

# **2006/02/17-22 - NEW YORK (Brooklyn) - BAMcinématek Presents The Best of the African Diaspora Film Festival**

Sábado 18 de febrero de 2006, puesto en línea por [John Malone](#)



## **Best of African Diaspora Film Festival at BAM**

*From February 17-22, BAMcinématek, the repertory film program at BAM Rose Cinemas, in collaboration with The African Diaspora Film Festival, presents The Best of the African Diaspora Film Festival. This one-week series showcases twelve feature films, and several short films, that enjoyed critical and popular acclaim during the thirteenth annual African Diaspora Film Festival, representing black filmmaking from five continents and an extraordinary range of subjects and artistic approaches.*

Created in 1993 by the husband and wife team of Reinaldo Barroso-Spech and Diarah N'Daw-Spech, the ADFFF has long been delighting audiences with U.S. and world premieres of independent films, including features, documentaries, animation, and shorts. The New York Times applauds the Spechs' "international sensibilities" and their penchant for promoting work such as 2002's series favorite, the animated *Kirikou* and the *Sorceress*.

"The ADFFF is a bridge," say the Spechs "between diverse communities looking for works that cannot be found in other festivals, and talented and visionary filmmakers and works that are part of the African Diaspora." ADFFF's ultimate ambition is to see an "informed and talented community come together to exchange ideas and strategies for improving our respective worlds." "The black cinema experience in the U.S. has traditionally been very incomplete," explains N'Daw-Spech. "A lot of films that come from Hollywood present a very limited vision of what the black experience is. Our goal is to present quality products and expand that vision through film." "Films can play a role beyond that of just entertaining people," says Barroso-Spech, "and they can lead to more than just education, they can lead to redemption."

## **About The Best of the ADFFF Films**

A highlight of The Best of the African Diaspora Film Festival is *Tsotsi* (2005), a deeply affecting South African film about a young gang leader who winds up caring for a young child in the sprawling ghettos of Johannesburg. The film has already garnered much acclaim, winning the audience award at the Toronto Film Festival 2005 and the AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival 2005. *Tsotsi* has also been selected as South Africa's official selection for Best Foreign Film at the 2005 Academy Awards. The Hollywood Reporter remarks that director "Hood's filmmaking is accomplished, Lance Gewer's cinematography exceptional and there are fine performances throughout, especially by Chweneyagae as the memorably tortured young *Tsotsi*." The film will screen on February 19 and 22. Another South African film features in the series, *Boy Called Twist*, is a retelling of Dickens' classic novel *Oliver Twist*. This screens on February 17 and 18.

The Best of the African Diaspora Film Festival also features a strong line-up of documentaries, including *Faces of Change* (2005), which plays February 18 and 21. In the film an international group of grassroots activists go behind the camera in order to tell their stories-an opportunity denied to them due to their

social, racial, gender or ethnic backgrounds. The film was the winner of the ADFP 2005 Public Award for the Best Film Directed by a Woman of Color. After both screenings there will be a Q&A with the film's director. Other notable documentaries include *The Importance of Being Elegant* (2004) (February 19 and 20), a documentary that follows Papa Wemba, the legendary Congolese singer living in exile in Paris; and *Nina Simone, Love Sorceress* (2000) (February 18 and 21), which captures a 1976 Paris concert by the singer. The film's director will be at BAM for a Q&A after both screenings.

On February 17 is an African American Shorts Program that includes three films: *Squirrel Man*, *Rubber Soles*, and *All Falls Down*. Also on February 17 is an Afro-Latino Program that consists of the short Mexican documentary *African Blood* (2004) as well as the classic Cuban feature *Maluala* (1979). On February 18 and 20 there is a showing of two Brazilian films, feature-length *Radio Favela* (2002), and the short silent *Soul in the Eye* (1974).

Two more films in the series will feature Q&As with their directors. The first is *Arthur! A Celebration of Life* (2005), a drama about the life of tennis great, activist, humanitarian and author, Arthur Ashe. Director Joe James will be present at both showings, which take place on February 19 and 21. John L'Ecuyer, the director of *On the Verge of Fear*, will be on hand for a Q&A after the film's screening on February 19. Against the backdrop of the brutal dictatorship in Haiti in 1971 the film tells the story of a 15-year-old boy's coming of age. Film Threat.com has described the *On the Verge of Fear* as "certainly one of the tastiest coming-to-self films to radiate the big screen in years." The film will also screen on the final day of the series, February 22.

