural manager, he currently serves as the Artistic Director of the Cairo International Film Festival and the Lead Programmer at Cinema Akil. He previously held the position of Deputy Artistic Director at the Cairo International Film Festival and worked as a film programmer at the El Gouna Film Festival, as well as a short film programmer at the Dublin International Film Festival (2022- present).

In addition, Tarek serves as the Cinema Project Manager at the Jesuit Cairo's Jesuit Cultural Center. He is a member of the content market selection committee at the Durban FilmMart (2023), Durban Talents (2024), and serves as a consultant for MedFest Egypt and the Goethe-Institut. He is an alumnus of the Beirut Locarno Industry Academy and Durban Talents.

He is also a member of the Egyptian Film Critics Association, affiliated with FIPRESCI (the International Federation of Film Critics).



RUMBI KATEDZA

Rumbi Katedza is a filmmaker and writer whose fiction and documentary work has screened across Africa and at festivals worldwide. She has directed content for the BBC, Al Jazeera, and Apple TV. Her documentary *The Axe and the Tree*, about survivors of Zimbabwe's post-election violence, premiered at the Nelson Mandela Foundation. Her debut feature documentary *Transactions* won awards at Encounters and the Zimbabwe International Film Festival, and was nominated for the Grimme Prize and Best Documentary at the Africa Movie Academy Awards.

A two-time Zimbabwe National Arts Merit Award winner, Rumbi is a former Festival Director of the Zimbabwe International Film Festival. In 2019, she was awarded the JMD Manyika Fellowship at the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, and was an Honorary Fellow at Harvard University's Film Study Center. In 2024, Rumbi was part of the team that drafted the Zimbabwe National Film Strategy.



DOMOINA RATSARA

Domoina Ratsara is a freelance journalist and film critic based in Antananarivo (Madagascar). She has recently joined FIPRESCI, the International Federation of Film Critics. An alumna of Talents Durban (2017) and Berlinale Talents (2018) as a Talent Press participant, she co-founded the Malagasy Film Critics Association (ACCM) in 2019. She has coordinated the pan-African film critic revue Awotélé and is in charge of the film section for the African Critics Network. She is primarily interested in film criticism, and more broadly, the global trends in the African film industry. Her work focuses on bridging countries in the Indian Ocean region by fostering connections through film criticism.



## 2025 DFM ACCESS

**D**FM Access is an 8-week development platform for entry level producers. It provides a nurturing framework for participants with existing long-form or episodic independent film projects to hone and improve their scripts and project packages.

With support from the National Film and Video Foundation's PESP 5 funding, This online incubation programme supports producers in shaping their stories, preparing their project presentations and understanding the marketplace in order to create effective strategies for their current projects and to plan their professional trajectory. The programme consists of one-on-one mentorship and talks led by industry experts. At the end of the 8-week mentorship projects pitch to an independent panel who selects 3 projects to participate in the annual Durban FilmMart as an official project.

**This year we are joined by the following mentors:**

### Documentary Features

- Miki Redelinghuys
- Nicole Schafer
- Sihle Hlophe
- Tiny Mungwe

### Fiction Features

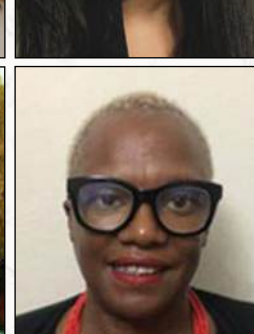
- Kethiwe Ngcobo
- Jacintha de Nobrega
- Thandeka Zwana
- Teboho Pietersen

### Series

- Bongi Ndaba
- Bonie Sithebe
- Busisiwe Ntintili
- Tracey-Lee Rainers

The 12 mentors will guide 24 participants through this year's programme.

Over the past three years, DFMI has seen nearly 58 first-time producers acquire the skills and knowledge to successfully participate in local and international markets. The success of the programme was evident in the previous edition, where three DFM Access participants were selected to pitch at the DFM Pitch and Finance Forum.





## 2025 HOT DOCS-BLUE ICE DOCS FILMMAKERS LAB

**T**he Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund offers more than just financial support. In addition to grants, the Fund provides a robust peer-to-peer mentorship programme, helping grantees bring their projects to international markets. Each year, up to 5 funded projects are selected to take part in a year-long mentorship experience led by international documentary experts. This includes a private digital Filmmakers Lab, ongoing guidance from experienced industry professionals, and participation in both Hot Docs and the Durban FilmMart.

The Hot Docs Filmmakers Lab is an intensive weekend workshop aligned with industry market days and covers a range of key topics such as storytelling, funding and production, pitching strategies, and promotion and distribution. Through this multi-faceted support, the Fund equips African documentary filmmakers with the tools, networks, and insight needed to elevate their projects on a global stage.



## OFFICIAL DFM HOT DOCS PROJECTS

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## CHILDREN OF HONEY

*Children of Honey* is a participatory vérité documentary co-created with the Hadzabe community, following three young friends, Nluba, Ngulabe, and Embilibi, who represent the last generation of true hunter-gatherers in northern Tanzania. Through their eyes, we witness the beauty, humor, and fragility of a world on the edge.

For the first time in Hadza memory, even the bees are disappearing along with the honey that has nourished their bodies, spirits, and identity for over 50,000 years. Growing up Hadza means being Olanakwe Sa Ba'alako (*Children of Honey*), raised in harmony with the land, free to roam, forage, and live without fear.

But that freedom is slipping away. With nearly 90% of their ancestral land lost, the Hadzabe people are now facing dark tourism, alcohol addiction, and unprecedented violent homicides. Their peaceful way of life is being pushed to the brink by outside forces. Set in the Yaeda Valley, amidst the backdrop

of climate change, this film documents a pivotal turning point. Told from within the community, *Children of Honey* places cameras in the hands of Hadza youth themselves. It is a co-created antidote to the wave of extractive content that misrepresents them.

This is not a film about the Hadza. It is a film by the Hadza. With poetic cinematography and an embedded gaze, *Children of Honey* offers a rare, unfiltered look at how one of the world's oldest surviving cultures is navigating the fastest-changing moment in human history.

Can the Hadza youth find a middle way, between protecting their Traditional Ecological Knowledge and ancestral wisdom while living beside a modern world that was never made for them?

