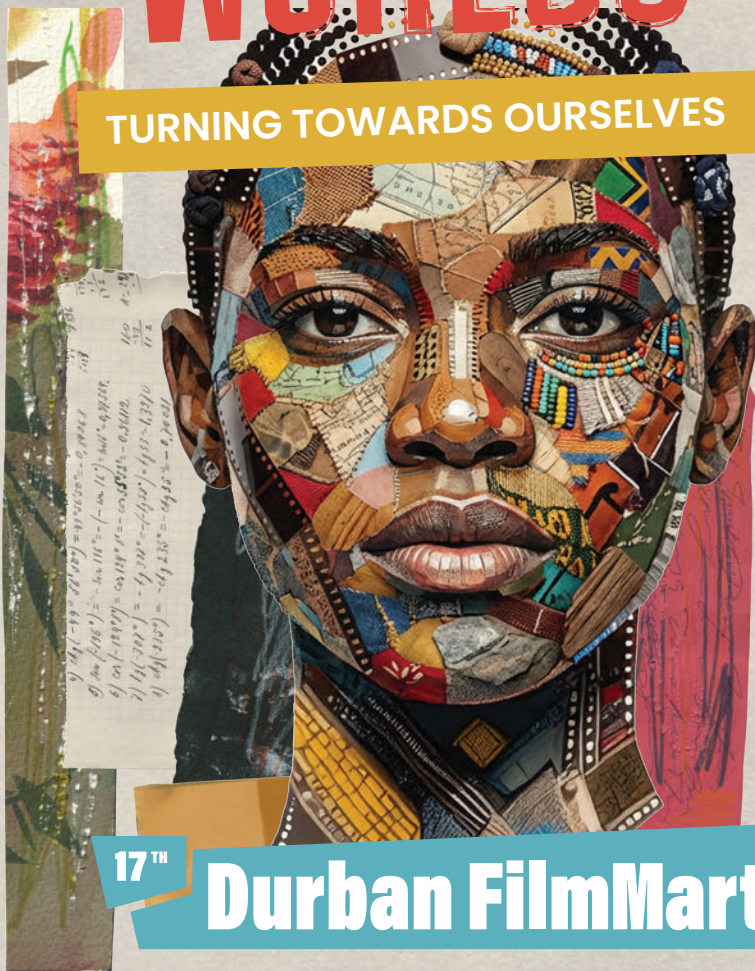


9 – 12 OCT 2026

SHIFTING WORLDS

TURNING TOWARDS OURSELVES



17TH

Durban FilmMart

PROJECT DOSSIER

www.durbanfilmmart.com

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

“The industry we want tomorrow is one we have built with our own hands.”

Dear Delegates, Partners and Friends of the Industry,

On behalf of the Durban FilmMart, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to our 2026 Market. UNESCO's Film Trends in Africa report named the DFM “the continent's best film market”, a recognition we carry with pride and one we continue to work hard to live up to each year. Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning as a long-standing participant of this market, we are delighted that you will be with us. Your presence is what makes this market gathering matter.

This year, the Market moved from its traditional July home to a new four-day gathering from 09 to 12 October 2026, and I want to extend my sincere thanks to each of you who will be joining us for adjusting your calendars and travel plans to join us on these new dates. Your flexibility and continued commitment to the Durban FilmMart, even as the shape of our year has shifted, speaks to the strength of this industry and the value we all place on the work we do together.

This year's theme, **“Shifting Worlds, Turning Towards Ourselves,”** could not feel more apt. We are working in an industry, and indeed a world, defined by constant change - in technology, in markets, in the way stories are financed, made and distributed. In moments like these, the instinct to look outward for answers is natural. But this theme asks something different of us: that as our world shifts around us, we also turn

towards ourselves - towards ourselves as Africans, independent filmmakers, developing countries working more closely together, collaborating more deliberately, and finding unique funding models amongst each other rather than waiting for them to arrive from elsewhere. It is a call to build and grow our own film infrastructure, so that the industry we want tomorrow is one we have built with our own hands. I believe this theme will shape some of the most meaningful conversations we have in this Market.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of our partners, funders and sponsors. To each of you: thank you. Your belief in the Durban FilmMart, and in the broader potential of African film and television, is what allows this platform to exist and to grow year after year. We are deeply grateful for your continued partnership.

I also want to make specific mention of the industry bodies, many of them members of SASFED, who wrote to and lobbied the government on our behalf to help secure funding for this Market. Public funding for platforms such as ours is becoming increasingly scarce, and it is only through this kind of collective advocacy that the Durban FilmMart continues to exist and grow. I would like to use this opportunity to encourage the wider industry to keep working with us in finding unique, sustainable funding models of our own, so that the future of the Durban FilmMart and the Durban FilmMart Institute does not depend on any single source, but on a community that has built the means to sustain it together.

I look forward to the discoveries, the deals, the debates and the friendships that will emerge over the four days of the Durban FilmMart. We look forward to welcoming everyone, in hopefully what will be a warm, sunny, happy Durban once again at the Durban FilmMart 2026.

With Love and Light,

Tshepiso Chikapa Phiri

Chairperson, Durban FilmMart Institute

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

Funders



**Ford Foundation
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NETFLIX



Awards

**Ford Foundation
JustFilms**



national film and video foundation
SOUTH AFRICA
an agency of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture



**CLIMATE
STORY LABS**



**THE
WHICKERS**



DOX Leipzig



**NORWEGIAN
SOUTH
FILM FUND**

Awards



OFFICIAL DFM 2026 PROJECTS

The Durban FilmMart Institute is proud to announce the official project selection for its 17th edition. This year 35 African film projects have been selected to participate in one of the continent's leading platforms for film finance, co-production and industry exchange. The selection reflects a diverse range of stories, formats and creative voices from across Africa and the diaspora.

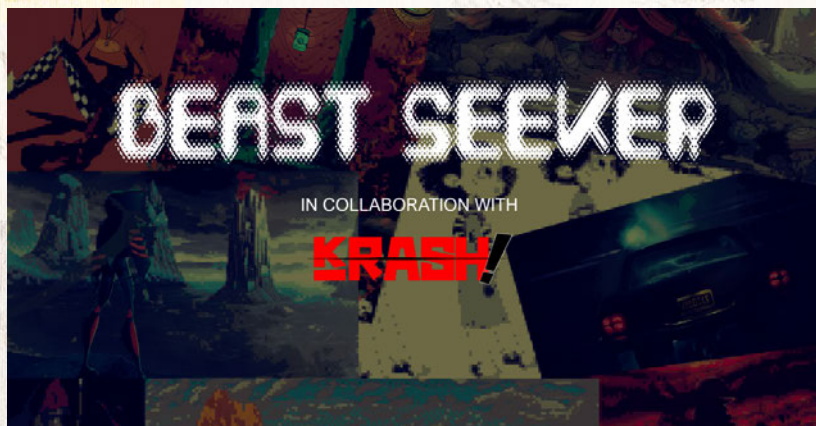
The 2026 selection features 8 animation, 15 fiction, and 12 documentary projects, all with African creatives in key roles. Each year, through an open application process and 3 independent selection panels, the Institute selects approximately 30 animation and live-action projects in development. These projects then participate in a rigorous 6 - 8 week packaging and mentorship programme in preparation for the Pitch and Finance Forum - a dynamic space for public pitching, one-on-one meetings, and meaningful industry engagement.



The programme continues to provide a vital meeting point for African and international film professionals, creating opportunities for collaboration and investment while supporting the development and circulation of African stories. We congratulate all the selected filmmakers and creative teams whose bold and diverse stories offer a glimpse into the future of African cinema.

OFFICIAL DFM PITCH AND FINANCE FORUM – ANIMATION

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BEAST SEEKER

A rigid sister must protect her enormous, chaos-loving little brother from all the beasts, booby traps and bad guys they encounter upon their quest to find a very special beast. In the African wilderness of a mythical land, badass big sister Ryn Ophidian would cross oceans, mountains and deserts for her little brother, Twitch. But she's not as likely to accept him for who he truly is – a deviant in the eyes of the regime. As his sole guardian, Ryn wants nothing more than to keep her little brother safe. She's become a hunter to secure their place inside the city walls. But Twitch is drawn to explore and protect the extraordinary wilderness of their uncharted world, while the regime is bent on conquering it. Ryn's loyalties are put to the test when she's sent on a mission to eliminate a pack of cuckoobadgers. They're ferocious, cunning and feral as fuzz. But worst of all, they're especially precious to her free-spirited brother. In a karmic twist of fate, Twitch swaps bodies with a badger pup and Ryn is forced to turn against her fellow hunters to keep him alive. Wounded and betrayed, Twitch runs away

in the cuckoobadger's body, leaving Ryn with the chaotic animal trapped inside his original body. Ryn must venture into the wild unknown, full of dangerous beasts and even more dangerous hunters, with her untethered brother in tow, to find his other half and mend their fractured bond. Set in a vibrant world inspired by the remarkable biodiversity of Southern Africa, Beast Seeker is a 2D fantasy-adventure exploring siblinghood with heart and humour. It takes an adventure-of-the-week approach to the siblings' overarching quest, where each episode challenges their courage, curiosity and the unbreakable bond between them.

Reel Previews 

 [robyn_v_creates](#)

 [blakrown](#)

 [krash_nation](#)

 [danielleretief](#)

 [recklesshavenprod](#)

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

As the youngest sister of four, Beast Seeker is my tribute to siblings everywhere. With shared history, heartache, inside jokes and childhood trauma, who could be a better friend or greater adversary? I hope to inspire brothers and sisters to appreciate each other, in spite of their differences. Because adventures are best faced with a sibling at your side.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Robyn Viljoen – writer-creator with 15 years' experience in visual storytelling, from cinematography to the editing room. Beast Seeker is the culmination of Robyn's story discipline and wild imagination.

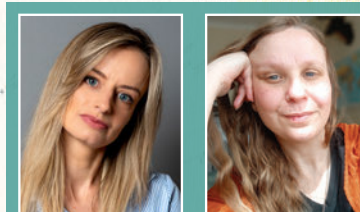
Danielle Retief – producer, director and entrepreneur with over two decades of entertainment experience. Founder of Reckless Haven, Danielle brings expert production strategy and creative insight to the team.

Kamohelo Salemane – art director and story artist with over seven years' experience in visual development. Co-founder of Krash Nation, Kamo brings her niche animation expertise to the project.

COMPANY DETAILS

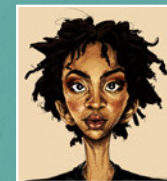
Krash Nation is a startup studio specialising in animation, comics and original IP development, supporting production from pre-to-post. Reckless Haven produces award-winning stories that entertain, educate and leave a lasting impact.

Company Profile 



Danielle Retief
PRODUCER

Robyn Viljoen
DIRECTOR



Kamohelo Salemane
ART DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Series

Audience Age Range: Teens (13+), Young Adults

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Krash Nation, Reckless Haven Productions

Running Time: 22 episodes, 11 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 4 700 000 USD

Finances Committed: 100 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure development partners.
- Find international sales or distribution partners.
- Connect with collaborators, broadcasters and financiers.
- Position the IP as a franchise.



CAPOZOOEIRA

CapoZOOeira is a musical comedy for little kids that introduces the principles of Capoeira through fun adventures and exciting calls to action. The series follows Lua, an extroverted, passionate and clumsy little girl who is determined to learn the secrets of this art from a charming group of animal mentors. Each episode focuses on a musical or acrobatic element of Capoeira and actively encourages children to join in and mimic the characters' actions during their "Capoeira Model!": a magical moment when body, mind and energy flow in harmony.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Originated among enslaved Africans in Brazil as a form of cultural resistance, Capoeira is now practised in over 150 countries, as millions of people discover every day its blend of art, athleticism and cultural expression. Despite this popularity boom,

Capoeira's representation in the media has been limited to secondary, clichéd roles. In this sense, *CapoZOOeira* will be the first animated series to bring the joy of this practice to children worldwide. Today, sedentary lifestyles have become the rule. That's why *CapoZOOeira* was born – as a reminder of the joy of expressing ourselves through our bodies and voices. *CapoZOOeira* is an invitation to move, to grow and to become stronger together. We want to convey to children that obstacles are opportunities to reveal their hidden talents and resilience.

In short, we believe kids and parents will embrace *CapoZOOeira*'s active celebration of music, movement and friendship, especially in today's digital era.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Orlymar Paredes Morales is a director and illustrator based in Caracas, Venezuela, with six years of animation experience in different roles. She is a fellow of Otros Ojos, a directors' mentoring programme sponsored by the French Cooperation. *El día que aprendí a volar*, her directorial debut, has been selected for over 10 international film festivals.

Wanjiku Waweru is a film, TV and animation producer based in Nairobi, passionate about bold, genre-driven African storytelling that resonates globally. She has grown through programmes such as the *Great Lakes Creative Producers Lab*, *CEE Animation Producers Lab* and *Triggerfish Directors Lab*.

COMPANY DETAILS

Mecha is a cooperative studio based in Caracas, Venezuela, engaging with social and environmental issues through emotional, insightful and entertaining storytelling.

Studio M&A is a production house that creates artistic and thought-provoking live-action and animated film and TV projects from Africa for the world.

Company Profile 

 [mechacoop](#)



Wanjiku Waweru
PRODUCER



Carlos Zerpa Bravo
PRODUCER



Orlymar Paredes
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Series

Audience Age Range: 3-6 years old

Country: Venezuela, Kenya, Brazil

Production Company: Mecha, Studio M&A

Running Time: 26 episodes, 7 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 570 000 USD

Finances Committed: 5 700 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Close the development gap and move towards producing a pilot episode by connecting with producers, distribution platforms and animation studios.



HADU

Simi loves to help in the kitchen at Hadu's Place, the family's warm and welcoming restaurant. Every day, there's something new to learn: why do pancakes puff up? What makes pepper soup spicy? And how do you cook a jollof rice just right? With the help of her best friends Tife and Elo, Simi uses Grandma Ade's special recipe book. With laughter and a sprinkle of kitchen magic, Hadu learns about food, teamwork, and the joy of sharing meals together.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

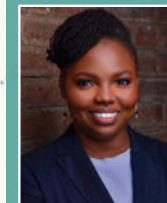
Food has a unique way of bringing people together. It carries memories, traditions and love, creating moments of connection that

transcend language, culture and borders. *Hadu* is built on this simple truth. In fact, *Hadu* means "connection." Through shared meals and culinary adventures, *Hadu* discovers the warmth, joy and humanity that unite us all. Each episode celebrates the universal experience of gathering around food, showing young children that while our traditions may be different, kindness, family and friendship are shared by every culture. At Smids Animation Studios, we believe stories can help children see the world with curiosity and empathy. *Hadu* is our invitation to families everywhere to discover that our differences make the world richer and that the strongest connections are often made around the table.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Damilola Solesi is an award-winning Animation Director, Producer, Writer, and Founder/CEO of SMIDS Animation Studios. Since founding SMIDS in 2010, she has championed authentic African storytelling and built a leading African animation studio. Her acclaimed works include *Hadu*, *Keko Africa*, and *Boxed*, with *Hadu* winning multiple international Best Animation awards. Her films have screened at festivals including IFFR, FESPACO, NollywoodWeek Paris, and CINANIMA. Damilola leads Toontopia and SMIDS Animation Summer Camp, nurturing creativity and shaping the future of African animation.



Damilola Solesi
PRODUCER



Precious Anih
DIRECTOR

COMPANY DETAILS

SMIDS Animation Studios is a multi-award-winning African animation studio founded in 2010, specialising in 2D and 3D Kids & Family entertainment and authentic African storytelling for global audiences.

 [smidsanimation](https://www.instagram.com/smidsanimation)

Company Profile 

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Series

Audience Age Range: 4-6 years

Country: Nigeria

Production Company: Smids Animation Studios

Running Time: 5 episodes, 26 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 100 000 USD

Finances Committed: 50 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- 3-5 serious co-production conversations.
- 2-3 broadcaster or streaming follow-up meetings.
- Meetings with international distributors or sales agents.
- At least one funding opportunity or grant application pathway.
- A roadmap towards closing financing and beginning production.



IN HER HANDS

A story about a young child named Zakia. She struggles to navigate the world because of her blindness, creating an inner conflict between her and her own perceived reality and leading her to get lost in an unknown world, alone, without anyone to guide her. A young, introverted blind girl named Zakia dreams of a nightmare about a giant fish swimming above her bed. Suddenly, she falls out of her bed into deep waters. Unable to breathe, she drowns before suddenly waking from her sleep, screaming next to her grandmother. She lives with her grandmother, and she urges Zakia to come out of her comfort zone to get exposed to a new environment; she takes her to the market to buy groceries. Zakia, having not been in a crowded place before, gets so overwhelmed by the busyness of the street; she gets separated from her grandmother,

and she gets lost, alone in the crowd. Not being able to see around her, she panics and goes through a sensory overload. After a long and exhausting period, a dog finds her, and she tries to use it as a guide through the street until she reaches a serene place, with wind blowing through her hair, and warm, soft sand gets between her toes; she hears the sound of rhythmic waves, she takes two steps closer to the sound, her feet get wet from the ocean's water hitting her gently, and for the first time she feels the sensations of being at a beach. She remembers her nightmare from before, but this time the ocean is a source of serenity for her; she hears her grandmother coming from afar, and her grandmother hugs her after a long day of searching for her.

Reel Previews 

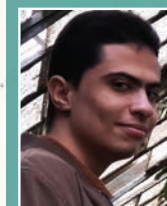
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

It's a story inspired by Hagar's grandmother, who lost her eyesight at a young age. Despite that, she lived a meaningful life, so that sparked a curiosity in us about how the blind navigate the world, and how different sensations translate in their mind. We found that animation is the perfect medium for this story because of how open to experimentation the visual aspect is, especially in animation.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Hagar Basiony is a self-taught animator, producer, and director based in Egypt, with over six years of experience in the animation field. She has worked on a lot of animated short films, series, ads, and songs through freelancing.

Gehad El-Akhal is a filmmaker and animator. Based in Egypt, he studies filmmaking at the Jesuit Cairo Film School. He has directed several short films, one of which is a self-made animated short film. He is working on his next short animated film as a director, *Headless Horseman*.



Gehad El-Akhal
PRODUCER



Hagar Basiony
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Short

Audience Age Range: 10+

Country: Egypt

Production Company: N/A

Running Time: 7 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 22 000 USD

Finances Committed: 4 500 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure funding for production.
- Seek international co-producing opportunities.
- Get attention from creative artists for collaboration.



JUJU SOCCER

In Akeme, a hyper-alternate Nigerian Igbo town where juju is common practice, a downtrodden youth football team finds hope when Dibia (Sorcerer) apprentice, Ikedi, arrives with a stolen Ikenga (Enchanted) staff. His magic turns the team into an unstoppable force until Egbe, the crime lord behind the reigning champions AGAMA FC, sees his empire threatened. *Juju Soccer* fuses football, juju (African magic), mythology, and underworld intrigue, where every goal is a stake, not just for pride, but for survival.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I mean, there is literally no show like Juju Soccer. Sure, we've seen fantastical soccer expressions like Strikerz or Shaolin Soccer, all great references for sure. But with *Juju Soccer*, we are digging into something deeper,

richer even. Here we can find tropes around the supernatural, sports procedurals and whatnot, but ultimately, when combined with its elements rooted in its specificity of culture, folklore, spirituality and aesthetic, we have something entirely new and fresh, while also being familiar, and using a genre spin that is richly authentic and inventive all at the same time. This is a show that elevates the culture of a people, a perspective we don't get to see, without alienating those who are not from that culture. It is a unifier, without forcing a message or an ideology. It's an ultra-cool, colourful, badass African animated series, and we are going to have a blast making it. In my book, that's the biggest and most important political statement any African creator can make nowadays. Certainly one I'm interested in making.

Reel Previews 

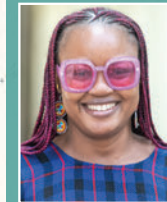
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

C.J. "Fiery" Obasi is an award-winning Nigerian filmmaker and co-founder of Surreal16. His debut feature, *OJUJU*, won Best Nigerian Film at AFRIFF 2014 and achieved cult status. His latest film, *Mami Wata*, Nigeria's official submission to the 96th Academy Awards, premiered at Sundance, winning a Special Jury Award for Cinematography.

Somto Ajuluchukwu is an award-winning animation director, producer and founder of Vortex Corp, a Lagos-based company exporting African culture through animation, comics and storytelling. His films include *Town Crier*, *Orange City* and *GLYCH*, with creative work spanning music and African storytelling for global audiences.

COMPANY DETAILS

Fiery Film is a film and TV production company whose credits include *Ojuju*, *O-Town*, *Hello, Rain* (2018), *Juju Stories*, and *Mami Wata* (2023). Upcoming projects include an untitled African-Korean feature film executive produced by Morgan Freeman, and a sports-biographical film, *The Boy Who Runs*, based on the book by bestselling author John Brant about two-time Ugandan Olympian Julius Achon. Vortex is an award-winning creative content company based in Lagos, Nigeria, operating as the largest African comic publisher and leading animation studio on the continent. Their IPs include *Land Of Gods*: ÒRÚN, *Strike Guard*, and *Orange City*.



Oge Obasi
PRODUCER



C.J. "Fiery" Obasi
DIRECTOR



Somto Ajuluchukwu
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Series

Audience Age Range: 14 - 50

Country: Nigeria

Production Company: Fiery Film Company,
Vortex Animation

Running Time: 22 - 25 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 10 000 000 USD

Finances Committed: 10 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- To find development financing.
- To find producing partners and studios.

Company Profile 

 fierycj

 fierycj / [simplyoge](#) / [vxanimation](#) / [somtoajuluchukwu](#)



MIDNIGHT METRO

In the vibrant and restless belly of Johannesburg, 15-year-old Kabelo is quietly suffocating under the weight of predictability. Soft-spoken, observant and curious, he dreams of a life beyond family sermons and expectations. One morning, he catches a glimpse of something wild: teenagers surfing a speeding train, ducking beneath wires of electric death. At their centre is Prince, a magnetic 17-year-old dropout and ruler of Johannesburg's underground train-surfing scene. Charismatic, fearless and unpredictable, Prince turns danger into theatre. His crew - Bandile, the wheelchair-bound joker; Khumo, the quiet protector; Lerato, the outsider who is "one of the boys"; and Thabo, the innocent young blood - live for the thrill. Prince sees both a project and a mirror in Kabelo. Secretly joining the crew against his older sister's wishes, Kabelo falls for the rush: the wind clawing at his clothes, the steel tracks

screaming beneath him, and the rhythmic clank of train carts fighting for space to exist. The rails become his classroom, and Prince his flawed mentor. As rival crews close in and the stunts grow deadlier, tragedy strikes when Thabo is almost killed. Wracked with guilt, Kabelo, Thabo and Lerato leave the crew. Feeling betrayed, Prince lures Thabo back with the promise of conquering the legendary *Midnight Metro* through Dead Man's Tunnel. The truth, however, is darker: Prince never conquered the tunnel. Bandile sacrificed the use of his legs to save him, and together they built the lie that made Prince king. When Kabelo's sister alerts the police to the underground race, a sting operation closes in. Kabelo and Lerato plead with Prince to jump. Broken and consumed by pride, he refuses. Risking his own life, Kabelo saves Prince from electrocution - but as the train bursts from Dead Man's Tunnel, only one boy remains standing.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Midnight Metro is a visceral exploration of adolescence, identity and systemic neglect, set against the backdrop of early 2000s South Africa, a nation caught between its aspirations as a "rainbow nation" and the lingering scars of apartheid. Through Kabelo and Prince's lens, we delve into the lives of Black township youth, balancing moments of reckless exhilaration with profound despair. The film captures the terrifying allure of train surfing as both metaphor and reality: a fleeting but overwhelmingly wondrous escape with harrowing consequences.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Katlego is a Johannesburg-based writer/director trained at the New York Film Academy, with creative credits on *Shaka iLembe* and Daniel Kaluuya's, *The Kitchen*. A co-creator of *Midnight Metro*, he brings sharp storytelling instincts and a flair for cinematic tension.

COMPANY DETAILS

BAV Creative Studio and Black Grass Entertainment are female-led creative studios developing culturally rooted IP across film, TV and animation that travels beyond borders, genres and expectations.



Wako Dube
PRODUCER



Katlego Makhudu
CO-CREATOR +
WRITER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Feature Length

Audience Age Range: Teens to Young Adults

Country: South Africa

Production Company: BAV,
Black Grass Entertainment

Running Time: 80 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 8 000 000 USD

Finances Committed: TBD

GOALS AT DFM

- Development funding.
- Co-production partners.

 [wako_sfr](#)

 [wako_ms / katlego_makhudu](#)

 [katlego-makhudu](#)



NERVE

Behind every man is a woman in horror. Nerve is a genre-bending Afrofuturist anthology where horror, folklore, science fiction, speculative fiction and the supernatural intersect. Drawing on the horror genre to tell stories about women, not as victims but as women who triumph, overcome and subvert in surprising and interesting ways. Nerve takes its cue from intersectionality in foregrounding female-bodied experiences. Be it third-generation Nigerians in London, the systemic racism experienced by Africans in Europe and USA, as well as homophobia and transphobia across the continent. The anthology forgoes slash and gore for cerebral, high-concept horror that is more commercially viable, from mysteries and thrillers to anime, dark comedies and ghost stories. Each character-driven stand-alone episode has a woman at its centre, with stories rooted in Africa and the Diaspora. And yes, there will be monsters ... spoiler alert, they're not men. Move over Love, Death & Robots, it's time for Love, Death and Revolt ... against patriarchy.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

As South African women who have lived through our own varied experiences of 'horror', we wanted to explore authentic stories and interpretations of what horror means to different women by featuring African and Diasporan voices across diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The anthology presents a unique opportunity to showcase talent still vastly underrepresented on screen and within the horror genre.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Raffaella is based in Paris where she is developing a series for Gaumont and writing for multiple French studios. She was the Development Executive for Triggerfish Studios/Disney's Storylab, which incubated Supa Team 4, and worked as an Executive Creative Consultant and writer on *Kiya &*

Reel Previews 

the Kimoja Heroes. Raffaella wrote two of the top five highest-grossing films produced in SA and won a SAFTA for *Ring of Lies*. Her thriller, *Free State*, won 'Best Feature' at the SA Indie Festival in 2023.

