

Mediterranean Sea

We knew no boundaries.

Red Sea

27

# New York African Film Festival

December 2nd – 6th, 2020

IN THE BEGINNING there was a river. The river became a road and the road branched out to the whole world. And because the road was once a river it was always hungry.

In the land of beginnings spirits mingled with the unborn. We could assume numerous forms. Many of us were birds.

We knew no boundaries.

There was much feasting, playing, and sorrowing. We feasted much because of the beautiful terrors of eternity.

We played much because we were free.

We feared the heartlessness of human beings, all of whom are

born

blind, few of whom ever learn to see."

— Ben Okri

## 27TH NEW YORK AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL

### Streaming Rivers: The Past into the Present

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a rise in the creation of artistic and intellectually demanding cinema from various regions in Africa. Despite the obstinacy of its political leadership, the restriction of freedoms and financial challenges, brilliant works were produced by independent filmmakers. Today, the gloomy representations of the continent that persisted for several decades has morphed into images of hope. The 27th edition of the New York African Film Festival will focus the lens on two countries, Nigeria and the Sudan, where nascent home-grown film industries blossomed in spite of the hurdles placed in the paths of its artistic communities. The program highlights the works of pioneers from these two regions, with different histories and cultures, who forged the rivers that have allowed generations of artists to navigate the past into the present.

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COVER · Featured stills from "Insan,"  
by Ibrahim Shaddad · "You will Die at  
20," by Amjad Abu Alala

# Films

## Nigeria

### **KADARA**

Ade Love (Adeyemi Afolayan) / 1980 / Nigeria / 94m / Yoruba and Hausa with English subtitles

Tradition dictates that the suitor of the beautiful princess of a kingdom will be decided by a wrestling contest open to all. In Ade Love's charming, swooning tale, a handsome and endearing farmer and a brutish man of considerable wealth face off for the princess's hand.

### **SHOOT THE MESSENGER**

Ngozi Onwurah / 2006 / UK / 100m

In Onwurah's provocative tale, David Oyelowo plays Joe, a school teacher in South London who is falsely accused of hitting one of his pupils. As the local Black population turns on him, branding him as a racist, a destitute Joe is forced to confront his fear and hatred of his own community.

### **THREE THIEVES**

Udoka Oyeka / 2020 / Nigeria / 108m

In this hilarious comedy of mistaken identities, three discontented friends are contracted to commit a seemingly simple theft. But complications arise when a young girl slips into their car, turning their robbery into an unwitting kidnapping.

## Sudan

### **KHARTOUM OFFSIDE**

Marwa Zein / 2019 / Sudan/Norway/Denmark / 76m / Arabic with English subtitles

A group of exceptional young women in Khartoum are determined to play football professionally, in spite of the ban imposed by Sudan's Islamist authorities. In Khartoum Offside, Marwa Zein captures their unwavering, fearless and often humorous struggle to be officially recognized



as Sudan's National Women's Team. Through her intimate portrait of these women, filmed over a number of years, we witness their hopes, their disappointments, and their unwavering grit.

### **TALKING ABOUT TREES**

Suhaib Gasmelbari / 2019 / Sudan/France/  
Germany/Chad/Qatar / 93m / Arabic and Russian  
with English subtitles

Ibrahim Shaddad, Manar Al Hilo, Suleiman Mohamed Ibrahim, and Altayeb Mahdi have been filmmakers and friends for more than 45 years. In 1989, they formed the Sudanese Film Group, an independent collective that was suspended soon after its founding when a military coup established an Islamist dictatorship in Sudan. Nearly three decades later, they've reunited to resurrect their old dream: to make cinema a reality in Sudan. *Talking About Trees* chronicles their efforts to revive a defunct movie theater in the city of Omdurman in the face of religious censorship and inefficient bureaucracy.

### **YOU WILL DIE AT 20**

Amjad Abu Alala / 2020 / Sudan/France/Egypt/  
Germany/Norway/Qatar / 105m / Arabic with  
English subtitles

Shortly after Muzamil's birth, the village's holy man predicts that he will die at age 20. Muzamil's father can't stand the curse and leaves home. His mother, the overly protective Sakina, raises her son alone. One day, Muzamil turns 19.

## TWO FILMS BY IBRAHIM SHADDAD (68M)

### INSAN

Ibrahim Shaddad / 1994 / Sudan / 27m

In this dialogue-less film distinguished by its innovative use of sound, Shaddad paints a dramatic and powerful portrait of the trials and alienation of a Sudanese villager who moves to a large city.

