

## 2020 Africa in Motion Film Fest to be held online

The 2020 edition of the Africa in Motion (AiM) Film Festival will be held online from today, 6 October, given the Covid-19 pandemic. Africa in Motion is Scotland's major annual celebration of African cinema, bringing a wide variety of creative stories from across the African continent.

Since its inception in 2006, AiM has introduced nearly 45,000 audience members to the brilliance and diversity of African cinema, screening over 500 films. This year's edition will include screenings of over 70 features and shorts, as well as 25 complimentary events including a digital dine and view, a Nollywood red carpet event, music sessions, filmmaker Q&As, workshops and masterclasses. This year also marks a new re-structure in the makeup of the festival.



Newly-appointed director of Africa in Motion, Liz Chege, says: “In a year where the world is being stretched in so many ways, it’s a testament to our incredible team that we have been able to continue our mission to highlight the rich diversity of African filmmaking and storytelling. We are passionate about expanding audience understanding, and appreciation of African film and cultures across the UK. I am excited and delighted to call AiM my new home.”

In the lead up to the festival, AiM has teamed up with other leading festivals of African cinema in the UK to present 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 will run 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, director of *Beats of the Antonov*, was recently wrongfully imprisoned, then released after global outrage. TANO amplified and continues to advocate for the artists still imprisoned.

AiM will also mark 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 will be joined by award-winning playwright Chinonyerem Obimba (*Princess & The Hustler*) and Yero Timi-Biu (BF Future Film Festival New Talent award winner). This will be followed by a storytime session centred on Lupita Nyong'o's book *Sulwe* and led by award-winning performance storyteller Mara Menzies.

As conversations about the underrepresentation of women in cinema and the #MeToo movement reverberates around the world, the festival continues to draw attention to women who steadfastly blaze the trail behind the camera. The Women in Focus strand includes our opening film *Dhalinyaro* (Lula Ali Ismail Djibouti, 2019) a tender coming-of-age tale that is also the first feature to be directed by a female director from Djibouti. *Khartoum Offside* (Marwa Zein, Sudan, 2019) follows the story of a group of exceptional young women in Khartoum determined to play football professionally and *Waiting for Men* (Katy Lena Ndiaye, Mauritania, 2007) is an intimate portrait of women talking about views on marriage, motherhood, sexuality and desire, in a society where many of the menfolk are absent due to labour migration.

The Queer Africa strand is a spotlight on the shifting landscape of African queerness. AiM will present a rare honest and intimate collection of stories from the queer community across the African continent as well as the diaspora. This includes *Kenyan, Christian and Queer* (Aiwan Obinyan, UK 2020), *I Am Samuel* (Pete Murimi, Kenya, 2020) and 'Days, Nights' - a collection of African and diaspora shorts.

For the Industry strand, AiM will connect a diverse and bold array of industry professionals and artists with wider than ever before the UK audience. Taking place throughout November, audiences can tune in to masterclasses and Q&As with the creatives behind our programme selection. This includes Dr Kehinde

Andrews (*Back to Black*), Emmy award-winner Rehad Desai (*Miners Shot Down, Everything Must Fall*), Toni Kamau, the youngest female African documentary producer to be invited as a member of the Academy for Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences and many more.

The Mamas strand is an offering of films that examine our mothership connection. *The Letter* (Maia Lekow Chris King, Kenya, 2019) is a shocking portrayal of murderous avarice rooted in the desire to purloin ancestral land, while *143 Sahara Street* (Hassen Ferhani, Algeria 2019) is a contemplative and sweet documentary about a lone woman that runs a roadside truck stop along the desert's Route nationale 1. Based on a true story, from 1970s apartheid South Africa, *Poppie Nongena* (Christiaan Olwagen, South Africa, 2020) is a woman whose life revolves around her family, finding stability in a period of immense upheaval. In *This is Not a Burial, It's a Resurrection* (Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese, Lesotho 2019), an 80 year-old widow who is winding up her earthly affairs and preparing to die, finds a new will to live and ignites collective spirit of defiance within her community.

Carmen Thompson, co-director of this year's festival, says:

*“ We have been on completely newground putting together a digital festival, but the 2020 programme has turned out to be one of our richest and varied yet. I have no doubt that this year's edition is going to provide the space for discovery, conversation and connection that Africa in Motion has become known for in Scotland – now to an even wider audience. ”*

View the festival programme from Tuesday, 6 October [here](#).

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