



## AiM 2020 End of Year Report

### Overview

2020 marked the 15th edition of Africa in Motion (AiM) Film Festival. The main festival took place online from 30 October to 29 November, with over 60 screenings and events available across the UK. The programme consisted of film screenings, complementary events, storytelling, music performances, a digital dine and view and more. We hosted over 70 films including shorts, documentaries and features. Throughout the year we also held around 25 screenings as part of our year-round programme.

### **Some highlights of this year's programme include:**

- **TANO:** We collaborated with the five UK African film festivals to host a season of 10 of the best features and documentaries over the last decade. The films were hosted on the AiM platform and reached 1,142 audience members in total. We presented a showcase of the best contemporary African cinema from the past decade to mark Black History Month. The title We Are Tano ('tano' meaning five in Kiswahili) was adopted in 2015 as the umbrella name for this consortium. This special season ran until 20 October and includes films from some of the best filmmakers in the world including Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, Alain Gomes, Rahmatou Keïta and Leyla Bouzid. Hajooj Kuka (*Beats of the Antonov*), was wrongfully imprisoned a few days before this film programme launched, and then released after global outrage. TANO amplified the #ReleaseTheArtistsSudan campaign and continued to campaign until all artists were released.
- **Day of the Girl Child:** We marked the UN day of observance for young girls worldwide on 11 October with an online conversation hosted by 2020 Caine Prize winner Irenosen Okojie (*Butterfly Fish, Nudibranch*). She was joined by award-winning playwright Chinonyerem Obimba (*Princess & The Hustler*) and Yero Timi-Biu (BFI Future Film Festival New Talent award winner). This event was followed by a storytime session centred on Lupita Nyong'o's book *Sulwe* and led by award-winning performance storyteller Mara Menzies. Lupita Nyong'o shared a quote with AiM in support of the event that we were permitted to use for publicity:

*"I wrote Sulwe to encourage children to love their skin and to see the beauty that radiates from within them. It's a reminder that what you look like externally should not be the extent of your value - that you have to work on what comes from inside because that is the beauty that is eternal. Sulwe brings the issue of colorism to the fore so people can address it, while giving dark-skinned readers a chance to live in the world of imagination and magic."*

- **Memory is a Weapon:** We partnered with the South African initiative #MemoryIsAWeapon to hold a series of film screenings focused on African women, these were accompanied by performances from Black female artists from across the world who reflected and reimagined the future post COVID-19. Performers include Ndileka Mandela, Kim Poole, Courtney Stoddart and Mara Menzies.
- **Festival highlights** - Pivoting 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. Three feature-length films that screened during the festival have gone on to be selected as Oscar entries in the Best Foreign Language category for their countries - Sudan, Lesotho and Kenya. Two films we screened were longlisted for multiple British Independent Film Awards (BIFA).  
This year, we also launch the **Notes Unbound** platform for up-and-coming African and Black diaspora film critics and journalists from around the globe to deepen their knowledge of African cinema. Going forward, this initiative will continue to be closely linked to films and events that occur during the festival. The critics selected were invited to share their impressions and insights through their articles and interviews for the Africa in Motion website. We worked with new local organisations (eg Jambo Radio and United Glasgow Football Club) as well as national ones such as Festival of Ideas. Events related to these new partnerships were some of the most well-attended with them staying in the top 5 of the whole festival.

**Our audiences for 2020 reached over 7108 people, our largest audience to date.**

### **Africa in Motion 2020 Festival**

#### **Approach:**

For this year's landmark 15th edition of Africa in Motion, in order to adapt to the extraordinary challenges we all faced this year on a global scale, we presented our festival entirely online. This year also marked the first edition of new festival director Liz Chege. In the wake of recent horrors yielded from our reckoning with racial injustice, it was important for us not to cancel the festival and find a way to present the rich diversity of African filmmaking and storytelling. The aim wasn't just to help counter the negative and emotionally damaging effects of the news, but to position ourselves as a communal space and platform for the diaspora to connect. 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 in unique ways, such as our 'AiM at Home' programme over



summer that paired archive and contemporary work, and our *Notes Unbound* series of film criticism that accompanied the festival edition.

### **Online platform:**

We worked with Edinburgh-based web designer Purple Spider to create a bespoke online streaming platform for our unique, virtual festival. All 70+ films in our programme were hosted on Vimeo and embedded for audiences to stream directly through Africa in Motion's website, protected by a paywall and geo-blocked to the UK-only.

We created a month-long programme, with new films scheduled and becoming available to watch on AiM's website each day. To try and replicate the sense of a physical event, we encouraged audiences to watch films "live" with us at the premiere date and time, often to line up with a real live complementary event (Q&A, discussion, etc). However, films remained on AiM's website for paying audiences to watch for 48 hours and all complementary events were recorded so people could catch up afterwards.

### **Ticketing:**

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. In each instance, audiences were sent a unique viewing link (not shareable), which logged them into the AiM website and gave them access to all their purchased content.

All discussions, Q&As and masterclasses were streamed for free, live to the Africa in Motion Facebook page and uploaded to Vimeo within 24 hours for those not able to access Facebook. All workshops were also free (with the exception of our "Create Your Own Superhero" workshop) but required registration in advance via Zoom.

### **Accessibility:**

To ensure that the festival was accessible and affordable to the widest possible audience, individual film tickets were priced on a **sliding scale** "pay what you can" amount of £2-8. Festival passes were offered at a standard price, or 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 discounted group tickets, including the Black Cinema Project and Readers of Colour.

AiM committed to ensuring that all feature-length films and documentaries in our 2020 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. In what was a particularly precarious time for the arts sector, we were dedicated to working with and supporting independent freelancers based in Scotland. We worked with local Edinburgh-based captioner Sarya Wu and Glasgow-based Collective Text, with some additional captioning from Matchbox Cineclub.

