

AiM 2021 Festival Report

Overview

2021 marked the 16th edition of Africa in Motion (AiM) Film Festival. This edition took place entirely online from **15 to 31 October**, with 101 films and 12 events. The programming team was the most diverse group in the history of the festival with 4 young Black curators each producing a special programme in addition to the main programme of the festival - this continued the ongoing practice of participatory programming at AiM. We are delighted to have screened 66 premieres including 6 world premieres (commissioned by Africa in Motion), 1 international premiere, 6 European premieres, 25 UK premieres and 29 Scottish premieres. With the COP26 Climate Change taking place in Glasgow in November, we elected to bring forward the festival dates to October so as not to clash with the climate change conversation activity. Based on feedback we received in 2020, the audience overwhelmingly supported the continuation of an online offering from Africa in Motion.

Our 2021 festival programme consisted of film screenings, complementary events, music performances and more. The aim of the festival wasn't just to help counter the negative and emotionally damaging effects of the news and ongoing global pandemic, but to act as an agent of change in the commissioning of new work and creating moments of levity. Throughout the year, we collaborated on a series of 9 screenings and 5 events that interrogated notions of citizenship and migration. While the Critics Circle programme could not expand this year, we are delighted to collaborate with YouTube Originals and Cocoa Girl Magazine to commission reflective pieces from young children (7 - 11 years old). Young audience members are invited to respond to the 'Time for Change' animation series 'Super Sema' that reflects on our role in the environment.

2021 Approach

Following the well-received online screenings we offered last year and with the first quarter of the year occupied by another national lockdown due to COVID-19, we elected to deliver the festival online again in 2021. AiM recognises the lack of Black voices in the arts and creative industries. We continued to pursue avenues where we can elevate artists forging a path for themselves and utilized our 'AiM at Home' programme of screenings throughout the year that paired archive and contemporary work.

Online platform:

We continued to build on our website and online platform with Edinburgh-based web design company Purple Spider to enhance our bespoke online streaming platform for our virtual festival. All 100+ films in our programme were hosted on a video-hosting platform we tested called Sprout Video and embedded the video files for audiences to stream directly through Africa in Motion's website, protected by a paywall, and geo-blocked to the UK-only (with the exception of several films that permitted international audiences).

We created a two-week programme, with most films available for the entire two weeks. This choice was based on audience feedback from our 2020 survey, where more time to watch the films was the most popular feedback. To fall within the film rights requested by distributors and filmmakers, once an audience member pressed 'play' they would have 48 hours to watch the film before their access to the film expired (a countdown below the video would display how much access time remained). Most filmmaker Q&As were pre-recorded during August and September, so that audience members could watch them right after viewing the film. All Q&As and events will be made available to the public on our YouTube channel.

Ticketing & Access:

We had a number of different options for audiences wishing to access films. Audience members could either buy/gift a **Ticket** for an individual film or shorts package, or buy/gift a **Festival Pass** which gave them access to the entire programme. To make a purchase, an audience member now needed to create an account on our website - this new development means that we have now begun creating a community on our website and harnessing this data to serve our audience even better.

To reflect the increase in expenses and the rising cost within the wider film industry, we increased the standard film pass from £10/15 to £25/30. This price point is still far below what most festivals are charging, but we feel it is important to keep AiM as accessible as possible and have continued the sliding scale structure for individual tickets (£2 - £10). Festival passes included a concession for students, under 16s, senior citizens over 65 and anyone in receipt of Universal Credit, Job Seeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Carer's Allowance (no proof required). We also worked with a number of community groups to provide free or group tickets. For the first time, the festival also offered an **Early Bird Festival Pass** option (£10/15) to increase cash flow ahead of the festival. We also developed a variety of price

packages to reflect special film packages (e.g. a separate price for the short film competition) where audience members could get access to multiple films for one ticket if they didn't desire to purchase a film pass. This flexibility proved attractive to audience members who were pressed for time and couldn't commit to attending the whole festival. All discussions, Q&As and masterclasses were accessible for free.

AiM committed to ensuring that all commissioned works, feature-length films and documentaries in our programme were fully **closed captioned** for d/Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing audiences. In addition, all other films in the programme that contained dialogue had English subtitles. We worked with Scottish firm Matchbox Cineclub to caption the films.

Year-round Activity

With the onset of the winter lockdown from November 2020 - April 2021, we continued our online screenings through embedded Vimeo links on our page under the title 'AiM at Home'. We were able to utilize the switch to digital, breaking down barriers of access and bringing together a number of speakers from across the world.

Transgressing Citizenship in the Black Imagination

April - September 2021

We presented a news series that drew on the concepts of citizenship, the relationship to our environment and inter-faith relationships. We examined how people have migrated, sought refuge, and settled, in and out of Africa, and also explored historical and present-day examples from all over the continent illustrating how migration patterns are constantly in flux. We believe it is not possible to contemplate the notion of citizenship without discussing the politics of race, gender, and class. Some highlights of this programme include:

- **Operation Solomon**

- 29 April - 1 May, 2021**

- This year marked 30 years since Operation Solomon which brought more than 20,000 Ethiopian Jewish people to Israel. We screened *Red Leaves* (Bazi Gete, Israel, 2015) about the Ethiopian community living in Israel along with *Tinghir-Jerusalem: Echoes from the Mellah* (Kamal Hachkar, Morocco, 2014) about the indigenous Moroccan Jewish community that emigrated in the mid-1960s. To contextualise these films, we held a conversation about inter-faith communities, post-colonial migrations and displacement. Guests included **Dr Yolande Cohen** (professor of Contemporary History at the Université of Québec holding the

National Order of Quebec and the Legion of Honour, the highest order of Civilian merit in France), **Dr Ophira Gamliel** (lecturer in Theology & Religious Studies specializing in South Asian Religions) and **Dr Awol Allo** (senior lecturer in law at the University of Keele and Global Fellow at Princeton University).

- **Illustrated talk & Director's conversation:** We screened two short films in this series that grappled with feeling dislocated in territories where one's identity is unwelcome, and the diasporic predicament of 'in between-ness', where losing and reclaiming ground is a recurring dilemma. We paired the archive animation film *Rooted* (Victor Opeyokun, UK, 1997) with live action short film *No Traveler Returns* (Ellie Foubi, USA, 2019) and the directors held an online conversation with each other after Opeyokun gave an illustrated talk about his animation film.