#### **Websites:**

<http://www.nyadff.org/BestofADFF2006.html>

<http://www.bam.org/film/series.aspx?id=60>

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## **FILM LISTING**

FEB 17 to FEB 22, 2006

All screenings at the BAM ROSE CINEMA (Brooklyn, NY)

### ***AFRICAN BLOOD***

Mexico, 2004, 25min, doc., Spanish w/ English subt., Roberto Olivares, dir.

Mexican identity is assumed as the fusion between Indigenous and European cultures. However, this definition excludes a very important component: our African blood. This documentary will bring us closer to these forgotten roots, through testimonies, reflections and powerful cultural expressions made by our brothers and sisters who live in the Costa Chica region, in the states of Oaxaca and Guerrero. These are the people who carry this great legacy: the Afro-Mestizo, or Afro-Mexican culture. Their struggle to strengthen and claim their own identity makes the wide diversity of cultures in Mexico even greater. Shown with *Maluala*.

Part of Afro-Latino Program. Fri. Feb. 17 @ 6:50pm.

### ***ALL FALLS DOWN***

USA, 2005, 20 min., fiction, English, David Koepp, dir.

Being a New York City teenager involves constant negotiation of the subway system and of relationships.

This is the story of three guys who meet three girls on their daily commute. It involves rejection, attraction and missed connections. In the end, each has a better sense of what they want from love and how to get home again. Shown with Rubber Soles & Squirrel Man.

Part of African American Shorts. Fri. Feb. 17 @ 2:00pm

### ***ARTHUR! A CELEBRATION OF LIFE***

USA, 2005, 80 min., docu-drama, English, Joe James, dir.

Arthur! a Celebration of Life takes us on a spiritual journey about the tennis great, activist, humanitarian and author, Arthur Ashe. It gives us the opportunity to experience Ashe's legacy and learn more about the legend and icon, 37 years after he won the U.S. Open. The Arthur Ashe story is told with true modern-day realism using a heartwarming soundtrack that includes beautiful songs by such artists as Grammy award winner Alicia Keys and Dink Entertainment's Angels VOP (Voices of Praise) male singing trio.

Sun. Feb.19 @ 2:00pm and Tue. Feb. 21 @ 4:30pm.

### ***BOY CALLED TWIST***

South Africa, 2004, 115 min., drama, English, Tim Greene, dir.

A mother dies in childbirth in the middle of nowhere. Fearing blame, the locals bury her in an unmarked grave and drop the baby at a rural orphanage. So begins the incredible life of a little boy called Twist. Based on Dickens' classic novel Oliver Twist, this South African version takes us into the world of the coloured population of Cape Town and exposes the viewer to the harrowing tale of a street kid in search of love, identity, roots, understanding and family.

Fri. Feb. 17 @ 4:30pm and Sat. Feb. 18 @ 9:15pm. Saturday screening followed by a free African Dance Party.

### ***DESAMORES***

Puerto Rico, 2004, 108 min., thriller, Spanish with English, Edmundo H. Rodriguez, dir.

Afro-Puerto Rican detective Isabelo is hired to discover who is responsible for a horrendous massacre in San Juan. As he starts his investigation, he is quickly thrown into a web of intrigue and manipulation beyond his imagination.

Mon. Feb. 20 @ 6:50pm

### ***THE DINNER***

USA, 1997, 85 min., drama, English, Bernie Casey, dir.

Veteran actor Bernie Casey makes his debut as a writer and director with this allegorical drama. Three prominent and prosperous African American men meet at an expensive restaurant for dinner, where they enjoy a meal and discuss the powerfully destructive impact of "the System" on Black America, and how to prosper despite it. Enlightening thoughts and ideas are reflected upon by Brother Man (Doug Johnson), a well-known jazz musician, Young Brother (Wren T. Brown), a well-heeled businessman, and Good Brother (Casey), a U.S. Senator who enjoys a profitable sideline as an art dealer. Shown with Slave Reparations: The Final Passage.

Fri. Feb. 17 @ 9:15pm

### ***FACES OF CHANGE***

USA, 2005, 80 min., documentary, English, French, Tamil, Portuguese, & Bulgarian with English subtitles,

Michèle Stephenson, dir.

Grassroots activists go behind the camera to find a voice denied to them because of their social, racial, gender or ethnic background. They live in five different countries, but they share the common trait of being members of a marginalized group. Their cameras show strikingly similar vistas of broken-down homes, dust and threadbare clothing to demonstrations of profound social inequity. Recorded from within the communities, the videos capture the hopes and dreams that echo each other across the five countries. Faith and perseverance embody this courageous work of patience and dedication by filmmaker Michele Stephenson, who wove together these testimonies to make a powerful film for change.