Tshepo is a writer, director, story doula, activist and founder of BAV Creative Studio. She entered animation as a staff writer on Netflix's *Supa Team 4*, before becoming an Executive Creative Consultant and writer on *Kiya & the Kimoja Heroes*. A director on Disney+'s *Kizazi Moto* anthology, Tshepo worked as a Showrunner on *Azania Rises* and as a Development Executive for Triggerfish Studios. Tshepo is also CEO of WATA NPC, supporting African female-identifying and non-binary creatives in animation and gaming.

Renee has been a lifelong fan of the horror genre. She has been working in the advertising industry for the last 15 years, directing commercials for the top South African and African agencies. Renee has won a bronze Loerie Award in the TV and cinema commercial category, as well as a merit award at The One Show.

COMPANY DETAILS

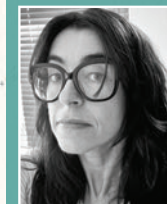
Independent co-creators with no studio or production company attached.



[msmoche](#)



[raffaella333](#)



Renee van Reenen
CO-CREATOR +
DIRECTOR



Raffaella Delle Donne
CO-CREATOR +
WRITER



Tshepo Moche
CO-CREATOR + DIRECTOR + WRITER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Series

Audience Age Range: YA/Adults

Country: South Africa

Production Company: N/A

Running Time: 10 episodes, 8-10 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 125 000 USD
(Development Budget)

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Producers.
- Development financing.
- Co-production partners.



SUNDAY MORNING

Every Sunday in one lively Ethiopian household, four determined kids wake up ready for adventure. Their mission? Play, sing, build, and have just enough fun to make the day unforgettable. Their obstacle? One very sleepy parent who just wants a few more hours of peace. Adding to the mayhem is a shy little worm desperate to be part of the fun, and a hungry rooster who sees the worm as a good morning breakfast. Together, this mismatched cast turns ordinary Sundays into unforgettable adventures filled with laughter, rhythm, and heart.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

We believe the most local stories often travel the furthest. *Sunday Morning* comes from our childhood Sundays, a familiar rhythm in many Ethiopian families where children chase moments of play while parents hope for moments of peace. Through visual storytelling, humour, and music, we want to share a story rooted in Ethiopia yet shaped by emotions that families everywhere can relate to.

Reel Previews 

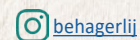
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Minasie Terefe is an award-winning Ethiopian animation director and Co-Founder of Behagerlij Studio. His shorts *Zarem Arbegna* and *Endegena* have received multiple international awards and screened at festivals worldwide. In 2026, he made African history with a continent-first double win at Annecy MIFA Pitches, receiving the Disney and AGrAF Prizes for *Sunday Morning*.

Nahom Abiy is Co-Founder and Producer at Behagerlij Studio. He oversees production, financing, and international partnerships for the studio's original animation projects. His producing work on *Sunday Morning* earned the Disney and AGrAF Prizes at the 2026 Annecy MIFA Pitches.

COMPANY DETAILS

Behagerlij Studio is a multiple award-winning Ethiopian animation studio creating original, culturally rooted stories with global appeal through design, animation, and visual storytelling.



Company Profile 



PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animated Series

Audience Age Range: Upper preschool (4-6 years old) and Family

Country: Ethiopia

Production Company: Behagerlij Studio

Running Time: 52 episodes, 6 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 4 000 000 USD

Finances Committed: 70 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Build meaningful co-production partnerships.
- Secure development financing.
- Strengthen our distribution strategy.
- Prepare Sunday Morning for international production.

OFFICIAL DFM PITCH AND FINANCE FORUM – DOCUMENTARY



OFFICIAL DFM PITCH AND FINANCE FORUM – DOCUMENTARY

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CHILDREN OF THE NILE

I have been asking myself why I cannot let go of the Nile River. For years, I believed I was searching for a river and her stories, a place connected to my ancestry, a landscape that might answer questions about who I was and who I was becoming. But the further I followed her path, the more I realised the Nile was not leading me to places. She was introducing me to her children, the people whose lives, memories and stories are cradled by her waters. I grew up in South Africa, born to Ugandan parents, inheriting a history and language I never fully understood. By my mid-twenties, I had become disconnected from myself, weighed down by childhood wounds, generational patterns and the pressure to become someone I was not. When life became uncertain and beyond my control, my journey to find myself began in Uganda, where my family history is rooted. From there, I followed the Nile north towards Ethiopia and Egypt, listening for stories that rarely make it into

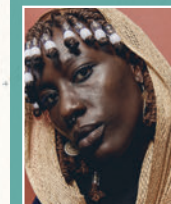
history books. I meet people whose lives challenge what I thought I knew about myself and the world around me. Children listen to stories they may one day have to preserve, change or forget. Others carry memories, beliefs and traditions passed down through generations, revealing a Nile I have never known and perspectives I have not heard. Their lives are different from mine, yet their stories unsettle my understanding of identity, inheritance and belonging. I want answers, but I truly do not know what I will discover. The further I travel, the more my questions change, and I begin to confront the possibility that what I am searching for cannot simply be recovered. Through intimate observation and experimental animation inspired by oral storytelling, *Children of the Nile* follows my search into the unknown, asking what it means to belong to a history we were separated from, and what we choose to carry forward with its weight.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I am making *Children of the Nile* because I am trying to understand an obsession I cannot explain. I grew up separated from parts of my Ugandan inheritance, and now I am choosing to listen for what was lost. I want the film to unfold through people, memory, folklore and contradiction, allowing the audience to discover the Nile through her children, rather than being told what it means.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Tina Obo is a Ugandan-South African filmmaker, writer, animator and visual storyteller working across animation and documentary. She is passionate about African stories, creating authentic representations of African experiences and developing intimate films where personal journeys open into wider cultural conversations. Her practice is rooted in listening, observation and meaningful relationships. In 2019, she wrote and directed the student film *The Sugarcane Man*, which received international recognition, including becoming a finalist for the BAFTA Student Awards. *Children of the Nile* is her debut documentary series and was selected for the THU Talent League 2024.



Tina Obo
PRODUCER /
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Series

Audience Age Range: 15+

Country: South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia, Egypt

Production Company: N/A

Running Time: 3 episodes, 45 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 523 575 USD

Finances Committed: 5 500 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure international co-production partners.
- Identify local production partners and filmmakers in South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia and Egypt.
- Access development finance, broadcasters, animation collaborators and editorial mentorship.





DESIGNING DIVIDE

More than thirty years after the end of apartheid, South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries in the world. Every day, millions of people navigate cities where roads, neighbourhoods and public spaces were designed to separate, control and limit opportunity. Laws such as the Group Areas Act may have been dismantled, but the physical legacy it created remains. *Designing Divide* is a cinematic investigation into apartheid's spatial design and the lives shaped by it. Through the experiences of communities living with the legacy of forced removals, alongside historians,

architects and those working to reimagine South Africa's cities, the film reveals how apartheid embedded its ideology into the built environment – and how that design continues to influence lives today. By revealing how one nation was constructed around exclusion – and following those now working to reshape it – *Designing Divide* explores the extraordinary power of design to mould society. In doing so, the film invites audiences to consider how their own cities have been shaped – and how profoundly the built environment influences opportunity, community and belonging.

Reel Previews



DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

My father is an architect, and I grew up fascinated by the power space can hold over us. We often reflect on how childhood experiences shape us, yet rarely consider the influence of the environments we grow up in. Working with communities shaped by forced removals and charities supporting young people, I began to trace a thread through their stories: the environments around them and the histories that created those places. *Designing Divide* grew from that realisation and my desire to reveal how these invisible forces shape everyday life.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Jessie Ayles is a South African documentary director and producer with over 15 years' experience. Her career spans projects for Discovery Channel, Netflix, Google and Nike. Her SAFTA-nominated short documentary *Never Come Fetch Me* won Best Edited South African Documentary at Encounters 2025. She is a Berlinale Talents alumna and Webby Award winner. Her debut feature documentary, *Designing Divide*, won Best Talents at Durban Berlinale Talents 2025.

COMPANY DETAILS

Sunbird Films is a South African production company creating cinematic documentaries and impact-driven stories for charities, brands and broadcasters.



Jessie Ayles
PRODUCER /
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 18-80

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Sunbird

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 675 000 USD

Finances Committed: 13 800 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure further development funding.
- Build strategic partnerships.
- Identify co-producers to advance the project.



GREEN ISLAND GIRLS

In Green Island, a remote village cut off from the mainland, generations of girls are born into the same fate: drop out of school, carry bricks, marry young, and raise daughters to do the same. Susan, a quiet girl with no formal education and no clear dream, once found comfort in the presence of her older sister, Hanaa. But as Hanaa prepares for marriage and grows more distant, Susan begins to form new attachments with the younger girls, Basma and Nazeera, unsure where she fits between childhood and womanhood. She can't read or draw well. But her eyes speak. They carry the weight of watching everything, without the power to change anything. In a village where girls are not

allowed to dream, Susan becomes the lens through which we witness the quiet unraveling of innocence.

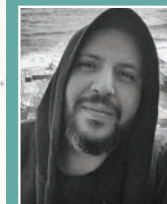
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Meeting Hanaa and Susan revealed two girls quietly holding on to their dreams despite child labour and the expectation of early marriage. Their story reflects the quiet strength and resilience of many girls. Through an observational yet creatively driven approach, the film contrasts the harsh world of the brick factories with the girls' rich inner worlds, where hope and imagination endure.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Rogena Tarek is an Egyptian filmmaker from Alexandria. She works as a video editor and post-producer across films and series, including projects for Shahid. She was selected for the AFAC x Netflix Women in Film Programme. Her films include *Where's My Home!*, *She Doesn't Sleep*, and *The Suitcase*, which have received festival recognition and awards. Her feature documentary *Green Island Girls* received the Factory Award at the Luxor African Film Festival, the AFAC Documentary Programme Grant, and support from the Aflamuna Impact Fund. The project was also one of the winning projects of the EUNIC Small Grants 2025.



Amrosh Badr
PRODUCER



Rogena Tarek
DIRECTOR

Amrosh Badr is an Egyptian filmmaker and producer based in Alexandria. He is the founder of Terzo Films, an independent production company established in 2024. His short film *Something Cold* (2017) premiered at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, and he contributed to the award-winning documentary *Lift Like a Girl* (2020).

COMPANY DETAILS

Terzo Films is an Alexandria-based independent production house making character-driven cinema and curated cultural events, where high art meets the street.

 [Green Island Girls](#)

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 18-45

Country: Egypt

Production Company: Terzo Films

Running Time: 75 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 113 000 USD

Finances Committed: 53 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Seek co-production partnerships, financing, and strategic collaborators to support the completion of Green Island Girls.
- Seek creative feedback to strengthen the film's narrative and cinematic approach.
- Build relationships with broadcasters, sales agents, distributors, festival programmers, and impact partners who can help bring the film to international audiences and amplify its social impact.



GWISO NATION

Few things reveal South Africa to itself – and to the world – like rugby. Since the end of apartheid, the sport has been presented as a powerful symbol of national unity, most famously through the 1995 Rugby World Cup, with the image of a newly reconciled “rainbow nation”. Alongside this celebrated image is another, carried by generations of Black communities in the Eastern Cape, who built vibrant rugby traditions under segregation, long before rugby became the fully integrated, nationally celebrated game it is today. *Gwiso Nation* traces this history into the present, asking what happens when a new generation inherits a game that was once used to divide them. At its heart is a young Black player navigating the opportunities, expectations and traditions of contemporary rugby. As he moves between home, school and the rugby field, the film observes how his identity is challenged, reshaped or strengthened as he learns to inhabit different worlds. His journey unfolds

alongside the memories of veteran players, historians and contemporary rugby voices, as well as the electrifying performances of the Gwiso Squad, whose music embodied the ways Black communities have made the game their own. Archival material traces rugby’s entanglement with colonialism, missionary education, apartheid, resistance and nation-building, from segregated sporting institutions to the Springbok’s transformation into a symbol of post-apartheid South Africa. For the young player, these histories are more than stories of the past. They reveal that he is not entering someone else’s story, but inheriting one that generations before him helped build. As he finds his place within the game, the film asks what it means to inherit a contested national symbol, and whether a shared South African identity can make room for distinct histories without requiring anyone to disappear.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I am drawn to the histories we inherit but rarely recognise as our own. This film began with rugby, but it has become a search for memory, dignity and belonging. I want young people to know they are not entering something new. They are inheriting something generations before them helped build.



DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Seshle Manzini is a South African documentary filmmaker and founder of Anno Domini Magazine, an organisation using storytelling to explore how historical memory continues to shape contemporary identity, belonging and public life. Her work centres communities whose histories have been overlooked, combining intimate documentary practice with public dialogue and impact engagement. Through character-driven films, she examines how ordinary people shape national memory and identity, creating work that is both locally grounded and internationally resonant.

COMPANY DETAILS

Anno Domini Magazine is a South African documentary and impact storytelling organisation producing films, public dialogue and community-centred projects exploring history, memory, identity and justice.

Company Profile 

 [annodominimag](https://www.instagram.com/annodominimag)

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 15+

Country: South Africa

Production Company: TBC

Running Time: 120 minutes

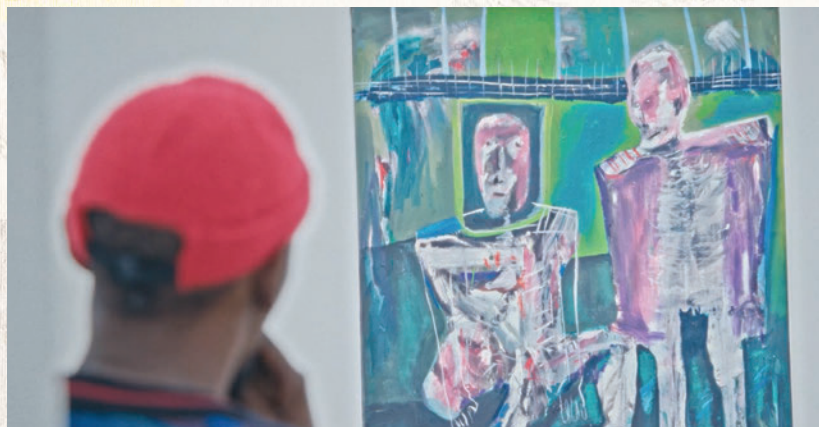
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 360 000 USD

Finances Committed: 5700 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Seek an experienced documentary producer.
- International co-production partners.
- Development finance to strengthen the project’s cinematic ambition.



MAJUTO SI MJUKUU (HEIRS OF NO REGRET)

As Kenya's Gen Z protests challenge a broken political system, internationally acclaimed artist Shabu Mwangi finds himself at a crossroads. Having transformed the lives of countless young people through Nairobi's Wajukuu Arts Collective, his community is now asking him to do something unimaginable: leave the studio behind and run for political office. Torn between a growing international art career and the responsibility to fight for change at home, Shabu must decide whether art alone is enough, or if true leadership demands entering politics. Alongside him are his wife and co-leader Freshiah, who holds together both their family and the collective, and Googz, a fellow co-leader whose journey from crime to artist mirrors Shabu's own. Together, they represent a new generation redefining what leadership can look like. Blending intimate observational filmmaking with animated sequences inspired by the collective's own artwork, *Heirs of No Regret* explores the psychological landscapes of its characters,

revealing memories of crime, survival and transformation that continue to shape their choices. An intimate story unfolding in real time, the film asks a universal question: Can an artist become the leader his community needs without losing/compromising the creativity that made him a force for change?

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I am producing *Heirs of No Regret* because it sits uncomfortably close to my own life, my generation, and the questions I carry as a Kenyan working within systems that were never designed for us to thrive. This film is not an abstract political idea to me, it is about people I know, spaces I move through, and urgencies I feel daily. When I first encountered Shabu Mwangi and the Wajukuu Arts Collective, I did not see a story of exceptional talent rising "despite" hardship. I saw a generation articulating

Reel Previews 

what many of us live with but rarely name: that what we inherit is not only poverty or opportunity, but silence, fear, and the expectation to endure without complaint. *Heirs of No Regret* became a way to sit with that inheritance honestly, without romanticizing struggle or reducing resistance to spectacle. As a producer, my work is deeply relational. I am present throughout the process, not only managing logistics or financing, but holding space for difficult conversations about safety, representation, and responsibility. This is especially crucial in a film that unfolds alongside real political unrest. The artists at the center of this story are not only creators; they are also activists, protesters, and young people whose visibility carries real risk. My role is to protect the integrity of the film while prioritising the well-being and agency of those who make it possible.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Mumo Liku is a Kenyan producer, filmmaker, and cultural ecosystem builder whose work weaves cinematic storytelling with community-rooted programmes and creative infrastructure. For over a decade, he has worked across documentary, television, commercials, and interdisciplinary arts, developing a distinctive practice grounded in rigorous production standards and an ethics of care. He is the co-founder of Baruu Collective, Tawi Creative Hub and Kilifi Creek Festival in Kilifi. All three are central to his vision of creative endeavours as art form, livelihood, and social imagination.

COMPANY DETAILS

www.baruucollective.com

 [baruucollective](https://www.instagram.com/baruucollective)



Mumo Liku
PRODUCER



Saitabao Kaiyare
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 18-65

Country: Kenya, Italy, Netherlands

Production Company: Baruu Collective Limited,
Rizoma Films, Windmill
Film, POPCult

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 526 272 USD

Finances Committed: 35 082 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Financing
- Pre-sales
- Distribution

Company Profile  / 



MDANTSANE - HOME OF BOXING

In Mdantsane, South Africa's boxing Mecca, 27-year-old recovering addict Siyakholwa Kuse fights to keep the promise made to his mentor, world champion Zolani 'Last Born' Tete, killed before he could complete his own comeback, in the very community he was fighting to uplift.

Mdantsane doesn't simply produce boxers. It produces champions, fighters who have changed what the world expects from a South African township. For decades, this Eastern Cape community has carried the title "The Home of Boxing", one fighter at a time. During apartheid, when opportunity was rationed by law, the boxing ring became one of the few places where a young Black man could compete, win and be recognised. That legacy lives through fighters like Welcome Ncita, Vuyani Bungu, and later Zolani 'Last Born' Tete, a two-weight world champion whose journey moved from triumph, through a doping suspension, to a hard-won return. Now that legacy lives in Siyakholwa Kuse. At twenty-seven, a father of two, he carries the responsibility of providing for his children. For him, winning

is not simply ambition, it is survival. But his hardest fight never happened inside a ring. It was his battle with tik addiction. At All Winners Boxing Gym, he began fighting his way back, supported by manager Mlandeli 'Ta Mla' Thengimfene and mentored by Tete, who saw the same hunger and determination in Siyakholwa. As Zolani prepares for his return to the ring, tragedy strikes. One evening, after returning from the gym, he is shot and killed near his home in Mdantsane. His death changes the trajectory of Siyakholwa's journey. The mentor who helped him rebuild his life is suddenly gone, leaving behind lessons, discipline and a responsibility to carry his legacy forward. Now Siyakholwa must continue his own fight without the man who helped him find his way back. As Mdantsane mourns one of its champions while another generation prepares to rise, Mdantsane – Home of Boxing becomes a story about legacy, loss, redemption and the power of mentorship. When the mentor is gone, can the lesson survive him?

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

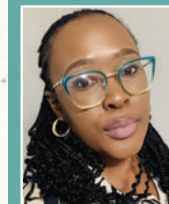
Pumlani Veto's connection to boxing is deeply personal. Through Siyakholwa's journey, she explores addiction, family, mentorship and redemption, while highlighting boxing's power to create discipline, purpose and hope. The film celebrates Mdantsane's boxing legacy and its role in fighting violence, crime and substance abuse, preserving its cultural heritage for future generations.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Pumlani Veto is an award-winning video editor and post-production specialist with over a decade of experience in documentaries, reality TV, and branded content. Recognised with 2x SAFTA Awards (Best Documentary, 2023) and the Silicon Valley African Film Award (Best in Documentary). Highly versatile in storytelling, editing workflows, and managing complex post-production environments. Fluent in multiple South African languages, bringing a culturally rich perspective to every project. My career started in 2009 through documentary filmmaker training at Big Fish Institution. Trained and mentored by the best industry professionals, my career has grown into a multifaceted one. Venturing into directing and editing documentaries over the years has helped me grow and develop as a storyteller.

COMPANY DETAILS

Amila Pictures is an Eastern Cape production company dedicated to authentic South African stories. Led by Pumlani with extensive documentary expertise, the studio focuses on intimate, character-driven storytelling that preserves community heritage, including the project *Mdantsane, Home of Boxing*.



Pumlani Veto
PRODUCER /
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 16-60

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Amila Pictures PTY (Ltd)

Running Time: 70 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 132 156 USD

Finances Committed: 23 337 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- My goal is to secure the strategic partnerships and financing needed to complete *Mdantsane, Home of Boxing* and position it for a successful international release. I want to connect with co-producers, broadcasters, distributors, sales agents and funders who believe in the film's potential to reach audiences both in Africa and globally.

 [pumlaniveto](https://www.instagram.com/pumlaniveto)



MY DJOMÉLÉ NIGHT

A young Burkinabé woman learns sign language to support her deaf and mute younger sister's attendance in the virgins' carnival celebrating the Lunar New Year in Bobo-Dioulasso. My name is Barkima, which means "Bless me" in the language of the Mossi people. I was born to a Mossi father and a Bobo mother, but I speak neither language, only Dioula. For some, having a dual cultural heritage is a blessing. For me, this mixed heritage is a heavy burden. I grew up in Bobo-Dioulasso, where the Bobo Mandaré Lunar New Year, the Djomélé, is celebrated with various activities, including a carnival reserved for female virgins of the Bobo ethnic group. As a child, I was fascinated to watch hundreds of girls my age parading through the streets of the historic district, made up, wearing beautiful jewellery, traditional outfits, and headaddresses in shimmering colours. Unfortunately, I was never able to walk among them. Today, an adult, a mother,

and a filmmaker, I would like to overcome this regret through my little sister Naila, 16 years old, by filming her preparation for and participation in the various activities of the Djomélé festival. However, Naila is deaf and mute, and neither my parents, nor my older sister, nor my two younger brothers, nor I know sign language. So, I will learn to be able to communicate with her on equal terms, and so that my film project is not a vicarious fulfilment of my own childhood dream, but an adventure entirely shared with my little sister and our whole family. Thus, *My Djomélé Night* is the story of several reconciliations: a young city girl reclaiming part of her varied identity, a family learning to communicate more inclusively with a child that everyone loves but without knowing how to listen to or understand her, and two sisters rediscovering each other by moving together towards the Djomélé celebration.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

My Djomélé Night is a gesture of love from a filmmaker towards her sister, whom she watched for a long time without truly seeing her. A family's film. A film of reconciliation(s). To make it real, we plan to bring together two African production companies and all partners who are willing to support a project that is both intimate and universal.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Barkima Nafissatou Laguempedo is a young, self-taught filmmaker from Burkina Faso. Thanks to the "From Idea to Short Film" programme, she directed her first film in 2023, *JUDGE T*, which addresses violence against women and was broadcast on Canal+ Afrique and screened at local and regional festivals.

Hicham Falah supports the creation and distribution of African documentary films from Morocco through festival programming, training programmes, artistic mentorship, and the production of emerging filmmakers.

COMPANY DETAILS

Cinema Salama is a Moroccan production company with a pan-African focus, founded in 2018 in Tangier, dedicated to first and second feature-length creative documentary projects.



Hicham Falah
PRODUCER



Barkima Nafissatou Laguempedo
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: All

Country: Burkina Faso, Morocco

Production Company: Cinema Salama

Running Time: 75 minutes

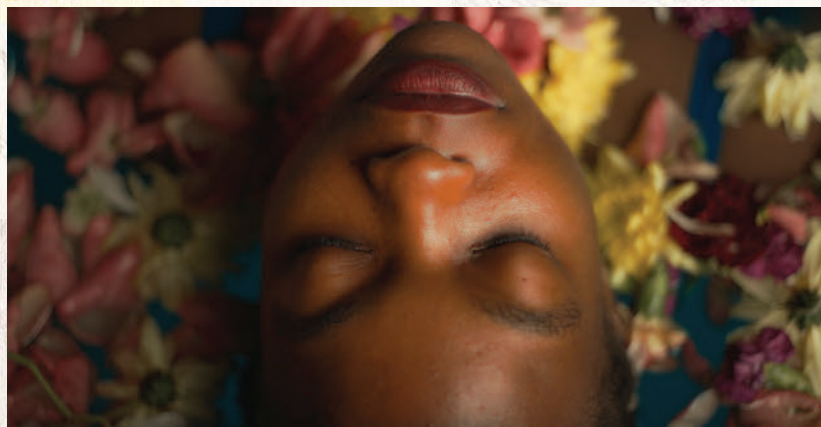
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 200 000 USD

Finances Committed: 20 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- We are looking for development programmes and funding, producers, and broadcasters to build a strong co-production scheme.



THE ONES WITH THE TEMPERED FLOWERS

For Neema, being a woman has always meant a script: school, marriage, babies. When a doctor tells filmmaker Neema that having children might be hard, she doesn't expect it to confuse her. Those expectations wound her. Raised in a multi-religious home, her identity was forged by questions of what is haram and what would please Jesus. All Neema cared about was which hell she'd end up in. To her, the older women in her family are a mystery beyond work and family. Their lives feel prophetic to her own. Her sister

and she try to rewrite their scripts through tarot. Her father taught her anything is possible. Now he reminds her of her fate. She stages performances with her family, reenacting fragments of their lives. They believe these are fictions. But they're memories, repurposed, hidden truths surfacing through play. This is the story of a woman studying her body's relationship to self, society and the political weight placed on women's bodies in Tanzania, challenging duty masked as love.

