

SVAFF 2025 Wraps in San José: 92 Films from 32 Countries, AU 'Sixth Region' Announcement, Omotola Honored

92 films, 32 nations—SVAFF 2025 honored Souleymane Cissé, screened Omotola's A Mother's Love, celebrated AU's recognition of the diaspora as its Sixth Region.

SILICON VALLEY, GA, UNITED STATES, October 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Silicon Valley African Film Festival \(SVAFF\)](#) marked its 16th edition with four days of screenings, masterclasses, and cultural exchange that celebrated the future of African storytelling. From October 9–12, 2025, over 90 films from 32 countries were screened, cementing SVAFF's role as one of America's most vital platforms for African and diasporic cinema.



Class of 2025 Silicon Valley African Film Festival Filmmakers with Board Members | Image- Asha Weal, Rice Media

Founded by Chike C. Nwoffiah, the festival has, over sixteen years, transformed what once seemed an impossible dream of an African film festival thriving in the heart of Silicon Valley into a global movement bridging film, culture, and technology.

“

For too long, Africa's story has been told through foreign eyes. At SVAFF, we bring authentic African filmmakers to Silicon Valley to share Africa as we truly know it.”

Chike Nwoffiah

Honoring a Legend

This year's edition was dedicated to the late [Souleymane Cissé](#) of Mali, regarded as one of Africa's greatest filmmakers. His daughter, Sira Cissé, accepted a posthumous honor during a moving opening ceremony that paused to reflect on his towering legacy. Opening night featured Ghanaian filmmaker Zoey

Martinson's *The Fisherman*, which took home the Narrative Feature Award, alongside John

Simmons' Wrong Address, winner of the Diaspora Narrative Short Award.

Documenting Legacy: NABJ at 50
The festival's centerpiece documentary, *Beyond the Headlines: The NABJ Journey* by James Franklin Blue III, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ).

"Beautifully capturing the resilience of HBCU students and the importance of preserving our history, the NABJ journey is true legacy and SVAFF was the perfect platform to celebrate it," said Delrish White, journalist and Bennett College alum.

Omotola Jalade Ekeinde's *'Mother's Love'* and the *Power of Story* Saturday night featured *A Mother's Love*, the directorial debut of Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde, to a sold-out audience. The emotional film exploring motherhood, trauma, and faith received a standing ovation. Omotola was later honored with SVAFF's Trailblazer Award for her 30-year contribution to African cinema.

Documentaries That Heal and Confront

Beware!, directed by Soussaba Cissé, won the Documentary Feature Award, standing as both tribute and testimony.

"The film carries Souleymane Cissé's DNA a call for the light he championed in *Yeelen*, and a reminder that Africans must reimagine healthier futures for ourselves and our children,*" said film critic Wilfred Okiche.

Youth and Inclusion: The Next Generation of Storytellers

In partnership with the Santa Clara County Alliance of Black Educators (SCCABE), SVAFF's Student & Children's Programming invited local students to engage with African and diasporic cinema. "Because of their genuine interest and intellect, I left inspired and hopeful for the future of art through the African diasporic lens," said Nia Miranda, SVAFF's Director of Community Outreach.



Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde wins Trailblazer Award at SVAFF 2025 | Image by Asha Weal, Rice Media



Opening Ceremony | Founder(SVAFF) Chike Nwoffiah honors Souleymane Cisse, October 9-12, 2025 | San Jose Asha Weal, Rice Media

The festival also introduced a Kindergarten Animation Block in collaboration with Jack and Jill of America, Inc., exposing children to short animations from Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, and Brazil.

Industry Day: Film, Tech & The Future of Distribution

SVAFF's Industry Day gathered filmmakers, educators, and distributors to discuss Black cinema, technology, and the new economics of representation.

Adobe hosted a private reception and AI demonstration led by Francis Crossman, Principal Product Manager for Premiere Pro, showcasing groundbreaking tools for filmmakers.

"We're not replacing editors, we're giving them back time," Crossman noted, emphasizing the harmony between technology and creative autonomy.

Runway Meets Reel: Fashion on Film

Curated by Victoria Adjekpiyede, the SVAFF Fashion Showcase featured Wummi Couture, blending tradition and futurism through bold silhouettes and African textiles. The show turned the festival lobby into a visual celebration of African style and craftsmanship.

A Defining Moment: The African Union Announcement

The most powerful moment of SVAFF 2025 came from Dr. Litha Musyimi-Ogana, African Union Commissioner on Human and Peoples' Rights, who announced a new AU framework officially recognizing African diasporic communities as the Union's Sixth Region.

"Still, I rise," Dr. Musyimi-Ogana declared, calling on African filmmakers to see themselves as architects of the continent's soft-power renaissance.

Marketplace and Collaboration

The SVAFF Marketplace buzzed with vendors and sponsors celebrating African creativity and entrepreneurship.

Coco de Mer Perfume (Seychelles) captivated attendees with its signature scent derived from the world's largest seed, a symbol of resilience and beauty.

Henning Morales, CEO of ECHOS TV, announced a new partnership with SVAFF to expand African film visibility through global streaming platforms.

Ubuntu in Motion: Awards & Legacy

The festival closed with the Ubuntu Awards, honoring excellence, impact, and creative courage. Official recognitions were presented by Councilmember Rosemary Kamei (San José), Supervisor Lisa Gauthier (San Mateo County), and Assembly Member Ash Kalra (California District 25).

"Magic happens when we connect with each other, in the spirit of Ubuntu, and take our rightful place in the global media conversation," said Chike Nwoffiah, SVAFF Founder and Executive Director.

Save the Date: SVAFF 2026

The 17th Silicon Valley African Film Festival will return October 8–11, 2026 in San José, California.

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