- **Folk Film Gathering**
25 June - 2 July, 2021

We are delighted to have supported the screenings of two films by Burkinabé director **Gaston Kaboré** at the [Folk Film Gathering](#). We supported the screenings of *Wend Kuuni* (Burkina Faso, 1982) and *Budd Yam* (Burkina Faso, 1997). Curated by Transgressive North, the Folk Film Gathering is the world's first folk film festival, celebrating the lived experiences of communities worldwide. This year the Folk Film Gathering revolved around a theme of solidarity. The online programme featured a series of live conversations between filmmakers from very different parts of the world, who nonetheless, shared certain aspects of perspective and approach to filmmaking. Some of the world's most significant filmmakers came together to discuss the possibility of a people's cinema. Gaston Kaboré (Burkina Faso) was in conversation with Zacharius Kunuk (Inuit community, Canadian Arctic).

- **Migration Stories**
3 - 5 September 2021

Ahead of the festival, we concluded our citizenship series with 3 film screenings that focused on the arduous journey of African refugees and asylum seekers. *Mediterranea* (Jonas Carpignano, Italy, 2015) was preceded by an introduction by the film's award-winning director and we screened two films by Abou Bakar Sidibé who filmed his journey from Mali to Italy and Germany as he sought asylum. We are delighted to have recorded a Q&A with Sidibé who is unfortunately still in the German asylum system for his third year. During his time in front of the border fence of Melilla in northern Morocco, he made the film *Les Sauteurs - Those Who*

Jump (Denmark, 2015) and upon making it to Europe, made the short film *ma nouvelle vie européenne* (Germany/Tunisia, 2019).

Night of the Kings (Philippe Lacôte, Côte d'Ivoire, 2020)

23 July

We supported the release of Philippe Lacôte's award-winning "Night of the Kings", in partnership with distributor Altitude Films. The film is a mesmerizing meditation on the art of storytelling and its role in survival. Altitude offered our audience a 10% [discount](#) with a special code.

We Get Shot with Bullets

20 - 22 August

We hosted this programme in partnership with [EDI Lab](#) at University of Glasgow's College of Arts, as part of their [The Dear Green Bothy](#) event series marking the city's hosting of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference – COP26 – in November 2021. The unseen costs of the global climate crisis are felt most urgently and destructively by those living in the resource-rich Global South, and in particular, by working class and indigenous women. This weekend of documentaries looked at capitalist extractivism and environmental resistance across the African continent, with a focus on the vital labour and activism of women. These screenings were accompanied by reflections from filmmakers featured in the programme, as well as activists working on the ground.

After the Pandemic

1 - 12 November 2021, Strathclyde Union

We screened two films with [After the Pandemic](#) during the COP26 Climate Change Conference. Glasgow's creative and cultural fringe. With a once-in-a-century pandemic and an increasing volume of dramatic and unignorable wildfires, floods, droughts, heat waves and exceptional weather directly connected to climate change. Each year the world avoids taking drastic action, the worse the problem becomes. At COP26, international world leaders met in Glasgow to discuss how to address this. The eyes of the world were on Glasgow but ATP questioned, where do Glaswegians fit in all of this? AiM's intervention involved two community screenings of *Miners Shot Down* (Rehad Desai, 2014) and *A Portrait on the Search for Happiness* (Benjamin Rost, 2021) both of which examined the impact of the mining industry in South Africa.

Aesthetica Film Festival: Focus on North Africa

2 - 30 November 2021

We presented a selection of standout short films from previous AiM editions that between them offered contrasting but compelling visions of North Africa. These three filmmakers form part of a wave of exciting new voices emerging from the region. They use surreal imagery, absurd humour and/or dream logic to explore overlapping themes of solidarity, hope, fear and resistance. The films selected are *The Aftermath Of The Inauguration Of The Public Toilet At Kilometer 375* (Omar el Zohairy, Egypt, 2014), *This Day Won't Last* (Mouaad El Salem, Tunisia, 2020) and *Before I Forget* (Mariam Mekiwi, Egypt/Germany, 2018).

MUBI

Cut to Black : Celebrating Black Cinema

We have begun a long-term relationship with film distributor MUBI by honouring Black British filmmaking pioneer **Menelik Shabazz** with free access to audiences to his film *Burning an Illusion* (UK, 1981). The film is part of their [Cut to Black](#) special series, a celebration of Black talent in cinema, both in front of and behind the camera. The titles in this series bear witness to the incredible wealth of Black artistry, vibrantly present in an eclectic range of works. From acclaimed classics to hidden treasures, social critiques to genre pleasures, these films powerfully articulate the struggles, resilience, and joy experienced by the Black community all around the world. They speak to the lived realities and the significance of representation in the arts. Honoring the inimitable artists who have enriched our screens, this selection of distinctive achievements in film looks to the past, reflects the present, and gestures to the future of cinema.

Main 2021 Festival Programme

AiM's extensive and diverse film programme consisted of over 101 films – including fiction features, shorts, documentaries and film commissions – and spanned 48 African countries. Hosting the festival online allowed us to reach a UK-wide audience and host even more diaspora talent speaking events than an offline festival would have afforded. We programmed under various strands and themes including:

Craft Insights

We were thrilled to continue our industry strand with a diverse and bold array of industry professionals and artists. Audiences are still able to catch up with masterclasses and pre-recorded Q&As with the creatives behind our programme selection. This included a masterclass in relation to a special retrospective with a trio of films by **Rosine**

Mbakam (*Delphine's Prayers, Chez Jolie Coiffure, The Two Faces of a Bamileke Woman*) and documentary filmmaker **Christopher Austin**, who has long career in both film and TV having made films for BBC, Channel 4, PBS, WDR (Germany) and ZDF (Germany). Both Mbakam and Austin's masterclasses were presented in partnership with the Scottish Documentary Institute.

