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**NEWS RELEASE #36**

## TIFF CELEBRATES THE FINEST IN AFRICAN AND AFRICAN-DIASPORA CINEMA

**Toronto** – Ten films from 12 countries point to the imagination and diversity of African and African-diaspora cinema. Added to the line-up of the 31st **Toronto International Film Festival**, these titles, with focuses ranging from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to a black female messiah superhero, include six world premieres and two North American premieres. Films announced today join such previously announced films as Tahani Rached's **THESE GIRLS**; Abderrahmane Sissako's **BAMAKO**; Asger Leth's **GHOSTS OF CITÉ SOLEIL**; Jerome Laperrousaz's **MADE IN JAMAICA**; John Barker's **BUNNY CHOW**; Mahamat-Saleh Haroun's **DARATT**; and Teboho Mahlatsi's **MOEKGO AND THE STICKFIGHTER**, in representing the finest in international cinema exploring African and Caribbean nations, peoples, histories, and culture. Limited Festival Passes and Coupon Books are available until August 25. Single tickets on sale September 6. For all information and to purchase tickets call **416-968-FILM** or visit [bell.ca/filmfest](http://bell.ca/filmfest).

"This year we'll bring audiences the stories of Idi Amin, Hurricane Katrina and South African freedom fighter Patrick Chamusso," says Cameron Bailey, International Programmer. "The African experience is vast and diverse, extending far beyond African borders to include both Chad and Trinidad, both Nigeria and Brazil, and we'll have films from all of these countries."

### **CATCH A FIRE** Phillip Noyce, UK/South Africa, **Special Presentation**

**World Premiere**

From the director of **THE QUIET AMERICAN** and **RABBIT-PROOF FENCE** comes a political thriller based on the real-life story of Patrick Chamusso. Shot on location in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Mozambique, the film focuses in on one man of thousands, reeling from years of divide and social unrest in South Africa. Initially apolitical, Patrick (Derek Luke) is shocked into action, reexamining his sense of self and purpose after his quiet life is ambushed by government-sanctioned terror squads. Patrick becomes a rebel fighter and political operative, staging daring solo attacks against the brutal apartheid regime even as policeman Nic Vos (Tim Robbins) further insinuates himself into Patrick's home.

### **THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND** Kevin Macdonald, UK, **Special Presentation**

**World Premiere**

On a medical mission in Uganda, Dr. Garrigan (James McAvoy) becomes irrevocably entangled with one of the world's most barbaric figures, Ugandan President Idi Amin (Forest Whitaker). Impressed by the young Scottish doctor's brazen attitude in a moment of crisis, the newly self-appointed president selects him to be his personal physician and closest confidante. Though Garrigan is at first flattered and fascinated with his new position, he soon awakens to Amin's savagery – and his own complicity in it. Horror and betrayal ensue as Garrigan tries to right his wrongs and escape Uganda alive.

### **INDIGÈNES** Rachid Bouchareb, France/Morocco/Algeria/Belgium, **Contemporary World Cinema** **North American Premiere**

Recruited in Africa in 1943, they have not yet set foot in France. But because it's war, Saïd, Abdelkader, Messaoud and Yassir are going to join the French army to free the motherland from the Nazi enemy, just like 130,000 other "natives" beside them. These heroes, forgotten by history, will vanquish in Italy, in Provence, and in the Vosges before finding themselves alone defending a village in Alsace against a German battalion. Taking home the award for Best Actor at Festival de Cannes, this ensemble cast breathes vibrant life into their portrayal of some of Africa's lost heroes.

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**KINSHASA PALACE** Zeka Laplaine, Democratic Republic of Congo/France, **Visions** *World Premiere*  
Adopting the feel of an intimate diary, filmmaker Zeka Laplaine offers a film that playfully blurs the line between fiction and memoir. Laplaine plays Kaze, a man in desperate search of his missing brother Max. With only a few small clues, Kaze travels to France, Congo and Portugal, and all the way to Cambodia, in hopes of resolving his brother's mysterious disappearance.

**ABENI** Tunde Kelani, Nigeria/Benin, **Contemporary World Cinema** *North American Premiere*  
Abeni, the daughter of a wealthy business mogul, and Akanni, a Beninise from a poor background, are childhood lovers destined to meet again in later years. All grown up, Abeni is ordered by her father to marry the son of one of his business associates, but she'll do anything she can to keep that from happening – including running off with the innocent Akanni for a disastrous gunshot wedding.

**WHEN THE LEVEES BROKE: A REQUIEM IN FOUR ACTS** Spike Lee, USA, **Masters**  
Filmmaker Spike Lee documents the rebuilding of those who saw their entire lives washed away in his epic portrait of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. A four-hour documentary assembled in four parts – each dealing with a different aspect of the disaster – the film recounts the heartbreaking personal stories of those who came out of Katrina alive, the eyes of the world fixated on their struggle to survive. From the tragic failure of the levees, to the lack of action that followed, Lee's moving film chronicles the indomitable spirit of a city rising from the depths of despair with the help of its rich cultural legacy.

**NO PLACE LIKE HOME** Perry Henzell, Jamaica/USA, **Visions** *World Premiere*  
Filmmaker Perry Henzell (*THE HARDER THEY COME*) returns to the big screen after 30 years with a story of one woman's journey to the heart of the real Jamaica. When New York City film producer Susan travels to Jamaica to shoot a shampoo commercial, a series of unforeseen circumstances sees her drift further and further from the world she knows, into a strange alternative reality that turns many of her previously held assumptions upside down. Consisting primarily of footage shot back in the 1970s, Henzell's second feature is musical, political, and spontaneously surprising – an energetic exploration of a turbulent, sun-kissed tropical culture.

**SISTAGOD** Yao Ramesar, Trinidad and Tobago, **Visions** *World Premiere*  
The first feature in a trilogy about the coming of a black female messiah in the future, during a period known as the Apocalypso – a global holocaust that she alone survives. Mari emerges on a Caribbean island, born with skin so dark her father abandons her, believing that she is not his child. Her mother blames Mari for this abandonment, convinced that she is possessed by the devil. When Mari becomes pregnant by an unknown man, her mother sews a costume for her so that she may hide her "shame" and "ugliness." In costume, Mari assumes a superhero persona – Sistagod.

**ANTONIA** Tata Amaral, Brazil, **Contemporary World Cinema** *World Premiere*  
Friends since childhood, Preta, Barbarah, Mayah and Lena are backup singers in a rap group fronted by a gang of testosterone-laden men, performing to huge audiences in the favelas. Convincing the guys to let them perform one song of their own, their musical stylings drive the crowd wild. Dreaming of the opportunity to make something of their lives, the girls form their own group, Antonia. But what chance do they stand against poverty, sexism and the everyday danger of life in the favela?

**GATHERING THE SCATTERED COUSINS** Akim Omotoso, South Africa, **Visions**  
This short film, playing with Yao Ramesar's **SISTAGOD**, offers an intimate glimpse into the director's life as he surveys his shared Nigerian and Barbadian ancestry. Exploring his family's separation by nation and bond by blood, Omotoso discovers he has a lot to learn about himself, his family, Africa, and the West Indies.

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