### JAGDPARTIE

Ibrahim Shaddad / 1964 / Germany / 41m / German with English subtitles

Made as a graduation project at the German Academy of Film Art in Potsdam-Babelsberg, Shaddad's seminal film is a Western-inspired treatise on racism. Shot in a forest in Brandenburg, it portrays a white mob's hunt for a black farmworker.

RIGHT · Featured still from "Insan,"  
by Ibrahim Shaddad

# Short Films

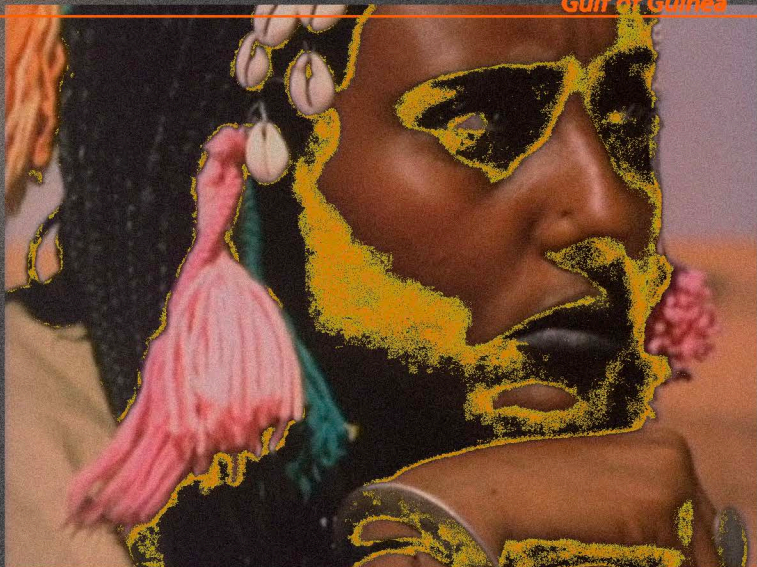
## Notes from Home

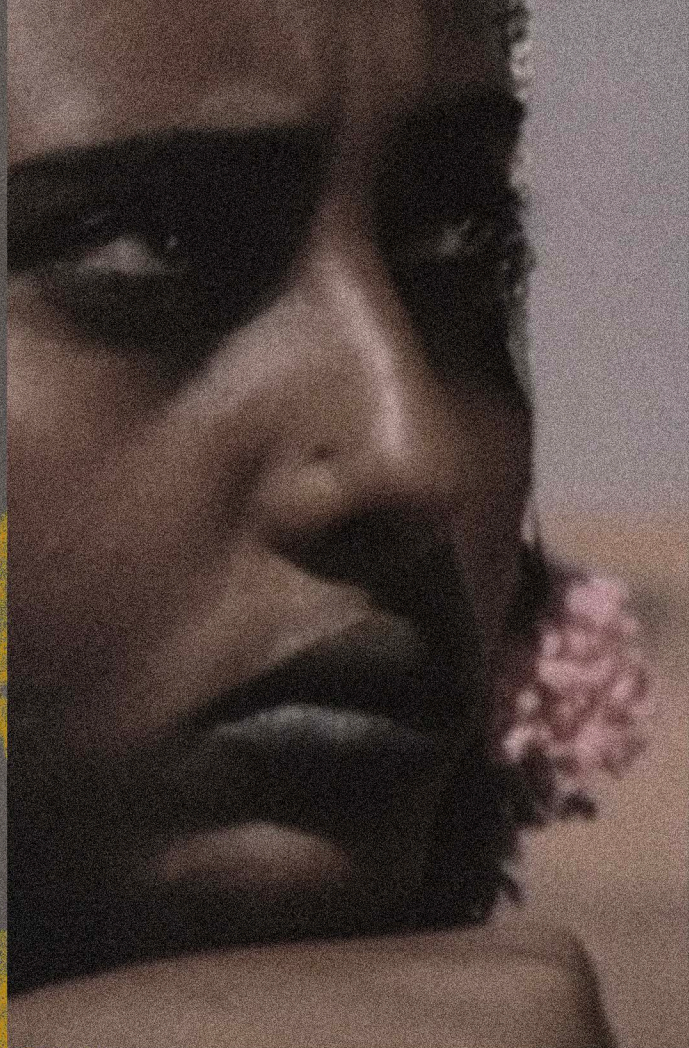
ATLANTIC OCEAN

Bight of Benin

Niger

Gulf of Guinea





### **A CEMETERY OF DOVES**

Adé Sultan Sangodoyin / 2019 / Nigeria / 15m

When a teenager's declaration of love for an older man is met with rejection, he struggles with heartbreak and fear for his safety and future in a society intolerant of the LGBTQ community.