Family Matters

This strand explored the tender and haunting observations examining our familial ties and how they impact us. Parenthood can be a splendid journey of sacrifice and unconditional love. We looked at intimate vignettes of motherhood and fatherhood, fleeting moments of connection, the struggle couples experience in the journey to conceive, and the often invisible labour that accompanies caring for others.

Great Expectations

With this strand, we selected thought-provoking films that shift perspective on ideas of legacy and survival. We invited the audience to explore the concept of heritage and the experiences shared by the African diaspora when striving to build brighter futures for their progeny. These riveting films took us on the journeys of brave, defiant dreamers and explorers, but also examined the dangers of expectations (conscious or otherwise) placed upon us by others, and how that weight could lead to destruction.

Imaginarium

This strand presented an inquiry into the embodied experience of Blackness and being in the environment, the changing climate and the need for communion with nature as a means of healing and resistance. What does it mean to traverse the world in a body that's considered a threat and a target? These films serve as a 'dream tank' to further consider political borders as spatial phenomena that insidiously interfere with our perceptions of the environment. They have real implications on how we move (or do not move) through space, place, and time. This is especially urgent within a framework of colonialist history, the Windrush scandal, and empire

Not Yet Uhuru

Named for Letta Mbulu's 1996 album of the same title, this strand comprises films that are rallying cries for change, the desire to break from the grip of capitalism and for the freedom to live and breathe without fear of prejudice and violence enacted upon us. They are rousing portrayals of the individuals and communities ceaselessly speaking truth to power.

Pachedu

In the ChiShona language, the word pachedu invokes a feeling of familiarity and kinship shared between individuals. Together with our closest allies, we dream, scheme, and hope ourselves into the future. This heart-warming selection allowed us into the intricate details of companionship. Through these films, we were reminded to ride the waves, commune with one another, and continue to express our common need to be listened to and understood.

Queer Africa

This programme included poetic meditations on queer identity, desire in unsafe communities, timely stories of activism and hope, moving accounts of love, freedom, refuge, acceptance, apprehension, community and family.

Setting Pace

Named for John Coltrane's 1961 album, this strand examined some of the greatest African musicians, past and present, from a wide array of music genres. Abdullah Ibrahim, one of the world's greatest jazz composers and pianists, muses on being an artist, a sound scientist and a martial artist, alongside cultural freedom fighter Brenda Fassie. These films were intimate portraits of African music icons and pioneers.

Women in Focus

This strand presented tender and powerful works by some of the best African and Black diaspora female creative talent. We explored coming-of-age tales, protagonists who defy patriarchy, a special retrospective of Rosine Mbakam's work, and deeply affecting films on assault, love, perseverance, longing, and the struggle to overcome hardship.

Film Highlights

FESPACO Winners: We are delighted to have screened 11 films that were selected for the 27th edition of the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou. FESPACO is the largest African film festival in the world and is bi-annual. It took place from 16 to 23 October 2021. Our programme this year included 5 filmmakers that won prizes. The winners:

- **Zinder** by Aicha Macky (Niger) won two awards: a Special prize - the Best woman filmmaker of West Africa (Prix speciaux: La meilleure femme cinéaste de l'Afrique de l'Ouest) and the Special woman prize, ambassador for peace (Prix spécial femme, ambassadrice de paix).

- ***Garderie Nocturne*** by Moumouni Sanou (Burkina Faso) won the Gold standard documentary feature film.
- ***Ethereality*** by Kantarama Gahigiri (Rwanda) won the Poulain d’Or documentary short film award. This film was selected for our Short Film Competition.
- **Amil Shivji** was awarded the Oumarou Ganda Prize for his latest film “Tug of War” which world- premiered at Toronto International Film Festival in September 2021. We screened his previous film WAHENGGA (Tanzania) in our programme.
- **Samantha Biffot** won the second prize (prix de la meilleure série TV) for best TV series: *Mami Wata : Le mystère d’iveza*. We screened her feature film debut THE AFRICAN WHO WANTED TO FLY (Gabon) in our programme.

Other films that made the official FESPACO selection include:

- *Janitou* by Amine Hattou (Algeria)
- *Juju Stories* by Michael Omonua, Abba Makama, C.J. Obasi (Nigeria)
- *Mofiala* by Boris Kpadenou (Togo)
- *The Colonel’s Stray Dogs* by Khalid Shamis (Libya, South Africa, Qatar)
- *The Legend of Lwanda Magere* by Kwame Nyong'o (Kenya)
- *When A Farm Goes Aflame* by Jide Tom Akinleminu (Nigeria, Germany)

BIFA Awards: In addition, the following films were selected by the British Independent Film Awards (BIFA):

- *Sing, Freetown* (Clive Peterson, Sierra Leone/UK, 2021) was longlisted for the Breakthrough Producer award sponsored by Pinewood Studios Group.
- *Play it Safe* (Mitch Kalisa, UK 2020) has been nominated for the Best British Short award.
- *Precious Hair & Beauty* (John Ogunmuyiwa, UK, 2021) has been nominated for the Best British Short award

Other film highlights: An exclusive UK preview of Sundance award-winning *President* (Camilla Nielsson, 2021) which is executive produced by Thandiwe Newton OBE and award-winning actor/director Danny Glover. This film attracted the largest audience of all the screenings and events during the festival. A rare double-bill of Christopher Austin’s works profiling seminal

African musicians Abdullah Ibrahim (*A Brother with Perfect Timing*, 1987) and Brenda Fassie (*Brenda Fassie, Not a Bad Girl*, 1993). We presented the UK premiere of *The Colonel's Stray Dogs* (Khalid Shamis, 2021) about Libyans exiled by Colonel Gaddafi's regime, a special focus on Rosine Mbakam's work with three of her films; *Delphine's Prayers* (Cameroon, 2021), *Chez Jolie Coiffure* (Cameroon, 2019) and *The Two Faces of a Bamileke Woman* (Cameroon, 2016). We continued the conversation about Operation Solomon with *Yerusalem* (Levi Zini, 2021) which portrayed a dramatic journey, filled with secret plans of a worldwide effort that called on Jewish communities everywhere to help protect Ethiopian Jews. With covert operations by Mossad and IDF's combat units, it was a life-altering event and chapter in Ethiopian and Jewish history.