"We are the Children of Honey. We want the world to know who we are."

Reel Previews 

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT


My mission with *Children of Honey* is to remind humanity about the intelligence of our ancestors, rooted in nature. The Hadzabe people's struggle to protect their land, language, and identity speaks to all of us. In their laughter and resilience, I see hope and a map back to something we've almost forgotten.


### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Jigar Ganatra** is an award-winning Tanzanian director and cinematographer whose eco-philosophical documentaries explore humanity's relationship with nature. He has collaborated with Indigenous communities across Africa, the Amazon, and the Himalayas to tell visually striking, culturally rooted stories. Jigar is the founder of the African School of Storytelling (AFRISOS), and his work bridges ancestral wisdom with cinematic expression to offer an authentic perspective into worlds often overlooked.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Storyboard Studios is an award-winning Glasgow-based team creating bold, global stories in documentary, arts, and science, driven by impact, inclusion, and creative excellence.

Company Profile 

 @childrenofhoney.film



Natalie Humphreys  
PRODUCER



Jigar Ganatra  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 5+

**Country:** Tanzania

**Production Company:** AFRISOS, Storyboard Studios

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 1 200 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 280 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Financing Partners
- Impact Partners
- Collaborators



## PURE MADNESS

In the 1960s, the filmmaker's great-uncle, Kaddour, emigrated from Tunisia to France to study—full of hope and promise. He became an architect at the renowned Oscar Niemeyer firm and sent regular letters home to reassure his family. Then, one day, the letters stopped. He vanished without a trace.

Years later, his family found him in a psychiatric hospital in Paris and eventually brought him back to Tunisia. Among the fragments of his past were haunting claims: a wife and child left behind in Paris. His family dismissed them as delusions. Yet certain names, places, and memories lingered—leaving open the possibility that Kaddour's stories might have been real. After his death, the filmmaker embarks on a personal journey to uncover the truth behind Kaddour's words—exploring the enduring impact of migration on mental health, and breaking the family silence around the legacy of psychological disorders.

Dealing with her own mental health, she spent years denying her condition, terrified of becoming "like him." For Inès, Kaddour was both a cautionary tale and a painful mirror. As she traces the missing years of his life, her journey becomes deeply personal.

Travelling between Tunisia and France, Inès explores not only Kaddour's mysterious past, but also the silences, fears, and taboos that have shaped her family for generations. Through intimate conversations and reflection, she begins to uncover the patterns of inherited trauma and emotional repression passed down across time.

Reel Previews 

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*Pure Madness* is a deeply personal documentary that traces the forgotten life of my great-uncle Kaddour and my own journey with mental health. Through intimate storytelling, poetic imagery, and mixed media, the film breaks the silence around mental illness, migration, and family trauma - transforming stigma into empathy, healing, dialogue, and reconnection.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Inès Arsi** is a Tunisian filmmaker whose work explores mental health and identity. Her short film *Flesh and Blood* was supported by AFAC, Durban Talents, and the Tunisian Ministry of Culture. She is currently developing her debut feature *Pure Madness* with producers **Sarra Ben Hassen**, an EAVE alumna and producer of the Oscar-nominated *Brotherhood*, and **Kaouthar Hadidi**, a Franco-Tunisian producer focused on socially engaged Mediterranean cinema. Together, they champion bold, inclusive storytelling.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Instinct Bleu and 3ème Genre Production champion bold, impact-driven films by Arab, African, and Mediterranean voices.



**Inès Arsi**  
DIRECTOR



**Sarra Ben Hassen**  
PRODUCER



**Kaouthar Hadidi**  
PRODUCER

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 10+

**Country:** Tunisia, France

**Production Company:** Instinct Bleu, 3ème Genre Production

**Running Time:** 80 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 415 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 110 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Introduce the Project to the Market
- Meet Funders, Distributors, Broadcasters, Sales





## THE ISLANDER

Gabon.

In the heart of Libreville, nestled between the airport and a military camp, lies Kilibia, an abandoned island with makeshift homes hastily constructed in 2009 - the year former President Ali Bongo was elected to address the country's housing crisis. Fourteen years have passed, and nothing has changed. Locals were never rehoused.

As presidential elections loom, Bravo (25), unemployed since his release from prison, survives by ferrying the island's residents with his canoe, all while nurturing big personal ambitions.

KILIBA is home to nearly a thousand people - adults and children - living without water, electricity, or roads, on the margins of a society that fails to see them. In this improbable setting, surrounded by a powerful channel of water, Bravo ferries state employees, pregnant women, the

sick, and schoolchildren daily on his canoe. He dreams of opening a small shop on the island; the income from this venture would allow him to build a proper house for his mother and son.

In August 2023, a military coup unfolds on the evening of Ali Bongo's contested re-election. For the island's residents, little about their daily lives changes. Yet, Bravo remains determined to save money and seize every opportunity that comes his way.

Amid the precarious existence of Bravo and the islanders, the unexpected beauty of this isolated, timeless place emerges. Faces and voices echo against the backdrop of a bustling African capital, stirred by evangelical propaganda and political promises.

Reel Previews 

Password: invisibles2024

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Bravo's story transcends the personal. It reflects a collective struggle to construct something meaningful amid chaos. Through his portrait, I hope to highlight the resilience of ordinary people striving for a better life in an unforgiving political landscape.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE


**Amédée Pacôme** is a Gabonese filmmaker and part of the new wave of African filmmakers. His work explores societal challenges with a commitment to optimism and transformation.

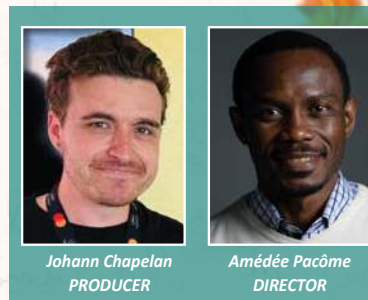
His debut creative documentary, *Boxing Libreville*, premiered at Visions du Réel in Nyon, Switzerland. The film won Best Documentary at the Tarifa African Film Festival (Spain) and the Jury Prize at FIDADOC (Morocco).

Currently, he is developing his second documentary, *The Islander*.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Pas Comme Les Autres Films is a film production company guided by passion and meaningful human encounters.

