

# AFRICAN FESTIVAL NEW YORK

**APRIL 8-14** Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center

**APRIL 15** Institute of African Studies, Columbia University

**MAY 22-25** BAMcinématek at BAM Rose Cinemas

**N°16**

**2009**





# AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL NEW YORK

APRIL 8<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>, APRIL 15<sup>th</sup>, MAY 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>

The 2009 New York African Film Festival, presented under the banner "Africa in Transition," takes an introspective journey across the African continent with films that create a vision of Africa's future through a deconstruction of its past.

It has been 15 years since South Africa's first all-race democratic elections. In mid-April of this year, South Africa will go to the polls for the fourth time since the end of Apartheid. With Nelson Mandela long retired, a new generation of leaders governs the country and grapples to maintain the grand ideals that drove the struggle against Apartheid. It is both the best of times, and the most challenging of times!

The films in this year's New York African Film Festival speak to these challenges. A centerpiece of the festival is Jihan El-Tahri's *Behind The Rainbow*, which probes the history of the governing African National Congress party. Director Ralph Ziman presents a new South African Scarface with his irreverent gangster movie, *Jeruselema*; meanwhile *Triomf*, by veteran director Michael Raeburn, focuses on South Africa's white poor. Rounding out the focus on South Africa is the artists collective, *Filmmakers Against Racism*, which produced a series of short films in response to the xenophobic incidents that rocked South Africa in 2008.

The festival also offers an introspective look at Africa through new contemporary works. It spotlights three up-and-coming female Kenyan filmmakers: Lupita Nyong'o (*In My Genes*), Judy Kibinge (*Killer Necklace*), and Wanuri Kihiu (*From A Whisper*). Meanwhile, the 21st century reality of young African asylum seekers within Europe and Africa is explored in *Area Boys* and *Paris à tout Prix*. This year's new directors join veterans across the continent in configuring a new vision of Africa's future.

Veteran filmmakers Jean-Marie Teno and Mahamat Saleh Haroun are back with films that, like those of the new generation, question the purpose and direction of African filmmaking. With *Sacred Places*, Teno asks African filmmakers who their audience is – and who it should be. Haroun surprises us with a comedy about the Diaspora (*Sex, Okra and Salted Butter*), which highlights the importance of the African audience.

This year's festival recognizes the journey into Africa's future with coming-of-age tales *L'Appel des Arènes*, *Bronx Princess* and *Nora*, which follow young people who reclaim their cultural legacies to create new opportunities. *Fighting Spirit* and *Yandé Codou* expand on this idea by exploring the lives of well-known historical figures who have influenced generations.

This intersection of past and present is a theme that will be further explored in 2010's festival, as the New York African Film Festival reflects upon 50 watershed moments in African history that still affect winds of change today.

The 16th New York African Film Festival was organized by Richard Peña of The Film Society of Lincoln Center and the African Film Festival, Inc. (Mahen Bonetti, Tocarra Holmes Thomas, Aba Taylor, Muriel Placet-Kouassi and Alonzo Speight). With special thanks to the AFF Board of Directors, Joan Baffour, Luca Bonetti, Françoise Bouffault, Sean Jacobs, Mamadou Diouf, Sarah Diouf, Gabriele Donati, Morgan Seag, Jacki Fischer, Belynda M'Baye, Alexander Markov, Andrew Milne, Philippa Naughten, Prerana Reddy, Keith Shiri, Cheryl Duncan & Co. P.R., Kojo Associates and AFF's volunteer team.

The programs of AFF are made possible by the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, JPMorgan Chase, New York State Council on the Arts, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, International Organization of la Francophonie, Divine Chocolate, Domenico Paulon Foundation, New York Foundation for the Arts, New York Times Community Affairs Department, South African Consulate General, Time Warner Cable, French Cultural Services, Bloomberg, Tides Foundation, Columbia University's Institute of African Studies, GoCard, WNYC, Continental Airlines, 57 Main St. Wine Company, Putumayo World Music, Royal Air Maroc and Ominpak Import Enterprises, Inc.