At a local level, we screened *Strike For Freedom: Frederick Douglass In Scotland* (Parisa Urquhart, 2020) which explored the impact that world-renowned author, orator and activist Frederick Douglass had on Scotland. We are thrilled to have been the home of the UK premiere of *Sementes: Mulheres Pretas no Poder* (Éthel Oliveira & Júlia Mariano, 2020) which examined the response to the execution of Marielle Franco, which turned the 2018 Brazil elections into the biggest political uprising led by Black women that Brazil has ever seen, with candidacies in every state. Finally, we held the international premiere of *Zo Reken* (Emanuel Licha, 2021), a film about the humanitarian aid organizations that are omnipresent in Haiti since the 2010 earthquake. Ten years later, as the country is once more in turmoil and under a strict lockdown, the film follows conversations about neocolonialism, humanitarian aid, and anger is mounting.

Short Film Competition

The process for the Short Film Competition commenced in April 2021, when our Filmfreeway platform began receiving submissions from directors from across Africa and the diaspora. The deadline for submissions was the 1st of July and by that time we had received over 600 eligible entries. A viewing committee of 16 members was formed, consisting of Film and Television Studies students at the University of Glasgow. The viewing committee then had 2 months to watch their portion of films and rate them on a scale from 1 – 5. Each film was watched at least twice and rated independently by committee members. The highest rated films were then organised into a longlist of around 60 films. This longlist was distributed amongst other senior members of the festival, and a similar rating process took place. By late August the committee met and whittled down the list to a shortlist of 16 films.

The shortlist was then passed onto the jury that had been selected for this year. The jury was composed of three film professionals, who are experts in their field and patrons of African cinema and creative content; **Eloise King**, **Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine** and **Yared Zeleke**. The final programme was released in the first week of September, where all 16 films were listed with

short synopses and selected stills. Three panel discussions with several of the chosen directors were organised, which entailed a pre-recorded Q&A hosted by members of the viewing committee. These will be uploaded on our YouTube channel to allow audience's further interaction and insight into their films and the journey of becoming a filmmaker. All short films were available for the entirety of the festival, meaning audience's had a chance to watch these films at their leisure and enjoy the ranging themes and forms in the competition. After collating the scores from the jury members, the highest average was mathematically calculated, and the award of £500 went to *Al-Sit* by **Suzzanah Mirghani** (Sudan, 2020). The online screening platform allowed audience members to rate the short films from 1 – 5, and from this, our Audience Choice Award was selected. This went to *Dorlis* by **Enricka MH** (Martinique, 2021). The 16 films in our final selection were diverse in genre, theme, and country and supported the festival's goal of showcasing the work of emerging African and diaspora directors.

Commissions

Environment theme

As part of our response to the [COP26 UN Climate Change Conference](#), we are delighted to have partnered with the [Scottish Poetry Library](#) and [The Obsidian Foundation](#) to commission three Black female poets to write and film new poetry which will world premiere at the festival. The poets are **Clementine Ewokolo Burnley**, **Tjawangwa Dema**, and **Zakia Carpenter-Hall**. We are also delighted to have commissioned **Adam Murray** to edit a video essay on the subject of environmental racism through the lens of horror. All four films world premiered at the festival:

- *Cadastral: The Black Girl Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (2021) by Tjawangwa Dema maps geographies where historical memory is dynamically entangled with contemporary experiences of walking while black.
- *Human Ecologies* (2021) by Zakia Carpenter-Hall is an eco-poetry film that explores a confluence between interpersonal care and caring for the environment, between nature and Blackness through the motifs of hair and foliage. It speaks to being at home within one's self and in the world, as well as loving Blackness as a spiritual calling and environmental imperative.
- *Paradise Engines* (2021) by Clementine E. Burnley reimagines the familiar geographies of cities and landscapes from the point of view of the creatures who inhabit it in an era many are calling the Anthropocene. If humans are the major force for change on the planet, how might we bring about a paradise?

- *Dark Horizons* (2021) by Adam Murray is a film essay that explores a decades-long obsession that genre cinema has had with notions of; ‘the end of the world’, environmental collapse and environmental concerns, usually framed against the BIPOC assumed/lived experience.

New Promoter: Music Commissions

Through Filmhub Scotland’s [New Promoter scheme](#) aims to increase the number of marginalised people programming films for cinemas, festivals and venues within Scotland. This includes those marginalised due to race, gender, sexuality, age, class, and disability. This comes from a recognition that these identities are not adequately represented within the Scottish screen industry. Our New Promoter this year was Josh Kilimanjaro, who is a Scotland-raised Zambian who has experience in many creative fields. Now focusing on music, the New Promoter opportunity by Filmhub Scotland fit perfectly with his desire to learn new skills and broaden his creative horizons. Working as Programme Coordinator at Africa in Motion, Josh has curated and produced three events as part of the 2021 festival edition:

- 2 original music commissions that world-premiered at the festival
- Producer Masterclass with award-winning producer Precious Mahaga
- A special afternoon conference that will connect young Black and African creatives with some of Scotland’s finest creative agencies.

We are delighted to have presented two audiovisual commissions inspired by films from our music strand, [Setting Pace](#). The two young Black female artists selected were **Nova Scotia The Truth** and **Gabriella Liandu**.

Complementary Events Highlights

Festival Opening - Jazz re:freshed + Music strand

To accompany our opening film *Elder’s Corner* (Siji Awonyinka, Nigeria, 2021) and our jazz-infused music strand, we partnered with UK-based [Jazz re:freshed](#) to showcase two incredible rising star acts **Balimaya Project** and **Jas Kayser**. Despite the barriers of 2020, Jazz re:freshed is still on a mission to celebrate a genre and musicians whose performance opportunities are severely reduced right now, and to showcase the incredibly diverse, colourful, expressive and creative world of jazz music and alternative culture in the UK. These performances were filmed on-location at Subfrantic Studios with thanks to Arts Council England, PRS Foundation and The Culture Recovery Grant.