Reel Previews 

Password: mauamaaua

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Growing up, I watched the women I loved fade into mysteries. Now, with fibroids, blamed on "unused" womanhood, I fear erasure too. This film uses metaphor to expose how patriarchy confines women through timed beauty and motherhood. Rooted in young African women's experiences, it speaks universally, inviting reflection on identity and societal expectation.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Neema Ngelime is a documentary photographer and filmmaker working from a feminist and experimental perspective. A 2021 DocNomads MA graduate and Erasmus+ scholar, her work has screened at Oberhausen, IDFA, the New York African Film Festival and the London Short Film Festival. A 2023 Berlinale Talent, she is currently developing her first feature with support from the DW Akademie Film Development Fund and the EAccelerate Fund managed by Documentary Africa.

COMPANY DETAILS

AQ Pictures is a female-led independent production and service company based in Kenya. We produce fiction films, documentaries and series that centre African women's experiences and tell bold, emotionally resonant stories. From intimate indie features to high-calibre international collaborations, AQ operates at the intersection of soul and scale, offering seamless execution, cinematic storytelling and a deep commitment to legacy-building through African cinema.



Ivy Kiru
PRODUCER



Neema Ngelime
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 25+

Country: Kenya, Tanzania

Production Company: LBx Africa,
AQ Pictures

Running Time: 75 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 471 958.76 USD

Finances Committed: 95 050.40 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- We are looking for financing partners, together with broadcast partners.

Company Profile 





THE THREAD AND THE WALL - LE FIL ET LE MUR

My name is Mouni. I am an Algerian actress. At 36, on my wedding day in Marseille, France, what was supposed to be the beginning of my intimate life became a shock: I could not be penetrated. I was unaware that my body carried a blockage. Doctors put a name to what I was experiencing: vaginismus. Deep in my memory, blurred images resurfaced: a dark room, a razor blade, a sweet date, my mother's gaze, and a sentence: "Ana hayt, ou weld nass khayt". I am the wall, and the man is the thread. I then remembered the tasfih: small razor incisions made on my thigh, in the shape of a tattoo, a ritual linked to the sealing of virginity, which I underwent at the age of ten in Constantine, during the civil war of the 1990s, in a context where mothers sought to protect their daughters from the violence committed by terrorists at that time. I return to Algeria to understand what was passed down to me. Guided

by the memory of my mother, I begin a journey of healing. I undergo an attempt to reopen the tasfih by the same woman who performed it on me. Through an investigation into ancestral practices, beliefs, superstitions, spirituality, and modern medicine, I meet women whose bodies and lives have also been marked by these inheritances. I discover the extent of this practice, which varies in its methods depending on the regions of Algeria: razor, padlock, weaving loom, fibulae... The purpose remains the same: to close the vaginas of girls and to "reopen" them before marriage. If a woman does not marry, she remains "closed" for her entire life and is not allowed to live her sexuality. The film tells the passage from an inheritance based on fear to a new form of transmission, founded on speech, listening, and choice. The trauma does not disappear. My body remains marked by its history, but something begins to open.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

The Thread and the Wall is a film born from silence, shame, and the fear of betraying what was passed down to me. Today, I choose to speak in the first person, not only on behalf of other women, but from the woman I have become. Through my own story, I question how inherited beliefs, traditions, and trauma continue to shape women's bodies, sexuality, and freedom.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Mouni Bouallam is an Algerian multidisciplinary artist, director, actress, and producer. After studying Political Science, she graduated in directing from ISMAS Algiers in 2015 and holds a Master's degree in Theatre Directing from Aix-Marseille University (France, 2024). She directed and produced her first documentary, *The Bride of the Casbah* (2015). In 2025, she directed and produced *Roman Carnival*, awarded Best Stage Direction at the Professional Theater Festival in Algiers. She is currently producing and directing *The Revenge of Diraf*, supported by the Algerian Ministry of Culture.

COMPANY DETAILS

Moon Light Film is an Algerian production company founded in 2024 by Mouni Bouallam. It develops intimate, socially engaged films exploring memory, identity, and women's voices.

 [mouni_bouallam](https://www.instagram.com/mouni_bouallam)



Mouni Bouallam
PRODUCER /
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: Adults (18+)

Country: Algeria, France

Production Company: EURL Moon Light Film

Running Time: 80 minutes

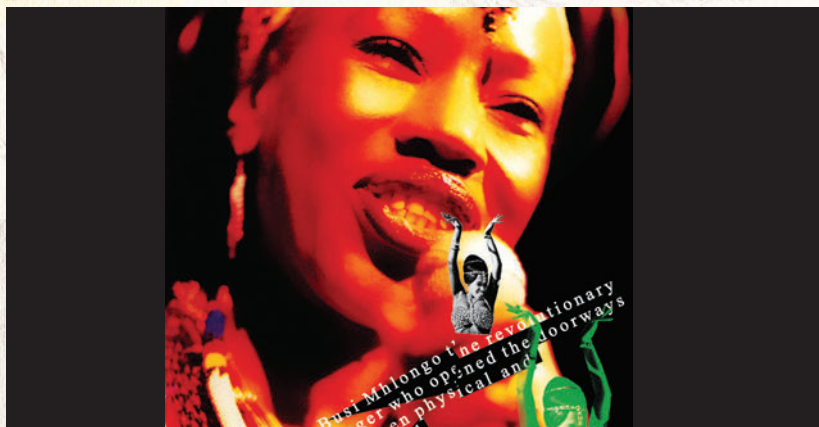
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 198 000 USD

Finances Committed: 8 500 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Connect with international co-producers, funders and impact partners to strengthen the project and prepare for production.



THE BUSI MHLONGO STORY

“A revolutionary vocalist opening the doorways between the spiritual and the physical.”

This is the biopic of the late, great sound sensation Busi Mhlongo. Called to music at a young age, she overcomes immeasurable odds to chart a stellar path from rural KZN to the top of the world music charts. The Busi Mhlongo Biopic is a hybrid feature documentary. Blending observational and interview-based storytelling with electrifying performance sequences and never-before-seen archives, Busi's multi-faceted artistic urban Zulu appeal is reawakened. Hailing from rural KwaZulu-Natal, at thirteen, Busi attends a showing of *King Kong*, the musical, in Durban, starring Miriam Makeba, and a lifelong fascination with the stage begins. In her 50-year artistic journey, her gigantic voice bends every genre it touches: 1960s South African musical theatre and jazz, Black

American soul, London's Afro-rock scene, and the world music circuit of 1980s Amsterdam. Yet the industry that celebrates her also exploits her. Cancer strikes. She heals and returns home to Durban to rediscover her authentic self through ancient Zulu music. Mhlongo weaves together music, fashion, styles, generations and time epochs into a unique Afrofuturistic art aesthetic. She charts to number one in the world with the Urban Zulu album (1999). Mhlongo overcomes many barriers and changes the status of African female singers. Her journey is of mythological status and an inspiration to the Afro-futuristic youth. In a song from the Babhemu album, Busi personifies the Nguni Goddess, Nomkhulwane. Yet, Mhlongo dies in 2010, aged 62, without the recognition she deserves. More than a biographical music documentary, *The Story of Busi Mhlongo* (2028) is the restoration of a legacy. Now, 17 years

Reel Previews 

after her death, on the eve of what would have been her 80th birthday, colleagues are reuniting, reviving and reawakening her legacy forever.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Busi Mhlongo's music and genre-bending journey educates, brings reflection, entertains and binds in friendship all lovers of African art worldwide. She shares her colourful Durban, KwaZulu-Natal musical identity and her Zulu spirituality of uBuntu. She generously opens and invites us all to her mission as a Diviner-Sangoma and as a healer.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

The Busi Mhlongo Story Biographical Documentary Project was originated and written by lifetime award-winning poet and heritage practitioner **Vusi Mchunu**, and South African music journalist, author and performer **Struan Douglas**. Busi has four significant recording careers: the Dutch Years, the Melt2000 Years, the Chissa Years and the House of Memory Years. Her intellectual property is managed by the Busi Mhlongo Testimonial Trust. Her community legacy in Inanda, outside Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, is managed by her sister's family.

COMPANY DETAILS

Founded in 2020, Sausage Films' mission of iZazi is to preserve and promote South African cultural heritage by spreading an authentic African voice of wisdom.

Company Profile 

[Linktree](#) [/urbanzulu](#)



Struan Douglas
CO-WRITER +
CO-PRODUCER

Vusi Mchunu
CO-WRITER +
CO-PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: All ages

Country: South Africa, Netherlands

Production Company: Sausage Film Company

Running Time: 70 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 380 000 USD

Finances Committed: 44 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Connect with the project at the Durban FilmMart in 2026 and collaborate in the preservation and promotion of Busi Mhlongo's legacy, a cultural heritage resource and an internationally recognised music icon.



WAITING FOR EVOLUTION

The closer the baboons come, the more we see ourselves. Are we prepared to look? *Waiting for Evolution* explores entrenched systems of power and human behaviour on the tip of Africa, told from the perspective of our fellow primates, baboons. One primate looking at another and asking who needs to evolve here? Using the current polarised issues around baboons in Simon's Town, South Africa, as a microcosm of the larger issues around the world, the documentary explores colonialism. We observe the patterns of repetition around power, oppression, concentration camps and forced removals. Can a species so close to us, sharing 94% of our DNA, allow us to see ourselves from a new perspective? Nomas and Khanyiso have worked as baboon rangers for over a decade. Under various authorities, they have worked with paintball guns, bear bangers and euthanasia policies that kill baboons for human failings. Having witnessed these different baboon

management tools, they are given the chance to apply their own approach. What unfolds is a unique co-existence model using mutual respect, whistling and flags to communicate with baboons. This model is criticised by authorities who gain monetary value through baboon management contracts, but the rangers become the peacemakers and moral compass for the community. Do they have the power to stop the proposed cull, though? At the heart of the story is a baboon, Yellow Tag, and her two sons, Jack and Hope. All are set to be killed under the proposed plan. Yellow Tag's stubborn way, Hope's innocence and Jack's attempt to adapt to their changing habitat highlight the stakes for baboons across this UNESCO World Heritage Site, surrounded by a rapidly densifying city. All the while, the baboons observe humans making decisions about their future. Will Hope see his first birthday?

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

There's a threat that baboons could disappear from the Cape Peninsula, along with an estimated 30 species of endemic plants that they help propagate. While awareness exists locally, it has not been enough to shift policy to protect them. This film aims to change perceptions around baboons and generate international attention, applying outside pressure where internal efforts have failed. I am still filming. The story is still unfolding.



Karin Slater
PRODUCER /
DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Karin Slater is an invited lifetime member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and serves as an Oscars judge. Her work has screened at Sundance, Berlinale, Hot Docs, Humboldt Forum Berlin and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. She received the MIPDOC Trailblazer Award for innovative and creative work for her body of work in the field of documentaries in Cannes in 2008. She has produced, directed and shot for leading international broadcasters and platforms including Disney+, BBC and Al Jazeera.

COMPANY DETAILS

In de Light has produced over 35 documentaries that delve into nature and the lives of interesting individuals across the globe over the last 26 years.

Company Profile 

 [projectdelight](#)

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 5+

Country: South Africa

Production Company: In de Light

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 245 013 USD

Finances Committed: 104 180 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Financing
- Distribution
- Co-producer



WHERE DO I BELONG?

In Nairobi, filmmaker Ibrahim “Snoopy” Ahmad waits for voice notes from his parents in Omdurman, where blackouts, shortages and danger interrupt even the simplest conversation. The separation reverses his family’s history: his Sudanese father and Sri Lankan Tamil mother once crossed borders to protect him; now he is the one living in safety while they remain inside Sudan’s war. Ibrahim decides to travel back toward them. As he moves from Nairobi toward Sudan, each road, border and delay opens an earlier journey through family photographs, home videos and conflicting memories: his parents’ migrations, their years in Lebanon, deportation, separation, and Ibrahim’s childhood between cultures and uncertain documents. Combining

present-tense observation, intimate voice notes, personal archive and hand-drawn pencil animation, the film follows a son moving toward a reunion that war may still prevent. Animation gives form to memories and events that cannot be filmed safely or reconstructed honestly; the archive reveals not only rupture, but also the humour, creativity and care through which a migrant family made temporary homes feel permanent. *Where Do I Belong?* is an intimate first-person road film about inherited displacement and the reversal of care between parents and child. Its destination is not a single country or identity, but a fragile answer: perhaps home is the unfinished work of carrying one another across distance.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

This film begins inside Ibrahim’s own family: the parents who crossed borders to protect him are now separated from him by Sudan’s war. We are making it as an act of care and responsibility, connecting one family’s unfinished journey to wider African histories of migration and conditional belonging, without surrendering their intimacy or agency.

DIRECTOR’S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Ibrahim “Snoopy” Ahmad is a Sudanese filmmaker and cinematographer, born in Beirut and based in Nairobi, and a co-director of *Khartoum* (2025).

Talal Afifi is a Sudanese producer, curator and archivist, and Founder and Managing Director of Sudan Film Factory. Since 2010, he has produced or supported more than forty films, including *Khartoum*, which world-premiered at Sundance and had its European premiere at Berlinale.

COMPANY DETAILS

Sudan Film Factory is an independent Sudanese production and cultural platform working across filmmaking, training, curation, archives and international collaboration since 2010.



Talal Afifi
PRODUCER



Ibrahim Snoopy
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 16+, Young adult and adult audiences

Country: Sudan, Lebanon, Sri-Lanka

Production Company: Sudan Film Factory

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 181 000 USD

Finances Committed: 25 650 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure an equitable co-producer.
- Secure production financing.
- Establish strategic broadcast, sales and distribution partnerships.

 [brahimsnoopy / SudanFilmFactory](#)

 [brahimsnoopy / sudanfilmfactory](#)

DFM PITCH AND FINANCE FORUM – FICTION



DFM PITCH AND FINANCE FORUM – FICTION

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A TOUCH OF PARADISE (RIHET EL JANNA)

Gabès, southern Tunisia. Cyrine and Slim are finally expecting their first child after years of infertility. Their fragile happiness is shattered when a massive ammonia leak from the nearby chemical complex engulfs the city. Cyrine survives, but their unborn baby does not. Unable to accept the loss, Slim secretly steals the fetus from the hospital morgue. When he sees it, he is convinced he is looking at a strange creature, somewhere between a human fetus and a marine animal. He never tells anyone about this vision. Carrying this secret alone, he buries the fetus in a dying palm grove overlooking the chemical complex. While Cyrine becomes determined to expose the truth behind the disaster and seek

justice, Slim withdraws into silence. As institutions manipulate medical records and deny any responsibility, the couple slowly drifts apart. Reality begins to shift through Slim's perception. His buried secret contaminates his relationship to the world, where poisoned landscapes, dead palms and sea turtles seem to mirror his inner collapse. Set in one of Tunisia's most polluted cities, *A Touch of Paradise* is an intimate ecological drama infused with subtle magical realism. It explores grief, love, masculinity and the invisible violence of environmental destruction, revealing how catastrophe transforms not only landscapes but also the most intimate human relationships.

Reel Previews 

Password: SLOULO21464276

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Gabès unsettled me before I understood it: the smell, the air, the difficulty of simply breathing. A question took hold: how do people fall in love, raise children and dream here? *A Touch of Paradise* explores what remains of a couple when private grief collides with a catastrophe everyone has learned to ignore.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

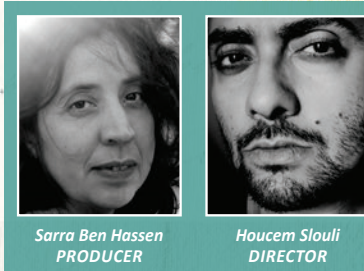
Houcem Slouli is a Tunisian filmmaker. He has collaborated with acclaimed directors including Mohamed Ben Attia, Meryam Joobeur, Lotfy Achour and Erige Sehiri. His short films have screened at international festivals including Leeds, Fribourg, Red Sea, and JCC, earning several awards. *A Touch of Paradise* is his debut feature. Sarra Ben Hassen is based in Tunisia and has produced several award-winning short films, including the Oscar-nominated *Brotherhood* by Meryam Joobeur. Her debut feature, *Who Do I Belong To*, premiered at the 74th Berlinale.

COMPANY DETAILS

Instinct Bleu is a Tunisian company founded by Sarra Ben Hassen and Oscar-nominated Meryam Joobeur. Credits include *Who Do I Belong To* (Berlinale) and *The Bird's Placebo* (Sundance, BFI).

 [houcem.slouli / sarra ben hassen](#)

 [houcem_slouli / instinctbleufilms](#)



PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Audience Age Range: Adults and young adults

Country: Tunisia

Production Company: Instinct Bleu Films

Running Time: 100 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 764 200 USD

Finances Committed: 32 200 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Seek industry feedback and potential partnerships.
- Secure second round of development funding.



AGAIN

Again follows Hermann Nkali, better known as Bob Van Damme, a man in his thirties haunted by a violent gangster past. In the chaotic streets of Kinshasa, Bob is determined to leave the criminal underworld behind and build a better life for his fourteen-year-old daughter, Luna, who has recently come back into his life. Dreaming of opening his own restaurant, Bob seeks redemption for the mistakes that have defined him. But the past refuses to let him go. His former associate, Gerard, resurfaces with an irresistible proposal: one final mission. The assignment is to eliminate Gengis, a ruthless gang leader, and rescue Alita, a woman Bob once loved and betrayed. Tempted by the promise of a fortune large enough to repay his debt to his former

boss, Dragon, and disappear forever with Luna, Bob accepts. Unaware that he has become the target of a carefully orchestrated revenge, he walks straight into a deadly trap. Alita, driven by years of pain and betrayal, has manipulated every move to confront the man who abandoned her when she needed him most. As old loyalties crumble and enemies close in, Bob is forced to navigate a brutal world where trust no longer exists. Caught between the ghosts of his past and the hope of a new beginning, he must fight for more than his own survival. To break the cycle of violence, he must protect Luna at all costs, even if redemption demands the ultimate sacrifice.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Inspired by *Viva Riva!* and *Tsotsi*, I want to tell an authentic Congolese story about redemption, fatherhood and resilience. Through Bob and Luna, *Again* explores the emotional cost of survival in a changing Africa, blending crime, suspense and humanity. I want to portray Kinshasa and Goma with honesty, complexity and cinematic ambition, while creating universal emotional resonance.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Erickey Bahati is a Congolese writer, director and producer from Goma. His work explores resilience, identity and moral dilemmas through fiction, television and documentary. Trained by Yole Africa, Africalia, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and Ateliers Varan, he combines strong visual storytelling with authentic narratives rooted in contemporary Congo. His work includes *Binti*, *Chez Mamie*, *Elongo-Elonga* and *My Most Subjective Right*. He brings a distinctive Central African voice to internationally ambitious productions and stories.

COMPANY DETAILS

Gikas Films is a Kinshasa-based production company developing fiction, documentary, animation and television projects. We create authentic African stories and build international co-productions with partners across Africa, Europe and beyond.

Company Profile 

 [Giresse Kassonga](#)



PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Series

Audience Age Range: 14+

Country: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Production Company: Gikas Films

Running Time: 8 episodes, 52 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 646 529.62 USD

Finances Committed: 45 862 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure strategic co-production and financing partners.
- Engage broadcasters.
- Build long-term international collaborations to bring *Again* into production.



DADDIES

Nick fucked up. His marriage is toast, his Melville bakery is kaput and his nine-year-old daughter, Scotty, is caught in the wreckage. For the record, he didn't sleep with his business partner, Vivienne. Not that his ex-wife, Joan, or their ex-couple's therapist care. Nick left the bakery to save his marriage. Just too late. Unemployed and living with Clint, the father who abandoned him, Nick is processing intergenerational daddy issues. As he plays dad again with his fantasy-obsessed daughter, Nick secretly misses being a baker. When Joan asks him to cater Scotty's birthday party, Nick enters the humiliating world of kids' catering, where nobody cares about his fusion-food genius. To add insult to injury, Brian arrives: a finance guy with a vape, a portfolio and Joan. Brian's everything Nick isn't. Boring. Present. Liquid. Spurred on by Francois, Nick's troublemaker best friend, they catch the eye of investor Karabo. Together, the trio turn Nick's return to simpler food into a pop-up

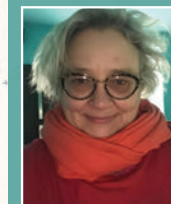
bakery run by dads. Including unlikely trainee, Clint. Nick's got his shot at redemption. Unfortunately, the dads cook better than they communicate. Francois and Karabo speed-run dating while managing the business, rushing Francois from situationship to working-stepdad to Karabo's teenagers. Meanwhile, Clint, an old dog learning new baking tricks from his prodigal son, is shepherded towards parenthood again with his younger girlfriend, Clarissa. But what starts as pop-up catering becomes all-consuming. Nick breaks promises and rebuilds the bakery that destroyed his marriage. Joan warns that if he can't put Scotty first, she'll seek full custody. Nick must choose between breadwinning and caregiving, and rediscover that the story of a family is written in the meals they eat together. His marriage may be over, but his daughter's life is just beginning.

Reel Previews 

Password: daddies26

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I was raised by a single mother and grew up with daddy issues. Now that I'm a father myself, I am discovering it takes more than a dad bod to become a father figure. Provider doesn't have to mean breadwinner. *Daddies* tells the story I needed growing up: that the currency of fatherhood isn't money, it's time.



Catharina Weinek
PRODUCER



Sean Mongie
DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Writer-director **Sean Mongie's** short *The House That Never Sleeps* premiered at DIFF, won Best Short Director at SA Indie Fest and Best Narrative Short at the African Film Festival Atlanta. He served as script editor and staff writer on SABC1's *Amalanga Awafani*. Producer **Catharina Weinek's** credits include *Black People Don't Get Depressed*, Oscar-selected *Old Righteous Blues* and national award-winner *The Fragile King*. She won Best English Pitch at Deental 2024 and builds bridges between South African filmmakers and European partners.

COMPANY DETAILS

Medusa Media and Homemade Films develop bold, character-driven African stories for film and television, combining local creative talent with international co-production networks to deliver distinctive, audience-focused work with global reach.

Company Profile 

 [changeofsean](#) / [catharinaweinek](#)

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Series

Audience Age Range: Primary: Adults 25–54, Secondary: 16+

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Medusa Media, Homemade Films

Running Time: 8 episodes, 30 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 675 000 USD

Finances Committed: 25 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Co-development and production finance.
- African-European co-producers.
- Broadcaster, streamer and international pre-sales partners.



Photograph by Lindsey Appolis
featuring Tarryn Lamb

FAFI

Set between Cape Town and Johannesburg, *Fafi* is a multi-generational crime mystery drama tracing the intertwined hopes, dreams and betrayals of Coloured and Chinese families over four decades. The series interweaves the parallel lives of two women navigating the mysterious, illegal gambling world of *Fafi*: Jade (40), a disgraced journalist in present-day South Africa, and her mother Sophie (16), coming of age in apartheid Johannesburg during the 1980s. At the lowest point in her career, Jade learns that her estranged father, the enigmatic Lee Sin, has died in a suspicious fire, leaving her his secret *Fafi* empire. Despite her mother's warnings to stay away, Jade travels north expecting a lucrative inheritance, only to uncover a web of corruption, gang rivalries and family secrets. With Lee gone, his trusted deputy Mandla is fighting to protect the Sin territory from the rival Tseng family. As questions surface around Lee's death,

Jade buries her journalistic objectivity and embeds herself within the *Fafi* operation. Rising through its ranks, she uncovers a criminal network stretching far beyond illegal gambling. Running parallel is Sophie's story. In 1980s Fietas, sixteen-year-old Sophie works as a *Fafi* runner for the Sin family. Refusing to accept the limitations imposed on her as a woman of colour, she persuades Lee to teach her to become a *Fafi* operator, a role reserved for Chinese men. Their partnership blossoms into forbidden love, but when Sophie falls pregnant, she flees to Cape Town, abandoning Lee and the world of *Fafi* forever. As past and present collide, Jade discovers that the answers to her father's murder, her mother's disappearance and her own fractured identity are inseparable. To uncover the truth, she must decide whether to expose her family's criminal legacy or protect the people who built it.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Fafi is rooted in stories passed down through my family, stories of survival, secrecy and ingenuity. These stories reveal a hidden economy that sustained families excluded from formal systems of power. As a Coloured woman in post-apartheid South Africa, I became fascinated by the untold histories that shape identity, belonging and the legacies we inherit.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Dominique Jossie is a South African writer, director and producer with 14 years' experience across film and television. She is a Realness Netflix Episodic Lab alumna and a Film Independent Global Media Makers Fellow. Her narrative directing debut, *Rooilug* (2019), received eight Silwerskerm Award nominations, including Best Director. She later co-wrote on the Showmax series *Breekpunt* (2025) and most recently co-wrote and directed *Die Superette* (2025). As co-founder of Blended Films, her work champions bold, character-driven stories inspired by her mixed-race heritage.

COMPANY DETAILS

Blended Films develops and produces nuanced stories driven by bold female perspectives. Recent productions include three feature films and an episodic series, with *Finding Optel* premiering at the BFI London Film Festival 2025.

Company Profile 

 [dominiquejossie](https://www.instagram.com/dominiquejossie)



Dominique Jossie
PRODUCER /
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Series

Audience Age Range: 25-45

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Blended Films Pty Ltd

Running Time: 8 episodes, 45 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 2 500 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Pre-sale/co-production broadcast or streaming partners.
- Development finance.
- Production finance partners.
- International sales agents.
- JHB-based co-producing partner.