 @pas\_comme\_les\_autres\_filles



Johann Chapelan  
PRODUCER

Amédée Pacôme  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 16+

**Country:** Gabon

**Production Company:** Pas Comme Les Autres Films

**Running Time:** 75 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 96 190,12 USD

**Finances Committed:** 19 580,99 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Submissions To International Film Funds



## SPOTLIGHT ON DURBAN PROJECTS

**T**he Durban Film Office Development Fund is dedicated to empowering intermediate and experienced producers based in Durban to bring their visionary feature films and documentaries to life by targeting both local and international markets. Designed to elevate the quality and market-readiness of film projects, this initiative provides vital support to help filmmakers package their projects effectively, positioning them to attract crucial funding from provincial, national, and private investors.

With a generous grant of R250,000, the Development Fund offers essential financial backing to refine and develop film or documentary projects. By investing in the development phase, the DFO enables filmmakers to craft compelling pitches and project packages that stand out to investors and funding agencies, increasing the likelihood of securing production financing.

Join us in transforming your creative vision into a commercially viable project with the support of the Durban Film Office Development Fund, where talent meets opportunity, and stories find their global stage.



## SPOTLIGHT ON DURBAN PROJECTS

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**HD N3twork**

## LOVE CHASE

Beatrice (49) is a successful widow living in a quiet suburban town. She has everything she's worked for – a thriving business, a comfortable home, a car, and two wonderful grown daughters. But her life is still tightly gripped by one thing she didn't choose: the control of her formidable mother-in-law, Christina (70).

When Christina announces that the family has decided Beatrice must enter a levirate marriage – a tradition Beatrice firmly rejects – it sets off a battle for her independence. Just as she begins to push back, she meets Mel (50), a charming single father who rekindles something in her she thought was lost: the hope for love.

Their relationship blossoms in secret. Beatrice hides the romance from her daughters, her Kenyan half-sister Naima, and her loyal business manager Irumba.

But secrets have a way of surfacing. When Christina catches Beatrice and Mel on a romantic date, she confronts Mel and cruelly paints Beatrice as a cheating wife. The confrontation drives a painful wedge between the new lovers.

Now, Beatrice must confront not only her family's expectations but her own fears. To reclaim her future, she must find her voice, defy tradition, and choose herself.

In the end, love wins – but only after Beatrice risks fighting for the life she truly wants.

Reel Previews



### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Growing up in a traditional extended family, every time an elder brother or sister got engaged or married, I would hear my siblings and parents say, "Getting married to a man means you have gotten married to his entire family." I thought this was a great thing but later learned that it treated a woman like the property of the man's family and siblings.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Happiness Mpase** has been a production manager for more than ten made-for-TV films broadcast on Mnet/Mzansi Magic. She directed two zero-budget films in 2019. She wrote, produced, and directed *Entangled* in 2020, a project funded in development and production by the KZN Film Commission. *Entangled* was selected for Durban Film Mart Content Shop (2021), received a worldwide Trace Studios Award for Distribution (2021), and was licensed to Mzansi Magic. *Entangled* is licensed to SABC soon (2023).

### COMPANY DETAILS

HD N3twork is a films, events, and talent company based in Durban, established in 2014. HD N3twork is the winner of the 2nd Durban Tourism Business Awards for Best Upcoming Filmmaker.

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[f /happinesmpase](https://www.facebook.com/happinesmpase)
[@hdn3twork](https://www.instagram.com/hdn3twork)


Happiness Mpase  
PRODUCER



Kizito Samuel Saviour  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 18-29, 30-55

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** HD N3twork

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 221 180 USD

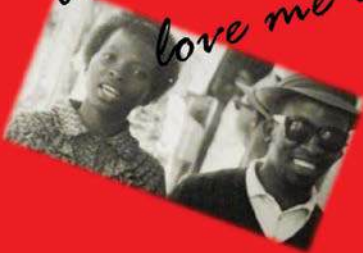
**Finances Committed:** 13 823,75 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Finance
- Sales
- Distribution
- Industry Opportunities



P.S.  
Love me a little,  
but  
love me long.



A True Romance  
Based on a book adaptation

## LOVE ME A LITTLE BUT LOVE ME LONG

*Love Me a Little but Love Me Long* is set in the east coast city of Durban, South Africa. It follows the playboy politician who is a gifted writer, George Sithole (47), as he makes a spirited shot at his one true love – his ex-wife, Nomathemba Sheppard (45).

In his past, George is the go-to guy on the island political prison where he writes love letters for his fellow inmates, while his own marriage to Nomathemba falls apart. The film opens in December 2003.

George is now a free man and man-about-town with a string of ever-hopeful girlfriends. Nomathemba is in Durban for the wedding of their daughter and now lives in Connecticut (U.S.) with her American

husband. She still swears never to reconcile with George – till hell freezes over.

Then – sparks fly between the former couple. Now, with a family that is broken, memories that tear at each other's hearts, and a burning flame of yearning, George and Nomathemba get sucked into a heady transatlantic affair which George records in his burgundy diary of 2004.

But will love, once thwarted, survive?

Reel Previews 

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT


*Love Me a Little but Love Me Long* is a poignant romance whose narrative holds a powerful pull across ages. It mirrors the intoxicating hope and fragile trust that define romance, the lingering ache of what was lost, and a reminder that love is lovely and has an enduring allure – making it a timeless tale.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Motheo Moeng** is a director of photography and producer. He is an award-winning cinematographer and a member of the South African Society of Cinematographers. His work includes Africa's first original series, *Queen Sono* (2019, Netflix); *Classified* (2023, Amazon); *Umbrella Man* (2023, Amazon); *Brave Ones* (2022, Netflix); *Catching Feelings* (2018, Netflix); *Tjovitjo* (2017, SABC 1, Netflix). He received the SAFTA for Best Cinematography (2018); *Thina Sobabili* was South Africa's official selection for the 88th Academy Awards (Oscars). He has also worked on various FMCG commercials.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Noontalk Publishing is Durban based, offers scriptwriting and art department services. The company is currently in pre-production with one feature and a second feature in the financing phase.

