



THE ETHIOPIAN FILM INITIATIVE

**WORKSHOP ON SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE FILMS**  
**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**Phase one 22 – 25 September 2009**

**Phase two 28 September – 10 October 2009**



United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organization



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# PROGRAM

## Day 1

### TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER

- 1.45 – 2.10 Registration and arrivals  
2.10 – 2.15 Introduction to course by Ragnhild Ek, EFI Coordinator  
2.15 – 2.30 Official welcome by H.E. Ambassador Dirir Gheddi, Minister of Culture and Tourism  
2.30 – 2.45 Hasen Said, Unesco cultural programme officer  
2.45 – 3.45 'Harnessing the power of film'. Talk by former BBC documentary commissioner, Keith Bowers  
3.45 – 4.15 BREAK  
4.15 – 5.00 Full Session: Introduction to group discussions and pitching exercise  
5.00 - 6.00 Individual group discussions – preparing for pitching exercise led by Dawit Lakew, Ermias Woldeamlak, Berhanu Gebeyehu and Nebiyou Baye

## Day 2

### WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

- 2.00 – 2.30 'Socially responsible film-making – international examples'  
Talk by Ragnhild Ek, EFI Coordinator  
2.30 – 3.30 Socially responsible film-making: 'Reflecting the Reality or go beyond'. Talk by Belayneh Abune, chairman at AAU Theatre department and lecturer Nebiyou Baye  
3.30 – 4.00 BREAK  
4.00 - 4.45 Case studies: Screening of Living with Hunger and Meteni.  
4.45 – 5.45 Individual group discussions: Identifying Ethiopian themes and further preparation for pitching exercise  
5.45 – 6.15 Full session: brief report back from individual groups

## Day 3

### THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

- 2.00 – 3.00 Intercultural and Inter-religious dialogue: 'The role of the filmmaker: Portraying the other'. Talk by Berhanu Gebeyehu Belayneh, Assistant Professor of Literature and Folklore, AAU.  
3.00 – 4.00 Discussion on inter-cultural and inter-religious issues.  
4.00 - 4.30 BREAK  
4.30 – 6.00 Further preparation in individual groups for pitching exercise

## Day 4

### FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

- 2.00 – 2.30 New formats and new opportunities  
2.30 – 3.00 Final group preparations for pitching  
3.00 - 4.15 Full session: pitching with panel discussion  
4.15 - 4.45 BREAK  
4.45 - 6.00 Continuation of Full session: pitching with panel discussion  
6.00 Refreshments

**PITCHING EXERCISE:**  
**WORKSHOP ON SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE FILMS**

- Each of the four groups will do one pitch.
- The notional documentary film you are pitching for should be aimed at an Ethiopian audience and be between 10 and 15 minutes long.
- Each pitch will be strictly ten minutes long. Afterwards there will be 20 minutes of discussion with the commissioning panel and the rest of the workshop participants.
- Pitchers are encouraged to use any visual material to support their pitch.

THE PITCH SHOULD CONSIST OF:

- What is the idea – in headline form with two compelling sentences
- What are the socially responsible elements of the film and why do you want them to be highlighted in a documentary?
- What is the target audience and why should anyone want to watch the film?
- Brief summary of the approach or treatment – what will the film look like?
- What are the main picture sequences and major interviewees?
- What is the budget and what are the distribution plans?
- What are the risks to the project?

## **QUESTIONS ABOUT SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE FILMS IN ETHIOPIA**

- What responsibilities does the filmmaker have to audiences in Ethiopia and society at large?
- Is it the job of the filmmaker to change or reflect society?
- What are the important social, cultural and religious issues that are not being covered by Ethiopian film and documentary makers?
- What are the new formats that socially responsible filmmakers can employ to harness the power of film?
- What are the challenges and potential setbacks of producing socially responsible films?

## **GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT DOCUMENTARIES:**

posed by Patricia Aufderheide in Documentary Film: A very Short Introduction (p127)

- How does a filmmaker responsibly represent reality?
- What truths will be told?
- Why are they important, and to whom?
- What is the filmmaker's responsibility to and relationship with the subjects of his work?
- Who gets the opportunity to make documentaries, how are they seen, and under what constraints?

