

## **2016 African Film Festival of Ottawa (AFFO)**

### **Press Release**

Following the tremendous success of our inaugural festival last year, Carleton University's Film Studies Department and Institute of African Studies, and the Canadian Film Institute are pleased to invite you to the second edition of the African Film Festival of Ottawa (AFFO), held over two weekends, on October 14-15-16 and October 21-22, 2016 in the River Building Theater of the Carleton University Campus.

The festival, which opens on **Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup> at 7pm** with Leyla Bouzid's breakthrough film *A peine j'ouvre les yeux/ As I Open My Eyes* (2015) aims to showcase the best in contemporary African cinema and offer a complex, nuanced and doubly moving image of Africa. It seeks to engage audiences in a conversation on Africa around the moving image by presenting Africa and Africans through the cinematic voices and visions of the continent's filmmakers themselves.

The five films selected this year celebrate both emerging voices and cinematic masters from across the five regions of the African continent represented by the following countries: Chad, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia. Indeed, according to festival curator and Carleton University Film Studies Professor Aboubakar Sanogo, " This year's selection emphasizes fresh and innovative voices in African cinema with two first features by Leyla Bouzid (Tunisia) and Sibs Shongwe La-Mer (South Africa), a second feature by Kivu Ruhorahoza (Rwanda), a third feature by Alain Gomis (Senegal) and a rare documentary by Chadian master Mahamat-Saleh Haroun." The films have been screened and/or have won awards at FESPACO (Pan African Film Festival of Ouagadougou), the Durban International Film Festival, the Cannes Film Festival, the Berlin Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival, and the Sundance Film Festival among others.

#### **A. Schedule of Screenings**

*A peine j'ouvre les yeux (As I Open My Eyes)*

dir. Leyla Bouzid Tunisia, 2015, 103 minutes English sub-titles

**River Building Theatre, Carleton University, Friday, October 14, 2016, 7:00 pm**

Set at the edge of revolutionary changes in Tunisia in 2010-11, this compelling drama revolves around Farah, a young singer and musician who has also just been accepted into medical, which pleases her very protective mother. Trouble is, Farah loves music more, but her band's material soon comes under the scrutiny of government authorities, and, as tension mounts, Farah must make a crucial decision that will affect not only her personal life, but the life of her country.

“On the eve of Tunisia’s Jasmine Revolution, a young woman struggles against family and society to pursue a singing career in Leyla Bouzid’s impressive, generally nuanced debut, *As I Open My Eyes*. Sharply yet subtly capturing the atmosphere of fear fostered by the dictatorship of President Ben Ali, this skillfully made drama is especially attuned to the myriad forms of surveillance, from the prurient to the political. Showcasing a stand-out lead performance by first-timer Baya Medhaffer, with intriguing compositions by Iraqi musician Khyam Allami, *Eyes* will open eyes to several new talents...” Jay Weissberg (Variety)

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1hWLpPvTOI>

### ***Necktie Youth***

dir. Sibis Shongwe-La Mer South Africa, 2015, 91 minutes

**River Building Theatre, Carleton University, Saturday, October 15, 2016, 7:00 pm**

On the anniversary of the violent Soweto Youth Uprising of June 16, 1976, an affluent group of Johannesburg youths are shocked by the suicide of one of their friends. A year later, the aftershocks of the tragedy are still fresh in their minds. In his edgy first feature, 23-year old director Shongwe-La Mer plays Jabz, a directionless youth who passes the time rummaging through the city’s sleepy manicured northern suburbs with his buddy September in search of drugs, distraction and salvation.

