



FESTIVAL INFO No. 11 (29.9.2014)
Both Cologne Audience Awards Go to South Africa

After handing out the audience awards for Best Feature Film and Best Documentary, the “Out of Europe XIII” film festival came to an end on Sunday (28.9), with a packed audience at the Filmforum im Museum Ludwig. Both prizes were endowed with 1,000 euros, through the support of the film culture magazine **CHOICES** and the **WDR** broadcaster. 16 films from 12 countries vied for the feature film award. Overall the films received high marks and the decision was close. (Eleven films were rated as “good” to “very good”, with the remaining five between “acceptable” and “good”). The best feature film received an average score of 4.6 on a 5-point scale and was announced with its trailer on the screen. It was the South African feature film **UMFAAN** (LITTLE ONE), about a six-year-old girl who is a victim of sexual violence. Director **Darrel Roodt** already gained international attention in 1992 for his film **SARAFINA!** and South Africa had selected the film as its 2012 submission for the Best Foreign Film Oscar. Because the filmmaker was not present, **Rüdiger Schmidt-Sodingen** (CHOICES) requested that FilmInitiativ send the award to South Africa. He took the opportunity to thank the organisational team of FilmInitiativ and declared, to great applause from the audience, that “after the impressive programme of the last two weeks”, it was clear to him that the African Film Festival was “the best film festival in Cologne”. The eleven documentary films from seven countries that vied for the **WDR**-supported audience award also received consistently good to very good marks. The winner even received an average score of 4.8 points. Just as great was the elation in the room when the winning film's trailer flashed across the screen – as the images of striking workers and police in military gear in South Africa made clear that **MINERS SHOT DOWN** had been chosen as Best Documentary Film. Before handing out the award, Jutta Krug (of the WDR's documentary film department) announced that in his film director Rehad Desai reconstructed the August 16, 2012 massacre of striking mine workers in Marikana, South Africa, which killed 34 people, with film material from various sources, including those of the police and security for the mining company. She noted that his film is “an excellent example of what the documentary film genre can do – namely, the search for truth.” Visibly moved, **Zivia Desai Keiper**, the film's co-producer and the director's sister, along with South African labour union activist **Bheki Ernest Buthelezi**, accepted the award and declared that this also serves as encouragement for the mine workers of Marikana. Up until today they are still working in vain for the state's crimes to be elucidated, in order for the families of the victims to be recompensed and the perpetrators to be punished. Thereafter, the other African directors present were asked to come forward, and the stage was filled with a dozen festival guests from countries including Ethiopia, Ghana, Tunisia, and Kenya. In the name of all the directors, **Victor Viyuoh** of Cameroon expressed thanks “for the outstanding festival programme, the selection of films, the hospitality and the opportunity for intensive discussions with the audience as well as with each other”. He also hoped that the Cologne African Film Festival would continue well into the future. The FilmInitiativ team expressed the hope that the positive feedback from festival guests and visitors will register with those in the city, state, and federal levels who decide on financing for the next years and thereby for the future of the festival.

The closing nights feature film **GRIGRIS** by Mahamet-Saleh Haroun of Chad (the only African submission in the Cannes 2013 competition) demonstrated once and again the quality of the African films presented at the festival.