In addition, some of our live complementary events had live **BSL interpretation**. We had a member of the team dedicated to responding to access queries and requests throughout the month of the festival. If any audience member were to require live BSL interpretation for an event where one was not already planned, we had a system by which this could be arranged. This was implemented a number of times during the festival.

Although this was an unprecedented year for festivals such as AiM, it was clear that there were many advantages to holding a virtual festival. The fact that it was held online meant that many people could join who usually wouldn't have been able to access films at a cinema. For example, one audience member commented on social media:

*"I really enjoyed watching the Dhalinyaro movie online this morning. Makes it so much easier to access it for people like me who work late shifts. I bought the pass and will watch all the movies you post from home. Please please please make it possible for next year as well!"*

### **Year-round Screenings and Events**

With the onset of COVID-19 and lockdown from March and the transition to digital events we created a series of online screenings through embedded Vimeo links on our page under the title 'AiM at Home'. Screenings were held in partnership with a variety of different organisations and were accompanied by discussions, Q&As, poetry, dine-and-views, storytelling and more. We were able to utilise the switch to digital breaking down barriers of access and bringing together a number of speakers from across the world. We held 15 events with a total reach of 574 viewers.

### **Best of AiM Shorts: Part I**

#### **29 May - 12 June**

We put together a selection of 5 short films from previous AiM festivals.

### ***A Handful of Dates*** (Hashim Hasson, Sudan 2018)

**5 June**

We held a collaboration with the Sudanese Community Group in Edinburgh to screen 'A Handful of Dates', the screening was followed by a live Q&A with director Hashim Hassan and producer Mamdooh Salih.

### **Digital Dine and View: *Bakosó: Afrobeats of Cuba* + Q&A**

**12 June**

We hosted a digital dine and view in collaboration with Kuche (social food enterprise) and Havana Glasgow Film Festival. We screened *Bakosó: Afrobeats of Cuba*, followed by a live Q&A with director Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi, and accompanied by two recipes - a Mango and Beans Salad + Jollof Rice - for audiences to prepare in advance and dine along with us!

### **Best of AiM Shorts: Part II**

**19 June - 3 July**

We put together another selection of 5 short films from previous AiM festivals.

### **Memory is a Weapon Mini Festival**

**26 - 29 June**

We collaborated with South Africa based organisation Memory is a Weapon to bring together 7 artists and 3 activists to share their reflections on COVID-19. The project drew inspiration from the Adinkra symbol of the Sankofa bird, which means 'reach back and get it'. Using this theme, the project acted as a catalyst for Black female artists from across the world to reimagine new futures during and post-COVID-19. Through performances, spoken word and discussions and a series of zines we drew together a series of powerful stories through which participating women will speak about their unique experiences, providing a space to share and reflect on the crisis, considering meaningful ways forward.

This was collated and brought together in a mini festival held on the Africa in Motion Film Festival Facebook page and website from, with scheduled performances, live discussions and film screenings.

**Some highlights of the Memory is a Weapon programme include:** Ndileka Mandela (eldest Granddaughter of Nelson Mandela) sharing a storytelling and her thoughts on COVID-19), Courtney Stoddart (Scottish based poet) and Mara Menzies (Scottish based storyteller)

We reached 345 viewers on YouTube for the performances (see [here](#)).

We also hosted a series of film screenings, including *Standing on Their Shoulders* (Xoliswa Sithole, South Africa 2016) a South African documentary that connects female resistance movements in South Africa, followed by a Q&A with Firdoze Bulbulia and director Xoliswa Sithole; and also a package of Afro-Brazilian short films focused on memory, followed by a live Q&A with Afro-Brazilian filmmakers in Brazil. Both discussions were livestreamed on Facebook.

***Concerning Violence* (Göran Olsson, Germany 2014)**

**16 July**

Drawing on Frantz Fanon, this film looks at archive material covering the struggle for liberation from colonial rule in the late '60s and '70s.

This was followed by a discussion with panelists from South Africa, India and Palestine on decolonisation.

***Clemency* (Chinonye Chukwu, US)**

**17 July**

We marked International Day of Justice by supporting the release of Chinonye Chukwu's brilliant and award-winning "Clemency", in partnership with Bird's Eye View.

**DIVE IN Cinema**

**21-23 July**

As part of DIVE IN Cinema, a collaboration between a number of Scottish based festivals, we screened *Fatma 75* (Selma Baccar, Tunisia 1976) the first non-fiction film by a Tunisian woman, a feminist essay-film, and the first in a series of powerful films about strong female figures in the country. The film was made in the UN International Women's Year, 1975, and has long been recognised as one of the most important films from North Africa.

***Wax Print, 1 Fabric 200 Years of History* (Aiwan Obinyan, UK 2019) + Q&A**

**1 - 31 August**

We partnered with Aya Films to show *Wax Print, 1 Fabric 200 Years of History* plus a Q&A with director Aiwan Obinyan.

**Shorts: African Women in the Time of Covid-19**

**17 - 31 August**

Africa in Motion hosted a series of short films commissioned by the Ladima Foundation, in partnership with DW Akademie the film were made by African women who shared their stories about the personal, economic, and social impact of Covid-19 in Africa.

## **Film Feels: Looking Back, Reaching Forward + Q&A**

**28 - 30 August**

We screened a double bill of Ghanaian director King Ampaw's films [Kukurantumi: Road to Accra](#) and [No Time to Die](#). Mr. Ampaw's past experience is fascinating having worked and studied with Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders and Peter F. Bringmann in Austria and Germany.

As part of this we hosted a live discussion with King Ampaw who was in conversation with Dr Shawn Sobers broadcast on our Facebook page. In addition, Scottish-Ghanaian documentary filmmaker Vanessa Kanbi provided a small playlist of her work on YouTube for us and joined in the conversation regarding her own experience with filmmaking.