New Promoter: Inner Visions Series

INNER VISIONS by New Promoter Josh Kilimanjaro was an event series aimed to bring to the fore the creative aspirations of young people around the UK who are looking to get involved in the arts sector. This series had particular focus on music and film and the ways in which they complement one another. Our hope was that our audience left these events not only inspired to create, but also with genuine opportunities to pursue their future careers in the create sector. We aimed to challenge the inaccessibility to the creative industries for young black people, working hard to create a valuable offering for them at this year's festival - whether that was through commissioning them to create and showcase their work across established platforms, reaching global audiences and raising their profiles, or hearing from industry professionals about their journeys into the industry and how they themselves can make the first steps.

- **Inner Visions: Conversation with Musicians**

To celebrate the launch of the audio visual world premieres, we held an online conversation with the commissioned artists to hear about their creative process and what aspects of the music strand they responded to. Later, the musicians were included in a segment of our Worldwide FM takeover radio show.

- **Inner Visions: Producer Masterclass with Precious Mahaga**

Our second event of the series was an online masterclass with award-winning producers **Precious Mahaga** - 2021 winner of 'Producer of the Year' at the UK Music Video Awards. She presented to an audience of young people of colour to share the challenges and triumphs she has experienced so far in her successful career. This was also an opportunity for young creatives to hear first-hand how an artist can carry an idea from conception to completion and directly ask Precious questions of their own.

- **Inner Visions: Insights into the Creative Industry**

In our third and final event of the series, we looked within the Scottish borders to the future of film and creativity and invited some of the best creative organisations in Scotland that are doing exceptional work in support of young creatives of colour, to come and share insights about the sectors they operate and what funds, bursaries and support they have available. At Africa in Motion, our mission is to empower and awaken imagination through the power of film. We believe that the stories of young people of colour matter and have the power to transform the world. We see these organisations as change agents supporting future generations with the tools and funding they need to take their careers in

the creative field to the next level and our aim is to connect, showcase and inspire these young people whatever their chosen path may be. In the end, only one organisation (**BeUnited**) could participate, but the event was quite successful and informative.

“My hope is that our audience leaves these events not only inspired to create, but also with genuine opportunities where they are able to pursue their future careers. We aim to challenge the inaccessibility to the creative industries for Black young people, we’ve worked hard to create a valuable offering for them at this year’s festival - whether that be commissioning them to create and showcase their work across established platforms, reaching global audiences and raising their profiles, or hearing from industry professionals about their journeys into the industry.”

- Josh Kilimanjaro, Programme Co-ordinator

- **How to Attend an African Film Festival**

Curated by Tanatsei Gambura

This event was a live panel discussion that addressed the modes and methods of the film festival circuit. With a focus on festivals specifically platforming African, diaspora, and Black narratives, the event furthered a conversation about the politics of filmmaking and film-viewing in the context of racialised, gendered, and geopolitical regimes of identity. Speakers included **Mahen Bonetti**, **Keith Shiri**, and **Judy Kibinge**. Mahen Bonetti is founder and executive director of the African Film Festival Inc., an organisation running an annual festival in New York. Keith Shiri is an international film curator and programme advisor to various film festivals including the BFI London Film Festival. He is currently the Regional Secretary (Europe) for the Federation of African Filmmakers (FEPACI) amongst other things. Judy Kibinge is a filmmaker who began her career in advertising. In 2013, she founded DOCUBOX, Sub Saharan Africa’s first homegrown fund for independent filmmakers.

Issues arising pertained to continental and diasporic nuances, building community through the audience, considering industry stakeholders at risk, and challenges posed by the film funding architecture and resource accessibility on the continent. Mahen reminded us of the importance of the work we do, citing that the festival is a significant “structure that brings the audience into dialogue... exchange and interaction.” Also discussed was the advent of video-on-demand streaming services such as Netflix, hulu, and Amazon Prime

and the role they play in the industry today. Amongst many important points raised, Judy Kibinge noted that the “responsibility of a filmmaker is to author the world in their own voice” and articulated the need for “spaces that feel safe, that enable critical exchanges and support between communities of filmmakers.”

- **Poet Reading and Conversation**

As part of the Imaginarium strand, we commissioned three women poets, Zakia Carpenter-Hall, Clementine Ewokolo Burnley, and Tjawangwa Dema, to produce new work to premiere at the festival. This project was enabled through the support of the Scottish Poetry Library and The Obsidian Foundation. Their respective film-poems *Human Ecologies*, *Paradise Engines*, and *Cadastral: The Black Girl Hiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* respond to the experience of being Black in the natural environment and emerge in light of the climate crisis and forthcoming COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow.

Taking place over Zoom, a live discussion about the work considered craft aspects of the poems more closely and thematically dived into the lived experience of racialized bodies in urban and rural landscapes, giving voice to an array of stories. 9 attendees registered. We had the opportunity to be joined by Bristol-based artist, **Jasmine Thompson**, who created a ‘living illustration’ of the discussion’s salient points. This mural gives a visual language to the poets’ contributions.

- **Inside Nigerian Film: Naija Producers But Why?!**

Curated by Oritsejimi Ikomi

Nigeria has generated and influenced pop culture through music, art, fashion and dance for decades. This event explored why Nigerian producers and screen talent often struggle gaining a wide audience beyond its borders and diaspora community despite Nollywood being the second-largest film industry in the world, and what is currently shifting in this industry. Africa in Motion board member, and Scotland-based filmmaker **Olumide Fadeyibi** hosted a conversation with *Juju Stories* (2021) producer **Oge Obasi** and *For Maria Egun Pataki* (2020) director/producer **Damilola E. Orimogunje**. Both films screened at the festival.

- **Our Legacies: Stories of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

Curated by Wacera Kamonji

"I want us to feel proud of how far we have come but also acknowledge that we have a lot of healing within ourselves in order to understand the past, build on the present and flourish in the future."

