

press release

September 20, 2012 – *for immediate release*

London's biggest, annual African film festival, Film Africa 2012 - returns from November 1 – 11

- Film Africa 2012, now in its second year and after the huge success of Film Africa 2011, will show 70 films from across the continent, with more than 30 of the filmmakers in attendance and 27 of the films never before seen in London
- Film Africa 2011 Silver Baobab winner and BAFTA nominee *Rungano Nyoni* to give a free scriptwriting workshop
- The introduction of 'Open Screen'- the cinematic version of an 'open mic' – for short films by African diaspora filmmakers
- Full schedule of screenings, events and ticket availability at www.filmafrica.org.uk

London's biggest, annual African film festival, Film Africa, returns for the second year running from November 1 – 11, 2012. The festival, organised by the [Royal African Society](#) and [SOAS](#), University of London, and co-directed by Lindiwe Dovey and Namvula Rennie will screen 70 films over 10 days, coupled with lively Q&As, panel discussions, professional and educational workshops, family activities and Film Africa LIVE! music nights. Hackney Picturehouse and The Ritzy host the festival in collaboration with Rich Mix, Screen on the Green, the BFI Southbank and the South London Gallery, ensuring access to the brilliance of African cinema in every corner of London.

Films in this year's festival range from Mahamat-Saleh Haroun's comedy [Sex, Okra and Salted Butter](#) (Chad) a hilarious family comedy set in France to the ground breaking [Call Me Kuchu](#) (Uganda) following the fight for equality for LGBTI rights in Uganda by the 'Kuchu' community. To the fascinating (and timely) [The Education of Auma Obama](#), a look at US President Obama's Kenyan half-sister who introduced him to his African roots which will be screened the same day as the US elections (November 6). The schedule is extensive, varied and engaging in unearthing the realities of a continent that has many rich and powerful stories.

Film Africa 2012 sees 27 much-awaited premieres and the return of the Silver Baobab award which celebrates the Best Short African Film, by giving the winner £2,000 towards their next production. This year, Film Africa also introduces the Audience Award for Best Film, where festival attendees will have the chance to vote for their favourite film, which will then receive a £1,000 prize. The festival is also excited to announce its partnership with [Film Education](#) where it will co-host 24 screenings to Key Stage 2 students across the UK as part of [National School Films Week](#).

Film Africa celebrates the wealth, diversity and quality of African cinema and African stories, thereby helping to challenge negative stereotypes about the continent. It does this by giving a London-wide platform to African and diaspora filmmakers and also to filmmakers who tell alternative stories about the continent.

Key programming strands for this year's festival are:

- **Continental crossings** – fiction and documentary films about Africa's long and on-going involvement with countries such as Burma, Cuba, China, India and Ukraine
- **Elections and democracy** – in the wake of the recent Marikana mine incident in South Africa and the upcoming Ghanaian and Kenyan elections, this strand puts the spotlight on films that explore election processes in Africa and ordinary people's struggles for democracy
- **Mama Africa** – four years after the passing of 'Mama Africa' herself – star singer and activist Miriam Makeba – we will pay tribute to her on our closing night and show a wide range of fiction and documentary films that look at motherhood and mother-daughter relationships in the continent
- **Spotlight on sexualities** – as gay people in South Africa continue to suffer extreme violence for simply being who they are, we have brought together recent films that have been made from South Africa to Uganda in condemnation of such violence as well as films that look in a more celebratory light at all kinds of sexuality in different African contexts
- **Sport** – keeping the Olympics spirit going is the aim of this strand, which celebrates the athletic talent and diverse sporting achievements of Africans, with fiction and documentaries about, for example, wrestlers in Senegal, Ethiopian and Sahrawi long distance runners, The Tour of Rwanda bicycle race, and the power of football across Africa
- **Public space and citizen journalism** – this strand recognises that Africans are increasingly teaming up to make films in collectives rather than as individuals which often speak out in favour of democracy, free speech and the creation of free public spaces for everyone to be heard; come to our own free public space, '[Picha House presents...](#)' taking place at Rich Mix where you will watch thought-provoking films on this topic and join the discussions

Over 2,000 people attended last year's festival and as London is home to one of the biggest African communities outside of the continent, the 2012 festival is set to build upon those numbers - making it the biggest yet.

Film programme director, Lindiwe Dovey, a South African who is also senior lecturer in African Film at SOAS says: 'Our programming team has travelled far and wide, from Kenya to South Africa to Ethiopia, and to festivals all over the world, to bring you the best programme of contemporary African film possible. We have viewed more than 300 African films in the process of making our final selection and we're excited to show you what the continent has to offer.'

Arts and education programme director, Namvula Rennie, who is also a singer-composer of Zambian and Scottish heritage, says: 'We are delighted to bring you a programme of professional, cultural and educational events almost as large as the film programme itself. We see all the arts in Africa as interlinked; the music, workshops, African market and family activities will no doubt enhance your overall experience at the festival.'

Richard Dowden, director of the Royal African Society commented: 'The annual Film Africa festival is integral to the work the Royal African Society does in bettering the understanding of Africa in the UK and celebrating the diversity and depth of African culture. The UK, especially London, has a long-standing relationship with the continent and its people and it's fitting that the biggest celebration of African cinema takes place in the adopted home of so many of its diaspora communities.'