## **TANO\***

From 1 - 20 October we partnered with the 4 UK African film festivals - Afrika Eye in Bristol, the Cambridge African Film Festival (CAFF), Film Africa in London, and Watch-Africa Cymru (Wales) - to showcase 10 of the best contemporary African films from the past decade. Titles were selected collaboratively by all the festivals and included *The Wedding Ring* (Rahmatou Keita, Niger 2016), *As I Open My Eyes* (Leyla Bouzid, Tunisia 2015), *Beats of the Antonov* (Hajooj Kuka, Sudan 2017) and many more. The programme was hosted on the Africa in Motion website, and films were available for free for 48 hours. The films were well received reaching 1142 audience members across the UK, and securing press coverage in The Guardian and more.

*\*Tano is the Swahili word for five and was adopted in 2015 as the umbrella name of the UK's five biggest African film festivals. The TANO network was founded in February 2013 at FESPACO where Africa in Motion, Afrika Eye, the Cambridge African Film Festival and Film Africa signed the Ouagadougou Declaration. Through this declaration the festivals committed to working together to promote African cinema throughout the UK.*

## **Short Circuit GFF**

In November, we became the first screening partner for the [Short Circuit Film Club](#). The club is for short filmmakers with online screenings and events from around the world, held monthly on the new Glasgow Film At Home streaming platform. The aim is for Scotland's film talent to engage and interact with the work of other filmmakers globally. Our programme with them was on Monday 30th of November for 72 hours, with an online discussion at 4pm on Wednesday 2nd of December. The industry event allowed participants to network, discuss the films and filmmaking together, and to learn more about each monthly film programme.

We screened 4 films from our 2020 Short Film Competition - *This Day Won't Last* (Mouaad El Salem) which reflects on what it means to be young and queer in Tunisia; *KaunaPawa* (Joel Haikali) a magical-realist tale of two strangers with haunted pasts; *Happy in the Gap* (Lucas H. Rossi dos Santos) an essay on Black liberation in Brazil; *Bablinga* (Fabien Dao) a tale of alienation, distance, memory and the ubiquity of regret; and one film that we had not screened before titled *Never Look at the Sun* (Baloji) which explores the debate around skin lightening. This programme was presented by Liz Chege and University of Glasgow student Grace Coletta Feinmann who coordinated the short film programme with fellow students that assisted with pre-selection, blog writing and discussions during the AiM festival.

### **Main 2020 Festival Programme**

AiM's extensive and diverse film programme consisted of over 70 films – including fiction features, shorts, documentaries and television shows – and spanned 30 African countries. We programmed under various strands and themes including:

#### **Diaspora**

With this strand, we explored the rich and varied perspectives of African Diaspora experiences from transatlantic cultures. Neither here nor there, the 'in-betweenness' and collective longing for our ancestral source affects our view of the world and galvanises us to continually demand for a dignified life without the persistent dehumanisation of colonial and post-colonial structures. This strand explored illusions about race, the possibilities of Afrofuturist worlds and the battle for individual, personal ideals.

#### **Industry**

We were thrilled to connect a diverse and bold array of industry professionals and artists with a wider than ever before UK audience this year. Throughout November, audiences tuned in to masterclasses and Q&As with the creatives behind the programme selection. This included Dr Kehinde Andrews (*Back to Black*), Emmy award-winner Rehad Desai (*Miners Shot Down, Everything Must Fall*) and Toni Kamau (*Softie*), the youngest female African documentary producer to be invited as a member of the Academy for Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences and many more.

#### **Mamas**

Our mothers strand turned the camera to the women around us who are the guardians of the flame. They nudge us toward the fragile threads that hold us all together.

#### **Queer Africa**



Our Queer Africa strand was a raw, honest and intimate collection of stories from the LGBTQIA+ community across the African continent as well as the diaspora. Despite threats of violence and rejection; bear witness to poignant, moving accounts of love, joy, migration, class, freedom, refuge, censorship, acceptance, community and family.

### **Women in Focus**

For this strand, we presented a range of heartfelt, sensitive portraits of female strength and resilience. This included the first feature to be directed by a female director from Djibouti (*Dhalinyaro*), collaborative video essay drawing together Black female artists and activists from Scotland and beyond to reflect and reimagine new futures during/post-COVID-19; and films with views on marriage, motherhood, sexuality and desire, in societies where many of the menfolk are absent due to labour migration.

### **Film Highlights**

Three feature-length films screened during the festival have gone on to be selected as Oscar entries for their countries; *You Will Die at 20* (Amjad Abu Alala, Sudan, 2020) and *This is Not a Burial, It is a Resurrection* (Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese, Lesotho, 2019) have been selected as Sudan and Lesotho's first ever entry for the Best International Feature Film category at the upcoming Academy Awards in 2021 respectively. In addition, *The Letter* (Maia Lekow/Chris King, Kenya, 2019) has been entered into the Academy Awards as Kenya's entry. Two films we screened were longlisted for the British Independent Film Awards (BIFA):

- *Real* (Aki Omoshaybi, UK, 2020) was longlisted for 4 awards: The Douglas Hickox Award (Debut Director), Debut Screenwriter, Raindance Discovery Award and Most Promising Newcomer.
- *Mandem* (John Ogunmuyiwa, UK, 2019) was longlisted for Best British Short Film and went on to gain an official nomination for this award.

**Some film highlights this year include:** coming-of-age film *Dhalinyaro* (Lula Ali Ismail, 2019) our opening night selection which is the first feature to be directed by a female filmmaker from Djibouti and *Psychosis of Whiteness* (Eugene Nulman, 2018) which attracted the largest audience of all the screenings and events during the festival. The latter was presented in partnership with Festival of Ideas who regularly present events with renowned authors, academics and experts. Rare screenings of *J'ai Tante Aimé (I Loved So Much)* by Dalila Ennadre and *Bab Al-Sama Maftuh (Door to the Sky)* by Farida Benlyazid were particular highlights for film programmers and curators. Our partnership with Brazilian

festival Mostra de Cinemas Africanos was also a key highlight in our diaspora programme as they provided 2 shorts film packages. We partnered once again with Glasgow Women's Library and University of Glasgow for the Being Human Festival and screened a video essay titled *Memory is a Weapon* directed by Firdoze Bulbulia which drew together Black female artists and activists from Scotland and across the world to reflect and reimagine new futures during and post-COVID-19.