## **BIOS – TRAINERS for the 1<sup>st</sup> week (22 – 25 September 2009)**

### **Belayneh Abune**

Chairman of the Theatre Arts Department at Addis Ababa University, Belayneh Abune is a senior lecturer in Mass Media, Theater For Development, TV and Video film production, as well as Acting. His research includes an assessment of ETV drama production related to social problems and the use of dramas for behavioural change: Focusing on Sabido`s Methodology. Belayneh Abune is also the former director of Addis Ababa University Cultural Centre. He holds a B.A in Theatre Arts and Film, and a M.A in Literature.

### **Nebiyou Baye**

Nebiyou Baye teaches Playwriting, Theatre for Development, Musical Drama, TV, Radio and Video Production at the Theatre Arts Department at Addis Ababa University. He is also an established actor, having played in Teza" by Haile Gerima, "Lettres De La Mer Rouge"( Piere Javoux Productions-France), as well as in a number of local TV, Radio and stage productions, and a prolific writer, penning plays for TV, radio and stage. Nebiyou Baye holds a B.A in Theatre Arts and M.A in Literature from Addis Ababa University.

### **Keith Bowers**

Keith Bowers currently works as a freelance adviser to the Editorial Standards Committee of the BBC Trust, the highest editorial body of the BBC. He also works as a broadcast consultant and lecturer in a number of countries, and has been teaching documentary film production at the AAU in Ethiopia and in Kosovo. Before his freelance career Keith Bowers spent 20 years at the BBC in the news and current affairs department. He worked as a television producer and director, and was the executive producer of two acclaimed international television documentary series, Assignment and Correspondent. During his time at the BBC Keith commissioned and supervised more than a hundred major documentary productions and numerous shorter features.

### **Ragnhild Ek**

An award-winning filmmaker and journalist, Ragnhild Ek has filmed extensively in the Horn of Africa. Her work includes documentary productions such as 'Terror on Trial' for the BBC and indie news features for Channel Four and other TV stations. She served with the UN Refugee Agency on numerous assignments, including producing the organization's 50th Anniversary events, as UNHCR roving senior spokesperson in Afghanistan and Pakistan, heading UNHCR's Film Unit, and producing the 'Voices for Darfur' gala event at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Ragnhild Ek is currently running an independent production company and developing an African dedicated search portal 'Essentialafrica.com' as well as serving as a consultant to the UNHCR on the Horn of Africa and coordinating the Ethiopian Film Initiative.

### **Berhanu Gebeyehu Belayneh**

A cultural anthropologist expert and Assistant Professor of Literature and Folklore at Addis Ababa University, Berhanu Gebeyehu Belayneh has a keen interest in theoretical understanding and empirical research in humanities, cultural and critical

studies. He is a Researcher and PhD fellow at the African Studies Center and Free University of Amsterdam, researching on interfaith relationships and social consensus among Christians and Muslims in Wollo, a society characterized by social and religious diversity and mutual tolerance. Berhanu's research also focuses on the role the New Media play in the construction of identities, and in negotiating peace. He has published extensively on issues relevant to popular culture and art and is currently co-authoring a book on the poetics and politics of the Ethiopian religious media (forthcoming).

### **Dawit Lakew**

After graduating from Addis Ababa University with a BA Degree in English Language and Literature, Dawit Lakew continued with studying film making both in Ghana (at Accra's National Film Institute) as well as at Howard University in the US. There he earned his MFA Degree in Film-making, and also got the opportunity to have been taught and worked with internationally acclaimed film-makers like Professor Haile Gerima of Ethiopia. Dawit Lakew is currently teaching in the Faculty of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University.

