

Written by Ernest Kanjo

Wednesday, 25 January 2012 00:25 - Last Updated Wednesday, 25 January 2012 00:37

AFRICA WORLD

DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL 2012



FEBRUARY 7-10, 2012 • University of Yaoundé, CAMEROON
FEBRUARY 16-18, 2012 • Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame, the Carver Theater, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, USA
FEBRUARY 24-25, 2012 • Missouri History Museum, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, USA
MARCH 8-11, 2012 • University of the West Indies, E.B.C.C.I, Cinemateque, CAVE HILL, BARBADOS
MARCH 26-30, 2012 • Saint Louis University, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, USA
APRIL 25-28, 2012 • Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, LAWRENCE, KANSAS, USA
MAY 1-6, 2012 • Obafemi Awolowo University, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA
AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 9, 2012 • 'I Will Tell' International Film Festival, LONDON, UK
NOVEMBER, 2012 • Jewish Community Relations Center, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, USA



Tuesday, February 7, 2012

12:00 PM – 1:15 PM

Opening Reception

1:30 PM - 4:00 PM

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Volcanic Sprint*

Steve Dorst (53m, Cameroon, USA)

The sleepy town in Buea in the Southwest Province of Cameroon hosts Africa's most grueling footrace: the Mt. Cameroon Race of Hope, a marathon-length sprint 10,000 feet up a live volcano...and back down again. To conquer the mountain, racers must overcome some of the cruelest conditions in sport: temperatures fluctuate 50 degrees, altitude sickness claims the weak, and loose volcanic stones can cause serious injury—and even death—as runners fly back down the mountain.

Sweet Dreams

Rob Fruchtman, Lisa Fruchtman (94m, USA)

The documentary is the story of the women of Ingoma Nshya, the first and only women's drumming troupe in Rwanda and their efforts to create the country's first locally owned ice cream shop, which they have named Inzozu Nziza - Sweet Dreams. Each of the group's members is a survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Some lost their families; some were raped. Others are wives or children of perpetrators. The film follows this remarkable group of Rwandan women as they create their own unique path to a future of peace and possibility.

*Volcanic Sprint is an entry from the inaugural AWDFFF in 2007. The Film was originally shot in Cameroon

4:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Discussion Session

5:00 PM – 8:00 PM

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Indochina: Traces of a Mother (Indochine Sur Les Traces D'une Mere)
Idrissou Mora Kpai (74m, Benin, France)

Between 1946 and 1954, over 60,000 African soldiers were enlisted to fight the Viet Minh. Pitted against one another by circumstances, these two colonized peoples came into contact and a number of African soldiers took Vietnamese women as wives. Out of these unions, numerous mixed-race children were born. At the end of the war, the colonial army ordered that all the black children be repatriated to Africa, officially to protect them from the Viet Minh. While some children left with their mothers and fathers, others were simply taken away by their fathers, leaving their mothers behind. Abandoned in orphanages, those that had neither mother nor father were put up for mass adoption by African officers, as was the case with Christophe. Christophe long avoided facing the scars and identity complexes left by this abrupt separation from his mother and homeland. By encouraging him to undertake a journey into his own past, the film opens a little-known chapter of the Indochina war.

Otelo Burning
Sara Blecher (96m, South Africa)

It is 1989 and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa has reached its peak. Based on real events, the documentary tells the powerful story of three Zulu boys, Otelo Buthelezi and his friends, escape from the misery of their own harsh township lives through the joy of surfing. Overcoming his traditional fear of the water, Otelo Buthelezi discovers a natural talent, finding freedom on the waves and a huge potential for change through surfing. But in the turmoil of a country on the cusp of change, he is dragged down into a spiral of jealousy and violence. As Nelson Mandela finally walks free, Otelo must choose between two worlds that will change his life forever.

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1:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Donsoya, la voie du chasseur (Donsoya, The Way of the Hunter)
Sebastien Bariller (43m, France, Mali).

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We invite you to discover the amazing world of the West African traditional hunters' brotherhoods. Most precisely, you'll get introduced to malinke master hunters in Mali, who'll explain the goals and rules of their ancient society.