### **Complementary Events Highlights**

#### **Introductions & Discussions:**

One of the most memorable events during the festival was the panel conversation about the film *Mayor's Race* (Lorraine Blumenthal/Rob Mitchell, UK, 2018). Bristol's Mayor, Marvin Rees, Labour Party Ward Councillor Hibaq Jama and directors Lorraine Blumenthal and Rob Mitchell were in conversation with Glasgow Councillor and Chairman of AiM's board Graham Campbell. The most popular conversation events were the Q&As for *Psychosis of Whiteness*, *Dhalinyaro*, *Door to the Sky*, *You Will Die at 20* and *The Letter*. The children's storytelling session with Mara Menzies was also one of our top 10 events and our collaboration with Film Africa for the Kenya, Christian, Queer panel was also popular especially for the Kenyan audience who were able to tune in. For films where it may have been difficult to coordinate a live event due to language or availability, we presented pre-recorded discussions (*Door to the Sky*) and also asked filmmakers to provide short recorded introductions to their work (eg *Lusala*). The Q&As were held on Zoom and livestreamed on Facebook as this the social media platform with our largest following. These videos were also added to our Vimeo channel for our archive.

#### **Festival Opening - Screening, Q&A and Ultimate House Party:**

We opened the festival with a screening of the first feature film from Djibouti, *Dhalinyaro* (Lula Ali Ismail, Djibouti 2019). The film is a coming of age story following a group of young girls growing up in Djibouti city, revealing the pressures that young women face and the choices they have to make. The film received 100 views through our platform, and was followed by a live discussion with the film's director, chaired by Liz Chege.

Utilising the switch to digital technology we wanted to host a stand out digital performance for the opening of the 15th edition of AiM. Therefore following the opening screening we brought together musicians from Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroon, Kenya and Tanzania who each performed a live set in their living room to audiences in the UK (and around the world) via our Facebook page. Musicians

included Wanja Wohoro - (Kenya), Ndlovukazi Ladies, University of Johannesburg (South Africa), Kindeh (Cameroon), Zeekels (Nigeria), Orbit Makaveli (Tanzania) and Ayanda Nhlangothi (South Africa).

#### **Digital Dine and View:**

Ensuring that we continued our famous dine-and-views during our digital edition, we opted to host digital dine-and-view in collaboration with multicultural food organisation - Kuche. We screened the Algerian documentary '143 Sahara Street' (Hassen Ferhani, Algeria 2019) which follows the story of Malika who runs a roadside truck stop along the desert's Route national 1. Drawing on the food links from this film we paired it with an Algerian recipe - Tajine Jelbane Karnoune (artichoke and lamb stew) - created by Zina an Algerian resident in Glasgow. We encouraged audiences to cook the recipe and eat it whilst they watch the film, and many shared photos of their final dish on social media.

#### **Create Your Own Superhero Workshop:**

Etienne Kubwabo presented a zoom workshop over two weekends for young people between 12 and 18 years of age. In this workshop, young people learnt about Etienne's inspiration for his own comic book, *Beats of War*, and worked with Etienne to develop and design their own superhero narratives. All participants also received a free copy of Etienne's comic book.

Etienne Kubwabo is a filmmaker and DJ from Glasgow who moved to Scotland 10 years ago from the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2012, Etienne joined Clydebank College to study Film and Communication and holds a degree from Glasgow Caledonian University. In 2020, he created and released Scotland's first-ever black superhero comic book, *Beats of War*.

#### **Movement Workshop:**

In recognition of the emotional weight of this year, we hosted a free online movement workshop to accompany the documentary *Beyond My Steps* (Kamy Lara, Angola, 2019) led by choreographer [Sara Dos Santos](#). The film follows five dancers as they interrogate the concepts of tradition, culture, memory and identity, questioning the transformation and deconstruction of these themes in their own lives. Nearly 40 registrants signed up for the workshop and 33 attended. Sara is a Portuguese born, Angolan London-based choreographer, movement director and emerging cultural professional, known for interlacing a variation of dance styles, cultural influences and international experiences. She often highlights current social and political affairs and her work has been seen at Royal Court Theatre, The Place and Sadler's Wells. She is on the Board of Trustees at Chisenhale Dance Space.

### **Children's Day - AfriKids:**

Africa in Motion maintains an important role in widening perspectives on African stories and films for children. In partnership with the Scottish Storytelling Centre, we organised the screening of five animated short films, emceed by Mara Menzies, who contributed her own original Scottish-Kenyan storytelling. The 5 films came from around the continent for a programme including films from Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda.

### **Festival Closing - Digital Dance Party:**

After our closing night film screening, *Air Conditioner* (Fradique, Angola, 2020) we directed the audience to join in a set from Ugandan Glasgow-based Dj Maveen to celebrate the closing of the festival. This set was part of our takeover of Clyde Built Radio which took place throughout the festival. As co-founder of the DJ outfit *Shakara*, he has embarked on starting a night with diversity, inclusivity being the ethos and music being the driving force. He's also curated Time to Move, a celebration of black excellence through music and art at Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA). His playlist is available to listen again on Clybuilt Radio's soundcloud account [here](#). We complimented the closing night set with party mixes from German-Kenyan filmmaker/DJ Philippa Ndisi-Hermann ([replay](#)) and Kenyan filmmaker/musician Mbithi Masya ([replay](#)).

### **Short Film Competition**

The process for the Short Film Competition commenced in March 2020, when our Filmfreeway platform began receiving submissions from directors from across Africa and the diaspora. The deadline for submissions was the 30th of June and by that time we had received over 500 eligible entries. A viewing committee of 15 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 50 films. This longlist was distributed amongst other senior members of the festival, and a similar rating process took place. But mid-September the committee met and whittled down the list to a shortlist of 15 films.

