

FROM DISRUPTION TO ACCOUNTABILITY

AFRICAN VISIONS UNLEASHED



19-22
JULY
2024

15TH

Durban FilmMart

E-DOSSIER

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“The film world is no exception and in the years since emerging from the pandemic, the resilience and fortitude that the sector has shown is truly remarkable.”

Welcome by the Chair

The Durban FilmMart (“DFM”), is at an inflection point in its journey, this year will be the 15th year of serving and engaging the film community since its inception. The DFM has grown exponentially from a localised organisation to a pan-African entity, that is focused on developing talent on the continent, building community and support for African filmmakers and creating visibility and investment opportunities for captivating and dynamic content. In line with this ethos and our *raison d’être*, our theme this year is, “African Visions Unleashed: From Disruption to Accountability”;

with our core focus being to ignite discourse and be the catalyst for our industry to redefine the cultural narratives that are pervasive in our industry.

In a post-pandemic world, it has become apparent that all spheres of business are under exceptional pressure and have to adapt their practices and strategies accordingly. The film world is no exception and in the years since emerging from the pandemic, the resilience and fortitude that the sector has shown is truly remarkable. With these seismic disruptions

We invite you to “Unleash a New Vision”!

bearing down upon the sector, the silver lining is that all role players in the film ecosystem have had to re-evaluate their status and purpose to maintain their viability and relevance in this climate. Within this context, it is important to mention that in the first quarter of the year the Durban FilmMart Institute board and management, met to discuss and debate these issues that inform our new reality and how to position the organisation in a manner that is impactful and resonates with those whom we serve. Our engagements resulted in us distilling our strategy into four core pillars that broadly capture our intentions as the institute; these are: Creating an African ecosystem; Developing African Film Talent; Facilitating Access to Film Funding and Developing Demand for African Film.

In executing this strategy, the DFMI team is cognisant of its responsibility to initiate and engage in conversations beyond our immediate borders and to afford African creatives, the opportunity to network with their global counterparts in the industry. This proactive approach to being a catalyst for African storytellers and filmmakers is intent on placing creatives at all levels at the crux of this project. Hence the clarion call for African Visions to be Unleashed! Our aim is to achieve through leveraging and harnessing the diverse skill sets of all those in the industry - from writers and directors to producers and financiers; to find common platforms where engagements may occur throughout the value chain.

The DFM's programme for this year has been crafted with the intention of scaling its purpose through its continuum. We would not only be doing ourselves a disservice by not transcending our borders, but we would be depriving the world of experiencing the beauty and nuance of African film and storytelling. This spirit of unbridled curiosity and sense of wonder is what sets this project apart, all of you have been instrumental in creating a universe that defies the imagination and invites us all to live in a world of wonder.

However, we dare not be complacent, for the industry to achieve its goals and aims, it is imperative to appreciate that an initiative such as the DFM is iterative in nature, and that there will be complex and daunting terrains that need to be traversed. These hills and valleys are not insurmountable, if the collective energies of the sector are focused on a common objective and clear vision.

The Board and Management, wish to thank the funders and sponsors, and indeed, the participants in the various DFM initiatives and events for your unwavering commitment to enhancing the craft that we all so passionately believe in. We encourage you to embrace this year's offering and make it your own. We invite you to “Unleash a New Vision”!

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

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

PRINCIPAL FUNDERS



FUNDERS, SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS



PROGRAMME PARTNERS



YEAR ROUND PROGRAMMES



OFFICIAL DFM 2024 PROJECTS

The Durban FilmMart is thrilled to reveal the selected projects for its 15th annual edition. Emerging from a highly competitive call for live-action and animation projects in development, these selections underscore the vibrant creativity and diverse voices within African cinema. As a premier Pan-African finance and co-production market, the Durban FilmMart is dedicated to nurturing and showcasing African talent. For 2024, the selection features 8 animations, 12 fiction projects, and 10 documentaries, each highlighting African talents in significant creative roles.

Leading up to the Durban FilmMart, these projects undergo a rigorous 6-8 week packaging and mentorship programme, preparing them for a pitching session with a distinguished panel of decision-makers. This initiative creates pathways for co-production, financing, and international distribution.

The Durban FilmMart Institute is steadfast in its mission to provide filmmakers with unparalleled access and growth opportunities. Congratulations to the creative teams behind these remarkable projects, whose stories are set to captivate audiences around the world.

OFFICIAL DFM FICTION PROJECTS

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ACTS OF MAN

“The most dangerous devils are our own.”

Called to investigate a brutal ritualistic killing in the remote mountain town of Hale, two city detectives face a shaken conservative community convinced the devil is at work. Forced to partner with a reclusive, disgraced former South African Police Service occult investigator, the deeper they find themselves entangled in a town split down social and religious lines, the more they're drawn into secondary cases, especially to a young girl suffering seemingly vicious abuse at home.

But is all as it first appears? An air of creeping supernatural dread hangs over Hale, and as the case races towards conclusion, shocking revelations will force both investigators and the town to confront their demons and give chilling answers to the question: which of these horrors are the work of the devil and which are the 'acts of man'?

Acts of Man is an original elevated genre production by South African writer-producers Sean

Drummond of *Five Fingers for Marseilles* and Sheetal Magan of *Paraya*. *Deliberately* centred on a South African region, cultures, and conflicts seldom depicted in mainstream media, the series draws on universal themes, truths, and fears to weave a narrative that will resonate with audiences both domestically and internationally.

Inspired by multiple research trips, the misty hillsides of KwaZulu-Natal are a mythic backdrop for the ideological conflict at the series' heart. It's an exploration of a country's fractured psyche and an examination of history and social dynamics, from the chilling investigation that drives the plot, to complex, conflicted characters and its unflinching look at the dangers of rigid belief.

With an 8-episode, one-hour contained season arc, *Acts of Man* offers a returnable series that delivers a psychological thriller with supernatural elements.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Acts of Man brings to life years of collaboration. Drawing inspiration from acclaimed series like *The Killing*, *True Detective*, *The Fall*, *Top of the Lake*, *Midnight Sun*, as well as seminal works such as *Things Fall Apart* and *The Crucible*. We delve into the complex spaces within our country's psyche, intending to do so in co-production with experienced broadcasters and storytellers, to reach a global audience.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Sean Drummond is best known for *Five Fingers for Marseilles*, *Apocalypse Now Now*, and as head writer on the Netflix hit *Unseen*. He is highly sought after as a writer, producer and story and creative consultant, guiding projects from the initial concept to the final stages of post-production.

Sheetal Magan is an independent filmmaker with a reputation for tackling social taboos in her short films, which have competed in Cannes, Toronto, Durban, Stockholm, and Mumbai. She is captivated by the new African lens and novel storytelling in the global south.

COMPANY DETAILS

Be Phat Motel and Atman are bold, high-level, artistic storytellers for local and international markets. Their work includes *Five Fingers for Marseille* and *Paraya*. *Acts of Man* is their first co-production.



Sean Drummond
PRODUCER

Sheetal Magan
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Series

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Be Phat Motel Film Company, Atman Media Lab

Running Time: 8 episodes, 60 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 6 400 000 USD

Finances Committed: 40 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Co-producers
- Broadcasters and/or Networks
- Development Finance



BENIMANA

In Rwanda 2012, as the country emerges from the 1994 Tutsi genocide, gacaca – or people’s courts – are being set up throughout the country to bring justice and reconciliation by enabling the perpetrators to confess their crimes and for the victims to forgive them. Veneranda, a survivor, staunchly advocates for these trials as the only path forward. Despite the pressure, she organises discussion groups between victims and the families of the murderers to better prepare them for the trial.

Therapeutic for some, an act of betrayal for others, these testimonial sessions revive and reveal the traumas that all these women are trying to overcome – each in their own way. When Veneranda’s daughter Tina becomes pregnant, the wounds of her past are reopened upon learning the identity of the father, forcing her to confront her own contradictions and a terrible secret, that forever impacting her relationship with her daughter.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Benimana reveals an uncompromising picture of intergenerational trauma and the need to deconstruct prejudices and resentments. In a country where reconciliation is a necessity, I ask: when the apocalypse happens, how do we evaluate the soul of a human being? Is it possible to forgive everything?

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Marie-Clementine Dusabejambo has already won two bronze Tanit awards at the Carthage Film Festival for her short films. She enjoys addressing taboo social issues with sensitivity and poetry.

COMPANY DETAILS

Ogweli Productions is driven by the desire to tell a unique African narrative, irrespective of genre, by showcasing young local talents with an authentic voice.



Samantha Biffot
PRODUCER



Marie-Clementine Dusabejambo
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type:	Fiction Feature Length
Country:	Ivory Coast, Rwanda, France, Belgium
Production Company:	Ogweli Productions
Running Time:	90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget:	1 339 202 USD
Finances Committed:	479 590 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Find Distributors
- Financers
- Connect with Production Funders



DEAR TARKOVSKY

Farouk, 35, lives in Ramallah. He has one dream only: to direct his first feature film, *A Bridge to Jaffa*, a period piece shot in 35mm starring Saleh Bakri as the Freedom fighter. Farouk has a definite artistic taste and an extensive film culture, with a particular interest in old Russian films. Since his return from Russia, where he studied cinema, Farouk has looked for funding for his film, but his attempts continue to be unsuccessful.

He is stuck in an unsatisfactory life, blasé by his frustrating job filming clichéd wedding videos where his artistic input is not valued. Desperate to secure financing for his film, he finally resorts

to a morally questionable scheme. It targets Fayeze Rammah, one of Ramallah's richest men, both morally and politically crooked, who wronged his family a long time ago.

Nothing goes quite as planned as Farouk falls progressively in love with Yasmine, Fayeze's daughter, who was just supposed to be the bait, and will inevitably have to face the consequences of his own questionable choices.

We follow his journey, full of hoops and hurdles, where unwavering determination meets shattered dreams.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

The story of Farouk is based on my journey: I am a Palestinian film director who struggled for 10 years to make *Alam*, my first feature film. *Dear Tarkovsky* would be my second feature film, in which I am more confident to infuse all my passion for cinema into a reflective piece that combines four different film genres.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Firas Khoury is a Palestinian scriptwriter and director. His debut feature, *Alam*, premiered in Toronto and won three major prizes in Cairo. He has created several award-winning short films that were broadcast on ARTE, BBC, Canal+, and Netflix.

Based in Tunisia, **Asma Chiboub** has produced several award-winning short films. She is currently working on the post-production of *Tunis-Djerba*, a dramatic comedy debut by Amel Guellaty, and is also involved in the development of Firas' projects *Dear Tarkovsky* and *Your Father's Friend*. Asma is part of the EAVE network.

COMPANY DETAILS

Based in Tunis, Atlas Vision has produced numerous short films. It is currently in the post-production phase of its feature debut, *Tunis-Djerba*, and is also developing several other projects. Additionally, Atlas Vision offers line production services.



PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Tunisia, Italy, Sweden Production

Production Company: Atlas Vision

Running Time: 120 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 202 828 USD

Finances Committed: 282 292 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Partners and Funding



GUARD DOWN

Imed, a 23-year-old boxer from an isolated village in Tunisia, becomes the amateur boxing world champion.

Imed's victory, a symbol of hope and triumph, unexpectedly becomes a political battleground. The authorities, seeing an opportunity to bolster their own agendas, engage in a fierce dispute. Each faction vies for credit, seeking to exploit Imed's success for their own gain.

Imed, now a global sensation, is courted by an international boxing firm. The allure of the challenge tempts him, but in the end, he chooses loyalty over personal gain. He returns to Tunisia, where the authorities have promised him numerous accolades, a decision that

speaks volumes about his character and the complexities of his newfound fame. Imed is welcomed as a national hero on his return home: ministers and officials gather for his reception at the Airport.

But everyone leaves once the transmission TV ends, and Imed is left to his own devices.

Imed must attend the official ceremony planned for the next day in his village to receive his promised rewards. He catches a community taxi service, the only way to reach the village. Almost arriving, Imed discovers that the river that borders the village is flooded. The only option proposed by local authorities to cross the river is a mule-drawn cart.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

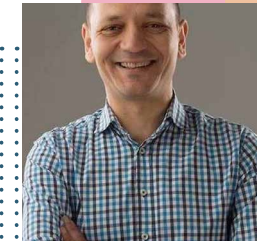
Growing up in a working-class neighbourhood filled with boxers and athletes, I was deeply impacted by their stories, hopes, and shattered dreams. This film is my way of adding to an ongoing collective narrative. It is a political and social satire, a comedy-drama. Through humour and derision, I aim to resist and create, gaining the clarity to perceive things differently.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Director, screenwriter, and producer, **Sami Tlili** holds a Ph.D. in Literature from Aix-Marseille University and a master's degree in Film Production from Metfilm School London. After two award-winning documentaries, his short fiction *Obvious Offside* was selected for the Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival. He has also served as a dialogue writer and script consultant on several feature films. Additionally, he has worked as a film curator and artistic director at festivals such as JCC and Gabes Cinéma Fen. He participated in the Sight and Sound Poll of Directors' Greatest Films of All Time 2022.

COMPANY DETAILS

Propaganda Productions is a key player in the African and Arabic cinema sectors, with several films in international co-productions selected at Sundance, Venice, Toronto, and Clermont Ferrand.



Imed Marzouk
PRODUCER



Sami Tlili
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Tunisia

Production Company: Propaganda Productions

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 200 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Introduce the Project to the Market
- Secure Development and Production Financing
- Co-producers, Distribution Partners and Broadcasters



I'M COMING FOR YOU (POR TOI JE REVIENDRAI)

Kaltoumi (25), a young mother and engineer, lives in a patriarchal society with a strong belief in magic. Burning with the desire to enjoy a certain freedom that she is deprived of like all women in her community, she has bought a Honda CMX 500 Rebel. Away from prying eyes, she loves riding her motorbike around the Sahel.

Abandoned by her husband and raising her three-month-old baby girl alone, Kaltoumi is forced to traffic goods with Boko Haram terrorists, hiding in the vastness of the Sahelian zone between Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. As Kaltoumi's activity is criminal, she takes extreme precautions to navigate between these worlds.

However, the investigative skills of Modou, the tall and handsome village chief, have brought

Kaltoumi's criminal activities to light. She is mostly guilty of being a woman who dares to do what men do. To punish her, he confiscates her baby, expels her and casts a spell on her. His spell makes her breasts swell day by day, causing her excruciating pain. To break free and be finally reunited with her baby, Kaltoumi goes in search of rock salt; an extremely rare and therapeutic stone, endowed with a power capable of cancelling the curse that weighs on her.

Rejected by her own family, Kaltoumi receives the help of a radical group of women who live remotely in the Sahel and fight against terrorists and any form of society that places women under the absolute domination of men.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Our project addresses the issue of women's freedom by highlighting the concepts of mother's love and sisterhood. Through this film, I wanted to use fantasy to explore subjects that are rooted in reality. Where I come from, it doesn't matter what God we serve, we all believe in the existence of a higher mystical entity.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Cyrielle Raingou founded Je Capture Ma Réalité in 2014. Her first documentary feature-length film, *Le spectre de Boko Haram*, won the Tiger Award in 2023. She holds a Master's degree in law and film directing.

Alice Abah is one of the Cameroonian producers of *I'm Coming for You* and holds a master's degree in film production.

Jean-Marie Gigon established SaNoSi Productions in 2005 in the Centre-Val de Loire region. He has produced 80 films, which have been showcased in major festivals worldwide.

COMPANY DETAILS

Je Capture Ma Réalité LLC invests in arthouse films by female directors. We have already produced more than seven short films and co-produced *Le spectre de Boko Haram*.



Alice Abah
PRODUCER



Cyrielle Raingou
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER



Jean-Marie Gigon
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Cameroon, France

Production Company: Je Capture Ma Réalité, SaNoSi Productions

Running Time: 105 minutes

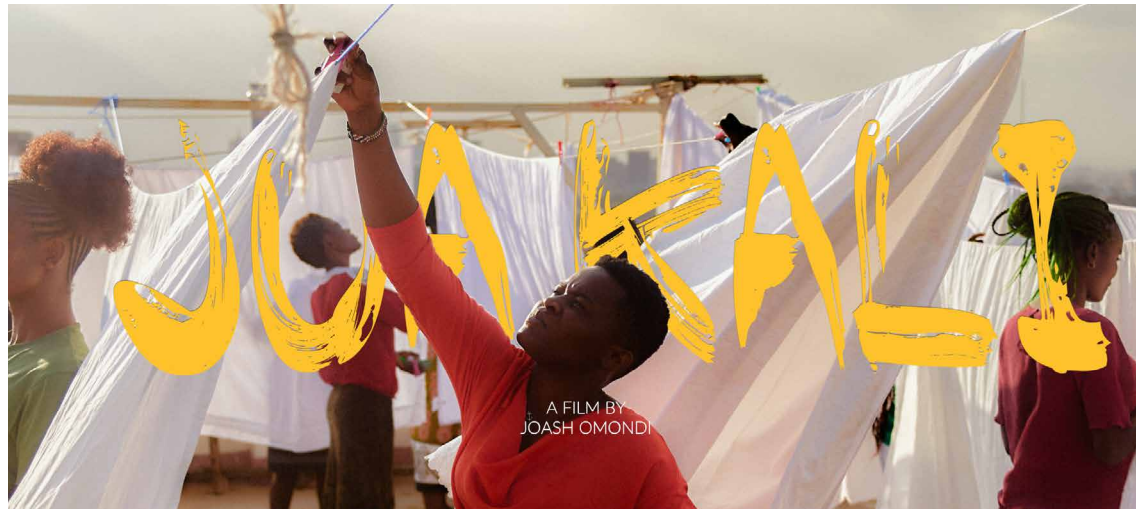
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 240 000 USD

Finances Committed: 437 990 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Partnerships within English Speaking Regions in Africa, North America, Nordic Countries and Asia.



A FILM BY
JOASH OMONDI

JUA KALI

Diana, a struggling single mother and housekeeper in Nairobi's Kibera settlement, faces the heart-wrenching reality of not being able to afford daycare for her young son. To make ends meet, she secretly adds alcohol to his breakfast to make him sleep while she works. She cleans the homes of her clients diligently, including that of Odis, a client who had helped her escape an abusive relationship. Throughout the day, we encounter other informal workers that form the large workforce that keeps the city going. Diana's journey leads her to the upscale home of Lucy, a pregnant expatriate. Lucy offers Diana a lifeline with a permanent position and living quarters, but Diana confronts her about the

trail of housekeepers left behind due to Lucy's family's nomadic tendencies. Later, in a chilling encounter at a vegetable shop, we find out that Diana is pregnant and is arranging an abortion with the vegetable seller. She however doesn't have enough to pay her. The abortionist agrees to wait as Diana hands over her day's earnings in a brown envelope. Returning home, Diana finds her son playing alone and finally answers a call from her mother, who verbally assaults her for leaving her husband. Struggling with familial obligations, single motherhood, and the impending abortion, Diana faces a crossroads and must carefully consider her next steps.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

My film, *Jua Kali*, explores Nairobi's working class through domestic workers, the city's unseen backbone. It's a day-in-the-life tribute to these informal heroes, honouring their vital role. We believe their powerful stories deserve a global platform.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Joash Omondi, a Nairobi-based filmmaker, editor, screenwriter, and composer, is known for his acclaimed short film *Jua Kali*, screened at IFFR and Clermont-Ferrand. He is currently transforming it into a feature film.

Yasmin Hassan, co-founder and producer at Wheelbarrow Films, has facilitated the production of over 30 commercials and one short film. With a background in financial consulting, she leverages her expertise to support the film industry.

COMPANY DETAILS

Director Joash Omondi's Wheelbarrow Films uses powerful storytelling to spark global conversations on pressing social issues, driving change.



Yasmin Hassan
PRODUCER



Joash Omondi
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Kenya

Production Company: Wheelbarrow Films Running

Running Time: 90 minutes

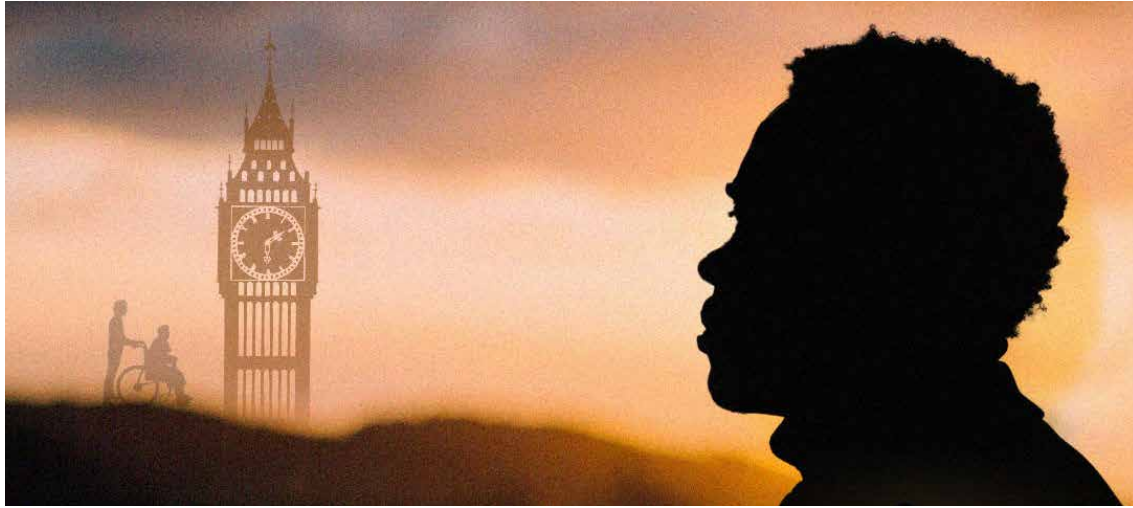
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 540 460 USD

Finances Committed: 215 527 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Find Partners to Expand *Jua Kali* into a Feature Film.



LONDONER

Ayo, a bank manager from Nigeria, arrives in the UK, eager to reunite with his family. However, he is met with a shocking revelation: his wife, Oyindamola, confesses she has fallen in love with someone else and wants a divorce. This blindsides Ayo, who was confident that as the man of the house, he would be able to tell his family that it was time to come home to Nigeria, and instead he faces the imminent loss of his entire family.

Ayo finds himself caring for an elderly man named Ben, who needs around-the-clock care. He continues to struggle with settling into British society and to survive both economically and culturally.

When he finds out that his daughter, Modupe, is pregnant, he goes on a destructive spree in their house, drinking and destroying the house. After an accident in the care home, caused by an ongoing equipment fault, leads to Ben's

hospitalisation and consequently his death, an investigation into Ben's death is launched. During the investigation, Ben's children pick up on the fact that Ayo smelled like booze, as he had been drinking the day of the accident. This leaves Ayo at a moral crossroads: should he ask his daughter to lie to the coroner about his drinking or confess and risk losing his family completely?

Ayo, in the end, decides not to ask his daughter to lie for him and confronts his past demons, accepting responsibility and consequences for his actions.

Amidst the turmoil, a flicker of redemption emerges, as Ayo chooses to return to Nigeria with a pregnant Modupe - a new, different family life ahead of them.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

This film is more than just a migration story; it's a poignant study of shattered dreams and flickering hope. This narrative holds profound personal significance for me. Like Ayo, I am an immigrant in the UK. It's steeped in the same character-driven spirit I explored in my previous film, with societal undercurrents of belonging and identity.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Babatunde Apalowo is a Nigerian director and screenwriter. His debut feature, *All the Colours of the World Are Between Black and White*, premiered at the 2023 Berlinale and won the Teddy Award for Best Feature Film.

COMPANY DETAILS

Cato Street Productions is committed to bringing compelling, commercial stories to a wider audience and highlighting narratives that often remain untold in mainstream cinema.



Sarudzayi Marufu
CO-PRODUCER



Babatunde Apalowo
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: UK, Nigeria

Production Company: Polymath Pictures, Cato Street Productions

Running Time: 90 minutes

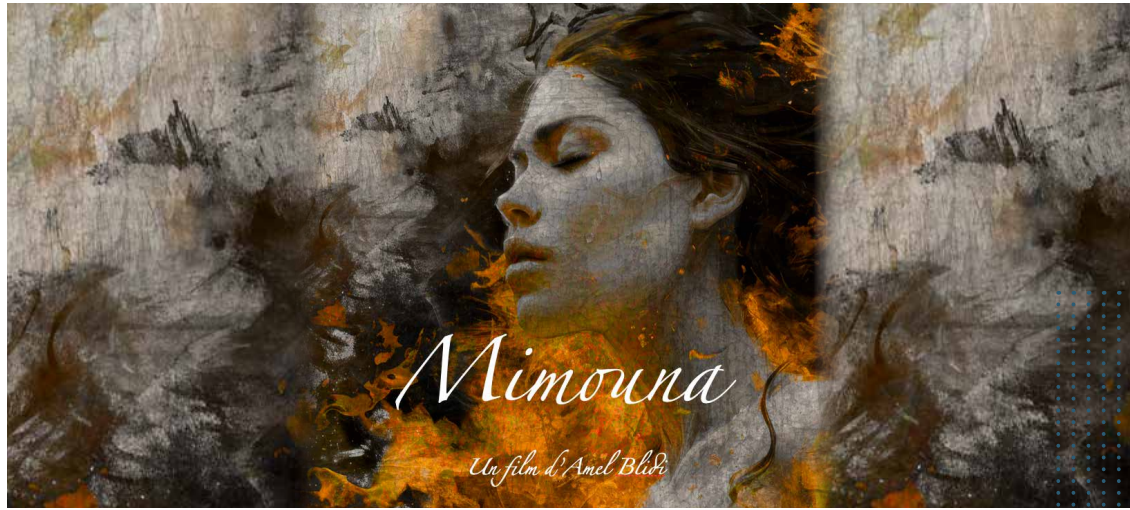
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 300 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Introduce the Project to the Market
- Development Financing
- Start Relationships and Conversations



MIMOUNA

Mimouna is a musical drama where music serves as the third character in this journey. In Algiers, Mimouna, a 25-year-old housewife, lives with her macho and violent husband Sofiane. Following a complaint against him at the police station, Sofiane arrives to apologise and take her home with him. Hearing screams, a parking attendant named Radi intervenes. In the confusion, Radi strikes Mimouna's husband. Believing him to be dead, Radi and Mimouna flee.

Mimouna receives a call from Sofiane, revealing he's alive and searching for them. She immediately hangs up without informing Radi. As they journey, Mimouna and Radi encounter various characters who challenge societal norms, particularly regarding women's roles. These encounters include a mad poet, a traditionalist receptionist, and a group of fans extolling the virtues of the world. Despite growing closer, Mimouna is determined to keep her newfound freedom.

A woman from the river, offended by their situation, suggests an official religious wedding the following day to resolve matters. Meanwhile, Sofiane, deceived and left for dead, is joined by Hakim, the policeman who handled Mimouna's complaint, to search for her. Their search leads them to the car abandoned near a mad poet, where the trail ends.

At their forced marriage ceremony, Khalti's son Hakim arrives as the final guest, prompting Mimouna and Radi to flee once more. In a café, Radi discovers Mimouna's deception: Sofiane is alive, and she's known all along. He takes her to an underground party, where Mimouna falls for Sofiane, revealing Radi's betrayal.

Mimouna and Radi are captured and brought to a public square, where Sofiane, driven by popular opinion, commits an irreparable act of violence. In full view of the crowd, including Hakim, Mimouna is immolated by her husband as the crowd descends into chaos.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Mimouna is more than just a musical drama; it's an exploration of the human condition in Algerian society. Through the characters' interwoven narratives, the film addresses the complexities of existence, particularly for women whose dreams are stifled. I invite you to reflect deeply on femicide, freedom, emancipation, and identity in a quest for social redemption.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

With a background in journalism spanning many years, **Amel Blidi** embarked on her directorial journey in 2016 with *In the Shadow of Words*, a film selected at Premiers plans d'Angers. In 2019, she directed *An Algerian Game*, garnering awards both in Algeria and internationally. Now, *Mimouna* stands as her debut in feature-length fiction filmmaking.

Jérémie Palanque co-founded Woooz Pictures in 2018. He has been producing original stories such as *Chimbo cheBere* by Naishe Nyamubaya (Zimbabwean feature film selected at Durban, Atelier de Cannes, TIFF, Red Sea Souk). He is currently developing Amel Blidi's film *Mimouna*.

COMPANY DETAILS

Woooz Pictures is an independent film company dedicated to promoting cultural diversity through various genres. Our goal is to challenge current perspectives and stimulate awareness.



Jérémie Palanque
PRODUCER

Amel Blidi
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Algeria

Production Company: Woooz Pictures

Running Time: 100 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 752 000 USD

Finances Committed: 6 800 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- International Collaboration (Labs, Institutions, Co-producers, Distributors) for Film Development



NUMALALI - MY VOICE, MY VOID

Numalali explores the experiences of Garifuna communities living between Labuga, on the Caribbean coast of Guatemala, and the Bronx, New York. The camera weaves, walks and dances through ritual-representations, family get-togethers, celebrations and everyday life as the community tells the story of who they are through song, language, ceremonies, dance, foodways, and gesture.