### **A GAME**

Marwa Zein / 2010 / Egypt/Sudan / 6m / Arabic with English subtitles

In Zein's adaptation of a short story by the Italian writer Alberto Moravia, a playful game turns into a revelatory confrontation between a divorced single mother and her little daughter.

### **COFFEE COLORED CHILDREN**

Ngozi Onwurah / 1988 / Nigeria/UK / 16m

In this lyrical and unsettling film, racist harassment prompts two young mixed-race children to try and whiten their skin with scouring powder. Ngozi Onwurah's semi-autobiographical testimony to the struggle for self-definition and the internalized effects of bigotry is a powerful catalyst for discussion.

BOTTOM RIGHT · “Love in Submission,”  
by Lande Yoosuf

## **LOVE IN SUBMISSION**

Lande Yoosuf / 2020 / USA / 19m

In the suburbs of central New Jersey, two Black Muslim women from different backgrounds meet for the first time—only to discover that they are bound by an explosive secret.

## **MY SISTER, SARA**

Sarra Idris / 2020 / USA / 30m / English and Arabic with English subtitles

In late 2018 and throughout 2019, Sudan experienced months of protests that ultimately overthrew a 30-year dictatorship. Sara Elhassan was among the young, grassroots activists who kept the world informed and connected during this time through social media, helping to mobilize global support for the cause of the Sudanese people. In *My Sister Sara*, Elhassan and her older brother Amin, an ESPN sports analyst and TV personality, engage in a candid dialogue on survivor’s guilt, youth movements, and the role of women in the Sudanese revolution.

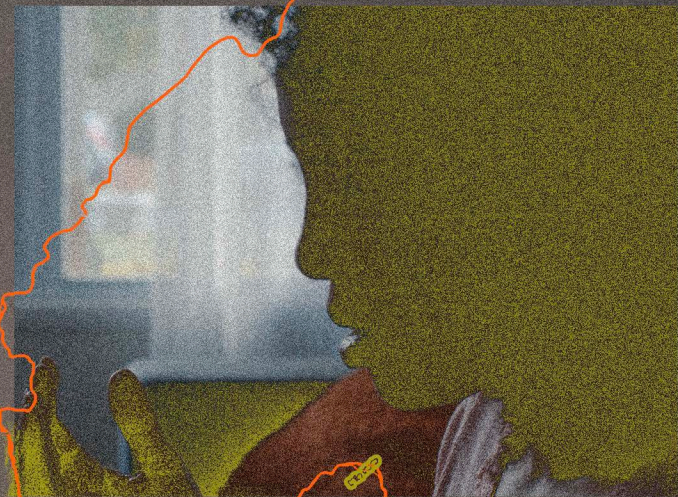
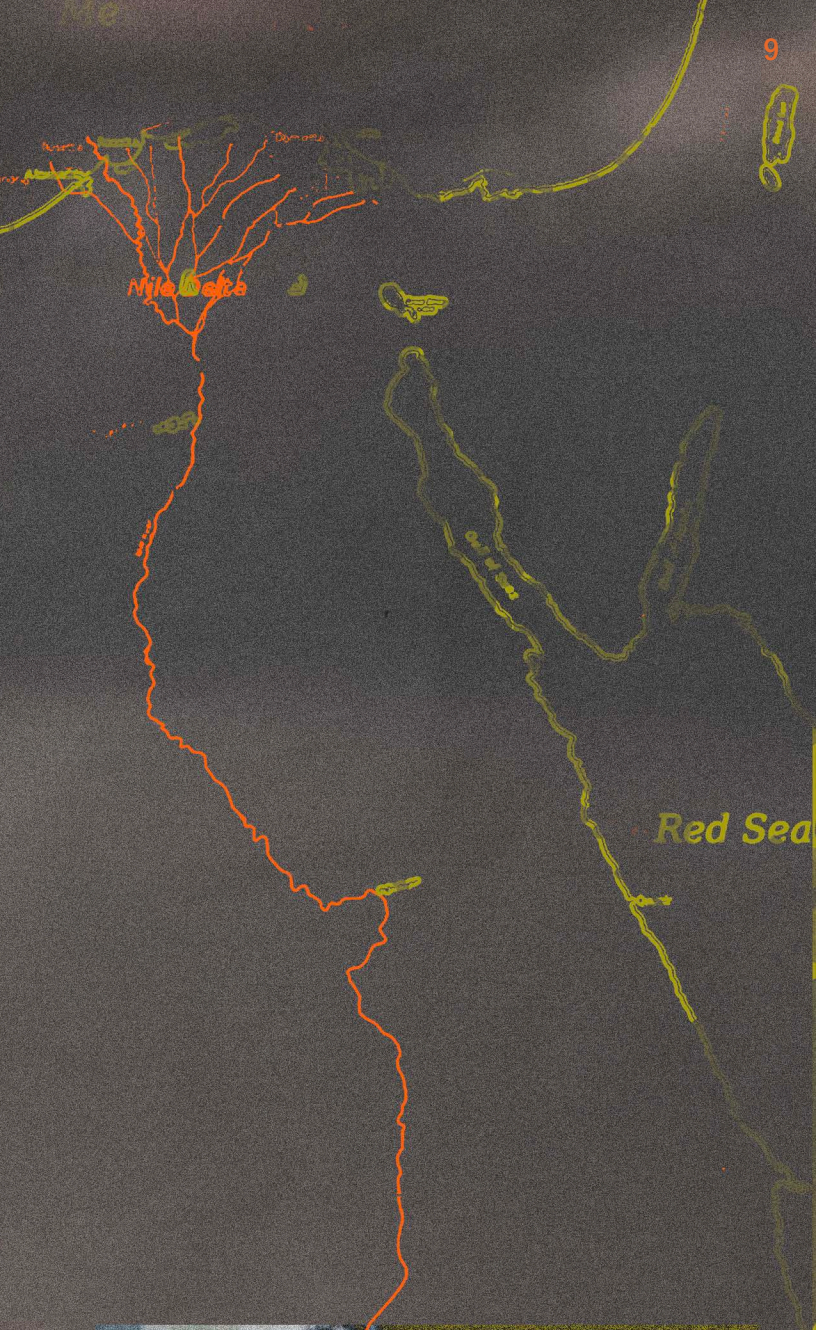
## **TROUBLEMAKER**