- Wacera Kamonji, programme curator

This event was inspired by legacies that Africans on the continent and the diaspora have created for themselves and how it will benefit them individually and as a community. In partnership with Vimeo and Mailchimp's new series *Stories in Place*, featuring *Kanyoko Boutique* (Ng'endo Mukii, 2021): which followed the director's mother who escaped an abusive relationship to start her own textile business, *Mitchell's the Bowl* (Troy Brown, 2021) which followed Caribbean shop owners and how their shop passed on from their father has helped foster a sense of community and home away from home, *Harriet's Bookshop* (Raishad Momar & Aidan M. Un, 2020) which follows a black-owned bookshop and a community hub and finally *Rebyrth Wellness* (Cydney Tucker, 2021) which looked at African American doulas who help care and guide African American expectant mothers. To round off this programme, we screened *A Fish Tale* (Emmanuelle Mayer, 2019) following Ghanaian immigrant parents in Israel who fight for a better future for themselves and their children both in Ghana and in Israel.

The speakers in the Q&A were Scotland-based entrepreneurs **Aghogho Ogunlesi**, a Nigerian-American business owner and designer of Leyelesi bags and **Sophie Amono** who is a digital marketing consultant and founder of her own marketing agency PERF. The conversation delved into ownership, how they found their creative footing, representation within their respected industry, the treatment that they have received, and the legacy they feel they are creating not just for themselves but also for the community which can be used as inspiration. The event was attended via zoom with attendees being of the 20-50+ age range which shows that the discussion topic and screened films resonate and relate to a wide range of people.

- **Masterclasses**

We're delighted to have continued our partnership with the Scottish Documentary Institute and presented two masterclasses with director's **Christopher Austin** and **Rosine Mbakam** whose films were screened in the festival.

- **AfriKids Animation**

Africa in Motion maintains an important role in widening perspectives on African stories and films for children. This year, we screened a wide array of animation work from countries all over the world including Guadalupe, Kenya, USA and the UK.

- **Festival Closing - Movie Quiz**

Our closing night film was *Honey Cigar* (Kamir Aïnouz, Algeria, 2020) which was available for the duration of the festival to allow more audience members to view it. To close the festival, we held a free online film quiz which was accessible for everyone.

- **Time for Change: Written works from Young Critics**

We continued to mark the International Day of the Girl Child, the [UN day of observance](#) for young girls worldwide (11 October) but within a year-round context, rather than being confined to the one day of the year. We have partnered with [Team Kukua](#) and [Cocoa Girl Magazine](#) to commission 4 young writers (ages 7 - 11) to write a reflective piece on Team Kukua's [Super Sema animation series](#) as part of our response to the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference. Young audience members are invited to respond to the 'Time for Change' animation episodes that reflect on our role in the environment. Foregrounding young Black children is an important part of our mission and goes beyond one particular day of observance, but we recognise the vital role international days like these play in global conversations.

The **Super Sema series** is the first African superhero animated series. It follows the world-changing adventures of an extraordinary young African girl, Sema, and her twin brother MB on a mission to protect their town Dunia from a villainous Tobor. Sema knows that with determination, creativity and a helping hand from the amazing world of science and technology, anything is possible! Its entire cast is made of African talent and is Executive Produced by Oscar-Winning Actress Lupita Nyong'o.

Management and Organisation

The festival was managed and organised by the following people:

Festival Director: Liz Chege

Festival Producer: Tanatsei Gambura

Programme Coordinator: Josh Kilimanjaro, Wacera Kamonji, Oritsejimi Ikomi

Short Film Competition Coordinator: Grace Coletta Feinmann

Communications Managers: Dachinii Lee-Hewitt, April Edgar

Festival Editor: Kael Onion Oakley

Web Development: James Cocker

Graphic Design: Derek Edwards

Captioning: Matchbox Cineclub

Short Film Competition Submissions and Selections Team: University of Glasgow Film and Television Studies Students: Kaia Bartholomew, Shona Powell McKay, Sean Talbot, Colleen Bell, Weiru Lu, Xiaoyu He, Zara Hugh Smith, Milo Clenshaw, Eugenie Theuer, Anna Belohlavova, Heather Muchamore, Nora Aubry, Niki Radman, Milda Valiulyte, Ed Fernandez, Marcela Villagomez

Festival Advisors: Justine Atkinson & Lizelle Bisschoff

The festival was supported by AiM's Board of Trustees which consists of:

Lizelle Bisschoff: Africa in Motion film festival founder, Senior Lecturer in Film Studies, University of Glasgow

Stefanie Van de Peer: Animation Programme Coordinator, Lecturer in Film & Media, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Cllr Graham Campbell: Glasgow City Council and Co-Convener African Caribbean Cultures Glasgow

Olumide Fadeyibi: Filmmaker

Joanna Keating: Head of International Development Team at Scottish Government

Peter West: Malawi's Honorary Consul in Scotland

Reception of the festival

The 2021 edition of the festival was well-received by audiences, guests and volunteers alike. We sold nearly 200 Festival Passes (allowing audiences to watch multiple films) and over separate 500 individual film tickets.

The 2021 Festival online audience viewing numbers were as follows:

- Film Programme - 4,572
- Complementary Events (Q&As, Discussions, Workshops, Masterclasses) - 1,038

Total: 5,610

Total year-round screenings audience: 620

Overall festival attendance: 6,230

Volunteers

We are pleased to welcome nearly 16 volunteers to participate in the festival. The volunteers who committed their time did so with enthusiasm and a deep willingness to learn. All expressed an interest in film and programming, and were keen to meaningfully engage with AiM as a platform for improving their knowledge and experience of a film festival environment. Our volunteers were involved in the short film competition pre-selection phase.

“The quality of films this year was really high, making our job very tough. However, after a lengthy and open discussion, we selected a variety of genre, style and tone that reflect the immense talent of African filmmaking, and the range of stories that are being told.”

- Milda Valiulytė

Metrics

Website (June - October 2021)

Top Referrers	Views	Visitors
Facebook/Instagram	3,250	3,937
Google	2,900	4,100
Twitter	2,700	3,300
Overall figures	74,200	17,500

The most visited pages on the website were the homepage, and the film listings of the films [President](#) (Camilla Nielsson, 2021) and [James](#) (Andrea Della Monica, 2021).