This ever-evolving story of the Garifuna is embodied by two generations of musicians, Grace and Juan who are each about to embark on a journey. For 75-year-old Grace who is on the cusp of leaving New York where she has built a life for over four decades and for 33-year-old Juan who plans to migrate to the US, time seems to be stretched by longing; the desire to return to Labuga and the need to leave.

In the Garifuna worldview, dreams are a legitimate source of knowledge and the realm through which

many people communicate with their ancestors. As the story develops and Juan and Grace's time in Labuga and New York draws to a close, the dream world and the messages it brings reaches a crescendo. The community must come to terms with loss, longing, and a sense of belonging to many places at once in a country that 200 years after their arrival continues to see this Afro-Caribbean descendent community as outsiders or tourist attraction. Between unemployment, love gained and lost, rites of passage and curiosity, people grapple with more than one reason to leave. Bodies become moving maps in the story of a people characterised by constant movement, from the West Coast of Africa to San Vicente in the Caribbean, to Central America, and New York. At the heart of these contemporary and historic migratory waves is their search for a place called home. In the half-light, as the sleeper's breath flows in and out with the tide, they travel further than they had envisioned, crossing the last border - that of their own bodies.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

The story of the Garifuna encompasses many places, historical times, territories, and identities. To bear witness to this is to honour the community and hold a mirror to our own origin stories and those of our communities. This film is an offering to all those who grapple with the complexities around answering the question "Who am I?".

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

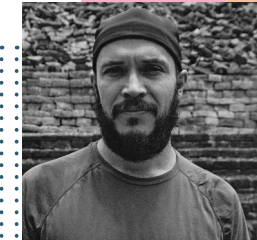
South African, Guatemalan, **Kim Munsamy** is a Berlinale Talents Alumna and MiradasAfro Lab grant recipient. She has directed short documentaries for international organisations in Latin America and Ghana.

Guatemalan, **Alberto Rodríguez Collía**, has worked in several film art departments and is the director of the Iximulew Film Society. His film *Land of Miracles* won the Ibermedia Next fund.

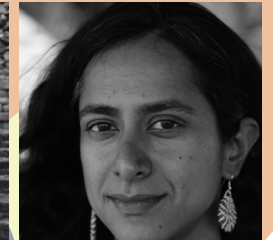
Award-winning, **Kurt Orderson** is a South African director and producer with over 20 years of experience. His films have been screened globally at over 70 film festivals.

COMPANY DETAILS

Azania Rizing was founded in 2009. Through a decolonial lens, their films blend history, visual culture, and geopolitics to address pressing issues and unearth untold narratives.



Alberto Rodríguez Collía
PRODUCER



Kim Munsamy
DIRECTOR



Kurt Orderson
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Guatemala, US

Production Company: Azania Rizing, Estudio Concordia

Running Time: 80 minutes

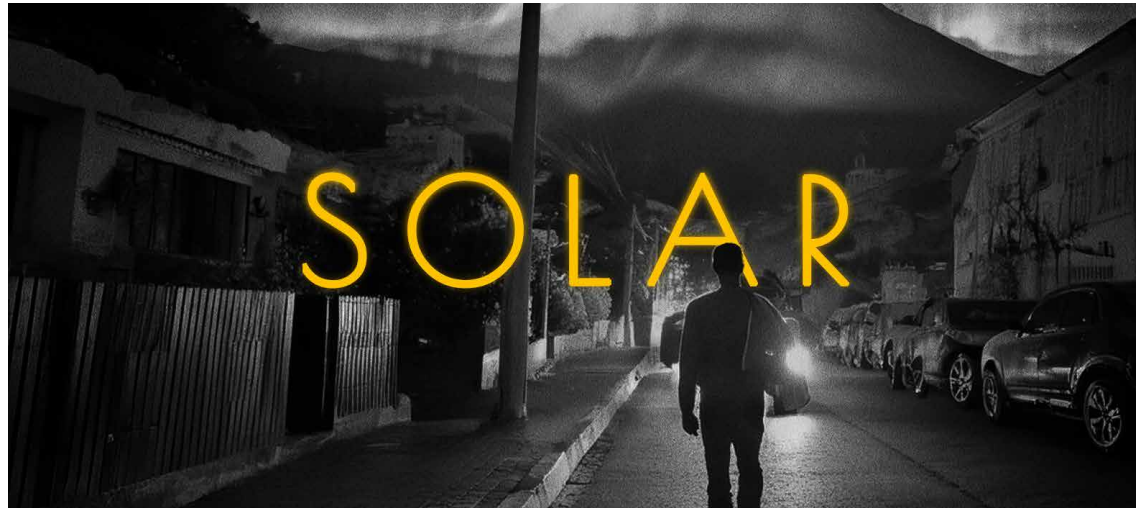
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 110 100 USD

Finances Committed: 10 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Promote Film Production and Distribution Between African and Latin American Film Industries
- Secure Funding
- Explore Lab Opportunities



SOLAR

Across four distinct periods in Cape Town's turbulent history, the stories of four men and women over two days are interwoven as they struggle to find faith in their changing worlds. When an aurora appears in the sky above them, the result of an electromagnetic storm, they each interpret this transcendent experience differently:

- 1450s: Unable to go on, an ageing Khoer woman left behind by her family has to learn to either accept her fate or find ways to survive on her own; when the aurora appears, to her, it is the world of her ancestors opening before her.
- 1780s: When a Dutch missionary on his way to the Cape begins to doubt that spreading the Gospel is the right thing to do, the aurora that appears to him after a storm capsizes the VOC ship affirms to him the presence of God.
- 2020s: When a Rasta initiate is tasked with finding an indigenous plant, his decision to steal it from a botanical garden leads to devastating consequences in a city where the electric storm has cut off the power for good.
- 2060s: In a dark city without power where nature has over the decades crept back in, a young woman grows up tending the goat herds of her grandfather for survival. When the goats are stolen by a marauding bands of rovers, she heads into the wilderness to find them.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

This is a story about mankind's dependence on technology and the vacuum it creates in its absence. South Africans are accustomed to power cuts, but what would happen if it went off for good? Through four micro-histories spanning several centuries, the appearance of an aurora sheds light on conflicting perspectives regarding our identity and who we think we should be.

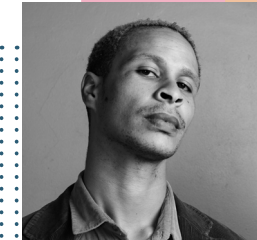
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Jason and **Devon** are co-creators in film, documentaries, theatre, and series. Their first feature, *Carissa*, won the La Biennale Prize at the Final Cut of Venice International Film Festival '23, among many other residencies, labs, and festivals they have been selected for. They produce under the collective KRAAL.

Co-producer Interakt is an award-winning Dutch production company based in Amsterdam, focused on documentaries, films, and series.

COMPANY DETAILS

KRAAL is a production company grounded in the Kamiesberg and Northern Cape region of South Africa.



Jason Jacobs
PRODUCER/ DIRECTOR



Devon Delmar
PRODUCER/ DIRECTOR



Mira Mendel
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: KRAAL

Running Time: : 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 800 000 USD

Finances Committed: 50 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Acquire Further Financing
- Align with Broadcasters, Sales Agents, and International Co-Productions.



THE MOON CAN'T RUN

A former WW2 veteran and newly assigned physical science teacher, Kasuba Banda, prepares his 'Afronauts' for their mission to the moon. He contacts his brother-in-arms, President Kaunda, to make good on an old favour. He believes the next step for Zambia's establishment of its new Independence is to create a Space Academy and to officially enter the International Space race.

At school, Kasuba quickly becomes the teacher of the year. All students clamour to attend his lectures, even detention, to witness the enigmatic man who wants to send the first Zambian to the moon. Eventually, Kasuba finds his team and begins a space training programme with limited resources. His star student, Chifunilo, has a secret mission to ensure her father and School Principal have the full intel

on Kasuba's antics. Unwillingly following the command of two men with opposing values, she takes her solace in the stars. Kasuba tries out a series of methodologies to test microgravity, vertigo, and mental endurance. A letter arrives from The BBC, to set up an interview that could make Zambia a clear contender for the space race and will unlock the funding Kasuba needs to finally send his student to the moon. The interview is cut and aired but humiliates Kasuba and his students.

As a result, he loses his job, and his team. At the same time, his family are ridiculed and ostracised. Unfazed, Kasuba Banda tries with all his might to make history for his country and continent. He gathers his last intel and says his final goodbyes, to be the first Zambian on the Moon.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

One of the most extraordinary and now contentious events from this era of dreamers and visionaries was Edward Nkoloso and his Afronauts, which serves as an inspiration for this narrative. We intend to produce a magical realism film that will not only be an ode to the past, but also stand as a mirror to question what could have been, what is, and what can be.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Naishe Nyamubaya is a Zimbabwean-Egyptian director and writer, passionate about telling African stories. He is an alumni of the TIFF filmmaker lab, Cinefondation l'Atelier, the Red Sea Lodge and Film Independent's Global Media Makers.

Shveta Naidoo is a South African producer committed to producing Pan-African narratives. She trained in International Co-Production and Financing as an alumna of the Atelier Ludwigsburg-Paris '23 programme. Her recent short film, *L'embrasure*, is distributed by ARTE and SWR.

COMPANY DETAILS

Kulfi Films is a South African independent production company with a vision to develop and produce transmedia projects in collaboration with diasporic filmmakers across the globe.



PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: South Africa, Zambia

Production Company: Kulfi Films

Running Time: 90 minutes

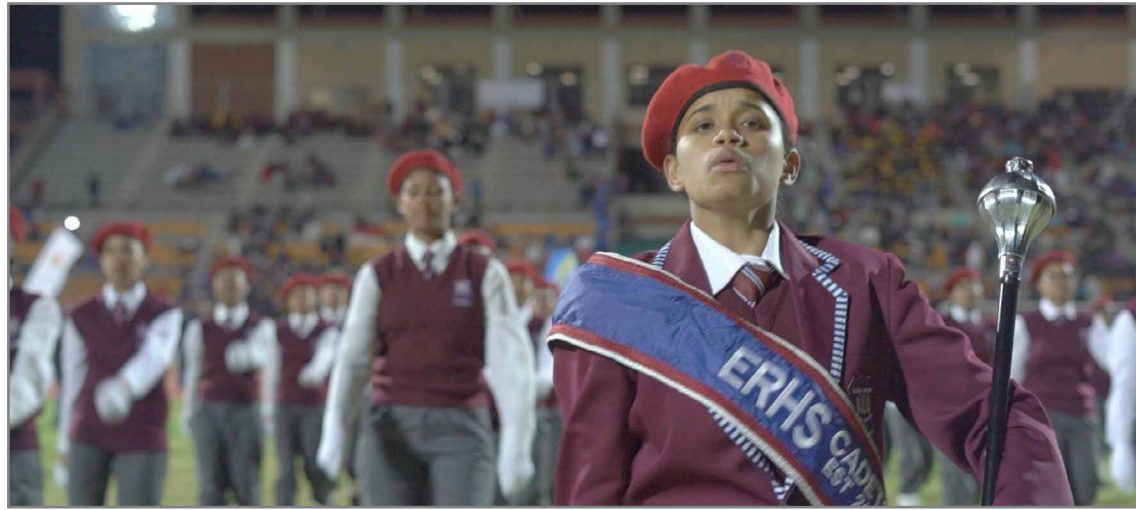
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 500 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Meet International Co-Producers, Sales and Distributors
- Introduce the Project to the Market
- Find Potential Collaborators



THE PATHFINDER

In a small town high school, troublemaker Kamilla teeters on the edge of expulsion due to her disruptive behaviour. As a final chance, she reluctantly joins the March and Drill band, led by the stern but compassionate Brigadier Hyles. Initially resistant, Kamilla clashes with jealous bandmate Julia, who doubts her worthiness. Despite the challenges, Kamilla begins to embrace the structure and camaraderie, guided by Brigadier Hyles. Principal Naidoo, once close to expelling Kamilla, becomes an unexpected ally, recognising her potential and the band's talent.

With his help, they raise funds to compete in the regional championships, offering a chance for redemption and recognition. As they prepare, Kamilla finds herself drawn to Rowan, the talented drummer. Their growing connection adds complexity to her journey of self-discovery within the group. With determination, teamwork, and a newfound respect for discipline, Kamilla and her bandmates face their rivals at the championships, proving that unity and perseverance can lead even the most unlikely individuals to find their place in life's rhythm.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

In *The Pathfinder*, we delve into the transformative power of discipline, camaraderie, and self-discovery. Through the journey of Kamilla and her bandmates, we explore themes of resilience, acceptance, and the triumph of unity over adversity. With heart and rhythm, I aim to inspire audiences to embrace change, find their place, and march forward towards their dreams.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Beverley Mitchell is a leading South African creative development executive with decades of experience working in both the international and African media environments. Passionate about storytelling, she has taught narrative storytelling and story structure at various tertiary institutions and has led writers' rooms across Africa and the Caribbean.

COMPANY DETAILS

Swirlkous Films, led by Rafieka Davis in Gqeberha, crafts impactful narratives, garnering international acclaim for seven years.



Beverley Mitchell
PRODUCER



Rafieka Davis
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Swirlkous Films

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 541 060.00 USD

Finances Committed: 156 907.83 USD

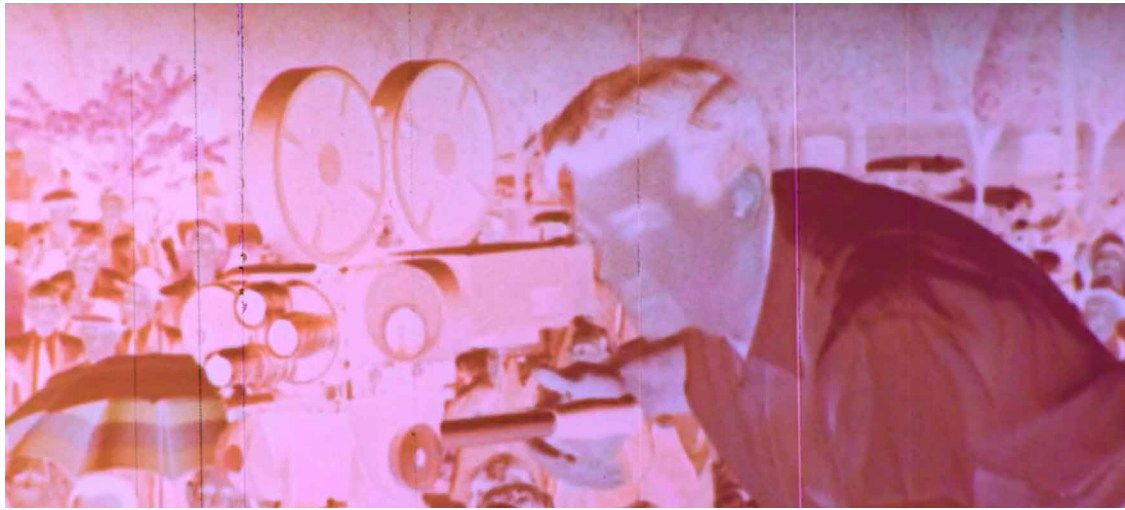
GOALS AT DFM

- Funding To Enhance Quality and Reach
- Streaming Partner



OFFICIAL DFM DOCUMENTARY PROJECTS

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A GIRL AND A GUN

What's the story?

A Girl and a Gun lightly stitches a filmmaker's dreamlike observations of a world changing around her - with the camera's role in making and unmaking the historically colonised world. It's a song from the girl to the gun - it's a rebellious, broken, and funny love song.

Who is the Girl?

Chasing a ciné-trance, adrift in personal and colonial archives, Arya is a curious voyeur lost behind the lens. Not quite a girl anymore, she is part of a generation of image-makers who came of age in the 'new' South Africa, and her gaze is entangled in the country's singular experiment in freedom.

What is the Gun?

The omnipresent camera - the camera as world-maker, memory-keeper, weapon, or tool. In the filmmaker's life, it plays confidante, a means of disappearing or being seen. Zoom out and it's an archetypal shapeshifter - a historical villain and potential liberator of futures.

What do we see and hear?

Time-travelling, the film takes us on a plastic journey through archives personal and historic. It sets glimpses of intimate domestic moments, scenes from a changing South Africa, and fragments of travel, against the big frame of colonial images. Lacing it all together is Arya's narration, a ballad to the camera itself, which reflects on power, perception, memory, identity, freedom and belonging.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I believe camera archives are a form of remains, like skeletons hoarded in faraway museums. Who catalogues and classifies the ghosts of history? Who gives them value, a price per minute? Where do they belong? My film is a procession of refugee images looking for 'home'. It is an act of return and liberation to raise the bones and let them dance.

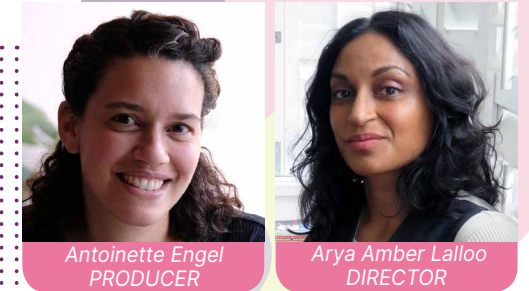
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Arya Amber Lalloo is an awarded filmmaker based in Johannesburg. Her work is artistically and politically daring, and she has held key creative roles on projects that have screened at major festivals such as Cannes, Sundance, and IDFA.

Antoinette Engel has presented immersive storytelling projects at the Venice Gap - Finance Market and IDFA's DocLab Forum. *Dorpie*, which she co-produced, premiered at IDFA Frontlight's section (2022), Dok.Fest Munich, Encounters, NYADIFF and FilmFest Frauen Welten, alongside several impact screenings.

COMPANY DETAILS

Opia Films was founded in 2021 and aims to produce provocative cinema of high artistic calibre. Female-owned and managed, it is based in Johannesburg, South Africa.



PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Opia Films

Running Time: 80 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 350 000 USD

Finances Committed: 33 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Seeking Production Finance
- Project Partners
- Consultants Working in Archival Film.



AFRICA AI

AFRICA AI investigates the hidden costs of artificial intelligence for the African continent - from the extraction of its raw natural resources to its effects on labour rights, privacy, equality, and ideas of freedom. *AFRICA AI* aims to demystify this seemingly intangible industry by engaging with the thought leaders at the cutting edge of the AI debate. This is an urgent account of what is at stake as technology companies use artificial intelligence to reshape the world.

Our film maps the lifecycle of a smartphone, allowing us as the viewer, to better understand the material and psychological consequences of this technology for Africans.

Together we explore how foreign corporations continue the colonial legacy in Africa by extracting its copper and cobalt through inhumane labour practices. We also discover how we are in fact being mined by the machines through the daily use of our mobile devices - and touch on how the current biases now encoded in data perpetuates a view of Africa.

While huge plumes of smoke rise over kilometres of shattered electronics in the e-waste dumps of Agbogbloshie in Ghana we hear from African inventors, thinkers and philosophers as they map the enormous potential within this digital revolution to create a vastly different world.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

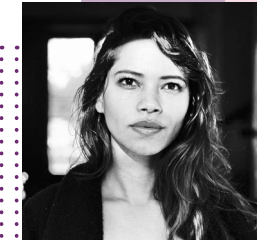
With a father who helped shape the South African labour movement and understanding the importance of working towards a more fair world, I was dismayed to learn how workers and citizens are affected within the AI production ecosystem. Our film will highlight the impact that AI has on Africa while also showcasing Africa's invaluable contribution to the AI landscape.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Amilcar Patel and **Chris Kets** have individually as Producer Director and as a duo co-produced award-winning feature documentaries, several short films, with a current documentary feature directed by Chris selected as a Cannes Docs spotlighted project 2024. They have their film work exhibited at galleries including Tate, London Museum of Design, Q21 Vienna for its conceptual and stylistic approach. They are Africa No Filter Narrative Champions and Berlinale Talents alumni with experience working on international co-productions across Europe, Brazil, Uganda and the United Kingdom.

COMPANY DETAILS

KAMVA has produced and directed multiple cross-continental episodicals with a viewership of 3 million+ online views. KAMVA focuses on underground history and alternative African futures.



Amilcar Patel
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER



Chris Kets
CO-DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: KAMVA

Running Time: 120 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 200 000 USD

Finances Committed: 10 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Introduce the Project to Market
- Find Suitable Co-Producers
- Secure Second Round of Development Funding
- Find Broadcaster Partners





BITTER SEED

Bitter Seed is an intergenerational quest for identity, with its protagonists being its director Camélia Gadhgadhi and her father, Mohamed-Lamine. It began when Mohamed-Lamine, a 56-year-old luxury cab driver in Paris, expressed his desire to “Frenchify” his name. This revelation prompted Camélia to realise that her father had been gradually distancing himself from his Algerian identity.

Initially, Camélia gets angry at what she sees as an attempt to erase their origins—as a form of shame. She starts filming their conversations, which form the backbone of this film, to understand the hidden reasons for his desire to become the “perfect immigrant.” From the Algerian Civil War in the 1990s to the 2015 terrorist attacks in France, Mohamed-Lamine’s relation to his culture and religion has indeed been shaped by violence and rejection.

Against her father’s advice, Camélia embarks on a journey to Algeria, a country she had never

lived in. There, she immerses herself in the underground techno scene known as ‘hefla’ (meaning ‘party’), which emerged in response to the oppression and violence her father had escaped. By filming young independent women at raves and capturing their conversations, allows the director to create a visually strong Algerian female character, positioning her to better counter her father’s disdain for Algeria. Both of their visions collide and a fantasized country appears between the lines.

Weaved together by experienced editor Sylvie Gadmer, different video formats are incorporated in this father-daughter visual conversation. From Mohamed-Lamine’s Mini DV archives from the 1990s; images shot by the talented DOP, Nina Bernfeld, of him in his taxi with his clients or playing golf; their discussion filmed by his daughter; and composed shots from ‘hefla’ party scenes. *Bitter Seed* is a creative proposal on identity and dignity in a French-Algerian family.

DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Zeri3a Morra (bitter seed) is an Algerian expression that refers Algerian men living in Europe who resent their homeland. *Bitter Seed* is the anatomy of this resentment, at the intersection of our paths. I want to highlight the dignity with which my father claims the freedom of absolute departure and my dignity as a French-Algerian woman.

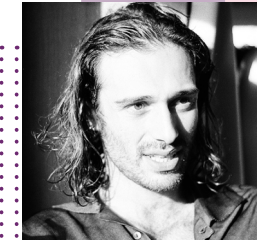
DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Camélia Gadhgadhi is a French-Algerian filmmaker. She directed two short films and was a writing coordinator and assistant to the showrunners on the first Apple TV series shot in France. *Bitter Seed* is her first feature film.

Antoine Goldet co-founded Amok Films in 2018 in Paris and has produced feature films, all of which made their World Premiere at A-list festivals and were broadcast on public TV channels in France and abroad. He is a 2024 Eurodoc participant with *Bitter Seed*.

COMPANY DETAILS

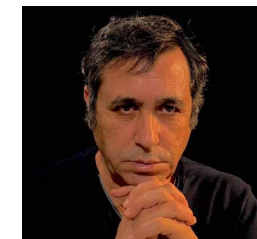
Amok Films stands for independent, innovative, and conscious documentary cinema. Sustained by filmmakers, technicians, and artists, this studio was founded in 2018 by Antoine Goldet.



Antoine Goldet
PRODUCER



Camélia Gadhgadhi
DIRECTOR



Boualem Ziani
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: France, Algeria

Production Company: Amok Films - Libre Image

Running Time: 80 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 365 769 USD

Finances Committed: 46 977 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Development and Shooting Partners: North Africa & Europe



CHILDREN OF HONEY

We are Hadza and we want the world to know who we are.

The Children of Honey are three young friends growing up in one of the oldest hunter-gatherer communities on Earth, the Hadzabe. Their home is the Yaeda Valley of Northern Tanzania, nestled amidst some of Africa's most breathtaking reserves. For 50,000 years, they have lived in peace, documenting their history around the light of a million fires, in a language spoken by around 1000 people. However, their nation has lost 90% of their land.

Our three friends, Nd!uba, Embelebi and Ngwilabe, represent the next generation, who hold the fate of the Hadza Indigenous Knowledge in their hands. Nd!uba dropped out of government school after being beaten and bullied for being Hadza. He loves to hunt but realises the increasing Datooga

cattle are causing the wildlife to disappear. Even honey is suddenly scarce, as fisher people are using bees as bait. He is curious and tours the villages of Datooga, Singida and Mbulu people. The girls, Ngwilabe and Embelebi see the trees, roots and earth as their school. However, the forests they gather from are turning into Mbulu farmland and their waterholes are being soaked up. Embelebi is torn between two worlds as she might have to move to town to care for her niece. The girls are spirited and eloquent. They rap in Hadza and one new song tells of how other tribes have fat bellies because they have stolen the food that belongs to the Hadza.

Will our characters choose to stay with the elders and keep the ancient flame alive, or leave for a new life? And what can the Hadza teach the rest of us about living in harmony with nature before it's too late?

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

A Tanzanian filmmaker collaborates with the Hadza to capture their unique way of life. Using high-end filming techniques, the film delves into their interactions with nature. Ethereal sound design and dreamlike visual effects explore Hadza beliefs, immersing the audience in a journey that inspires and motivates change.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Jigar Ganatra is an experienced filmmaker who specialises in working with indigenous communities and natural history. He is also the founder of the NGO African School of Storytelling (AFRISOS), which is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of African filmmakers.

Natalie Humphreys is a producer with over 25 years of experience in filmmaking. As the former controller of Factual for the BBC, she provided editorial, compliance, and commercial leadership across an annual content budget exceeding £100 million, which included oversight of the BBC Natural History Unit.

COMPANY DETAILS

Both AFRISOS and Storyboard are dedicated to leaving a lasting legacy with the Hadza community, primarily through the establishment of a media centre as part of a broader impact initiative aimed at amplifying the voices of the Hadza.



Natalie Humphreys
PRODUCER

Jigar Ganatra
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Tanzania, Scotland

Production Company: Storyboard Studios

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 500 000 USD

Finances Committed: 200 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Seeking Collaborators: Production and Impact Partners
- Respectful Storytelling: Film Honours Hadza Culture
- Global Audience



HOW MANY NIGHTS HOW MANY DAYS?

Younis Abdallah, a young peasant from Al-Himamiya in Upper Egypt, was unaware of the grave implications of conscription into the Egyptian Labour Corps. During World War I, the British, who controlled Egypt, established private companies to recruit labour to support their army. They presented these roles as lucrative opportunities and pressed the Egyptian authorities for large numbers of recruits to support both the Eastern front against the Ottoman Empire and, by 1917, the Western front in Europe.

Word had spread that many conscripts had not returned, indicating the perilous nature of these 'jobs'. Efforts by village leaders to prevent conscription partially succeeded, saving some but not others, like Younis's mentor, Sheikh Abbas. When Abbas was seized for conscription, Younis volunteered in his place, driven by loyalty and naivety.

Transported to the front lines in France, Younis bonded with Quabaisy, a fellow villager, whose

subsequent death spurred Younis and his peers to protest. Their leader, Sabet Haroun, organised work strikes, inspiring Younis to recognise his own potential. Despite enduring humiliation, physical punishment, and near-death experiences, the collective spirit of the group – nurtured through songs, dances, jokes, and theatre – helped Younis evolve into a resilient figure.

The documentary climaxes with a tragic massacre executed by the British against the striking workers, an event Younis miraculously survives. Returning to Egypt, his harrowing tale becomes a catalyst for the major peasant uprisings of the 1919 revolution. Through Younis's journey from a naive youth to a seasoned survivor and catalyst for change, the film exposes the brutal realities of war and colonial exploitation, highlighting the transformative power of collective resistance and the indomitable human spirit.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

The story of WWI labourers, exploited and treated as mere tools, yet still displaying remarkable resilience and bravery, resonated deeply. Particularly because they still managed to protest through strikes, jokes, and songs. This infuriating yet fascinating tale illustrates how oppressed individuals undermine power, maintain dignity, and assert their agency.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

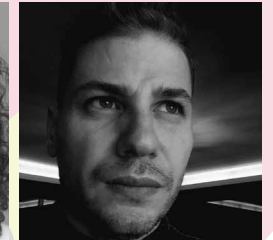
Kesmat El Sayed, a producer known for impactful storytelling, is joined by **Alaa Dajani**, a seasoned documentarian with a profound commitment to representing history and its relevance. Together, they explore overlooked narratives. Their partnership thrives on a shared passion for exposing historical injustices. Their current project dives into the untold stories of WWI labourers, challenging Eurocentric historiography while highlighting the power of collective resistance and the enduring spirit of oppressed communities.