Real Voodoo

Sandra M. Whiteley (52m, Haiti, Canada)

In January 2010 a few days after Haiti suffered a massive earthquake, evangelical leader Pat Robertson went on air to blame the devastation on Haitians' 'pact with the devil' He was talking about Voodoo Was he right? Is Voodoo evil? To find out we decided to ask 'What is Voodoo? After many trips to Haiti pre and post-earthquake you know what we found? This is not Pat Robertson's Voodoo. It is something else. We think we have seen the Real Voodoo and we think you will be amazed when you see it too.

Abyssinia Ethiopia Meeting Point (Abyssinia Ethiopia terre des faces brûlées)
Denis Khalifa (51m, France)

The meeting of Genet, an Ethiopian Jew and Salomon, an orthodox Christian, takes us into the heart of Ethiopia's history and religious traditions. They travel 900 km, showing us their unique universe. They finally arrive into the whirlwind of the Ethiopian Epiphany, the most spectacular and colorful event in the Horn of Africa.

3:45 PM – 6:15 PM

These Streets Belong To Us

Shareen Anderson, Lisa Henry (54m, South Africa)

The documentary looks at how ordinary South Africans are coping with the scourge of crime and violence. The film tells of three different Johannesburg communities: Kensington, a middle class suburb that is jolted into action after a street security guard is murdered while on duty;

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Alexandra, a mostly poor black township that has formed a community policing forum that patrols the streets, lending a helping hand to the overburdened police; and Hillbrow, a densely populated inner city neighborhood, which was a 'no go' zone for police for many years, but is now undergoing massive regeneration. The film is an inspiring look at how neighbors from disparate lives become empowered to stand up and take back their community, with a hopeful vision of the future.

Brother Time
Wesley Shrum (56m, Kenya, USA)

Brother Time is a mythic tale of neighbors from different tribes caught in a wider conflict. Kenya erupted in ethnic violence after the 2007 Presidential election, and the two friends fell apart when, suddenly, it was 'not the brother time.' Filmed in the Rift Valley during the clashes, the roots of tribalism are explored as one who saw the worst of the conflict returns home to see his neighbor. To be released during the 2012 Presidential campaign, this message of hope shows it can be Brother Time once again.

18 Days
Tarek Abouamin (19m, Egypt)

In an 18-day popular uprising that toppled a decades-long oppressive regime, the people of Egypt rose to change the social and political landscape of the region and the world. Many Egyptians paid with their lives in a fight against corruption and autocracy. They fought bravely for basic civil liberties, justice and freedom from a government that tortured, murdered its citizens, and embezzled billions of public money. Countless people risked their lives to tell the story to the world. This film is made with footage shot by protesters, revolutionaries, and everyday Egyptians.

We Win or We Die
Mathew Millan (21m, USA)

February, 2011. The people of Benghazi revolt against the brutal regime of Moammar Gaddafi. Yet standing in the way of liberation is the 2-mile sprawling fortress known as the Katiba. Holding hundreds of soldiers and heavy artillery, it stands poised to rain death down upon the

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protesters. The film is the story of an ordinary Libyan who understands that there is but one way to stop the bloodshed and one way to gain freedom. The sprawling fortress, the fist of Gaddafi, the Katiba must fall...

6:15 PM – 6:45 PM

Discussion Session

6:45 PM – 8:30 PM

The Big Banana

Franck Gilles Brice Hameni Bieleu (85m, Cameroon)

In the coastal region of Cameroon, in Central Africa, a western conglomerate has set up a lucrative exploitation of dessert banana for over 30 years. This lucrative business should normally generate wealth and economic growth for community as well as for the company, instead, the plantation workers barely manage to survive with as low as 40 dollars per month work over 15 hours a day, health issues arise due to the use of toxic chemical product use to treat banana trees, people get expropriated by the state in favor of the almighty big banana company so it can generate billions of profits. People of the Moungo region are failed by their government and their representatives who are bought and paid for by the company.