 @motheomodagurudp



Motheo Moeng  
PRODUCER



Gugu Kunene  
DIRECTOR + PRODUCER

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** Primary 16 - 55

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** Noontalk Publishing

**Running Time:** 110 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 554 650 USD

**Finances Committed:** 13 860 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Meet Sales Agents
- Meet Distributors
- Meet Potential Co-Production Partners





## RETIREMENT FROM WAR

*Retirement from War* is a hybrid docu-drama following Naomi, a 32-year-old Zulu tribeswoman, who flees to foreign lands to heal from her traumas, reclaim her peace, and reconnect with her roots. Guided by her psychologist and ancestral grandmother, she journeys through five symbolic stages of healing – each inspired by the five stages of grief, her culture, world traditions, psychology, and nature.

Across this personal and spiritual odyssey, Naomi also engages with ten global experts – including psychologists, herbalists, trauma specialists, anthropologists, Indigenous knowledge holders, and spiritual leaders – who offer insights into healing, identity, and ancestral reconnection.

Each phase unfolds in a unique landscape tied to her inner transformation:

**The Soulmates** – Set by a calm river, Naomi explores her persona and shadow self, arriving at awareness and self-empowerment.

**The Silent Ghost** – On a sacred mountain, she confronts conflict and emotional silence, reconnecting with joy and the land.

**The Phoenix with a Bleeding Heart** – Within a concealed room, she explores plant medicine and symbolism, seeking rebirth in sanctuary.

**The Blinded Owl** – At a gravesite, she honours ancestral memory, Zulu tradition, and Indigenous wisdom.

**The Yagareté** – In the forest, Naomi undergoes sacred rituals and reclaims her fierce, rooted self.

*Retirement from War* is a poetic reckoning with grief, identity, and transformation. Through cinematic ritual, expert reflection, and spiritual immersion, Naomi's journey becomes a universal call to grieve, to return, and to rise.

Reel Previews 

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*Retirement from War* is my ritual of healing. A cinematic ceremony guided by ancestry, psychology, and nature. Through Naomi's five stages, I explore what it means to grieve, remember, and return to self. This story is both personal and universal: a tribute to every spirit trying to make peace in a world that never stops burning.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Naomi Gumedde** is a Durban-based film director and humanitarian committed to powerful, African-centred storytelling. Her work spans documentary, fiction, and visual art, often exploring identity, healing, and transformation. She holds a Master's in Film Studies (Chevening, UK) and is the founder of Sapere Aude. Naomi's storytelling is deeply personal and poetic, rooted in truth, and inspired by community, ancestral memory, and the ongoing fight for emotional and spiritual liberation.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Sapere Aude is a Durban-based film and project company by Naomi Gumedde, telling bold, African-centred stories that inspire, challenge, and spark change.



Zanele Nhlapo  
PRODUCER



Naomi Gumedde  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Documentary Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 25–40, all genders (female-focused), multicultural with Indigenous emphasis (local & global)

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** Sapere Aude

**Running Time:** 90 minutes


### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 386 067,50 USD

**Finances Committed:** 0 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Pitch My Documentary
- Build Industry Connections
- Secure Funding
- Refine Positioning
- Grow Creatively
- Share My Story

 @melaneseewolf / @zanelizintombi\_nhlapo



## PALESTINE FILM INSTITUTE (PFI)

**P**alestinian cinema emerges as a record of the people's dreams, hopes and struggles. It is evidence of the land we miss, an image of the people we lost, and an archive of a future to shape and inhabit. This is why the Palestine Film Institute (PFI) emphasises the importance of supporting Palestinian films and narratives in international forums. This year, the PFI presents 3 feature films at the Durban FilmMart for the second time, enabling filmmakers and producers to showcase feature films about Palestine to decision-makers and festival programmers on their own terms, and providing a vital platform to engage with the global film community and participate in industry events. You can also engage with the filmmakers and representatives of the PFI at our shared stand with NAAS in the market.



## PALESTINE FILM INSTITUTE (PFI)

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## MINUS 40

*Minus 40* is a psychological drama film that delves into the struggles of loss and denial, portraying deep inner conflict and reflecting on the impact of grief, particularly when facing exceptional social and political pressures, like in Jerusalem. Kamel, a Jerusalem taxi driver in his fifties, loses his wife in a tragic car accident that escalates into a significant national security issue. Consequently, the Israeli authorities retain custody of her body due to security ramifications. The withholding of his wife's body has made her loss even more intangible for Kamel; he cannot bury her body, and it is as if her death has not yet become established as a reality in his eyes. He is deprived of this closure, leaving him stuck in a state of denial - as if she is still alive in some illusory world of his creation, where reality hasn't given him the chance to properly say goodbye, as he didn't get the chance to bury her.

Enveloped by pain and isolation, Kamel begins to create an imaginary world where

his wife, Mariam, is still alive and returns to him in his illusions. He lives in this alternative world, evading the acceptance of her loss. On this turbulent psychological journey, he tries to convince himself that he can protect his family and keep his wife by his side. The conflicts in his life escalate - from financial pressures to threats of losing his home to being in continuous pursuit by an Israeli police investigator. Then Mariam suddenly disappears from his fabricated reality. This disappearance throws him into a state of panic: he frantically searches for her but, over time, he becomes more and more aware of the harsh reality he was trying to escape. After losing everything, including his job and his home, Kamel finally comes to terms with the truth he had long fled and denied - the loss of his wife 11 months ago, her body still under the custody of the Israeli authorities.

### Reel Previews



Password: GazaBride17-2025WA

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*Minus 40* explores the emotional and psychological layers of Palestinian loss through Kamel, a grieving taxi driver trapped in denial. Inspired by a personal experience of mourning without closure, the film blends personal and collective trauma, using space, illusion, and memory to examine how grief can reshape reality and become a silent, enduring form of resistance.

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Waseem Khair** is an independent Palestinian director, actor, and producer, and CEO of Nahwand Film (founded 2015). He started his career in theatre and then transitioned to filmmaking in 2013, directing and producing *Throe* (2015), *120 Km* (2021), and *Gaza Bride 17* (2025). With experience as a location manager, AD, line producer, casting director, and production manager, he's contributed to films like *All That's Left of You* (2025) and *Palestine 36* (post-production), as well as TV series and programmes.

## COMPANY DETAILS

Nahawand Film is a dynamic production company founded in 2015, dedicated to creating impactful independent, auteur-driven cinematic works with a strong artistic and social essence.