## PANEL DISCUSSION - Beyond the Rainbow

Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm

Screening Session I: 12:00pm – 2:00pm

Screening Session II: 3:00pm – 4:30pm

Milbank Chapel at Teachers College, Columbia University @ West 120<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway

Panel Discussion: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Lindsay Rogers Room, 707 International Affairs Building @ 420 West 118<sup>th</sup> Street

### Beyond the Rainbow: 15 Years into South Africa's Democracy

In the past year, we have seen South Africans of all shades and ages posing: Who is South African? What does it mean to be South African? How to define South African identity? The notions of ethnicity and race no longer have the strict systematic logic of Apartheid to fall back on, and race and culture are becoming increasingly fluid. With South Africa's upcoming elections, it is fitting that this year's panel examine the idea of nationhood in post-Apartheid South Africa and consider the various ways in which South Africans envision their relationship to both the rest of the continent and the rest of the international community.

A reception will follow the panel discussion.

## GALLERY EXHIBITION - Orpheus Dreaming

Exhibition of artwork by artist Michelle Hill, April 8<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>

### Frieda and Roy Furman Gallery, Walter Reade Theater

The intent of artist Michelle Hill with "Orpheus Dreaming" is to breathe new life into the retelling of ancient legend and folk myth. She wants to present stories in a contemporary high-tech idiom to awaken an international audience, and she hopes to exploit this technology to give new life and expression to ancient myths. By reaching into the past, she continues her own journey to understand her personal history as an African-American whose roots are found in the Ivory Coast.





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#### AFRICAN BOOTY SCRATCHER

*Nikyatu Jusu, USA/Sierra Leone 2008, 13min.*  
A fashionable New York City teenager must decide whether to follow family tradition or conform to her peer’s values when choosing her prom dress. This is a crisp and fresh retelling of the story of young Africans living in the Diaspora.

#### AREA BOYS (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Omelihu Nwanguma, Nigeria, 2008, 25min.*  
Lifelong friends Bode and Obi decide to repent from their corrupt way of life. They cut ties with their megalomaniac boss, but life as “good” citizens proves difficult, and so they plan one last job to fund their transition. The friends are then faced with a life-or-death situation as they search for an escape from their vengeful former boss’s henchmen.

#### AWAITING FOR MEN

*Katy Léna N'diaye, Senegal/Mauritania/Belgium, 2007, 56min.*

In the haven of Oualata, a red city on the far edge of the Sahara, three women practice traditional painting by decorating the walls of the city. In a society apparently dominated by tradition, religion and men, these women unabashedly discuss the relationship between men and women.

#### AZUR AND ASMAR / AZUR ET ASMAR

*Michel Ocelot, France, 2006, 99min.*  
This new film by the director of the hit Kirikou films is a delightful animated fairy tale set in North Africa. Michael Ocelot creates a magical world for the story of two brothers and their quest to free a captive fairy, while handling themes of race and tolerance with keen insight.

#### BARAKA (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Omelga Mthiyane and Riaan Hendricks, South Africa, 2008, 24min.*

After the violent xenophobic attacks in South Africa, the community of Masiphumelele publicly apologized to nearby Soetwater Refugee Camp, inviting their displaced foreign nationals back home. Baraka follows their return to the overcrowded community of Masiphumelele.

#### BEHIND THE RAINBOW (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Jihan El-Tahri, South Africa/Egypt, 2009, 120min.*  
*Co-presented with Thiridi.*

*Behind the Rainbow* explores the transition of the ANC from a liberation organization into South Africa’s ruling party through the evolution of the relationship between two of its most prominent figures, Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma. The film features interviews with key ANC figures, including both Zuma and Mbeki.