Winner: ADFF 2005 Public Award for the Best Film Directed by a Woman of Color. Sat. Feb. 18 @ 2:00pm and Tue. Feb. 21 @ 6:50pm. Q&A after screenings. Award Ceremony after Tuesday's screening.

### ***THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ELEGANT***

UK/France, 2004, 70 min., documentary, French with English subtitles, George Amponsah & Cosima Spender, dirs.

Set to the soundtrack of Papa Wemba's extraordinary music, this outrageous, funny and eye-opening film depicts the underground world of a flamboyant African cult. As the camera follows Papa Wemba, the legendary Congolese singer living in exile in Paris, the audience discovers a fascinating world of music, life in exile and fashion.

Sun. Feb. 19 @ 4:30pm and Mon. Feb. 20 @ 4:30pm

### ***MALUALA***

Cuba, 1979, 95 min., drama, Spanish with English subtitles, Sergio Giral, dir.

"Maluala," one of the most powerful films by Sergio Giral, the dean of Afro-Cuban cinema, takes us to a Palenque, a settlement of escaped slaves hidden somewhere in Cuban's eastern mountains. The story tells of the survival of the Palenque and its leadership against the attacks and intrigues of the Spaniards. A classic. Shown with African Blood.

Part of Afro-Latino Program. Fri. Feb. 17 @ 9:15pm & Wed. Feb. 22 @ 9:15pm

### ***MASSAI: THE RAIN WARRIORS***

France/Kenya, 2005, 94 min., drama, Massai with English subtitles, Pascal Plisson, dir.

Massai: The Rain Warriors follows a group of young warriors who have been chosen to kill the lion-god responsible for the drought in their village. This film tells a beautiful story of initiation, friendship, teamwork and sacrifice set on the vast ochre savannah of Kenya. Wed. Feb. 22 @ 9:15pm

### ***NINA SIMONE, LOVE SORCERESS***

France, 2000, 75 min., documentary, English & French with English subtitles, Rene Letzgus, dir.

This rarely seen document of a 1976 Paris concert captures Simone's breathtaking singing and mercurial behavior, as she creates something of a performance art piece. The riveting "High Priestess of Soul" conflates classical, jazz, blues, folk, pop, and soul music - inspiring the most freewheeling among us.

Sat. Feb. 18 @ 6:50pm and Tue. Feb. 21 @ 9:30pm

### ***ON THE VERGE OF A FEVER***

Quebec-Canada/Haiti, 2004, 88 min., drama, French with English subtitles, John L'Ecuyer, dir.

Against the backdrop of poverty, fear and the brutal dictatorship in Haiti in 1971, 'On the Verge of a Fever' ('Le goût des jeunes filles') tells the story of Fanfan, a 15-year-old boy who just wants to experience life for himself with his streetwise friend Gégé. Having lived a somewhat sheltered life with his protective mother, Fanfan experiences a bizarrely terrifying incident involving a Tonton-Macoute. As a result, he decides to hide out at his beautiful neighbor's house for the weekend. There, he is trapped between his fear of being caught and the fulfillment of his deepest fantasy.

Sun. Feb. 19 @ 6:50pm followed by a Q&A and reception sponsored by the Délégation Générale du Québec de New York. Also, Wed. Feb. 22 @ 4:30pm

### ***RADIO FAVELA***

Brazil, 2002, 92 min., drama, Portuguese with English subtitles, Helvecio Ratton, dir.

Based on a true story, Radio Favela is a music-driven story of young heroes rising from an urban ghetto to popular recognition. From within their impoverished surroundings, four young boys from the Favelas (slums) in Rio de Janeiro dream of setting up a radio station that will shout at the world the voice of the voiceless, and express their reality and music. The radio gains a huge following with upfront denunciation and spontaneous language. Soon, the police try to shut it down. Shown with Soul in the Eye.

Sat. Feb. 18 @ 4:30pm and Mon. Feb. 20 @ 9:15pm

### ***RUBBER SOLES***

USA, 2005, 10 min., fiction, English, Christine Turner, dir.

An 11-year-old music collector trades in his prized soul records when he falls for a 13-year-old girl with a nice jump-shot. Shown with All Fall Down & Squirrel Man.

Part of African American Shorts. Fri. Feb. 17 @ 2:00pm

### ***SLAVE REPARATIONS: THE FINAL PASSAGE***

USA, 2004, 28 min., documentary, English, John Eisler, dir.