Audience Feedback

This year, we redesigned the audience journey and gathered demographic data at the start of the booking journey. When an audience member buys a ticket or a pass, they are presented with a short set of demography data questions which are optional and anonymously gathered. This strategy encouraged audience members to share this information with us in a timely manner rather as the uptake to share this data with us at the evaluation stage continues to be a challenge. We were thrilled at the result with a staggering 546 responses. At the evaluation stage, this meant that the survey form was much shorter and could be responded to in less than a minute. We built an anonymous online survey form to list the questions which were broken up into categories including questions about which devices were used to access the festival, and about the audience's experiences of the festival. Some key feedback:

- **Films and events:** The most well attended screening and event was film *President*. Other popular and memorable films according to the survey were: the short film competition, the Rosine Mbakam trio of films, *Honey Cigar*, *Jebel Banat (Girl's Mountain)*, *Ici C'est Paris (Paris is Here)*, *Pickney*, *Elder's Corner*, *A Brother with Perfect Timing*, *Tales of an Accidental City*, *A New Country*, *Dorlis*, *Juju Stories*, *In Your Eyes I See My Country*, *Downstream to Kinshasa* and the Poetry commissions.
- **Memorable moments:** Many audience members commented on how important AiM is as a platform for learning about Africa. Below are some comments from the survey about key moments for audience members:

"I didn't have one particular favourite film because I enjoyed all of the films that I watched. The range of subjects, the quality of the films, and the ease of access to the films was all excellent."

"I really enjoyed the diversity, creativity and informative nature of the films. The short films were great because they can be used to generate discussions in various groups for in depth understanding."

"I loved the curated strands, the trailer, how I could watch the shorts programmes in one screening, the recommendations suggested for you for each film, and how you could vote on the website."

"Another great selection! I am very much enjoying the online element still, I like that I can take things at my own pace. While I am looking forward to being able to attend physically, I hope that some elements will remain blended. Fantastic work as always, roll

on next year!"

- **Reach:** Feedback showed that most respondents found out about the festival through word of mouth via channels such as WhatsApp. This was closely followed by email, facebook, the AiM website and twitter. The survey also showed that our radio collaborations and our investment in our instagram channel is bearing more fruit than our press partners. 67% stated this was their first time attending the festival, showing a big increase in reaching audiences who were not aware of AiM before.
- **Viewing method:** 76% of audiences used laptops/desktop computers to view the films and discussions while 16% used TVs and 8% used their phones or tablets.
- **Quality of programme:** 86% of audience members rated their experience of watching the film selection as 'excellent' or 'very good' and the remaining 14% rated the experience of the film programme as 'good'.
- **Value for Money:** 92% of audience members rated the festival as 'excellent' value for money despite the slight increase in price. Compared to other festivals, the price point is still on the lower end and we have kept the sliding scale on individual tickets as intact as possible. Audience members found booking tickets and passes easy compared to last year and we were able to be quickly responsive to any unforeseen needs such as a small website bug that prevented the gifting of tickets for specific films.
- **Demographics:** Feedback showed that almost half of the audience was between the ages of 18 - 40 years old at 43%, and 25% were over 50 years old. Of those who chose to submit this information, 53% of the audience identified as female, compared to 31% who identified as male, 2% preferred to self-identify. 68% of respondents identified as heterosexual, with 6% as bisexual and 12% as either gay, lesbian or self-identifying, while 20% preferred not to disclose this information. 10% of respondents considered themselves as having a disability. We are thrilled that our audience members who identified as people of colour doubled to 41% (up from 21% last year) with people who identified as Black people at 36% (up from 7% of respondents last year). 26% of audience members identified as white, and 16% identified as mixed heritage or 'other'.

Feedback also showed that audience members were from a wide range of locations such as Belfast, Kirkcaldy, Isle of Sheppey, Ayr, Fife, London, Bristol, Southend-on-Sea, Plymouth, Edinburgh, Perth, Manchester, Birmingham, Northampton, Lincoln, Halifax,, Ayr, Bradford, Glasgow, Oxford, Devon, Leeds, Newcastle, Norwich, Bath, Manchester, Aberdeen, Sheffield, Wolverhampton, Leicester and Brighton.

Supporters

As always, the festival was supported, financially and otherwise, by a wide range of organisations:

Principal Funder

Screen Scotland

Funders and Supporters

Film Hub Scotland

Scottish Poetry Library

University of Strathclyde

Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh

Scottish Documentary Institute

Watch Africa Film Festival

Ayr Film Society

University of Glasgow

Event Partners

After the Pandemic

Jazz re:freshed

MUBI

Cocoa Girl

Team Kukua

YouTube Originals

Altitude Films

BeUnited

Havana Glasgow Film Festival

Being Human Festival

The F-Show

Up2Stndrd

Vimeo

Black History Month Scotland

Matugga Rum

Media Partners

The Skinny

The Big Issue

Jambo Radio

Worldwide FM

Africa Movie Channel

Publicity and Marketing

Press

As in previous years, AiM continued our media partnership with *The Skinny* and developed a new partnership with *The Big Issue* which guaranteed coverage of the festival. We also enjoyed coverage from a variety of e-newsletters and websites including *Screen International*, *Safar Film Festival*, *Birmingham Conservatoire*, *Scottish Documentary Institute* and *Ayr Film Society*. We also enjoyed coverage on regional, national and international blogs, news, arts listings, film and other websites including *Pat's Guide to the West End*.

We disseminated our Early Bird Offer press release in August which also announced our Short Film Competition and 2021 Jury. Our main press release followed shortly after which went in-depth into the programme with Industry highlights. These were sent out to our database of contacts across the UK.

A selection of press publicity:

- [Africa in Motion 2021 Festival Preview](#) (The Skinny, Oct 2021, Online).
- ['Elder's Corner': A film review of Africa in Motion film festival's captivating opener](#) (Brig Newspaper, Oct 2021, Online).
- [Community Projects Making a Difference](#) (The National Lottery Blog, Oct 2021, Online).

Radio

We continued our partnership with Glasgow-based Jambo Radio and established a new partnership with renowned Worldwide FM (WWFM) founded by BBC's Gilles Peterson. The platform is an award-winning community and platform where marginalised voices, alternative perspectives and shared progressive values are brought to the forefront through music and culture. WWFM features a rotating roster of international radio DJs and global programmes with a current monthly listenership of close to a million people from all over the world. We were thrilled to host two takeover shows:

- [October 31](#) titled "**Setting Pace**"- This show takes the audience on a journey, through the lens of the curators of Africa in Motion. It lifts the curtain on African cinema, hoping to expand people's perceptions of Africa, showcasing the depth, complexity and vibrancy of the continent through film and of course, music.