### **Ermias Woldeamlak**

A graduate from Addis Ababa University with a BA in Literature and English, Ermias Woldeamlak went on specializing in film directing at the National Film and Television Institute in Accra, Ghana in 1995. Currently an independent filmmaker and digital video trainer for youngsters, he gives and facilitates training for a number organizations including for UNESCO and UNICEF projects. Ermias Woldeamlak has worked in a variety of capacities, including as a script writer, production manager, producer and director, most notably directing "The Father" for M-net, which has been featured in a number of International Film Festivals and won the Silver Dhow at the Zanzibar Film Festival 2001, as well as the prize for the best debut movie at the Ghanaian film festival in August 2001.

**EXTRACT OF SPEECH BY LORD PUTTNAM: Keynote address at Edinburgh International Film Festival on 21 June 2009**

Surely, the remarkable history of cinema makes it worth holding on to at least some kind of a dream?

Here's why; and it's a story that concerns the film that was unquestionably the most difficult, but most rewarding of my professional life – The Killing Fields. In 1985 I was asked by the British Council to attend a British cultural week in Kiev; we'd just won a clutch of Oscars and they felt it was appropriate to screen the movie there. It didn't take long to realize that I'd been rather badly briefed about the Ukraine - I had no understanding at all of the tensions that existed: political, religious, economic and cultural.

We ran the film on a Saturday morning, in a huge cavernous cinema, to an audience of mostly young people - about 2,000 of them. After the screening, in an otherwise terrific Q and A session, no-one mentioned Cambodia.

All of the talk was of the Ukraine and its problems, and whether any such series of events could possibly happen to them. Almost twenty years passed until one day, in a hotel in Davos, I was introduced to the then new Ukrainian President, Yushchenko. He didn't speak particularly good English but I heard one of the interpreters mention that I was the producer of The Killing Fields. At which point he grabbed me and excitedly explained that shortly after my visit the film had begun to circulate among their schools and colleges, he didn't actually say they pirated it – he didn't need to!

Apparently lots and lots of VHS copies of The Killing Fields were shown in schools all over the Ukraine. In fact as far as I could make out, every kid in the Ukraine has at some point seen the movie. He asked me if I'd ever noticed that during the Orange Revolution there was never any discussion, at any point at all, about the possibility of a civil war breaking out.

"Because of your film we understood all too well what civil war did to a nation. We saw what happened in Cambodia, and determined that it was not going to happen in Ukraine."

For the first time in my life I had been brought face to face with the quite incredible power of cinema. I can't pretend that when making the film any of us thought for one moment that it might have that type of effect. But the story perfectly illustrates what an incredibly powerful and important medium cinema can be, and what a lasting effect it can have on people's lives.

So we must keep faith with the dream of a distinctive cinema that really does 'dare to speak the truth to power' – and celebrates the privilege, the freedom, of being able to do so.

The dream of a British cinema that, both in its humanity and in its infinite variety, speaks to all of the communities represented here in the UK. Whether it be the experience of Romanian immigrants in Belfast, or disillusioned working class communities here in Leith. As I say, an inclusive and tolerant view of the world, one informed and shaped by understanding and empathy, not ignorance, fear and hatred.

The dream of a cinema that entertains, that engages, and that endures – a cinema that leaves its imprint as much on our hearts and our conscience as on our more easily reached emotions; an imprint that lasts long after the lights come up – in my case it was for a lifetime. Why should all of this be so important? It's important because, over the next few decades, we're going to need every exceptional person, and every scrap of talent we can find if we're to meet and see off what is almost certainly the greatest set of challenges the human race has ever faced:

- 0. Long-term economic stagnation.
- 0. Climate Change; and that consequent flood of refugees I've mentioned.
- 0. Ever widening nuclear proliferation.
- 0. The likelihood of mass structural unemployment.

- 0. The growing inevitability of global pandemics.
- 0. Ever more visible inequalities – both in this country and overseas.
- 0. The terrifying human and economic cost of obesity.

The list simply gets longer, and the consequences more potentially devastating.

What's certain is, should we fail to act on the all-too-obvious warning signs, should we fail to get to grips with these impending crisis, there'll be no need to ask 'for whom the bell tolls'; it will be tolling for just about every man, woman and child on this once

beautiful planet. If I may I'll finish with something I picked up in the New York Times a few weeks ago. It's a very short quote from the book *The Great Gatsby*, in which the narrator Nick Carraway assesses the brutal world of the principal characters, Tom and Daisy Buchanan. He says: "They smashed up things and people, and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness ... and let other people clean up the mess they made".