FAIRWAY TO FREEDOM

Fairway to Freedom is inspired by the extraordinary true story of Papwa Sewgolum, an Indian South African golfer whose quiet determination challenged the injustices of apartheid and changed South Africa's sporting history. Durban, 1955. Papwa works as a caddie at an exclusive golf course where he is permitted to carry clubs but forbidden from playing alongside white members. Despite poverty and relentless discrimination, he possesses an extraordinary natural gift for golf. Supported by his devoted wife, Sumintra, and driven by the dream of creating a better future for their children, Papwa refuses to let apartheid define his worth. As his reputation grows, he gains unlikely allies who recognise his talent and help him access opportunities once thought impossible. Success on South African courses opens the door to international competition, where his achievements challenge assumptions about race, talent and belonging. Yet every triumph abroad is met with renewed hostility at home. Excluded from clubhouses, denied equal

treatment and repeatedly humiliated, Papwa learns that success alone cannot defeat prejudice. At the heart of the film is his relationship with Sumintra, whose unwavering faith becomes his emotional anchor. Together they endure financial hardship, public scrutiny and the personal cost of Papwa's growing fame. As he enters the defining tournament of his career, Papwa must confront the country's greatest golfer, Gary Player, and an apartheid system determined to ensure that no matter how he plays, he will never be accepted as an equal. The championship becomes more than a sporting contest. It becomes a battle for recognition, dignity and equality. Though history denied him the recognition he deserved in his lifetime, Papwa's courage, humility and resilience left an enduring legacy that transcends golf. *Fairway to Freedom* is ultimately a story of love, family and quiet resistance, celebrating the power of dignity in the face of injustice.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Fairway to Freedom honours the extraordinary yet overlooked legacy of Papwa Sewgolum, whose quiet courage challenged apartheid through dignity, resilience and sporting excellence. More than a golf story, it is a deeply human tale of identity, family and hope. Through authentic international collaboration, we aim to bring this inspiring South African story to audiences around the world.

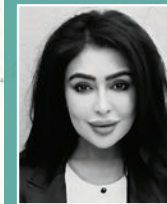
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Tarina Patel and **Alan McAlex** combine South African creative leadership with Indian co-production expertise to develop culturally authentic stories with global appeal. Tarina, founder of Tarina P Productions, produced Mandela's Gun. Alan, founder of Suitable Pictures, produced BAFTA-winning *Boong*, showcased at Cannes, Toronto and Berlinale. Supported by Robin de Jager, the team brings international experience, strategic partnerships and access to South African and Indian financing and festival networks.

COMPANY DETAILS

Suitable Pictures is a Mumbai-based production company specialising in internationally co-produced, filmmaker-driven films, developing culturally authentic stories with global audience appeal through strategic partnerships and innovative financing. Tarina P Productions is a South African production company creating authentic, socially impactful stories that celebrate African voices and connect local narratives with audiences worldwide through international collaboration.

Company Profile 



Tarina Patel
PRODUCER



Alan McAlex
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 25-65

Country: South Africa, United Kingdom, India

Production Company: Tarina P Productions, Suitable Pictures

Running Time: 110 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 2 500 000 USD

Finances Committed: 300 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Complete the final stages of development, delivering a production-ready package and advancing the project into pre-production.
- Secure financing, commence production, and deliver a world-class South African feature film for international audiences.

 [tarinapatel](https://www.instagram.com/tarinapatel)

8278A FILM STUDIO

FISI (HYENA)

In a world full of predators, Kaya Makaya is prey. Watching her ex-boyfriend, now her boss, thrive on a concept he stole from her, Kaya goes on a vodka-fuelled rant that gets her fired. Desperate, Kaya begs for a second chance and is granted a Hail Mary in the form of Bikini Island, a trashy reality show that no other producer is willing to touch. Armed with ignorance and a dazzling sense of delusion, Kaya and her motley crew invade the remote Kenyan island of Lamu, ready to take reality TV to a new level and craft something meaningful from it. But her plans are thwarted when a series of mishaps occurs, and the show goes live, creating a viral sensation. Now, the network and the audience want more, and Kaya faces a terrible dilemma. To succeed, she must betray everything she believes in, while staying true to herself

means failure. Choosing to commit to the show's success, Kaya crafts chaos behind the scenes, weaving storylines out of the contestants' vulnerabilities. As she plunges further into the abyss, the show rises in ratings until a tragedy brings the glory train to a screeching halt. In a dazzling finale, she throws down the gauntlet, exposing hers and the audience's complicity. But her last hurrah has the show earning its highest rating yet, and Kaya soon realises that walking away isn't going to be easy after all. In the end, Kaya must answer the question: Is chasing your dreams worth the price of losing your soul? *Fisi* is a show that hurls us into the jungle that is reality television, and though it holds up a mirror, it's also a love letter to the messy genre that has us all secretly hooked.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Invasive, restless, uncomfortable. The camera hovers, intrudes, and eavesdrops. It is aggressive and unstable. Surveillance is not just aesthetic; it is the psychological condition of the series. The camera has a pulse. Shots feel grabbed. Frames are imperfect, sometimes late, sometimes too close. The audience is complicit. There is no neutral gaze in *Fisi*.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Mkamzee Mwatela is a writer and filmmaker based in Nairobi, Kenya. She is a stage and screen actor, choreographer and director, as well as a writer for both mediums. In 2015, she co-founded 8278A Film Studio. Mkamzee moved into producing, serving as the showrunner and head writer on *Second Family* (Showmax, 2023) and as a co-writer, story developer and casting director on *Country Queen* (Netflix). She worked on the development and writing of MTV *Shuga Mashariki* (Season 1, 2025). She lives and works in Nairobi.

COMPANY DETAILS

<https://www.8278afilmstudio.com>

Company Profile 

 [mkamzee](#)



Mkamzee Mwatela
PRODUCER



Sanele Zulu
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Series

Audience Age Range: 16-40

Country: Kenya

Production Company: 8278A Film Studio

Running Time: 8 episodes, 45 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 4 050 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Seeking Funding
- Distribution
- Co-production



FOUR MONTHS AND TEN DAYS

After 30 years of marriage, Azza decides to leave. The day she quietly prepares to escape, Hakeem, her husband, is killed by a random gunshot on the first day of the Sudanese revolution. Azza refuses to cry. Hakeem's ghost appears only to her, confused and wounded. Azza is bound by the Idda waiting period of four months and ten days, during which a widow must remain inside her home, withdrawing from public life and all forms of adornment. The house becomes a sealed, ritual-governed world. Inside are Azza, her daughter Hiba, her son Ahmed and Hakeem's ghost, unable to move on. From other lingering spirits, Hakeem learns he cannot exit without Azza's sincere tears. Azza reveals a painful truth: she mourned him long ago, in silence and disappointment. The spirits

offer him a strange alternative: if he can make her laugh three times, the tears may follow. Reluctantly, he tries. Revisiting memories, retelling stories and reliving their shared past, Hakeem searches for the moment their love faded. Confined to the house he once escaped, Hakeem begins to see what he never saw while alive: Azza's quiet strength, their children navigating grief, metaphysics and a revolution that tumbled a 30-year dictatorship. *Four Months and Ten Days* is a tragicomic story of reconciliation, infused with magical realism, where mourning becomes resistance, laughter opens the path to healing, forgiveness, and love reveals itself at the threshold between life and death amidst a historical revolution.

Reel Previews



DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

When my father died, I witnessed my mother's Idda: four months and 10 days that turned from a "prison" into a temple, honouring a sacred ritual. The story merges two realities: a nation seeking freedom after 30 years of oppression, and Azza seeking reconciliation after 30 years of an unhappy marriage, whilst sheltered to practise the radical act of rest and healing.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Alyaa Musa is an alumna of EAVE, Berlinale Talents, Cannes Docs and Rotterdam Producers Connection. She studied filmmaking at the London Film School and holds an MA with distinction in Cinematography and Post-Production from the University of Greenwich. **Samo Hussein** has co-produced *The Dam* (Cannes Directors' Fortnight), served as line producer on *Goodbye Julia* (Un Certain Regard, Freedom Prize) and worked on *You Will Die at Twenty* (Venice). He also produced the documentary series *Nas Shagala*.

COMPANY DETAILS

Based in Kigali, Tooma Production is an art house specialising in cinema and international co-productions, collaborating alongside Sudan's Black Balance Artistic Production and Poland's My Way Studio.

Company Profile



Samo Hussein
PRODUCER



Alyaa Musa
WRITER + DIRECTOR



Anna Stylińska
CO-PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 15+

Country: Sudan, Rwanda, Poland

Production Company: Tooma Production,
Black Balance
Production and
My Way Studio

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 075 652 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Development financing.
- Labs and international co-production.



MIETA

Set in 1984 South Africa, *MIETA* is a modern fairy tale about memory, land, and the inheritance of violence, told from the height of a ten-year-old girl. Denied a name, an education, and a childhood, Mieta is an orphaned labourer trapped on the unforgiving Grobler farm. In a world where she owns nothing and is called nothing, magic is not an escape, it is the language of the oppressed. Her days are measured by the whistle's call to work beneath the volatile shadow of Koos Grobler, a man of scripture, liquor and guns. But her nights belong to the ocean she conjures in her mind, where her late mother still walks beside her, whispering that trees have souls and roots remember everything. Unable to read the books she is forbidden to touch, Mieta learns instead to read the land. Her only ally is her thirteen-year-old brother, Niko, who carries the impossible burden of protecting them both in a system designed to break them. As Koos's cruelty escalates and violence closes in from every direction, Mieta begins to sense another

world beneath the one she can see: a place where memory lingers in the soil, forgotten truths take root, and the earth itself bears witness to every injustice. What begins as imagination slowly reveals itself as something older, deeper, and ancient, a force that has been waiting beneath the earth all along. Yet the horrors of the farm are only the surface of a far greater evil. Beyond its fences, a secret state-sanctioned chemical and biological programme quietly reshapes the country, poisoning both land and people. As history itself threatens to disappear beneath violence and silence, Mieta's inner world begins to spill into reality. The earth remembers. The trees answer. And the land itself rises to meet her defiance. A haunting fusion of grounded magical realism and historical truth, *MIETA* is a story about the quiet, radical power of imagination in the face of impossible brutality. To survive, Mieta must discover whether hope can outlive fear, and whether imagination is the first act of freedom.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

The stories that shaped me were often carried rather than written; passed between generations, altered by memory, silence and survival. Mieta grew from those fragments, from a desire to give them a life of their own. Rooted in African ancestral spirituality, where the living and the dead share the same breath, Mieta is a fairy tale about the quiet, radical power of imagination when everything else has been taken away. It is for every child who imagined freedom before they knew its name.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Carla Fonseca Mokgata is a South African-Mozambican writer-director and artist. She wrote and directed the first South African MGM-Amazon production produced locally, *A Scam Called Love*; her debut feature, *Burkinabe*, screened at FESPACO. *Mieta* is her 3rd feature film.

Producer **Neil Brandt** co-founded Storyscope and produced over 200+ hours of fiction and non-fiction stories. His credits include Sundance-selected *Influence* and Netflix's hits *Senzo* and *Beauty and the Bester*. Neil champions African stories with global reach. Together, the team develops ambitious, auteur-driven African films engineered for both international acclaim and commercial reach, pairing distinctive vision with proven global appeal.

COMPANY DETAILS

Storyscope produces locally authored African stories for global audiences. Its award-winning productions span Amazon, ZDF, ARTE and Al Jazeera, reaching viewers worldwide, from Sundance competition to Netflix global Top 10.



Neil Brandt
PRODUCER



Carla Fonseca Mokgata
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 16+

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Storyscope (SA),
BlackMicMac (FR),
Peripheria (CA)

Running Time: 100 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 3 000 000 USD

Finances Committed: 500 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Private Equity.
- Institutional Funding.
- Platform Access.

Company Profile   

 [carla.fonseca.mokgata](https://www.instagram.com/carla.fonseca.mokgata)



MOTHER THERESA

In Kigali, Theresa, a dedicated nurse and single mother, is pushed to the brink when the private clinic where she works has not paid salaries for months while its director, Athanase, has redirected all the clinic's funds into an ambitious hospital project. Theresa faces eviction, mounting debt, and a custody battle with her ex-husband, who threatens to take their son. With the pressure mounting, she desperately sedates Claude, a nearby mobile money agent, steals his money, and gets away with it. When a patient dies because the clinic lacks propofol for anesthesia, Athanase orders the staff to falsify reports and refills the inventory to mask the problem, which could jeopardize his ambitious project. As investigators shut

down the clinic and suspend medical licenses, Theresa finds herself unemployed. Her life in jeopardy in a city where the cost of living rises day by day, she adopts a costume of a Catholic nun and starts stealing from mobile money agents across the city. What starts as an act of desperation becomes a financial liberation. Rumors of a "criminal nun" spread across the city, and suspicion shifts toward the Catholic Church, giving her the perfect cover. However, on New Year's Eve, Claude tracks her down, seeking revenge for ruining his life. As fireworks erupt across Kigali at midnight and the city welcomes the new year, the confrontation between Theresa and her first victim escalates into a violent reckoning.

Reel Previews 

Password: Nameless2020

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

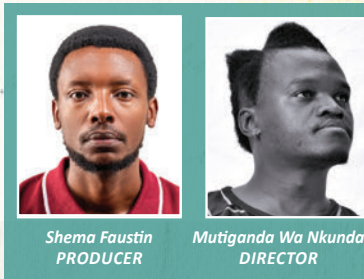
When you don't have what to eat, you don't think about God. You only think about what to eat." I want to explore a universal story of survival, not in the jungle, but in the socio-economic situation where systems of greed and inequality complicate the lives of ordinary people.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Mutiganda wa Nkunda is a Rwandan filmmaker and industry analyst whose debut feature film, *Nameless*, won Best Screenplay at FESPACO 2021, among other international recognitions. Shema Faustin is a Rwandan film producer whose credits include *Small Gods*, winner of the Grand Jury Prize for International Narrative Feature at the 2026 American Black Film Festival. Together, director Mutiganda wa Nkunda and producer **Shema Faustin** collaborated on *Mucoma*, which earned a nomination for Best Actress at the 2025 Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA).

COMPANY DETAILS

Amarebe Productions produced *Mucoma*, which was nominated for the 2025 Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) and won Best Screenplay at the Mashariki African Film Festival.



Shema Faustin
PRODUCER

Mutiganda wa Nkunda
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 16+

Country: Rwanda

Production Company: Amarebe Productions

Running Time: 120 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 650 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure funding for script development.
- Attract co-producers.



SMOKE & MIRRORS

Brazil, 2024. The grave of a South African crypto-king is discovered empty by a South African journalist and a Canadian FINTRAC agent. Somewhere between South Africa and Brazil, between fact and myth, he, and 7000 stolen bitcoins have vanished into digital smoke. This extraordinary true story connects South Africa and Latin America through the exquisite stupidity of ordinary people believing in miracles, and con artists believing in themselves. Johannesburg, 2020. As the COVID lockdown devastates livelihoods and the world searches for a financial lifeline, hen-pecked IT genius Johann Steynberg is seduced by newly engaged lovers and veteran ponzi schemers, sex-addict Cheri Ward and born bully Clynton Marks, into becoming the public face of Mirror Trading International (MTI), an AI-powered Bitcoin trading platform delivering impossible returns. There is just one problem: it's all bullshit. What begins as another con quickly becomes one of the largest cryptocurrency Ponzi schemes in history. Among the believers is retired schoolteacher Lizelle Davids, who invests her and her church's life savings. Her daughter, Mikayla, an Anonymous ZA hacker, uncovers the truth and faces an impossible choice: protect her mother or expose the fraud. Her leak brings the MTI empire crashing down. Cheri and Clynton's relationship implodes as her sex addiction spirals into an affair with Clynton's bodyguard, and before they can

blame their scapegoat Johann, he disappears to Brazil. But the greatest injustice is reserved for MTI's ordinary investors who are pursued relentlessly by court-appointed liquidators determined to recover every last bitcoin at today's inflated prices. With the true crime POV of "Painkiller" and "Succession's" moral compass Smoke & Mirrors is a 6-part hour-long returning true crime series roller-coaster of a story about the dangerous power of belief in an age where illusion is more valuable than truth. When it all becomes uncovered that the whole thing is a scam, Johann disappears to Brazil and Cheri and Clynton are holding the bag, as are the rest of the MTI investors, forced to return their investments at today's 200% inflated bitcoin value.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

We've all been scammed. The feeling of broken trust is something that binds us. But when you lose as much money as MTI stole, you almost have to admire the audacity. *Smoke & Mirrors* is our ode to the East Rand boytjies who aimed for the moon, hit the stars and burnt out across the financial firmament.

Reel Previews  / 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Jozua Malherbe is a South African director and producer whose work spans Netflix, M-Net, BBC Studios, kykNET, ACORN and ITV. A sitting member of the DGSA executive committee, he has built a career telling culturally specific, unflinching South African stories on international platforms, including Devil's Peak for BBC Studios and M-Net, and The Invisible for ITV Studios. Smoke and Mirrors continues that throughline, a true-crime saga rooted in real characters with great (and very corrupt) personalities.

Luke Rous is an established South African producer who has made hundreds of hours of television and five feature films. Recently, Luke co-produced the Canada/South Africa Hallmark feature A Safari Romance and the Netflix feature Bruid Van Die Jaar as part of a multi-title output deal with Netflix. Inspired by challenges and drawn to complex, commercially accessible yet ambitious stories, Luke is excited to structure Smoke & Mirrors as an international co-production.

Zoë Laband is an award-winning South African screenwriter who has written over 20 South African limited series and storylined for five years on award-winning long-form series. In 2024, she won the C21 Content London Drama Pitch for her dark comedy detective series Blood Red Thread (GER; FRA). She has had three of her features produced to date and is driven to tell South African stories that resonate globally. She has a particular interest in adaptation and is thrilled to bring this local prestige true-crime series to life.

COMPANY DETAILS

Luke Rous Productions is home to a slate of prestige feature film and series projects. Luke has made 350 hours of prime-time scripted TV and five feature films over a 20-year career including *Lucky Fish* (DIFF '25, SAFF '26) and *Whatever It Takes* (SAFTA winner '22).

 [jozua_malherbe](https://www.instagram.com/jozua_malherbe)



Luke Rous
PRODUCER



Jozua Malherbe
DIRECTOR



Zoë Laband
WRITER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Series

Audience Age Range: PG 16

Country: South Africa, Brazil

Production Company: Luke Rous Productions
PTY LTD

Running Time: 6 episodes, 50 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 4 623 664 USD

Finances Committed: 23 529 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Introduce the project to market.
- Secure development funding.
- Secure anchor South African Broadcast partner.
- Meet co-producers and financiers for production phase.



THE BOY WHO SPOKE STATIC

Móke, a fifteen-year-old migrant from the DRC grieving the recent loss of his mother and younger brother back home, arrives at the gates of Nitel — a six-storey abandoned building in the heart of Lagos, now home to over five thousand. He is taken in by his uncle, Abel, the Nitel building electrician, and befriends a crew of youth in the building who traverse Lagos on rollerblades and teach him to navigate a city that never stops moving. As he begins to settle in, Móke learns of a locked room on Nitel's top floor, said to be haunted by eerie, static-laced voices that echo in the night. During a boisterous New Year's party, his new friends dare him in, and Móke enters. Inside, he discovers an old intercom still humming under a quarter-century of dust, and from it, two voices singing a song he remembers his mother singing when he was a child.

Móke can't help but wonder if the voices are those he has lost. As Nitel's adults grow anxious about rumours of evictions sweeping abandoned buildings across the city, Móke chases the voices. When the forbidden room is welded shut by a paranoid council, he finds them in another abandoned building on Lagos Island, where he uncovers an identical radio room connected to the same network. When he finally speaks to the voices, he learns they are not his lost family. Instead, the voices are from a mother and son living in another abandoned building — one of hundreds across Lagos — singing into the static the same lullaby his mother used to sing. The dead don't come back. But the network connecting Lagos's forgotten structures still lives — and when his community needs it most, Móke just tuned in.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

To enter the Nitel building on Lagos Island is to pass through a fold in time - into the echoes of a vacated past and the sounds of a re-imagined future. Nitel stands as one of hundreds of abandoned buildings across Lagos. *The Boy Who Spoke Static* dives into these corridors, revealing their secrets and the promise they may yet hold.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

The Agbajowo Collective is a filmmaking collective based in Lagos, Nigeria. The majority of its members come from informal settlements in Lagos. The Collective's storytelling builds on traditions of co-creation in order to reshape and expand narrative frameworks around urban poor realities in Africa's largest megacity.

Mathew Cerf is an award-winning producer, member of the Collective, and lead producer on the Collective's debut film, *The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos*, which premiered at TIFF 2024 and went on to win 14 international awards.

COMPANY DETAILS

Yaya Films (US) focuses on producing transformational narrative and documentary films for global audiences and is joined on this project by Raconteur Productions (NG), JEI-Nigeria (NG) and Die Gesellschaft (GER).

 [mat_cerf](#)

 [sams_documentaries](#)

 [milan_documentaries](#)

 [a_b_grace](#)

 [yaya_films](#)

 [ch10ma](#)



AGBAJOWO COLLECTIVE:
Temitope Ogungbamila, Samuel Okechukwu,
Mat Cerf (Lead Producer) and Bisola Akinmuyiwa

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 12+

Country: Nigeria

Production Company: Yaya Films

Running Time: 100 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 350 000 USD

Finances Committed: 40 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Production Financing.
- International Sales.
- Key Creative Attachments.

Company Profile 



THE COVEN

A year after her brother Sabelo is taken by the police and disappears, nursing student Nandi watches her family unravel. Desperate for answers, she helps a mysteriously injured woman, Mabel, during her practicals and protects her when the Apartheid police come looking. Mabel later recruits Nandi into the Coven, a secret group of women using traditional healing and spiritual gifts to aid the underground struggle against Apartheid. Nandi agrees on one condition: they help her find Sabelo. She goes undercover as a helper in the home of Jacob Mkhonza, the black police commander who ordered Sabelo's arrest, feeding the Coven information as she looks for clues about what happened to her brother. There she meets Jacob's charming son, Qiniso. Bonding over their difficult families, they fall into a forbidden romance. As Nandi's double life consumes her, she fails nursing school and clashes with her

family over her involvement with the Coven. Her mission collapses when Qiniso catches her spying and, devastated by her betrayal, turns her in. Jacob captures and tortures Nandi, offering information about Sabelo in exchange for the Coven's identities. She refuses. Qiniso, overcome with guilt, reveals Nandi's location to the Coven, but when they arrive to rescue her, she has already escaped and killed Jacob. With the police hunting her, Nandi must flee South Africa. Before leaving, she reconciles with Qiniso, who joins her across the border into Mozambique as they look to start a new life. At the Coven's safehouse, Nandi finally believes she is safe, until Sabelo walks through the door, alive. He claims he escaped Jacob but refuses to explain his disappearance. Something about him has changed, leaving Nandi with a terrifying question: has her brother been turned into a spy?

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

One of my earliest memories is playing cops and robbers using a rifle my grandmother had built in the 80s during her days as an anti-apartheid activist. The Coven was born from that memory and a desire to tell the story of women who sacrificed themselves in this struggle and the spiritual toll that took on them.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Mthembu is an award-winning filmmaker who has written for and storylined some of South Africa's top shows, including the historical epic Shaka iLembe, Emmy-nominated telenovela *The River*, and award-winning shows such as *Adulging*, *The Queen*, and *Gomora*, among many others. He has written over 600 episodes of scripted television. In 2016, he wrote and co-directed the sci-fi short film *What Comes Next*. In 2017, he directed the documentary *F Is for Father*, which received a Simon Sabela Award nomination for Best Short Documentary. In 2020, the Mail & Guardian named him one of the 200 Young South Africans shaping the future of the country. In 2023, Mthembu created and executive produced the SAFTA Award-winning sitcom *Roomies*, and head-wrote a 13-part dramedy, *Dichipi*. He is currently working on three new feature films: a horror, a road-trip comedy and a musical biopic.

COMPANY DETAILS

Auteur Studios is a boutique film, television and audio production company based in South Africa. It was founded with the vision of creating a production house that develops story-led content with an authentic South African signature.

 [auteurstudios.tv](https://www.auteurstudios.tv)



Sihle Mthembu
PRODUCER



Anne Mashiloane-Cele
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Series

Audience Age Range: 16-47

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Auteur Studios

Running Time: 8 episodes, 44 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 174 870 USD

Finances Committed: 15 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Securing co-producers, with a particular focus on France, Germany and Canada.
- Securing distribution.
- Securing financiers and full commissioning.

Company Profile 



UNDER GREEN SKIES

Set around New Year's. Mona, a housemaid in her mid-thirties, works in the Zamalek flat of the writer Yahya and his sister Hala. As a child, she came here with her mother Magda, who served the same family. Now she has returned, same place, same role. Every morning, she crosses the Nile from Imbaba, where she lives with her ailing mother in a crumbling building. She changes into simpler clothes in the servants' bathroom, puts her own back on before leaving. She knows the apartment better than anyone in it, and moves through it as though she isn't there. She carries a question she never asks, her smell, the distance between her and a life she doesn't own but breathes every day. Rumours of a green object drawing closer to Earth. Some call it a comet, others a planet. Some say it will end everything. On New Year's Eve,

Mona lays the table, decorates the tree with a broken green glass ball that has been there since she was a child. The flat fills with guests who have come for the meteor the news promised over Cairo. It never appears. The plates move between Mona's hands. After New Year's, Yahya and Hala move to their house by the sea, Mona with them. She meets Muzammil, a young Sudanese driver. On impulse, she lies. She pulls Hala's shawl over her shoulders, tells him she is here with her parents. They grow closer. But when the moment comes, it doesn't complete, and in Muzammil's body Mona faces the same question she has been carrying about her own. The lie doesn't hold. Mona rides back to Imbaba alone, in a microbus on the highway, among strangers lifting their faces to a sky something is crossing.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Class in this film is smelled before it is spoken, carried in the body, feared on the skin. I hold the camera close enough to share it. No deliverance from the sky. Mona returns to the same flat, the same dawn. I know that dawn. I lived it too, somewhere else. This is a film about what doesn't wash off.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Jad Chahine is a Cairo-based director and writer. He studied directing at the Higher Institute of Cinema and began his career with Yousry Nasrallah. His debut short, *The Call of the Brook*, was selected for La Cinef at Cannes. *Under Green Skies* is his first feature.

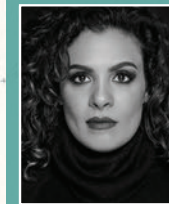
Yara Goubran is an Egyptian actress and producer. She began production with lighthouse films on projects including the Cannes premiered *18 days*. She was later the executive producer for acclaimed feature *19B*. In 2025, she founded April productions, currently producing *Under Green Skies*.

COMPANY DETAILS

Founded in 2025 by Yara Goubran, April Productions is a boutique company developing bold short and feature films. We nurture authentic, author-driven storytelling.