- [November 20th](#) titled “**Un/Familiar Geographies**” - This second instalment reflects on the festival's 'Imaginarium' strand, which presented an inquiry into the embodied experience of Blackness, the changing climate and the need for communion with nature as a means of healing and resistance. What if instead of looking for safety in nationhood and citizenship, we honoured every being we share the planet with? What does it mean to traverse the world in a body that's considered a threat and a target?

Jambo Radio is the “only radio station for People of African and Caribbean heritage in Glasgow and Renfrewshire”. We held a ticket-giveaway competition and festival director Liz Chege participated in a 1 hour interview. Being a radio station that aims to bring the communities together with speakers of a multitude of languages, our partnership allowed us to reach both a Scottish and an Afro-diasporic audience.

Print Publicity

This year due to the exceptional circumstances posed by the outbreak of COVID-19, and that many venues were still closed to the public during the festival preparations, we decided against printing brochures and posters from our marketing strategy. Instead, we commissioned the design of a digital version of the programme that could be downloaded from our website. This pdf was also shared in our social media channels.

Online Marketing

For Africa in Motion’s second online edition, we needed to build a new marketing approach with the aim of increasing the festival’s online presence, awareness and directing the audience to the website, which was the hub of the virtual festival. Our online marketing strategy continued to be more important than ever. This new strategy required us to pay special attention to the visual identity of the festival and to new ways of standing out from the myriad of other online events happening at the same time.

Social analytics between 28th August and 25th November 2021

Instagram

Reach

We have reached 15,500 accounts, an increase of +413% with 12.5% gained from adverts and promotions. Overall, our social media posts reached mostly non-followers who numbered at 13,800 compared to our followers who engaged with our posts at 1,687. Posts that focus on imagery or graphics reached audiences the most at 7,547 followed by videos at 5,691, reels at 3,733 and stories at 906 audience reach.

Our top posts were:

1. Introducing our jury at 984
2. Announcing our festival programme at 816
3. Announcing our short film competition winner from the jury at 800
4. The announcement of the UK premiere of *Min Alesh* at 689

Our Top video posts were:

1. Early Bird announcement/trailer: 1,756
2. Official festival trailer: 1,753
3. Marking seven days till the festival/Poster: 1,147
4. Opening night film trailer: 1,333
5. Trailer for *Soy Cubana*: 1,063
6. Closing film trailer (*Honey Cigar*): 308

Our engagement account is 1,024 with our top age range being 25-34 years old. More non followers engaged with our posts this season at 565 compared to below 200 last year. Our **overall follower count** is at 2,504 which is a +19.5% increase since earlier this year and an over 50% increase since the same time last year. The **median age and gender** for our followers is 25-34 years old with 60.4% of the followers being women and 39.5% being men. In terms of **location**, our top engagement audiences were based in London, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Addis Abba Abba, while the top countries where our audiences are based were UK, USA, France, Ethiopia.

Facebook

Analytics between 28 August 2021 and 25th November 2021.

The **overall reach** on facebook between the 28th August and 25th November has been 196,150 thousand (an increase of 4.2%). The number of people who saw our adverts at least once via paid advertisement has been 28,600 and paid Impressions (number of times our ads have been seen) has been 83,400.

Top performing organic post on facebook was the "Great expectations" post at 120,700 (reached organically with no advertising spend). The **top performing paid post** was the festival trailer- at 18,000. The **median age and gender** on our facebook page is between 25 to 44 years old with 22.7% women, 15.9 men% aged between 25 to 34 years old, 16.9% of women and 13.75% men aged 35-44 years old. Majority of our patrons on facebook are women at 56.40% and men at 43.60%. In terms of **location**, our top cities in which our social interactions came

from were: Glasgow, Edinburgh, London, Cape Town and Nairobi, while the top countries in which our social interactions were located are UK, South Africa, United States, Nigeria, France.

Goals that were met and improvements to be made:

Our goal for this year's festival edition was to raise awareness of the festival, grow our social media outreach, improve quality of content and make sure that our social media is not stagnant after the festival so we keep interaction between our audience and our content flowing.

This year we have managed to grow our social following by keeping many of our followers and increasing our reach to new followers and non-followers who engage with our content. For 2022 we hope to stretch out our social media content especially during the run of the festival across all social media platforms so that we may build an even stronger audience base and network both in audience and other organisations. This in turn we hope will aid in solidifying the organisation in the film festival circuit in Scotland, the UK and globally.

Looking Forward

Planning for AiM 2022 has commenced, and we are considering a number of ideas to implement. The feedback continues to be overwhelming in support of an online offering of some kind from the festival. The flexibility and access an online platform allows across the UK is an avenue we will pursue while continuing to support independent cinema venues. The new COVID-19 variants present a unique and challenging variable in event delivery, so hybrid (online/offline) choices for the festival are highly likely in the near future, especially as mobility continues to be a pressing issue for many. With guidance from Filmhub Scotland, we are reflecting and looking into how best to reach the borders and further afield in Scotland.

Looking forward, the risks presented by the pandemic are still quite high, and we will use this opportunity to focus on strengthening the current assets of the festival and develop grassroots community ties within the Black community in Scotland. In the festival programme, we will look to consolidate the industry strand of the festival, strengthen the short film competition and the Critics Circle element to develop up-and-coming writers and film critics. The last minute withdrawal of films continues to present a challenge, and we will continue to pursue a more secure online video hosting platform. Due to the filmmakers' reluctance to make brand-new films available online and distribution and territorial limitations imposed by distributors, we are looking for methods to make our online platform more secure. We will continue to use our festival assets to raise awareness of the festival and build on the new partnerships we have fostered this year. In order to develop these assets and seek multiple income and funding sources, it is likely that year-round activity will need to be reduced. Still, we are determined to be of service to our community by using our platform to amplify, advocate and maintain a positive voice for the African continent.

Report compiled by Africa in Motion Film Festival, November 2021.