#### BRONX PRINCESS

*Yoni Brook and Musa Syeed, Ghana/USA, 2008, 29min.*  
*Bronx Princess* follows headstrong 17-year-old Rocky as she leaves behind her mother in New York City to reunite with her father, a chief in Ghana. By confronting her immigrant parents’ ideas of adulthood during her tumultuous summer between high school and college, Rocky must reconcile her African heritage with her dream of independence.

#### THE BURNING MAN – ERNESTO ALFABETO NHAMUAVE (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Adze Ugah, South Africa/Nigeria, 2008, 24min.*  
Adze Ugah shares his journey to reclaim the identity of the man the world has come to know as “The Burning Man” - Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave. This is not a hard-hitting exposé of the horrific burning of a man, but a gentle exploration as Adze tries to understand who Ernesto was and what poverty can do to the fragile chords of humanity.

#### LE CLANDESTIN

*José Laplaine, Zaire, 1997, 15min.*  
When an Angolan stowaway lands in Lisbon, he learns that the Europe of his dreams may not be the paradise he imagined.

#### COME BACK TO SUDAN

*Daniel Junge & Patti Bonnet, Sudan/USA, 29min.*  
The last time Lado, Mabiior, and Deng saw their families, they were eight years old. Flash forward 18 years. Accompanied by their adoptive Colorado mother, they undertake an extraordinary journey back to their villages in war-torn Sudan.

#### COMING OF AGE (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Judy Kibinge, Kenya, 2008, 12min.*  
*Coming Of Age* takes us through the development of Kenyan democracy through the eyes of a young Kenyan girl. The naïve post-independence euphoria is reflected in an innocent young girl’s outlook; Moi’s oppressive regime is narrated through her teenage turmoil; and a more mature narrator comes of age with the election President Kibaki. But after disputed election results in December 2007, we are left to wonder if democracy ever truly comes of age.

#### CONGO MY FOOT (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Okepne Ojang, South Africa/Cameroon, 2008, 24min.*  
The members of Tino La Musica, a Congolese band based in Cape Town, live and rehearse in a rundown block of flats until they are evicted just before the outbreak of xenophobic violence. The double impact of these events causes the band to fall apart, yet its members struggle to reunite and find the will to sing and dance again.

#### THE FIGHTING SPIRIT (U.S. PREMIERE)

*George Amponsah, UK/USA/Ghana, 2007, 80min.*  
One town in Africa takes on the world as three boxers, two men and a woman from a poor slum in Ghana, fight their way to the glittering rings of New York and London. Thanks to tenacious coaches who turn rough street fighters into money-churning professional boxers, the village has produced several champions and is looking for its next big winner.

#### FROM A WHISPER (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Wanuri Kahiu, Kenya, 2008, 90min.*  
This film commemorates the 10th anniversary of the August 1998 terrorist bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, in which over 250 people died and more than 5,000 were injured. The film tells the story of an artist and an intelligence officer, and how they find unique ways to move on from the tragedy that shattered their lives.

#### HEARTLINES

*Angus Gibson, South Africa, 2006, 95min.*  
*Heartlines* is a touching story about second chances, forgiveness and the power of unconditional love. Manyisa is offered a second chance at life when he is paroled and taken in by a pastor and his family. Manyisa is drawn to the closeness of the family and the congregation, but his chance at a new life is threatened by his former crime boss, who has other plans in mind.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ELEGANT

*George Amponsah, UK/USA/Ghana, 2004, 69min.*  
The Congolese Sapeurs, members of the Société des Ambianceurs et Personnes Élégantes, have elevated fashion to the status of a religion. Papa Wemba, a well-known Congolese singer, is one of La SAPE’s most prominent figures. This film is a splendid evocation of Papa Wemba’s music, and it presents an unusual insight into what it means to be an immigrant in contemporary Europe.

#### IN MY GENES (NY PREMIERE)

*Lupita Nyong’o, Kenya, 2009, 78min.*  
*Co-presented with Margaret Meade Film & Video Festival*  
What is it like to be “white” in a “black” society? Agnes, a woman with albinism, overcomes the difficulties of being born with no pigment in a society that discriminates against the condition. *In My Genes* asks us to consider how it feels to be a member of one of the most hyper-visible and yet effectively invisible groups of people in a predominantly black society.

