

The 33rd African Diaspora International Film Festival Celebrates African Voices and the Fight for Artistic Freedom

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The 33rd African Diaspora International Film Festival (ADIFF) spotlights a bold lineup of contemporary African films exploring resilience, artistic freedom, and identity. From riveting historical epics to politically charged dramas, this year's program reflects the complexity and creativity of African storytelling across generations and geographies.



Still from "Mora is Here" directed by Khalid Zairi

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*ADIFF Co-Director Dr.
Reinaldo Barroso-Spech*

Presented at Teachers College, Columbia University and Cinema Village ADIFF's Africa program includes premieres and festival favorites from Burkina Faso, Chad, Morocco, Mali, South Africa, and beyond—many screening in the U.S. for the first time.

Africa Highlights: Courage, History, and Legacy:

Among this year's most anticipated premieres is *Diya* (The Price of Blood) by Chadian filmmaker Achille Ronaimou, a gripping moral thriller that follows an NGO driver in N'Djamena whose accidental crime plunges him into a desperate struggle between tradition and modern corruption. The film debuted at the Toronto International Film Festival.

The [Gala screening](#) of *The Ants* (Les Fourmis) by Moroccan director Yassine Fennane highlights an exciting 2025 fiction thriller exploring intra-African migration and the quest for dignity

through the intertwined lives of a young Sub-Saharan woman, a corrupt recruiter, and a wealthy employer near the Morocco–Spain border. The Gala screening will be followed by a Q&A and a VIP Reception.

As part of the ADIFF program “Pan-African Legacies: Malcolm X and Fanon,” audiences can explore [Frantz Fanon's](#) life and revolutionary impact through film. The documentary *Frantz Fanon: His Life, His Struggle, His Work* by Algerian director, Cheikh Djemaï traces Fanon's journey from facing racism in the French Army to advocating for Algeria's liberation, examining his seminal works *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*. The New York premiere of Closing Night film *Fanon* by Jean-Claude Barny is a powerful biographical drama tracing the transformative years of Martiniquan psychiatrist and revolutionary Frantz Fanon in 1950s Algeria. As he confronts the violence of colonial oppression inside and outside the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital, Fanon's compassion turns into political action and resistance.

From Morocco and France comes *Mora is Here*, a powerful historical documentary uncovering the forgotten stories of over 70,000 Moroccan laborers recruited in the 1950s to work in French coal mines. Filmmaker Jamal Belmahi's moving chronicle exposes exploitation and the roots of today's migration debates.

In *Mother City* (South Africa), filmed over six years, directors Miki Redelinghuys and Pearlle Joubert unflinchingly capture the Reclaim the City movement in Cape Town as activists battle developers and the state to reclaim land and housing for displaced Black and Colored communities—a defining struggle for justice in post-apartheid South Africa.



Still from closing night film "Fanon" directed by Jean-Claude Barny



Still from "Black Women and Sex" directed by Godisamang Khunou



Still from "The Banjo Boys" directed by Johan Nayar

The Song of the Rifles (Burkina Faso) by Jean Elliot M.R. Ilboudo, winner of major festival prizes across Africa, is a searing portrait of a boy forced into civil war and turned child soldier. Based on real events, the film is a haunting reflection on the loss of innocence and humanity amid chaos.

Another highlight is the U.S. premiere of Yambo Ouologuem: Bound to Violence (Mali/Senegal/France) by Kalidou Sy, tracing the brilliant rise and tragic fall of the Malian writer who won the Prix Renaudot in 1968 before racist accusations of plagiarism silenced his voice for decades. The film restores his rightful place in African and world literature.

Censorship and the African Imagination:

A special section titled “[Silenced Voices: Cinema and Censorship](#)” revisits outstanding films that were once banned in their home countries or abroad for challenging social, political, and religious norms.

The program features Sins of the Flesh (Egypt), Foreign Body (Tunisia), and The Boy of Cairo (Egypt), all confronting taboos around sexuality, women’s autonomy, and moral hypocrisy. Together they reveal how African filmmakers have used cinema to confront censorship and reclaim narrative freedom.

Additional Features:

Other African titles deepening the continent’s cinematic vision include:

- The Eyes of Ghana (Ghana), executive produced by Barack and Michelle Obama, following 93-year-old film pioneer Chris Hesse as he races to restore a lost national archive.
- The Banjo Boys (Malawi), the joyful journey of Madalitso Band from the streets of Lilongwe to international acclaim.
- Carissa (South Africa), a tender coming-of-age story of a young woman reclaiming her family’s rooibos tea lands.
- Black Women and Sex (South Africa), a candid, pan-African documentary confronting patriarchal taboos around sexuality.
- Abo Zabal 89 (Egypt), an award-winning personal quest into the trauma of political imprisonment.
- Megnot (Ethiopia), a romantic drama celebrating a woman’s defiance against forced marriage and her fight for self-determination.

ADIFF Mini Virtual Festival:

For audiences unable to attend in person, ADIFF will host a Mini Virtual Festival featuring twenty films from the festival lineup, available to stream in the USA and Canada. The selection includes nine African and African Diaspora titles set in Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Algeria, Canada, Belgium,

France, Tunisia, Senegal, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Guinea-Bissau.

A Celebration of African Voices:

"These films embody the power, artistry, and political consciousness of African cinema today," says ADIFF Co-Director Dr. Reinaldo Barroso-Spech. "From the Sahel to the Cape, filmmakers are reclaiming space to tell stories of beauty, struggle, and survival that speak to the global human experience."

Festival passes and tickets are now available at www.nyadiff.org, with screenings running November 28 – December 14, 2025, in theaters and online at nyadiff.org

ABOUT THE AFRICAN DIASPORA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL Founded in 1993 and based in Harlem, the African Diaspora International Film Festival (ADIFF) is a minority-led, 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to expanding understanding of the human experience of people of color worldwide through cinema. Its curated programs include socially relevant and award-winning films from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, and beyond.

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