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realness

REALNESS

A SCREEN WRITERS RESIDENCY

Urucu Media, under the mentorship of Berlinale Talents, in partnership with Nirox Foundation, Durban Filmmart, Restless Talent Management, The French Institute of South Africa and Institute Français's Cinémas du Monde, Torino Film Lab, EAVE and World Cinema Fund proudly presents REALNESS, a screenwriters residency for a new generation of African cinema.

After careful evaluation of 175 projects from 29 countries in Africa, five writer/directors will attend a seven-week residency to develop a new draft of their original feature screenplays.

“The aim of REALNESS is to provide the continent's best emerging writing talents with the necessary time, space and support to develop their unique cinematic vision.”

The most promising projects to emerge from REALNESS will be selected and funded to participate in the prestigious La Fabrique des Cinémas du Monde in Cannes, EAVE Producers' Workshop and Torino Film Lab Meetings events in 2017.

REALNESS recognises the real-life demands of most writers, and that taking time to develop a screenplay is not always economically viable. To this end, residents will receive a stipend of R15 000, and all food, travel and accommodation expenses will be covered for the duration of their stay. Realness holds no legal claims over anyone's work while in residency.





INTRODUCING REALNESS 2016 RESIDENTS

KENYA | ETHIOPIA | MADAGASCAR | SOUTH AFRICA

AMIRAH TAJDIN

HAWA HAWAII

KENYA

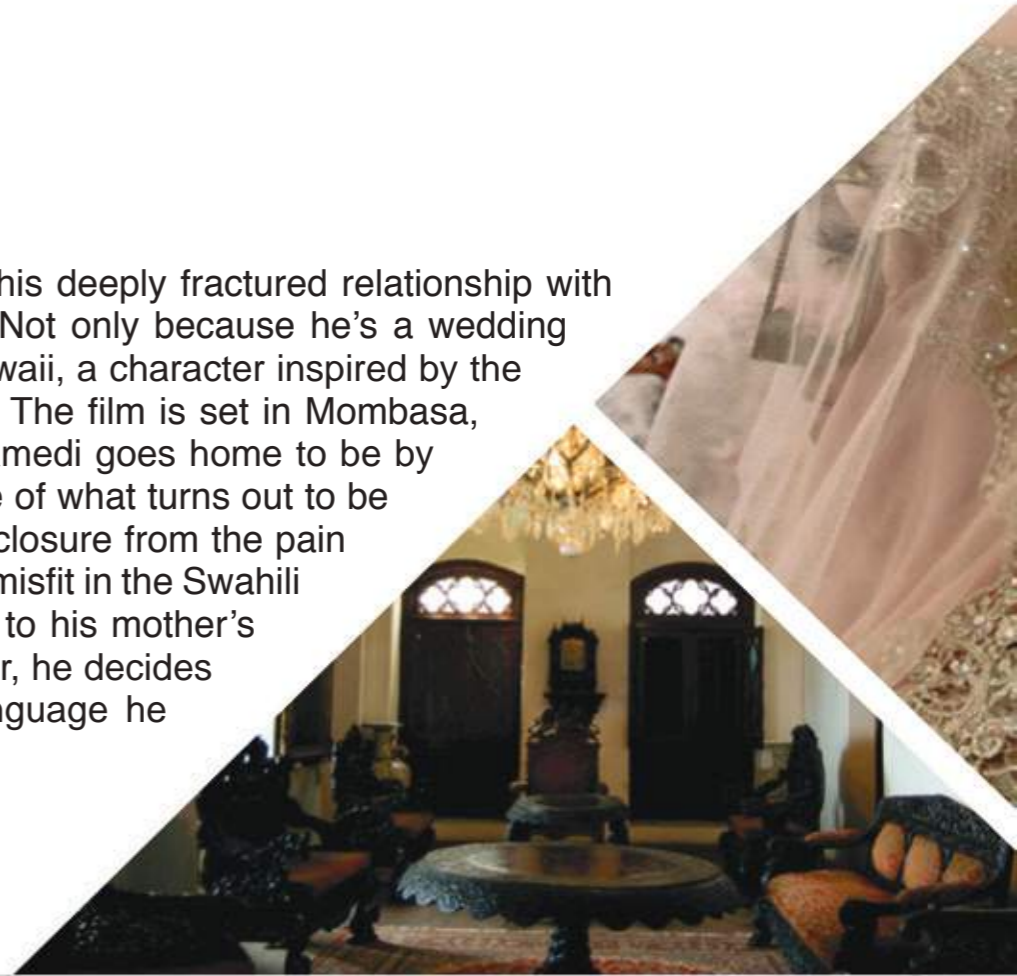
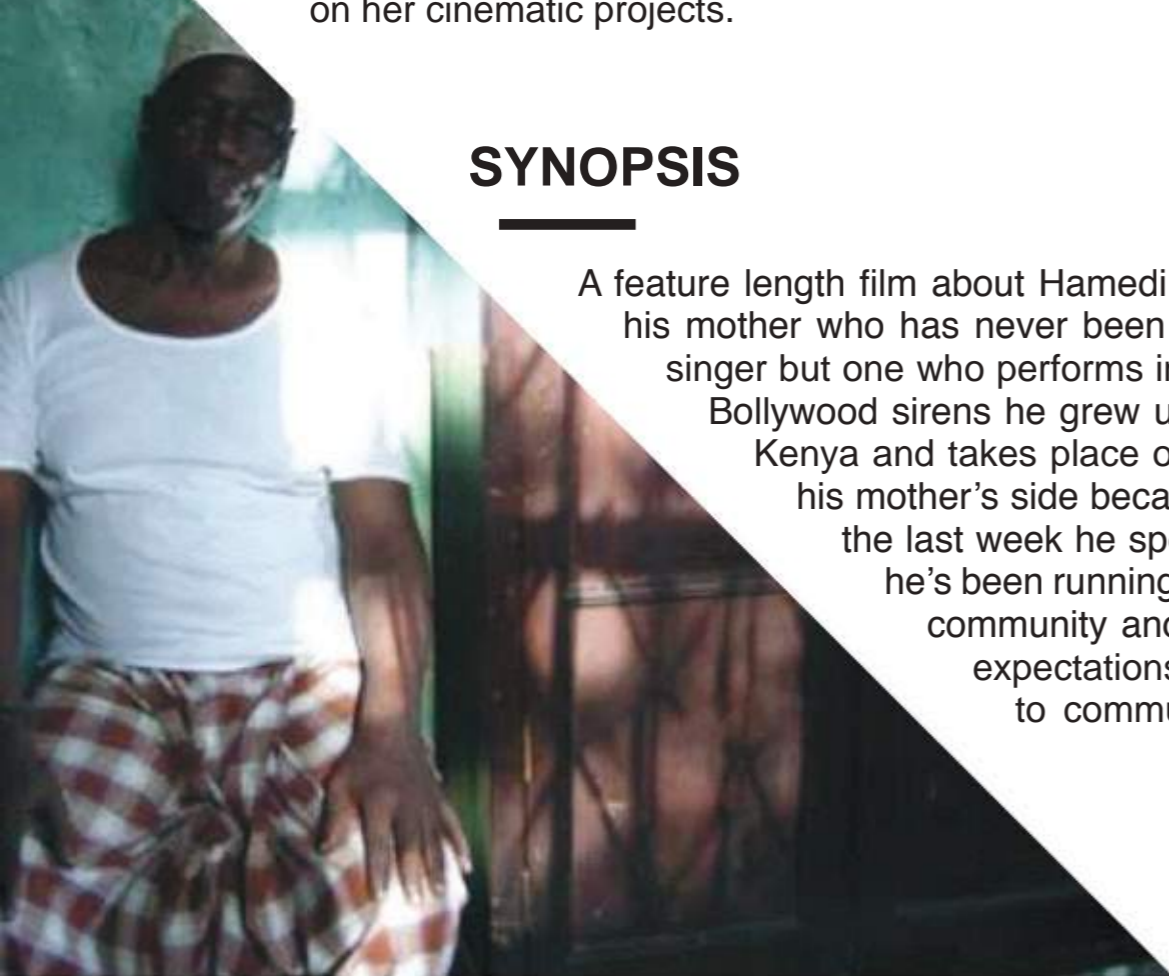


BIOGRAPHY

Amirah Tajdin, 29, is a Kenyan artist and filmmaker. She graduated from Rhodes University with a Bachelor of Fine Art (Photography) in South Africa, was born and brought up in Nairobi and spent her teenage years in Dubai. She has since written and directed numerous visual pieces. *Fluorescent Sin* (2011) and *His To Keep* (2013), both short films, have played at over twenty film festivals around the world with *Fluorescent Sin* garnering Jury Special Mention awards at the Zanzibar International Film Festival and Film Africa London. Her most recent co-directed short, *Marea de Tierra* (2015) premiered at the Cannes Directors' Fortnight as part of the Chile Factory Residency. The film was also part of Sundance Film Festival in 2016 under the International Shorts Program. She currently splits her time between Africa and the Middle East balancing freelance commercial directing work and working on her cinematic projects.

