

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.

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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.



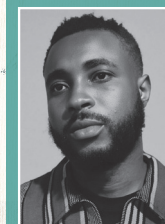
DIRECTOR'S/PRODUCER STATEMENT

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.