 [JadChahine / yaragoubranofficial](#)

 [jadchahine / yaragoubran](#)



Yara Goubran
PRODUCER



Jad Chahine
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 16+

Country: Egypt

Production Company: April Productions,
Co-production: Red
Star Films

Running Time: 120 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 649 000 USD

Finances Committed: 194 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Co-Production partners.
- Funds.
- Distributors and sales agents.
- Scriptwriting residencies.



VINO AMARGO (BITTER WINE)

Arantza Zabala is a passionate trade unionist living in the Basque Country (Spain). Considered a firebrand with strong political leanings, her solitary life is fuelled by anger at the status quo and heavy drinking. As a union negotiator during a strike, Arantza imposes her course of action against protocol, hurting the cause and leading to seriously injured protesters. Ostracised by her comrades, she finds refuge in wine. Her long-time friend Mel Hofmeyr, a married-into-money-turned-wine-farm owner from South Africa, visits her accompanied by her husband, Anton, and their assistant, Denver September, whom they treat as their servant. Arantza develops feelings for Denver. Due to her radical actions, Arantza is expelled from the union and returns to her lonely life, throwing herself into a spiral of depression and heavy drinking. She obsessively clings to pictures of cherished memories of the South Africans' visit and calls Mel, who

pities her and invites her to their vineyard in South Africa. The sun, the wine and Denver's tender company cheer Arantza up, until she realises how the Hofmeyrs exploit their workers. Her furious activist persona erupts, clashing with everybody at the wine farm. Arantza tries to impose her agenda and Denver accuses her of being an authoritarian leftist. Her interference exposes the workers' secret plan: Denver is an undercover activist collecting evidence of fraud about the Hofmeyrs with the intention of taking over the winery. Arantza and Denver are summoned to a workers' assembly, where Arantza realises that she needs to step aside. To recover the incriminating documents, Denver leads a deadly assault into the wine cellar. The workers subject the Hofmeyrs to a people's trial and manage to attain the winery, but the bitter victory's consequences haunt them.

Reel Previews

Password: DFM2026!

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Bitter Wine is the story of neo-slavery experienced by South African wine farm workers, revealed through Pablo's work with disenfranchised communities for over 16 years. The perspective and agency of the protagonists shift, motivated by their desire for justice and reparations. Our film explores racism, labour exploitation, contemporary post-apartheid society, white saviour complex, love and, of course, wine.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Pablo Pinedo Bóveda is an award-winning Basque director, screenwriter and producer with a global outlook. Pablo spent several years in Italy in pursuit of Neorealism, working on film sets and developing a cinematic sensibility that combines technical rigour, artistic vision and content with purpose.

David Franciscus is an award-winning creative producer and screenwriter, founder of Protagonist Studios. David produces films that explore characters struggling with identity before finding belonging. David is an alumnus of EAVE / Realness Creative Producer Indaba and the African Producer Accelerator.

COMPANY DETAILS

Protagonist Studios is focused on producing authentic, bold, character-driven films from Africa for global audiences. EveryWhere Films is based in the Basque Country and South Africa, driving diverse, intersectional international co-productions, combining social purpose with quality entertainment.

[pablopinedoboveda](#)

[davidfranciscus](#)

[protagoniststudios](#)



David Franciscus
PRODUCER

Pablo Pinedo Bóveda
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Audience Age Range: Young adults (20+)

Country: South Africa, Spain

Production Company: Protagonist Studios,
Everywhere Films

Running Time: 110 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 011 275 USD

Finances Committed: 624 981 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Our film is in advanced development. We are seeking soft funds, equity as well as strong distribution partners.

Company Profile



WASLAP

Thabo, a 26-year-old rising star in Johannesburg's advertising industry, is days away from a career-defining pitch when his estranged grandmother, Gogo Nosisa, passes away. He reluctantly returns to his rural Eastern Cape village for her funeral, planning to leave after the burial and resume the life he has built. His obsession with cleanliness and city-boy tendencies make him the joke of the village. He looks for a shower where there is only a bucket, armed with a loofah and shower cap, and fumbles through life in the lalis. His cousin Sbu roasts him, while childhood friend Fezeka makes no effort to hide her disappointment in the disconnected man he has become. Everything changes when Thabo goes to buy a waslap and encounters the eccentric Oom Goba outside the spaza shop, who gives him a cryptic message. That night, while washing with it, Thabo's hut is struck by lightning. He wakes with a gift:

with the waslap on him, eye contact triggers fragments of other people's memories. He blames grief and exhaustion. But the visions pull him into the secrets and wounds of the community he left behind. With Sbu and Fezeka, Thabo pieces together the mystery of Gogo's final days and uncovers BoerGro, a global agribusiness whose promises of sustainability conceal corruption, exploitation and the poisoning of the local water supply that led to her death. The deeper they dig, the closer the conspiracy comes to home, culminating in the discovery that his beloved Uncle Jabu was involved. With his Johannesburg career hanging in the balance, Thabo must choose between the identity he built to succeed and the person he left behind. What begins as an unwanted homecoming becomes a suspense-filled and comedic supernatural journey back to community, self and purpose.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Some of my happiest formative years were spent in the rural Eastern Cape. Leaving that world sparked a lifelong search for the warmth and belonging I felt there. *Waslap* grows from that. Through suspense, humour and magical realism, we explore how reconnecting with self, community and land can restore wholeness and imagine the healing, empowering possibilities of care.



Batandwa Alperstein
PRODUCER/
DIRECTOR

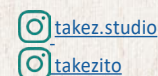
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Batandwa Alperstein is a South African filmmaker and entrepreneur with over a decade of experience across film, television, documentary, commercials and branded content. He is founder and creative director of TAKEZ Studio. His work includes *Gqom Nation* and *Yo! MTV Raps Africa* for MTV Base, *Nadia Naked* for Showmax, *Damian Marley's Stony Hill to Addis* for TIDAL, *NBA Life: Season 1* and the short film *I AM* for NBA, and campaigns for brands such as Woolworths and TRACE. *Waslap* is his debut feature film.

COMPANY DETAILS

TAKEZ is an independent South African film and content studio developing audience-centred stories and worlds that build connection, community and commercial value. RE-EST. 2025 | www.takez.studio

Company Profile 



PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Fiction Feature Length

Audience Age Range: Primary: 20–45,
Secondary: 45+,
Tertiary: 14–20

Country: South Africa

Production Company: TAKEZ Studio

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 600 000 USD

Finances Committed: 10 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Connect with development, co-production, finance and distribution partners to make *Waslap* locally relevant and globally competitive.

2026 TALENTS DURBAN

The Durban FilmMart Institute, in partnership with Berlinale Talents, presents the 19th edition of Talents Durban, continuing its commitment to nurturing the next generation of African filmmakers, storytellers and film critics. The programme provides an intensive space for emerging talent to develop their craft, strengthen their projects and build meaningful connections across the African and international film industry.

For the 2026 edition, **25 projects and 6 film critics** representing 17 countries across the continent have been selected through a highly competitive adjudication process. The cohort brings together a diverse range of voices and disciplines, with the final selection including **3 animations, 6 documentaries, 6 feature fiction films, 6 short films, 4 fiction series, and 6 film critics.** The 2026 programme also welcomes **2 Talents Durban alumni** as part of the peer-to-peer Press Programme, strengthening the exchange of knowledge and experience across generations of African film talent.

Over 10 weeks, selected participants engage in mentorship, skills development and project-focused sessions designed to move their work forward. Talents Durban is structured into four distinct categories:

Storytelling Lab: Script development and mentoring for features, shorts and series.
Doc Lab: Practical guidance for documentary filmmakers.
Animation Lab: Tailored mentorship for animators, focusing on African visual narratives.
Talent Press: Critical writing training for up-and-coming African film journalists.

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TALENT PRESS ALUMNI



DOMOINA RATSARA

Domoina Ratsara is a cultural journalist and film critic based in Antananarivo, Madagascar. A member of FIPRESCI and president of the Association of Malagasy Film Critics (ACCM), she champions the development of film criticism as a cornerstone of the African film industry's growth. An alumna of the Talent Press programs (Talents Durban and Berlinale Talents), she is dedicated to mentoring Africa's emerging critics.

COUNTRY: Madagascar



ELIJAH OLUWANISOLA

Elijah Oluwanisola is a Nigerian writer and film critic whose work examines the social, political, and artistic forces that shape Nigerian and African cinema and how these find expression through film form. He is a contributing writer at *What Kept Me Up*, where he writes about Nigerian and African cinema. He is currently developing A Spot and the 7th Art, a microcinema initiative aimed at expanding access to film and cultivating a more critically engaged audience in Nigeria. His broader interests span independent cinema, global arthouse traditions, and the evolving relationship between cinema, culture, and criticism.

COUNTRY: Nigeria



HAROUNA NEYA

Harouna Ney is a cultural journalist, filmmaker, and specialist in communication for cultural organisations and new media. A writer for RFI's Mondoblog, he collaborates with several festivals and cultural organisations.

COUNTRY: Burkina Faso



MICHELLE ABUTI

Michelle Abuti is a media entrepreneur on a mission to expand visibility and access to African cinema. Her technical background in theatre and experience on film sets contribute a practitioner's point of view to the business of film. Through her platform, Singano, she offers a curated streaming guide aimed at improving discoverability of African cinema. She is also an emerging film distributor who connects African independent filmmakers to new audiences.

COUNTRY: Kenya

HLUMELA LUVUNO

Hlumela Luvuno is an emerging film professional and a film lecturer specialising in film producing, costume, makeup and styling, based in Durban. She enjoys telling stories as well as using visual elements to bring characters and stories to life from script to screen. She considers herself a multifaceted writer, since her written work has been published by *Modern Times Review* (2026). She has also participated as a film reviewer for the Durban International Film Festival, where she engaged with different African and international films. She is a film fanatic who is passionate about growing in her career, and she is all about creating meaningful stories that connect with audiences.

COUNTRY: South Africa



TALENT PRESS ALUMNI

WILFRED OKICHE

Wilfred Okiche is a Rotten Tomatoes certified culture critic and film programmer. He has served on the selection committee of Berlinale Talents and his writing has appeared in *Variety*, *Al Jazeera*, *The Guardian*, *The Continent*, and *Senses of Cinema* among other publications. He is a member of FIPRESCI, the Critics Choice Association (CCA), and has served as an international voter for the Golden Globes. He has participated in juries at the Berlinale and the Carthage film festival. He earned a Master's degree in cinema and media studies at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts.

COUNTRY: Nigeria



ALEXANDRIA FOREVER

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animation

Country: Egypt

Language: Arabic, English

Running Time: 90 minutes

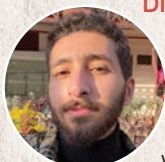
Socials:  @kirollos_george

After the inevitable sinking of the city of Alexandria, a little girl dives into the mind of her long-gone grandmother to rebuild the city from her memory in order to stop a large corporation from displacing her people, who live in the ruins of the old city. But in the memory, she will need to live her grandmother's life, from birth to death, to untangle the city in her mind. The film is an exploration of architecture and space as narrative devices, and of the city as a living, breathing organism that can be studied and analysed.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

The city of Alexandria is cursed with a perpetual cycle of life and death. Each time it is destroyed, it comes back anew. Alexandria Forever is a speculative future in which the city dies, and it can only be brought back by the will of women who love each other and by indulgence in the dangerous territory of memory.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE



KIROLOS GEORGE

Kirolos George is an animation filmmaker, architect, and visual artist who has worked on several animated projects. He blends historical and cultural research, technological innovation, and emotional storytelling, finding the meeting point between architecture and animation by bringing the cities we inhabit to life through animation.

ALL YOU SHEEP

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animation

Country: Zimbabwe

Language: English

Running Time: 10 minutes

Socials:  @fungai_jack

All You Sheep follows Paul, a desperate man who finds himself in a mind-bending loop of memory loss as he tries to hold on to who he is before he forgets himself.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

Paul is stuck in a memory erasure loop, and he finds himself trying to piece together his identity. Memory and Identity are the two tangled themes that drive this story, but for this film I want to push that idea and theme to ask how much of our memories shape our Identity and how we define our Identity as well as look at how the world around us shapes us.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

2D Animator and Storyboard Artist with experience in character animation and visual storytelling. Passionate about crafting emotionally resonant stories through expressive animation. JACK MACHIRIDZA I have always loved wacky sci-fi, and growing up, I was always fascinated by the potential of hard sci-fi through an African lens.



JACK MACHIRIDZA

AMANDLA

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Animation

Country: South Africa

Language: English, Zulu

Running Time: 5 minutes

Socials:  @rainmedallion

Amandla is an animated short film inspired by African mythology and folklore. When a hunting party searches for a legendary leopard said to be the guardian of a hidden paradise, a young girl unexpectedly becomes involved. Driven by grief, the men are determined to end the leopard's reign and locate paradise, unaware that Amandla is the key to finding both. Amandla explores self-actualisation in the midst of opposing perceptions.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER

When it comes to mythology, Western and Eastern folklore and creatures have become far more recognisable in mainstream media than the rich tales found across Africa. I've been curious to explore what kind of stories we would tell if folktales were set in our current reality. Amandla is a short film that serves as an introduction to a much larger narrative exploring that idea, reimagining African mythology in a contemporary setting.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER

Pule is a 2D/3D artist and animator with a passion for storytelling. He is laying the foundation for Rain Medallion, his newly founded studio dedicated to bringing original stories that celebrate African imagination and culture to life through animation.



PULE MOHOTSI

ABETI

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary

Country: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Language: French

Running Time: 75 minutes

Socials:  @juniormozese

Abeti follows a 44-year-old woman living in Kinshasa's informal settlement of Mpakadjuma, where she has remained for 17 years after leaving her village in search of opportunity. Supporting herself through a women's savings group and small businesses, she struggles to fulfil promises made to the family she left behind. When her niece follows the same path to the city and Mpakadjuma is demolished, *Abeti* confronts the devastating cost of migration, forced to choose between returning home with little to show or remaining trapped in an increasingly fragile existence.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Born and raised in Kinshasa, I create intimate films exploring broader social realities. *Abeti* follows a woman whose long-delayed return home reveals how economic migration reshapes family, responsibility, and belonging across generations. Through her story, the film questions sacrifice, absence, and what it truly means to leave, stay, or return.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Junior Mozese is a Congolese writer-director from Kinshasa. Trained under Tshopor Kabambi, he has worked across fiction and documentary, collaborating with Dieudo Hamadi and Moimi Wezam. His acclaimed films include *Kin ma belle* and *Ici ou là-bas*, with selections and awards at major international programmes and festivals.



JUNIOR MOZESE

FITAMPOHA, THE RETURN OF THE KING OF MENABE

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary

Country: Madagascar

Language: Malagasy, French (with subtitles in English, French)

Running Time: 90 minutes

Socials:  /Anatole Ramaroson

In 2024, an ancestral ceremony in Madagascar calls for the return of King Toera's skull, taken to France after his execution in 1897. His descendant, Joe Kamamy Razafindravelo, embarks on a journey from royal lands to Parisian archives, uncovering colonial history and confronting fierce disputes over the king's rightful return. Blending ritual, history, and contemporary politics, the film follows a powerful quest for restitution, asking whether reclaiming ancestral remains can heal generations of colonial trauma and restore dignity before the sacred Fitampoha ceremony of 2026.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

For years, I have explored stories where memory endures. *The Return of King Toera's Skull* examines the intersection of colonial history, spirituality, and restitution through a deeply personal Malagasy perspective. Blending observation, ritual, and testimony, the film asks universal questions about memory, justice, and whether returning ancestral remains can help heal historical wounds.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Ramaroson Anatole is a Malagasy filmmaker, producer, and cultural entrepreneur. Founder of AyeAye Films Dev and president of the Association of Malagasy Filmmakers-ASA SARY, he dedicates his projects to creative documentary filmmaking, cultural heritage, and the art of Malagasy storytelling, connecting local voices with international audiences through film, social and cultural initiatives.



RAMAROSON
RAZAFIMBELO
ANATOLE

GOODBYE PARTY

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary

Country: Tunisia

Language: French, Arabic

Running Time: 75 minutes

Socials:  @sarraea

Seen through the perspective of the child I was at seven years old, my immigration to Montreal becomes the ground for a confrontation between childhood and the adult world. September 11 shatters my sense of stability and teaches me, too early, what it means to become "the other". The film extends into the present day, confronting the ways in which the same mechanisms of violence and assimilation continue to shape the lives of children who migrate today.

SCREENWRITER + PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

Goodbye Party explores migration through the eyes of a child navigating identity, belonging, and family across Tunisia and Canada. Drawing on personal experience, the film blends memory, archives, and observation to reveal the emotional legacy of departure, asking whether home is a place we return to or something we gradually rebuild.

SCREENWRITER + PRODUCER'S PROFILE

Sarra El Abed is a Tunisian filmmaker based between Montreal and Mexico City. Her work explores migration, memory, and belonging through hybrid documentary and fiction. Her films have screened internationally, including at Clermont-Ferrand, DOK Leipzig, and Slamdance. She is currently developing two fiction features and her first documentary feature, *Goodbye Party*, supported by international development programmes and film industry partners.



AHMED SHAMS
NAGM ELDIN

RIVERS: UNDER THREAT

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary

Country: South Africa

Language: English (with subtitles for South African languages)

Running Time: 75 minutes

Our rivers are our arteries, pumping needed lifeblood throughout the planet: water. Without water, there will be no life on Earth. Healthy rivers mean healthy people and a healthy environment. The rivers that flow through our towns, cities, and villages are being rapidly decimated. Rivers are under threat from pollution caused by sewage, industrial, mining, agricultural and chemical pollutants, as well as domestic and construction waste. The film will target some of South Africa's most polluted rivers, highlighting their critical state, the relentless efforts of local communities to protect them, and inspiring the preservation of our precious watercourses.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER + PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

As a parent, I am deeply concerned about the future of our children on the planet. We are facing several crises, namely a water crisis, a food crisis, an energy crisis, and a climate change crisis. If we do not mitigate and start radically altering what we do to the planet, we will collapse into wars over food and water. This film about rivers is part of a package of environmental film proposals that I've written about water. A film dedicated to social and environmental change that is solutions-driven and will be used as a tool for advocacy on water issues. Success for me is making an impact with the film, affecting minds through the lens, leading to action and change for the good of humanity and the planet.



MICHELLE
SIMON

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER + PRODUCER'S PROFILE

Michelle Simon is a filmmaker and environmental scientist who has worked on the delivery of human rights, shelter, and basic service needs, namely water and sanitation, while also protecting rivers, wetlands, and groundwater, having designed projects on food security, rainwater harvesting, recycling, and energy efficiency.

SABARY

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary (Hybrid)

Country: Sudan

Language: Arabic

Running Time: 90 minutes

Socials:  /Ahmed Shams Eldin

Oshaik, a youngster from the eastern hills of the Red Sea Mountains, embarks on a risky and magical road trip with Daoud, a retired wrestler from the Nuba Mountains of the west who once fled his legacy. Oshaik accompanies Daoud, his wrestling mentor, seeking the Nuba's ancestor's permission to initiate him as a warrior from outside the tribe. A heroic road trip set against the backdrop of real-time civil war, displacement, revolution, and ethnic wars in Sudan. In this journey of self-examination, the two men develop a challenging relationship beyond mentorship, age, and tribal tension.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

Sabary explores masculinity and manhood through the contrasting rites of passage of two Sudanese tribes, the Beja and the Nuba. Through magical realism and local mythology, the film excavates the psychological tensions Sudanese men carry silently, asking what it means to be a man in a country where masculinity has long been weaponised for war.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

Ahmed is a Sudanese filmmaker working at the intersection of documentary and narrative fiction. His work draws on mythology, tribal heritage, and cultural identity, exploring the human condition through a distinctly spiritual and psychological lens.



AHMED SHAMS
NAGM ELDIN

THE BIRTH OF DERNA

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary

Country: Libya

Language: Arabic

Running Time: 80 minutes

Socials:  @hussdebb



HUSSEIN EDEB

In September 2023, catastrophic floods swept through the Libyan city of Derna, killing thousands and leaving thousands missing overnight. Survivors gave testimony to a night many called a “small Judgment Day”, raw accounts of unimaginable loss. At the film’s centre is Noweiji, a freediver and botany professor bound to the sea and to Derna through years of diving with his closest friend, Hussein, who vanished when the dams collapsed. Through archives and search-and-recovery footage, we follow Noweiji searching the sea for those still missing. The story builds to a quiet reckoning: Noweiji’s youngest son, also named Hussein, steps into the sea for the first time.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER’S STATEMENT

When the dams broke in Derna, I was in Berlin. I went not as a journalist, but as a Libyan seeking truth beyond the headlines. What I witnessed surpassed anything I’d lived through before. I began as a stranger, listening. Naming this film *The Birth of Derna* became an act of belief in renewal. Through Noweiji, I found a story of grief, resilience, and quiet hope for a divided nation.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER’S PROFILE

Hussein Eddeb is a Libyan filmmaker, producer, and journalist with a Master’s in Media and Communication Management. Selected for IDFAcademy, INTRO:DOX Copenhagen, and EURODOC MED, he co-founded the Bayt Ali Gana Libyan Film Festival and champions Libya’s independent film scene through training and cultural initiatives.

BAREFEET

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction

Country: Ghana

Language: English, Twi, Ga, Pidgin

Running Time: 110 minutes

Socials:  @aphua_larbi / @filmbybravado

Logline - Two inseparable teenage boys leave their sleepy coastal town for the fast-paced streets of Accra, the capital of Ghana, chasing dreams of football stardom. They buck against the sporting system while their friendship, morals and resilience are tested.

SCREENWRITER + PRODUCER’S STATEMENT

BareFeet is a love letter to Ghanaian football and footballers. In writing the story, I wanted to explore what it means to have a dream that feels impossible to attain. The two characters in the story, Dankwa and Munir, became representations of the various boys I met who needed to become football stars, no matter the cost or sacrifice.

SCREENWRITER + PRODUCER’S PROFILE



LAWRENCIA APHUA LARBI-AMOAH

Lawrencia Aphua Larbi-Amoah

is a Ghanaian writer and producer. As the co-founder of Bravado, she is passionate about stories that explore identity, duality, loss, and the Ghanaian condition.

DOGI DOGI

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction

Country: Tanzania

Language: Swahili

Running Time: 90 minutes

Socials:  @kelvin_kagambo

Set in the slums of Dar es Salaam, *Dogi Dogi* follows Dachi, a 15-year-old boy who can talk to dogs. When his mother is arrested by a corrupt officer demanding a bribe within 48 hours, Dachi must choose between staying the “good boy” his mother wants him to be or returning to his past life of dog theft to raise the bribe needed to free her. As the clock runs out, *Dogi Dogi* asks: Can you stay clean in a dirty world?

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER’S STATEMENT

Growing up in the slums, I watched brilliant, gifted friends become small-time thieves and addicts. Dachi’s ability to talk to dogs is a metaphor for that wasted potential. With *Dogi Dogi*, I want to explore how limited choices reshape morality and imagine what these children might have become if given the chance.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER’S PROFILE

Kelvin Kagambo is a Tanzanian

filmmaker. His work explores the emotional complexity of family relationships through high-concept storytelling. He has written for African animated series like *Akili* and *Me* and is the writer-director of short films, including *Embe Dodo* (2026).



KELVIN KAGAMBO

THE THINGS WE LEAVE BEHIND

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction**Country:** Nigeria**Language:** English**Running Time:** 100 minutes**Socials:**  @russelloru

Haunted by the racially motivated murder of the lover she lost abroad, Tomiwa has a chance encounter with Ebinipere, a Nigerian doctor whose flight to the United Kingdom is delayed on the eve of his emigration. Their meeting leads them on a surreal 24-hour odyssey through a Lagos that feels both alive and dying, where Tomiwa sees echoes of the man she lost in Ebi, and he must decide whether the promise of another country is worth the life he may never return to.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

I grew up in a country that asks its young people to either leave or lose hope. That became this film's backdrop. Set in Lagos over a single day, moving between France and the United States, it follows two people living with the consequences of opposite choices, and what it means to mourn people who are still alive.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

Russell Oru is a Nigerian filmmaker whose work examines inequality, identity, displacement, and environmental issues across contemporary

Africa. An AFRIFF Globe Award winner, his credits include Showmax, and his short films have screened at over 30 festivals worldwide.



RUSSELL ORU

THE BASEMENT

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction**Country:** The Democratic Republic of Congo**Language:** Swahili**Running Time:** 100 minutes**Socials:**  @melanie_k_zawadi

For years, the mining village of Bimbo has been slowly emptying, eroded by poverty, armed conflict and neglect. Furaha, a 28-year-old schoolteacher, continues to hold onto hope for her students and her family despite everything. But when a former mining operator turned rebel leader violently attacks the village and abducts dozens of inhabitants, everyday life is plunged into horror. As her brother Baruti is among the captives, Furaha hides several survivors and children in an old basement beneath her family home. Refusing to wait for state intervention, she decides to infiltrate the rebel camp alone to save the hostages before they are executed. In the heart of a war-torn forest, Furaha leads a group of adolescents who have been exposed to violence too early in life, in a silent struggle for survival, memory and the dignity of an entire village.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

Today, eastern DRC suffers from repetitive conflicts, with the reality of its population often forgotten. My film asks an essential question: does the end of war truly free the people? Gun violence is replaced by legal mining exploitation. The oppressor changes uniform, but the misery remains. I want to film this truth to break this cycle of silence and honour civilian resistance.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

A Congolese filmmaker based in DRC who constantly seeks new learning opportunities. Raised in conflict zones, she creates committed films inspired by her background to give a powerful voice to ordinary heroes and silent civilian resistance.