The shortlist was then passed onto the jury that had been selected for this year. The jury was comprised of four film professionals, who were experts in their field and African cinema and creative content; Cecile Emeke, Ana Camile Esteves, Edima Otuokon and Lara Utian-Preston. The final programme was released in the first week of October, where all 15 films were listed with short synopses and selected stills. We then underwent the process of organising panel discussions with a Q&A to be live streamed on the festival's Facebook

page. These were recorded and uploaded to the festival's Vimeo page afterwards. Three panel discussions were set up on consecutive Monday evenings during November, chaired by student committee members, and was a brilliant way to interact with directors and for audiences to engage with the 15 selected shorts. Most of the short films were available during the festival (except for three titles which distributors required to be online for a shorter period of time). After collating the scores from the jury members, the highest average was mathematically calculated and the award, and cash prize of £500 went to *Da Yie* by Anthony Nti from Ghana. 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 *Henet Ward* by Morad Mostafa from Egypt. Overall the short films were watched a total of 1,200 times over the month that the festival took place. The 15 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.

### **Management and Organisation**

The festival was managed and organised by the following people:

**Festival Director:** Liz Chege

**Festival Co-director for 2020:** Carmen Thompson

**Programme Coordinator:** Myriam Mouflih

**Marketing Coordinator:** Ane Lopez

**Afro-Brazilian Programme Coordinator:** Ana Camila Esteves

**Animation Programme Coordinator:** Stefanie Van de Peer

**Web Development:** James Cocker

**Graphic Design:** Derek Edwards

**Festival Trailer Editing:** King Simz

**Captioning:** Sarya Wu

**Additional Captioning:** Emilia Beatriz, Matchbox Cineclub

**Short Film Competition Coordinator:** Grace Coletta Feinmann

**Short Film Competition Submissions and Selections Team:** Ben Allardyce, Rosie Beattie, Federica Bianco, Iona Bremner, Noemie Colin, Callum Creaney, Ed Fernandez, Angus Gilles, Rebecca Lee, Ashley McDougal, Ilia Ryzhenko, Sharon Thomas, Milda Valiulyte, Chang Xu

**Marketing Interns:** Elisa Jockyman Roithmann, Luna Issa

**Festival Advisors:** Justine Atkinson & Lizelle Bischoff

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

**Lizelle Bischoff:** 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

**David Murphy:** Professor, School of Languages, Cultures and Religions, University of Stirling

**Raquel Ribeiro:** Lecturer in Portuguese, University of Edinburgh

**Peter West:** Malawi's Honorary Consul in Scotland

### **Reception of the festival**

The 2020 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 2020 Festival online audience viewing numbers were as follows:**

- Film Programme - 3778
- Complementary Events (Q&As, Discussions, Workshops, Masterclasses) - 1614

**Total: 5392**

**The TANO screening audience viewing numbers were as follows:**

- A Screaming Man - 201
- Man on Ground - 96
- Tey - 140
- Something Necessary - 82
- Beats of the Antonov - 105
- As I Open My Eyes - 120
- The Wedding Ring - 92
- Call Me Thief - 75
- Supa Modo - 175
- Film Festival Film - 56

**Total: 1142**

**Total year-round screenings (15 individual events) audience: 574**

**Overall festival attendance (2020 Festival, TANO and year-round): 7108**

### **Volunteers**

Despite taking place virtually, this year we were still pleased to welcome nearly 20 volunteers to participate in the festival. The volunteers who committed their time did so with such enthusiasm, despite the unprecedented circumstances. 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 took on roles within the short film competition pre-selection and marketing teams.

**Feedback from volunteers:**

When asked after the festival, 90% of volunteers rated their overall experience volunteering for AiM as above average, with 78% rating it as “excellent”. There was some general feedback about the adjustments to working remotely, away from the AiM team, something that has of course been felt by everyone. We will take this onboard for future festivals and events that are to be organised and take place online, and think about ways to further cultivate a sense of team connection whilst working remotely. Overall feedback was that volunteers had the opportunity to gain valuable experience and learn new skills. The following quotes are responses from volunteers about their experience:

*“I have really enjoyed the experience. Viewing so many and such a wide range of African cinema has really opened my eyes and introduced me to a beautiful part of cinema that I was unaware of before.”*

*“The Short Film Competition committee role felt a lot more practical and applicable in a future professional context than Front of House roles for example. There was a lot more flexibility, but also deadlines to meet and it was very interesting to critique films.”*

*“Volunteering with AiM has been an incredibly enriching experience. Despite being unable to attend any in person events, there was a very nice feeling of shared experience...”*

One volunteer wrote about her experience for the Africa in Motion blog, writing *“I have truly loved each moment of being a small part of bringing the Africa in Motion Film Festival together and would highly recommend that anybody who can get involved with the festival in the future does so”*. Read the full piece [here](#).

### **Audience Feedback**

We partnered with Filmhouse cinema (Edinburgh) to offer 2 prizes: an annual cinema membership and a student membership to incentivize the audience to fill out our online survey. We used an anonymous Survey Monkey to list the questions which were broken up into categories including demographic feedback questions that provide insight into who our audiences are, which devices were used to access the festival, and about the audience's experiences of the festival and how they found out about it. Some key feedback:

- **Films and events:** The most well attended screening and event was *The Psychosis of Whiteness*. Other popular and memorable films according to the survey were: the short film competition, *Door to the Sky*, *Knuckle City*, *Dhalinyaro*, *Poppie Nongena*, *How to Steal a Country*, *Nafi's Father*, *The Letter*, *Our Lady of the Nile* and *Softie*.
- **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:

*“Being able to attend the festival at all was my favourite element! In a year of distanced everyone, shut everything, etc, knowing that AiM was still in motion*

*was by far the best antidote.”*

*“I loved being able to watch back the interviews with the filmmakers because they were recorded over zoom!”*