Olive Nwosu / 2019 / Nigeria / 11m / Igbo with English subtitles

On an excruciatingly hot day in East Nigeria, a young boy learns the hard way that all actions have consequences. *Troublemaker* is a coming-of-age story about masculinity, violence, and the devastating costs of war across different generations.

All films will be available to  
watch online from Dec 2 – 6





# Digital Art Exhibition

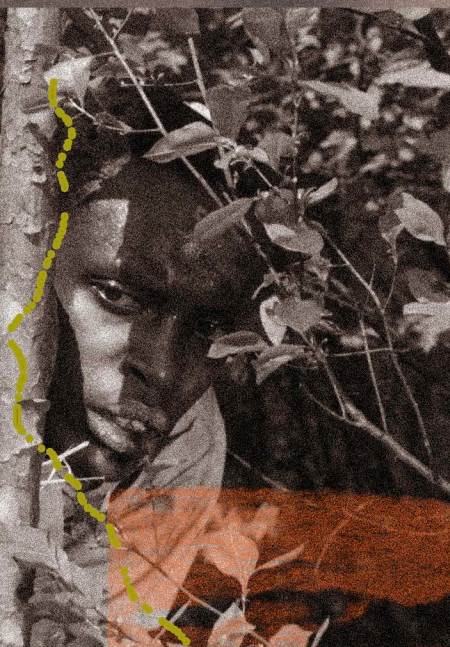
## FOREVER (BROTHER'S KEEPER)

A tender touch, a soft embrace. The body tenses, then leans beautifully into vulnerability. What does it mean to be your brother's keeper? How do we hold one another? With impeccable musicality and a full-bodied choreography, the Nigerian Ebinum Brothers show us how.

## DJ MOMA FROM CORAL ROCKS ZANZIBAR

DJ mOma hails from Sudan. In this afrobeat set, he takes us on an energetic musical journey with the backdrop of an idyll that cannot be matched: thatched roofs, palm trees and the clear blue waters of Zanzibar. Do not take this one sitting down, get up wherever you are and MOVE to DJ mOma's vibe.