Giovanni Robbiano  
PRODUCER



Waseem Khair  
DIRECTOR

## PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** +15

**Country:** Palestine

**Production Company:** Nahwand Film

**Running Time:** 100 minutes

## FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 2 048 998 USD

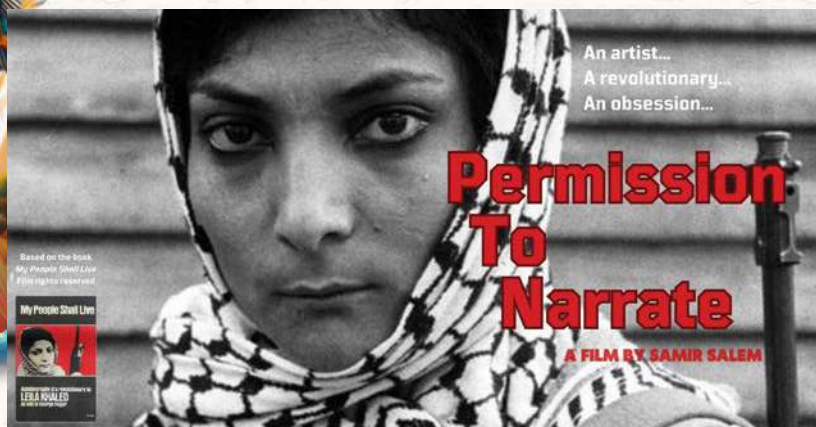
**Finances Committed:** 286 562,50 USD

## GOALS AT DFM

- Distribution and Sales Partners
- Attract Investors Who Are Passionate About Authentic And Bold Cinematic Voices

@waseemkhair / @giorobb





## PERMISSION TO NARRATE

Samir is a 27-year-old nerd from New York City. He's smart, occasionally charming, and creatively gifted, but he's neurotic, stubborn, and immature. He's our Woody Allen-like hero who dreams of making a movie about Leila Khaled, the first woman to hijack a plane.


Samir's movie, "*Revolutionaries*", follows Leila as she carries out her historic hijacking in 1969, leading to her being hailed as an icon for the Palestinian resistance movement and enemy number one to the Israeli state. With her face now internationally recognised, she undergoes several plastic surgeries to disguise her identity and steels herself for her next mission.

Meanwhile, in Managua, Irish-Nicaraguan-American Patricio Argüello Ryan revolts against the Somoza dictatorship. Eventually, Patricio is tortured and expelled from the country he loves. With the goal of one day returning home to Nicaragua, he and his small band of revolutionaries commit to participate in Leila's next mission.

While Leila and Patricio lead their teams to Germany in the summer of 1970, an Israeli agent is hot on their trail but finds himself conflicted between his Holocaust trauma and his seek-and-destroy mission. As the gravity of their actions crystallises, Leila and Patricio turn to each other for comfort. It's during these nights that Leila and Patricio's feelings blossom.

Although Samir's movie is a love story, no one wants him to make it. When Samir's fiancée, Avigail, an anti-Zionist Jewish woman, reveals she's pregnant, Samir's anxiety and motivation shift into high gear. Desperate to tell his story, Samir lies, cheats, and manipulates anyone who can help him make his movie.

Samir's movie exists in his imagination, which the audience gets to see as we follow Samir's and Leila's missions in this movie-within-a-movie about the depths we must go to to tell a true story.

Reel Previews 

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Grab your popcorn and hold on. This isn't your typical Palestinian film. Although Leila Khaled is the quintessential icon of Palestinian resistance, our film looks beyond the icon, at the person, at our own humanity with all its flaws and desires. *Permission To Narrate* is unconventional; a disruption of normalcy; a neo-noir thriller and a Woody Allen-esque comedy.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Linda Mutawi** is a Palestinian producer currently based in Sweden. She has 23 years of experience working in the film industry in countries like the UK, US, UAE, and Jordan. Recently, she has produced several feature films and documentaries, including Tarik Saleh's latest feature *Eagles of the Republic*, which premiered in official competition at the *Cannes Film Festival 2025*. **Linda** is a graduate of both The Producers Guild of America's Diversity Workshop 2012, and the prestigious EAVE Producers Workshop 2022.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Fikra is a Stockholm-based company that facilitates and implements creative projects between Scandinavia and the Middle East, aiming to become a natural partner for bi-cultural endeavours.



Linda Mutawi  
PRODUCER



Samir Salem  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 14 - 100

**Country:** USA

**Production Company:** Fikra

**Running Time:** 120 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 2 500 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 500 000 USD

### GOALS AT DFM

- Connect With Potential Co-Financing Partners
- Attract Investors





## PING-PONG

As the war on Gaza erupts, a few kilometres away in the occupied 48 territories, Issam stays with his parents in his childhood home for the first time since his brother's passing a year prior. The house feels heavy with memories and unspoken grief, while the echoes of war and loss are a constant backdrop. Stuck at home and weighed down by sorrow, Issam is drawn to the rhythmic sounds of ping-pong games coming from his neighbour's house, cutting through the noise of warplanes overhead.

He befriends his neighbour, who hosts nightly ping-pong tournaments amidst the chaos. These gatherings become a refuge - a place where laughter and competition offer a temporary escape. Through his new friendship, Issam begins to grieve and confront the reality he must face, finding solace in the shared moments of humanity and resilience.

Reel Previews 

Company Profile 

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*Ping-Pong* emerged from our suffocating reality, born of helplessness as I stayed home with my parents. Warplanes underscoring collective grief. Yet, human resilience surfaced. We coped through shared silence, then philosophical talks and ping-pong. These innocent acts became lifelines - acts of survival, reclaiming joy amid despair.

### DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Saleh Saadi** is a Palestinian writer-director. His short film, *Borekas*, screened at *Palm Springs ShortFest* (2021), and *A'lam*, which he wrote, directed, and starred in, premiered at *HollyShorts Film Festival* (2022). Saadi is a MEMI fellow at USC Cinematic Arts, where he developed his TV series, *Dyouf*, and is now working on his debut feature, *Ping-Pong*.

### COMPANY DETAILS

Philistine Films is an independent company based in Palestine and Jordan, supporting bold Arab voices through the development and co-production of feature and documentary films.