MÉLANIE K. ZAWADI

THE VIOLENT TYPE

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction**Country:** South Africa**Language:** English, Afrikaans, Xhosa**Running Time:** 90 minutes**Socials:**  @meekaaeel

When home invasions grip a white suburb in 1990s South Africa, an outsider detective links the crimes to a security company, but his key witness is its top saleswoman, who is hiding a murder of her own.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

The Violent Type is a neo-noir crime thriller set during South Africa's democratic transition, exploring how prejudice evolves rather than disappears. Through an evolving police force, the film examines race, morality, gender-based violence, and the blurred line between justice and complicity. Influenced by *Nocturnal Animals*, *Nightcrawler*, and *Sicario*, it combines psychological tension with grounded realism to challenge assumptions about identity and criminality. Drawing on my own experiences of race and class, the film asks whether our fears and biases have become more powerful than truth, leaving audiences questioning the stories they instinctively believe.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

Described by *Variety* as "one of South Africa's most daring new voices", **Meekaaeel** is an award-winning director and cinematographer. His debut feature *The Trek* won Fantasporto's Jury Award, while his work has screened globally and appeared on Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Showmax.



MEEKAAEEL ADAM

THE WORDS I DO NOT HAVE

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Feature Fiction**Country:** Kenya**Language:** English, Swahili, Luo**Running Time:** 90 minutes**Socials:**  @shandydaisy

The Words I Do Not Have follows Liz and her university friends as they navigate love, friendship, ambition, and survival in contemporary Kenya. Beneath the humour of campus life, the film confronts colourism, objectification, reproductive rights, and the male gaze. As one friend undergoes a secret abortion, their bond becomes a source of resilience and care. Tender and emotionally honest, this coming-of-age story explores how young African women reclaim their identities in a world determined to define them before they can define themselves.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER + PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

The Words I Do Not Have is my exploration of young African women navigating identity, colourism, desire, friendship, and belonging. Through an intimate, realistic approach, I examine how beauty, objectification, and expectations shape self-worth while celebrating humour, resilience, and tenderness. Ultimately, I want the film to honour young women in all their complexity.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER + PRODUCER'S PROFILE

Shandra Daisy Apondi is a Kenyan filmmaker, producer, director, actress, and founder of Out of My Mind Films. An award-winning storyteller, her acclaimed films include *Love or Tragedy*, *Paaswaad (Password)*, and *Owadwa (Our Brother)*, with recognition at major African and international film festivals.



SHANDRA APONDI

BORROWED SKIN

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Series

Country: Botswana

Language: English, Setswana

Running Time: 10 Episodes, 45 minutes each

Socials:  @ruuudo_

Lerang Mosiame, a trainee forensic pathologist, haunted by her sister's mysterious death, returns to her childhood town to finish her internship but secretly to uncover the truth behind her death. After tearing off a sacred thread worn since childhood, she unknowingly awakens an ancestral gift: the power to borrow the skins of the dead and relive their final moments. Using this gift, Lerang discovers seemingly unrelated deaths begin tying to a ruthless land-grabbing syndicate enforced by her revered station commander, putting her on a deadly collision course with a man willing to kill to keep the truth buried.

SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

I'm telling this story because I've always loved supernatural stories and, most importantly, stories about heroes. As a Motswana woman, creating my own hero, rooted in my culture and reality, is what makes Lerang special to me. She fights for the voiceless while confronting grief and injustice, something I feel we haven't seen enough of.

SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

Rudo Furusa a Botswana-based writer and actress, trained at AWIL College (formerly AFDA Botswana). An alumna of Botswana Ignite's Scripted Television Academy and StoryLab, she served as a 3rd AD trainee on the BAFTA-nominated African adaptation, *Liar*. Her work explores character-driven narratives.



RUDO FURUSA

CAUSE, EFFECT & MAYBE CONSEQUENCES?

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Series

Country: Nigeria

Language: English

Running Time: 45 minutes

Socials:  @cheyi_okoaye

A Lagos genius builds a time machine to prove himself to a father who never made his love legible. His father dies before it is finished. Months later, he activates it anyway, hoping to reach the past. Instead, it pulls his past and future selves into his present, and three versions of the same man, one younger, one older, and one exactly as he is now, must share a single apartment. Lagos barely notices, a city that absorbs the impossible and moves on, mining deadpan comedy from three men fighting for control of one identity.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

Through sci-fi surrealism, this rigorous character study exposes the ultimate absurdity of human self-reflection. When a man's past and future selves converge in Lagos, his life collapses into a loop of behavioural damage control. Rejecting clean answers, the series leans into the unresolved, proving that when you know your own moves, your greatest obstacle is always yourself.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

Cheyi Okeaye is a Lagos-based writer, director, and founder of *A Dank House*. A former data analyst, he subverts genre conventions with clinical precision. His NEFTi-winning film *Don't Think About It Too Much* screened at AFRIFF, Berlinale, and Durban FilmMart.



CHEYI OKOAYE

SLIGHTLY AWKWARD

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Series

Country: South Africa

Language: English, Setswana

Running Time: 6 episodes, 30 minutes each

Socials:  @des_imitates_art

After quitting his toxic job, Keneilwe (Kenny) falls into a world that's messier. His new business partner, Alu, is a charismatic wrecking ball. Nathi, the man Kenny's been casually seeing, wants something real. When chasing a crucial deal, Kenny commits creative theft. As the cracks start to form, he tries harder to keep his lie going. By the end, he is exposed, unemployed, and alone, forced to finally face himself.

SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

I wrote *Slightly Awkward* after discovering a restlessness in many 'settled' adults who felt lost, having followed the checklist of life but still wondering, 'Is this all there is?' Kenny is where his younger self dreamt of being, and all he found was emptiness. *Slightly Awkward* sits between humour and heartbreak. It's honest, funny, and painful, just like real life.

SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

Des Dlamini is a filmmaker working across narrative filmmaking and strategic video production who is passionate about character-driven stories. He directed the award-winning short *Indalo* and produced *Perception*, which received a DIFF 2026 premiere.



DES DLAMINI

THE ELEVENTH YEAR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Series

Country: Mali

Language: English, French

Running Time: 8 episodes, 45 minutes each

Socials:  /hawa.sogoba.7

In 1902, Charles Duroy, a rational colonial inspector haunted by the death of his son, travels to Africa to investigate a series of mysterious murders. Expecting to find a human killer, he instead uncovers a curse created after the unjust execution of Mory, a young boy with spiritual powers. With the help of Yaro, Charles tries to save Kounandi, an eleven-year-old girl condemned by the curse. To stop the cycle of revenge, he must confront the colonial past, face the supernatural, and find his own path to redemption.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

The Eleventh Year explores how colonial violence and collective silence can haunt generations. Blending historical realism, African spirituality, and supernatural horror, the series uses the curse as a metaphor for unresolved trauma. Rooted in West African culture yet universal in scope, it examines memory, guilt, truth, and the possibility of reconciliation through immersive, atmospheric storytelling.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

Hawa Sogoba is a Malian filmmaker and screenwriter whose award-winning work has been showcased at international festivals. Committed to promoting African cinema, she creates stories rooted in African realities, blending cultural identity, social issues, and a vision that inspires future generations.



HAWA SOGOBA

AWAKE

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Film

Country: Ghana

Language: English, Twi

Running Time: 16 minutes

Socials:  @abynakoblyn

Logline - When the memories of Abena, a woman murdered by her husband in 1995, awaken inside Adobea, she begins reliving Abena's brutal final moments and must confront the abuse in her own marriage or risk suffering the same fate.

Haunted by violent visions that blur the line between madness and memory, a troubled woman discovers she carries the reincarnated soul of a murdered wife and must embrace her borrowed past to fulfil its call for vengeance.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

Awake grew from witnessing someone I love carry trauma for so long that their pain began to feel like my own. This became the premise of the film: How can someone's pain feel so real when it didn't happen to you? Through a supernatural thriller, I explore inherited trauma, emotional abuse, and the cycles of violence women endure across generations. I hope *Awake* reminds us that not every scar appears on the skin.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

Sarah Abena Adjei, professionally known as Abyna Koblyn, is a Ghanaian director, writer, and actress. Her work explores identity, trauma, resilience, and contemporary African life. She also founded Africa Women in Films (AWIF), championing female voices and bold, culturally authentic storytelling.



SARAH ABENA ADJEI

FACING THE SUN

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Film

Country: Egypt

Language: Arabic

Running Time: 15 minutes

Socials:  @ghazzoulah

After reporting the man who assaulted her, eighteen-year-old Toqa seeks justice but is met with silence and isolation. Slowly, nowhere feels safe, memory begins to blur into reality, and the world she knew starts to feel like someone else's. Toqa struggles to recognise herself, pulled into a reckoning with the body she no longer recognises as her own.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was never interested in recreating an act of violence. What stayed with me was what followed: the silence. The altered relationship to one's body, and the quiet collapse of once-unquestionable beliefs. This film follows Toqa as she comes to understand her body has always carried meanings she never chose. I turned to psychological horror because it makes an inner experience visible without explanation, familiar spaces lose their certainty, everyday gestures begin to betray her. The horror lies not in what is seen, but in what can no longer be trusted.

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE

Ghazzal Abdullah is a Cairo-based visual artist, filmmaker, and cultural practitioner. A graduate of the Faculty of Applied Arts, she shaped her cinematic voice through intensive workshops. Her debut documentary, *As I Open My Eyes*, screened at international festivals including Ismailia International Film Festival and Winterthur Kurzfilmtage.



GHAZZAL ABDULLAH

NIGHTBIRDS

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Film

Country: Lesotho

Language: English, Bemba

Running Time: 14 minutes

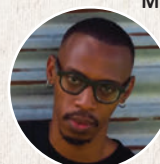
Socials:  @mososematlane

Far from Zambia, his homeland, Tim, a lonely male escort, roams the streets of Johannesburg, satisfying his male clients' sexual fantasies, until an encounter with an underage client turns his life upside down when it becomes public knowledge. Told through a poetic letter to his home, the film follows Tim as he satisfies the strange sexual desires of men in Johannesburg's nightlife, a city humming with tensions against 'undocumented migrants', where apartments and living rooms hold the stories of queer men who long to be touched by another, even if that touch comes from a stranger.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

When I was living in Johannesburg, I came across a 'migrant' male escort who served a clientele of primarily queer men. This sparked the idea for *Nightbirds*. Through it, I want to explore the loneliness that afflicts particularly queer men, the basic human need for connection, and the obstacles that arise in its search.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE



MOSO SEMATLANE

Moso Sematlane is a writer and filmmaker whose work explores the fractures that occur at the intersection of different localities and identities. His work has been showcased at various film festivals.

ONLY WE REMAIN

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Film

Country: South Africa

Language: English, Xhosa

Running Time: 30 minutes

Socials:  @xola_limba

After the sudden death of her mother, Nandipha, twelve-year-old Ayanda withdraws into a virtual world where her mother still lives, still laughs, and still teaches her to swim. As her father, Luvuyo, tries to rebuild their home through routine and discipline, the distance between them only widens until grief forces a reckoning. *Only We Remain* follows a daughter learning that the deepest way to hold on to someone is not to preserve them exactly as they were, but to carry forward what they gave her.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

Only We Remain grew from my own inheritance: what my grandmother and mother gave me long before I understood it as a gift: stories, music, confidence, and imagination. Neither remains as she once was, yet both continue to shape how I see the world. The film asks how we continue the people who shape us, not by holding them exactly as they were, but by letting what they gave us keep changing who we become.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

Xola is a South African writer-director centering the experiences of young Black women through memory, grief, and belonging. Her work has earned the Rising Star Award at Basha Uhuru and the First Place CILECT Prize (CARA Best Film). As a Writers' Guild of South Africa Traineeship alumna, she creates stories that empower and add to the archive of Black women's narratives.



XOLA LIMBA

RUKIA

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Film

Country: Uganda

Language: Luganda, Rukiga, English

Running Time: 15 minutes

Socials:  @daisymasembe

The idea of an unmarried girl being pregnant in Nimoru is taboo! And yet 16-year-old Rukia is in this predicament. In their patriarchal village, girls who conceive out of wedlock must face death lest they give birth to a curse. Determined to protect her, Rukia's outlandish parents hide her indoors. Their efforts are threatened when the chief orders a head-out to weed out "impure" girls. As Rukia's pregnancy is impossible to conceal, her parents devise a desperate plan to smuggle her to the city under cover of night. However, their plan is thwarted, and Rukia's life hangs in the balance.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S STATEMENT

Inspired by the Bakiga practice of killing girls who became pregnant outside marriage, I wanted to explore the impossible choices parents face when love conflicts with tradition. Through *Rukia*, I hope to reveal how attitudes that devalue women persist today, encouraging audiences to question inherited beliefs, confront injustice, and recognize that no culture should come at the expense of dignity, compassion, and our shared humanity.

DIRECTOR + SCREENWRITER'S PROFILE

Daisy Maseembe is a Ugandan filmmaker based in Kampala whose work explores women's rights, culture, faith, and identity. Her films have screened at major African festivals and earned awards, including Best Short Film at the Uganda Film Festival. She is an alumna of MultiChoice Talent Factory, DW Akademie, and the New York Film Academy.



DAISY MASEMBE

SECOND BLOOM

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Short Film

Country: Zimbabwe

Language: Shona, Swahili

Running Time: 25 minutes

Socials:  @tendaishe_chitima

Second Bloom uses speculative African cinema and traditional motifs to explore what happens when familial trauma from the past survives inside the body. There is a struggle to overcome or live with the trauma, without letting it define who we are. Set in a devastated future, it follows Miriro, a genetically engineered Shona woman whose body carries adaptive traits linked to her parents' Nzou and Soko totems. Through performance capture and African cultural symbolism, the film treats the body as a site of change.

Miriro, a genetically engineered woman created to save a dying world, has spent years hiding in an underground laboratory, paralysed by trauma inherited from her

mutated parents. When the Second Bloom forces the lab to shut down, she must finally begin the mission she was born for. After refusing to use the animal transformations encoded in her DNA, Miriro now must confront her fears of mutating, or die.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Second Bloom grows from my exploration of memory, familial bonds and inherited trauma. Through Miriro's journey, the film reflects on how Africa's painful histories, though past, continue to shape our psyche, beliefs and behaviours. It asks what it means to confront inherited pain, release the stories that limit us, and become who we were always meant to be.

DIRECTOR PROFILE

Tendaishe Chitima is an award-winning Zimbabwean actress, creative economy practitioner, and cultural entrepreneur. She is interested in stories that explore migration, African history, culture or trauma through futuristic and speculative storytelling.



TENDAIISHE CHITIMA

2026 MENTORS

All Durban FilmMart Institute projects are supported through dedicated one-on-one mentorship with experienced industry professionals. This year, DFMI welcomes a distinguished cohort of returning and new mentors, bringing together a wealth of experience, diverse perspectives and fresh industry insights. Through focused conversations and constructive feedback, mentors work closely with filmmakers to interrogate and strengthen their projects at key stages of development. This exchange is an important part of the DFMI experience, giving creators the space to sharpen their ideas, deepen their storytelling and move their projects to realisation.



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 the Dubai International Film Festival (2014); and she also co-produced *The Man with the Harpoon* (2015). In 2022, Bouzid co-founded Daarna Productions, which epitomised her dedication to cinematic excellence. She is currently a jury member of the Film Selection Commission of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (FWB) and a reader for the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).



AMEL BOUZID



BRIDGET PICKERING

Bridget Pickering began her career at Universal Pictures in New York City, where she worked as a Casting Assistant and Associate on acclaimed feature films including *Glengarry Glen Ross* and *The Last of the Mohicans*. Following Namibia's independence, she returned to produce social and political films, exploring topics such as maternal mortality and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Among these was *Dreams of a Good Life*, which was screened on Arte France. She has since built an extensive career in television, producing more than eleven scripted series, including *U Gugu no Andile*, *Emoyeni*, and *End Game*, which have been broadcast on SABC, Netflix, and Canal+. In 2025, she completed the feature film *Mrs Plum*, which is currently being submitted to international film festivals. Bridget is in post-production on the feature film *Apetown* and the feature-length documentary *Forgotten Beauty*.



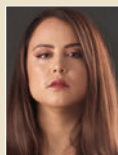
JUSTINE BANNISTER

Justine Bannister is a trilingual international animation strategist, creative facilitator and founder of JUST B, with nearly 30 years' experience across the global audiovisual industry. Her career spans majors, independent companies, broadcasters and start-ups, giving her insight into the entire content value chain - from production management, post-production and voice direction to acquisitions, co-productions, international distribution, marketing and brand strategy. With animation at the heart of her practice, Justine advises creators, producers, studios, media groups, producer associations and government export agencies worldwide. Through JUST B, she provides tailored strategic and creative guidance across project development, positioning, pitching, partner sourcing, financing, co-production and international commercialisation. Combining industry expertise with an extensive global network, she helps creative teams sharpen their vision, identify the right partners and build coherent strategies for long-term international growth. She also produces and moderates practical, forward-looking industry sessions exploring international financing, co-production, brand-building, technology and how AI can support creativity in animation. An experienced mentor, project evaluator, advisory board member, awards juror, session producer and moderator, Justine contributes to festivals, funding bodies and industry programmes worldwide. Through her work, she champions distinctive voices, creative ambition and meaningful collaboration, helping projects become market-ready while remaining true to their cultural and creative identity.



KARIM AITOUNA

A graduate of studies in law, film studies, and cultural management, Karim Aitouna is a producer based in France and Morocco, with a portfolio that spans fiction and documentary, reflecting his commitment to supporting diverse storytelling across borders. With more than 22 feature films produced, his productions have screened and awarded at festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Toronto, and Sundance. Karim Aitouna is a member of The Academy, Film Independent, EAVE and EURODOC. He is a consultant and speaker for numerous funds, labs, and festivals, among others IFFR Pro Days, EFM Toolbox at the Berlinale, the Red Sea Film Fund, Open Doors by Locarno IFF, and the Nouveau Marché at the Festival de Nouveau Cinema de Montreal.



LAYLA SWART

Layla Swart is an award-winning South African producer, editor, and showrunner, widely regarded as a leading creative voice of her generation. As co-founder of Yellowbone Entertainment and Thesis, she has spent over a decade crafting more than twelve premium film and television productions that have premiered at top-tier international festivals like TIFF, BFI London, Busan, FESPACO, and Palm Springs. She holds the historic distinction of being the only South African producer with two consecutive official Academy Award submissions: *Sew the Winter to My Skin* and *Knuckle City*. Her extensive credits include the epic series *Blood Psalms*, alongside major titles for Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and eVOD. Beginning her career as an editor on over 14 projects, she brings a unique perspective spanning development to post-production. Recognized as one of South Africa's Forty Under 40 and honoured by Constitution Hill as one of 30 Women Who Shaped Democracy, she continues to champion sustainable companies and globally resonant African storytelling.



MMABATHO KAU

In her 20-year-long creative journey, Mmabatho has worked as a producer, broadcaster, development executive and script consultant, roles that have harnessed her deep love for story and her passion for helping writers find their voice as storytellers. In 2017, she was invited to co-mentor at Realness, a Pan-African writing residency. Since then, she has mentored on numerous international labs, including the Canal+ Poland Series Lab (2021), Full Circle Lab in the Philippines (2019, 2020, 2022), Maisha Producers Lab in Uganda (2019), Jumpstart Produire au Sud in South Africa (2019 and 2020), For Film's Sake Attagirl Lab in Australia (2020, 2022), BoostNL (Netherlands Film Festival/IFFR 2020), Dramatic Producers' Lab in Ethiopia (2019), EAVE Access Canada (2022), and Biennale College Cinema Italia (2022). In addition to her mentorship work, she has had the honour of participating in the Torino Script Lab, EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs), and the Rotterdam Producers Lab.

Sean is a screenwriter, producer and occasional director, as well as a development and story executive for the South African and international markets. His debut feature film *Five Fingers for Marseilles* premiered at Toronto International Film Festival, continuing to a multi-year festival run and multiple awards including five African Academy Movie Awards (including Best Film). Recent TV work includes Netflix smash hit *Unseen*, the most watched African programming on the platform in 2023 and the first ever African series to break into the global Top Ten with two seasons simultaneously. His short film *Apocalypse Now Now* won the SAFTA for Best Short Film and made waves in the international genre scene. A feature version is in development. As a story, creative and finishing consultant his roster of African and international projects includes films from South, East and West Africa, as well as US-Indian and US-Chinese co-productions, each of which have garnered accolades and awards at festivals the world over including TIFF and Berlinale, and/or found commercial success. Sean is the former founding manager of the Cape Town chapter of the shnit Worldwide Shorts Festival, which celebrated and awarded South African and international short films for a decade, and he spent many years on the festival's international executive committee, pushing artistic collaboration and exchange between filmmakers from all around the world. He continues to be active in film festival planning and programming on an independent basis, has served multiple terms on the Writer's Guild of South Africa's executive council and hosts panels on finance, distribution and development across South Africa. He is a Durban Film Mart and Berlinale Talents alumnus and a current Talents script mentor.



SEAN DRUMMOND



SÉBASTIEN ONOMO

Sébastien Onomo is a French producer who has been working in the film and audiovisual industry for over ten years. He has produced numerous films for cinema and television. In parallel with his work as a producer, he was elected Vice President of the Syndicat des Producteurs Indépendants and President of the Animation College in 2023. In 2025, he was officially appointed CEO of Pathé Touch Afrique.



PROF SYLVIA VOLLENHOVEN

Writer, award-winning journalist, playwright and filmmaker. Foreign Correspondent for the Swedish daily Expressen in the 80s and 90s. Former Commissioning Editor for the SABC. The University of Johannesburg's inaugural Professor of Practice. Awarded Sweden's main journalism prize by the Publicistklubben, the prestigious Nordic academy of writers and publishers. A Knight Fellow as well as a STIAS Fellow (Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies). *The Keeper of the Kumm*, her creative non-fiction novel about Khoi-San identity, won SA's prestigious Mbokodo Literature Award. Her short film |XAU on the profound nature of intellectual erasure was selected for the Hollywood African Cinema Connection Film Festival in LA 2023. Nomination: Cinema for Peace Award 2021 for *Jozzi Gold* (Co Director with Fredrik Gertten). SA Producer for the BBC TV mini-series *Mandela the Living Legend*. Chair of the 2018 and 2019 Alan Paton Literary Award Jury. Member of the International Emmy Awards 2018 Jury.

Themba Bhebhe (he/him) is an independent consultant, strategic advisor, industry programmer, talent support worker and mentor, working with a variety of film festivals, markets, funds, professional development programmes for creatives and other film organisations. With a background in international film sales and DEI programmes and programming, Themba's work is currently located at the intersections of the African, Caribbean and global Indigenous screen industries through his continued collaborations and roles in and with organisations such as the Indigenous Cinema Alliance, Third Horizon, Durban FilmMart, The Nuru Collective (formerly known as Engage), the Programmers of Colour Collective, the Great Lakes Creative Producers Lab and New Dawn.



THEMBA BHEBHE



TINY MUNGWWE

Tiny Mungwe worked at STEPS, where she 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 CTRL ALT Shift, she released the feature documentary Womxn: Working in 2024/25. She has written Evelyn and directed Daddy's Boy, both short films, and directed and produced Akekho uGogo, a medium-length documentary. Her TV work includes writing for Muvhango and Matatiele, and directing for 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 and Talents Durban. She is the co-founder of Engage, an itinerant knowledge production initiative consisting of think tanks and industry dialogue about the next horizons for African screens. She has worked as a mentor at DFM, Great Lakes Producers Lab, Hot Docs and with the EFM Toolbox Programme. She is part of the DFM Future Mentors Programme as a contributor, curriculum developer and trainer. She is also the founder of Ehozini Retreat, an artist residency in Maphephetheni, eThekweni. She was a participant in the 2024 EAVE Producers Workshop.



AKOSUA ADOMA OWUSU

Akosua Adoma Owusu is an award-winning filmmaker, producer and educator whose films explore diasporic identity, memory and belonging through the lens of triple consciousness. Her work examines the layered realities of African, American and transnational experience across experimental cinema, documentary and narrative forms. Her films have screened internationally at the New York Film Festival, Berlin International Film Festival, Locarno Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, MoMA and the National Gallery of Art. Her film *Kwaku Ananse* (2013) won the Africa Movie Academy Award and later screened at the Venice Biennale. *Reluctantly Queer* (2016) premiered at Berlinale Shorts and was nominated for the Teddy Award. Owusu is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Creative Capital Award and the Film at Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Film at Howard University and the founder of *Black Light: A Howard Short Film Showcase* and *Save the Rex*.



BONGZI NDABA

I'm a storyteller, bred in Africa and grounded by the voices of my people, their dreams, light, humility and love. My experience is not only measured by the work I have done, but it is textured by the impact I have created through storytelling. This passion exudes through the tapestry of my stories, and I always remain truthful and kind to the eyes and ears that will consume them. Build and entertain, not destroy. I live for storytelling.



AMINE HATTOU

Amine Hattou is an Algerian director holding an MFA in Film and TV Directing from Columbia College Chicago (2024) and a journalism degree from the University of Algiers. He debuted with the documentary short *Two for Tango* (2009) following La Fémis Summer University, and the fiction short *Down to Earth* (2011), which screened at over twenty festivals, including FESPACO. A dedicated community builder, he founded the Béjaïa Film Lab in 2012 for emerging North African filmmakers and co-founded Dima Cinema to promote Algerian film culture. A 2021 Fulbright Fellow and alumnus of Berlinale Talents and Global Media Makers, he served on the NAAS Steering Committee (2017–2019). His feature documentary *Janitou* (2020) screened at major events like the Durban International Film Festival. He is currently completing the short film *Anza* (2025) and developing his second feature documentary, *House of Shadows* (2025).



COMFORT ARTHUR

Comfort Arthur is a British-Ghanaian filmmaker whose work blends bold storytelling with social impact. After studying Graphic Design at Central Saint Martins and Animation at the Royal College of Art, she moved to Ghana and founded The Comfy Studio, creating award-winning films such as *Black Barbie* and *I'm Living in Ghana, Get Me Out of Here*. In recent years, Comfort has expanded her practice into television, serving as an episodic director on the popular CBeebies series *JoJo & Gran Gran*, the first UK preschool show to celebrate a Black British family. Her work on the series showcases her skill in character-driven storytelling and her commitment to inclusive children's media. Now entering a new creative chapter, Comfort is moving into immersive and interactive filmmaking. She was recently awarded a MIFA Pitch Prize at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival 2026.