COMPANY DETAILS

Arab-based, See Media Production, excels in crafting award-winning, socially relevant documentaries that have garnered international recognition and festival accolades.



Kesmat El Sayed
PRODUCER



Alaa Dajani
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Egypt, Germany

Production Company: See Media Production

Running Time: 80 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 480 765 USD

Finances Committed: 47 500 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Finding Artistic and Financial Partners in Animation



IN PURSUIT OF GHOSTS

How does a city hide its scars? A different name? A fresh lick of paint?

Lurking behind Durban's harbour headland sits an abandoned whaling station. Built in 1907 by Norwegian businessmen, the station stretched 1km in length – longer than even the biggest of whales. For 68 years profits rose until the tide of public opinion changed and the whaling station closed for good.

Today you'll find it overgrown with trees, buried between a military barracks and a sewage plant that quietly expels waste out to sea.

The spectre of the past is embodied by this whaling station, but we don't know what to do with it, so we've left it behind – turned a blind eye. Well, not all of us.

The ghost of a whale has returned to Durban seeking to reclaim what's left of her remains. She's a foreigner in these warm waters, dragged

off course by men with harpoons sixty years ago - but everything's different now.

The glamorous city she remembers, with its art deco hotels and palm-tree promenades, now sways like a senile watchdog guarding a bygone era. The bay that once welcomed tourists on boards and blow-up tubes now harbours effluents and disease. "At least it's better than the blood of my kin," she mutters.

Through a poetic exploration of the whaling station, told from the perspective of a whale's ghost, *In Pursuit of Ghosts* paints a portrait of a weary resort city that's permanently out of season. Its former glory owed to a trade most don't even know existed, yet all feel the ramifications of today.

Our backs may have turned on the whaling industry, but the scars remain, holding clues about who we are, where we come from, and where we are headed.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Little has been written about Norway's partnership with South Africa in their hunt for the giant mammals of the sea. Most are unaware that it even happened, so how can we begin to remember it? What has been erased from collective memory that still lingers in the cracks? Can the remnants of the whaling station reveal any answers?

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Jethro Westraad is a South African filmmaker and researcher based between Amsterdam and Durban. He holds a master's degree in directing from DocNomads, as an Erasmus Mundus scholarship recipient. Jethro's latest film, *Love, Your Neighbour* (2023), was also set in Durban and premiered in competition at IDFA and IndieLisboa.

Jacintha de Nobrega is a leading South African producer and an alumna of the Los Angeles Film School. Jacintha's latest project, *London Recruits*, won Best Documentary at the Joburg Film Festival.

COMPANY DETAILS

Row Your Boat Films is a boutique film house based in Durban, dedicated to fostering emerging local filmmakers with bold and artistic vision.



Jacintha de Nobrega
PRODUCER

Jethro Westraad
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Row Your Boat Films Running

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 330 000 USD

Finances Committed: 10 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure Production Finances and Partnerships by Way of International Co-Productions



MY FATHER KILLED BOURGUIBA

In 1988, as we journeyed to visit my father in prison, a soldier on the bus asked my older sister why our father was in prison. Emna replied, "Our father killed Bouguiba."

For years, I continued to believe that my father had really killed Bourguiba but never tried to find out more. As far as I was concerned, my father did not like Bourguiba and Bourguiba did not like my father. That was until I discovered that Bourguiba was alive. Since then, I have been trying to understand who my father is and who Bourguiba is.

This film chronicles my journey in search of my father's motivations and their impact on my life. It begins many years after his death and his involvement in a group plotting to overthrow the Tunisian regime of Bourguiba through a military coup.

My father's pursuit of change turned our family and my personal life upside down. I have since been beset by a multitude of increasingly pressing questions. What leads a person to sacrifice his and his family's safety for an ideal, an ideology, or a dream? How much has this affected my choices as a daughter, a woman and a mother?

To unearth the story, I dive into a memory box full of family photos, prison letters, relevant official archives and drawings I used to draw for and with my father. I also engage in discussions with my father's comrades and their siblings, who share similar experiences to confront them with their hidden feelings. Ultimately, I seek salvation from the heavy burden of the past to hopefully heal the open wounds of a conflict I didn't choose.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

The 1987 coup in Tunisia was not merely a political event; it became entangled with personal family matters, thrusting me into a conflict I never sought. I aim to shatter the enduring silence surrounding this conflict, spanning two, or even three, generations, and to unravel the events that unfolded for me, my family, and Tunisia throughout a third of a century of the country's history.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Tunisian producer **Sarra Ben Hassen** boasts over 25 years of experience in executive production for both local and international projects. She notably produced the Oscar-nominated short film *Brotherhood* by Meryam Joobeur. Her debut feature, *Who Do I Belong To*, premiered at the 74th Berlin International Film Festival.

Fatma Riahi is a Tunisian filmmaker. Since 2011, she has directed and produced short and medium-length documentary films. Her inaugural feature film, *A Haunted Past*, has screened at prestigious festivals such as IDFA.

COMPANY DETAILS

Instinct Bleu, founded in 2019 by Sarra Ben Hassen and Meryam Joobeur, is a Tunisian film company focused on nurturing Arab and African talents through production.



Sarra Ben Hassen
PRODUCER



Fatma Riahi
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Tunisia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia

Production Company: Instinct Bleu

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 370 000 USD

Finances Committed: 105 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Explore Co-Production Possibilities
- Seek Industry Feedback
- Funding Opportunities from Funds and Broadcasters



THE ONE WHO SINGS

The One Who Sings takes you behind the incredible voice and mesmerising stage persona of Zolani Mahola, South African music icon who rose to international fame as the lead singer of Freshlyground. The blend of visuals and music provides an intimate insight into the experiences that shaped her life and forced her to confront her inner voice, encouraging the viewer to do the same for themselves. In an empty theatre, Zolani, illuminated in the spotlight on the stage, sings the words to a familiar song “What would you do if you knew the truth”, contrasted with scenes from her stage performances in primary school and international career.

Revisiting her great Aunt, Nyameka Mahola’s home, Zolani looks through old family photos, sharing her story. Born in 1981 amidst Apartheid protests, losing her mother at 6, enduring abuse, and struggling with identity, university introduced destructive coping mechanisms. In 2002, Freshlyground was formed, changing her

life forever, touring the world, and performing alongside musical greats. The camera follows her on stage at the peak of her career, while she shares her internal suffering. Years of recovery, childhood reflection, and reconnection with nature allowed Zolani to rediscover her true self.

The film captures her new journey as ‘The One Who Sings’, a name given to her by the South African public. Intimate rehearsal sessions with her new band, The Feminine Force, reveal an empowering safe space for female artists. The members, Sky Dladla, Genevieve Lee, Cal Thompson, Ntombe Halam & Chanté Phillips, share their journeys. Visiting schools and organisations, Zolani uses music to connect with fellow survivors and youth, nurturing healing. Through interviews, archive, and musical performances, Zolani’s story unfolds, revealing how our lives are shaped by our sacred time of childhood, but we too, have the power to change our stories

DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Zolani’s music has shaped the soundtrack of my own life. With a young South African female perspective, we’ll capture the transformative power of her story. By taking the audience on a journey into Zolani’s innermost thoughts and feelings and contrasting this with her public persona, the film will inspire everyone, particularly women in Africa and around the world to embrace their truth and create hope with their voices.

DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Chelsea Art is a South African filmmaker, honours degree graduate and founder of See Art Films. She participated in the Durban FilmMart Business Lab in 2023 and Access Lab in 2024. Chelsea has produced and directed various documentaries, short films and music videos, that challenge the existing narrative.

Rene Weston currently works in film for impact and alternative distribution, with extensive experience in the TVC and feature film production space. Together Chelsea and Rene have 20 years of experience as women in the industry.

COMPANY DETAILS

See Art Films is a Cape Town based production house with a focus on impact storytelling.



PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: See Art Films

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 240 000 USD

Finances Committed: 33 762 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Production and Impact Distribution Funding Partners
- Distributors
- Streamers and Broadcasters
- Linking with Industry Professionals Invested in the Power of Musical Storytelling



media

UNSUNG

In this pilot series, an adult child of a military veteran interviews her mother, an unsung hero of the South African liberation movement. The heroine in question is Sibongile “Promise” Khumalo who left the country at age 14 for military training in various parts of the world including Russia, Angola and numerous African countries. The child in question is renowned journalist and award-winning TV & radio broadcaster, Masechaba Khumalo, who was born in exile as a product of the revolution and subsequently had an extraordinary childhood raised by a soldier. In this series, mother and daughter sit down, for the first time, in an exclusive no-holds-barred interview. This is the story of a national hero whose story has never been told on television. Their journey allows mother and daughter to navigate their discourse.

MaKhumalo has been victimised by the system throughout her entire life in a way that compromised her ability to mother her daughter the way she would have liked. Her greatest wish is not to perpetuate this victimisation onto her daughter. This is a story about healing and breaking generational curses.

To break generational curses means to end toxic patterns that haunt your family history. It means to break away from negative expectations assigned to you. Ending family generational curses means taking the necessary steps to address past trauma. We can't change the past but we certainly have the power to influence our future generations by re-writing the narrative and telling our story.



DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Families have stories, the ones never spoken and the ones with contested truths and lies. My parents are in their 80's. The need for closure around certain family stories is urgent. By watching aspirational icons having courageous conversations with their adult children, we hope viewers will find new ways to have similar transformative family conversations.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Masechaba Khumalo is a renowned journalist and award-winning radio and TV broadcaster. She has produced and presented TV programmes on SABC 1, 2, and 3, as well as eTV, SABC NEWS, ENCA, and BET.

Amanda Lane is an award-winning writer and director of Africa's most groundbreaking TV shows. She has created, written, directed, and consulted on 30 shows and films across genres, including the Pan-African hit MTV *Shuga*, which debuted Lupita Nyong'o, and *Is'thunzi*, which earned Thuso Mbedu International Emmy nominations (2017, 2018).

COMPANY DETAILS

Masechaba Media is a holistic 360 media and communications agency run by African women, for Africans, and specialises in content that promotes the African agenda.



Masechaba Khumalo
PRODUCER



Amanda Lane
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Series

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Masechaba Media

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 161 052.62 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure Prospective Funders for International Syndication
- Learn and Meet Professional Industry Stakeholders



WE HAD THE MOON!

In *We had the Moon!*, Pamella Edouard's journey unfolds, illuminating the profound impact of racism, colonialism, and slavery. Growing up in a Mauritian ghetto, Pamella, like many Mauritians, was unaware that her Chagossian neighbours were forcibly expelled from their homeland during the Cold War to make way for a UK-US military base. Despite their shared appearance, Pamella despised them, and she wonders how she could harbour such prejudice against people who look so much like her.

However, a transformative encounter with Charlésia Alexis, a Chagossian woman on a bus in England, shattered Pamella's preconceptions and ignited her mission to shed light on their plight.

The film delves into the Chagossians' harrowing history, revealing how they were chased from the Chagos Archipelago by the UK and the US for the construction of a military base. This expulsion echoes the historical injustices of slavery, as the Chagossians were uprooted from their ancestral

lands and deprived of their basic rights.

Through a blend of animation, archival footage, and first-hand accounts, *We had the Moon!* vividly portrays the ongoing struggle of the Chagossian community for justice and the right to return home. Despite international condemnation and legal victories, the UK government's indifference persists, underscoring the enduring impact of colonial attitudes and policies.

As time slips away for the elderly Chagossians, their grandchildren inherit the mantle of resistance, determined to preserve their culture and reclaim their identity. The film serves as a rallying cry for solidarity and accountability, urging viewers to confront the uncomfortable truths of colonial history and stand in solidarity with marginalized communities fighting for justice and dignity.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

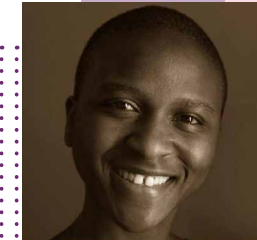
In 2010, meeting Charlesia, a Chagossian woman, shattered my world. The conversations with her shed light on hidden aspects of my origins, my African roots, my link to the Chagossian people. Why were those issues left out of the official narrative? So many questions haunt me ever since this June 2010. Charlésia passed away but her words, her voice, her smile always on my mind. I want to share her story.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Zippy Nyaruri is an upcoming producer recognised for her work *Truck Mama* for which she received awards from IDFA and AfriDoc. Her notable works include *Mama Emerre* and *Zebu and the Photo Fish*, screened at esteemed film festivals like Durban, Aspen and Toronto (TIFF). With a master's degree in Film and Photography Studies, she has also attended IDFA Academy, Berlinale and Durban Talent Campus.

COMPANY DETAILS

Dousma Dousma is a recently established Mauritian production company with the primary objective of producing documentaries like *We Had the Moon!* and other projects such as *The Place*.



Zippy Nyaruri
PRODUCER



Pamella Edouard
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Mauritius

Production Company: Dousma Dousma Production

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 355 223.03 USD

Finances Committed: 63 664.48 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Producers
- Sales Agents
- Broadcasters
- Film Funds



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JAY FLY

Meet Jay, the all-American teenage golden boy – athletic, smart, good-looking and popular. But hold onto your hats, folks, because Jay's African vacay adventure takes a wild turn when he makes an unfortunate nosedive out of their holiday treehouse and meets his maker... or does he?

Instead of pushing daisies, Jay hits the respawn button, but not as the heartthrob we know and love. Nope, he's back as a fly – a buzzing, winged

nuisance. Now, Jay must navigate the savage, wild, crazy bug-eat-bug world while trying to reconnect with his family, who are caught up in life's day-to-day challenges and see him as nothing more than a pesky bug to be swatted, squashed or sprayed... because when you're this small and ugly, everything wants to kill you.

Off the wall and zany, *Jay Fly* is a dark, fish-out-of-water adult animated comedy.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

With *Jay Fly*, we aim to create an incredible adult animation show to appeal to the global audience through exploring different perspectives in the human world and in the bugworld. Fastpaced, ruthless and zany in the insect domain, while dysfunctionally calm in the human world. The storylines push the envelope of humour through wacky characters and funny situations. At the core of this story is about being human. Life in the bug world is so overtly brutal and in the human world seemingly gentle but in any world, when you are this small and ugly, everything wants to kill you!

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Nosipho Maketo-van den Bragt, CEO of Chocolate Tribe, co-writer and producer of *Jay Fly* is also a creative entrepreneur and seasoned legal expert. The *Jay Fly* team consist of the original creators of the show – **Greg Blyth** and **Barend Kruger**. Further, highly skilled animation directors – Rob van den Bragt and Tiaan Franken. Collectively, this team offers over 25 years of technical and creative experience in the industry, with global award-winning projects, high-end visuals, and compelling narratives. The team have collaboratively placed South Africa on the map for original stories in animation, feature films and VFX.

COMPANY DETAILS

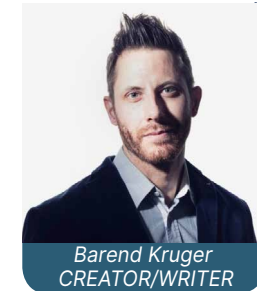
Chocolate Tribe is an award-winning multifaceted animation, visual effects, and IP Development studio with over 25 years of international experience. The company was founded in 2014 by Nosipho Maketo-van den Bragt and currently has two branches, in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Since its establishment, Chocolate Tribe has delivered numerous projects with local and international partners in the animation, VXF, and IP Development space.



Nosipho Maketo-van den Bragt
PRODUCER



Greg Blyth
CREATOR/WRITER



Barend Kruger
CREATOR/WRITER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Adult Animated Series

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Chocolate Tribe Jay Fly Ltd

Running Time: 8 episodes, 22 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 7 351 302 USD

Finances Committed: 107 650 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Looking for Investors/Financing Partners
- Pre-sales/Distributors
- Building Partnerships and Networking



LEGEND OF HYENA MAN

A once-cherished childhood ends when Abeo is given a life responsibility to look after his mother. His aspirations to become the great Master of Hyena man succeeding his father timidly diminishes, however, the return of Baba, a renowned master who was his father's assistant back in the day rekindled his passion. The great deeds of his father woven into his mind blossom within Abeo's memory. Gruelling working hours and even Baba's stern treatment fail to intimidate him from seeking the hyenas that Baba owns.

Meanwhile, Abeo's mother choice to remarry overshadows all his attempts to provide for his household and blinds him even to consider his father's unfavourable impression of Baba. His determination to attend Baba's last day of performance in the village on his mother's wedding day sparks a fierce fight with his mother, leading to his suspension from home.

Looking for a retreat in Baba's presence, Abeo stumbles on the mysterious walkout of Baba with his hyenas. He curiously follows them and sees when Baba rolls into ashes and merges with his

hyena clans. Abeo who is now closer to Baba's hyenas than ever and has nowhere to go decides to implore Baba to take him on his journey so that he can perform with hyenas disregarding the stranger thing he witnessed.

But fate takes a different turn as Abeo begins to observe the signs that Baba is involved in his father's death. The Alpha, under the mystical force, detects Abeo's discovery and before he does anything, He readies himself to end Abeo. Yet, a surprising intervention appears as Kofi, a member of Baba's clan attacks Baba securing Abeo, and all the hyenas one by one stand against Baba's side, set to rip him apart.

This 2D and 3D animated picture is aimed at viewers aged 13 and above as the narrative delves into uncovering dark truths and the transformative power of confronting one's past and embracing one's true calling. Through the character's struggle to follow his aspiration, it explores loyalty, search for identity, betrayal, and the mythical connection between humans and animals.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

As an Ethiopian, I grew up with the rich myths of hyenas and witnessed the unique bond between the people of Harar and these animals, but unfortunately Mastering Hyenas has never been taken as a serious profession much like Abeo's journey which involves becoming a Master of Hyenas.

Beyond all, overcoming the loss of his father and the societal burdens that come with pursuing one's dreams relates with my own struggle to enter the entertainment industry amidst relentless criticism. Through this film, my aim is not only to take the audience on an emotional journey, connecting them with the vibrant and spirited folktales of Africa but this story is to inspire those who dare to defy societal expectations and chase their dreams.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Elshadye Temesgen is a writer, director, and cinematographer. She graduated in Performing Arts from Gondar University and holds a one-year International Filmmaking Certificate from MultiChoice Talent Factory. Some of her works include *The Enigmatic Mark*, *Abi and Hanna*, and *Truth*.

COMPANY DETAILS

M2VPRODUCTION is dedicated to telling authentic African stories. Led by founder Mathew Valerian, an award-winning filmmaker, the company brings a fresh perspective to the entertainment industry.



Joshua Faber
PRODUCER



Elshadye Temesgen
DIRECTOR



Mathew Valerian
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Feature Length

Country: Tanzania

Production Company: M2VPRODUCTION

Running Time: 85 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 456 766 USD

Finances Committed: 54 760 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Financing
- Co-Producers
- Distribution and Sales



LEGENDS OF BULAN

On a voyage of no return, off the Island of Goree, exiled renegades lost at sea uncover ancient tablets with hieroglyphs in a hidden cave. With it, they discover not only their mysterious Identities as 'Marked Ones' but also their urgent mission as guardians of the realm. They must defeat the tyrannical dynasty and restore the lost civilization and glory of Bulan. However, before they do so, they must discover themselves.

As the weight of prophecy dawns on them and they realise that time is short, the renegades must now embark on a quest, to find Zana, the Queen of the Unconquered, and unite the other tribes in time to face the War to End All Wars. The fate of Bulan hangs in the balance.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Akosua, a broken female mercenary picks up herself and leads a band of besmirched renegades to face their greatest purpose and their greatest fear: the tyrannical dynasty. Join their journey in this epic series.

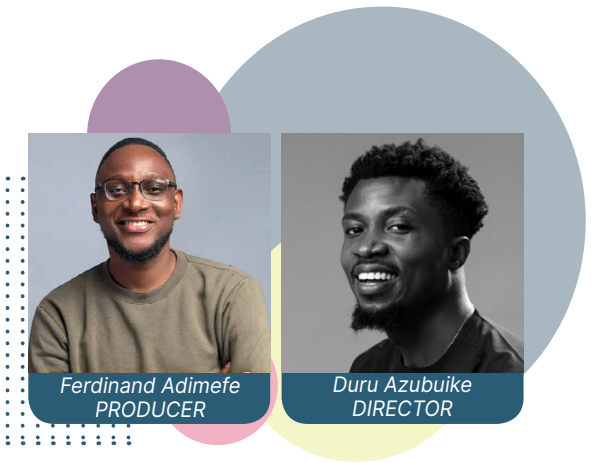
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Producer, **Ferdy Adimefe**, is a storyteller, an elected member at the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (the Emmys), a creative entrepreneur, MIPAD awardee, and the CEO/founder of Magic Carpet Studios, one of Africa's most renowned animation studios.

Director, **Duru Azubuiké** is an award-winning 3D artist, 3D art director and cinematographer. His portfolio includes projects such as *Gangs of Lagos*, *Microsoft*, and *Sesame Street*. He is also the 3D art director and co-founder at Magic Carpet Studios.

COMPANY DETAILS

Magic Carpet Studios innovates through storytelling, using high-tech animation and timeless, endless art to share wholesome stories with a global audience.



Ferdinand Adimefe
PRODUCER

Duru Azubuiké
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Series

Country: Nigeria

Production Company: Magic Carpet Studios

Running Time: 30-40 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 5 000 000 USD

Finances Committed: TBC

GOALS AT DFM

- To finance the production of *Legends of Bulan* and secure interest in potential distribution.



MONSTER NANNY

Tagline:
From African Godzilla to farmyard nanny: a monstrous family adventure.

Monster Nanny is a monstrously funny and heartwarming Animation Style - 2D Cutout/ Traditional Family Adventure Series, (targeted at kids 6-11), set in a world where monsters and humans coexist, even in the movie industry. Tayt is an obnoxious African A-list Kaiju monster movie star known on-screen as the African Godzilla. But when he loses his roar, his career goes into decline. Forced to crash on a rural chicken egg farm with his childhood human friend Chenai, a widowed go-getter chicken egg farmer, and her four rambunctious kids, whom Tayt affectionately calls the little terrors.

As Tayt balances body-slamming monsters on-screen with wrangling toddlers into bed,

running underground pillow fight clubs, playing paparazzi dodgeball, and surviving the chicken run Illuminati, he learns that true stardom isn't about the glitz of Nollywood; it's about genuine connections. His new fragmented family may learn to embrace their inner monsters, but can Tayt find a way to keep his fragmented family together and reclaim his place as the king of the monster actors?

Amidst monster-sized chaos, belly laughs, and squishy hugs, *Monster Nanny* imparts lessons on sticking together, being brave, and embracing your inner monster, by accepting the parts of ourselves that the world won't. So get ready to laugh until you cry, or at least cry until you laugh, because in this series, family is always an adventure.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I was raised on a healthy diet of gloriously cheesy Nollywood and cult monster movies. Besides being a "bombastic" mix of both, this series is a personal reminder in a world where performative perfection is often the price of love. You can find these moments freely in life's most perfectly imperfect moments, with the family you never knew you needed.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Tafadzwa Hove, an award-winning Zimbabwean animation director and writer, gained acclaim for the short film *Mukudzei* and was part of the Annie award-winning *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire*. He challenges African stereotypes, focusing on narratives depicting marginalised communities' resilience.

Kaya Kuhn, a producer with 10+ years of experience, line-produced BBC1's *Zog* and *The Snail* and *The Whale* and co-produced Netflix's *Seal Team*. She served as senior series producer for *Kizazi Moto: Generation Fire* on Disney+ and was the consultant producer for *Aau's Song in Star Wars: Visions Volume 2*. In 2022, she founded Those Production Girls.

COMPANY DETAILS

Those Production Girls is a production management firm founded to revolutionise the management of animated content. Founded by Kaya Kuhn, whose credits include *Kizazi Moto*, *Star Wars Visions* and *Supa Team 4* amongst other notable and award-winning productions.



Kaya Kuhn
 PRODUCER



Tafadzwa Hove
 DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Series

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Those Production Girls

Running Time: 13 episodes, 26 minutes each

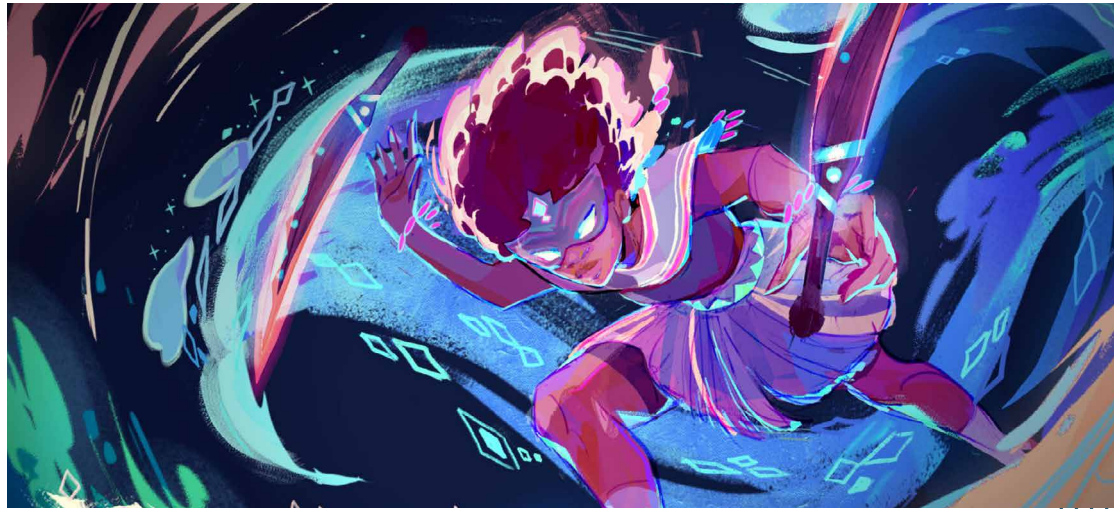
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 7 119 330.27 USD

Finances Committed: 20 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Potential Co-producers
- Sales Agent/Distributor
- Funding for Further Development



OARONA

Oarona is a captivating tale set in the vibrant but perilous streets of Cape Town's slums. The story follows the journey of a young girl named Oarona, who stumbles upon her latent magical abilities and ancestral heritage after a series of mysterious events unfold in her community. As she grapples with her newfound powers, Oarona forms a deep and unlikely bond with her wise grandmother, who guides her through the complexities of their magical lineage. Together,

they embark on a transformative quest to uncover the truth behind their family's past while navigating the treacherous landscape of their urban surroundings. Along the way, Oarona must confront formidable challenges and dangerous adversaries, ultimately discovering the true strength that lies within her. *Oarona* is a compelling narrative of self-discovery, resilience, and the enduring power of familial bonds in the face of adversity.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Oarona celebrates community, magic, and familial bonds in Cape Town's townships. Oarona navigates a world where danger and enchantment coexist, showcasing the importance of unity. Central is her bond with her grandmother, steeped in tradition and ancient magic. As a director, I aim to empower with this enchanting tale of resilience and transformation.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

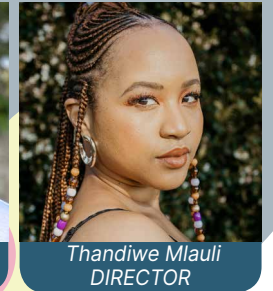
Thandiwe Mlauli, CEO of Studio Yezi, is a trailblazer in animation from Johannesburg, South Africa. With a BFA from the New York Film Academy and experience at Black Women Animate Bootcamp, she pioneers diversity in South Africa's animation. Her studio empowers emerging talents globally. As a Women In Animation alumna, Thandiwe champions women's voices, embodying resilience and creativity.

COMPANY DETAILS

Studio Yezi is a home for the bright ideas we bring to life. We amplify diverse voices in animation, shaping inclusive narratives that inspire change and celebrate the richness of human experience.



AJ Pitre
PRODUCER



Thandiwe Mlauli
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Feature Film

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Studio Yezi

Running Time: 101 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 7 000 000 USD

Finances Committed: 10 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Co-production
- Financing
- Team Building
- Sales Agent/Distribution





R.E.M. RAPID EYE MYSTERY

In the not-so-distant future, humanity suffers from the curse of nightmares that grip their minds, preventing them from sleeping for more than half an hour, lest they transform into crazy people, leading to disasters and chaos in the world. Life becomes tragic without sleep, as people lose control over their actions.

The story revolves around Sherif, an Egyptian police officer, who possesses a unique ability to sleep without issues, finding solace in his nightmares rather than fearing them. This ability becomes his weapon to combat nightmares and defend humanity. Sherif's path intersects with Najwa, a psychiatrist, who seeks to understand the phenomenon of nightmares and how to treat them. Alongside her trusted companion, "Zaytouna the Cat," who can transform into other beings. They are joined by Sheikh Baraka, who believes nightmares are a divine punishment for humanity and seeks to communicate with and tame them.

