

Durban International Fest announces 2020 programme

The Durban International Festival (DIFF) has unveiled the programme for its 2020 edition, which will be hosted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Creative Arts (CCA) from 10 to 20 September 2020. The festival curated a film programme that speaks to the historical injustices and the different ways in which healing and redress are sought through the 21st-century lens under the theme 'shifting paradigms'.

The film programme consists of 60 shorts, documentaries and feature films. The plots in the selected films, through different lenses, show contemporary relevance to the challenges currently faced by the world, which has, over the last years, progressively begun to interrogate history to right wrongs and restore human dignity to previously disenfranchised populations.

Some of the films that highlight these themes include *Our Lady of the Nile*, directed by Atiq Rahimi, which takes us on a journey that juxtaposes religion and mythology in a beautiful tale set on the backdrop of the Tutsi and Hutu conflict that ravaged Rwanda for decades.

Ouvertures, directed by Louis Henderson and Olivier Marboeuf, explores the social abundance and history of Haiti, where the brutal legacy is slavery and how the world has begun to collectively revisit the past to try and heal the wounds that are still globally felt. In the film *Beanpole* by Kantemir Balagov, two young women, in the aftermath of World War II, search for meaning and hope as they struggle to rebuild their lives among the ruins.

[Overtures Official Trailer 2020](#) from [louis henderson](#) on [Vimeo](#).

The documentary *In Your Eyes, I See my Country* where Neta Elkayam and Amit Haï Cohen live in Jerusalem where they created a band that revisits and reshapes their common Jewish-Moroccan musical heritage. They grapple with this identity duality; an attempt to heal the wounds of exile carried by their parents. A captivating narrative musically driven, they reshape their perception of who they are and want to become, along with aspirations to consolidate bridges with the homeland of their ancestors.

A Rifle and a Bag, a documentary by Isabella Rinaldi, Cristina Haneş and first-time feature-length director, Arya Rothe is an insightful love story that survives a decade of armed struggle and violence. A search for a new identity in the aftermath of a violent past. “Bereka”, a short film directed by Nesanet Teshager Abegaze exquisitely explores similar themes of memory, migration and rebirth.

“ The DIFF prides itself on discovering and nurturing new talent, and each year we select films from a diverse number of first-time feature-length directors. The 41st edition is no exception with almost 30% directorial debut feature-length productions on showcase, which we are very excited about,” says Head of programming Chipou Zhou. ”

Some of these directors include Arya Rothe, the director of *A Rifle and a Bag*; Sam Soko, director of *Softie*; Aslaug Aarsæther, director of *The Art of Fallism*; Amine Hattou, director of *Janitou*; Carla Fonseca, director of *Burkinabe*; Ena Sendijarević, director of *Take Me Somewhere Nice*; Louw Venter, director of *Stam (The Tree)*; and Kislay Kislay, director of *Just Like That*.

Instilling confidence in young aspirant filmmakers

At the heart of the University of KwaZulu Natal is a mission to redress the imbalances of the past, and its contribution to this mission through the Centre for Creative Arts is emphasised through a robust community engagement programme titled isiPhethu. This year, in addition to drive-in screenings in the greater KwaZulu-Natal, the programme will host various online workshops and seminars.



Durban International Film Festival announces opening and closing films

17 Aug 2020



isiPhethu aims to entertain, educate, train and up-skill, instil confidence to young aspirant filmmakers and share information that is relevant to the film industry to empower young people.

“ The idea is to link the film community virtually in these trying times where the Covid-19 pandemic threatens not just our lives but the arts in general,” says IsiPhethu curator Sakhile Gumede. ”

A range of top facilitators and guest speakers are featured, under which multi-award-winning filmmaker Shirley Bruno and producer and actor Michal Birnbaum. DIFF is also proud to host the New York-based writer, producer and director of *Equal Standard*, which tackles the issue of police brutality in the US. Taheim will be joined by a few of his colleagues to give the DIFF audiences an in-depth insight into his work.

South African-born documentary filmmaker Jessie Zinn now based in the US, will be joined by award-winning documentary filmmaker and photographer Simon Wood to discuss new approaches to documentary filmmaking.

“Many young people will undergo training through these programmes. The video production and scriptwriting workshops both aimed at the development of young makers. This year we have opted to engage in virtual workshops, and this allowed us to bring many players on board from across the globe. Some of the highlights include speakers from the San Francisco Black Film Festival, Swift, Visual Network SA, George Mason University, Coastal-conferences,” added Gumede.

The full programme, alongside all the films that will be screening, will be accessible on ccadiff.ukzn.ac.za. Tickets for the virtual screenings are only available from South Africa and free, and accessible through a booking system, which will open in the next week. Tickets for the drive-in screenings and workshops will be free and available on a booking system, however, at limited capacity.

On 10 September DIFF 2020 opens with a virtual and a drive-in screening of the film, *This is not a Burial, but a Resurrection* by Lemohang Jeremiah Moses. From 11 September all other films will be available for online screenings. Closing film *Dust* by Pierre de Villiers will be screening during a drive-in screening on 19 September alongside the annual DIFF Award Ceremony. *Dust* will also be available online on 19 and 20 September.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>