



PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until 1 Oct 07

Africa in Motion film festival continues its aim of bringing the best of African cinema to Scottish audiences

Stop and Stir Arts Ltd is delighted to announce the **Africa in Motion (AiM) film festival**, taking place from 25 October - 4 November 2007 at Edinburgh Filmhouse and other venues. Now in its second year, the festival programme will consist of more than 30 brilliant and thought-provoking African films from all over the continent – features, documentaries and shorts - from pioneering African filmmakers to young and emerging contemporary directors.

The main focus of AiM 2007 is a tribute to the late Senegalese director Ousmane Sembene, one of the most important pioneers of African cinema. The festival will open with his highly acclaimed political satire *Xala* (1975), and his earlier film *Black Girl* (1966), regarded as the first feature film by a director from sub-Saharan Africa, will also be screened at AiM. "The world was saddened by Sembene's death in June this year, but through celebrating his legacy, audiences will be able to reflect upon his immense creative and political impact on African cinema," says artistic director Lizelle Bisschoff, a researcher in African cinema at the University of Stirling.

The Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade will be celebrated by a number of film screenings, and AiM will also have a spotlight on Ghana to mark 50 years of independence from Britain, with the screening of Kwaw Ansah's *Heritage Africa* (1989). Other classic masterpieces include feature films by Egyptian director Youssef Chahine, Malian director Souleymane Cissé, and Senegalese director Djibril Diop Mambety.

"The classic films in the AiM 2007 programme are amongst the greatest works of cinema produced anywhere in the world, and landmarks in African film history", says film critic and AiM advisor Mark Cousins. "The essential films in the African movie canon are hardly ever programmed together in this way. Africa in Motion is a brilliant overview and a rare treat."

The festival programme will have a special focus on the work of female African filmmakers, with early work such as acclaimed Algerian novelist and director Assia Djebar's experimental documentary *La Noubia* (1979) and Guadeloupean director Sarah Maldoror's classic *Sambizanga* (1972), which focuses on the role of women in the Angolan liberation struggle. More contemporary work by female directors at AiM will include the UK premieres of French/Ivorian director Isabelle Boni-Claverie's evocative short film *Pour la Nuit* (2005) and Burkinabe director Apolline Traoré's female-centred feature film *Sous la Clarté de la Lune* (2005). Boni-Claverie and Traoré will both be in attendance at the festival.

Contemporary feature films such as *Bamako* (Abderrahmane Sissako, Mauritania, 2006) and *Africa Paradis* (Sylvestre Amoussou, Benin, 2006) will showcase the latest gems of African cinema to Scottish audiences. South African director Teddy Mattera will be in attendance at the screening of his hilarious comedy-drama *Max and Mona* (2004). The festival will close with the South African film *Son of Man* (Mark Dornford-May, 2006) – an ambitious and adventurous reinterpretation of the Gospels.

A number of documentaries will premiere at the festival, including work from South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique and Angola, with several of the filmmakers in attendance to talk about their work.

“Africa in Motion continues its main goal of bringing the best of African cinema to Scottish,” says Ms Bisschoff. “The festival aims to counter the marginalisation of African cinema in realising our belief that the cinematic riches of the continent should be accessible to all.”

SUPPORTING EVENTS

Film theorists and critics will introduce screenings, many of which will also be followed by talks and discussions. International theorists of African film will present their research at an academic symposium taking place on Saturday 27 October, entitled *African Cinema: Art and/or Industry?*, hosted by the University of Edinburgh's Centre of African Studies.

Additional screenings of African films and directors master classes will be taking place at the Edinburgh College of Art. Screenings and workshops for school children will further enhance the educational focus of the programme. Interested parties should contact info@africa-in-motion.org.uk for more information.

Filmhouse Cinema will be transformed into a hub to celebrate African culture, with an arts exhibition by internationally acclaimed Nigerian comic artist Tayo Fatunla, music performances by Edinburgh-based African musicians, and a DVD and book stall in the foyer of the cinema for the duration of the festival.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- 1) For all press queries, please contact Press Officers Leo Wood (leo@africa-in-motion.org.uk 07876 403 648) or Kirsty Dickson (kirsty@africa-in-motion.org.uk 07917 431 609).
- 2) The final programme for AiM will be released mid-September, please visit www.africa-in-motion.org.uk for full details. Concessionary discounts and ticket deals will be available. Most complementary events will be free of charge.
- 3) AiM is organised by *Stop and Stir Arts Ltd* (www.stopandstir.org), a not-for-profit arts company that aims to make marginalised and underrepresented art more widely available to Scottish audiences. The artistic director of AiM and *Stop and Stir Arts Ltd* is Lizelle Bisschoff (lizelle@africa-in-motion.org.uk 07807 485 058).
- 4) AiM is funded by **Scottish Screen; The Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland; Awards for All; the Centre of African Studies (CAS) at the University of Edinburgh;** and the **South African High Commission in the UK**. The charities **Global Concerns Trust** and **Challenges Worldwide**, as well as the **School of Languages, Cultures and Religions at the University of Stirling** are sponsoring individual film screenings. Please see the website for a full list of partners and supporters.
- 5) AiM is supported by a Board of Advisors including Mark Cousins, renowned film critic; David Murphy, senior lecturer at the University of Stirling and a leading scholar on African film; Paul Nugent, Professor of Comparative African History and Director of the Centre of African Studies at the University of Edinburgh; Noe Mendelle, Head of Film and TV at the Edinburgh College of Art and Director of the Scottish Documentary Institute; and Andrew Lawrence, lecturer at the University of Edinburgh's Centre of African Studies.