Available to watch for free at  
[africanfilmny.org/festival](http://africanfilmny.org/festival)



ABOVE · "Jagdpartie," by Ibrahim Shaddad ·  
 RIGHT · Featured still from "Kadara," by Ade Love



# Ticketing

Virtual tickets are \$12

Save with the NYAFF All-Access Pass for just \$60 (a \$96 value)

Visit [filmlinc.org](http://filmlinc.org) for more information about ticketing



## ABOUT FILM AT LINCOLN CENTER

Film at Lincoln Center is dedicated to supporting the art and elevating the craft of cinema and enriching film culture. Film at Lincoln Center fulfills its mission through the programming of festivals, series, retrospectives, and new releases; the publication of Film Comment; the presentation of podcasts, talks, and special events; the creation and implementation of Artist Initiatives; and our Film in Education curriculum and screenings. Since its founding in 1969, this nonprofit organization has brought the celebration of American and international film to the world-renowned arts complex Lincoln Center, making the discussion and appreciation of cinema accessible to a broad audience, and ensuring that it remains an essential art form for years to come.

For more information, visit [filmlinc.org](http://filmlinc.org) and follow [@filmlinc](https://twitter.com/filmlinc) on Twitter and Instagram

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# AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL NEW YORK

## **ABOUT AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL, INC.**

African Film Festival, Inc. (AFF) is dedicated to advancing an enhanced understanding of African culture through the moving image. It offers diverse platforms for the wide distribution of African media through its flagship annual film festival and complementary year-round programming. AFF is committed to increasing visibility and recognition for African media artists by introducing African film and culture to a broad range of audiences in the United States and abroad, bypassing economic, class and racial barriers.

In 1990, AFF's founders established goals that continue to enrich the organization mission and organizational development: to use African cinema to promote and increase knowledge and understanding of African arts, literature and culture; to develop audiences for African films; to expand the opportunities for the distribution of African films in the United States and abroad. AFF programming goes beyond its flagship annual film festival and related exhibitions to encompass a national traveling series, year-round screenings of both new and classic films in New York and beyond, and educational and community programs. Combined, these core programs serve to promote a better understanding of the full spectrum of African film and culture.

## **AFF DIGITAL**

Viewers enjoy our curated selection of African and diaspora cinema and live-streamed talks.

## **ANNUAL NATIONAL TRAVELING FILM SERIES**

AFF's National Traveling Series provides a package of AFF-curated films, promotional materials and professional cinema consultation to film programmers in cultural and community institutions.

## **COMMUNITY PROGRAMS**

AFF partners with community organizations to host free and low-cost programs. These include year-round screenings, discussions and performances with institutions including the Schomburg Center

for Research in Black Culture, Apollo Theater, The Bronx Museum of Art, City University of New York, CityParks Foundation, Cornerstone Mentoring Program, MoCADA, Carnegie Hall, Global Kids Network, The Trust for Governors Island, New York Public Library, Ocularis, The Queens Museum and United Nations, just to name a few.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMS

AFF facilitates education programs in NYC schools where students are led in historical and cultural investigations of works produced by or about people of African heritage through guided conversations and inquiry-based lesson plans.

## DVD DISTRIBUTION and AFF PUBLICATIONS

AFF's online store offers DVDs representing the best in classic, contemporary and hard-to-find African and Diasporic film and self-published anthologies of conversations with African directors, capturing the experience, spirit, and wisdom of African filmmakers. Publication titles include *Through African Eyes: Dialogues with the Directors*, *Through African Eyes: Conversations with the Directors Volume 2* and *Looking Back, Looking Forward: 20 Years of the New York African Film Festival*. The three publications are available on our website.

For more information on AFF's programs and initiatives, please visit [africanfilmny.org](http://africanfilmny.org)

The 27th New York African Film Festival was organized by Mahen Bonetti, Founder and Executive Director, African Film Festival, Inc. with Oluwadara Ojugbele, Colleen Ndemeh Fitzgerald and Françoise Bouffault in collaboration with Dennis Lim, Director of Programming, Film at Lincoln Center with Dan Sullivan, Erin Delaney and Matthew Bolish.

Thanks are due to the AFF Board of Directors, Zainab Aliyu, Melay Araya, Luca Bonetti, Tafadzwa Chiriga, Mansita Diawara, Jacki Fischer, Suhaib Gasmelbari, Shirine Gill, Sarra and Selma Idriss, Colombe Kela, Dora King, Utibe Mbagwu, Ulli Maier, Karen McMullen, Cornelius Moore, Seke Somolu, Alonzo Speight, Malika Lee Whitney, Cheryl Duncan & Company Inc. Public Relations, Kojo Associates and AFF's volunteer team.

# 2011... Ocean Sea

The New York Film Festival is made possible by the generous support of:



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# AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL NEW YORK



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had branched out to the whole world.