

African films screened at DIFF 09

The 30th Durban International Film Festival (DIFF) plans to feature 77 African films (including South African), comprising nine feature films, 28 documentaries and 49 short films. DIFF 2009 will take place 23 July - 2 August 2009 at various venues across the Durban vicinity.



DIFF opens with the South African premiere of Durban-made feature "My Secret Sky" directed by Madoda Ncayiyana, a tale of two orphaned rural children and their adventures on the streets of Durban. Other South African films premiering at the festival include the South African Bollywood romantic comedy "For Better For Worse" by Naresh Veeran, South Africa's first Xhosa feature-length film "Intonga" by JJ Van Rensburg and "Long Street", a second offering from Revel Fox, director of "The Flyer".

Savo Tufegdžić's first feature named "Crime - Its a way of Life" is a portrait of the psychology of crime in South Africa. Steve Jacobs' "Disgrace" is an Australia production of the adaptation of JM Coetzee's Booker Prize winning novel, and stars John Malkovich with Durban actress Jessica Haines. Anthony Fabian's "Skin" is a South African-UK co-production based on a true story about Sandra Laing who was born to a white family during apartheid, but happened to be black. The world premiere of "White Lion" is a story about an albino lion cub rejected by his pride yet revered by the Shangaan tribe. Another film suitable for children is "The Seven of Daran - The Battle of Pareo Rock", a Dutch production directed by Lourens Blok, shot in South Africa, about two children's adventures with a mythical giraffe.

Also in the African contingent of feature films this year is "The Absence", Senegalese Mama Keita's film on the brain-drain of African skills and knowledge, particularly to Europe; African Movie Academy Awards winner for Best Nigerian Feature Film Tunde Kelani's "Arugba" as well as "From a Whisper" from Kenya's Wanuri Kahiu.

Doccies at DIFF

In addition to these feature films, the selection of African documentaries includes Sundance Award winning Kim Longinotto's "Rough Aunties", which provides insight into the dramas of an Amanzimtoti organisation who help abused children, Zola Maseko's "The Manuscripts of Timbuktu" about Africa's great ancient centre of learning, and Malian director Cherif Keita's unfolding of the connections between ANC founder John Dube and renegade missionaries in "Cemetery Stories: A Rebel Mission in South Africa". "ISETA - Behind the Roadblock" is a personal portrait of lives shattered by the Rwandan genocide; "Give Us This Day" by Billy Raftery follows the lives of vulnerable children living in the streets of Durban and Charlene Houston's "Babalwa's Story" paints the picture of the crisis of masculinity in South Africa while championing the resilience of one courageous young woman.

The Foster Brothers (Craig and Damon) have two films in the festival, the world premiere of "Ice Man" (about Lewis Pugh whose swims in the Arctic and Antarctic Oceans highlight the perils of melting ice-caps) and "The Nature of Life" which addresses climate change from an African perspective. Richard H. Nosworthy's film "Reg Park - The Legend" documents the life and times of body-building legend Reg Park; "The Silver Fez" by Lloyd Ross brilliantly explores the competitive character of Cape Malay music culture, while "Zwelidumile" by Ramadan Suleman shows the impact of exile on families left behind through the story of legendary self-exiled artist Dumile Feni. Cameroonian filmmaker Jean-Marie Teno presents "Sacred Places" a film on filmmaking, art, African cinema, globalisation popular culture and business in contemporary Africa. The excellent Yande Codou, "The Griot of Senghor" introduces us to a remarkable 80-year old singer of polyphonic Sérère poetry, while Canadian production, "Nollywood Babylon" is a portrait of the Nigerian film industry that delves deep into the lives of the filmmakers and audience in the slums of Lagos. Directed by Ntokozo Mahlalela, "Tribes and Clans", a study on tribalism in contemporary South Africa focuses on issues of race and identity.

Akin Omotoso returns to DIFF with "Jesus and the Giant" an experimental film constructed entirely from over 7000 digital stills images. Michael J Rix, director of South Africa's first feature length stop frame animation, returns this year with a five-minute film "Strings"; "Waramutseho" by Auguste Bernard Kouemo Yanghu is a Cameroon-Belgium-France co-production that takes a look at the Rwandan genocide from a surprising angle; "Voice of Our Forefathers" is an M-Net Edit film by KZN local Thomas Hart while acclaimed Zimbabwean writer / filmmaker Tsitsi Dangarembga offers a musical drama on the scourge of HIV in Zimbabwe called "Sharing Day". "Miss Sgodiphola" is a comedy by Andy "The Admiral" Kasrils; Rwandan Daddy Ruhorahoza's "Lost in the South"; Alicia Price's "You've been terrified", a spoof on reality TV that examines attitudes towards crime and safety as well Durbanite Akona Matyila's "Ulysses". Also featuring is "Coming Home", written by and starring 12-year old Amber-Jay van Rooyen, which has already won international awards. Short films aim to serve as calling card to the industry for entry-level filmmakers and the Durban Short Film Challenge, a project of the Durban Film Society that invited filmmakers to make a five-minute film in two weeks on a specific theme, has produced a selection of the top 12 films entered to be screened at a special event of the festival on the 30 July, 2009 at the KZNSA Gallery.

For full programme details go to www.cca.ukzn.ac.za or telephone the Centre for Creative Arts on 031 260 2506/ 1704.

Principal funders include the National Film and Video Foundation, Stichting Doen, HIVOS, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, German Embassy, Goethe Institute of South Africa, City of Durban, Industrial Development Corporation, with support from East Coast Radio, Durban Film Office, Department of Arts and Culture Film, Video and Sound Archives, French Embassy of South Africa and other valued sponsors and partners.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>