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## 14<sup>th</sup> Cologne African Film Festival (15-25 September 2016)

83 films from 25 African countries and 30 international guests

**Theme: Sisters in African Cinema**

Under the patronage of: **Mallence & Patrice Bart-Williams**

Award-winning feature films, documentaries and short films from Africa's major film festivals (Ouagadougou, Tunis, Durban, Zanzibar...), new releases from the global African diaspora, a thematic focus on **Sisters in African Cinema** with current films made by directors of African origin and a podium discussion, plus three live music acts, an exhibition, a reading and screenings for schools and children – that's what the programme for the 14th African film festival held by FilmInitiativ Köln e.V. from 15 to 25 September 2016 has to offer this year.

There are previews all over Cologne for several months before the festival to get you in the mood:

- \* a South African children's film (**ZAMBEZIA**) at the African summer festival at the Northside youth centre in Chorweiler (4.6.)
- \* Feature films from North Africa (**STARVE YOUR DOG**) and the African diaspora (**MAY ALLAH BLESS FRANCE**) at the Filmhauskino and Odeon cinemas as part of the "Kölner Kino Nächte" festival (8.7. and 9.7.)
- \* A cinematic look at the subject of development policy at the AKWAABA Africa day at the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum (27.8.)
- \* Short films made by black German filmmakers as part of the "Art&Amen" cultural event at St Michael's church on Brüsseler Platz (9.9.)
- \* An animated feature film from the Ivory Coast (**AYA OF YOP CITY**) at the monthly cinema day at Institut Français (14.9.)

Filmmakers from Ethiopia, Cameroon, Kenya, South Africa, Sudan and Tunisia have been invited to join us for the opening of the festival (15.9., Filmforum in Museum Ludwig). **Mallence Bart-Williams** and her brother, the Cologne-born, internationally recognised musician **Patrice**, have taken on patronage duties for the festival. To kick off the festival, they will show a short film that they shot in Sierra Leone. The Afro-American writer and filmmaker **Beti Ellerson**, who writes a blog on the role of women in African cinema, will introduce this year's theme of **Sisters in African Cinema**, and the band **SISTERS (Onejiru, Nicole Hadfield, Mamadee Wappler & Meli Wharton)** will provide the accompanying soundtrack with a live performance. The opening film **A PEINE J'OUVRE LES YEUX** has already won dozens of prizes at international festivals and it will get its start in German cinemas at the screening here in Cologne, with Tunisian director **Leyla Bouzid** in attendance. We have another cinema preview in store with the feature film **HEDI** (18.9.), for which Tunisian actor **Madj Mastoura** won the Silver Bear for Best Actor at the Berlinale 2016.

Other highlights of the eleven-day programme include feature films from Egypt, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Morocco and South Africa, documentaries about Islamic militants in Somalia, the use of music to heal war

trauma in Sudan, the African cinema pioneer Ousmane Sembène from Senegal and Nollywood cinema in Nigeria, as well as short films from Libya, cinematic discoveries from all corners of Africa and the presentation of "visual art" from Africa.

FilmInitiativ consulted directors from five countries when compiling its film programme for the **Sisters in African Cinema** theme. From the long list of suggestions, we finally selected 33 feature films, documentaries and short films that will give you an insight into the current filmmaking exploits of women in 13 African countries and from the African diaspora. The selected films stand as examples of the huge diversity in terms of content, cinematic styles and genres.

At a **podium discussion**, directors from Tunisia, Cameroon, Kenya and South Africa will debate the current standing of women in the African filmmaking world (18.9.). Guests are also invited to the screening of the documentary **FEMINISM INSH'ALLAH** to discuss the history and current status of the women's movement in North Africa with Tunisian director **Feriel Ben Mahmoud** (25.9.).

For its "Sisters" theme, FilmInitiativ received funding from the **German Federal Cultural Foundation** (*Kulturstiftung des Bundes*) for the first time. This not only allowed us to provide German subtitles for many of the films, but we were also able to invite a number of directors to the festival in Cologne, and have the films shown in other German cities, including Hamburg, Münster, Osnabrück, Saarbrücken, Freiburg, Berlin and Bayreuth. This project illustrates the transregional significance of the Cologne African film festival as the largest of its kind in Germany and one of the biggest in Europe.

Further funding was provided for the festival by the city of Cologne's **Office for Cultural Affairs** (*Kulturamt*) and **Engagement Global**, the funding department of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (**BMZ**). In addition to this, the festival was able to acquire dozens of supporters and cooperative partners for the 2016 edition.

There will be an event with films, readings, live music and African guests at the Central Library (*Zentralbibliothek*), for example, with the title **Africa 2016: cool, creative and visionary** (19.9.), and a discussion event at **Filmclub 813** with a film on the revolution in Burkina Faso with the director in attendance, in cooperation with the **africologneFESTIVAL** (20.9.).

The festival programme also includes two school screenings with feature films and animations for older (16.9.) and younger (23.9.) school classes, a South African animated film to mark Cologne's World Children's Day celebrations (18.9.), plus the awarding of audience prizes for the best feature film (sponsored by **choices** magazine) and best documentary (sponsored by **WDR's** documentary film department). Rapper **AWA** (African Women Arise) from Zimbabwe will also perform, before the festival is brought to a close by the Moroccan film **L'ORCHESTRE DES AVEUGLES** on 25.9.

*For festival pre-announcements and reports on festival-related events, plus meetings and discussions with the international guests, FilmInitiativ will gladly provide screener copies of films (via link or DVD) as well as press photos and background material.*

*For interview requests or other queries, please email us at [mail@filminitativ.de](mailto:mail@filminitativ.de) or call us on +49 – 221 – 46 96 243.*

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*Extensive information on the festival will be available on the website [www.films-from-africa.com](http://www.films-from-africa.com) from August. You can already watch the festival trailer on the site.*

*(Category: "Out of Europe" festival)*