SYNOPSIS

A feature length film about Hamedi, a Swahili wedding singer, and his deeply fractured relationship with his mother who has never been able to accept his life choices. Not only because he's a wedding singer but one who performs in drag as his alter ego Hawa Hawaii, a character inspired by the Bollywood sirens he grew up watching on the silver screen. The film is set in Mombasa, Kenya and takes place over seven days during which Hamedi goes home to be by his mother's side because she's dying. Over the course of what turns out to be the last week he spends with her, he painfully finds closure from the pain he's been running away from all his life spent as a misfit in the Swahili community and a son who never could live up to his mother's expectations. In trying to break through to her, he decides to communicate with her through the language he knows best, love songs.



HIWOT ADMASU

A FOOL GOD

ETHIOPIA



BIOGRAPHY

One of the very few Ethiopian upcoming filmmakers with international exposure, Hiwot Admasu Getaneh believes she learned the art of storytelling from her grandmother. Though her love for art was obvious from her activities in the high school years, she first got her B.Sc in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Addis Ababa University in 2010. She then decided to follow her real passion, filmmaking, and joined the Blue Nile Film Academy in Addis Ababa. After experimenting with school shorts, she made her first professional short film *New Eyes* in 2015. The film premiered at the Venice International Film Festival in September 2015 and showed at the Toronto International Film Festival the same month. Hiwot was able to attend a lot of workshops and talent labs around the world; TIFF Talent Lab, Addis to Cannes and Berlinale Talents to mention a few. She says the mentorship of excellent filmmakers from such places helped her career a lot. Now, she is preparing to make her first feature film *A Fool God*.

SYNOPSIS

Mesi, 11, lives with her grandmother, younger brother and her sick mom. One morning out of desperation to save her hopelessly sick mother, Mesi performs a traditional ceremony that requires slaughtering a hen without her family's consent. Since traditionally, only a man can act in this kind of spiritual ritual, her grandmother holds her responsible when her mother dies after a few days. Trying to escape the blame, Mesi rebels and treats everyone as a fool, most of all God, for confusing her hands with her gender. She stops going to school so as not to learn all the foolishness of the 'fool God's' creations. Instead, she befriends the only official fool in the village, Abera, a 34 year old former life guard with a 'slow mind'. Mesi convinces Abera to teach her swimming in the lake; in return, she promises him that she will teach him magic.

LUCK RAZANAJAONA

DISCO AFRICA

MADAGASCAR



BIOGRAPHY

Luck Razanjaona is an emerging filmmaker from Madagascar who graduated from the Marrakech School of Visual Art in 2011. He was invited to prestigious programs like Berlinale, Durban Talents and La Fabrique des Cinémas du Monde (2012). He also attended the Hailé Gerima workshop at the Luxor African Film Festival with his two shorts Zebu de Dadilahy and Madama Esther. He was in official competition and selected at several film festivals worldwide like Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, and won a prize at FESPACO. He moved to Moulin d'Andé for residency with support of CNC France and Institut Français, and worked with acclaimed scriptwriter Olivier Gorce. He also finished a new short project called Memories, a mix of Japanese sword film and sci-fi. He is currently working on Chants de Tlous and Disco Africa, a project that has just won the Step Fund Prize at Luxor African Film Festival 2015. He works a lot with the history of his country and its relationship with Africa; musically, as a composer and also on social drama.

SYNOPSIS

Disco Africa tells of Kwame, 25, who works as a clandestine sapphire extractor in the southern region of Madagascar, before contracting a serious lung infection. He returns to his hometown on the east coast, where he learns to live with his illness, and finds his mother who he has not seen for a long time. In his father's office he discovers a stack of old 45 records that combine various West African 70's Afro Beat artists. Through these records and snippets of the past, Kwame gets to know his father who was full of dreams and values, and very present in the '70s African post-independence. This dream was born in him, a sea of hope and optimism that changes his life. Babaa, an old musician, replaces his father and introduces him to the underground side of these places, and enforces human values he has never known before. His encounter with Idi, a childhood friend, leads him astray. Day by day his disease spreads, but he feels the need to continue this illicit lifestyle. Seriously wounded by a gunshot, he ends up on a ship to Africa, rocked by this Afro beat music that his father was so fond of, caught between two sides, between two dreams.