#### JERUSALEMA (NY PREMIERE)

*Ralph Ziman, South Africa, 2008, 118min.*  
Lucky Kunene, a poor boy in rural South Africa, is plucked from the nursery slopes of crime and roped into armed robbery by a former ANC soldier with a vendetta against the old regime. Kunene grows up to become the country’s self-proclaimed Robin Hood. This stylized crime story ponders the nature of justice and the virtues of vigilantism.

#### KILLER NECKLACE (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Judy Kibinge, Kenya, 2009, 40min.*  
Boo is a handsome young banker with a bright future; Wai is a sultry young girl from a privileged background. Boo would do anything for Wai, but Wai has her eye on a different prize: the most beautiful golden necklace in the world. This twisted tale of desire and deceit asks, is anybody what they appear to be?

#### KINSHASA PALACE (NY PREMIERE)

*José Laplaine, Democratic Republic of the Congo/France, 2006, 75min.*  
The Laplaine family is scattered throughout Europe and Africa, refugees from the wars in the Congo. Kaze and his younger brother Max live in Paris, but recently Max has gone missing and the family is beginning to worry. Somewhere between documentary and fiction, this engrossing film speaks volumes about the legacy of an unstable Africa on the micro level.

#### MARTINE AND THANDEKA (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Xoliswa Sithole, South Africa, 2008, 24min.*  
*Martine and Thandeka* follows the stories of two women, one Congolese and one Zimbabwean, both caught up in the furor of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa and struggling to redefine their uncertain futures.

#### METENI: THE LOST ONE

*Wondessen Deresse, Ethiopia, 2002, 30min.*  
Meteni’s family moves with their herds through northeastern Ethiopia. When her husband leaves for town, she moves all the family’s possessions by camel to a new campsite. She grinds maize by hand, milks the goats and carries water for miles in searing heat. When she becomes pregnant, she continues her punishing workload with disastrous consequences.

#### MUNYURANGABO

*Lee Isaac Chung, Rwanda/USA, 2007, 97min.*  
A teenager steals a machete at a Kigali market, then leaves with his friend on an extraordinary journey that boldly confronts Rwanda’s bloody history and the emotional consequences of years of war and genocide. This intimate story asks profound questions about the possibility of reconciliation and healing.

#### NORA

*Alla Kovgan and David Hinton, USA/ UK/ Mozambique, 2008, 35min.*  
Based on a true story, *Nora* takes us to the Zimbabwe of dancer Nora Chipaumire’s childhood as she journeys through the vivid memories of her youth. With the help of local performers and dancers of all ages, she brings her story to life in a swiftly moving poem of sound and image.

#### PARIS SELON MOUSSA

*Cheik Doukouré, Guinea/France, 2003, 96min.*  
The village’s water pump is on its last legs and Moussa is appointed to go and buy a new one in Paris. On his journey he encounters remarkable characters and typical immigrant difficulties; however, he also discovers the solidarity of the immigrant community. This film stirred controversy in France and was awarded the United Nations Human Rights Award in 2003.

#### PARIS OR NOTHING / PARIS À TOUT PRIX

*Josephine Ndagnou, Cameroon, 2008, 133min.*  
Suzy will do anything to leave her native Cameroon for Paris, but after risking the journey and enduring seemingly endless ordeals, she finds that Paris is not the paradise of which she dreamed. This film presents a powerful portrait of a young woman whose dreams and perhaps false hopes are shared by many young people today.

#### THE PRODIGAL SON (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Kurt Orderson, South Africa, 2008, 64min.*  
Kurt Orderson, a Rastafarian and a filmmaker from Cape Town, retraces the epic journey of his great grandfather, a member of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, from the West Indies to South Africa.

