



Festival newsletter no. 1 (12 September 2016)

SUCCESSFUL FESTIVAL PROLOGUE

Lively Sudanese night on Saturday (10.9.)

On Saturday, the foyer of the Filmhauskino Köln cinema was quickly transformed into something resembling a dancefloor in Sudan once the refugee band **S. P. Music** had started their live performance. The additional **Sudan Special** event kicked off with a screening of the Sudanese short film **ADAM & HOWA** and the multi-award-winning documentary **BEATS OF THE ANTONOV** in the almost sold-out cinema hall. Then the special guests who had travelled in from Hanover, and whose band name stands for “**Sudanese People Music**”, got the crowd in the cinema foyer dancing to their mix of traditional Sudanese sounds, rock and reggae, and got those from the local Sudanese community singing along. The films document the gloomy situation in Sudan as a result of the many years of armed conflict that has thus far forced three and a half million people to flee the country as refugees. But they also show how people in such war-torn regions and refugee camps can attempt to heal their trauma through music and dance. The refugee band exuded a similarly positive energy, and they were spontaneously supported by other Sudanese musicians in attendance.

FilmInitiativ used the occasion to clarify that refugees are welcome at all events at the 14th African Film Festival and that they receive free entry.

Three directors at “Art & Amen” on Friday (9.9.)

Friday evening was just as exciting, as FilmInitiativ presented three short films – two made by Afro-Germans and the other by a female Ghanaian film student – as a further festival prologue as part of the “Art & Amen” event at St. Michael's church on Brüsseler Platz. These included **Nancy Mac Granaky-Quaye's** autobiographical short film **BEENTO** about her German mother meeting her Ghanaian father during the time of the German Democratic Republic, and **KNIFFEL**, a documentary that she made with young writer and FilmInitiativ employee **Esther Donkor**. Ghanaian director **Hannah Awo Nkeba Bonney**, who currently studies at the KHM art college in Cologne, also presented her film **PRISCILLA**, a portrait of an Afro-German classmate. To the delight of the audience, all three directors were in attendance for a Q&A session after the screenings.

African cinema evening at the Cologne Institut français on Wednesday (14.9.)

To close the festival prologue, the Institut français in Cologne showed **AYA DE YOPOUGON**, an animated film by Marguerite Abouet and Clément Oubrerie about a strong young woman from Ivory Coast, at its monthly film night on 14 September (8 pm).

Festival opening on Thursday (15.9.)

The eleven-day festival, at which 83 films from 25 countries will be shown, really gets rolling with the official opening at the Filmforum cinema in Museum Ludwig on Thursday (15.9., 6:30 pm), which will feature a short film **THE RISING OF THE SON** by **Mallence** and **Patrice Bart-Williams** (patrons of the festival), a live performance by **SISTERS**, an introduction to the festival's theme “**Sisters in African Cinema**” and a presentation of the festival's international guests.