May Jabareen  
PRODUCER



Saleh Saadi  
DIRECTOR

### PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 12+

**Country:** Palestine

**Production Company:** Philistine Films

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

### FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 1 305 300 USD

**Finances Committed:** In Progress

### GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Producing Partner
- Funding
- Development Labs/Workshops
- Script Advisor
- Pitching Opportunities



@philistinefilms / @salehsaadi  
@mayhope



## THUTHUKA

**T**huthuka is an initiative of the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) and the Netherlands Film Fund to promote collaboration between South Africa and the Netherlands.

It focuses on the development of feature films, feature-length documentaries, or animated films with content related to South Africa and the Netherlands. Thuthuka selects films with the potential to be of high cinematographic quality, films that appeal to a wide audience in cinemas and film festivals in both countries. Apart from financial support, selected projects receive tailor-made workshops at IFFR to kickstart their writing process. Teams that have successfully completed the Thuthuka development phase are invited to the corresponding pitch round of the scheme. This year the Thuthuka production pitch is planned for November.

All teams presenting have received Thuthuka development support. We are proud to introduce these projects, all of them exciting and wonderfully inspiring.



## THUTHUKA

RAIN ANIMALS

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THIRD WHEEL

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# PrettyNeat

## RAIN ANIMALS

*Rain Animals* is a dual narrative set in present-day Cape Town as well as the early 1800s Cape Colony. In the present, Michelle, an aspiring white artist, shares a home with her autistic son Ben and his caregiver Lesedi, a black woman grappling with her own son Dumi's addiction. Their dynamic reflects the evolving complexities of post-apartheid South African life.


In the past, Yolente and her brother Neel, children of a Dutch settler, are lost in the wilderness and rescued by Augustus, a rebel slave, on the run after killing his master. Augustus is searching for identity, freedom and spirituality.

Michelle discovers that her lineage traces back to Yolente, and begins an art project inspired by this history. Her obsessive research strains her relationship with Lesedi, who is overwhelmed by her own personal challenges. As Michelle dives deeper into Yolente's story, Dumi is hospitalised, forcing Lesedi to choose between caring for Ben or her own family. Tension erupts, culminating

in a painful but necessary confrontation. Back in the past, Augustus leads Yolente and Neel towards safety, forming unexpected bonds and confronting trauma. As they near civilisation, Augustus experiences a spiritual epiphany. A meteor streaks across the sky, affirming his belief in "rain animals", mystical beings tied to his heritage.

Moments later, he is tragically shot by a colonial soldier who ironically mistakes him for a kidnapper.

Michelle finds success with her exhibition, but remains emotionally adrift. She seeks reconciliation with Lesedi, now empowered and building a future on her own terms. Michelle finally begins to understand her place in history and the profound truth: Her very existence rests on Augustus's act of compassion. She returns to Lesedi's door, not as an employer, but as a guest, asking, "Can I come in?"

Reel Previews 

Password: j0n@h\*

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT


As a white South African born into Apartheid, I grapple with inherited privilege and the grace of reconciliation. *Rain Animals* explores love, injustice, and survival across time. It reflects on those who nurtured us despite being denied dignity. This is a parable about human nature and asks how we move forward while honouring truth, history, and our shared humanity.

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

**Louw Venter** is a South African actor, screenwriter, and director. He studied Fine Arts in Johannesburg and co-created *The Most Amazing Show* (2001), a cult comedy that helped spark the Zef movement. He wrote and starred in *Konfetti* (2014), based on his play *Best Man's Speech*, earning multiple awards. His directorial debut *STAM/The Tree* won Best SA Feature at DIFF. In 2023, his screenplay *Without Which Not* won at JETS. He is currently developing several original film and television projects in South Africa.

## COMPANY DETAILS

PrettyNeat Pictures, a Cape Town company, makes story-first, emotionally resonant films. From character-driven dramas to genre stories, we create work that moves and inspires audiences.

Company Profile 



Tassyn Fynn  
PRODUCER



Alex Dean Fynn  
PRODUCER



Louw Venter  
DIRECTOR



Louw Venter  
CO-WRITER

## PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 25+

**Country:** South Africa

**Production Company:** Pretty Neat

**Running Time:** 120 minutes

## FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 900 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 40 500 USD

## GOALS AT DFM

- Secure Sales Agents
- Secure Distributors
- Secure a Third Co-Producer to Expand Financing
- Unlock Further Support



# PRPL

## THIRD WHEEL

As Thina is about to marry her charismatic but domineering fiancé Manqoba (Q). Her best friend and adoptive sister Emma thoughtfully organises a dreamy pre-wedding weekend at their family's isolated estate in the stunning Drakensberg. The multiracial party of 10, near-strangers, gets off to an awkward start as Thina's white and woke worlds collide in a sun-drenched weekend: amapiano, booze, and coke blur into flirtation, dance-offs and ghost stories. But the vibes shift when it's revealed that Thina was adopted by Emma's white family. And her biological mother still works for them. None of her friends knew.

During a tense volleyball game, Q mistakenly — or not — hits Thina in the face. Blood. Although Emma and S'phe, Thina's cousin from the hood, quietly compete for maid of honour, it's Q's possessiveness that unsettles everyone. Something's off. Mist in the mountains. Running footsteps through hallways. The smell of gas lingers. And a bridesmaid disappears. S'phe confronts Thina about identity-switching. Emma

quietly suggests it's not too late to call off the wedding. Thina snaps. She's fine — even though she's sleepwalking. But it's Q whose pressure explodes: savagely killing a kudu, fighting with S'phe, and motherlessly beating the driver for watching Thina. Ominous chaos. When S'phe is found drowned, the group panics. Eyes turn to Q, but he's not the one with secrets.

Thina discovers Emma had a twin. She 'drowned'. It's been Emma all along — gaslighting Thina. Her twisted attachment stems from festering feelings of being overshadowed by her brilliant twin, then the 'perfect', but ungrateful Black adoptive sister. "After everything we've done for you!" Emma knocks Thina out, planning to stage her suicide on the morning of the wedding. The film crescendos in a watery confrontation. Emma lights a match in the gas-filled pool house. "I can't live in a world where you have everything, and I have nothing." Submerged, Thina survives. She surfaces - but not whole.

