

Young film producers return from LA

Two young South African producer/directors, Cecil Matlou and Apollo Muwanga-Zake, recently returned from four weeks at the New York Film Academy (NYFA), based at the Universal studios in Los Angeles. They went there courtesy of the MultiChoice Film Talent Incubator.

Welcoming back the two young filmmakers was Jackie Rakitla, GM of corporate affairs for MultiChoice South Africa, who said, "Our main objective with the Film Talent Incubator is to fast-track previously disadvantaged talented individuals in South Africa's film and television industry. We are committed to contributing towards addressing the technical skills gap in our film industry; and to do all that we can to develop up-and-coming filmmakers."

Platforms for ordinary South Africans

Muwanga-Zake, 30, a producer, director and presenter from Gauteng who has done extensive work for MTV, e.tv, SABC1, SABC2 and Kaya FM, believes that being chosen for the programme is an "unbelievable opportunity" to create platforms for ordinary South Africans to be able to express their own images.

"We had access to other productions on set, so we got to see productions in the making like *Desperate Housewives*, and the *Late Night* show with Conan O'Brien. Some of my most amazing experiences were having a camera put in my hands in the first week and shooting and watching my first film on a big screen at the Egyptian Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard," said Muwanga-Zake.

"Learning by doing"

Reflecting on this opportunity, Muwanga-Zake said, "Learning by doing is the Academy's philosophy. We experienced an intense four-week program structured around the production of three short films of increasing complexity. Each week all our films were screened and critiqued by experts."

The academy knows how inspiring it can be for their students to meet with, and learn from industry professionals. Henry Sim, Sam Travolta and Bruna de Luca, well-known directors, actors, producers, editors, screenwriters and cinematographers, were invited to lecture at the master classes. They also met David Seltzer (director of the *Omen*), James Crowe (Indie LA Film maker) and Marshall Lewis (screenwriter).

Twenty-nine year old Cecil Matlou, a producer and director from Gauteng, was ecstatic over this opportunity. "Not only has it been a rich cultural experience, meeting other students from all over the globe and making valuable contacts, but we met famous directors and producers," said Matlou. Matlou has produced and directed a wide range of commercials, short films and features.

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