*“All of it - it was so varied and diverse, historical and contemporary.”*

*“Loved so many of the films. Learning so much about so many african countries, the landscapes, culture, political issues. A fantastic festival. Got me through lockdown!”*

*“Seeing these films was a wonderful way to experience Africa-the land/streetscape,the people and the issues that concern them. We have travelled in West Africa and it was so good to revisit!”*

*“Being able to watch the films for 48 hours, rather than one set time. Flexibility is key right now with people on all sorts of different schedules.”*

*“I absolutely loved the fact it was available online. I always want to see as many of Africa In Motion films as possible, but I work a lot. Also, crowds make me anxious, so being able to watch movies online made a HUGE difference. Please consider offering such an option in the future.”*

*“This last month of films has greatly improved my knowledge of Africa.”*

*“Wonderful opportunity for armchair travel, which was really welcome in these restricted times.”*

- **Reach:** Feedback showed that most respondents found out about the festival through word of mouth via channels such as WhatsApp (a distant first place). This was closely followed by email, facebook, the AiM website and twitter. The survey also showed that our radio collaborations, collaboration with Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and adverts in The Skinny and The List had an effect on reaching audiences. Notably, the mention in The Guardian about the TANO programme was mentioned by an audience member as leading to the discovery of the festival and several mentioned they received passes and tickets as gifts. 51% of audience members stated they had attended AiM events before and 48% stated they had not, showing a big increase in reaching audiences who were not aware of AiM before perhaps due to the national reach we were able to achieve this year.
- **Viewing method:** 70% of audiences used laptops/desktop computers to view the films and discussion while 15% used TVs and 15% used their phones or tablets.
- **Ticketing feedback:** 38% of audience members rated the experience of booking tickets as ‘superb’ and 48% rated the experience of booking tickets ‘great’. Although there were some challenges with booking the tickets and navigating the system early on (a noted problem with Hotmail addresses in particular), many said that it was



good value for a festival pass. Ironically, while people were stuck at home due to the pandemic, many said they would have benefited from larger viewing periods of time, as they missed some of the two day windows. Many found the daily reminder of what's new helpful.

- **Demographics:** Feedback showed that almost half of the audience was between the ages of 25 - 44 years old at 43%, and 39% were over 55 years old. A staggering 81% of the audience identified as female, compared to 17% male and 1% preferred to self-identify. Around 71% identified as heterosexual, with 17% as bisexual and 9% as either gay, lesbian or self-identifying. 5% of respondents considered themselves as having a disability. Around 22% of audience members identified as people of colour (with Black people at around 7%). 63% of audience members identified as white, and 15% identified as mixed heritage or 'other'.

Feedback also showed that audience members were from a wide range of locations such as Kirkcaldy, London, Bristol, Fife, Edinburgh, Perth, Manchester, Birmingham, Oldham, Halifax, John o' Groats, Ayr, Falkirk, Huntly, Bradford, Glasgow, Lancashire, Leeds, Bath, Manchester, Hay-on-Wye, Aberdeen, Sheffield, Preston 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**

Voluntary Action Fund  
Film Hub Scotland  
Film Audience Network  
University of Strathclyde  
Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh  
Scottish Documentary Institute

#### **Event Partners**

Küche  
Caladonia Worldwide  
TurnFlicks Media  
Nollywood Travel Film Festival  
Havana Glasgow Film Festival  
Glasgow Women's Library  
Being Human Festival  
The F-Show  
Memory is a Weapon  
Sudanese Community Group Edinburgh  
Lux Scotland  
Mostros De Cinemas Africanos (Brazil)



Ayr Film Society  
Bristol Festival of Ideas  
Scottish Storytelling Centre  
University of Exeter  
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
Document Film Festival  
Fans Youth Film Festival

#### **TANO - Supporting Festivals**

Afrika Eye  
Cambridge African Film Festival  
Film Africa  
Watch-Africa

#### **Media Partners**

The List  
The Skinny  
Clyde Built Radio  
Jambo Radio

#### **Feedback from partners**

We requested for feedback from our partners and they were generous in their responses:

*"This year has been tricky due to various COVID complications, but I still feel it's been a good partnership and a great opportunity to present work we might not otherwise have been able to present." - Alexandra Colta, Document Human Rights Festival*

*"We are a small organisation with no resources to invest in the digital infrastructure to deliver online screenings ourselves. Therefore, partnering with AiM has enabled us to provide our audiences with access to new world cinema at a time when we cannot deliver physical screenings. Being attached to the Festival the past two years has also broadened our exposure to new audiences across Scotland and the UK, particularly this year. As a very local community organisation, this increased awareness is important to enhancing the perception and validity of our work." - Zaki El-Salahi, Ayr Film Society*

*"Very successful and beneficial. It enabled us to widen our audience reach and to promote the work we do and ties in perfectly with the ethos of our organisation. We were really impressed by the audience numbers that the festival attracted to our partner event too. It has also helped forged links between our two organisations and opened up other collaboration opportunities already." - Karen O'Hare, GMAC Film*

*"It was wonderful! Liz had thought really carefully about the event that we should partner on, and it was a great compliment to our own speaker networks and audience programme. It was a great joy to be finding new ways of working with new partners, despite the difficulties of this year." - Naomi Miller, Festival of Ideas*

## **Publicity and Marketing**

### **Press**

As in previous years, AiM developed media partnerships with the two leading local cultural papers *The Skinny* and *List Magazine* which guaranteed coverage of the festival. In the lead-up to the festival, we also enjoyed coverage from *Bizcommunity*, *The Sunday Post* and *Waitrose Weekend Newspaper*.

Online coverage and write-ups in e-newsletters were numerous and extensive and included: *CCA Glasgow*, *University of Glasgow*, *St Andrews University*, *Filmhouse Recommends*, *Scottish Documentary Institute*, *The Mosaic Rooms*, *Safar Film Festival* and *Rumpus Room*. 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*, *All Hands on Doc* and *The Words of the Lost Penguin*.