We Want What's Ours (Sifuna Okwethu)

Bernadette Atuahene (19m, USA)

We Want What's Ours is a documentary short filmed in South Africa and is about loss, resistance, identity and the elusiveness of justice as experienced by the Ndolila family in their quest to get back their family land stolen by the apartheid government in 1973. Standing in their way are working class black homeowners who purchased portions of the Ndolila's land in the 1990s. For the homeowners, the land and houses they have legally purchased are a reward for their hard work. For the Ndolilas, the land is part of their family legacy and hence deeply intertwined with their identity. Both sides have a legitimate right to the land, but whose rights will

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prevail?

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1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Without a Net

Kelly J Richardson (60m, USA)

Djeferson, Barbara, Rayana and Platini live in a drug controlled slum of Rio de Janeiro. Their families are struggling, their homes are physically unstable and everyone they know has dropped out of school. When a big-top circus tent suddenly appears in a nearby parking lot, they decide to take a chance. They learn trapeze, acrobatics, juggling and contortion, then audition for the end-of-year show, rehearse and prepare for the curtains to part on opening night. Along the way, 'Without A Net' celebrates the perseverance and resiliency of youth in the face of tremendous odds.

Street Journey

Tracy Christian (58m, USA)

For the street children of Nairobi, hope for the future is dim-until renowned Kenyan actress Anne Wanjugu lifts their spirits and awakens their joy through the power of the theater. Given a home and the chance to express their gifts on stage, the orphaned children flourish, but an unexpected event puts their resilience to the test as they journey from down-and-out Nairobi to the bright lights of Broadway.

3:15 PM – 5:15 PM

Twilight Revelation: Episodes in the Life & Times of Emperor Haile Selassie

Yemane I Demessie (58m, Ethiopia, USA)

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The documentary film explores and analyzes watershed events during the reign of the former Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie. Using a wealth of archival footage and photographs, the documentary reexamines the imperial administration through the eyes of numerous notable individuals who played substantive roles and worked closely with the emperor. The featured witnesses include former ministers, a general, a state attorney and a judge, parliamentarians, high ranking civil servants and staff from the royal court. It also featured members of the royal family including his grandchildren. The observations and narratives of these individuals shed a new light on the personality, leadership style and the myth behind Ethiopia's last emperor.

Fambul Tok

Sara Terry (82m, USA)

Victims and perpetrators of Sierra Leone's brutal civil war come together for the first time in an unprecedented program of tradition-based truth-telling and forgiveness ceremonies. Through reviving their ancient practice of fambul tok (family talk), Sierra Leoneans are building sustainable peace at the grass-roots level -- succeeding where the international community's post-conflict efforts failed. Filled with lessons for the West, this film explores the depths of a culture that believes that true justice lies in redemption and healing for individuals - and that forgiveness is the surest path to restoring dignity and building strong communities.

5:15 PM - 5:45 PM

Discussion Session

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Talibe - The Least Favored Children of Senegal

Daniela Kon (57m, Senegal)

The important tradition of Islamic education in Senegal has been left to develop in disturbingly perverted ways. 50.000 koranic students (Talibes), young boys between 4 and 15 years old are subjected to exploitation in conditions akin to slavery. They are forced to beg on the streets by

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their koranic schoolteachers and suffer severe physical abuse and neglect. Following the staff of local grassroots NGO 'La Maison de la Gare' (MDG) during their daily efforts to find solutions for the terrible conditions the boys are subjected to, the documentary sets out on a poetic exploration of the nature and circumstances that breed and prolong the suffering of these children.

You Must be Something
Lynn Groft (13m, USA)

The documentary journeys with Sunny Ntayombya, who was born in Uganda and raised in Canada, after his parents fled their native Rwanda to escape growing ethnic violence in 1959. In this short documentary, Sunny grapples with his identity growing up as a refugee and returning to Rwanda after the 1994 genocide and the return of stability.