#### SACRED PLACES/LIEUX SAINTS (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Jean-Marie Teno, Cameroon/France, 2009, 70min.*  
Jean-Marie Teno turns the portrait of a neighborhood in Ouagadougou into an introspective look at his craft as a filmmaker and a reflection on art, popular culture and business in Africa today. Sacred Places is told through the lives of a video club operator and a djembe maker and player who sees the djembe as the big brother of cinema.

#### SEX, OKRA AND SALTED BUTTER / SEXE, GOMBO ET BEURRE SALÉ

*Mahamat Saleh Haroun, Chad/France, 2008, 81min.*  
Mr. Haroun reveals an incredible sense of humor in this comedy. An extra-marital affair leads to Hortense’s separation from her very traditional African husband, who is in for a ride as he learns about her love affair, his eldest son’s secret love life, and the responsibilities of single parenthood.

#### SHOOT THE MESSENGER

*Ngozi Onwurah, Nigeria/UK, 2006, 100min.*  
Joe is determined to save the black youngsters at his school from a life of gangs, crime and underachievement. When a seemingly minor incident escalates out of control, Joe loses his job, turns against his community, and descends into madness before realizing he still has a lot to learn. This film was the winner of the Dennis Potter Screenwriting Award and two BAFTA TV Awards.

#### SIKI, RING WRESTLER (U.S. PERMIERE)

*Mamadou Niang, USA/Senegal, 1993, 12min.*  
Senegalese boxing legend Battling Siki, a World War I hero and the first African to win a world championship, fascinated and intrigued before he was murdered at only 28 years old. This film tells the story of his most famous fight, and the saga of the excavation of his remains.

#### THIS IS MY AFRICA

*Zina Saro-Wiwa, African continent/Nigeria/UK, 2008, 47min.*  
In *This Is My Africa*, we hear about the Africa that inhabits 18 people’s memories: the Africa that has inspired, infuriated and delighted them. We also learn about what they hope Africa will be in 2060.

#### TRIOMF (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Michael Raeburn, South Africa, 2008, 120min.*  
In April 1994, on the day of South Africa’s first free elections, Lambert Benade will turn 21, and uncle Treppie has promised him the girl of his dreams. But in this hilariously horrendous tragic-comedy, as a new world is born, two members of the poor white family are destined to die.

#### WRESTLING GROUNDS / L'APPEL DES ARÈNES

*Cheikh N'Diaye, Senegal/Burkina Faso/France, 2006, 105min.*

When 17-year-old Nalla joins a champion wrestling team, he learns that wrestling is about more than muscles, money and ladies. *Wrestling Grounds* twists the familiar images of Africa, cutting from nightclubs to ancestral ceremonies to streets where boomboxes play and athletes in traditional dress and sneakers dance their way to victory.

#### YANDE CODOU, THE GRIOT OF SENGHOR/ YANDE CODOU, LA GRIOTTE DE SENGHOR (U.S. PREMIERE)

*Angèle Diabang Brener, Senegal, 2008, 52min.*  
Yandé Codou Sène (80 years old) is one of the last great singers of polyphonic Serere poetry. This film is an intimate look at a diva who has lived through the history of Senegal at the side of one of its greatest near-mythical figures, President-poet Léopold Sédar Senghor.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

Getting Exposure: Securing the Buzz You Need for Your Film

**Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am**

*Frieda and Roy Furman Gallery, Walter Reade Theater*

Established and emerging filmmakers will learn the elements vital to an attention-grabbing pitch, tips on utilizing social media tools and other dos and don’ts of film promotion from journalists and experts in publicity and social networking. Costs: \$8 public, \$6 Film Society members and students, \$7 seniors (62+).

# Walter Reade Theater

\* Directors will be in attendance.