SHEETAL MAGAN

THE DAY AND NIGHT OF BRAHMA

SOUTH AFRICA

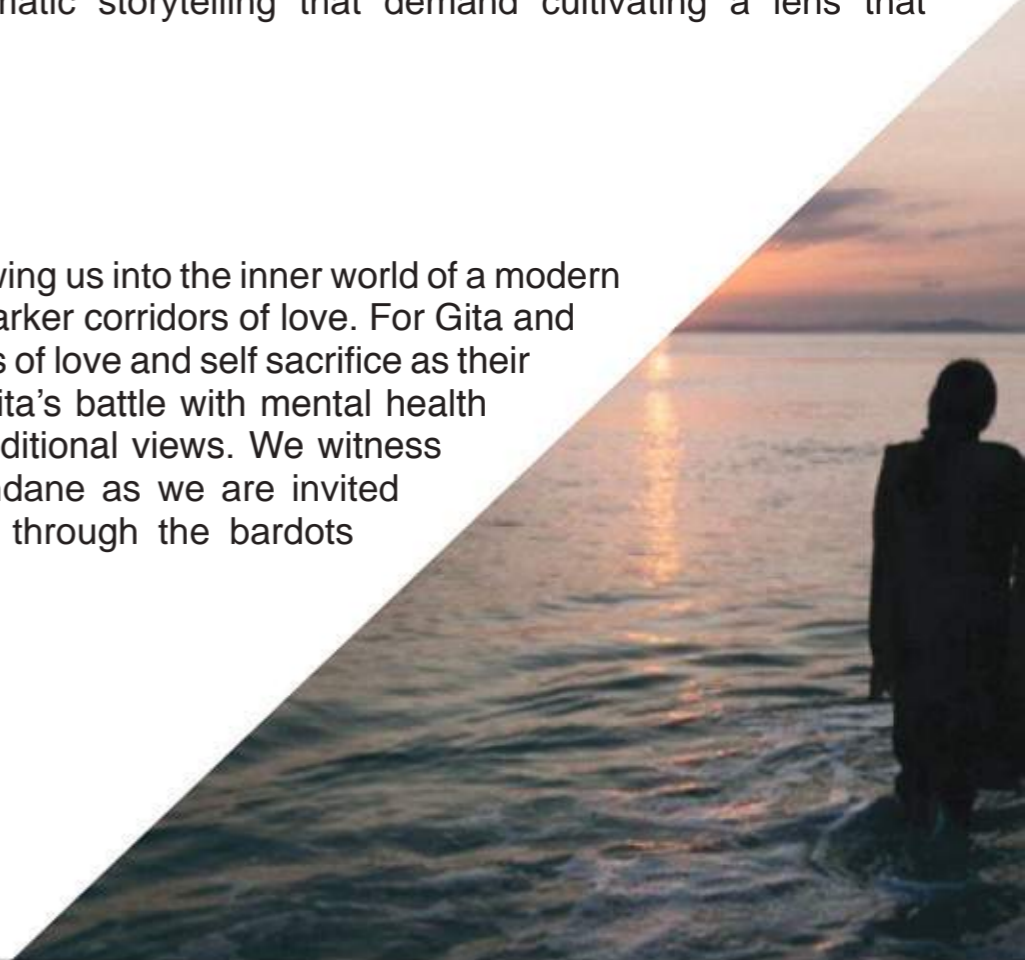
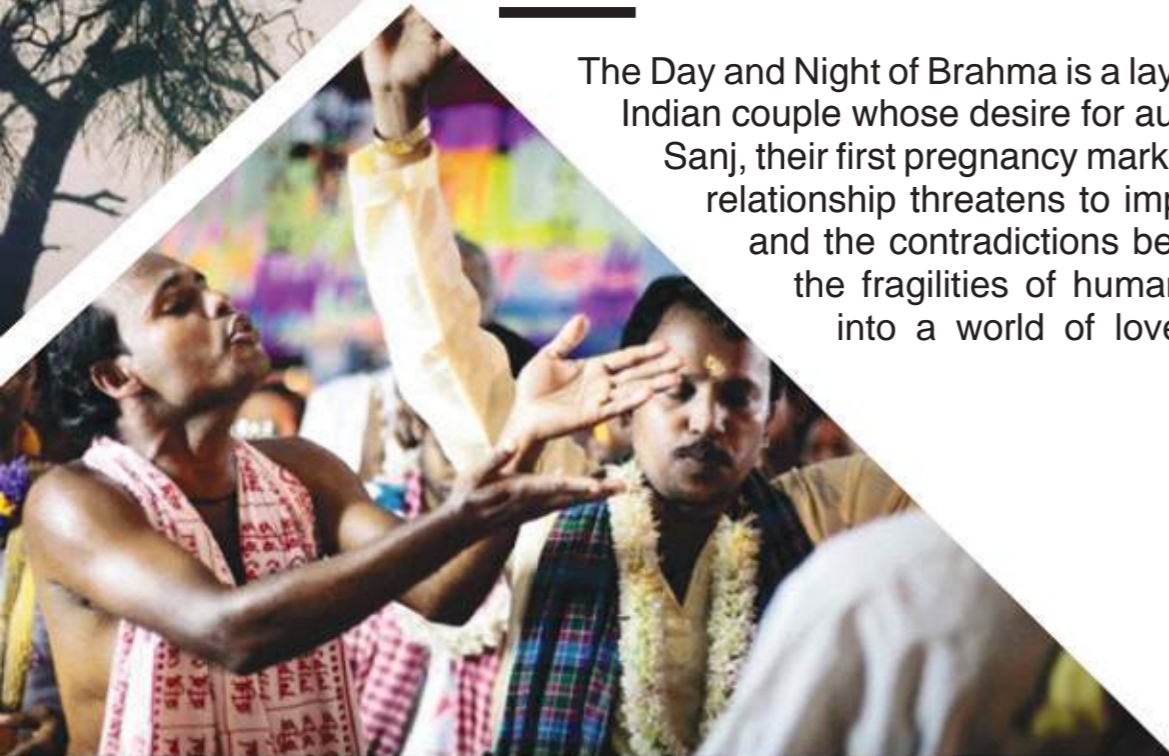