JIHANE BOUGRINE

Jihane Bougrine is a Moroccan film critic, cultural journalist, moderator and programmer. She writes for several international and regional publications, including *Vogue Arabia*, and regularly covers major film festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin and Marrakech. A member of FIPRESCI (the International Federation of Film Critics), she is also a member of the Selection Committee of the Marrakech International Film Festival and served on the International Jury of La Semaine de la Critique at the Cannes Film Festival in 2025. Her work bridges film criticism, festival programming and cultural journalism, with a particular interest in African, Arab and emerging cinemas. Alongside her writing and programming activities, she regularly moderates industry panels, filmmaker conversations and masterclasses, fostering dialogue between creators, audiences and industry professionals. Through her various roles, she is committed to supporting new cinematic voices and exploring how criticism can contribute to the visibility, circulation and understanding of films beyond the review itself.



LUCK RAZANAJAONA

Luck Razanajaona is a Malagasy director, screenwriter, producer and cultural activist. A graduate of the Higher School of Visual Arts of Marrakech (ESAV), Luck Ambinintsoa Razanajaona has participated in prestigious programmes such as the Berlinale Talent Campus, the Rotterdam Lab and La Fabrique des Cinémas du Monde in Cannes to develop his film projects. He has also participated in the Moulin d'Andé Residency and the Realness Institute Residency. He is also a Berlinale Talents, Durban Talents and Rotterdam Lab alumnus. He directed several low-budget short films, which have been selected for more than 60 festivals, and was the first Malagasy director to compete at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival. Later, his first feature film, *Disco Afrika*, became the first Malagasy film to compete in the Berlinale Generation section in 2024 and became the first Malagasy film to be submitted for the Academy Awards. Since 2021, he has created MADAFILMLAB, a cinema workshop for young people in Madagascar with the aim of sharing his knowledge, creating a new cinema industry and discovering emerging filmmakers.



MAYYE ZAYED

Mayye Zayed is an Egyptian filmmaker working between Egypt and Germany. She is the founder of Cléo Media for female-driven content production and impact distribution in Alexandria. In 2020, she achieved critical acclaim for her award-winning feature documentary, *Lift Like a Girl*, which had its world premiere at the Toronto Film Festival and received the Golden Dove Award for Best Film at DOK Leipzig, three awards at the Cairo Film Festival, and the Best Documentary Award from the Critics Awards for Arab Films. The film was co-produced with ZDF Das kleine Fernsehspiel, and it was the first Egyptian documentary to be distributed on Netflix worldwide. Her previous work was screened at prestigious film festivals such as the Berlinale, Cinemed, Doc NYC, AFI Fest, Thessaloniki, São Paulo, and Kasseler Dokfest. Mayye is a Fulbright Scholar who studied Cinema and Media Studies at Wellesley College and Innovations in Documentary at MIT in 2011/2012 in the USA. She is the recipient of the Getty Images ARRAY grant in 2017 and Film Independent's Global Media Makers Fellowship in 2017 and 2019. She is also an alumna of Berlinale Talents, the Nipkow Program, Good Pitch, Documentary Campus Masterschool, and the American Film Showcase documentary programme at the USC School of Cinematic Arts.



NICOLE SCHAFFER

Nicole Schafer (b. 1980) is a South African documentary filmmaker. Her award-winning *Buddha in Africa* (2019) won numerous awards, including Best Director and Best Documentary at the 2020 SAFTAs, and screened internationally. Her recently released *Mama-Demic* (2025) explores the public health system through the lens of a young maternity doctor and will be broadcast globally this year. She has worked for Reuters' Africa Journal, holds an MFA from the University of Cape Town and founded Thinking Strings Media in KwaZulu-Natal. She is an alumna of the Durban FilmMart Institute, and her film pitches have received multiple awards. Nicole is also a passionate mentor to emerging filmmakers and is dedicated to nurturing new voices in documentary storytelling.



RAMADAN SULEMAN

Ramadan Suleman has written, produced and directed feature films, series and documentaries. He has mentored more than 50 first-time filmmakers and produced 35 short films.



ORIS

Oris Aigbokhaevbolo is the winner of the 2015 All Africa Music Award (AFRIMA) for Entertainment Journalism. He is also a member of the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI). Since 2010, he has written about Nollywood, pop music in Nigeria, African cinema and Nigerian literature, among other subjects. Those writings have appeared in the *London Review of Books*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Africa Report*, *The Washington Post*, and the British Film Institute's magazine, *Sight & Sound*. He has attended and written about films screened at the Cannes Film Festival, Sundance, FESPACO, the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), the Berlin Film Festival and other venues. He is the founder of Film Efiko (filmefiko.com), a magazine for African cinema, and a co-founder and editor-in-chief of Efiko Magazine (efikomag.com), a literary magazine publishing Africa's writers and African perspectives. Oris is the author of the forthcoming book *Main Characters: Essays and Reviews on Afrobeats, Nollywood, and Literature* (2010–2026), a collection of his work spanning two decades.

DFM ACCESS

DFM Access is an 8-week development platform for entry-level producers with feature-length or episodic film projects in development. Supported by the National Film and Video Foundation's PESP funding, the programme equips participants with the skills, industry knowledge and mentorship needed to strengthen their projects and prepare for the marketplace.

Through one-on-one mentorship and industry talks, participants refine their scripts, develop stronger project packages, and gain insight into film financing, distribution and pitching.

For this edition, 12 industry mentors guided 24 participants across Documentary Features, Fiction Features and Series. At the conclusion of the programme, three projects were selected to pitch at the 2026 Durban FilmMart Pitch and Finance Forum:

- *Mdantsane - Home of Boxing* (Documentary Feature), produced and directed by **Pumlani Veto**
- *Waslap* (Fiction Feature), produced and directed by **Batandwa Alperstein**
- *The Coven* (Series), produced by **Sihle Mthembu**

Over the past four editions of DFM Access, DFMI has supported nearly 58 first-time producers, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and industry insight needed to participate successfully in local and international markets.

Mentors Include:

Documentary Features

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

Fiction Features

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

Series

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

The programme's impact continues to be evident through the strong representation of DFM Access alumni at the annual Durban FilmMart Pitch and Finance Forum.



PALESTINE FILM INSTITUTE (PFI)

The Palestine Film Institute (PFI) is proud to return to Durban Filmmart with a delegation of filmmakers and projects selected for its 2026 Palestine Film Hub Showcase. This marks the fourth year that PFI will present four feature films in progress to international industry representatives in Durban. Building on the strong industry attendance from previous years, the Showcase is part of PFI's broader initiative to develop, promote, and preserve Palestinian cinema while creating international opportunities for Palestinian filmmakers and producers.

The PFI's various international showcases are a vital component of the institute's mission to promote Palestinian cinema. Through this showcase, filmmakers and producers present their ongoing projects, allowing them to engage directly with decision-makers and the film industry.

The PFI's role in this showcase is to facilitate connections that can lead to meaningful outcomes, such as advancing projects, fostering partnerships, and establishing ways for long-term production and distribution.

We extend our gratitude to those who engage with and support these filmmakers, and we welcome partners committed not only to the films themselves but also to the narratives and structures that ensure their longevity.



PALESTINE FILM INSTITUTE (PFI)

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ECHOES OF THE UNSUNG

Echoes of the Unsung is an experimental documentary about, and made by, the Gazan rock band Osprey V, who have thus far survived the current genocide. Filmed over the course of more than three years of bombardment, the story follows the band as they are displaced by bombings within Gaza, then separated across borders. From songwriting without instruments to recording on the day the studio is bombed, every aspect of making music becomes a historical document of the conditions that make it impossible. This film is about the courage of overcoming this impossibility. As a musical journey that uses cinema to question what it means to be heard, the story unravels as it is being filmed, and the act of filming becomes central to the story itself. For example, our cameraman, Ismail, was killed in the Baqaa Cafe Massacre only two months after shooting many of this film's

scenes. Ismail's voice, speaking from behind the camera, haunts the film throughout. Witnessed in self-reflexive form, the act of risking our lives to produce this film becomes an enacted record of the resilience worth documenting. While the story moves through the band's archives, it also documents the archive's impossibility, since most belongings were destroyed in bombings. The act of filming is revealed to be a necessity, not only to document our experiences, knowing that it could be all that's left of us once we are killed, but also as a means of survival itself by producing content to gain life-saving opportunities. This film follows the success of the band as a defining factor in our survival and in the empowerment of others. This is the story of building infrastructure between communities of artists and musicians who are choosing life in the face of so much death.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

This film developed from the necessity to document our realities of experiencing genocide, knowing it could be all that's left of us if we are killed. Since starting production, three people involved in this film have already been killed by the IDF. As a document of a rock band surviving war, who better to tell the story than the band itself? After directing our own music videos, we developed a filmic language, playing a crucial role left vacant by the vacuum left by all the murdered journalists.



Osprey V
DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Osprey V is a Gazan rock band that operates as a film and art collective. Our film *[Inaudible]* was screened at Festival Cine-Palestine (Paris), Santa Monica Art Center (Barcelona), Palinale Festival (Berlin), Diffusion Festival (Toronto), Giorno Poetry Systems (New York City), the Whitney Museum's ISP Exhibition (New York City), and the Rockbund Museum (Shanghai). Our music videos were screened at Palau Sant Jordi in Barcelona (with Rosalía, Tinariwen, and Bad Gyal), as well as during an online concert with Roger Waters, Tom Morello, and Brian Eno. Ash Moniz, our drummer, has screened work at the Sheffield International Documentary Film Festival, the Berlinale | Forum Expanded, among others.

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 14+

Country: Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Spain

Production Company:

Running Time: 50 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 320 000 USD

Finances Committed: TBC

GOALS AT DFM

- Funding
- Attract investors who care about true stories of survival.
- Co-producing partner.
- Post-production resources.
- Sound design and engineering support.
- Networking and pitching opportunities.
- Distribution.



ON THE SEA ROAD

During the war on Gaza, under the roar of fighter jets, Nour asks me from a shelter in Khan Younis, "Isn't it funny that we are considered the same people?" Through a screen, she looks into my room in Yafa. I live as a Palestinian citizen of Israel; she shelters in Gaza. We are the same age, share the same national identity, yet inhabit radically different realities. We first meet through an online citizen journalism programme. As communication becomes increasingly unstable, our conversations move to WhatsApp. What begins as a practical exchange slowly becomes a friendship, then a lifeline. We each begin filming our own lives. The act of filming becomes our shared language. While Nour documents repeated displacement from Rafah to Khan Younis, temporary shelters, and a tent, I film the uneasy normality of Yafa, where cafés remain open and the sea appears unchanged. As our conversations deepen,

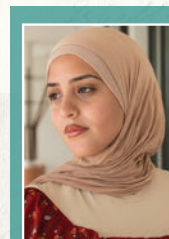
they move beyond survival into questions of womanhood, faith, family, marriage, and the futures we struggle to imagine. Much of what Nour records no longer exists, transforming her footage into an unintended archive of places destroyed while they were still being lived in. At the same time, my camera becomes a way of confronting the guilt and contradictions of watching war from relative safety. Through self-filmed footage, WhatsApp calls, voice notes, and moments of silence, *On the Sea Road* unfolds as an intimate dialogue between our two lives. Connected by the same sea yet separated by borders and war, *On the Sea Road* follows two Palestinian women trying to hold on to one another while war continually reshapes the distance between them.

Reel Previews 

Password: 020303

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

On the Sea Road grows from a friendship forged under extraordinary circumstances. While Nour films life in Gaza, I film in Yafa, revealing unequal realities of two Palestinian women. Rather than making a film about Nour, we become authors of our images. Through self-representation, the film resists simplification, insisting on intimacy, contradiction, and remaining connected as history threatens disappearance.



Fitnat Waked
DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Fitnat Waked is a Palestinian filmmaker and producer from Yafa working across documentary and fiction, with experience in documentary production and international media. Her work explores identity, memory, and belonging through intimate first-person storytelling. Her short documentary, *The Voices of Souls* (2025), was selected for the Al Jazeera Short Documentary Competition and released on Al Jazeera's digital platforms. In 2026, she completed her first narrative short, *SADA*. She is currently directing and producing her debut feature documentary, *On the Sea Road*.

COMPANY DETAILS

Fitnat Waked is an independent producer based in Yafa, dedicated to developing intimate, author-driven documentary and fiction films rooted in ethical, collaborative storytelling.

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 16+

Country: Palestine

Production Company: Fitnat Waked
(Independent Producer)

Running Time: 75 minutes

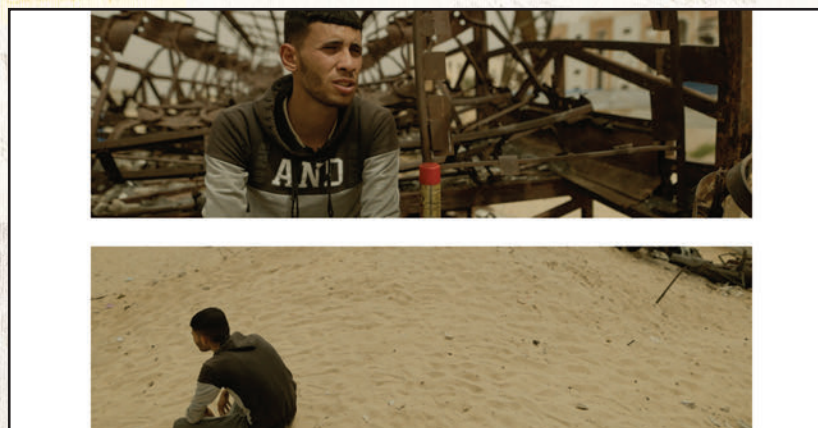
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 54 000 USD

Finances Committed: 14 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure post-production financing.
- Connect with international co-producers.
- Connect with festival programmers.
- Connect with sales agents and distribution partners.



THE SOLE SURVIVOR "WHAT THE SAND REMEMBERS"

In Khan Younis, 2024, Abdulrahman Abu Hadda lives between two burial places: a cemetery holding some members of his family, and a vast mound of sand where the rest are believed to remain. After an Israeli strike destroyed his family home, Abdulrahman became the sole survivor. His parents, grandmother, and five siblings were killed. Some bodies were recovered and buried; others disappeared beneath the ruins, later covered by bulldozed earth and sand. With no grave to visit and no certainty to hold onto, Abdulrahman returns again and again to the site, searching for signs, fragments, and memories. What the Sand Remembers follows his life after survival. Moving through deserted streets, damaged neighbourhoods, and the landscape of loss, he carries the memory of an entire family alone. His daily routines become acts of remembrance: visiting graves, standing before the sand mound, recalling voices, and trying to rebuild a life in a place where the past remains physically buried beneath him. The film observes Abdulrahman

without turning his survival into triumph. His loneliness, silence, and repetition reveal the burden of being the only witness left. Through intimate testimony, restrained images, and the presence of the landscape itself, the film asks what remains when a family is erased but one person survives to remember them. His story is not presented as an exception, but as one intimate record of a wider devastation, where survival can mean carrying the names, gestures, and unfinished lives of those who no longer return home. The sand becomes more than a location. It is a grave, an archive, and a silent witness. As Abdulrahman searches for a way to live with what cannot be recovered, the film becomes a meditation on memory, absence, and the unbearable weight of survival.

Reel Previews



Company Profile



DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Through Abdulrahman, the sole survivor of an Israeli attack that erased his family, What the Sand Remembers explores the weight of memory, absence, and survival. Rather than documenting tragedy, the film observes the quiet rituals of remembrance and the fragile relationship between landscape and loss. I wanted silence, time, and the presence of the land itself to become witnesses. The film asks what remains when an entire family disappears, and whether the sand can preserve the traces that history tries to erase.



Yousef Nateel
PRODUCER



Mahmoud Abu Ghalwa
DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Mahmoud Abu Ghalwa is a Palestinian filmmaker, screenwriter, and creative producer with over 15 years' experience in documentary and fiction filmmaking. His work explores memory, displacement, and social justice through intimate cinematic storytelling. He has collaborated with international media organisations including Al Jazeera and Misbar, and his films have screened internationally. His screenplay for Nuseirat: The Hostage Massacre received the Best War Film Screenplay Award at the Five Continents International Film Festival.

Yousef Abdul Rahim Nateel is a Palestinian filmmaker and producer whose work focuses on socially engaged cinema and amplifying Palestinian voices globally.

COMPANY DETAILS

Hardy Skills is a creative media production company founded in Gaza in 2011, specialising in documentary films, media campaigns, animation, and digital storytelling. Operating across the Middle East and Europe, we create high-quality visual content that helps organisations and brands communicate their messages with creativity, clarity, and impact.

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Series

Audience Age Range: 16+

Country: Belgium, France, Palestine

Production Company: HardySkills

Running Time: 26 minutes per episode

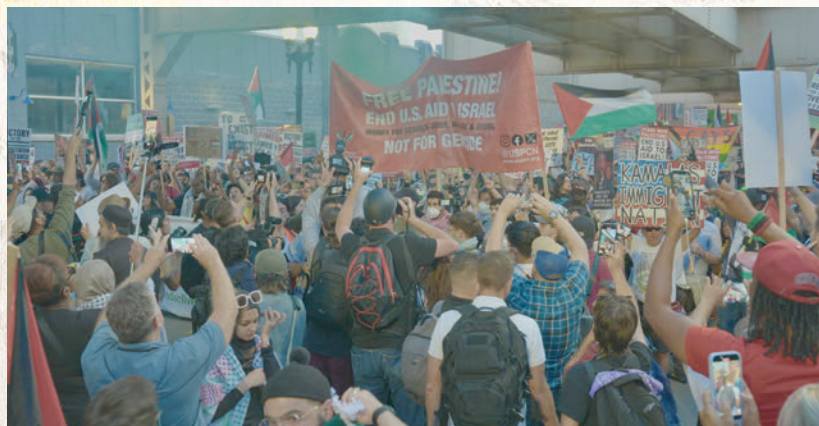
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 100 000 USD

Finances Committed: 5 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Seeking funding, partners, sales, and festival support to complete this film and develop four more films about Gaza's sole survivors.



WITHIN SIGHT AND SOUND

On 14 October 2023, a white American man is watching TV news about Gaza in his home in Chicago. He becomes enraged by the news. "All these Palestinians are terrorists!" he yells, as he grabs a knife, walks to the home of his Palestinian neighbour, and stabs six-year-old child Wadde Al-Fayoumi 26 times, killing him. This brutal act of hate stuns Chicago's 'Little Palestine', the largest community of Palestinians in the United States. A weekly protest against the genocide begins the day after Wadde's funeral. People in Chicago bear witness through social media videos from Gaza, even as they watch mainstream American news manufacture another narrative about what's happening. We see, visually, a city rise up to try to stop the genocide through university encampments, protests, direct actions, boycotts, voter mobilisation, etc. We document the beginning of a government crackdown against activists, first under President Biden and then President Trump. Palestinian activists are kidnapped, detained, and deported by Trump's immigration police. This quickly evolves from

targeting anti-war activists to targeting all Americans. The genocide in Gaza becomes the bellwether for a crackdown against democracy and the advent of fascism in the US. This film deconstructs how a media narrative that dehumanised Palestinians led directly to the murder of one Palestinian child in Chicago and the mass killing of tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza. Over and over again, power intervened in the historical production of the genocide to erase Palestinians and silence their story. This enabled Israel's mass killing and destruction in Gaza, and the US financing of the genocide, to continue unabated. We track how and when power entered the story, while documenting the Palestinian community in Chicago rallying to stop a genocide and resist erasure through the creation of a counter-narrative.

[Reel Previews](#)

[Company Profile](#)


DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I grew up in Chicago's 'Little Palestine' and it was the setting for my first film, *The Feeling of Being Watched* (2018). When I attended the funeral of Wadde, the Palestinian boy murdered in 2023, something broke inside of me. As I watched the story of dehumanisation that killed Wadde be repeated to justify the genocide in Gaza, I felt compelled to start filming.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Assia Boundaoui is an award-winning Algerian-American filmmaker and journalist. Her debut short film, *J'adore Nawal*, set in an Arab women's hair salon in Chicago for HBO Films, premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. Her award-winning feature-length documentary, *The Feeling of Being Watched*, investigating a decade of FBI surveillance in her Arab-American community, had its world premiere at the 2018 Tribeca Film Festival and was broadcast on PBS and Al Jazeera. Her most recent short film, *Estranged Letters*, had its world premiere at the 2024 Chicago International Film Festival. **Jihan El-Tahri** is an Egyptian-French filmmaker, director, producer, writer, and visual artist. Her award-winning documentaries include *Nasser*, which premiered in the official selection at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival, *Behind the Rainbow*, *Cuba: An African Odyssey*, and the Emmy-nominated *House of Saud*.

COMPANY DETAILS

At Big Sister, we tell stories from the vantage point of the South. Created by **Jihan El-Tahri** in 2004 and based in Europe, the company was one of the first to create a platform for cooperation with filmmakers from Africa and the Middle East.



Jihan El-Tahri
PRODUCER

Assia Boundaoui
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: 16+

Country: United States of America, France, Tunisia

Production Company: Big Sister Productions, Watched Films LLC

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 410 000 USD

Finances Committed: 280 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Post-production funding.
- African and international co-production partner.

AFRICAN PRODUCERS ACCELERATOR

The African Producers Accelerator (APA) is a four month professional development programme supporting mid-career African film producers to strengthen their production companies, build sustainable business strategies, and sharpen the investment propositions of their slates. The programme combines tailored advisory support and industry engagement, culminating in an in-person lab in Cape Town and, in 2026, a second lab in Lagos for CANEX WKND.

At the 2026 Durban FilmMart, APA presents a showcase of five producers from the programme, each presenting a project from their current slate to industry, financiers and potential partners.

The 2026 APA programme is delivered by Big World Cinema in partnership with the Bertha Foundation, Just Films|Ford Foundation, Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) and the National Film and Video Foundation of South Africa, in association with the Durban FilmMart Institute, and with thanks to the International Emerging Film Talent Fund.

**AFRICAN
PRODUCERS
ACCELERATOR**

AFRICAN PRODUCERS ACCELERATOR

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A FANTASTIC TALE

Twelve-year-old Sweetie is devastated when his beloved sister, Folake - the closest thing he has to a mother - announces her marriage and plans to leave their village. In Sweetie's eyes, it's not Folake's fiancé to blame, but the legendary Pink Fish, said to bring luck wherever it appears. The fish's last sighting was in Folake's new village, and Sweetie blames it for tearing his family apart. Determined to fix things, Sweetie hatches a plan. He'll repair an old boat, cross the Epe Lagoon, catch the Pink Fish, and use its luck to bring Folake home. To pull this off, he recruits his brother Olamide and best friend Maduka. To get an engine, they have to let Tochi, the mechanic's daughter, join their crew, even

though the boys aren't sure about having a girl on board. Through trial, error, and teamwork, they finally fix up the boat. On departure day, Sweetie's friends insist on coming along. He tries to talk them out of it, but they refuse. The adventure is now theirs, too. Minutes into their journey, Olamide senses danger and urges the group to turn back. Sweetie refuses, leading to a heated argument. Tensions are high when Maduka spots something in the water - a glimmer of hope? No, just a red shoe. Maduka's belief in the mission falters, and Olamide calls for a vote. Outnumbered, Sweetie jumps into the lagoon, daring them to go home without him. The group relents and the quest continues.

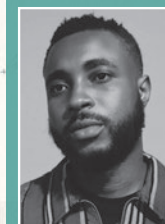
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I spent my evenings as a child listening to my mother and grandmothers compete to tell the most compelling story. These stories spurred my imagination. This film draws from the narrative traditions of my childhood and from my experience working with these inquisitive kids. *A Fantastic Tale* honours the dreamers who inspire us to invent, innovate and understand one another.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Vincho Nchogu is a Kenyan director, producer and writer whose first feature, *One Woman One Bra*, premiered at Venice, and won the BFI Sutherland Award for Best First Feature Film.

Josh Olaoluwa is an award-winning Nigerian producer and showrunner. He produced *One Woman One Bra* (Venice, BFI Sutherland Award, Tribeca Audience Award), Amazon's *GRIND*, and Netflix's *A Sunday Affair* thriller.



Josh Olaoluwa
PRODUCER



Vincho Nchogu
WRITER + DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/ FACTS

Project Type: Feature Film

Audience Age Range: 12+

Country: Nigeria, Kenya

Production Company: Conceptified Media, Kilastory

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 2 800 000 USD

Finances Committed: 150 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Explore franchise opportunities.
- Seek financiers.
- Sales and distribution.



BORSEL

Byron is a 19-year-old classical guitar student in Cape Town, and the first in his family to leave the mining town of Carolusberg. He is gifted, adrift, and quietly drinking too much. The College of Music, where he studies, is losing patience with him missing classes. At a gallery auction where he performs, he meets Martin, a wealthy white gentleman of sixty-five who buys a painting: a bucolic, idealised scene of Coloured labourers harvesting before an 18th-century Cape-Dutch homestead. Martin is cultured, irreverent, disarming, and seemingly taken with Byron. He offers him a lift back to his university res. What follows is an invitation to his farm to play guitar at his birthday, opening a door into a world Byron has only ever seen from the outside. When Byron arrives at the estate, he recognises it at once. It is the house in the painting. What follows is a seduction dressed as patronage. Martin leans on

a favour, secures Byron an audition at a conservatory in the Netherlands and offers to pay for the trip. Byron is certain he is in control. He is not. In Amsterdam, the parties grow stranger and the favours heavier. There are pills, blackouts, a soreness in his wrist he cannot explain, and a half-remembered night of an old man in an animal mask at the foot of his hotel bed. Byron keeps practising, keeps drinking, looking away. He fails the audition and is filled with shame. Eventually, he yields to Martin's demands, no longer sure where the balance of power lies. He returns alone to Cape Town, lives in poverty, breaks his guitar on the pavement, and drifts into freelance survival. One night at City Hall, listening to Brahms, he sees Martin a few rows ahead, seated beside a new, fresh-faced young man. The lights dim. The orchestra begins. Byron watches them from behind.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Borsel confronts how race, class, and colonial inheritance still shape who gets to enter culture, and at what cost. Byron's story reveals how fetishisation can mask extraction, how patronage can become predation, and how silence protects complicity.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Jason Jacobs and **Devon Delmar** are a South African writing and directing duo. Their debut feature *Carissa* (2024) premiered in Orizzonti at the Venice International Film Festival. Their second feature *Variations on a Theme* (2026) received the Tiger Award at IFFR.