## WED APR 8

1:45 **Kinshasa Palace**  
3:30 **Paris or Nothing**  
6:00 **Sacred Places \***  
8:00 **Behind The Rainbow \***

## THU APR 9

2:15 **The Importance of Being Elegant**  
4:00 **Wrestling Grounds**  
6:15 **Triomf \***  
9:00 **Killer Necklace \***  
*screening with*  
**Area Boys \***

## FRI APR 10

1:00 **The Fighting Spirit**  
*screening with*  
**Siki, Ring Wrestler**  
**The Prodigal Son**  
*screening with*  
**Bronx Princess**  
*screening with*  
**African Booty Scratcher**  
**Sex, Okra and Salted Butter \***  
**Jeruselema \***  
**Filmmakers Against Racism \***

## SAT APR 11

1:00 **Sacred Places \***  
3:00 **From a Whisper \***  
5:15 **Yandé Codou, the Griot of Senghor \***  
*screening with*  
**Nora \***  
*screening with*  
**Coming of Age \***  
**Wrestling Grounds \***  
7:35 **The Importance of Being Elegant \***  
10:00

## SUN APR 12

12:30 **Filmmakers Against Racism \***  
2:40 **The Prodigal Son \***  
*screening with*  
**Bronx Princess \***  
*screening with*  
**African Booty Scratcher \***  
5:15 **The Fighting Spirit \***  
*screening with*  
**Siki, Ring Wrestler \***  
7:20 **Sex, Okra and Salted Butter \***  
9:15 **In My Genes \***

## MON APR 13

12:30 **Triomf**  
2:50 **Behind the Rainbow**  
5:30 **Kinshasa Palace \***  
7:30 **Paris or Nothing \***  
10:00 **Killer Necklace \***  
*screening with*  
**Area Boys \***

## TUE APR 14

2:40 **Yandé Codou, the Griot of Senghor**  
*screening with*  
**Nora**  
*screening with*  
**Coming of Age**  
5:00 **In My Genes \***  
7:00 **From a Whisper \***  
9:00 **Jeruselema \***

## INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

## WED APR 15

12:00 **Session I Film Screening:** Feature  
3:00 **Session II Film Screening:** Shorts  
6:00 **Panel Discussion**

# BAMcinématek

## FRI MAY 22

2:00 **Heartlines**  
4:30 **Kinshasa Palace**  
6:50 **Heartlines**  
9:15 **Kinshasa Palace**

## SAT MAY 23

2:00 **Meteni: The Lost One**  
*screening with*  
**Awaiting for Men**  
4:30 **Meteni: The Lost One**  
*screening with*  
**Awaiting for Men**  
6:50 **Shoot the Messenger**  
9:15 **Shoot the Messenger**

## SUN MAY 24

3:00 **African Short Program †**  
6:00 **Munyurangabo**  
9:00 **African Short Program †**

† *featuring:* **Come Back to Sudan, Le Clandestin, This is my Africa.**

## MON MAY 25

2:00 **Azur and Asmar**  
4:30 **Azur and Asmar**  
6:50 **Paris Selon Moussa**  
9:15 **Paris Selon Moussa**

**Walter Reade Theater**, 165 West 65<sup>th</sup> St. on the plaza level at Lincoln Center. Visit [www.filmlinc.com](http://www.filmlinc.com) or call 212.496.3809 for tickets. **Box office:** open daily from 12:30pm. Call 212.875.5600 for information. General Admission \$11, \$8 seniors (62+), \$7 students, \$7 FSLC members, \$7 children (ages 6-12) accompanied by adult. **Series pass available.** **Directions:** Take 1 train to 66<sup>th</sup> Street; M5, M66 or M106 bus.

**BAMcinématek @ BAM Rose Cinemas**, 30 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn. Visit [BAM.org](http://BAM.org) or call 718.636.4100 for information. Tickets also available through [www.movietickets.com](http://www.movietickets.com) or 718.777.FILM. General admission \$11; Cinema Club members \$7; Seniors, children under 12, students with valid ID \$8 (Mon-Thu, except holidays). \*Discounts available at BAM Rose box office only. **Directions:** C train to Lafayette; N, R, D, M to Pacific; 2, 3, 4, 5 train to Nevins; or G train to Fulton.