Throughout their journey, they face many obstacles, including a suspicious organisation led by a corrupt businessman who seeks to spread more chaos through nightmares for personal gain. The three heroes eventually discover a memorandum from a soldier of the past who participated in a world war. Upon reading the memorandum, a gateway opens to the original world of nightmares, revealing a terrifying secret behind this phenomenon. Hope will return anew, borne by the resilient souls who persevere and vanquish the nightmares that haunt their existence. As they conquer their deepest fears, they become beacons of survival, guiding humanity through the darkest of nights into the dawn of a brighter future.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

In a world where reality is scarier than nightmares, we delve into their origins, reflecting humanity's darkest history. As filmmakers, our aim is a universally relatable narrative. Imagine a world without sleep, where nightmares bring chaos. Our goal is to create a story that everyone can connect with, while also meeting international standards for accessibility. We, storytellers, have a duty to bring hope and make a positive impact on people's lives, even in the darkest stories and times.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

The show is co-directed by Mahmoud Hameda and Ahmad Thabit, both Egyptian graduates of the High Cinema Institute.

Mahmoud Hameda, CEO and Co-founder of Samaka Studio, has over 15 years of experience in animation. He has directed two short films and has worked on TV commercials and cinema movies.

Ahmad Thabit, CCO and Co-founder of Samaka Studio, is an illustrator and animation filmmaker. He has produced multiple animated films and received awards at prestigious festivals, including a selection at the Annecy Film Festival.

COMPANY DETAILS

Samaka Studio is a leading MENA animation studio, committed to raising industry standards through authentic storytelling and cultural representation, to establish North African animation globally.



Mahmoud Hameda
DIRECTOR



Ahmad Thabit
DIRECTOR



Ahmad Abdelhameed
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Series

Country: Egypt

Production Company: Samaka Studio Running

Running Time: 120 minutes

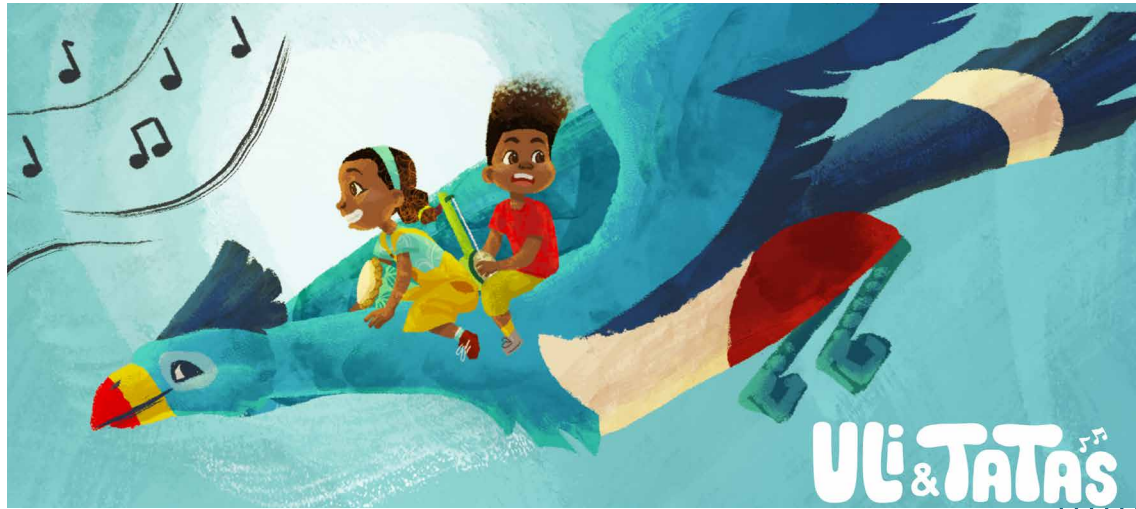
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 6 500 000 USD

Finances Committed: 6 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Production Partners
- Investors/Producers
- Pre-Sales Agreements
- Platform Partnerships
- International Distribution and Marketing



ULI & TATA'S AFRICAN NURSERY RHYMES

Uli & Tata's African Nursery Rhymes is a 2D animated children's series that follows the extraordinary adventures of two siblings - Uli and her brother Tata.

When they stumble upon magical traditional instruments, they inadvertently summon Tuki, a

wise blue giant turaco bird from the Kakamega rainforest. Together, they journey across the continent in search of Africa's nursery rhymes.

Through song and story, they learn important life lessons while celebrating Africa's rich cultural and natural heritage.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

In our creative journey, nothing has resonated with us quite like our animated children's series *Uli & Tata's African Nursery Rhymes*. Conceived amidst the challenges of Covid lockdowns, *Uli & Tata* emerged from a heartfelt desire – as newly minted parents of two young boys – to fill the glaring void of African children's content on our beloved TV screens and streaming platforms. This robs contemporary African children of media that reflects their lived experiences, environments, and heritage. While traditional folk stories and music serve as invaluable repositories of African culture, the encroachment of urbanisation and the proliferation of Western content have marginalised our storytelling traditions. Nevertheless, the burgeoning demand for African children's content, fuelled by increased internet access, has ignited a digital arts renaissance with boundless growth potential. *Uli & Tata's African Nursery Rhymes* not only delivers an authentically African animated series but also serves as a catalyst for addressing critical cultural and ecological issues, while propelling Africa's digital arts economy forward.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Chief Nyamweya is an author, digital artist, creative director, and co-founder of Pungulu Pa Productions and Freehand Studios: two twin digital arts and social impact studios based in Nairobi, Kenya. His work fuses storytelling, illustration, and animation to create visions of an alternative African future.

COMPANY DETAILS

Pungulu Pa Productions is an animation studio dedicated to creating African children's content that celebrates culture and natural history through fun and entertaining experiences.



Sarah Mallia
PRODUCER



Chief Nyamweya
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated series

Country: Kenya

Production Company: Pungulu Pa Productions

Running Time: 52 episodes, 5 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 2 500 000 USD

Finances Committed: 272 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Financing
- Co-Production Partnerships
- Industry Networking and Feedback
- Distribution/Marketing



UNSEEN

Unseen is an adult animated anthology series that delves into hidden non-human worlds and the fascinating challenges they face. Drawing on the anthology formats of *Love, Death & Robots* and *Kizazi Moto*, each episode has its own visual language and animation style for each animal or plant protagonist.

We invite viewers to step outside of their human-centric selves and see life from across species lines, drawing them into perspectives they've never considered before to celebrate the inherent unity that exists within all things.

As a high-end series, *Unseen's* narratives are told with unflinching and violent realism. We hone in on animal, plant, and other sentient lives without dialogue or voiceover. The stories are visually driven, fast-paced, and fraught with danger.

1. In a besieged city in Ancient Egypt, when a hungry cat identifies its prey from among the

2. messenger pigeons used to call for aid, will its hunting instincts doom the city to attack?
2. At the heart of the Great Migration, can a wildebeest resist the allure of a plant that slowly poisons it from the inside?
3. How is it to be a succulent ripped out of the sunny desert sands and shipped across the world to sit on a windowsill in a cold apartment?
4. What does an octopus mother, terrorised by a herd of seals that chase her through the watery depths, dream of when she sleeps?
5. How does an old crow, abandoned by its group and cast into the wilderness, get its own back?
6. In the distant future, will an interstellar ark guided by artificial intelligence be able to safely transport the last hope for life to an exoplanet, or will it succumb to the enchanting siren song of a black hole?

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Can we push the limits of storytelling to experience life from other Earthlings' perspectives? Our fascination with non-humans leads us toward empathy for other species who think and feel, challenging the idea that we are the sole inheritors of our planet. *Unseen* fosters a global collaborative network, bringing together diverse artistic visions to explore non-human worlds.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Jason and **Devon** are co-creators in film, docs, theatre, and series. Among many residencies, labs, and festivals they've been selected for, their first feature, *Carissa*, won the La Biennale Prize at the Final Cut of Venice International Film Festival '23.

From the biodiverse Namaqualand, Jason is intimate with plant medicines, while Devon dreams of non-human cinema and magical realism. Annemarie strives to create engaging experiences for audiences of all backgrounds, believing that story has the power to challenge perspectives.



PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Series

Country: South Africa

Running Time: 6 episodes (anthology), 15-25 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget:	TBC
Finances Committed:	TBC

GOALS AT DFM

- To align ourselves with series broadcasters and to foster independent co-productions with international animation studios.

2024 TALENTS DURBAN

Durban FilmMart Institute proudly partners with Berlinale Talents to present the 17th edition of Talents Durban. Bringing together rising African film professionals, it is an integral initiative of Berlinale Talents and has been a successful partnership since 2019. This training and development platform offers selected Talents participants six weeks of mentorship and the opportunity to present their film projects to selected decision-makers.

After a rigorous adjudication process, 25 film projects and 4 film critics from 15 countries across the continent have made the final cut. The 2024 selection includes 4 animations, 6 documentaries, 5 feature fiction, 4 series, and 6 short films.

Talents Durban is categorised into these four sections:

- **Storytelling Lab** focuses on advanced consultation and mentoring for features, shorts, and episodic projects, offering scriptwriting workshops.
- **Doc Lab** provides hands-on training and mentorship for submitted documentaries.
- **Animation Lab** offers one-on-one mentorship for animation directors and screenwriters, focusing on character and visual development specific to Africa.
- **Talent Press** provides mentorship for emerging African film journalists and critics.

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TALENT PRESS

BOB PERFECT

Bob Perfect is the host of the award-winning *The Almost Perfect Podcast*. He's a cultural journalist who has been published by Noisey, Hypebeast, Afropunk, Mail & Guardian and Bubblegum Club.

COUNTRY: South Africa



TONY ASANKOMAH

Tony Asankomah is a film critic, creative writer, and visionary behind GhMoviefreak.com – Ghana's foremost platform for film reviews and promotions.

COUNTRY: Ghana



TIMOTHY NIWAMANYA

Timothy Niwamanya is a writer, filmmaker and podcaster. He co-hosts *The Cinema Red Pill* podcast. It is one of Uganda's longest-running podcasts with over 100 episodes.

COUNTRY: Uganda

YOUSRA EL-SHARKAWY

Youssra El-Sharkawy is an Egyptian culture journalist and film critic with over 14 years of experience. Her work has graced the pages of various Egyptian, Arab, and international websites. Additionally, she excels as a freelance translator and playwright, having authored three published books.

COUNTRY: Egypt



BABY BLUE

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animation

Country: South Africa

Language: English

Running Time: 5-7 minutes

A story of how daydreaming of open skies and vast seas saved a child from their restrictions.

SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

Gerphan Louw - This is a story about personal experience. How daydreaming helps many queer children escape societal and parental restrictions and how a creative outlet is a lifeline for queer youth. My experience using eyeliner for the first time was life-changing. I felt like I was free for the first time, flying to a place where gender rules could not get me and my restrictive upbringing could not follow. I think with this project we are trying to recapture the first feeling of freedom queer people have, and how beautiful and innocent it is.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Allyssa Peters is an artist passionate about weaving together rich stories, Ally is always finding ways to learn and improve how their writing translates to a visual medium. They are skilled in various areas of 3D and 2D production, including research and story development, asset creation, post-production and motion graphics.



ALLYSSA PETERS

HUNT ME NOT

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animation

Country: Kenya

Language: English, Swahili, Sheng

Running Time: 6 Episodes, 20 minutes

Socials: Facebook

Hunt Me Not is an adaptation of an original 20-page comic book series by The Laikipian based on 'real life events' set in the stunning landscape of Laikipia, Kenya. It revolves around Leshan, a reformed poacher working at a Kenyan ranch, a sanctuary for endangered species. However, Leshan's transformation doesn't sit well with his former associates, particularly Leitato, who now sees him as a threat amidst a serious poaching crisis following trade routes from Africa to the Far East.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

For decades, Africa's wildlife and other resources have attracted different interests. *The Hunt Me Not* animation series unfolds in this dangerous underworld fuelled by poaching, climate tyranny, and resource-driven crimes that breed corruption, money laundering, and constant conflicts creating a more insecure and unsustainable future for everyone, humans and animals alike.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Noella Luka is an award-winning Kenyan filmmaker, a WIA (Women in Animation) 2024 semi-finalist who champions conservation, climate action, and mental health through documentaries, TV shows, and comic books, raising global awareness.



NOELLA LUKA

TASTE BUDS

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animation

Country: South Africa

Language: English

Running Time: 13 Minutes

Socials: Instagram

Mother Earth has created a world called The Garden, filled with vegetables of all ages destined to grow and harness their magical nutrient power at Sprout High under the hand of Elder Kale (the oldest green vegetable). She intervenes when Elder Kale's bias excludes all the non-green, countryside vegetables from Sprout High. Reluctantly Elder Kale agrees to enrol a non-green, countryside vegetable; but only if they complete the 3 Seed Challenges. Best friends Tom Tomato and Carly Cauliflower are chosen, but only one can attend Sprout High. As they face challenges and Elder Kale's sabotage, their friendship is tested. Who will be the last vegetable standing and is their friendship worth the sacrifice?

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My goal is to start the conversation of a positive relationship towards food, self-worth and being kind to others from a young age. Using the imaginary world of The Garden and the relatable vegetable characters, I hope to entertain and also challenge children's views, thoughts and engagements to ultimately have both a positive individual and collective influence regarding food, self-worth and kindness.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Palesa Lebona - Founder at Watchdog Media and a multi-award-winning filmmaker, aiming to provoke thought and drive dialogue about human issues through education and entertainment using video content.



PALESA LEBONA

TOMODOMO: TOGETHER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animation

Country: Nigeria

Language: English

Running Time: 23 Minutes

Socials: Instagram

When things go horribly wrong in Noa, the small quiet village is on the brink of extinction. Beta has to join forces with his rival, Iota, who knows a little too much about Noa's lost history that will help him uncover many unsolved missing persons cases and find Alfa, his sister.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

With this project, we aim to display the beauty and ingenuity of African narratives through animation. We'll create vibrant stories highlighting diversity and rich storytelling traditions in West Africa and beyond, while exploring the continent's stunning landscapes and wildlife to inspire world-building and character designs.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Kanebi Chidinma, creative director of animated shorts like *Tomodomo*, *Fourteenagers*, *Citrus*, and *The Chi-Chi Misadventures*, showcased her work at AFRIFF, Zuma Film Festival (2023), and Lift-off Global first-time filmmaker festival (2024). She's a full-time 2D animator at Vortex Corp. Animation Studio, also contributing to Proud African Roots' (PAR) series *Grandma Wura's School Bus* on DSTV Channel.



KANEBI CHIDINMA

AKAL

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary

Country: Morocco

Language: Arabic, Amazigh

Running Time: 90 Minutes

In the heart of the Moroccan mountains, a pasture experiences the seasonal arrival of a tribe of shepherds, disrupted in winter by another foreign 'tribe' the skiers who are remnants of French colonial influence. Through personal archives and narratives from people she has known since childhood, the director, a former ski athlete, revives her memories and delves into the hidden mysteries of this land.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Skiing in Oukaimeden shaped my youth, but only later did I grasp its environmental impact. The village's dual identity, as a skiing destination and pastoral land, sparked my vision. Through photography and filmmaking, I aim to reveal its stories and preserve its cultural heritage.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Basma Rkioui - a Moroccan director, cinematographer, and former ski athlete holds a degree from ESAV School Marrakech. Her short film *Louka* reflect her deep connection to Oukaimeden village. She co-founded ESAV Doc Lab, a vital documentary film hub in Morocco.



BASMA RKIQUI

BREAKING THE MOLD

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary

Country: Ghana

Language: English, French

Running Time: 60 Minutes

Socials: Instagram

Breaking the Mold follows Bgirl Tris Naomi, a Ghanaian breakdancer challenging societal norms. Mentored by Bboy Lyricx, she competes internationally, defying gender roles in a male-dominated scene. The film explores her journey, showcasing resilience and breaking barriers in breakdancing.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Growing up, I was obsessed with becoming a breakdancer. So, telling this story is personal. The themes of breakdancing and balancing career with family reflect some of my personal experiences. I have spent over a year getting to know the African breakdancing community. With an inspiring female lead and breakdancing's Olympic debut, I am honoured to bring such a timely African story to the world.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Michael Ansah is a filmmaker hailing from Accra, Ghana. With several years as a director, he brings underrepresented African stories to light. In 2022, Michael completed his first short documentary titled *Life in Limbo*. He premièred it for the first time in Accra at the Goethe Institute in 2023.



MICHEL ANSAH

KLOHO (HÉRITAGE)

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary

Country: Côte d'Ivoire

Language: French, Tagbana

Running Time: 60 Minutes

Socials: Facebook

My native languages are Tagbana and Avikam, but I do not speak them; I only speak French. I was born in Côte d'Ivoire, and I have always lived there. Yet, I feel like I am not entirely Ivorian. Kloho is a return to Katiola, the land of my ancestors, the land where I was born, to connect, with the help of my grandfather Lonan, to my Tagbana culture. In this quest, the figure of my father reappears, of whom I have no memory. Through him and learning Tagbana, I regain my place within a family and a culture that I did not know.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

There's a saying that goes: "When you don't know where you're going, you have to look back to where you came from". In this film, I decided to go back to my paternal roots in Katiola, in search of cultural landmarks to which I could attach myself. Through this experience of return, I'll try not only to make family with the family of my father, who died when I was 4, but also to put down roots in this land, this culture and this Tagbana society to which I belong and whose habits I'm unaware of.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Estelle Kone is an Ivorian film director. She is currently developing her 1st feature-length documentary, *Kloho*, which participated in the writing residencies of FIDADOC and Impala in 2023. She is also the director of two documentaries, *Pas bandits* and *Nostalgie*, which has won several awards at festivals. Estelle also works as an assistant director and director on series and fiction sets.



ESTELLE KONE

MY DREAM TO FLY

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Creative Documentary

Country: Egypt

Language: Arabic

Running Time: 75 Minutes

Socials: Instagram

In a suburb of Cairo, Egypt, the film follows Osama (24) and Mansour (11) as they try to gain a spotlight and develop their skills in motorbiking, the only realm available for them to experience fear and daring. In this coming-of-age story, we accompany them as they challenge the dangers of their drag race while their mothers suffer the fear of loss. It is not just a stunt game but it's their life.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was born and lived in rural slums just like the characters, so when I talk about them, I feel like I talk about myself, my dreams and my fears. From watching motorbike shows to riding it, for me motorcycles represent moments of escape from Cairo's chaos. Now, my film becomes a journey with young men facing economic exploitation trying to find freedom and space to express themselves outside suburb walls.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Asmaa Elgafrie with a master's degree in Drama and Television, directed the acclaimed short film *Masrya*, winning three awards. She's been selected for programmes like GMM in Los Angeles and Hot Docs Blue-Ice Fellowship in Canada.



ASMAA GAMAL ELGAFRIE

THE DEVIL, THE TUNE AND GOD

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary, Animation

Country: South Africa

Language: English

Running Time: 90 Minutes

Socials: [Facebook](#)

The Devil, the Tune, and God is a documentary exploring the life and mysterious death of Mosses Molelekwa. His father seeks answers, questioning if his son's death was truly a murder-suicide or if foul play was involved. Interviewing Mosses' friends from his jazz and Kwaito music circles, he hopes to uncover truths about his son's life that eluded him, shedding light on a complex story of talent, fame, and tragedy.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film delves into the enigmatic life and tragic death of South African jazz prodigy Mosses. Through his story, we explore universal themes of love, mental health, and spirituality. It's both a murder mystery and a tribute to his legacy.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Lukhanyo Kumkani -

A filmmaker based in the Eastern Cape, he studied Film and TV production at Wits, majoring in screenwriting and experimental filmmaking. He's written for TV shows (*Abomzala*, *Ses Top LA*, *Rhythmn City* and *House of Zwide*) and is currently working on a documentary.



LUKHANYO KUMKANI

TINY GRAIN, BIG WAR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary

Country: Ethiopian

Language: Amharic

Running Time: 80 Minutes

Socials: [Instagram](#)

A humble Ethiopian grain, Teff, becomes a battleground for cultural identity and economic justice as a farmer, an entrepreneur, and a biopiracy case collide, revealing the fight for heritage in the face of globalisation.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As an Ethiopian and someone who hailed from a farming family, Teff is something I hold dear. *Tiny Grain, Big War* explores the clash between traditional Ethiopian Teff cultivation and global commercial forces. Teff itself becomes a powerful symbol of cultural preservation and the enduring spirit of Ethiopian farmers. Shot in a verité style, the film sheds light on the complex societal dynamics at play and celebrates the rich cultural heritage and unwavering resilience of these communities.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Leul Shoferaw, a filmmaker, music manager, and event curator, premiered his short film *Plumes Blanches* at FESPACO in 2019, showcased at festivals like NYAFF and DIFF. Co-founder of WAG, he supports emerging talents and is Ethiopia's National Coordinator for INPUT (International Public Television Screening Conference). Currently he is producing a series for Showmax.



LEUL SHOFERAW

ABYOT

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction

Country: Ethiopia

Language: Amharic, English

Running Time: 100 Minutes

Socials: [Instagram](#)

In 1976, Yordanos starts her freshman year at Haile Selassie I University, anticipating freedom and fun. Yet, amidst familial disapproval and political unrest following the monarchy's overthrow, she encounters Hiruy, a passionate member of the EPRP. Joining the party to be close to him, Yordanos finds purpose but faces dilemmas as the party splits and danger looms. Despite falling in love with Hiruy, her involvement leads to her arrest, torture, and bitter choices. Amidst turmoil, Yordanos faces a harrowing decision, testing love and loyalty, ultimately fleeing with Hiruy, and leaving Ethiopia behind.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Abyot, meaning "revolution" in Amharic, inspires my film set in 1970s Ethiopia amid socialist fervour. It highlights African voices fighting for justice and equality, a perspective long overlooked.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Abigail Megbar Debebe is a young Ethiopian filmmaker. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in communication studies in California before returning to Ethiopia to pursue a career as a writer-director. Debebe is committed to showcasing less-explored aspects of Africa through film and is particularly interested in exploring existential themes, especially as they relate to young people.



ABIGAIL MEGBAR DEBEBE

A TIME TO WANDER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction

Country: Tunisia

Language: Arabic

Running Time: 100 Minutes

Socials: [Instagram](#)

Chadia, 18, lives alone in Tunis, searching for her missing brother. She meets Adam, 20, and the attraction is immediate. That same evening, Adam meets up with Abderrahmane, 21, a childhood friend. A triangle forms and the relationship between them evolves between love, jealousy, betrayal and dreams. Chadia, Adam and Abderrahmane, each explore their youth and discover the changes in life during a journey that will transform them.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

A Time to Wander is a feature-length film about Chadia, Her quest is a pretext for exploring youth and its relationship with life, navigating emotions, and dealing with life misfortunes and joys - universal themes that deeply interest me as they are inherent to all human beings.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Rim Nakhli, a filmmaker, holds a diploma from the Institute of Arts Manouba Multimedia (ISAMM), Tunisia, and a degree in Cinema from the University of Bologna (DAMS), Italy. In 2017, she directed her debut short film, *Ranim*, followed by *Nour* in 2020. *Nour* was selected at prestigious festivals including Locarno Film Festival, AFI FEST, and Cairo International Film Festival.



RYM NAKHLI

BAPTISM OF SILENCE

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction

Country: South Africa

Language: Afrikaans, English, Xhosa

Running Time: 90 minutes

Socials: [Facebook](#)

Baptism of Silence is a coming-of-age thriller exploring high school initiation at an Afrikaans, all-boys school. The film centres on thirteen-year-old Joshua during the climax of orientation week – a sleepover on school grounds. Under the control of eighteen-year-old seniors, Joshua is subjected to aggressive and manipulative tasks that force him to suppress his fears and anxieties. As the weekend progresses, we gain deeper insights into Joshua, his family, and the older boys imposing he violence.

Upon returning home, Joshua's psychological distress becomes evident.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Baptism of Silence explores toxic masculinity and abuse in South Africa, challenging aggressive traditions rooted in military practices. We believe this film has the potential to open a dialogue around various themes in South Africa, to ask questions that often feel too difficult to voice, and to create moments that are familiar to far too many of us.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Kanya Viljoen and **Emilie Badenhorst**, known as Unusual Bones, won numerous awards for *ekstasis* and *n Doop om Stilte*, including Best Direction at Silwerskerm and New Renaissance Film Festivals.



PEPO KALI

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction

Country: Kenya

Language: English, Swahili

Running Time: 90 Minutes

Socials: [Instagram](#)

Pepo Kali, meaning strong wind, is about Wairimu, a woman in her 50s who decides to learn how to ride a motorcycle after her daughter, a biker, is killed in a riding accident. As a result, Wairimu becomes immersed in Nairobi's community of biker women that her daughter was a part of.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Pepo Kali is a film about coming to terms with the worst thing that could ever happen and how to process it. It is also inspired by the growth of women bikers and women-only motorcycle clubs in Nairobi. I am deeply inspired by these women who can ride through Nairobi traffic and even further, across Kenya and sometimes across Africa, on motorbikes while building a strong, female community. Making *Pepo Kali* is an opportunity to explore heavy themes uniquely. My intention is to tell a layered story about grief, motherhood, friendship, community, and motorcycles.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Lydia Matata, a writer for Netflix's *Country Queen*, created the acclaimed short films *Pepo Kali* and *Sungura*. *Pepo Kali* was featured at the 31st New York African Film Festival, while *Sungura* won Best Women in Film at the Blackstar International Film Festival.



RUSARO

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction

Country: Rwanda

Language: Kinyarwanda

Running Time: 90 Minutes

Socials: [Instagram](#)

In a rural Rwandan village in the early 1990s, Rusaro, a young cowherd girl, grapples with the injustices and gender norms of her society. After a series of events, including the rape of her sister and her own ostracization, Rusaro seeks transformation from a local witch, Nyiramavugo. However, Nyiramavugo's deception leads to unintended consequences, sparking chaos and violence in the village. As Rusaro navigates the aftermath of her actions, she confronts the limitations of tradition and the power dynamics within her community. The film explores themes of gender, justice, and the complexities of seeking change in a conservative society.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Rusaro is a story about a young girl's brave defiance of oppression. It's also a story about the ways our lovely African traditions were used as excuses to keep up the oppression of women. Stemming from my story of growing up in Rwanda and witnessing women being the unsung heroes of my community, and my family, they were the glue that held our houses together while also they carefully managed egos and the pride of the patriarchy. This film is about the emotional toll this had on women and especially young girls like Rusaro who aims to change herself for the acceptance of this culture. Ultimately turning this into a story of self acceptance.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Jeanpierre Niyigena is a Rwandan writer for television, film, and theatre. Trained at Maisha Film Lab, he has worked in the industry for five years. *Rusaro*, a drama fantasy short film co-written and produced by him, won Best Short Film at Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) in Egypt in 2023.



THE SPACE MAASAI

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction

Country: Tanzania

Language: Swahili, Maasai, English

Running Time: 90 Minutes

Socials: [Instagram](#)

16-year-old Maasai orphan Saitoti Losenyari falls in love with astronomy, ignited by his grandmother Bibi's ancient Maasai tales of the sky. When Bibi, facing stage 3A cancer, sells land to cover medical costs, Saitoti, determined to support her, works in gravel mines until a disastrous landslide halts production and work. Introduced to a science competition by teacher Mr. Marungi, he sees a chance to win funds for Bibi's treatment. Despite facing traditional hurdles like a circumcision ceremony, Saitoti perseveres, innovating a telescope for the competition. Through trials and triumphs, he aims to secure his grandmother's future with the prize money.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Space Maasai is a tribute to young African boys and girls, encouraging them to chase their passions and wholeheartedly believe in their potential. This film serves as a beacon of hope and empowerment for all dreamers, diving deep into a young Maasai boy's journey with a dream to become an astronaut.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Priscilla Calvin Marealle, a filmmaker based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, was selected as one of 60 young African filmmakers for the MultiChoice Talent Factory academy in 2019, she received hands-on training in film and TV production.



GRÉVE

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Series

Country: Benin

Language: French

Running Time: 52 Minutes

Socials: [Facebook](#)

In the tumultuous university setting of Abomey-Calavi, tensions escalate between students and the administration following the introduction of new enrollment fees. Chabi, the president of the National Federation of Students of Benin (FNEB), leads the charge to defend student interests. In contrast, Cossi, a student from a village with limited means, struggles to overcome financial obstacles and unjust accusations.

Amid clashes with law enforcement, political manoeuvring, and personal dramas, students face unprecedented challenges to defend their rights and ideals. But as violence reaches a tipping point and lives hang in the balance, they must choose between continuing the struggle or seeking peace at any cost.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In November 2015, a university class faced brutal threats, sparking a three-month strike with dire outcomes: a lost academic year, a student's death, and 21 expulsions. This crisis deeply affected those involved, with lasting repercussions. The series delves into their struggles, relationships, and quests for identity, all against the backdrop of the strike's aftermath, highlighting its socio-political significance.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Gildas Adannou, a Beninese author, screenwriter, and director, is pursuing a film studies doctorate at ENSAV, Toulouse, France. With a master's in marketing and communication and a cinema bachelor's from INMAAC-UAC, he's also an assistant director.