We disseminated our main press release advertising the programme which contained information about the overall festival with Industry highlights, and two announcing the shortlist and winners of our short film competition. These were sent out to our database of contacts across the UK.

### **Here is a selection of our press publicity:**

- [\*Africa In Motion film festival moves online as it aims to introduce Scottish audiences to continent's rich storytelling\*](#) (The Sunday Post, Oct 2020, online)
- [\*The Scottish Film Festivals Offering a Window on the World\*](#) (The Skinny, Nov 2020, online and in print)
- [\*Africa in Motion Film Festival showcasing 70 features and shorts online\*](#) (The List, Oct 2020, online)
- [\*Catch the Africa in Motion Festival\*](#) (Waitrose Weekend Magazine, No. 526, page 45 - online and print)

### **Radio**

This year we formed new partnerships with two radios stations based in Glasgow - Jambo Radio and ClydeBuilt Radio - broadcasting content for the entire duration of the festival:

**Jambo Radio** is the "only radio station for People of African and Caribbean heritage in Glasgow and Renfrewshire". Co-founder George Tah arranged four interviews, every Wednesday during the month of the festival, with different members of AiM staff to highlight specific events from the programme. Being a radio station that aims to bring the communities together with speakers of a multitude of languages, these series of interviews allowed us to reach both a Scottish and an Afro-diasporic audience.



**Clyde Built Radio** is an online music station which broadcasts from the Barras Market in Glasgow. Clyde Built has more than 2,000 followers on Soundcloud, nearly 3,000 Facebook followers, almost 7,000 Instagram followers, with a mostly young Scottish audience. The partnership comprised of four hour-long radio takeovers, every Thursday during the month of the festival. The sessions served as a great outreach tool and included both music and excerpts of the festival's live discussions and Q&As.

Festival director Liz Chege was also interviewed on **BBC Radio Scotland's** morning show.

### **Print Publicity**

This year due to the exceptional circumstances posed by the outbreak of COVID-19, and considering most Scottish art venues were closed to the public, we eliminated the printed brochure 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.

### **Niche Marketing**

We developed a niche marketing strategy for all events to ensure special interest audiences were reached. Different groups, organisations and influencers were highlighted and email marketing used to recommend specific films/events to them to share with their follower bases or to raise general awareness of the festival. For example, Arab British Centre generously shared details of our Arabic-language titles across their social media platforms throughout the festival and included news about the festival in their regular newsletter.

General social media sharing/retweeting support was received from a wide range of organizations, including (but not limited to): *African Cultural Organisation Edinburgh, Scottish BAME Writers Network, Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival, Centre of African Studies (Edinburgh), Glasgow School of Art, Fringe of Colour, Kaleidoscope Trust, Kenyan Women in Scotland Association, Strathclyde University Nigerian Society, Radical Film Network* and *Yon Afro Collective*. In addition, all staff members, curators and volunteers were able to share and promote in their own networks. Marketing from third party referral contributed to 7% of website traffic during the month of the festival, equating to 507 unique visitors.

### **Online Marketing**

For Africa in Motion's first ever online edition, we had to create a whole new marketing approach with the aim of increasing the festival's online presence and directing the audience to the website, which was the hub of the virtual festival. Our online marketing strategy became 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 media statistics overview - Programme Launch until end of Festival:**

Platform	Increased Followers	Total Reach
Facebook	479	205,865
Twitter	308	309,900
Instagram	458	22,685

The festival programme launched on Tuesday 6 October. We posted daily from this date across our three major social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using the most visually strong stills of the programme. We first introduced the different film strands and highlighted different events each day to slowly unveil the programme and create interest and understanding about the functionality and accessibility of the online format. We prompted various influencers, digital partners and supporters to then share and retweet these posts to increase engagement. In the time between programme launch and the start of the festival we received over 90,000 impressions, 385 likes and 242 retweets for our posts on Twitter and our Facebook content had a total reach of nearly 86,000. We created Facebook events for all events (Q&As, performances and discussions) and boosted some of them for the weeks leading up to the event dates. We also boosted Facebook posts about strands and the countdown to the festival opening with targeted audience groups.

In addition we created a tailored advertising using the festival’s trailer across Facebook and Instagram, targeting Scottish audiences from within the African diaspora, as well as those with an interest in film from the African continent (and the diaspora) and the topics/issues explored in individual films, as well as those with a general interest in cinema more broadly.

**Video Assets:**

This year, AiM commissioned both a Festival Trailer and Short Film Competition Trailer for use in our online marketing campaign, working with Edinburgh-based editor King Simz. From its release on Programme Launch day, the main trailer received nearly 1000 views across our social media platforms, with the Short Film Competition trailer receiving over 250 views.

In addition, we worked with Glasgow-based production company Caesura Media to create a “Welcome to Africa in Motion 2020” video, in the absence of a traditional opening night at Edinburgh’s Filmhouse. The film utilised stop motion, and included a welcome address from the AiM’s two 2020 Festival Co-directors. It was released online on the first day of the festival - 30 October - and from this date received over 350 views.

We also used film trailers, promos and specifically commissioned filmmaker introductions as additional marketing content to highlight different elements of the programme. Overall, the festival’s original video content generated 1851 views from audiences online.



## **Social Media:**

As part of a media partnership with *The Skinny*, we were able to take over their Instagram stories for our opening day on the 30<sup>th</sup> October. We shared highlights from the festival programme to their 16,000 followers. The take over increased our followers considerably and allowed us to reach a much wider audience within Scotland.

Once the festival started, we used a regular daily posting format called "NEW TODAY", to keep in line with similar daily messaging on our website. These posts across all three platforms informed the audience on the screenings and events happening that day. To accompany these informative posts, we designed an eye catching branded social media card template in various formats that improved the festival's visual identity, giving consistency across the month-long campaign and considerably increasing the engagement.

