



Africa Film Special – “New films from North and South Africa“

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AFRICAN FILMMAKERS VISIT WDR TELEVISION STATION

At the invitation of Jutta Krug, head of the documentary film department at the WDR television station, six international guests of FilmInitiativ Köln e.V. paid a visit to the station's Vierscheibenhaus office today (Friday, 13.9). The guests invited were Egyptian directors Alia Ayman, Mona El Naggat and Iman Kamel, her co-screenwriter Klaus Freund, Algerian filmmaker Anis Djaad and Tunisian feature film director Mahmoud Ben Mahmoud. From the WDR side, Birgit Virnich, long-standing Africa correspondent for ARD and editor of the foreign desk, was joined by Lukas Roegler, producer and freelancer in the WDR documentary department. After an introduction into the structure of the public service television station and the programming slots and (documentary) film formats at WDR, the North African directors discussed their films, which will be screened this coming weekend in Cologne's Filmforum. A lively exchange of ideas ensued regarding opportunities and limitations for co-productions between African filmmakers and German television stations, such as WDR, as well as the difficult political and financial conditions under which North African directors are forced to work.

Today's visit by the African filmmakers to the WDR offices was the third of its kind and it demonstrates the close working relationship the WDR documentary desk has with the organisers of FilmInitiativ's African Film Festival in Cologne. This is further backed up by the three cinema previews that FilmInitiativ organised in recent years for WDR-produced documentaries ("Kinshasa Symphony", "Tahrir 2011" and "Atomic Africa"). We hope to continue to build upon this healthy working relationship in the future.

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