GILDAS ADANNOU

RUE 6

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Series

Country: Senegal

Language: Wolof, French

Running Time: 8 episodes, 52 minutes

Socials: [Instagram](#)

Youma is exhausted, tired of injustice and endlessly pursuing worthy jobs despite her diplomas. She's weary of explaining her father's plight – a principled ex-cop without pay or pension due to defying the government. But she's resilient, raised to believe in overcoming the system from within. Sira shares her fatigue, worn out by a life of self-reliance amidst dishonesty. With Maestro in jail and Youma job hunting, Sira tends to Youma's ailing father. Discovering his need for chemotherapy, Youma faces financial constraints and a void health insurance. Bonding over shared struggles, they envision a joint venture, leveraging Youma's education and Sira's street smarts to build a legitimate business. Yet, as their enterprise grows, they attract both admiration and jealousy, caught between rival traffickers and a determined inspector. Will they maintain their integrity and friendship amid escalating threats?

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"Goor yomboul" reflects the paradox of Senegalese society. In Rue 6, women maintain balance in the face of patriarchal norms. I aim to capture the essence of Medina, immortalising its fading vibrancy.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Young Senegalese director and producer **Djeydi Djigo** gained recognition through his documentary *Omar Blondin Diop, le révolté*, which was selected for the official competition at FESPACO. He further solidified his reputation with his series *Salma*, which has received multiple awards.



DJEYDI DJIGO

THE MIND OF ALKEBULAN

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Anthology Series

Country: Namibia

Language: English

Running Time: 8 episodes, 50 minutes each

Socials: [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [Twitter](#)

The Mind of Alkebulan is a poignant anthology series delving into the souls of eight protagonists in post-colonial urban Africa. Each story delves into personal struggles shaped by cultural heritage and socio-economic realities, from battling eating disorders and confronting suicides to navigating societal rejection and reconciling spiritual and psychological conflicts. These stories weave a rich, tapestry of resilience and the quest for holistic healing.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Amid rising male suicides in Namibia, my project examines how urban Africans balance cultural values and modern stresses, questioning if Western psychology effectively addresses our colonial trauma and hold space for our cultural practices and values.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Esther Beukes, a dynamic filmmaker with working and learning experience across African cities, harnesses her vast network to revolutionise storytelling, blending authenticity and collaboration to reshape the continent's cinematic landscape.



ESTHER BEUKES

VIGILAUNTIES

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Series

Country: South Africa

Language: English, AfriKaaps

Running Time: 8 episodes, 30 minutes each

Socials: [Instagram](#)

When Aunty Cassandra's son leaves for university, she enlists her pals, Aunty Haley and Aunty Khadija, the hippy healer, to help pack up his belongings. The discovery of a joint in her golden boy's bedside table, however, leads to Aunty Cassandra and her friends smoking it to appease their collective empty nest pain. Later, they stumble into a stolen car, inadvertently becoming heroes. Unveiling a poached abalone smuggling ring, they confront Aunty Fatimah, their ward councillor. Using grassroots tactics, banking intel, and holistic practices, they dismantle the operation. Alongside victory, they confront personal revelations, proving that even high Aunties can be community saviours.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

VigilAunties is a fresh, fun, feisty and unique lens at the communities we know and come from, deliberately through the eyes that never miss a beat, the real detectives, diggers, trouble makers and accidental heroes in our society - the Aunties.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Lauren Loubser is a queer filmmaker. Loren has directed an episode for *Yellowbone* Entertainment's Female Filmmaker Slate and their original TV show concept was selected for the Canada-South Africa co-development fund. Loren will also be directing a short dark comedy.



LOREN LOUBSER

ADAME

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Fiction

Country: Senegal, France

Language: French

Running Time: 26 Minutes

Socials: [Facebook](#)

Stunned to discover that Momar is a pimp, Adame, a lively young student, desperately tries to escape from this ruthless and unscrupulous cousin. Adame accidentally meets Mathieu, an elderly vagabond in his seventies. Touched by her distress, Mathieu takes Adame under his protective wing, without realising for a moment the dangers that await them both.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Adame delves into the plight of a determined student battling her ruthless cousin, revealing a dark world of human trafficking and homelessness.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Binetou Faye started her career as a production manager for the series *C'est la vie*, which was produced by Keewu Production. After completing her master's degree in film production in Paris, she works as a project assistant for the Francophone Image Fund of the OIF, and subsequently as a project manager for the Access Culture Fund of the AFD at the French Institute in Paris.



BINETOU FAYE

LANGALANGA

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Fiction

Country: Ghana

Language: English, Twi

Running Time: 7 Minutes

Socials: [Twitter](#)

In rural Ghana, a farmer meets a mystical dwarf offering wealth. Years later, as a revered Apostle, his miracles conceal a dark secret. When a church member visits his mansion, she unveils the truth. *Langalanga* explores desire, morality, and the price of power, blending Ghanaian folklore and magic in a captivating tale of the human spirit.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Langalanga is like stepping into a vibrant, modern dark fairy tale rooted in the rich traditions of Ghanaian folklore. We're diving into the mystical world of the 'Mmotia' or 'Aziza' – these mythical beings rumoured to grant wishes with a touch of magic, albeit with some twists and turns.

Growing up in Ghana, I was hooked on the diverse stories that brought these enigmatic beings to life. That fascination led to the birth of *Langalanga* – a creative journey and cinematic tapestry designed to showcase the captivating Mmotia folklore. Inspired by diverse stories from Ghana, the film delves into power dynamics within religious communities, examining charismatic leadership's transformative and darker sides through Kwadwo Wiafe's journey.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Fofo "Togbe" Gavua, is a versatile filmmaker from Accra, Ghana, who blends diverse influences from his upbringing in Ghana and Toronto. Currently, Fofo Gavua is immersed in his upcoming project, *Langalanga*, promising another venture into storytelling that captivates and resonates across cultural boundaries.



FOFO "TOGBE" GAVUA

NEBULA

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Film

Country: Egypt

Language: Arabic

Running Time: 15 Minutes

Socials: [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#)

Ramy, an 18-year-old Egyptian, is the eldest son in a poor provincial Christian family. Pressured by his family's expectations, he battles severe depression and attempts suicide. Following electroconvulsive therapy, memory distortion leaves him with scattered recollections. Haunted by a serene girl from a previous session, he's driven to attend the next session with his father in search of her. Will Ramy unravel the memory's importance or break free from its grip?

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

At 19, I battled severe depression and suicidal thoughts, leading to electroconvulsive therapy. Memory loss worsened my confusion and depression, leaving me with fragmented recollections filled with fear and tension. Seeking understanding, I've explored memory's role in human existence, aiming to depict the struggles of young people navigating familial and societal pressures, often overlooking their emotions and challenges.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Egyptian filmmaker **Michel Doss**, based in Cairo, merges psychology studies with filmmaking, specialising in memory exploration across various life stages, particularly aging. Currently, he's crafting *Nebula* and contributing to *Ninety, Sixty, Thirty*.



MICHEL DOSS

NGITHEMBE (TRUST ME)

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Film

Country: South Africa

Language: isiZulu

Running Time: 13 Minutes

Socials: [Instagram](#)

In a quiet KwaZulu-Natal suburb, Scelo Maphumulo mistakenly takes Viagra, setting off a chaotic day. On his commute, he picks up Anele, who he thinks is a student but is a cunning sex worker. She exploits him, draining his bank account. As Scelo races to stop the transaction, his wife uncovers his secrets.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As an intern producer during a winter shoot, I was often mistaken for a sex worker, while waiting for the production shuttle at 4am. Strange men trusted me without knowing if I was a potential serial killer. The production driver also told me a story of when he picked up a sex worker thinking she was a student. He expressed how vulnerable he was after doing an innocent act of kindness. These experiences inspired a film exploring the fragility of trust and the cost of dishonesty.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Samke Makhoba obtained her film degree with honours from Witwatersrand. She won numerous student film awards and screened in various festivals and film clubs. She developed a few of her short films under the KZNFC. In 2024 she directed her short film *KwaZulu* with Yellowbone Entertainment-NFVF Female programme. She also packaged her debut feature film *Nikiwe* under the DFM Access programme in 2023.



SAMKE MAKHOBHA

STAY

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Film

Country: Nigeria

Language: English, Yoruba

Running Time: 10 Minutes

Socials:  Instagram

Stay delves into the Yoruba belief of the Abiku, translated to mean “a child fated to die prematurely”. The central character Kikelomo finds solace and resilience through her deep bond with her mother. As she confronts her impending fate, she discovers the inner strength to challenge her predetermined destiny. In a powerful moment of defiance, she chooses to embrace life, only to realise that destiny may ultimately prevail despite her efforts to resist it.

The narrative of *Stay* poignantly explores themes of love, choice, and the inexorable pull of fate.

SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

I have always been fascinated by surrealism and the idea of life after death, along with the diverse cultural beliefs that surround it. The concept of Abiku, which varies across generations and cultures, inspired me to creatively tell a story about it in the most experimental manner I could.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Tomi Folowosele is a passionate and driven Screenwriter with over 3,300 minutes of Primetime Show on Mnet. She's skilled in script and story development, screenplay structure, character building, and the nuances of storytelling. She's dedicated to pursuing creativity, uniqueness, and captivating narratives, and is committed to continuous learning and improvement.



THE MOUNTAIN IN THE SEA

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Film

Country: Greece, South Africa

Language: Afrikaans, English

Running Time: 21 Minutes

Socials:  Instagram

In the early 18th century, three young, Dutch sailors are sent to find their ships captain who has mysteriously disappeared on Table Mountain. Myths, time and reality begin to dissolve amidst their journey to the mountain's heart.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have always been drawn to the fantastical tales and myths that encompass cultures throughout the world and the role of the landscape in provoking these stories. Upon first hearing of 'Van Hunks and the Devil', I was lured in by its mysterious and almost open ending. This is mainly due to the character of Table Mountain, which could be likened to a sleeping giant from a bygone era and an eternal place that will watch empires rise and fall beneath it, stoic in its divine judgement.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Léandros Brown is a Greek-South African filmmaker who is deeply focused on exploring spiritual and metaphysical themes through poetic storytelling.



2024 MENTORS

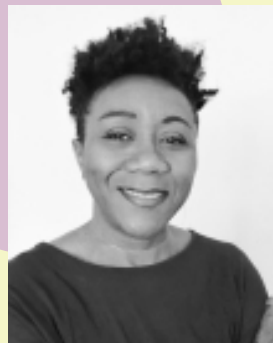
All DFM projects benefit from the invaluable one-on-one mentorship provided by experienced and knowledgeable mentors. The Durban FilmMart Institute is honoured to welcome back mentors from 2023 and new mentors alike. These industry leaders provide tailored guidance and insightful feedback, fostering 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 programmes like Eurodoc.



▲ AMEL BOUZID



▲ EBELE OKOYE

Africa's pioneering female animator, Ebele Okoye, boasts over 20 years of experience as an animation entrepreneur, changemaker, and equity advocate. Recognised globally, she's a two-time laureate of the Africa

Movie Academy Award. Her accolades extend to institutions like The DEFA Foundation and Focus Features and honours from the United States Congress. With a portfolio spanning international co-productions, jury work, and educational endeavours, including animation tutelage at the Bauhaus University, Weimar, Germany, Okoye has left an indelible mark on the animation landscape. She has founded several animation training initiatives including AniJolly Girls' Training, and is the CEO of the EdTech brand SpunkyToonz, promoting healthy, social, and eco-friendly values in young minds.



▲ FEMI ODUGBEMI

Femi Odugbemi is a pioneering force in Nigeria's entertainment industry, renowned for his multifaceted contributions as a writer, filmmaker, and television producer. As the Founder and CEO of Zuri24 Media, he has spearheaded the production of groundbreaking television dramas like *Tinsel* and *Battleground*, while also directing feature films such as *Gidi Blues* and *Code Wilo*. Femi's influence extends globally, with memberships in both the Oscars and Emmys academies, reflecting his impact on the international stage. Additionally, he is a leading figure in documentary filmmaking, with a portfolio of acclaimed titles addressing diverse cultural and societal issues. Through initiatives like the iRepresent International Documentary Film Festival and roles as an educator and mentor, Femi remains committed to nurturing African talent and promoting dialogue within the industry. His numerous accolades, including lifetime achievement awards and inductions into prestigious halls of fame, attest to his enduring legacy as a visionary leader in African cinema.



▲ JOEL KAREKEZI

Joel Karekezi graduated from Cinecours with a film directing diploma (2008). The following year, his short film *The Pardon*, supported by Maisha Film Lab, snagged the Golden Impala Award at the Amakula Film Festival in Uganda and Best Short Film at the Silicon Valley African Film Festival (2010). His debut feature *Imbabazi: The Pardon* received a development award from the Göteborg International Film Festival Fund, earning accolades like the Nile Grand Prize at the Luxor African Film Festival (2014) and Best Director at the International Images Film Festival For Women (2014). His script *The Mercy of the Jungle* also garnered recognition, winning the CFI Award for Most Promising Audiovisual Project at Durban FilmMart (2012) and other awards at festivals worldwide, including FESPACO (2019) and PAFF (2020).

Justine Bannister, the Founder and Creative Facilitator of JUST B, brings over 25 years of remarkable experience in children's entertainment to the table. Her expertise honed through roles at independent ventures and prestigious entities like 20th Century Fox, Disney Channels France, and Lagardère Studios, encompasses every facet of the industry – from production and distribution to acquisitions, co-productions, marketing, and brand management. Fluent in three languages, Justine is not only well-connected but also possesses a deep understanding of the constantly evolving entertainment landscape, having navigated the international marketplace for decades. Through JUST B, her company acts as a catalyst for creativity, offering customised services to producers, distributors, and media conglomerates worldwide. From the inception of a project to its commercialisation, Justine's consultancy delivers comprehensive support, covering areas such as market readiness, financing, business development, project sourcing and evaluation, as well as international sales and marketing strategies.



▲ JUSTINE BANNISTER

Layla Swart, a leading producer and editor in Africa, established Yellowbone Entertainment in 2017. With 7 feature films and the acclaimed series *Blood Psalms* under her belt, Layla launched The Post Office, a premier post-production facility. Her films have graced renowned festivals like Cannes and Toronto, earning international acclaim. Notably, she's the sole South African producer with consecutive Academy Awards selections for *Sew the Winter to my Skin* (2019) and *Knuckle City* (2020). Recognised for nurturing creative brilliance, Layla and Yellowbone Entertainment have garnered numerous awards. Now represented by CAA's Africa division, Layla drives African content creation to new heights.



▲ LAYLA SWART

DFM PROJECT MENTORS

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 multi-faceted questions facing the African (diaspora) screen sector. He is also one of the founding members of the Programmers of Colour Collective (POC2).

THEMBA BHEBHE ▶



▶ **TINY MUNGWE**

Tiny Mungwe works at STEPS where she has produced Generation Africa, a collection of 25 films, from 16 African countries on migration and a collection of 11 short films for Mzansi in a time of Covid. Through her production company CTRL ALT Shift, she is releasing the feature documentary *Womxn: Working*. She has written *Evelyn* and directed *Daddy's Boy*, both short films and directed and produced *Akekho uGogo*, a documentary. Her TV work includes writing for *Muvhango*, *Matatiele* and directing on *Uzalo*. Mungwe has also organised and programmed festivals including four international festivals: Time of the Writer, the Durban International Film Festival, Jomba! Contemporary Dance Festival and Poetry Africa and curated film programmes for Durban FilmMart, Talents Durban. She mentors at Great Lakes Producers Lab and works with EFM Toolbox programme. She is part of the DFM Future Mentors programme as a contributor, curriculum and trainer. She is also the founder of Ehozini Retreat, an artist residency in Maphephetheni, eThekweni. She is a participant in the 2024 EAVE producers workshop.

TALENT DURBAN MENTORS

Beverley Mitchell is a leading South African creative development executive, producer, line producer, and creative with decades of experience in both the international and African media environments. Passionate about storytelling and nurturing the next generation of African filmmakers, she has taught narrative storytelling and story structure at the University of Cape Town, AFDA, and Big Fish School of Digital Filmmaking. She regularly leads Writers' Rooms across Africa and the Caribbean, always seeking to elevate the craft of storytelling to produce high-premium African content.

BEVERLEY MITCHELL ▶



Carol Kioko, CEO of Lemon Slice Pictures, has 20 years of TV and film experience in Kenya and South Africa. In 2013, she introduced the 48 Hour Film Project to Nairobi, running it as City Producer for 10 years and sending two short films to the Cannes Film Festival. Carol is an alumna of Creative Producers Indaba, Produire au Sud, Rotterdam Producers Lab, and the EAVE Producers Workshop 2023.

◀ **CAROL KIOKO**

Hawa Essuman is a filmmaker, writer, director, and producer with over 15 years of experience. She co-directed the documentary *Silas* and directed the award-winning *Soul Boy*, screened at over 40 film festivals. Her work includes a short film for Olafur Eliasson's Little Sun Project. Co-founder of Manyatta Screenings, she supports African filmmakers through masterclasses, workshops, and mentoring future scriptwriters.

HAWA ESSUMAN ▶



Jihane Bougrine has spent the last 15 years covering every level of cultural expression in Morocco and internationally. She is a cultural journalist and a film critic for Vogue Arabia. As a film critic and journalist, she has been a correspondent at the Cannes Festival, La Mostra di Venezia, and The Berlinale. She also serves on the selection committee of the Marrakech Film Festival.



▲ JIHANE BOUGRINE



▲ KARABO LEDIGA

Karabo Lediga is a writer and director whose short film *What Did You Dream?* premiered at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival and won Best African Short at the Durban International Film Festival. She has worked on *Late Nite News with Loyiso Gola*, *Queen Sono*, *The Bantu Hour*, *Only Jokes Allowed*, and *Classified*. Currently, she is in pre-production for her feature film *Sabbatical* and developing an adaptation of *Coconut*.



▲ KETHIWE NGCOBO

Kethiwe works at the intersection of broadcasting, film and TV production, story development, and audio-visual education. She produced four youth drama series and directed six documentaries before working as the Head of Drama at SABC for six years. Since then, she has produced three TV drama series, a docu- reality series, five feature films, and two feature documentaries. Currently, Kethiwe is developing a slate of adaptation-feature films.



Laza, producer, filmmaker and APASER president, leads the Madagascar Short Film Festival, nurturing local talent and advocating for African filmmakers' rights worldwide. He's instrumental in the continent's cinematic renaissance, spearheading initiatives like the SERASARY Fund. With a diverse portfolio, he's a jury member in prestigious festivals, contributing to the global film discourse.

◀ LAZA

With over 20 years of experience in the animation industry, Mounia Aram is the Founder and President of the Mounia Aram Company. She is a member of the International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences and serves as the Africa Council Chair of the Geena Davis Institute for Gender in Media. Mounia has been honoured with the Black in Animation Award in the Cultural Innovator category and was featured on CNN as an African Voices Change Maker.

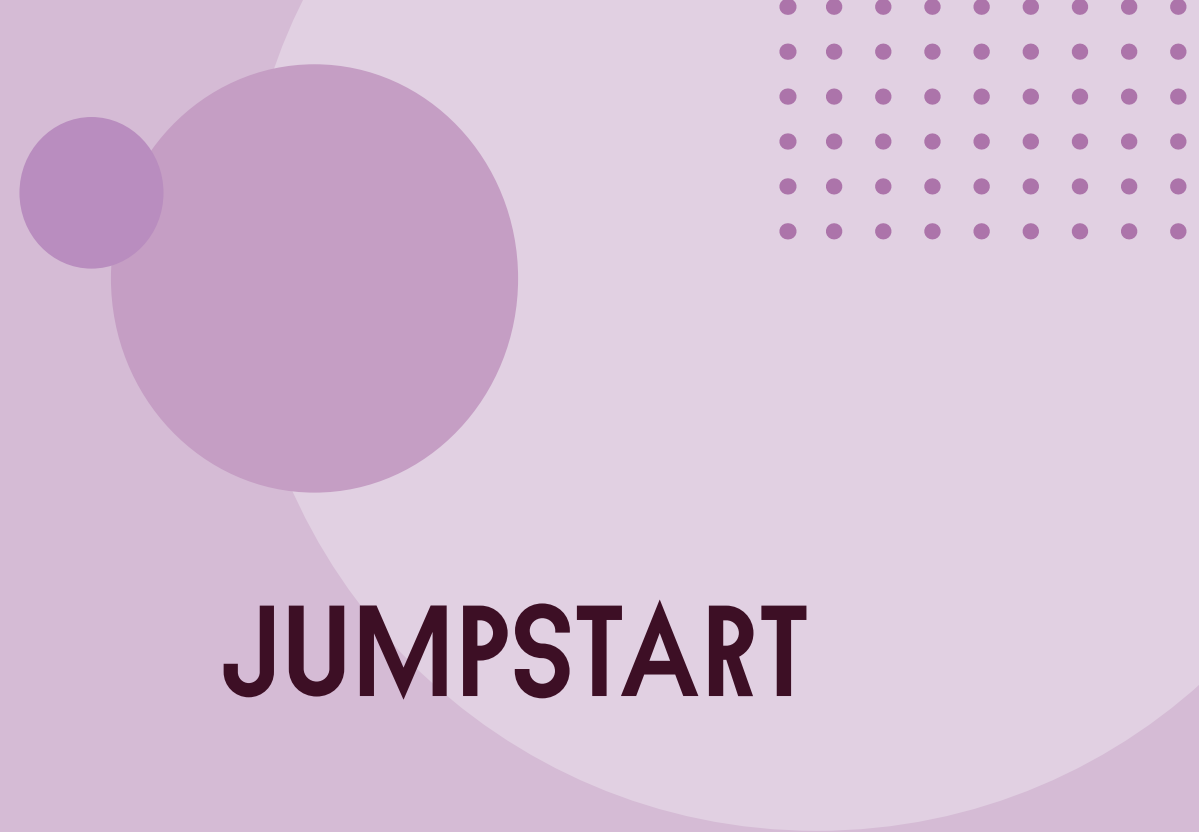


MOUNIA ARAM ▶



Yanis Gaye is a producer and the founder of Goree Cinema (SN) and Strange Fruit Production House (FR). His films have been showcased on international platforms such as Kurzfilm Festival Hamburg, NYAFF, and FESPACO, as well as on broadcasters like Arte. He is an EAVE alumnus and a mentor for Durban Talent. In 2024, he will be participating in the Torino Script Lab. Recently, Yanis co-founded YETU (Un)Limited, a multi-venture African film studio.

◀ YANIS GAYE



JUMPSTART

Jumpstart is an incubator programme presented by the Durban FilmMart Institute in partnership with Produire au Sud, Nantes, the French Institute of South Africa (IFAS) and the Centre National du Cinéma (CNC) to introduce emerging filmmakers to writing and packaging. Focussing on project packaging for the international market, filmmakers are introduced to key techniques and tools for scriptwriting and storytelling processes.



CORRUPTION IS AN ENGLISH WORD

Busi Kumalo, a cheeky 12-year-old Black girl and the daughter of the foreman on the farm, loves to lord her reading skills over the other kids, which makes her feel superior. Narrowly escaping a beating from some boys she was teasing, she heads up to the big main house, a beautiful rustic farmhouse, just in time for the arrival of her best friend, Christie, 12, an angelic blonde bundle of energy returning from boarding school with her father, Mr Smith.

Despite Busi's dad, Memo Kumalo, working for Christie's dad, their 'since birth' friendship makes everything on the farm feel magical when they're together. However, a loud knock interrupts their play, and Christie opens the door without thinking. The man in the army suit, General Zhou,

who visits, interrupts their childhood, setting in motion a chain of events that will change their lives forever.

It's after bedtime, so the two girls shouldn't be up, but they're the first to sound the alarm about the ragtag army of men surrounding the house – the farm is being invaded! This night of high tension and turmoil will test the relationships and dynamics between the Kumalos, the Smiths, the farmworkers, and the invaders. Will blood, friendship, and history prove thicker than water, or is skin colour everything in the new Africa? The answers are uncertain, but the events of this fateful night will leave an indelible mark on Busi's life and the world she knows.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

My film strips away the false politeness that is so deeply ingrained in us and puts two little girls and their families in a position where they cannot avoid talking. It spotlights the unease of the older generation who failed, or chose not, to address reality, and how the next generation is forced into violent confrontations rather than discussions.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

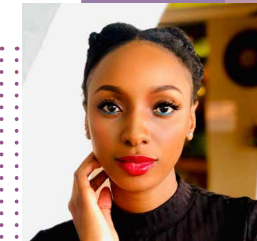
Zoe Ramushu is a multi-hyphenate filmmaker whose directing debut was nominated for the 48th Student Oscars, and her next was shortlisted for a Student BAFTA.

Rea Moeti-Vogt is a multi-award-winning producer and director, a dynamic force of storytelling prowess. Zoe and Rea's latest Netflix film is *Real Estate Sisters*.

Ellen Havenith's award-winning feature films premiered at the film festivals of Cannes, Sundance, Berlin, Toronto, Rotterdam, Locarno, and Tribeca, and five of her films were the national entries to the Academy Awards.

COMPANY DETAILS

Totem Zea is a South African company of young, Black, and gifted females breaking barriers. Amsterdam-based PRPL is a production company with a love for inspiring, challenging, and heartfelt stories.



Zoe Ramushu
DIRECTOR



Ellen Havenith
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Totem Zea Collective

Running Time: 65 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 760 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Funding
- Labs
- Co-Producers
- Sales Agents



GHOSTS OF THE COLONY

Two Kenyan college students, Joy and Susan, travel upcountry to seek jobs. But the lodge is derelict and deserted, except for the sinister Mrs Bird. There is no transportation back, and the girls are trapped for the night. Mrs Bird invites Susan to The Party. The lodge has mysteriously reverted to a perfect state, with staff and guests from the colonial era. Susan is besotted with William, a handsome white aristocrat. Susan seems to be invisible to the African servants.

The following day, the lodge reverts to its former dilapidated state, and the girls are forced to clean out filthy animal cages. Joy wants to leave, but Susan is keen to see William again. That night, Susan joins The Party again. But the party games take an ugly turn; Susan is treated roughly, and her dress is torn. Mrs Bird forbids Susan to leave until she pays off the damaged dress.

Joy follows a small boy, Abdi, into The Room of Curiosities, where she is imprisoned by Barry, the

sinister curator. Joy realizes that Abdi is actually a ghost. In a room filled with cobwebs and decay, Susan meets Wanjiku, a tortured soul. Susan steals Wanjiku's wedding dress and pearl necklace.

At The Party, Susan is drugged and placed upon a silver serving platter. The pearl necklace is ripped off, and the ghoulish guests descend upon her. Joy, awakening from a nightmare, searches the lodge for Susan. The sepia photographs have changed to horrific, grisly scenes. To Joy's horror, she recognizes Susan in an ancient photo of the lodge, forever trapped in the photo.

Joy flees into the forest but is betrayed by Abdi. The hunting party closes in on her. Joy mesmerizes the wild beasts with her traditional lullaby and escapes the forest onto the highway, back in the present day.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Through *Ghosts of the Colony*, I desire to amplify voices that have long been silenced and shed light on truths that have been obscured, with the intent of sparking authentic and lasting change for future generations who will inherit the legacy of our collective struggles and triumphs.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Isaya Evans is a Kenyan filmmaker who has worked for over a decade in various capacities. Isaya's directorial debut was the award-winning short film, *Loop*, in 2021. Isaya has also directed high-end TV shows like *Igiza*, *Second Family*, and currently *Nilichoma*, which airs on the VOD platform Showmax. Isaya's recent award-winning short film, *Grogan's Lodge* (2023), is on its global festival tour and has been accepted so far into seven film festivals, including the prestigious Clermont-Ferrand ISFF 2024.

COMPANY DETAILS

Grogan's Lodge Productions is a joint venture between Shaleen, Isaya, and Densu. In 2023, we produced the award-winning short film, *Grogan's Lodge*, and in 2024, another short film, *Zoya*.