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For more information, please contact:

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Notes to editors:

- Film Africa is an annual, 10-day celebration of the best African films across countries and genres, showcasing 70 fiction, documentary, short, and experimental films in venues across London.
- Film Africa, in its second year running, is a festival organised by the Royal African Society and SOAS, University of London, and is also holding a dynamic programme of director Q&As, panel discussions, professional workshops, family activities, and educational screenings, live music, and art.
- The criteria for inclusion in the Film Africa festival is that the films need to be made by African and/or African diaspora film makers, or by non-Africans who tell alternative stories about Africa to the negative, stereotyped fare that is usually shown in the mainstream UK media

- The Royal African Society is Britain's prime Africa organisation, more than 100 years old, which provides in-depth, long-term research of the continent and its peoples. The society fosters a better understanding of Africa in the UK and throughout the world, as well as disseminating knowledge and insight to make a positive difference to Africa's development, while celebrating the diversity and depth of African culture.
- SOAS, University of London, is the world's leading centre for the study of a highly diverse range of subjects concerned with Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.
- Miles Morland started Blakeney Management in 1990 and is an independent London based firm, dedicated to investment in inefficient stock markets. Now its current Chairman, Miles Morland has been the pioneer investor in many of the stock markets of Africa and the Arab world and are today the only international firm which focuses exclusively on that area. They are the largest and sometimes only, foreign portfolio investor in many of the markets of sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world and invest in both listed and private companies. They are an active investor and have played a role as a catalyst in the development of the telecommunications and banking industries in our region.
- Online:
 - Website - www.filmafrica.org.uk
 - Twitter - [@FilmAfrica](https://twitter.com/FilmAfrica) (hashtag - [#FilmAfrica2012](https://twitter.com/hashtag/FilmAfrica2012))
 - Facebook: [Film Africa](https://www.facebook.com/FilmAfrica)
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 - The University of London's [Centre of African Studies](#) is the largest centre of expertise on Africa outside Africa. Founded in 1965 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, where its administration is still based, since 1991 the Centre has assumed formal responsibility for coordinating, stimulating and promoting interdisciplinary study, research and discussion on Africa within the University; and promoting a wider awareness of African issues.
 - [IC publications](#) has over 50 years' experience in publishing magazines, newsletters, country supplements, industry reports and market intelligence on Africa. Among our bestselling magazines are New African, African Business, African Banker, New African Woman, Le Magazine de l'Afrique and Femme Africaine. Reaching over 2.6 million readers in more than 100 countries, our eight magazines are the region's undisputed market leaders.
 - [Ophir Energy plc.](#) is an international oil and gas exploration company with an extensive portfolio of interests spread across the continent of Africa. Since its foundation in 2004, the Company has acquired an extensive portfolio of exploration interests consisting of 17 projects in nine jurisdictions in Africa. The majority of these interests lie offshore in water depths greater than 250m and are thus classified as "deepwater".

- [Renaissance Group](#) is a leading investment banking firm that operates in high-opportunity emerging markets. It is a top-ranked investment bank for M&A, equity and debt capital markets, as well as securities sales and trading. Renaissance Capital focuses exclusively on emerging markets, including Russia, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the frontier markets of MENA and sub-Saharan Africa. The company was founded in 1995 by a group of founding partners, including Stephen Jennings, who is today CEO of Renaissance Group, as well as Boris Jordan, and Leonid Rozhetskin.
- Film Africa 2012 venues are:
 - **HACKNEY PICTUREHOUSE**, 270 Mare Street, London E8 1HE. Box Office: 0871 902 5734 (9:30am – 8:30pm daily), book [online](#)
 - **THE RITZY**, Brixton Oval, Coldharbour Lane, London SW2 1JG. Box Office: 0871 902 5739 (9:30am – 8:30pm daily), book [online](#)
 - **RICH MIX**, 35-37 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA. Box Office: 020 7613 7498, (Mon-Fri 8:30am-10pm, Sat-Sun 10am-10pm), book [online](#)
 - **SCREEN ON THE GREEN**, 83 Upper Street, Islington, London N1 0NP. Box Office: 0871 906 9060 (9am-9pm daily), book [online](#)
 - **BFI SOUTHBANK**, Belvedere Road, The South Bank Centre, London SE1 8XT. Box Office: 020 7928 3232, book [online](#)
 - **SOUTH LONDON GALLERY**, 67 Peckham Road London SE5 8UH. Box office 020 7703 6120, book [online](#)
- The 2011 winner of the Film Africa Silver Baobab award was Rungano Nyoni for short film [‘Mwansa the Great’](#)
- The first iteration of results from the 2011 UK census revealed that a huge proportion of African-born residents reside in London: 105,000 Nigerians; 83,000 South Africans; 53,000 Zimbabweans; 44,000 Somalis; 39,000 Ghanaians; 15,000 Kenyans and many more. It also showed that Black Africans are among one of the [fastest growing communities in Britain](#) and that the Mixed Race population (of White and Black African heritage) has also risen from 80,700 (2001) to 131,800 (2009). Source: [Office of National Statistics](#).

Bresi-Ando consults is a global, boutique PR consultancy specialising in growing awareness and connecting brands and projects with talent for a variety of clients in the luxury, arts, consumer tech, entertainment and music industries. One arm of the consultancy’ is to promote brands that have their roots in Africa or an African focus. Past clients such as [Helen Jennings](#) (editor of Arise and author of New African Fashion), [Mo Saïque](#) Shoes, [Joansu](#) jewellery, [Christie Brown](#), [Villa Monticello](#), Ghana and the Southbank Centre’s month-long festival; [Africa Utopia](#), have all benefitted from the insight, expertise and connections of the consultancy. www.bresi-ando.com.