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

*Third Wheel* is an allegory for post-colonial Africa: independent countries are dating, getting to know, maybe committing to their governments. The colonisers? Playing third wheel. Told through South Africa's trend of white families informally adopting Black children — offering 'what they can' from the goodness of their white hearts or white guilt. This is one of their stories.

## DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

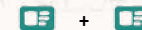
**Zoe Ramushu** is a filmmaker with a legal background. In New York, her film *It Takes a Circus* was nominated for the 48th Student Academy Awards, and *To the Plate* was shortlisted for a Student BAFTA. Currently in post is her new short *Damsel*.

A Reuters Institute Journalism Fellow at Oxford, Cannes Producers Network, DFM Access, and The Gotham, she holds Master's degrees from Wits University and Columbia Journalism School.

## COMPANY DETAILS

PRPL and Totem Zea unite bold storytelling with global vision — championing inclusive, award-winning films and series by fearless female creators across continents, from Cannes to Netflix.

### Company Profile



@prpl\_film / @zoeramushu  
@rea\_filmaker



Ellen Havenith  
PRODUCER



Rea Moeti-Vogt  
PRODUCER



Zoe Ramushu  
DIRECTOR

## PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

**Project Type:** Fiction Feature Length

**Audience Age Range:** 16 - 50

**Country:** South Africa, Netherlands

**Production Company:** PRPL, Totem Zea Collective

**Running Time:** 90 minutes

## FINANCING PLAN

**Total Budget:** 1 200 000 USD

**Finances Committed:** 61 799 USD

## GOALS AT DFM

- Meet Co-Producers
- Financiers
- Distributors
- Sales Agents
- Festival Programmers



## CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Durban FilmMart Institute Board:** Mpumi Mazibuko (Chair), Dr. Tegan Bristow, Tshepiso Chikapa-Phiri, Fazel Dolley, Pearl Munonde, Maganthrie Pillay, Neiloe Whitehead

**Director:** Magdalene Reddy

**Principal Funder:** eThekweni Municipality, Durban Film Office

### DFM Finance and Pitch Forum

**Project Manager:** Faiza Williams

**Pitch & Finance Forum Assistant:** Thobeka Mnyandu

**Project readers:** Ibee Ndaw, Johanna Boyer-Dilolo, Léa Baron, Lisa Aziz, Lurdes Laice, Lyse Nsengiyumva, Muhammad Taymour, Silas Miani

**Selection Committees:** Adriek van Nieuwenhuyzen, Bongzi Ndaba, Emily Paige, Femi Odugbemi, Francis Y. Brown, Joachim Landau, Keisha Knight, Khalid Shamis, Marit van den Elshout, Mmabatho Kau, Samantha Biffot, Tshepho Moche

**Mentors:** Bongziwe Selane, Femi Odugbemi, Justine Bannister, Layla Swart, Olivier Catherin, Prof Sylvia Vollenhoven

### Talents Durban

**Project Manager:** Menzi Mhlongo

**Talents Mentors:** Francis Y. Brown, Joel Karekezi, Rumbi Katedza, Mmabatho Kau, Karabo Lediga, Tarek Mohamed, Mamounata Nikiema, Domoina Ratsara, Laza, Mayye Zayed

**Speakers:** Ahmed Shawky, Amjad Abu Alala, Andrea Amber Voges, Andrew Ahuurra, Mandisa Zitha, Marco Orsini, Nikola Joetze, Riaya Aboul Ela, Tarha McKenzie, Taryn Joffe, Zunaid Mansoor

**Talent Press Publications:** AFRICINE, City Press, Film Efiko, FIPRESCI, Modern Times, No'OCultures, Sinema Focus

**Readers/Selection Committee:** Djia Mambu, Domoina Ratsara, Bonie Sithebe

### DFM Access

**Project Managers:** Faiza Williams

**Project Assistants:** Thobeka Mnyandu, Nadia Davids

**Project readers:** Bongzi Ndaba, Kethiwe Ngcobo, Miki Redelinghuys

**Mentors:** Bongzi Ndaba, Bonie Sithebe, Busisiwe Ntintili, Jacintha de Nobrega, Kethiwe Ngcobo, Miki Redelinghuys, Nicole Schafer, Sihle Hlope, Teboho Pietersen, Thandeka Zwana, Tiny Mungwe, Tracey-Lee Rainers

**Masterclass Experts:** Bongziwe Selane, Cait Pansegrouw, Carolyn Carew, Mitchell Harper, Mmabatho Kau, Neil Brandt, Pascal Schmitz, Rethabile Ramaphakela, Sean Drummond, Thandi Davids, Toni Monty, Unathi Malunga

### Industry Programme

**Programme Curator:** Antoinette Engel

**Programme Consultant:** Mitchell Harper

**Programme Assistant:** Sibahle Marcia Khwela

**Speakers, Panellists and Moderators:** Temilola Adebayo, Nasreen Al Amin, Rodrigo Antonio, Hanna Attallah, Aliou Kéba Badiane, Nada Bakr, Pape Boye, Dora Bouchoucha, Francis Y. Brown, Themba Buyeye, Germaine Coly, Kumbi Chitenderu, Joel Chikapa-Phiri, Tshepiso Chikapa-Phiri, Akunna Cook, Khosie Dali, Nadia Darries, Thandi Davids, Claire Diao, Angèle Assie Diabang, Abdou Simbandi Diatta, Carlynn de Waal-Smit, Jack Devnarain, Claye Edou, Emad Eskander, Kathryn Fasegha, David Hernández Palmar, Darcy Heusel, Hamid Ibrahim, Dhia Jerbi, Karen Jaynes, Samantha Kaine, Anita Khanna, Adel Ksikiri, Mmabatho Kau, Lebo Leitch, Marcela Lizcano, Richard Lothian, Kadeem A. Maxwell, Liana Maasdorp, Reem Maged, Cindy Makandi, Simon Makwela, Unathi Malunga, Simon Manda, Itzel Martínez del Cañizo, Tarha McKenzie, Nondumiso