Isaya Evans
DIRECTOR



Densu Moseti
PRODUCER



Shaleen Keshavjee
SCRIPT WRITER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Kenya

Production Company: Grogan's Lodge Productions

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 135 000 USD

Finances Committed: 20 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Producers
- Financiers
- Sales Agents
- Pre-Sales



STONE

Leila, a young woman suffering from depression, refuses to reveal her darkest secret until she receives a visit from a young psychologist.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Leila lives secluded in her apartment. Depressed and agoraphobic, she withdraws into silence, her psychological troubles manifesting physically. Her childhood, deeply scarred by trauma, is a subject she refuses to address. Her best friend, Salma, a Franco-Tunisian nurse, is Leila's sole connection to the outside world. Devoted and persistent, Salma spends much time with Leila, determined to uncover the source of her suffering and help her heal. Despite Salma's attempts to make Leila open her eyes and accept treatment, Leila remains stubbornly in denial, refusing to confide. Salma, sharing her own personal struggles to build trust, still fails to break Leila's wall of silence. As a last resort, Salma decides to involve Akram, her ex-boyfriend and a psychologist, hoping he can penetrate Leila's shell. It is in front of Akram that Leila, for the first time, decides to open up. She reveals a dark secret long buried, finally allowing the origin of her torment to emerge.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Karim Berrhouma, born on March 9, 1983, is a self-taught screenwriter and director from Tunisia. Known for his award-winning short films, he began his career making videos with friends, pioneered Tunisian rap music videos, and later directed TV commercials and shows like *The Illusionist*. He then focused on filmmaking, writing, and directing short films including *Stouch* (2016), *Garita* (2016), and *Dajjal* (2016).

COMPANY DETAILS

Twin C, created by Mejdî Housseini, is a production company based in Dubai and Tunisia. Twin C has produced more than 5 feature films.



Karim Berrhouma
DIRECTOR



Mejdî Housseini
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Tunisia

Production Company: Twin C

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 195 000 USD

Finances Committed: 120 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- I aim to broaden my writing knowledge by collaborating with new people, exchanging ideas with other scriptwriters and directors, and secure funding.



THE SEA WAS ONCE BLUE

In the depressed torpor following the failed Egyptian revolution, Reem (34) announces to her partner, Osama (35), that she cannot stand to live anymore, and by dawn, she will be gone. Devastated, Osama has no choice but to follow her in one last night of roaming the empty streets of Alexandria. Together, they reminisce

about their relationship, their life in this city, and what the revolution was like. But in the midst of their nostalgic wanderings, an unexpected and violent encounter will push her to question her plan and the nature of her relationship with Osama.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

In this film, I revisit a past that I did not experience, yet it is still a part of me. After the failure of our Revolution in 2011, I witnessed comrades' souls being eaten away. We lived in tight-knit groups for the years that followed. That's when I began to think about this film: a film about how, without freedom, a person could lose their ability to love.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Charles Meresse worked for White Light Films and Sofica Cinéma in 2014 before joining Les Films du Poisson. He then worked in line production for two years before starting the Atelier Ludwisburg-Paris at La Fémis. In 2020, he co-founded Furyo Films. The company focuses on international co-productions and notably produced as a delegate the feature *In the Land of Brothers* by Alireza Ghazemi and Raha Amirflazi, which was awarded the Best Directing Award in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition at Sundance 2024.

COMPANY DETAILS

Furyo Films is a film production company founded in 2020 by Charles Meresse, Emma Binet, and Adrien Barrouillet around the desire to develop singular and ambitious cinematographic projects.



Mohamad El-Hadidi
DIRECTOR

Charles Meresse
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: France, Egypt

Production Company: Furyo Films

Running Time: 120 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 288 917 USD

Finances Committed: 5 600 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Script Consultancy
- Co-Producers



2024 AFRICA LABS SHOWCASE

In its ongoing commitment to advancing African cinema, DFM proudly showcases projects from 10 distinguished film labs: Doc Society, DocA, East Africa Film Collective, FIDADOC, Great Lakes, Hot Docs, IBFC, Impala, Realness, and Yaoundé Film Lab. These labs represent the pinnacle of talent development and innovation across the continent. By featuring these projects, the Durban FilmMart not only highlights the diverse storytelling and creative prowess of African filmmakers but also reinforces its role as a key platform for nurturing and elevating African cinematic voices on the global stage.



DIGITAL LAB AFRICA ANIMATION 114

Created in 2016, Digital Lab Africa is an initiative of the French Institute and the French Embassy in South Africa, managed by the South African innovation hub Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct since 2018. Digital Lab Africa (DLA) is the first platform dedicated to creative content (immersive realities, video game, animation, music, digital art) linked with innovation in Africa. The very idea of DLA is to incubate emerging talent by offering them a springboard to fast-track their project development with the support and expertise of DLA creative industries ecosystem in France and in Sub-Saharan African countries.

Visit Website:



DOCUMENTARY AFRICA (DOCA) 124

DocA's ACP DOConnect mentorship programme represents a significant milestone in the African film industry, bringing together promising producers from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific regions.

Over the past three years, participants have benefited from top-tier mentorships aimed at nurturing their projects, fostering valuable South-South co-productions, and positioning their documentaries for global success.

Visit Website:



DOC SOCIETY CLIMATE STORY LABS 116

Climate Story Labs convene to address the pressing question: what narratives are essential for our current context and location? These ecosystem gatherings aim to catalyse impactful storytelling, incorporating diverse voices to shape a climate-resilient and equitable future. Led by cultural organisations worldwide, including partners in South, East, and West Africa, these labs delve into themes such as collective action for climate justice and fostering inclusive movements. Meanwhile, the Global Impact Producers Alliance (GIPA) fosters a community of over 500 impact producers from 50+ countries, dedicated to leveraging media for positive social change.



Visit Website:



EAST AFRICAN SCREEN COLLECTIVE 126

The East African Screen Collective is a coalition of companies and organisations advocating for narrative sovereignty in the screen-based sectors (TV, film, and digital) in Eastern Africa. The collective aims to increase the production and export of content from the region and support the sector's stabilisation and growth. EASC is an implementation partner of DW Akademie Film Development Fund, which supported 15 filmmakers in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Tanzania with funding, mentorship, and training to develop feature film projects. The yearlong programme included three labs aimed at developing the scripts, mentorship sessions, pitch training, and career planning and consultation.

Visit Website:



FIDADOC BEEHIVE

132

The FIDADOC Pan-African Writing Residency, organised by ACEA since 2012, is the cornerstone of the FIDADOC's training and mentoring programme: "The Documentary BeeHive". Completely free for its beneficiaries, this residency enables selected author-directors to deeply analyse their projects, ideas, and develop the writing of a documentary script. Now conducted in two 10-day sessions annually, this residency supports about fifteen filmmakers from North African and Sub-Saharan countries and their diaspora. In its first 10 editions (2012-2022), the residency hosted 88 filmmakers from 12 countries, with gender parity respected among the 44 female and 44 male authors.

Visit Website: 



HOT DOCS-BLUE ICE DOCS FILMMAKERS LAB

140

The Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund (HDBIDF) includes more than just a grant. In addition to financing, the Fund provides a peer-to-peer mentorship programme where grantees bring projects to international markets. Up to five funded projects are invited to participate in a year-long mentorship programme guided by international mentors, consisting of a private digital filmmaker lab, year-round mentorship from seasoned doc professionals, and participation at Hot Docs and Durban FilmMart. The HDBIF Filmmakers Lab is a weekend-long lab with the industry market days that will vary and/or include on four areas: Storytelling; Funding and Production; Pitching; Promotion and Distribution.

Visit Website: 



GREAT LAKES

136

The Great Lakes Creative Producers Lab is a 5-day film development programme aiming to broaden participants' professional networks and production expertise. Through hands-on workshops and one-on-one sessions with local and international industry mentors, the programme refines emerging producers' creative instincts and communication skills. The first two editions in 2021 and 2022 were successful, hosting producers from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. The 2023 edition included West African producers via the DEENTAL programme. In 2024, both fiction and documentary projects from Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania & Ethiopia will be featured.

Visit Website: 



IBFC

144

IBFC's broad vision across South Africa, is to develop and produce programmes, projects and initiatives that contribute to skilling, up-skilling and professionalising black filmmakers and black-owned filmmaking enterprises to enhance, not just the financial growth of the audio-visual sector, but to create accountability, compliance and quality production mechanisms to meet global standards. The IBFC Fiction Narrative Lab is designed for 7 writer/producer teams with promising concepts (4 feature films and 3 episodic narratives) that speak to a specific genre. The programme paves the way for fresh innovative storytelling, exploring the theme - "Diversity in Creation" - and encouraging inclusive narratives.

Visit Website: 



IMPALA

148

Impala aims to contribute to the development and organisation of the documentary film sector in Africa. Through various initiatives such as training programmes in documentary filmmaking covering aspects like filming, editing, sound and image capture, as well as support in scriptwriting through workshops, Impala helps to nurture young talent. Additionally, it provides training in production fundamentals and facilitates networking opportunities between industry professionals from the Global South and North. Furthermore, Impala works towards promoting African documentaries through broadcasting and other distribution channels.

Visit Website: 



THE REALNESS

154

The Realness African Screenwriters Residency is an incubator for African screenwriters, offering practical support to refine projects creatively and pitch them to industry partners for financing and production. Residents benefit from 6 weeks of dedicated time and space in Stanford, Western Cape, alongside professional mentorship. The programme serves as a year-round support system for alumni, guiding scripts from page to screen and fostering authentic African cinema. Since 2015, it has received 650 submissions from 23 African countries, resulting in 34 film projects, including *A Fool God* and *This is not a Burial, It's a Resurrection*, which garnered international acclaim and awards.

Visit Website: 



OUGALAB

152

Ouaga Film Lab is a sub-Saharan African film incubator dedicated to nurturing the continent's cinematic talent. It fosters collaboration by connecting rising directors and producers with established experts. Through workshops and mentorship, the LAB hones their artistic and technical skills, ultimately aiming to empower them to secure national and international film funding.

Visit Website: 



YAOUNDE FILM LAB

158

Since 2020, the Yaoundé Film Lab, founded by the late dc Dieudonné Alaka, aims to revive international production and co-production in Central Africa by developing auteur films aligned with national and international markets. The lab builds project developers' capacity, fosters collaboration among Central African technicians and companies, creates a sub-regional market, and attracts international broadcasters and distributors. From June 7 to June 14, 10 filmmaker-producer duos will develop their projects with international experts, representing six countries: Cameroon, Chad, CAR, Congo Brazzaville, DRC, and Rwanda. The programme includes professional training, international meetings, and film screenings.

Visit Website: 



NOK NOK

Nok Nok follows the adventure of three kids as they journey into a strange world full of majestic creatures. Che-Che, Basket, and Koko often hang out in Papa's home and sculpture studio in Kafah. Papa Kuku, Che-Che's grandpa, is a retired archaeologist turned artist, obsessed with the art and culture of the lost Nok civilization. His studio is filled with artifacts from the Nok era.

Papa Kuku taught Che-Che that on special days of the full moon, saying the words 'Nok Nok' in the right place and time can bring the art to life. One day, while Grandpa is out, the kids decide to

try it, and boom, they are transported to the Nok Colony - a dwarf land of Nok creatures.

The Nok microcosm is a breathtaking place surrounded by mountains and filled with adorable dwarf Nok creatures resembling Grandpa's sculptures. But there's trouble - a gigantic wind monster keeps causing chaos. Che-Che and her buddies aren't afraid! They team up with the Nok creatures for a thrilling adventure to stop the wind monster and find their way back home. Get ready for a whirlwind of excitement and a dash of 'Nok Nok' magic.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Nok Nok is a fantasy/adventure series done in 2D animation and 3D VFX. This magical animated series is inspired by the Nok people, the oldest civilization in Northern Nigeria. With little known about them, we let our imagination soar. The Nok universe is represented as a world revealed in sound. We follow the kids on their coming-of-age journey.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Chekwube Okonkwo is an author, an excellent 2D artist, and an award-winning art director. He was a supervising director for Cartoon Network's *Garbage Boy*. He has directed movies and projects, some of which won the RTF 2019 Best African Animation Hourglass award and the Africa Film for Impact Festival award.

COMPANY DETAILS

Magic Carpet Labs is an animation and game development studio founded over five years ago. We tell authentic African stories and are one of the fastest-growing animation studios in Africa.



Chekwube Okonkwo
DIRECTOR

Ferdinand Adimefe
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION DLA ANIMATION

Project Type: Fiction Series

Country: Nigeria

Production Company: Magic Carpet Studios

Running Time: 10 episodes, 10 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 5 000 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Production
- Distributors
- Secure Licensing Deals
- Partnerships
- Relevant Talent



BARGNY

Bargny is located some thirty kilometres from Dakar. Situated on the edge of the ocean, it has a population of around 70,000. Fishing is the main activity for men, while women are involved in the processing of fish products. For some years now, Bargny has been suffering from the fury of the Atlantic Ocean's waves. Periodically, houses are destroyed, cemeteries submerged, and populations are forced to move. Wedged between the sea and the main road, the commune has lived with pollution since the Sococim cement plant was installed in 1948. Over the last few decades, pollution problems linked to the installation of this plant have exploded, and residents are constantly calling for measures to be taken.

Since then, new threats have been added to the people's ordeal. The coal-fired power plant, built by the Senegalese government with financing from a West African bank, didn't last long. After just a few years in operation, it is destined to be shut down as a result of the

actions taken by the people, in particular, the complaint lodged against BOAD. This bank, after declaring the complaint admissible, dispatched investigators to take a look at the situation and draw the consequences. This victory for the people against the state and private investors strengthened the commitment of the associations. Today, other threats hang over Bargny, including the mineral port and the steel plant.

Cheikh Fadel Wade has distinguished himself in the fight against the plant. He was at the forefront of the fight, and today is one of the leading figures in environmental activism. He will be the main character in the film. Climate change is a reality that the African continent is experiencing head-on. And according to some studies, Bargny is particularly threatened. In this small commune on the outskirts of Dakar, Cheikh Fadel fights daily to halt the peril threatening his neighbourhood.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Bargny is a commune on the outskirts of Dakar, just 30 kilometres from the Senegalese capital, on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. Seventy thousand souls live in this land of fishermen, market gardeners, and others, in a city lifestyle with a social organisation of neighbourhoods that were villages not so long ago.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Mame Woury Thioubou began her career in 2009. Eager to reflect the struggles of Senegalese society, she embarked on the production of her first medium-length film, *Agora Braille*, about the inclusion of the visually impaired in the school system.

Mamadou Hady Dia is a young Senegalese producer. With six years of experience as a general manager and production manager in the film industry, he joined Karoninka as a producer in 2020. In 2022, he set up his own production company, Malaka Studiolab, based in Senegal.

COMPANY DETAILS

Malaka Studiolab is a Senegalese film and audiovisual production company. We develop projects that enrich us, both in terms of the people we work with and the subjects we deal with.



Mame Woury Thioubou
DIRECTOR



Mamadou Hady DIA
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Sénégal

Production Company: Malaka studiolab

Running Time: 70 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 130 107 USD

Finances Committed: 31 036 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Partners
- Co-Productions
- Distribution



IMVULA

On the 22nd of April 2022, Nomandla Nqakula received a WhatsApp message from her community group that read, “Don’t go to sleep. The river is rising. There’s more rain on the way. Be ready to evacuate.” She was at her home in Quarry Road, situated on the banks of the Palmiet River in Durban. Nomandla, an environmental activist, had partnered with UKZN’s School of Environmental and Development Studies to develop early weather warnings. After the floods, as the community rebuilds, this partnership continues. Nomandla is also collaborating with the Centre for Environmental Rights, embarking on a journey to hold accountable those responsible for carbon emissions contributing to the climate crisis.

The 2022 floods are considered the most catastrophic natural disaster yet recorded in KwaZulu-Natal. Nomandla lost everything

during these floods and is now rebuilding her life, believing that resilience is the ability to bounce back. For Nomandla, rebuilding means incorporating climate adaptation as the crisis continues to bear its ugly fruits. She is interested in teaming up with relevant stakeholders to ensure this happens.

The School of Built Environment and Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is led by Cathy Sutherland, who works with communities in Quarry Road, Durban, to co-produce knowledge and create climate adaptation strategies. Nomandla worked closely with Prof. Sutherland to develop weather warnings for the community, which led to the timely evacuation during the 2022 floods. Although she lost her property, she was able to evacuate in time with her son.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

The floods of April 2022 affected many people in Durban, and as a filmmaker from this area, I feel a need to tell these stories as we are still grappling with the climate crisis. Nomamndla and her community help tell the story of resilience as she addresses the issues they face while taking care of her son.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Zanele Nhlapo embarked on her journey in the audio-visual sector in 2014, starting her career at the KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission. Over the years, she has honed her skills and expertise, gaining invaluable experience within the industry. In 2021, she took a leap into freelancing, assuming roles as both a production accountant and manager.

Omelga Mthiyane has directed and produced several documentary films for the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), ETV, BBC World, and Al Jazeera.

COMPANY DETAILS

Algemo Pictures has produced award-winning documentaries, including *Lefu*, which tackles the issues of burial rites during COVID-19.



Omelga Mthiyane
DIRECTOR

Zanele Nhlapo
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Algemo Pictures

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 163 599 USD

Finances Committed: 545 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Meet Local And International Decision Makers
- Funding
- Co-Production



TO THOSE WHO WILL INHERIT THE EARTH

Ina-Maria Shikongo is a Black Namibian female activist and artist who has emerged as a prominent voice in the fight for climate justice and social equity. Born in 1979 in Kalulu, Angola, Ina-Maria's early years were marked by displacement and adversity, as her family actively fought apartheid in Namibia and had to seek refuge. She embodied the spirit of activism from a young age, driven by a deep-seated desire to fight against injustices and advocate for change. Today, Ina-Maria dedicates her life to challenging the exploitation of land and resources by multinational corporations in her home, Namibia. Through her artistry and activism, she amplifies the voices of marginalised communities and tirelessly advocates for a more equitable and sustainable future. Ina-Maria's activism extends beyond local initiatives, as she is actively involved in international climate movements such as Fridays For Future.

The film follows the turbulent life of 42-year-old Ina-Maria, known prominently for fighting against the Namibian government and multinational mining companies to protect the Okavango World Heritage site from fracking. We experience Ina-Maria's life as she navigates threats to her security, food and money shortages, and mental instability. As she balances activism and strives for mental and physical wellness, Ina-Maria embarks on a new project to curate mural art with indigenous women in the Okavango Delta. Through her activism, the film exposes the intricate web of power, capitalism, and exploitation, ultimately questioning the sacrifices Ina-Maria has made as an activist and the value of her struggle. The central conflict revolves around the tension between her desire to protect the environment and her commitment to her family's safety and mental and physical well-being in a relatively wealthy country with great disparity along racial lines.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

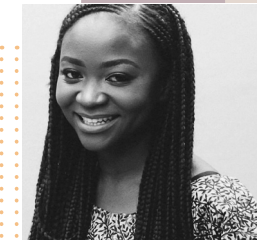
This documentary's essence lies in the profound bond with the community we are portraying, centred around Ina-Maria Shikongo and the impact of her activism on her personal life and mental health. Observing Ina-Maria's painful personal journey and the evolution of her advocacy has deeply moved me as a filmmaker; this film is a testament to her inspiring activism.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Sara Chitambo-Hatira is an accomplished filmmaker renowned for her expertise in crafting emotionally resonant and authentic narratives. Sara's portfolio includes award-winning productions such as *Intersexions* and *MTV Shuga*, which have garnered critical acclaim for their impactful storytelling and social relevance. Sara has just had the world premiere of her debut feature documentary about mental health in Africa at the New York African Film Festival.

COMPANY DETAILS

Joe Vision is a renowned production company with over 15 years' experience in the film industry in Namibia and Angola.



Sara Chitambo-Hatira
DIRECTOR



Sophie Haikali
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Namibia, Germany

Production Company: Joe-Vision

Running Time: 52 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 65 000 USD

Finances Committed: 3 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- To find co-production partners and potential collaborators who can help us find additional funding required to produce the film.



THE CONSERVATIONIST

The Conservationist is a feature-length documentary that tells the story of Moreangels Mbizah, a Zimbabwean conservationist who is working to restore the balance between rural communities and nature, so people and wildlife can coexist regardless of farmland development and wilderness areas that need to be preserved. As she works to increase food sustainability within communities, the ever-looming threat of mining companies is growing.

Moreangels is determined to restore the balance between rural communities and nature by promoting coexistence between humans and

wildlife, so farmers can thrive and lions and other wildlife can be protected. However, with human-wildlife interactions on the increase as animals enter villages in search of food and water, retaliatory killings are on the rise. During a year with one of the worst droughts on record, she has to continue to innovate to find new ways to protect the environment.

Told through poetic narration by Moreangels, the film relates a story of a love for a very complicated country that is beautiful on the one hand, but fraught with corruption, economic challenges, and hyperinflation on the other.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

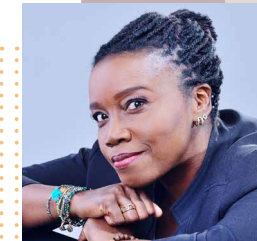
I want to tell this story of innovation in adversity with the beauty and dignity it deserves. It is the story of a complicated love between Moreangels, the communities she works with, the wildlife she protects, and the son she is raising, in the country she is battling to preserve while under threat from climate change and encroachment by corporate entities.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Rumbi Katedza is a Harare-based filmmaker and writer who produces independent fiction and documentary content through her production company, Mai Jai Films. Her recent documentary *Transactions* won Best Zimbabwean Documentary at the Zimbabwe International Film Festival, was Runner-Up in the Best African Documentary section at Encounters International Documentary Festival, and was nominated for the German Grimme Prize and for Best Documentary at the African Movie Academy Awards.

COMPANY DETAILS

Mai Jai Films is a creative boutique production company from Zimbabwe working through collaborative projects and co-productions with partners around the world.



Rumbi Katedza
DIRECTOR



Siza Mukwedini
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Zimbabwe

Production Company: Mai Jai Films

Running Time: 72 minutes

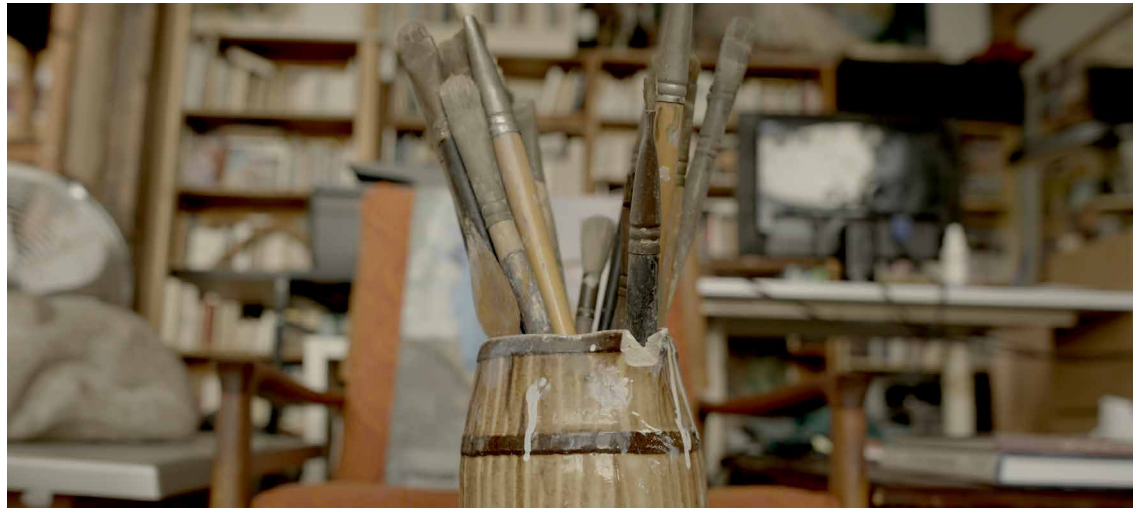
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 252 560 USD

Finances Committed: 1 900 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Access to Funding
- Pitch Development
- Gaining Market Knowledge



THE MULTIPLE MAN

Hervé Masson, a celebrated Mauritian painter, deserves recognition, but it's his unwavering fight for independence that truly cemented his place as a national hero. This documentary explores the man behind the brushstrokes, revealing a life woven with both artistic passion and intellectual depth.

Masson's character transcended labels. While he identified as a painter, his prolific writings and vast knowledge of esotericism portray him as a man of exception. Even before the island claimed its independence, his numerous press articles played a crucial role in shaping the nascent Mauritian identity. Stifled by the limitations of his colonial environment, he sought artistic freedom in Paris, but success wasn't immediate.

Patriotism ultimately trumped personal ambition. At the peak of his artistic journey, Masson returned to Mauritius to join the fight for freedom. He actively participated in

the independence movement, even holding an advisory position in the newly formed government. However, his political career was short-lived, leading to a period of imprisonment alongside his comrades.

Yet, Masson's legacy extends beyond politics. He transitioned to focus on his art and delve into the esoteric beliefs that captivated him since childhood, influenced by his African-descent nannies. His research and writings remain valuable resources in this field.

This documentary embarks on a journey through Masson's artistic evolution, delving into the meaning behind his paintings and his pursuit of artistic recognition. It chronicles a life filled with passion, unwavering commitment, and an unrelenting love for freedom. More than a tribute, the film aims to solidify Masson's place as a founding father of Mauritian art and national identity.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

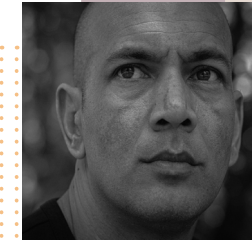
The Multiple Man explores the life of Hervé Masson, a multifaceted artist who significantly influenced Mauritian culture. More than just a tribute, this documentary highlights Masson's artistic and political contributions, which are considered as vital to the nation's birth.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Mauritian filmmaker **Patrice Canabady** (b. 1972) embarked on his journey with the award-winning short film *The Rendez-vous* (1999). He founded Clap Productions in 2000 and has since directed, edited, and produced several short fiction and documentaries. In 2014, he made his documentary debut with *Ratsitanina*, winning a youth jury prize. His most recent work, *Autour de la Mer* (2022), a series on artisanal fishing, was screened at the European Film Festival in Mauritius.

COMPANY DETAILS

Created by local technicians and scriptwriters, Clap Productions has, since its inception in 2000, supported local culture and heritage, working with numerous local and international players.



Patrice Canabady
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Mauritius

Production Company: Clap Productions

Running Time: 75 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 40 000 USD

Finances Committed: 114 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Financing
- Distribution
- Feedback
- Foster a Strong African Film Network



KILELE (THE PEAK OF RESILIENCE)

Born at the gate of Mount Kilimanjaro, Agnes was 21 years old when she had her first daughter, Teddy. After her divorce, she had to figure out how to survive by working on the mountain as a porter, but that was not an easy job. She faced discrimination, inequality, exploitation, and sexual harassment. The mountain is also changing due to climate change, and the competition to secure jobs is becoming increasingly difficult every day. Back home, her 16-year-old daughter, Teddy, is undergoing changes. After failing the secondary education exams, she is now at a crossroads, trying to figure out what's next in her life –

whether to look for a job or join her mother as a porter. The fractured relationship between mother and daughter makes Agnes question what future lies ahead for her family. Agnes doesn't want her children to follow her path, so her goal is to upgrade from being a porter to a tour guide. This way, she will earn a bit more and find hope for her family.

Over the course of a year, where both Agnes and her daughter are faced with the big question of what's next, we will follow this extraordinary journey.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

The first time I climbed the mountain in 2021, I saw women working in such a challenging environment. When I met Agnes, she reminded me of my childhood. I was raised by a mother who used to be away because she was selling food in factories to support the family, and that's why I connect with Agnes' story deeply.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

With over 8 years in the world of filmmaking, **Frank Papushka** is an experienced cinematographer known for his extraordinary talent in capturing the heart and soul of diverse narratives. He has lent his creative vision and technical expertise to projects across more than 20 African countries.

Frank Papushka's proficiency extends beyond the camera lens. He is also a co-founder of AFRISOS (African School of Storytelling), aiming to impact the next generation of storytellers.

COMPANY DETAILS

With our roots in Africa and experience across the continent, we specialise in crafting impactful films that illuminate real stories of change, driving transformation.



Frank Sylvester
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Tanzania

Production Company: Nyumbani Content Ltd

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 200 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Connect with Filmmakers, Producers, and Financiers from Across Africa and the Globe to Explore Funding Opportunities.



NEKESA

In the remote village of Saafi, nestled deep within a lush, secluded forest, a dark history shapes the lives of its inhabitants. Founded as a sanctuary for women survivors from another village called Nimoru – who somehow survived the gruesome fate of being pushed off a cliff for the sin of getting pregnant out of wedlock – Saafi stands as both a refuge and a prison. Among its residents is the spirited 15-year-old Nekesa.

Nekesa's world is one of whispers and strict rules, where the pain of the past still lingers like a ghost. But her young heart yearns for more; she secretly dreams of a life beyond the confines of Saafi. Her dreams become compelling when she meets Kimuli, a strange boy from the outside world. Kimuli looks and behaves differently from anyone she has seen growing up, triggering Nekesa's curiosity. He represents her pathway to seeing the outside world. Bound by shared curiosity and the secret thrill of teenage love,

Nekesa defies the strict boundaries that have kept her community safe for generations and seeks answers for herself.

Nekesa makes it to Nimoru, and at first, it is everything she ever dreamed it to be. She is introduced to modernity and technology. She loves their brass factories, their weaponry, and their buildings, which are bigger and stronger than anything she has ever seen in Saafi. Nekesa befriends Kimuli's stepsister, Tutu.