Annemarie du Plessis is an award-winning producer and founder of Meria Productions. Credits include *Carissa* (Venice Orizzonti), IFFR Tiger winner *Variations on a Theme* and Emmy-nominated *Koek*.



Annemarie du Plessis
PRODUCER



Jason Jacobs
DIRECTOR



Devon Delmar
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/ FACTS

Project Type: Feature Film

Audience Age Range: 16+

Country: South Africa

Production Company: KRAAL, Meria Productions

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 625 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Meet with potential funds and funders for *Borsel* as well as other projects.
- Growing networks within the independent cinema space.



GALATIANS

Following a university strike, cynical student Marie reluctantly assists her ambitious theatre director mother, Mummy. Mummy's performing arts company has pivoted from staging traditional plays to a lucrative new venture: running fully scripted, highly choreographed church services. After attracting a wealthy investor, Mummy launches her own church. She casts a struggling but charismatic actor, Julius, as the pastor. Julius flourishes, delivering carefully crafted sermons and staged miracle healings that spark explosive growth. Marie ignores her ethical concerns about the church's true nature in order to support her mother. Meanwhile, Marie begins dating Victor, only to suffer a devastating betrayal when she discovers he is a 419 fraudster and a philanderer. This sends Marie into a spiral. She begins to draw clear parallels between Victor's performative romance and Mummy's theatrical church, feeling trapped in a world where everyone is playing a role.

As the church's popularity skyrockets, Julius's ego inflates. Believing his own hype, he abandons the script and begins plotting a coup. At the same time, Mummy is diagnosed with degenerative glaucoma and suffers debilitating migraines. Desperate, she forces Marie to take charge. When Marie learns of Julius's plan to steal the congregation, she fires him. Julius ignores his dismissal and hijacks a Sunday service. Mummy drags herself from her sickbed for one final onstage confrontation, but, overwhelmed by illness, collapses into Julius's arms, allowing him to seamlessly seize control of the crowd. Recuperating in hospital, Mummy abandons the project, lamenting her failure to manage her actors' egos. As she speaks, the hospital room is revealed to be a physical set on a theatre stage. Marie realises that "the stage follows us everywhere," an epiphany that is immediately proven true when she finds herself reciting pre-written lines from a prophetic dream.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I spent a large part of my childhood Sundays in the church. I slowly started to realise there was a performative side to religion which I found fascinating. It got me thinking about the parallels between church and theatre. I decided to explore these ideas in a short film, *Rehearsal*, and further expanded on the ideas for this project *Galatians*.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Michael Omonua is a Nigerian-British director and screenwriter based in Lagos. His short *Rehearsal* (2021) premiered at Berlinale, winning Winterthur's prize. He co-directed *Juju Stories* (2021), winning Locarno's Boccacino d'Oro.

Abba T. Makama is an award-winning Nigerian filmmaker. He directed *Green White Green* and *The Lost Okoroshi*, which both premiered at TIFF, and co-founded Surreal16 Collective and film festival.



Abba T. Makama
PRODUCER



Michael Omonua
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/ FACTS

Project Type: Feature Film

Audience Age Range: 18-55

Country: Nigeria

Production Company: The Surreal16 Collective, Osiris Film and Entertainment

Running Time: 110 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 2 200 000 USD

Finances Committed: 540 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure financing and find co-production partners.



THE RETURN

During Ghana's vibrant Dettie December, seven Gen Z friends (three local and four from the diaspora) reunite for the ultimate beachfront getaway, complete with luxury, music, and reckless abandon. But when they ignore the instruction to honor the house deity with a libation and drink the offering themselves, they awaken an ancestral force that turns their dream Airbnb into a living nightmare.

Phones glitch. Walls breathe. Friends vanish one by one. Trapped inside the house, the group must survive the night while confronting a spiritual tradition they dismissed, a history they barely understand, and the terrifying cost of treating culture like part of the party.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

As an African American shaped by youth in Ghana, returning feels both like a homecoming and discovery. You inherit history through skin and birthplace, yet customs and responsibilities seem unfamiliar. The bond is undeniable, but identity is a journey balancing heritage with exploration, connection and distance together.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Zoey Martinson is an award-winning writer and director. Her film *The Fisherman* premiered at Venice Biennale Film Festival, winning UNESCO's Fellini Medal. In theater she's written and directed Off-Broadway and internationally.

Kofi Owusu-Afriyie is a seasoned Ghanaian producer with over 15 years' experience. Co-founder of Luu Vision Media, he produced *The Fisherman*, Ghana's first Venice Biennale premiere, winning UNESCO's Fellini Medal.



Kofi Owusu-Afriyie
PRODUCER



Zoey Martinson
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/ FACTS

Project Type: Feature Film

Audience Age Range: 18-50

Country: Ghana, USA

Production Company: Luu Vision Media Ltd

Running Time: 90 minutes

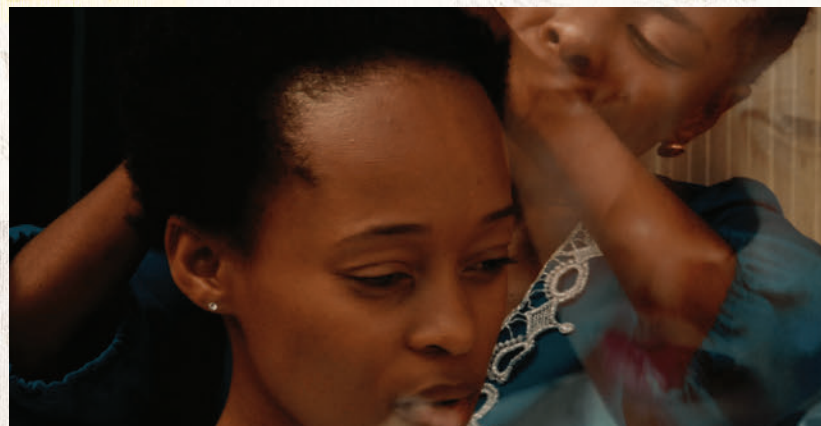
FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 1 200 000 USD

Finances Committed: 50 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Seeking finance.
- Co-production partners.



UKUSHONA KWELANGA (THE SETTING OF THE SUN)

After sculptor Anathi is sexually assaulted by her friend Lesley, she is welcomed into her grandmother's house by Nana who is determined to avenge Anathi. An enraged Nana pushes Anathi to get a confession out of Lesley furious at his denial and the silence that protects men like him. The confrontation spirals. In a flash of rage, Nana seizes one of Anathi's sculptures and brings it down on his head; killing him. Anathi's two best friends Esther and Dikeledi stumble on the crime scene and are horrified as Nana takes over with a plan to dump the body in a nearby dam. When they hear nothing for a while, the women are sure that they have gotten away with the perfect murder, but a few days later; Lesley's body rises from the water, and Johannesburg closes in: detectives ask questions, neighbours

whisper, and Lesley is mourned as a golden boy. Nana refuses to let him become a saint in death. Determined to expose him, she drives Anathi deeper into revenge, even as every move risks prison, public ruin, and the fragile remains of Anathi's sanity. But Anathi's memories are fractured. Time slips. Evidence appears where it should not. And the more she relies on Nana, the more terrifying the truth becomes: Nana may not be her protector at all, but a splintered part of Anathi's own mind, born from trauma and sharpened by rage. Anathi is not only the victim, she is the killer. Hunted by police, haunted by Lesley, and trapped inside a mind turning against itself, Anathi must decide which version of her will survive before revenge destroys the last thing she still has left: herself.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

I'm drawn to this story because I want Black women's interiority on screen — not-so-good women, responding to this world in complex, surprising ways. I'm excited by the chance to explore a complex interiority, set against an equally complicated Johannesburg — a city I have known, feared, and loved all my life.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Palesa Nomanzi Shongwe is a South African filmmaker, film scholar, and Fulbright recipient. Shongwe holds a Master of Fine Arts from Temple University, Philadelphia, and is currently a Harvard South Africa Fellow.

Babalwa Baartman is a social entrepreneur and creative producer. She founded Sanusi Development Studio, turning African cultural assets into investable IP portfolios. Her credits include *Good Madam* (TIFF) and *Sizohlala*.



Babalwa Baartman
PRODUCER



Palesa Nomanzi Shongwe
DIRECTOR



Neo Sibiyi
WRITER + CO-PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/ FACTS

Project Type: Feature Film

Audience Age Range: 16-35

Country: South Africa

Production Company: Sanusi Development Studio

Running Time: 90 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 900 000 USD

Finances Committed: 0 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Build strategic partnerships.
- Project & slate financing.

CLIMATE STORY LABS

Climate Story Labs Africa is a pan-African network connecting regional Climate Story Labs and partners working at the intersection of storytelling, climate justice and social change. The initiative was created in 2023 by Climate Story Lab Southern Africa, Climate Story Lab East Africa, Climate Story Lab Lagos, Doc Society, Tunga Africa and Surge Africa to help build and support a growing ecosystem for climate storytelling across the continent.

The Labs support filmmakers, impact producers and movement leaders to develop strategic approaches for different forms of climate storytelling, including documentary film. Through labs, mentorship, workshops, convenings and impact strategy development, participants are supported to move beyond awareness-raising and consider how their stories can contribute to meaningful social and systemic change. The programme creates opportunities to connect storytellers with audiences, movement partners, funders and organisations that can help extend the reach and impact of their work.

The network brings together experienced practitioners working across film, impact, education and climate storytelling. The team representing CSLA at DFM 2026 includes Emily Wanja and Cindy Makandi from Kenya, and Liani Maasdorp, Miki Redelinghuys and Tarha McKenzie from South Africa. Together, they bring expertise spanning impact producing, documentary filmmaking, distribution, education, research, climate storytelling and impact strategy. The 2026 CSLA DFA activities are supported by Doc Society, Climate Story Labs Africa, UCT Centre for Film and Media Studies, South x Sul Network and UMI Fund.

Climate Story Labs Africa is excited to support two projects from Nigeria and Zimbabwe and South Africa respectively, to participate in the African Labs Showcase, namely:

Projects:

Pülö: Bloodstream of the Kirike by Christina Ifubaraboye (Nigeria)

Chikukwa Custodians by Jacqueline van Meygaarden and Rumbi Katedza (South Africa, Zimbabwe)



CLIMATE STORY LABS

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CHIKUKWA CUSTODIANS

Zeddy Chikukwa's quest to regenerate indigenous cultural practices of traditional food growing lies at the heart of the short documentary *Chikukwa Custodians*. The people of Chikukwa live in the remote Chimanimani mountainous region of eastern Zimbabwe, bordering Mozambique. Their story reveals the interconnectedness of growing food, generating livelihoods, spirituality, cultural rituals, eating, connection to the land and the protection of nature, and how food security hinges on these elements working well together. *Chikukwa Custodians* explores solutions through building resilience in the face of the climate crisis.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

As a filmmaker and storyteller, I'm drawn to stories of resilience, solidarity and possibility. Chikukwa's intergenerational sharing of indigenous knowledge offers a powerful example of how communities can nurture biodiversity and adapt to a changing climate. Through a poetic and immersive approach, I hope to honour the community's connection to land while creating a hopeful, solutions-oriented story for audiences beyond Chikukwa.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Jacqueline is an independent director, producer and communications practitioner from South Africa, with over 20 years of experience in creating socially engaged storytelling across film, performance and multimedia platforms. Her artistic practice bridges documentary realism, poetic visual storytelling and community advocacy work. She was awarded the Commonwealth Vision Award in 2007; has produced climate justice campaign content for 350.org in Africa; produces factual content for the local broadcaster SABC; and has directed several short documentary films. She co-directed and was the impact producer on the feature documentary *Temperature Rising* (2023), and is currently in production on *Chikukwa Custodians*. She is the impact producer on *Out of Mined*, a feature documentary about the impacts of mining on the West Coast of South Africa. Jacqueline is the co-director of media co-operative Mycelium Media Colab in Cape Town.

COMPANY DETAILS

Mycelium Media Colab is a registered cooperative created in 2018 by six women storytellers. With a focus on documentaries, broadcast TV stories, web-based media, educational programming, training and strategic communications, Mycelium has extensive experience in media production and storytelling across formats.

Company Profile 

 [jacqueline.meygarden](https://www.facebook.com/jacqueline.meygarden)

 [jacqofthegarden](https://www.instagram.com/jacqofthegarden)



Rumbi Katedza
PRODUCER



Jacqueline van Meygaarden
DIRECTOR / PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/ FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: All

Country: Zimbabwe

Production Company: Mycelium Media Colab

Running Time: 35 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 70 546 USD

Finances Committed: 70 546 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Meet broadcasters and distributors who want to screen my film.
- Find impact funders and partners to support finishing funds and a Southern African impact campaign.



PÜLÖ: BLOODSTREAM OF THE KIRIKE

When Christina returns to Okrika Island, she encounters a landscape shaped by illness, eroding livelihoods and spiritual rupture. Guided by her father, who spent much of his working life in the oil industry, she begins to trace the contradictions of an industry that sustained families like hers while gradually poisoning the community's land, waters and bodies. His memories lead into the lives of five central figures navigating the layered consequences of oil pollution across the island. Set against rhythmic images of Okrika's waters, whose beauty reveals

itself slowly, two rare archival films, *Odum and Water Masquerades* (1974) and *Becoming a Woman in Okrika* (1990), unearth what the present-day island still holds: a cultural force that refuses to disappear. Images of ceremony, identity and belonging stand in stark contrast to the island's devastation, offering a glimpse of what oil has not managed to destroy. By tracing these intertwined histories, *Pülö: Bloodstream of the Kirike* uncovers a story of inherited grief and resilience, a home that remains wounded, yet unwavering.

Reel Previews 
Password: OIL

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

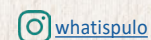
I am Okrika. Pülö began with grief after my grandmother's death and became an act of witness and return. Through water, birth, memory and cultural survival, I trace how oil has shaped my family and community. As director and producer, I want the film to move beyond recording harm, to create visibility, dialogue and space for repair and accountability.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Christina Ifubaraboye is a Nigerian Ijaw filmmaker, writer and producer from Okrika in the Niger Delta. She holds a bachelor's degree in Mass Communications, specialising in Film and Journalism, and has worked across broadcasting, arts and culinary media, advertising and creative strategy. She founded IMBUU Media, a narrative collective spanning film, exhibitions, audio and communications. Rooted in memory, place and cultural inheritance, her practice connects intimate histories to social and political realities.co-operative Mycelium Media Colab in Cape Town.

COMPANY DETAILS

IMBUU Media is a culturally rooted narrative studio and collective for the Other, producing film, exhibitions, audio and communications that centre lived experience.



Christina Ifubaraboye
DIRECTOR /
PRODUCER



Yvonne Welbon
EXECUTIVE
PRODUCER



Elisa Mereghetti
CO-PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/ FACTS

Project Type: Documentary Feature Length

Audience Age Range: N/A

Country: Nigeria

Production Company: IMBUU

Running Time: 108 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 485 056 USD

Finances Committed: 401 350 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- To secure finishing, distribution and impact partners, positioning Pülö for a strong festival launch and community-led campaign.

HABESHA CREATIVE

Habesha Creative Lab (HCL) is Ethiopia's hub for creative innovation, located at and implemented by Alliance Ethio-Française in Addis Ababa, with funding from the French Embassy. It supports emerging talent across gaming, animation, XR/VR, AI, audio, video and digital arts, offering mentorship, funding, state-of-the-art equipment and workspaces. Beyond membership-based lab access, HCL runs incubation and acceleration cohorts: its first cohort supported 24 creative startups, followed by Palette Lab - a women-focused cohort backing 10 female-led entrepreneurs in animation, game development, architecture and digital arts - positioning Ethiopia as a rising force in creative and technological innovation.



HABESHA CREATIVE

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BAYTEWAR

In the early 2000s in Addis Ababa, a generation of children are growing up in the shadows of silence. While the adults go about their daily lives, five friends gather at a local playground after school, each carrying the neglected truths of their community that society refuses to name (*Baytewar*). Everything changes when they encounter Engida, a wise, mystical turtle who has watched over the land for generations. Engida does not simply offer advice; he provides Lebawi, the Grand State of Awareness. Acting as a mirror to their souls, Engida uses his ancient magic and shape-shifting abilities to guide the children through their deepest struggles. Whether he is creating a safe space for the unheard or revealing terrifying glimpses of a path not taken, he forces the children to confront the “neglected” realities of their world. From the quiet battles of self-worth and disability to the heartbreak of harmful cultural traditions, the children discover

they are not alone in their pain. As they gain Lebawi, they stop being victims of their circumstances and transform into brave beacons of change for their neighbourhood. *Baytewar* is a journey from the shadows of neglect into the light of empathy, proving that when we finally have the courage to truly see one another, no one is ever truly a stranger.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Growing up in Addis Ababa during the early 2000s, our neighbourhood playground was everything to us. It was where we learned to dream, but it was also where we carried our

Reel Previews 

heaviest silences. In our communities, struggles like childhood anxiety, unequal domestic burdens, disability, addiction and rigid cultural expectations often go unacknowledged. We call these the Baytewar struggles, the neglected realities hidden behind quiet faces.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

Amanuel Beyene is a 2D animator, director and co-founder of Addis Ababa-based Hiyaw Animation Studio. Combining authentic Ethiopian visual textures with universal coming-of-age themes, he directs *Baytewar*, a series that explores childhood resilience and social awareness (Lebawi). He's also a strong advocate for the global growth of contemporary African animation.

COMPANY DETAILS

Hiyaw is an indie 2D animation company based in Ethiopia, founded by Amanuel Zebre and Biniyam Masresha in 2024. Built on a shared passion for storytelling, culture and community, Hiyaw goes beyond a traditional studio, it is a movement to redefine animation in Ethiopia and across Africa. With bold visuals, socially conscious themes and a commitment to creative empowerment, Hiyaw develops animated content and training programmes that resonate with audiences and spark meaningful conversations.

Company Profile 

 [hiyaw-animation-studio/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/hiyaw-animation-studio/)



Amanuel Beyene
DIRECTOR /
PRODUCER

PROJECT INFORMATION/ FACTS

Project Type: Animated series

Audience Age Range: 6-12

Country: Ethiopia

Production Company: Hiyaw Animation Studio

Running Time: 6 episodes, 5-7 minutes each

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 24 000 USD

Finances Committed: 7 000 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Network.
- Attract grants, pre-sales and private funds.



KEFFA THE CURIOUS GOAT

Keffa The Curious Goat is a 3D animated slapstick comedy series set in the lush, vibrant landscape of southern Ethiopia. The story follows Keffa, an adventurous and deeply curious two-year-old goat who prefers exploring the rich natural world around her rather than staying inside the shed like the rest of her pack. Driven by an endless desire to analyse and interact with her environment, Keffa constantly discovers new things, solves everyday problems and resolves conflicts that arise in her community. Accompanying Keffa on her daily farm adventures is Kaldi, her 15-year-old herder. Though they cannot communicate through spoken language, they share an intuitive emotional bond and clear understanding. Kaldi follows Keffa's inquisitive lead, frequently finding himself swept into exciting, unexpected discoveries. The show's core ensemble

also features Billo, a carefree and reckless three-year-old goat who loves joining adventures, and his older brother Mamo, a laid-back goat known for his laziness and passion for food. Together, the herd faces non-stop playful challenges, from rescuing Mamo out of deep water wells to defending their home from angry ants and helping lost visitors. Designed as a non-conversational, visually driven show, *Keffa The Curious Goat* connects universally across cultures through physical comedy, expressive character animation, vibrant music and heart. Rooted in authentic African traditions, the series celebrates curiosity, imagination and learning through play. *Keffa The Curious Goat* offers global audiences an uplifting, hilarious look at childhood discovery through rich African storytelling.

Reel Previews 

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

Growing up, I rarely saw authentic African stories represented in animation. *Keffa the Curious Goat* changes that by bringing rich local culture and landscapes to life through non-conversational slapstick comedy. Produced by G Media Studios, our goal is to inspire children to stay endlessly curious, solve problems creatively and celebrate our heritage through high-quality visual storytelling.

DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER PROFILE

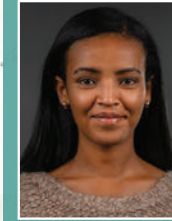
Lidiya Mitiku is an award-winning Ethiopian director, producer, scriptwriter and creative director based in Addis Ababa. She holds an MFA in Film Production (4.0 GPA) and has directed projects including *Blen*, *The Mirror Within* and the children's musical animation series *KuKu*. Leading creative ventures at G Media, Lidiya specialises in culturally rich, impactful African storytelling that engages global audiences across both animated and live-action formats.

COMPANY DETAILS

G-Media Production PLC is a 360° creative agency in Addis Ababa crafting authentic stories, impactful video production, and integrated marketing campaigns.

Company Profile 

 [gmediastudios](https://www.instagram.com/gmediastudios)



Betelhem Sileshi
PRODUCER



Lidiya Mitiku
DIRECTOR

PROJECT INFORMATION/ FACTS

Project Type: Animated series

Audience Age Range: 4-10

Country: Ethiopia

Production Company: G Media Studios

Running Time: 7 minutes

FINANCING PLAN

Total Budget: 92 500 USD

Finances Committed: 7 581 USD

GOALS AT DFM

- Secure soft-money grants.
- Secure international pre-sales agreements
- Secure global distribution partners to finalise and release the film.

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Durban FilmMart Institute Board: Tshepiso Chikapa-Phiri (Chair), Ameera Faber, Zanele Mthembu, Masi Mtshali, Poovashnee Reddy, Khalid Shamis, Mocke Jansen van Veuren

Director: Magdalene Reddy

DFM Finance and Pitch Forum

Project Manager: Faiza Williams

Pitch & Finance Forum Assistant: Thobeka Mnyandu

Project readers: Johanna Boyer-Dilolo, Arthur Comfort, Khosie Dali, Babette Dieu, Hawa Essuman, Gabe Gabriels, Berry Hahn, Mbuotidem Johnson, Kudakwashe Maradzika, Kate Marsay, Mbithi Masya, Lodi Matsetela, Beverly Mitchell, Omelga Mthiyane, Ibee Ndwane, Lyse Nsengiyumva, Cyrine Sellami.

Selection Committees: Edward Barnieh, Sean Drummond, Mmabatho Kau, Njoki Muhoho, Tendayi Nyeke, Femi Odugbemi, Emily Paige, Bridget Pickering, Tracey-Lee Rainers, Nada Riyadh, Lucas Rosant, Adriek van Nieuwenhuyzen.

Mentors: Karim Aitouna, Justine Bannister, Themba Bhebhe, Amel Bouzid, Sean Drummond, Mmabatho Kau, Tiny Mungwe, Sébastien Onomo, Bridget Pickering, Layla Swart, Sylvia Vollenhoven.

Moderators: Mitchell Harper, Theresa Hill, Isaac Mogajane, Flavia Motsisi.

Talents Durban

Project Manager: Menzi Mhlongo

Support Team: Chigo Chirwa, Chris Kanku, Nelisiwe Mkhize

Talents Mentors: Oris Aigbokhaebolo, Akosua Adoma Owusu, Jihane Bougrine, Comfort Authur, Amine Hattou, Bongi Ndaba, Ambinintsoa Luck Razanajaona, Nicole Schafer, Ramadan Suleman, Mayye Zayed.

Speakers: Alice Johnson, Vusi Africa, Damaris Irungu Ochieng, Zunaïd Mansoor, Rethabile Ramaphakela, Steve Rickinson.

Talent Press Festival Partners: Durban International Film Festival and Encounters South African Documentary Festival

Talent Press Publications: AFRICINE.org, Awotele, Film Efiko, Modern Times Review, TalentPress.org

Project Readers: Domoina Ratsara, Sharon Kakora, Wilfred Okichie.

DFM Access

Project Managers: Faiza Williams

Project Assistants: Thobeka Mnyandu, Nadia Davids

Project Readers: Bongi Ndaba, Kethiwe Ngcobo, Miki Redelinghuys.

Mentors: Jacintha de Nobrega, Tracey-Lee Dearham-Rainers, Sihle Hlope, Tiny Mungwe, Kethiwe Ngcobo, Busisiwe Ntintili, Tehobo Pietersen, Miki

Redelinghuys, Nicole Schafer, Thandeka Zwana.

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

DFM Industry Programme

Programme Coordinator: Sibahle Khwela

Programme Consultants: Mitchell Harper, Nataleah Hunter-Young

Support Team

Project Assistant (Operations): Minenhle Luthuli

Sponsorship Management: Pearl Munonde

Technical and Website Administrator: Chigo Chirwa

Financial Administration: Minenhle Khwela

Event Coordination: thoughtFIRE Events

Guest Coordinator: Deneice Otto

Publicity: Versfeld & Associates

Digital Marketing Strategy: New Noise

On-site Digital Marketing Team: Elevate Nexus

DFMI Interns: Nelisiwe Mkhize, Kwenza Ntsele, Asanda Zinti

Copy Editor: Busisiwe Memela

DFM 2026 Campaign Design: Digitlab Digital Strategy

DFM Accreditation: Fiona Suliman

DFM Dossier: Artworks

DFM Website: Digitlab Digital Strategy

Venue Coordinator: Nolulamo Maqutho

Volunteers: Students from AFDA, Durban University of Technology and University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Funders and Partners

Funders: eThekweni Municipality + Durban Film Office, Ford Foundation, National Film and Video Foundation, KwaZulu-Natal Tourism and Film Authority, Netflix, IEFTF, NEFTI, Arab Culture Fund.

Programme Partners: AnimationSA, Climate Story Lab, Cape Town International Animation Festival, Documentary Film Africa, Doc Society, DocA, EAVE, Independent Black Filmmakers Collective, Independent Producer's Organisation, NEWF, South African Guild for Actors, South African Guild for Editors, Storyboard Collective, Sisters Working in Film and Television and Writer's Guild of South Africa.

CONTACT:

✉ info@durbanfilmmart.com

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