My Long Distance Friend
Carina Molier (73m, the Netherlands)

OG is a beautiful young woman who has wandered around Europe since she left Zimbabwe at the age of 9. From then on she has struggled to survive, continually seeking a balance in her life. OG strives to regain custody of her daughter taken from her at an early age. Director Carina Molier - her long distance friend - follows her in her quest for reunification and peace of mind. The documentary is about displacement, about longing for security and relationships in an ever globalizing and inhospitable world.

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1:00 PM – 3:15 PM

I Love Africa
Suzanne Africa Engo (100m, USA)

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When celebrity AIDS Activist and a native Cameroonian, Suzanne Africa Engo, gains 120 pounds becoming an obese woman she vows she will lose 100 pounds and run from NY to Chicago before the next world AIDS day. But the journey doesn't end in Chicago she ends up continuing to run around the world proving that to change the world first she has to change herself.

Back to Mandima (Retour a Mandima)

Robert-Jan Lacombe (40m, Switzerland, DR Congo)

The film maker returns to his birth place in Mandima, the small village in northeast part of Democratic Republic of Congo after 15 years to find his birth village and his three best friends. The documentary journeys with Robert-Jan, the son of European parents, in his attempt to bring closure to an idealized childhood and free himself from its spells. The film maker discovers what friendship means, beyond skin color and when one can take the plane to visit while the other can't?

3:30 PM – 6:15 PM

The Other Documentary

Yassine El Idrissi (58m, Morocco)

The documentary follows Mustapha, a disabled street performer, who sings ten hours a day to earn a living in the capital city of Morocco, Rabat. The film is a reflexive portrait into the manipulation and bi-directional influence between documentary making and the subject of the film. It also tries to investigate the nature of the media and its influence on the story.

Sunday in Brazzaville (Dimanche a Brazzaville)

Enric Bach (51m, Spain & Congo)

A young radio talk host, Carlos La Menace, unveils in his weekend show three figures of Congo's capital, Brazzaville. The Sapeur Yves Saint Laurent, surrounded by extreme poverty, chooses elegance as a way of life. Cheriff Bakala is not a usual rapper. Finally, Palmas Yaya,

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Brazzaville's wrestling champion is relying on voodoo to defend its throne in a crucial moment of his life...

Body and Soul (De corpo e alma)
Matthieu Bron (54m, Mozambique)

The film tells the stories of three young Mozambicans with physical disabilities, living in the townships of Maputo, Mozambique's capital city, performing dance, the art of the body. The documentary follows the daily lives of these three young Mozambicans and reveals their physical, psychological and emotional challenges. In a world where visual input (physical appearance, clothes, etc.) is a powerful basis for social judgment and positioning, the film tries to explore the way they look at themselves and others as well as raises universal questions about self-acceptance and how to find one's place in society.

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

The Great Mafia Orange Squeeze
Sophia Luvara (28m, UK)

Italy's Southern region of Calabria behaves like a rogue State. Here, the 'Ndrangheta (Calabrian Mafia) hold sway. They are the de facto Government, the de facto law and, in the countryside, the main employer. Thousands of African Immigrants have found this out the hard way. Quasi legal migrants, coming direct from Africa are drowning to Calabria by the work - harvesting oranges. What awaits them is pure misery and semi-slavery. They become trapped by government bureaucracy and by poverty. Their employers are the Mafia, so they have little course to complain about the level of wages. They cannot leave Italy, they don't have the right papers, yet they cannot join society, because they have not got the right papers. On one night in January this year, two of them were shot by the locals in Rosarno. The mostly young African men rioted in this small backwater town, which is dominated by the Ndrangheta.

Surfing Soweto
Sara Blecher (85m, South Africa.)

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Over the course of the last 3 years Cinga Productions has been following and documenting the lives of three of the most notorious train surfers in Soweto: Bitch Nigga, Lefa and Mzembe. We have followed them on to the top of trains hurtling through Soweto. We have followed them into the heroin dens of Hilbrow, and jails with names like Sun City - all in the hope of understanding their frustrations and documenting the lives of the new generation of youth in Soweto. Surfing Soweto is the story of this forgotten generation.

TTS NOTE

Dr Tagem Donatus Fai talks to Ernest Kanjo on AWDFD soon!