Everything is going well for Nekesa until she learns that Tutu, her new best friend, is pregnant and is going to be put to death for the sin of sex outside wedlock. Nekesa discovers that this is the norm in Nimoru. Women are considered unclean if they get pregnant outside wedlock and must be killed, or else bad luck might befall the land.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Growing up in an African single-mother household, I witnessed my mother's efforts to protect us from her in-laws, who put her through hell when she lost her husband. At 30, I know little about my father's family, and I worry about sharing this heritage. My protagonist, Nekesa, mirrors this, yearning to explore beyond her restrictive village.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Usama Mukwaya is a Ugandan screenwriter, film director, and producer with nearly a decade of experience. He studied at Maisha Film Lab and Makerere University and founded O Studios Entertainment Ltd. Usama has served in key roles within Uganda's film industry, including General Secretary of the Screenwriter's Guild and programmer for the Pearl International Film Festival. His notable works include *Bala Bala Sese*, *Love Faces*, *Kyaddala*, *Sanyu*, *The Blind Date*, *Sixteen Rounds*, *The Passenger*, and *Nambi*.

COMPANY DETAILS

O Studios Entertainment Ltd, founded in 2014, provides comprehensive TV, film, and video production services for a diverse range of clients, including corporations, nonprofits, and sports franchises.



Daisy Masembe
DIRECTOR



Usama Mukwaya
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Uganda

Production Company: O Studios Entertainment Ltd

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 3 000 000 USD

Finances Committed: 11 359 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Networking
- Build Community
- Seeking Further Development Funding
- To Meet People Who Run Development/ Training Labs



OUR HEROES

As the rebel army advances towards the town where they live, Kiya (11) and his brother Abi (6) are told by their mother Alem that they can no longer wait for their missing father, urging them to seek a more peaceful refuge. However, when Kiya's soldier father, Teferi, returns, the defeated veteran standing before Kiya is a stark contrast to the larger-than-life figure he used to imagine. Kiya, grappling with the reality of his father's persona, starts studying him to find a single heroic trait. The closer he gets, the more he sees his father's scars. Teferi, dealing with PTSD, discovers Alem's plan to leave, assuming he is dead, leading to a deeper family rift and feelings of betrayal.

In an attempt to find purpose, Teferi embarks on a journey to inform families about the deaths of soldiers he knew. Meanwhile, rebel forces

declare control over the country. Kiya, no longer proud, removes his father's army medal pinned on his chest and throws it into the demonic cave. Teferi, noticing the absence of the medal, realises the extent of his son's disillusionment. Determined to regain his fatherhood, Teferi takes Kiya and his brother on his journey to share news of fallen soldiers with their families.

As trust builds, Kiya accepts Teferi as a father and develops a new definition of heroism. Despite their progress, Kiya faces his fears and ventures into a demonic cave to retrieve his father's discarded army medal. In a fierce battle against imaginary demons, Kiya reclaims the medal, symbolising his triumph over fear. The imperfect yet reunited family embarks on a journey to build a new life, leaving behind the haunting memories of their past.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Our Heroes is a story of a son and his father as they strive to rebuild their relationship following the end of the long-lasting civil war, which had kept them apart. It explores our challenges of reconnecting after years of separation, reflecting our yearning to reclaim lost time and connection, and our determination to become who we truly are.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Henok has been an editor for the past 10 years. *New Eyes*, a short film he edited, screened at the Venice and Toronto International Film Festivals. He also edited *Katanga Nation*, a short documentary that premiered at Visions du Reel and screened at IDFA in 2022. The documentary won the Silver Foal prize at FESPACO in 2023. Currently, Henok is developing his first fiction feature, *Our Heroes*, which was part of the DW Akademie Film Development Fund in 2023.



Henok Legesse Birhanu
DIRECTOR



Leul Shoaferaw Abebe
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Ethiopia

Running Time: 100 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 390 192 USD

Finances Committed: 10 849 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- My goal is to introduce my project to industry professionals who would be interested in being part of it.



BOUDJADIS

In Épinal, in the heart of the Vosges, young soldiers join the 1st Tirailleurs Regiment. Its band is called La Nouba, its mascot, Messaoud the Ram, and its chief, the caïd. The apprentices, or 'boudjadis' are initiated into the traditions inherited from the North African tirailleurs who

served in the French colonial army. Following their beginnings in the barracks until their deployment on operations in Africa, I examine the image of Épinal that they revive and invite them to unravel the strange history of France told there.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

In 2011, I moved to Épinal for art school and was struck by a view of a war cemetery. Discovering WWII Muslim soldiers' graves revealed the complexities of France's colonial past. This film explores how colonialism is remembered through military rituals, uncovering the enduring impact of these histories on present-day identities.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Élina Chared, artist and filmmaker, merges performance and visual arts to explore narratives shaping our world. Graduating from ENSAD in 2016, she pursued documentary writing at Aix-Marseille University. She explored movement and the understanding of voices, which is reflected in her film *The Voices From Inside* (2019). Discovering colonial traditions in military barracks, she crafted *Boudjadis*, her debut feature-length documentary with Muja Films.

COMPANY DETAILS

Muja Films bridges Marseille and Tunis, charting a cinematic channel between the two continents. Propelled by filmmakers' gazes, it seeks freshness and boldness in content and form.



Elina Chared
DIRECTOR

Dhia Jerbi
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Tunisia, France

Production Company: Muja Films

Running Time: 80 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 350 000 USD

Finances Committed: 32 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Producers
- Funding
- Broadcasters
- Distributors
- Sales Agents



NADINE AND NADIA, WE ALSO WANT TO GOVERN

The unexplained 45-day extension of Patrice Talon's initial five-year term has created a rift between the 27-year-old twins and political activists Nadine and Nadia Okoumasoun. Despite their close bond, social media has become a battleground for the sisters. Following the April 2021 presidential election, Nadine found herself behind bars for impetuously criticising President Talon, whom Nadia deeply reveres and admires. Caught between sisterly love and political beliefs, Nadia is now engaged in a struggle to secure her sister's release from prison.

This hybrid documentary explores a unique and contentious bond between twin sisters whose unexpected and remarkable political allegiances become particularly intriguing during a heated presidential election in Benin. Much like the

divided public opinion in Benin, split between two opposing political factions engaging in confrontations on social media and in the streets, the sisters' relationship reveals the manipulative aspects of politics. The narrative unfolds through the lens of a puppet show that holds nostalgic significance from my childhood: The Puppets Theatre.

The show, hosted by the charismatic Tanti Yoyo, whom I resonate with in the film, is complemented by the renowned puppet orchestra Tip-Top Rythmo. Through this show, the film introduces its central themes, providing a unique avenue to address aspects of reality that are challenging to capture directly on camera.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

A passionate journalist disillusioned by political manipulation, I initially supported Talon's 2016 campaign. Amid the tensions of the 2021 election, I chronicled the Okoumasoun twins' struggle, employing traditional Beninese puppets to illustrate political manipulation.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Evelyne Agli is a visual communication specialist and the publication director of *Le Progrès* in Benin. Since 2015, she has managed Gazelle Production, which is engaged in film production. Evelyne holds a Bachelor's degree in Physical Sciences with a major in Chemistry, as well as a Master's degree in Communications.



Evelyne Agli
DIRECTOR

COMPANY DETAILS

Gazelle Production is a production company founded in 2015 in Benin. It has several films to its credit that have taken part in festivals.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Benin

Production Company: Gazelle Production

Running Time: 70 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 300 267 USD

Finances Committed: 86 012 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Funding
- International Sales Agents
- Distributors



CHILDREN OF AFRAN QALLO, WAKE UP!

The documentary delves into Ethiopia's Oromo musical movement, a resilient symbol of resistance. Combining personal narrative with observational filmmaking, it follows the filmmaker's quest to uncover the Arfan Qallo band's first-ever 11 songs, recorded live and aired on national radio in the 1960s. With the passing of the national radio archivist, believed to be the sole person capable of identifying these recordings amidst disorganised archives, the search intersects with Abedlle's mission from Australia. Abedlle seeks to preserve the legacy

of his musical heroes, who boldly advocated for Oromo identity under repressive regimes. His ultimate aim is to reunite these band members for a final performance after 60 years of exile.

Together, they lead us on a captivating journey through the movement's past and future, alongside its visionary founders, now in their late 80s. Through these experiences, the film offers a profound exploration of identity across generations and its evolution over time.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

As a filmmaker with Oromo heritage, I explore the struggle to preserve identity through music. Inspired by the tragic murders of Oromo singers, exile, and systemic repression, my film delves into the resilience and evolution of cultural identity. This socio-political story, set against a musical backdrop, aims to resonate universally with its message

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Based in Addis Ababa, **Dirbdil Assefa Akirso** both directs and produces. His documentary *Which Direction to Go* premiered at the Winterthur International Film Festival and competed at Hot Docs. He also participated in the 11th Berlinale Talent and the Doc Toolbox at the 72nd Berlinale. Collaborating on projects like *Horizon Beautiful* expanded his expertise. Currently, Akirso is developing *Children of Afran Qallo, Wake Up!* with funding from DW Akademie, and is a GLCP Lab alumnus. He is also the co-owner of Rusty Town Films, directing and producing *Gera Kegn*, a beloved local TV series.

COMPANY DETAILS

Rusty Town Films, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is dedicated to portraying the authentic narratives of its surroundings.



Dirbdil Assefa Akirso
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Ethiopia

Production Company: Rusty Town Films

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 250 000 USD

Finances Committed: 10 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Potential Financers
- Network with Producers and Broadcasters

ALLDAY STUDIOS

THE RHINO FRIEND

In a world where three births mark the beginning of intertwined destinies, “The Circle of Life” unfolds with the arrival of Tauwo in the vast expanses of Lewa Conservancy. A few months earlier, thousands of miles away, Fatu takes her first breath within the confines of Dvur Kralove Zoo. Amidst these joyous moments, Zach, a devoted rhino caregiver, welcomes his son into the world, igniting a spark of paternal love. A thread of fate weaves through their lives, binding them in a tale of resilience, love, and the enduring circle of life.

Inspired by his father’s commitment to wildlife preservation, Zach found his purpose amidst the rhinos of Lewa Conservancy. Now, he shoulders the immense responsibility of caring for the last two northern white rhinos at OI Pejeta Conservancy. His connection to the natural world deepens with each passing day. Meanwhile, Zach’s son, despite growing up with a providing father, feels his dad was taken away

from him. Though their paths diverge, the bond between father and son remains unbreakable.

Balancing financial pressures and the emotional toll of being away for ten months each year, Zach grapples with the sacrifices required to fulfil his role. He wrestles with feelings of guilt and longing but finds solace and purpose in his connection to the rhinos, viewing them as part of his extended family.

With the arrival of Tauwo, a Southern white rhino, hope ignites within Zach. Tasked with guiding the last two northern white rhinos towards embracing their wild instincts, Tauwo symbolises a beacon of possibility. Zach envisions a future where the rhinos thrive and his role as their caregiver is passed on to a new generation. He seeks a new rhino caregiver to share his passion and dedication, ensuring the legacy of rhino conservation endures.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

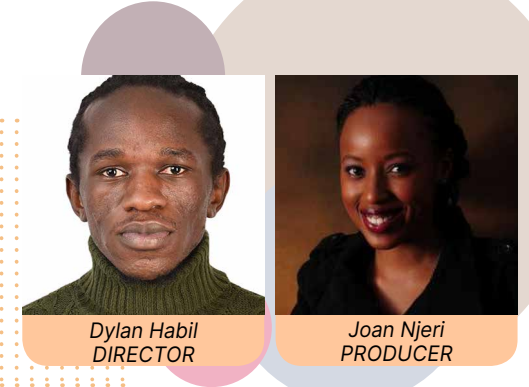
In *The Rhino Friend*, we spotlight Tauwo’s mission to guide the last northern white rhinos to freedom while delving into Zach’s balancing act between rhino care and family, urging action for biodiversity.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Dylan Habil, a Kenyan filmmaker and photographer, excels in authentic storytelling, particularly in his work at OI Pejeta conservancy capturing conservation efforts. As an African Conservation Voices – Media Lab and Sundance Ignite X Adobe fellow, he collaborates with notable names in wildlife conservation, documenting efforts to save Northern White rhinos. Featured in global media outlets, he showcases impactful storytelling and a commitment to conservation.

COMPANY DETAILS

Allday Studios, a Kenyan production collective, crafts captivating factual and fictional films, pushing creative boundaries, and reflecting Africa’s rich storytelling heritage.



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type:	Documentary Feature Length
Country:	Kenya
Production Company:	Allday Studios
Running Time:	90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget:	1 103 219 USD
Finances Committed:	7 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Showcase our Project
- Foster Industry Connections
- Amplify African Storytelling Globally



LOOKING FOR THE MERMAID

In the UNESCO World Heritage Island of Mozambique, once the crossroads of the world, connecting the east to the west through its major spices, ivory, gold, and slave-trading African port, the sea continues to be the extension of people's lives. This has very much been the reality for Sadique, a sailing dhow master and fisherman who was once married to the sea creature - the mermaid - and lived then in abundance. But recently, things have changed. There are no more fish in the sea, tropical cyclones and a militarised coast have become a significant threat to life, and the sea level keeps rising and submerging coastal villages. Since then, Sadique hasn't been out in the water and has not seen the sea creature.

'Looking for the Mermaid' is an incantation chant of a nakhoda—a sailing dhow master, Sadique, who is desperately looking for the elusive mermaid so he can restore the broken bond, save himself, and find a resolution for his coastal fishing community. To do that, he needs to make a sacrifice, but he has nothing left to sacrifice. He has lost his identity as a sea wisdom master, his wife and daughter to the rising high tide, and his existence is threatened even though he did not trawl the ocean's depths nor benefit from the oil and gas extractions that led to this imbalance. His community cannot right the wrong. But what about those who are responsible or who are still benefiting from it? Can they sacrifice their living dreams in order to save their species?

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

In today's Western-caused climate crisis, Sadique represents humankind, and the Mermaid represents nature. This is an urgent philosophical film, told in a poetic way, to politically question how the so-called "developed and civilised" world came to be through an extremely unbalanced and perverted historical relationship with nature and the planet itself.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Yara Costa is a filmmaker from the Island of Mozambique. Yara's work is deeply informed by local African narratives, cultural heritage, and systems of knowledge that, due to the lingering effects of colonial intellectual racism, cultural genocide, and Eurocentric supremacy, have been persistently marginalised.

Looking for the Mermaid is the documentary film component of *Nakhoda and the Mermaid*, an XR/VR immersive experience exploring the traditional ecological knowledge of the coastal communities of the Indian Ocean.



Yara Costa
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Mozambique

Running Time: 70 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 220 000 USD

Finances Committed: 46 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Network
- Funders
- Co-Productions
- Line Producer



SPACEMAN IN KONGO

Spaceman in Kongo is an intergenerational story about two Congolese student engineers, Nestor and Isaac, who moved from eastern Congo to the capital, Kinshasa, to study at the technical university. Their ambition is to build a spacecraft. Although they don't know it, by embarking on this journey, they have joined a lineage of Afrofuturist visionaries, pushing steadily onwards as they transform the dream of an African cosmos into a reality.

Jean-Patrice Keka is their mentor and predecessor in pursuing this dream of space travel. Starting from scratch 17 years ago with

salvaged materials such as televisions and oil drums, Keka is now working on the launch of their Troposphere VI rocket—the most ambitious yet, with aims of reaching 200 km altitude.

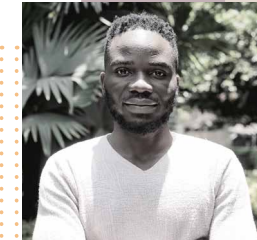
They are not alone in this project. The spirit of Edward Nkoloso Mukuka – the Zambian engineer and professor who dreamt of going to Mars in the 1960s – watches over their progress, pushing them ever onwards. For this new Congolese generation, who have watched as the global giants of capital feed on their country's resources, space is an opportunity to repurpose the forces of technology.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

As a Congolese person, this project is a way for me to contribute to the vision-building project that Nestor and Isaac are a part of. Like them, I am a member of Congo's next generation, and we are on the same mission to generate belief for our country and envision an African cosmos.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Maisha Maene born in 1998 is a Congolese screenwriter and director. As an Afrofuturist artist, he works on issues of human rights and the environment. Maisha has directed five short films. His most recent short film *Mulika* won the Medien Patent Award at Locarno Film Festival 2022. *Mulika* was also selected at Sundance, Clermont Ferrand and FESPACO. His fiction feature film project *Niobium* was selected for the Locarno Residency (2023). His feature documentary *Spaceman in Kongo* was selected for Berlinale Talents Doc Station.



Maisha Maene
DIRECTOR



Leo Nelki
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Production Company: Leo Nelki Productions

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 351 273 USD

Finances Committed: 18 841 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Production and Post-Production Funding Partners
- Broadcasters
- Distributors



COUSINS

Shivani (35) is a bankrupt animator who has lost her artistic mojo. She's just been fired from yet another job, her bills are piling up, and her mother's gambling debts have put them in danger of losing their home. She needs money, and she needs it fast. Shivani's mother, Dheena, reveals that Shivani's paternal grandfather, a wealthy farmer, is on his deathbed. Dheena figures that if Shivani can get into her grandfather's good graces, she can get into his will, and all their money troubles will disappear. And that's how Shivani finds herself being dragged against her will by her manipulative mother to spend the festive season on a farm with people that she hardly knows.

There Shivani meets her colourful cast of cousins, and just like Shivani, they'll do whatever

it takes to get their inheritance. But when backstabbing and sabotage turn to bonding, Shivani rediscovers her vision and voice. She stands up to her mother, lands her dream job, and connects with her heritage.

Grandfather passes and it's revealed that he left nothing to his family, and everything to his shifty farmhand, STEVEN! Shivani and her cousins are forced to realise that perhaps the real fortune wasn't the money after all, but one another instead. Not quite ready to throw in the towel and say goodbye just yet, the cousins team up to take on Steven and win back their family land.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

In an individualistic society obsessed with overnight success, *Cousins* is a hilarious exploration of the late bloomer finding happiness, and themselves, in the journey, not the destination. Packed with colourful characters and relatable family drama, *Cousins* is a multi-age story that urges us to throw out the timeline and never forget that we are part of a whole.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

With a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts from Wits University, filmmaker **Kirsten Mohamed** has worked on numerous screenplays, receiving SAFTA and AMVCA nominations for her films *Mbalenhle* and *Ke Bono Spoko* in collaboration with Leburugraphy Pictures. Drawing from these experiences, writing for Comedy Central Roasts, and creative producing on *Last One Laughing*, Kirsten will direct her feature film debut, *Cousins*, under the mentorship of Samuel Leburu.

COMPANY DETAILS

Founded by filmmakers Kirsten Mohamed and Anil Polton, HeyCuz Productions is a South African screenplay development company that aims to tell the untold stories of underserved communities.



Kirsten Mohamed
PRODUCER/DIRECTOR



Samuel Leburu
DIRECTOR



Anil Polton
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: HeyCuz Productions

Running Time: 90 minutes

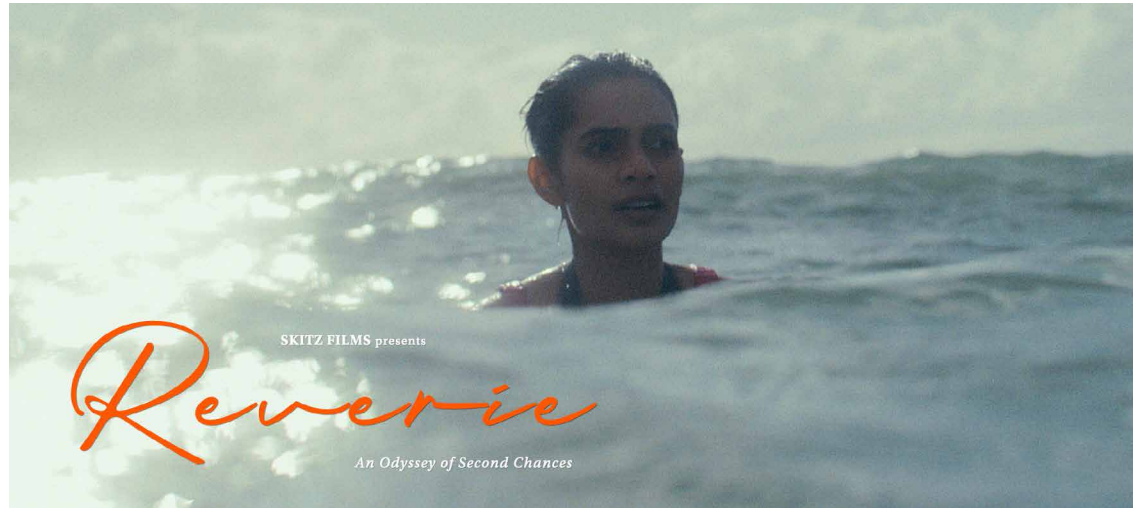
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 470 482.49 USD

Finances Committed: TBC

GOALS AT DFM

- Financing
- Co-Production
- Local and International Distribution



REVERIE

Mali (28) and Archie (32) are a pair of hopeless romantics pursuing love and life in the big city. They don't have much, but they have each other and enough money to support their drug addiction – until they fall pregnant.

Mali goes cold turkey to kick her addiction, while Archie sees no real detriment to his continued drug use. This sows a seed of discord between the lovers who, in an attempt to reignite their love, hastily marry in a shotgun wedding that exposes their shaky foundation.

Mali relapses into addiction immediately after the birth of their son, Seth, leading to a downward spiral as Archie struggles to provide for his family. When a heated argument sees Archie storm off in a dilapidated delivery vehicle, a fatal collision claims his life, leaving behind a toxicology report that brings unwanted scrutiny to Mali's addiction.

She loses custody of her son to Maureen (57), her former mother-in-law, before Jake (34), a local rehab counsellor, saves her from a near overdose. He encourages her to check herself into a radical rehab facility where a mix of ibogaine and a 12-step faith-based recovery programme confronts Mali's demons head-on.

Jake guides Mali through recovery, taking her sailing and allowing her to help him fix his motorbike as forms of alternative therapy. He takes her riding one evening before, at her insistence and they visit Maureen. Mali's spontaneous apology for her part in Archie's demise eases tensions, allowing Mali to forgive herself.

After completing rehab, Jake helps Mali secure an apprenticeship at a motorcycle dealership before her sobriety earns her custody of Seth. At his first birthday party, the undeniable bond between Mali and Jake offers a glimpse of hope for a romantic relationship in the future.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Whether from car accidents, violent crimes, or the consequences of poor healthcare, a dark undercurrent of tragedy lurks in the lives of everyday South Africans due to the loss of loved ones by forces beyond their control. For those who are able to overcome this, tragedy holds a transformative power to break cycles of ineptitude and foster personal growth.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Lamar Bonhomme is a film director from South Africa who seeks to capture the world in its most raw and unfiltered form. His debut short film, *iNhlawulo*, premiered in Clermont-Ferrand in 2019. His next two films, *Time and Tide* and *iNdoda*, won Best Short Film at the Simon Sabela Awards in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Lamar is one of four South African directors to have work featured on the prestigious Director's Library, cementing his place among the country's best image-makers and storytellers.

COMPANY DETAILS

Skitz Films was established in 2019 to offer global audiences cathartic South African narratives through culturally impactful audio-visual experiences with a cinematic edge and universal appeal.



Lamar Bonhomme
DIRECTOR



Rizelle Januk
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Skitz Films

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 550 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Partner with a Seasoned Co-Producer
- Engage Distribution Stakeholders to Secure Pre-Sale Agreements



ENTRE TROIS EAUX

Once a large colonial town and port, Lahou Kpanda has now become a village where the land is shrinking like a sieve due to global warming, rising water levels, and the constant movement of the river mouth. With an area less than 2.5 km wide and a population of fewer than 3,000, the village is losing more than half its population, who are migrating to the towns.

Daniel, a young Avikam in his 30s, is one of the last residents who have decided to stay in the village despite the lack of food and the risk of flooding. They are determined to see the village withstand the rising waters. The villagers hope that Lahou-Kpanda will be saved. If nothing is done, it is the land of the Avikam people that will disappear, along with its habits, customs and language, leaving families landless and rootless.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Entre Trois Eaux (*Between Three Waters*) is my first feature-length documentary. It depicts, through images and sound, the rise of the sea gradually eroding the land of Lahou Kpanda, the effects of this disappearance on the communities who live there, and their efforts to confront the inexorable forces of nature's renewal and climate change.

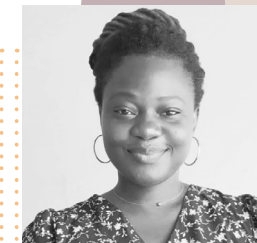
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Olivia Murielle Amoin Yao is a documentary filmmaker from Côte d'Ivoire and holds a Master's degree in Cinema. Thanks to her passion for the authenticity of reality and her sensitivity, she made her first short documentary film, *Abouadji*. She is now preparing to make her first feature-length documentary, *Entre Trois Eaux*.

Shriman Boris Frédy Agblo is a young producer born in Benin with 10 years of professional experience. He is currently producing three feature-length films.

COMPANY DETAILS

FMEDIA is a Beninese film production and communications.



Yao Olivia
DIRECTOR



Shriman Boris Frédy Agblo
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Côte d'Ivoire

Production Company: FMEDIA

Running Time: 72 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 150 000 USD

Finances Committed: 30 078 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Meet Co-Producers
- Meet Documentary Film Funding and Distribution Organisations



LES BILOKOS

In this city, the Katindo neighbourhood draws attention due to its abundance of a military camp. Against the backdrop of perpetual armed conflicts, the Katindo camp is a different and unique place. Here, active and inactive military personnel live with their families. Houses are cramped, stacked, and stored; garbage is everywhere. Each military member builds their own house, while others become tenants, renting from fellow military members who claim ownership. Fences are erected in this concession supposedly belonging to the state.

The concept of cleanliness doesn't exist; it's a sanctuary for epidemics. Many shelters are made of worn-out plastic sheets, and large families live in confined spaces as if the concept of privacy doesn't exist. In this indescribable social chaos, the population must constantly invent the conditions for its own survival every day.

Les Bilokos tells the story of the Katindo Military Camp located in the Katindo neighbourhood of Goma, the volcanic city with over 2 million inhabitants at war since the 90s. The film follows characters living in the camp.

Mr. Assumani makes a living by collecting makuta ya kuribika, a form of recycling worn-out banknotes that he exchanges for candies in the city's streets to exchange them for new banknotes at the central bank. Having entered the army as a child soldier and demobilised from the armed forces of DRC after losing his hand in combat in 1997 he, like other active and inactive Congolese military members, lives with his large family in this camp that is like a city within a city - with its own unique realities.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Born in 1993, I grew up from childhood to adult, always living in Goma, bordering Rwanda - the epicentre of conflicts for years.

Les Bilokos is a pejorative term used to refer to various second-hand items from Europe. These are objects considered no longer useful in Europe, discarded there but proudly used here. In Africa, they have a new life.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Producing a variety of compelling fiction, documentaries, and animation for both cinema and television, **Erickey Bahati** is motivated by his passion for accompanying stories from inception to release to the public. With a deep appreciation for the wealth of stories across the African continent, particularly in his home country of the DRC, Bahati has made it their mission to tell these stories with authenticity. His wish is to collaborate with others to ensure their projects are executed to the highest standard possible.

COMPANY DETAILS

Gikas Films was established in 2017 and is a production company based in the DRC. They produce fiction, documentary, and animation, with a commitment to authentic representation of Africa.



Erickey Bahati
DIRECTOR

Giresse Kassonga
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Production Company: Gikas Films

Running Time: 75 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 230 000 USD

Finances Committed: 70 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- International Co-Producer
- International Distributor
- International Seller
- Funding
- Development Residencies



COMMANDANTĒ TITINA SILA: VOCTORIA CERTA

Ernestina “Titina” Sila, aged thirty (1943-1973), stands as a heroine and martyr of Guinea-Bissau, a comrade-in-arms alongside Amilcar Cabral in the struggle for her nation’s independence. Her portrayal as a military woman and warrior, commanding an army of over a thousand men, starkly contrasts with the stereotype of the African woman, albeit valiant, burdened with firewood atop her head and a child on her back.

“Victoria Certa” (Victory is certain) was not merely a war cry of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) in their bid to break free from Portuguese colonialism; rather, it embodied the

political, social, and economic success of the thousands of young men and women whom Amilcar Cabral, the leader of this party, had dispatched across the globe.

While Titina epitomises heroism, women such as Anna Maria Gomes Soares, Francisca, and Carmen Pereira, among others whose faces remain unknown, exerted every ounce of their strength in building a Guinean nation.