Beautifully and starkly shot in black and white, this revealing exploration of the generation born after the fall of apartheid presents a side of South Africa not often seen. Winner of the Best South African Film prize and the Best Director Award at Durban International Film Festival, Shongwe-La Mer is a promising directorial talent in South Africa.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzhKR4jwpIs>

### ***Hissein Habré, une Tragédie Tchadienne (Hissein Habré: A Chadian Tragedy)***

dir. Mahamat-Saleh Haroun -Chad, 2016, 82 minutes-English sub-titles

**River Building Theatre, Carleton University, Sunday, October 16, 2016, 4:00 pm**

Hissène Habré was President of Chad from 1982 until 1990. His one-party regime committed countless human-rights abuses via his notorious CIA-trained secret police. As with other dictators who have faced trial, Habré refused to recognize the court’s legitimacy and had to be forced into the courtroom. His case marked the first time an African dictator was tried by an African Union-backed court, and, in May of 2016, he was found guilty of sexual slavery, torture, and ordering the killing of 40,000 people. The film revolves around the activities of Clément Abaïfouta, a former prisoner who is now chairman of the Association of the Victims of the Crimes of the Hissène Habré Regime. Meeting with survivors who carry both physical and psychological scars of Habré’s rule, Abaïfouta elicits their dramatic and disturbing testimonies.

One of the most important African directors working today, this is Mahamat-Saleh Haroun's first — and very impressive — foray into non-fiction. "Hissein Habré, A Chadian Tragedy is a poignant and immediate account of struggle and survival in the face of evil." Cameron Bailey (2016 Toronto International Film Festival).

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Kq7U8VQzio>

***Tey (Today)***

dir. Alain Gomis Senegal, 2012, 86 minutes English sub-titles

**River Building Theatre, Carleton University, Friday, October 21, 2016, 7:00 pm**

Satché is an apparently healthy man who wakes one morning at his mother's house in Dakar and is suddenly and mysteriously informed that he will die at the end of that day. In this place, death warns of its arrival 24 hours in advance, and so, today will be the last of Satché's life. Though he is strong, he accepts his imminent death as he walks through the streets, taking in the sites of his past as if he were looking at them for the last time: his parents' house, his first love, the friends of his youth, and his wife and children.

Acclaimed actor, musician, and poet Saul Williams stars in this stirring, reflective, and incredibly beautiful drama. Named one of Film Comment's Best Unreleased Films of 2012, Gomis's film was selected for Official Competition at the 62nd Berlin International Film Festival. "This is a quiet film, modest and dreamlike, full of extended silences punctuated by bursts of talk... there's an unassuming, contemplative quality to *Tey* that keeps you watching." David Rooney (Variety).

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j10MoCNSvs8>

***Things of the Aimless Wanderer***

dir. Kivu Ruhorahoza-Rwanda, 2015, 78 minutes-English sub-titles

**River Building Theatre, Carleton University, Saturday, October 22, 2016, 7:00 pm**

"Kivu Ruhorahoza's arresting feature reveals a series of cryptic and loosely connected narrative shards. Each depicts an uneasy encounter between an African woman and a male figure of authority or menace, be he a nineteenth century white explorer, a twenty-first century Western journalist, or a Rwandan man performing reconnaissance for a shadowy internal agency. In each story, a female figure is an object of lust, surveillance, fascination or violence, inevitably disappearing from the narrative. Every disappearance becomes a sort of chorus, punctuated by enigmatic images and haunting musical soundscapes. Considering the film's title ("aimless wanderer" originally described hapless European explorers), one might indeed ask whether the female avatar of these stories may be a metaphor for Rwanda itself: colonized, objectified, and struggling to calibrate cultural gains, including gains for women, with reactionary policies and

sentiments. Such questions haunt the periphery of this provocative film whose narrative core remains a reservoir of mystery.” (Sundance Film Festival, 2015)

Stunning.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWGEM3mS63A>

## **B. Practical Information**

### **Directions:**

All screenings will take place in the River Building Theater of Carleton University. The address is: 2200 River Building, 42 Campus Avenue, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6-Phone 613-520-2600.

For more information on how get to the River Building Theater, please click on the following link from the Canadian Film Institute ([http://www.cfi-icf.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=4&Itemid=4](http://www.cfi-icf.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=4&Itemid=4)).

### **Ticketing**

For general admission, the Canadian Film Institute will set up a box office at the entrance of the River Building Theater before the beginning of the screening. Admission is FREE for Carleton University students and staff. Please click on the following CFI link for more information: [http://www.cfi-icf.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=27&Itemid=821](http://www.cfi-icf.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=27&Itemid=821).

### **Contact**

For more information about the event, please contact us at the following email addresses and/or phone numbers:

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