It's a matter of mis-education and lack of understanding in both the black and white communities that hurts the current slave reparations movement. That's the message of this new documentary, which provides an historical background on the current controversial movement and answers the most often voiced arguments against the payment of reparations to African Americans through interviews with some of the movement's most prominent proponents, including Prof. Manning Marable, Dr. Alvin Poussaint, Rev. Herbert Daughtry, Richard E. Barber, and others. Shown with The Dinner.

Fri. Feb. 17 @ 9:15 pm - Q&A after the screening.

### ***SOUL IN THE EYE***

Brazil, 1974, 8 min., silent, Zozimo Bulbul., dir.

A short silent film paying homage to the legacy of Africans in Brazil. One of the early works of Zozimo Bulbul, the renowned Afro-Brazilian actor/filmmaker. Shown with Radio Favela.

Sat. Feb. 18 @ 4:30pm and Mon. Feb. 20 @ 9:15pm

### ***SQUIRREL MAN***

USA, 2005, 20 min., fiction, English, Jeffrey Lynn Shepherd, dir.

A squirrel bite leads an elderly jazz musician to believe he is a super hero. These powers inspire him to fight crime in his neighborhood, which unexpectedly leads to the mending of his broken relationship with his son. Shown with All Falls Down & Rubber Soles.

Sat. Feb. 17 @ 2:00pm

## ***TSOTSI***

NY Premiere

South Africa, 2005, 94min., drama, English, Gavin Hood, dir.

Based on the book by acclaimed author and playwright, Athol Fugard, this deeply affecting film traces six days in the life of a young gang leader who steals a woman's car-unaware, in his panic, that her baby is in the back seat. Orphaned at an early age and forced to survive by his wits alone, having to care for the infant taps into reservoirs of humanity that surprise even Tsotsi. Pumping with the high energy of Zola's 'Kwaito' music, and told from an African perspective, 'Tsotsi' is an extraordinary contemporary portrait of ghetto life in the sprawling Johannesburg townships. Deviating from Fugard's material which was set during Apartheid to the present, Hood has crafted a singular story of hope and redemption, the triumph of love over rage.

Sneak Preview Screening. A Miramax release. Best Foreign Language Film Nominee - Academy Awards 2005. Audience Award- AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival 2005 and Toronto Film Festival 2005. Sun. Feb. 19 @ 9:30pm and Wed. Feb. 22 @ 6:50pm

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## **FILM SCHEDULE**

### **Friday, Feb 17**

- 2:00 pm African American Shorts Program. All Falls Down & Rubber Soles & Squirrel Man
- 4:30 pm Boy Called Twist
- 6:50 pm Afro-Latino Program. African Blood & Maluala
- 9:15 pm The Dinner & Slave Reparations: The Final Passage

### **Saturday, Feb. 18**

- 2:00 pm Faces of Change (Q&A)
- 4:30 pm Radio Favela & Soul in the Eye
- 6:50 pm Nina Simone, Love Sorceress
- 9:15 pm Boy Called Twist & Dance After Party with DJ

### **Sunday, Feb. 19**

- 2:00 pm Arthur! a Celebration of Life (Q&A)
- 4:30 pm The Importance of Being Elegant
- 6:50 pm On the Verge of a Fever (Q&A) & Reception
- 9:30 pm Tsotsi

### **Monday, Feb. 20**

- 4:30 pm The Importance of Being Elegant
- 6:50 pm Desamores
- 9:15 pm Radio Favela & Soul in the Eye

### **Tuesday, Feb. 21**

- 4:30 pm Arthur! A Celebration of Life (Q&A)
- 6:50 pm Faces of Change (Q&A)
- 9:30 pm Nina Simone, Love Sorceress

**Thursday, Feb. 22**

- 4:30 pm On the Verge of a Fever
- 6:50 pm Tsotsi
- 9:15 pm Masai: The Rain Warriors

**SPECIAL EVENTS****- AFRICAN DANCE PARTY**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18 AFTER SCREENING OF BOY CALLED TWIST

**- CATERED RECEPTION SPONSORED BY THE Délégation Générale du Québec de New York**

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19 AFTER SCREENING OF ON THE VERGE OF A FEVER

- 
- General Admission \$10
  - Cinema Club Members \$6
  - Seniors & Children under 12 \$6
  - Students w/ valid ID (Mon-Thu, except holidays) \$7
  - To purchase ticket: (718) 777-FILM or [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org)
  - For information: (718) 636-4100 or (212) 864-1760