

# 2019 African Screenwriter's Residency announced at Cannes

Realness, an African Screenwriter's Residency, has announced the 2019 residency participants at the Cannes Film Festival. Now in its 4th edition, Realness has hosted writers and directors from 13 different countries in Africa, including Senegal's Rama Thiaw; Rwanda's Kantarama Gahigiri; Angola's Mario Fradique Bastos; and Kenyan Ng'endo Mukii.



(L-R) Marit Van Den Elshout (IFFR), Anne Lai (Sundance Institute), Elias Ribeiro (Realness), Bongiwe Selane (Realness), announce Realness participants at Cannes this week.

Realness is an initiative that aims to uncover the depth of cinematic talent that the African continent has to offer. Realness provides a space for filmmakers to develop their authentic voices within an African context. Thus, creating an environment of diversity, but also finding familiarity in different layers of each writer's experiences.

Realness alumni have gone on to be selected to take part in the Sundance Directors and Screenwriters Labs, Biennale College Cinema and La Fabrique in Cannes. Two of the Realness projects have already been produced: Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese (Lesotho) recently wrapped production on his film, *This Is Not A Burial, It's A Resurrection*, which will have its world premiere at the Venice International Film Festival this coming September; and Hiwot Admasu's *A Fool God* is currently in post-production.

## Six residents

"2019 has affirmed the core values of what Realness seeks to achieve – to unearth the wealth of African stories - real stories from the continent, told with an honest and unapologetic point of view by African talent," says Bongiwe Selane, a partner at Realness for the last three years. Selane announced the six residents participating in Realness 2019 on Monday 20th May in Cannes:

- Athi-Patra Ruga, *The Lunar Songbook*, South Africa.
- Beza Hailu Lemma, *The Last Tears of The Deceased*, Ethiopia.
- Fanyana Hlabangane, *The Spirit Guest*, South Africa.
- Hajooj Kuka, *African Titanics*, Sudan.
- Iman Djionne, *Coura+Ouleye*, Senegal.
- Silas Miami, *Miles*, Kenya.

The six projects were chosen by an international panel of 16 world cinema stakeholders, including Efuru Flowers, Flourishing Films; agent Anthony Mestriner, Cassarato Ramsay & Associates; Dominique Welinski from DW; and production and development executive for Indigenous Films, Thandeka Zwana.

"The 2019 group for Realness crosses Africa from East to West. I can hear new strong voices, loud ones. A couple of directors already did a 1st feature which did travel across the world and I'm sure their international experience will really benefit the residency. I would like to thank Realness for allowing me to discover new talents, stories and voices," says Welinski.

The 4th Edition's participants will begin their journey at the idyllic Nirox Foundation residence and sculpture park in the Cradle of Humankind in South Africa, on the 11 June. Over the course of six weeks, the residents will be furnished with the resources and mentorship that will empower them to create their best work. They will also attend this year's 10<sup>th</sup> Durban FilmMart, 19 – 22 July, during the 40<sup>th</sup> Durban International Film Festival, to publicly present their projects to the industry.

## Film institute

Elias Ribeiro, founder of Realness, announced that Realness would be developed into an institute inspired by Sundance Institute within the African context, which not only caters to writers, directors and producers, but in future also nurtures professionals in other disciplines of film, such as curation, production design, sound and cinematography; as well as structures a film fund to help finance filmmakers and projects.

Realness is an initiative by Urucu Media in partnership with Nirox Foundation, Berlinale Talents, Durban FilmMart, The Durban International Film Festival, Durban Talents, Institute Français, The French Institute of South Africa, TorinoFilmLab, EAVE Producer's Workshop, Locarno Filmmaker's Academy, CNC (Le Centre National du Cinéma et de L'image Animée), Toronto International Film Festival, TIFF Filmmaker Lab, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Cocoon Productions and Deuxieme Ligne Films.

More information about the 2019 Residents and their projects can be found on the Realness Website: <https://www.realness.institute/>.