Within the graphic social media assets, we also created a series of text based animated gifs prompting the highlighting key components of the festival, including tickets and passes, as well as key dates such as the last week of the festival or and the end of the festival. The graphic elements were inspired by the digital brochure's design and were reminiscent of traditional letterpress techniques that we hoped would cut through the predominantly digital designs of other brands and festivals marketing in the online space.

Alongside the daily information-led posts about the programme, we used Twitter as a to remind the audience of specific events that were still within their 48hr viewing window, picking up on key aspects of the films, press quotes, recent awards/news or any other relevant information related to the subject of the film. We also formulated a live tweeting strategy during the festival in order to generate buzz and direct people to the live Q&A's streaming on Facebook. Moreover, we utilised Instagram stories to build an immersive sense of engagement with the festival despite it running online.

## **Blog:**

We utilised Africa in Motion's online blog to highlight different aspects of the festival in a longer-form editorial format. Pieces included interviews with filmmakers shortlisted in AiM's Short Film Competition, in-depth critical pieces and personal pieces from volunteers about their experience working at the festival. In addition, different members of the festival team wrote a "Staff Pick" piece, highlighting a favourite film from the extensive 2020 programme.

## **Online Marketing Summary:**

The social media campaign contributed to 34.7% of the website traffic with a total reach of 2680 people.

During the four weeks of the festival our Facebook content gained a reach of over 166,693 and our Twitter posts received 220,000 impressions, 1,000 likes and 385 retweets. Our

overall social media followers also increased significantly. Our Facebook followers grew from 7,480 at launch to nearly 7,900 by the end of the festival and we also gained 124 Twitter followers (total now 4,879) and 326 followers on Instagram (total now 920).

We received sustained positive feedback and comments about events from attendees on social media throughout the festival. Some posts included:

*"I really loved this festival so much. I saw so many stunning films - both documentary and non-documentary. There were also so many films I would have like to have seen and was not able to. It gave me a chance to travel in my mind and have a glimpse into different lives - which I do not normally have a chance to see. So compelling. And because the festival was online - it enabled me to do this, whereas I would not have been able to travel to Scotland. Thank you to all the filmmakers, actors, organisers etc. I hope that you will continue in online format moving forward so I will be able to attend in future years."*

Cat Gardner, Facebook

*"I really enjoyed watching the Dhalinyaro movie online this morning. Makes it so much easier to access it for people like me who work late shifts. I bought the pass and will watch all the movies you post from home. Please please please make it possible for next year as well! "*

Marta Morz, Facebook ("Dhalinyaro")

*"Wow! There is so much on offer here. In a time where I have time...to think, feel, engage and research, this wonderful film festival has appeared in my life. I have space in my psyche to appreciate more news and art and history and the beauty of Africa....and it's a Scottish initiative! Check it out everyone. I can't wait to get more involved!"*

Vicki Ritchie, Facebook

*Immensely moving cinema. Unlike most films about apartheid, #PoppyNongena:*

- is about a woman
- is about an ordinary person, not one of the great 'struggle heroes'
- doesn't take sides (e.g. in portraying the school strikes)
- doesn't have a happy ending

Darren Phillip, Twitter ("Poppie Nongena")

*"Just watched the Queer Africa Shorts at @AiMfilmfesat - this festival is so so important! Favourite moments were all of Bonde, the moment we see @CassavaRepublic She Called Me Woman in a shot in Ife, supreme suit game in 2064 and the final moments of Mandem 🏳️🌈🎬🏳️🌈🎬🏳️🌈🎬🏳️🌈🎬"*

Jess Brough, Twitter (Queer Africa Shorts)

*"Enjoyed this candid and enlightening documentary on female expression, identity and creativity - my first Mauritanian film (I think!) #AiMFilmFest"*

Rishaad Ait El Mouddeh, Twitter ("Waiting for Men")

### Here is a selection of our press publicity for TANO:

- [The Guardian](#) - Critic Peter Bradshaw created a list of his own to accompany our TANO showcase. His list included archive films whereas the TANO programme focused on contemporary titles. (1 October 2020, online)
- [The Economist](#) '*Hajooj Kuka's Art of Resilience*' Liz Chege was interviewed about TANO and the campaign to release Sudanese director Hajooj Kuka. (3 November 2020, online and print).
- [2020 Africa in Motion Film Fest to be Held Online](#) - Biz Community (6 October 2020, online)
- [We Are Tano – An online showcase of African film](#) - The Voice (28 September 2020, online)

### Looking Forward

Planning for AiM 2021 has already commenced, and we are considering a number of ideas to implement. The feedback we've received from partners and audiences is that making films available online has been very successful and they would like this option to continue. The flexibility and access an online platform allows to viewers across the UK is an avenue we will pursue while continuing to support independent cinema venues. A hybrid (online/offline) festival is highly likely in the coming years especially as the pandemic is still with us and 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. With COP26 soon upon us, exploration into further integrating the Glasgow and Edinburgh programmes will be pivotal to offer a cohesive public facing image for festival audiences.

Looking forward, we would like to further consolidate the industry strand of the festival and the Critics Circle element to develop up-and-coming writers and film critics. For the industry strand, we will look into wider distribution opportunities for African films in the UK, and partner again with the TANO festivals to explore more ambitious routes and ideas. We experienced a number of filmmakers withdrawing their films this year because our Vimeo platform was not secure enough against piracy. 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 hope to find a digital film distribution expert to assist us in conducting an audit on online film festivals and make recommendations for us to implement in the future. We will continue to expand our year-round activities, as this would maintain awareness of the festival in the public eye, increase and expand our audiences, and provide new opportunities for partnership development.

Challenges due to Brexit are upon us, and seeking multiple income and funding sources are an even more urgent top priority for us. In addition, with ongoing global movements such as





#EndSARS and Black Lives Matter, we are determined to be of service by using our platform to amplify, advocate and maintain a positive voice for the African continent.

*Report compiled by Africa in Motion Film Festival, December 2020*