Mdlala, Sithabile Mkhize, Yaliwe Mlambo, Noluthando Mnguni, Tshepo Moche, Tarek Mohamed, Nicolas Mugisha, Tiny Mungwe, Selin Murat, Pete Murimi, Bongzi Ndaba, Kethiwe Ngcobo, Farren van Niekerk, Mamounata Nikiema, Jacqui Nsiah, Avuzwa Ntshongwane, Zonke Nyandeni, Mohamed Said Ouma, Sébastien Onomo, Heba Othman, Natalie Paneng, Melissa Parry, Pragna Parsotam-Kok, Maganthrie Pillay, Vicky Plancher, Pepsi Pokane, Elizabeth Radshaw, Domoina Ratsara, Miki Redelinghuys, Tanya Roussouw, Tracey-Lee Rainers, Roger Ross Williams, Weaam Williams, Isabelle Rorke, Vanessa Ann Sinden, Rama Thiaw, Marion Schmidt, Jon Sesrie-Goff, Ayanda Sibisi, Sam Soko, Anthony Silverstone, Londiwe Shange, Johan Steyn, Caroline Vos, Xolile Vundla, Emily Wanja, Louiza Wanjiku, Mxolisi Xaba, Mayye Zayed, Thandeka Zwana

### Support Team

**Project Manager (Operations):** Nadia Davids

**Sponsorship Management:** Maxine Burke

**Technical and Website Administrator:** Chigo Chirwa

**Financial Administration:** Prakashnie Ragaven

**Guest Liaison and Event Coordination:** thoughtFIRE Events

**Guest Coordinator:** Deneice Otto

**Publicity:** Elevate Nexus

**Digital Marketing Strategy:** New Noise

**DFMI Interns:** Aphiwe Ngwenya, Zamashuku Shangase

**Copy Editor:** Busisiwe Memela

**Event and Guest Teams:** Nolulamo Maquthu, Nikiwe Yika, Anele Mnyengo

**DFM 2025 Campaign Design:** Digitlab Digital Strategy

**DFM Accreditation:** Fiona Suliman

**DFM Dossier:** Artworks

**First Published:** 11 June 2025

**Subsequent Additions:** 4 July 2025 (Awards logos, Palestine Film Institute projects, Spotlight on Durban Projects, Thuthuka)

**DFM Website:** Digitlab Digital Strategy

**Volunteers:** Students from AFDA and Durban University of Technology

### Funders and Partners

**Principal Funder:** Durban Film Office and the eThekweni Municipality

**Funders, Sponsors and Exhibitors:**

Department of Sport Arts and Culture, Ford Foundation, Netflix, Afreximbank, National Film and Video Foundation, NEFTI, IDC, Institut Français, IEFTA, MTN, KwaZulu-Natal Tourism and Film Authority, I.M.P.A.C.T., Gauteng Film Commission, Film Cape Town, Panavision, Panalux, Namibia Film Commission, Palestine Film Institute, Network of Arab Alternative Screens, Cine Connect, Film and Publication Board, Eastern Cape Development Corporation, Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire, Downtown Music Publishing Africa, Next Narrative Africa Fund, GIZ KE, Sunshine Cinema, WESGRO, The Independent Producers Organisation, Wrapped, CANAL+, CANAL+ University, IDFA Bertha Fund

**Programme Partners:** Durban International Film Festival, ARC, Animation SA, Berlinale Talents, CPT Animation Film Festival, The Climate Story Lab South Africa, Dante Languages, Digital Lab Africa, Docsociety, Documentary Filmmakers' Association, Durban University of Technology, Encounters South African International Documentary Festival, European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs, DW Akademie, Fak'ugesi, Fipresci, Hot Docs Blue Ice Fund, The Independent Black Filmmakers Collective, The Independent Producers Organisation, South African Guild of Actors, Sisters Working in Film & Television, Writers Guild of South Africa, South African Guild of Editors, Tempo, Directors Guild of South Africa

**Year-Round Programmes:** DW Akademie, German Cooperation, National Film and Video Foundation



# CONTACT:



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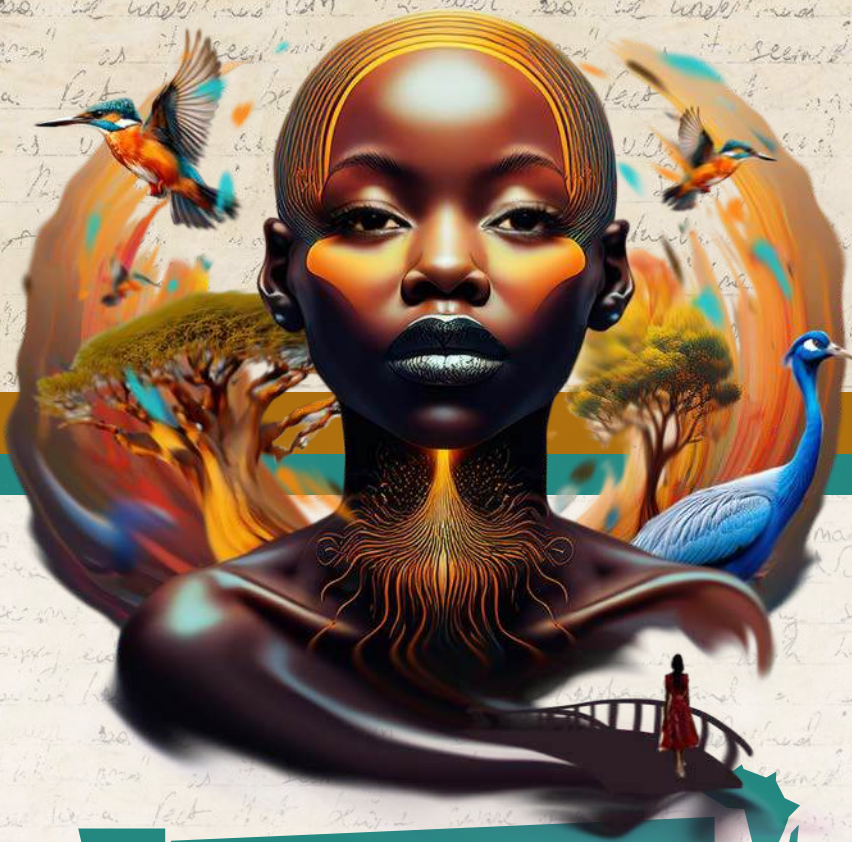
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## Durban FilmMart