BIOGRAPHY

Sheetal Magan is an emerging South African talent who studied screenwriting and directing at AFDA where she graduated at the top of her class. She has completed several short films including God Dank vir Klank (2011). She was selected to participate in the National Film and Video Foundation female filmmaker slate in 2015 where she made her short film The Fall of Ganesh (2015) which screened at the Durban International Film Festival 2015. She was selected to participate in the Durban Talent Campus and subsequently selected to participate in Cannes South Africa Factory to make Paraya, one of four short films that will open the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes in 2016. She was recently identified as one of five creatives to watch in 2016 by the South African City Press. Sheetal is presently in development on her first feature film The Day and Night of Brahma, and an eight part mini series entitled Acts of Man. She is interested in both experimental cinema and dramatic storytelling that demand cultivating a lens that articulates contemporary African problems.

SYNOPSIS

The Day and Night of Brahma is a layered portrait of domestic life drawing us into the inner world of a modern Indian couple whose desire for autonomy will lead them into the darker corridors of love. For Gita and Sanj, their first pregnancy marks a descent into deeper questions of love and self sacrifice as their relationship threatens to implode under social pressures, Gita's battle with mental health and the contradictions between their own secular and traditional views. We witness the fragilities of human life both remarkable and mundane as we are invited into a world of love, magic and psychology seen through the bardots of an unborn soul.



WIM STEYTLER

UITLANDER

SOUTH AFRICA



BIOGRAPHY

Wim Steytler, hailing from a family of pioneering writers, is an award-winning, young writer/director with a compulsive drive for creating edgy, realist narratives and constructing poetic, powerful imagery. He cut his teeth by earning a degree in fine art, editing for six years and being mentored by South Africa's top directors. Picture Tree in Johannesburg now represents Wim as a director with producer Gary King. In his directorial debut, he picked up a prestigious CFP-E/SHOTS Young Director Award in 2014 at the Festival de Cannes for his narrative music video about xenophobic attacks in Johannesburg's underbelly of hijacked buildings. For his first short film, Wim was awarded Best Director at the 2015 Silwerskerm Film Festival in Cape Town for *Skewe Reënboog (Crooked Rainbow)* – an allegory on the failings of Rainbow Nation idealism. Wim aims to be part of the new wave of bold and uncompromising storytellers rising from the African continent.

SYNOPSIS

Uys is a misfit South African farmer and closet intellectual. After a tragic hunting accident, he is blamed for his best friend's death and is ostracised by his small town community. Uys is guilt-ridden and depressed, his wife leaves him and his business falls apart. He plunges into alcoholism and loneliness. While at his lowest, he finds new community in a mysterious, French, New Age couple, and they form a co-dependent relationship helping Uys to partly assuage his guilt and get back on his feet. It transpires that the couple belong to a survivalist, narcissistic cult and plan to parasitically abuse his resources to prepare for Doomsday. In the meantime, Uys finds a new love interest that creates a fatal wedge between him and the French couple. They eventually violently turn on him and he is drawn into a destructive killing spree that ultimately vindicates him from his past.



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