This film endeavours to delve into the lives of Titina and her comrades, as well as the diverse women of contemporary Guinea-Bissau, who have contributed to the nation’s consolidation and continue to contribute to its prosperity.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

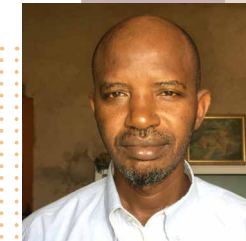
My motivation for making this film is to show that many women in Africa, like Titina Silà, and in Guinea Bissau fought at the cost of their lives for the freedom of their people and participated in nation-building, yet remain unknown to many.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Samba Diao is a Jurist, Journalist, and Director. His debut is *Black on White*, and he has also directed *Canvas for a Visa*. Additionally, he has written *Dans le Joola, Nous étions*” (Harmattan 2013).

COMPANY DETAILS

Impluvium is a production and audiovisual distribution company based in Dakar, focused on creating content exclusively for television and festivals.



Samba Diao
DIRECTOR



Sebastien Tendeng
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: Senegal, Burkina Faso, Guinée Bissau

Production Company: Impluvium Production

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 243 600 USD

Finances Committed: 42 632 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Funding
- Co-Production



FRENCH KISS

Djeneba, a 16-year-old with a penchant for books, harbours a secret love for romance novels. When her closest friend, Alidou, teases her about her lack of real-life experience with French kissing, she sets her sights on Ken,

the charismatic heartthrob of their school. Reluctantly, Alidou finds himself dragged into her scheme, and the more he helps her, the more he realises he might not want Ken to be the one French kissing her.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

French Kiss represents a much-needed addition to the landscape of African cinema, specifically targeting the coming-of-age genre within the teenage romantic comedy niche. It's designed to fill a gap that currently exists in the market, where African youth are underserved in terms of relatable and culturally relevant content in this particular genre.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

An independent writer/director, **Leslie To** has been writing short films, sitcoms, and feature films for over a decade. In 2022, Leslie To's short film *En Route* was selected for the Clermont Ferrand African Perspectives Programme. In that same year, it won the Best African Fiction Short Film at the URUSARO Film Festival. In 2019, her television pilot *Coup d'Etat* placed as a semifinalist in both the Screencraft Fellowship and the WeScreenplay Competitions. *French Kiss* is her most recent project.

COMPANY DETAILS

Created in 2019, Aza Communication is a global communications agency specialising in audiovisual production. We bring the unique vision of a small group of creators to the screen.



Leslie To
DIRECTOR



Gery Barbot
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Burkina Faso

Production Company: Aza Communication

Running Time: 95 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 648 000 USD

Finances Committed: 7 500 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- I envision forging partnerships that will lead to future collaborations and securing production financing.



UNDERSTORY

MUBI

Set in Johannesburg in 1990, a few months before the release of Nelson Mandela and the official end of Apartheid, *Mubi* tells the story of identical twin sisters who were separated at birth – one raised to believe she is beautiful and the other ugly and invisible. A series of magical coincidences reunites them on the day when former beauty queen Nomoya is diagnosed with a strange terminal illness located in her womb. With only a few months left to live, Nomoya

convinces her sister, Nomazi, to replace her – to carry on her life and bear the child she cannot give her husband. Nomazi, known all her life as ‘Mubi’ (ugly one), agrees to become her sister’s understudy. However, when their plan works too well, Nomoya must contend not only with the strange illness that is causing her to become literally invisible but also with the bitterness of her rage and jealousy at being replaced.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

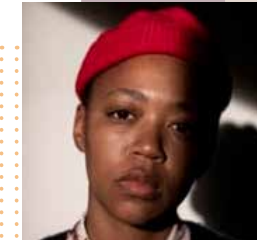
Mubi is a magical realist allegory that explores themes of beauty and ugliness, sisterhood, love, loss, and the questions: What makes us beautiful? And how is beauty distorted by obsessions with appearance, wealth, respectability, and social mobility?

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Palesa Nomanzi Shongwe is a South African filmmaker of many “lives” – Writer, Director, Teacher, and Fulbright Scholar. She currently works as a freelance Story Producer in both fiction and documentary formats while also pursuing an independent film career rooted in her interests as a film scholar and experimental artist. In 2010, she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study towards an MFA in film production at Temple University. She has made three short films: *Atrophy*, *uNomalanga and the Witch*, and *11-19*.

COMPANY DETAILS

Understory Features was founded in 2020 and develops features, series, and short films.



Palesa Nomanzi Shongwe
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Running Time: 80 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 270 000 USD

Finances Committed: 300 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Revive Interest in the Project
- Attract Funding for Further Development



SACHA'S JOURNEY

Sacha is a 21-year-old single mother who works as a sex worker to make ends meet with her 5-year-old son in contemporary Kigali. Her world revolves around her work, caring for her son, and drinking with her friends. When she receives news that her estranged father, who banished her 6 years ago when she got pregnant outside

of wedlock, has passed away, the wounds of her oppressive past are reopened, and her past and present collide. This intensifies her suppressed anger and resentment towards the patriarchal society that has contributed to her struggles, fueling the anger that drives her to stand up in her highly toxic and misogynistic world.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

In the backdrop of contemporary life in Kigali, *Sacha's Journey* is a subjective portrait of a young mother who has been living with the consequences of a decision made for her long ago by the patriarchy. The death of a patriarch becomes a catalyst for her revolt against the same system and her emancipation from her misogynistic and toxic environment.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Mutiganda wa Nkunda is a Rwandan self-taught filmmaker and former film journalist who has worked in both films and TV series since 2013. His debut feature film, *Nameless*, premiered at the Fribourg Film Festival 2021 and won the Best Screenplay Award at FESPACO 2021 among other international recognitions. He is currently in post-production of his second feature film. Additionally, he directed and produced *A Legacy* for Al Jazeera.

COMPANY DETAILS

Merveilles Production is a Beninese company producing documentaries and fiction. Their latest feature film, *Freda*, was selected in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes 2021.



Mutiganda wa Nkunda
DIRECTOR

Faissol Gnonlonfin
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Rwanda, Benin

Production Company: Merveilles Production

Running Time: 120 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 320 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Development Funds and Residences
- Financiers
- Co-Producers in South Africa and Europe
- Sales and Pre-Sales



SELF!

Emmanuel, a young musician without a mother, dreams of being famous. But his father, a senior civil servant, is fiercely opposed to his passion. He'd rather his son followed in his footsteps than pursue dreams he believes are doomed to failure. When Emmanuel persists in his ambition, Pierre kicks him out and uses all his energy to get him to fall in line. Emmanuel takes refuge with his maternal uncle Jean, an eccentric, lonely, penniless painter. This chaotic

cohabitation changes Emmanuel's outlook on himself, his art, and his relationships with others. Not only with his family, who will turn out to hold many secrets about him, but also with Sarah, his girlfriend, and professional rival. In the end, he loses Sarah, and his relationship with his family is permanently damaged. But he gains a spiritual father and maturity that will enable him to better understand the musical career he has finally decided to fully embrace.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

The need to direct this melodrama came to me from personal experience, as I preferred to follow the path of cinema despite my academic training in law and the doubts of my family. Emmanuel's story tells of this search for balance between personal aspirations and consideration for others; between giving priority to one's ambitions and pleasing others.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Born in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on February 23, 1996, **Cynthia Etaba** began working as a scriptwriter in 2020. In 2021, she took part in the Patrimoines-Heritage workshop's documentary film training programme, after which she directed the film *Les Fantômes de Sa'a*, which was selected at the Short Film Festival in Clermont-Ferrand. To date, she has directed three short films.

COMPANY DETAILS

Onore, SARL is a Cameroonian company owned by Martinel Nemalieu, which has produced a variety of TV film genres and short documentaries, such as *Tchekanda* by Bawa Kadade in 2021.



Cynthia Etaba
DIRECTOR



Martinel Nemalieu
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: Cameroon

Production Company: Onore Ltd

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 657 438 USD

Finances Committed: 164 360 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Producers
- Broadcasters
- Funding



STORIES READY TO SHOOT IN KZN – MEET THE KZN FILMMAKERS



DURBAN FILM OFFICE DEVELOPMENT FUND 171

The Durban Film Office Development Fund supports intermediate to experienced producers based in Durban who need to develop feature fiction or documentary projects for the local and/or international market. The programme provides grant funding for 2 Durban film projects per annum, to a maximum of R250 000 per project towards the development of the project.

ILEMBE STORY LAB 180

Ilembe Story Lab is a screenwriting training and development platform for emerging filmmakers living in the Ilembe district. 8 participants are selected for basic screenwriting training and a chance to write a short film script with dedicated mentor support as an introduction to the screenwriting profession. Each of the writers are given a one-year membership to the Writers Guild of South Africa, allowing them to connect with the screenwriting community. The best script from the programme earns the writer a 2-month internship with Stained Glass Productions, where they work in the writers' room of the South African telenovela, Uzalo.

ZINDELA Pictures.

GREATNESS IS WITHIN YOU

A girl from the deep rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal endures severe abuse, but her inner strength and perseverance help her overcome these

challenges until she discovers her talent for music.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Set in a Zulu film scrubland habitat where life is unfair in many ways, human rights are violated under the umbrella of cultural cleansing ceremonies, a reality known to few. Hlalumi, an innocent girl, is traumatized by memories of rape, disturbed and confused without any form of support from her family.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Senzo Zindela is passionate about community development and recently received the SAFTA 2016 Special Recognition Award for his outstanding work as the best Provincial Development Initiator. His film credits include notable works such as *Paladin Resurrection*, *Treasure Fellowship*, *The Foggy Mountain*, *Red Cargo*, *The Right*, *Problems Are Everywhere*, and *Finding Joy*. For more details, his IMDb profile can be found [here](#).

COMPANY DETAILS

Zindela Pictures Group is a South African fiction filmmaking firm established in 2007 to produce entertaining stories with high impact to upgrade the local industry.



Siya Sityana
DIRECTOR



Senzo Zindela
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Zindela Pictures Group

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 500 000 USD

Finances Committed: 200 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Funding
- Co-Production



LOVE CHASE

Beatrice (40s) is a widow who seems to have it all: great kids, a successful business, and a house in a small suburban beach town. One thing amiss is the control her mother-in-law, Christina (70s), enforces upon her life by announcing that the family has decided to put her in a levirate marriage.

The levirate marriage is a no-no for Beatrice. While fighting to break free, she unexpectedly falls in love with someone else: a charming single dad, Mel (50s), which complicates the situation further.

Beatrice secretly starts dating Mel, while dodging her grown-up daughters, her Kenyan half-sister Naima, and her business manager, Irumba. However, her mother-in-law catches her on a romantic date and tells Mel that Beatrice is a cheating wife, driving a wedge between these two lovers.

Beatrice must find her voice, pursue her dreams, and secure her freedom to live her life on her own terms.

Love wins in the end.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

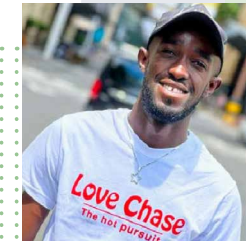
Growing up in a traditional extended family, every time an elder brother or sister got engaged or married, I would hear my siblings and parents say, "Getting married to a man means you have gotten married to his entire family." I thought this was a great thing, but later learned that it treated a woman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

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Happiness Mpase is a Durban-based film producer who has managed more than ten movie projects for local broadcaster M-Net/Mzansi Magic, and has produced two made-for-TV films in her own production company. One of those films was distributed worldwide by Trace Studios after being selected in the DFM Content Shop. Both her films are broadcast locally, one on M-Net/Mzansi Magic and one on SABC. Her production company HD N3twork won Best Upcoming Filmmaker in the Durban Tourism Business Awards in 2023.

COMPANY DETAILS

HD N3twork is a film production company based in Durban. We are passionate about women's stories, exploring love, relationships, family dynamics, culture, tradition, and legal rights.



Kizito Samuel Saviour
DIRECTOR



Happiness Mpase
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: HD N3twork

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 214 058.28 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Raising Production Finance for Love Chase
- Networking with International Filmmakers
- Seeking Film Business Opportunities



LOVE ME A LITTLE, BUT LOVE ME LONG

Love Me a Little, But Love Me Long is a riveting and true tragic romance set in 2004 in the East Coast city of Durban, South Africa, and Hartford, Connecticut, US. It follows the charming yet self-destructive playboy-politician and gifted writer, George Sithole (53), as he makes a spirited shot at a second chance in love with his one true love, his ex-wife, Nomathemba Sheppard (51).

In 1982, while he is imprisoned on an island political prison, George is the go-to guy for his fellow inmates who need love letters for their partners on the mainland. George writes love-soaked letters for others while his first marriage to Nomathemba falls apart. At the time, Nomathemba flees South Africa for the US and leaves George and their three children behind.

When the film opens, it is December 2003. George is not only a free man but also a man-about-town. Nomathemba still swears never to reconcile with George until hell freezes over. She is happily married and lives in Hartford, Connecticut (US) with her American husband, Earl Sheppard (52). Nomathemba is now back in town (Durban) for the wedding of her daughter with George. Nomathemba and George come face-to-face for the first time in years. Sparks fly. Nomathemba is overwhelmed and runs back to her loving husband, Earl. But George is relentless. George records their dreamy yet salacious reconciliation in his 2004 burgundy diary. As George and Nomathemba race into a future filled with nostalgic dreams of their once young love, will love thwarted survive?

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I am drawn to stories of deep passion, eternal love, and melancholy. George and his reckless eccentrics remind me of my father. It is a story of our own love lives, a story heard or read about once in a while. It is a story of love found, lost, and found again. I want the audience to be teary, to yearn for love again, or stay in love, because love is lovely.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Gugu Kunene is a writer, producer, and director who provides art department services, particularly for made-for-television projects. She has developed two feature films, both currently in the financing phase. Gugu writes scripts, including for animation, catering to independent producers. She participated in the NFVF Female Filmmakers Project (2019), where she wrote and directed her first project – a short film. Gugu has also served as a panelist on a funding programme for Micro Budget films. Additionally, she is a DFM Access Alumni (2020) and has been selected for an Italian film lab.

COMPANY DETAILS

Noontalk provides scriptwriting services to independent producers, script coaching for new writers, and an art department and buying service for independent producers.



Gugu Kunene
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER



Mpho Ramathuthu,
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Country: South Africa, United States

Production Company: Noontalk Publishing

Running Time: 110 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 803 595 USD

Finances Committed: TBC

GOALS AT DFM

- My goal, with my producer at the DFM, is to pitch our project to sales agents and distributors, and to promote the film and network.



MAHLATHINI, THE EXPLOITED ZULU ARTIST

In the racially charged South Africa of the 1960s, a time when dark politics cast long shadows, emerged a voice that would defy the odds. Simon Nkabinde, armed with unparalleled work ethic and unmatched discipline, joined the ranks of Gallo Records. Under the wing of the controversial producer Rupert Bopape, he was determined to carve his name into the annals of music history.

Nkabinde's innovative song style, tailored to his distinctive rough, gruff voice, quickly became his signature, propelling him to dominate the South African music charts. His sound, authentic and captivating, caught the attention of a French promoter, leading to negotiations that would catapult him onto the international stage.

As Nkabinde opened for icons like Michael Jackson and Malcolm McLaren and collaborated with stars such as Paul Simon, his star seemed to burn ever brighter. Yet, as the 1990s dawned, bringing with it illness and hardship, the once-celebrated musician faced a dire financial crisis,

ultimately passing away unable to afford his medical bills, dying a pauper.

This investigatory film peels back the layers of Nkabinde's life, probing the archives to unearth the truth behind his meteoric rise and sudden fall. Was his downfall a result of personal excesses, or were there elements of exploitation and foul play at work within the industry he once dominated?

Through interviews with contemporaries, analysis by music historians, and insights from those who knew him best, *Mahlathini, The Exploited Zulu Artist* seeks to unravel the mystery. Did Nkabinde's fortunes evaporate through a series of misfortunes and missteps, or was he betrayed by the very industry he helped to shape?

Join us on a journey of discovery as we attempt to piece together the fragmented legacy of a man whose music transcended boundaries, but whose story remains shrouded in speculation and sorrow.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Our film, *Mahlathini, The Exploited Zulu Artist*, will draw upon a diverse array of sources, meticulously piecing together the narrative. A key voice in our film will be Hilda Tloubatla, the venerable 81-year-old surviving member of *Mahlathini* and the *Mahotella Queens*.

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER PROFILE

Sibongile Nene has made her mark as a producer, director, and writer. Her debut project titled *Insila ka Shaka*, a compelling story based on a servant of the illustrious King Shaka, is in production with Known Associates. Her short film, *'Iyeza Medicine Biopiracy'*, a critical piece that raises profound questions about cultural appropriation and ethics, earned an International Film Award at the prestigious Bermuda International Film Festival.

COMPANY DETAILS

Founded on the principles of cultural preservation and cinematic excellence, 'Zulu Heritage Films' delves deep into the heart of South Africa's rich history and diverse narratives.



Sibongile Nene
PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Zulu Heritage Films

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 000 000 USD

Finances Committed: 10 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

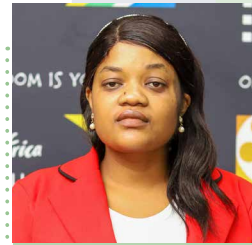
- Funding

A DEAD FLOWER CAN STILL BLOOM

Nhlanhlo Zulu is a young, beautiful teenager who lives with her grandparents in a rural area in Mandeni. Her grandmother has always emphasized that being a virgin is honourable. Nhlanhlo attends virginity testing every month to prove her virginity status. Nhlanhlo is also an average student who wishes to pass her matric with distinctions so she can further her studies.

On her way to school, she meets a boy and falls in love. She sometimes skips school so she can spend time with him. Having no experience in relationships, she is badly influenced by him to the extent that he breaks her virginity the night before her scheduled virginity test.

A call from her Aunt, who normally performs the testing, bursts Nhlanhlo's love bubble as she informs her that the test is scheduled for the next morning. Nhlanhlo makes an excuse of being sick to her grandmother to avoid getting tested. However, her grandmother, who has noticed her behaviour, insists that she goes.



Lulama Sithole
WRITER

Nhlanhlo realises that for her to pass well, she needs to come clean to her grandparents as this situation is weighing on her. A disappointed face from her grandparents says it all. Nhlanhlo deeply apologises to her grandparents and her apology is fully accepted as she passes her matric with distinctions.

AYIKHO IMPUNGA YEHLATHI

Detective Zwane is a dedicated but emotionally distant police detective with a strained relationship with his son, Sfiso. Zwane is a hardworking officer who prioritises his work over his family, often dismissing his son's attempts to connect with him. The story begins with Sfiso trying to spend time with his father at the police station, only to be dismissed.

At home, Zwane's wife, Nozimanga, tries to maintain a loving household despite Zwane's frequent absences. Sfiso seeks his father's attention again, wanting to watch a soccer match together, but is turned down. Nozimanga comforts Sfiso, attempting to fill the void left by Zwane's neglect.

The plot thickens when Zwane learns about a new case involving a boy who stabbed another during an attempted hijacking. As Zwane delves into the case, he is shocked to discover that his own son, Sfiso, is implicated. In a tense scene at the police station, Zwane bribes an officer to avoid recording the interrogation, attempting to understand his son's involvement.

Sfiso insists on his innocence, claiming he tried to help the victim rather than harm him. However, Mthethwa, a rival officer, seizes the opportunity to undermine Zwane, pushing for Sfiso's guilt. Zwane secretly investigates further, enlisting the help of a friend to obtain CCTV footage, which ultimately proves Sfiso's



Bongani Makhathini
WRITER

innocence but also reveals his son's involvement in drug distribution.

Confronting the evidence, Zwane is torn between his duty and his love for his son. He presents the footage to his superior, leading to Mthethwa's arrest for a separate crime captured on the mistakenly switched USB drives. Zwane's son's charges are dropped, and Mthethwa is taken into custody.

In the end, Zwane realises the importance of being present for his family. He apologises to Sfiso, acknowledging his shortcomings as a father, and they reconcile, promising to spend more time together and rebuild their relationship.

DENYING SPIRITUAL GIFT

Nosiphiwo is an independent woman in her late twenties, who is unexpectedly promoted to chief surgeon at her hospital. The story begins with Nosiphiwo waking up to this exciting news, as conveyed by her colleague, Robert. She eagerly prepares for her first day in the new role, exuding confidence and sophistication.

Upon arriving at work, Nosiphiwo's presence commands admiration from her colleagues. Her best friend, Thando, congratulates her, and they plan to celebrate later. Nosiphiwo's first day as chief surgeon is challenging; she encounters a tense situation in the operating room where she decides to remove a traditional bracelet from a patient, believing it could interfere with the surgery. This decision causes friction with the nursing staff, highlighting the cultural and professional conflicts she faces.

After an exhausting day, Nosiphiwo drives home but falls asleep at the wheel, crashing into a tree. She dreams of her ancestors performing traditional dances, indicating a deep connection to her heritage. She awakens in the hospital, confused and injured, only to be visited by Mamakhumalo, a traditional healer, who tells her that the accident was no coincidence but a sign of her spiritual gift.



Thelma Sinenhlanhla Kubisa
WRITER

Nosiphiwo initially rejects this notion but is later forced to confront her heritage when strange occurrences and physical symptoms push her to seek Mamakhumalo's help. Through traditional rituals, Nosiphiwo embraces her spiritual calling, reconciling her modern career with her ancestral roots. The story concludes with Nosiphiwo finding balance and peace, acknowledging her role as a bridge between the spiritual and the contemporary worlds.

IMPILO

Musa, a determined 16-year-old matric student, faces the daily challenge of struggling to read fluently at his local high school. Despite his difficulties, Musa harbours a deep passion for poetry, a talent that offers him a glimmer of hope amidst his struggles.

The situation intensifies when Mrs Mdluli, the strict isiZulu teacher, announces that the students will be reading aloud for marks. This news puts everyone on edge, especially Musa. When Mrs Mdluli calls on him, Musa stumbles after just one word, drawing laughter from his classmates. In an attempt to salvage his dignity, Musa switches to reciting poetry, earning applause, but Mrs Mdluli remains firm that he must read for marks the following day.

Among his peers, Nhlanhla is particularly harsh, taunting Musa and expressing doubt in his ability to succeed. The ridicule Musa faces weighs heavily on him, exacerbated by his cousin's awareness of the situation. Despite this, Musa is determined to improve. He practises reading in secret, but the echo of his classmates' laughter haunts him, making progress difficult.

In a moment of vulnerability, Musa confides in his cousin about his reading difficulties. This



Ayanda Mbatha
WRITER

revelation transforms their strained relationship as his cousin decides to help. They spend the entire night practising together, focusing on pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. This intense session not only prepares Musa for his reading task but also fosters a newfound bond between the two.

On the day of the reading, Musa faces the class with sweaty palms and a pounding heart. To the surprise of his classmates, he successfully navigates the long paragraph. Impressed by his determination and improvement, they smile at him, acknowledging his capability and resilience.

STAND OUT OF FEAR

Samke, a young woman who has only ever known life in the village, faces challenges at her first job in a call centre while trying to deal with personal struggles back home.

The story begins with Samke starting her first day at the Metropolitan Insurance Company. She is introduced to her new environment by Calvin, the manager, who explains the company's rules and regulations and introduces her to her colleagues. Calvin also announces a cash incentive for the first sale of the day, creating a competitive atmosphere.

Samke struggles initially, as her calls to customers either go unanswered or are abruptly disconnected. She receives a distressing message that her grandmother is sick and needs medication for epilepsy, adding to her stress. In the restroom, she confides in Nokubonga, a cleaner and old schoolmate, who advises her to be herself when speaking to customers.

Taking Nokubonga's advice, Samke finally manages to engage a customer and successfully makes a sale. However, when she tries to submit it, she finds that the sale has already been recorded by Sandiso, the top agent known for his ruthless behaviour. This realisation devastates Samke, who feels cheated out of her hard-earned sale.

Samke confronts Sandiso, who denies any wrongdoing. When she reports the issue to



Bonisiwe N. Nxumalo
WRITER

Calvin, he dismisses her concerns, leaving her feeling unsupported and defeated. Samke's frustration peaks when she receives another message about her grandmother's worsening condition.

Nokubonga suggests Samke ask Calvin to review the call recordings, as all customer interactions are recorded. In Calvin's office, they listen to the recordings, which clearly show that Samke made the sale. Sandiso is forced to apologise publicly and return the incentive money to Samke.

The story ends with Samke using the incentive money to buy the necessary medication for her grandmother.

THE COME UP

This is an observational documentary that follows Simphiwe "Alpha" Mahlangu, a young DJ and sound engineer from Melville Stanger, as he strives to establish himself in the music industry. The story highlights themes of self-belief, goal-setting, and perseverance.

Simphiwe lives with his grandmother and cousin, balancing household responsibilities, studying to improve his matric grades, and pursuing his passion for music. He spends his days trading Forex and creating music in his bedroom studio, using programmes like Reason, Fruity Loops, and Ableton. Simphiwe performs at local taverns and clubs to make money, relying on public transport or his father's help for transportation.

Despite the challenges, Simphiwe remains focused on his goals. He networks with local DJs like MeloBee, sharing ideas and holding listening sessions. He also takes care of his grandmother by handling household expenses and running errands.

The documentary culminates in Simphiwe's participation in the Ballito Pro competition, held at KwaDukuza Town Hall. The competition is a significant opportunity for him to showcase his skills and potentially advance to the main event at Salt Rock. Winning the competition could propel Simphiwe's career, offering him a chance to move beyond his small town and into larger music markets in cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town.



Sandiselwe Mjali
WRITER

Throughout the documentary, the audience witnesses Simphiwe's dedication and the sacrifices he must make, including the potential separation from his supportive grandmother. The story underscores the importance of creating opportunities, overcoming mental health challenges, and the necessity of mentorship and training for young artists.

Simphiwe's journey is a testament to the power of resilience and the pursuit of dreams, serving as an inspiration to others facing similar struggles. The documentary aims to shed light on the struggles and triumphs of emerging artists in small towns, emphasising the need for community support and recognition.

THE MATURITY TWIST

Zukiswa Mlaba, an 18-year-old girl with dreams of becoming a fashion designer, immerses herself in sketching eye-catching dresses in her room. Despite her pride in completing a one-year fashion design course, Zukiswa faces the harsh reality of a rejected art funding request. Zukiswa's world takes a turn when her stepmother and her friend, Miss Mbhele, enter her room with news of a job opportunity – cleaning roads for the Ndwedwe municipality. Reluctant and ashamed of the prospect of being a public cleaner, Zukiswa agrees fictitiously to attend an interview to avoid disappointing her stepmother.

Intentionally avoiding setting an alarm, Zukiswa oversleeps on the day of the interview. As she heads to the kitchen for breakfast, Zukiswa attempts to forget about the cleaning job by singing and preparing a delicious meal for herself. However, her stepmother, Mrs Mlaba, expresses frustration about being the sole provider for the household. Zukiswa justifies her reluctance for the cleaning job, claiming it is not suitable for someone as pretty as her who spent time learning art at school. In response, her stepmother instructs her to leave and return only when she has a concrete job plan.



Mbali Nobuhle Vezi
WRITER

Desperate and seeking money to attend the interview, Zukiswa eventually decides to walk to the job location. Upon arrival, she discovers that her spot has been filled. Overwhelmed by desperation, Zukiswa confesses her misjudgment and genuine need for the cleaning job. Moved by her sincerity, Miss Mbhele grants her a new interview opportunity. The interview goes well, providing Zukiswa with a chance to turn her situation around.

TROUBLED

Buhle is a troubled girl who is expelled from her school for violent behaviour. The story begins in the principal's office where Mr Sibisi, the principal, informs Buhle's grandmother, Mama Mzobe, that Buhle has been repeatedly beating other children, leading to her expulsion. Buhle insists that she was provoked, but the damage is done.

With no other options, Buhle is sent to live with her mother, Nokuzola, who works as a domestic worker in a wealthy area. Nokuzola is surprised and disappointed by Buhle's arrival and the news of her expulsion. Despite the challenges, Mrs Smith, Nokuzola's employer, agrees to enrol Buhle in a new school, provided Buhle behaves and performs well.

At the new school, Buhle struggles to fit in and is mocked by her classmates for her poor English. She befriends Kamogelo (Kamo), a confident and talkative girl, who shows her the ropes of life in the affluent suburb. Kamo's influence leads Buhle astray as they engage in shoplifting, resulting in their arrest. Kamo's boyfriend bails her out, leaving Buhle alone in custody. Buhle is forced to call her mother for help, leading to a heartfelt confrontation.



Zinhle P. Sotshange
WRITER

Nokuzola bails Buhle out, using borrowed money, and the two have an emotional conversation about their strained relationship. Buhle feels neglected and unloved, while Nokuzola explains that she has been trying her best to provide a better life for her. They both apologise and promise to work on their relationship. The story ends on a hopeful note, with Buhle committing to focusing on her education and making her family proud, and Nokuzola promising to be more present in Buhle's life. This emotional reconciliation sets the stage for a fresh start.

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