To me this passage brilliantly describes our present situation with regard to the consequences of the financial crisis which, at least to some degree, we've brought upon ourselves.

I can only say again: how much more serious will it be if, one day, this passage also describes the way in which the actions of my, of this present generation, have succeeded in entirely 'smashing up' our planet.

In every sense, what lies ahead will involve an unprecedented degree of collective responsibility; the ability to persuade people, most especially young people, into adopting an entirely new understanding of the consequences of each and every one of their actions.

The medium of Cinema, our medium, could and should be at the heart of this. Part of our job surely is to replace what's become an instinctive 'individuality', in effect amounting to little more than selfishness, with a far more generous and intuitive selflessness. It's not going to be easy to navigate our way through the many and varied challenges that lie ahead, and any 'sunlit uplands' certainly won't be achieved overnight.

But if we could inform our work with a new found sense of responsibility; if our films could reflect the overwhelming benefits of a genuine sense of commitment to one another; then I sincerely believe there remains enough good in this world to allow for the possibility of at least some kind of a 'sustainable' future for ourselves, for our children, and for our children's children.

Thank you for listening to me.

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*From [www.cinemabusiness.co.uk/news/?ID=999&StartRow=1](http://www.cinemabusiness.co.uk/news/?ID=999&StartRow=1) (section on socially responsible films)*

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## **Indian art films a big hit in Berlin by Manik Mehta**

"Alternative Indian cinema", a euphemism for art films, is drawing good crowds at the Berlin Film Festival now under way in Berlin.

Gretman Sommer of the Berlin International Forum of New Cinema, a special section of "Berlinale" (as the festival is called), says the "mood at the screening of Indian films has been excellent".

"The number of fans of films coming from India is increasing," she told IANS. "And I mean not just people of Indian origin but also mainstream fans."

The discussion after the screening of each Indian film has been "interesting and intense", she added. The film festival began on February 5 and will conclude February 15.

Indian entries this year include Vishal Bhardwaj's Macbeth adaption "Maqbool" and the Shah Rukh Khan-Preity Zinta starrer "Kal Ho Naa Ho", the latter being described here as a "musical" because of its songs.

Bollywood celluloid products, because of their songs and dances, are described in German as "musicals" or "musical fantasies", though, in the strict sense of the term, they have very little in common with the Western notion of a musical.

"Maqbool" was well received because of its raw treatment of the underworld. The dialogue of the film is tersely cogent, even though it loses some of the impact when one hears the diluted translated version.

Some Germans, familiar with this genre of Indian films, were predicting that Indian filmmakers will make more such films, provided these films are not defeated at the box office.

According to the 34th International Forum of New Cinema festival organisers, this year's Indian entries show that the traditional dichotomy between art and commerce is slowly dying out.

A new generation of Indians is starting to rediscover politically and socially responsible filmmaking, using the tools of popular cinema.

Gabriela Seidl, the Forum's spokesperson, told IANS that in the past India would send mostly Bollywood films as entries. "However, it is heartening to see an increasing number of films from the alternative cinema in India. Many of these films are thought-provoking and promising," she said.

She said she had "heard a great deal" about Rakesh Sharma's "Final Solution". Sharma's 218-minute documentary is described as the longest at the festival. It deals with the Hindu-Muslim violence that ravaged Gujarat in 2002.

"It is a shockingly precise analysis of the political wheeling and dealing that led to the gruesome slaughter of thousands of defenceless people," said one German viewer after seeing the film.

According to the Forum, of particular interest is Partho Sen Gupta's debut film "Hawa Aney Dey ("Let the Wind Blow"), described here as an "apocalyptic film" about the deceptively carefree attitudes of spoilt youngsters set against the backdrop of India's conflict with Pakistan.

Another entry, "Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi ("A thousand Dreams Such as These") by Sudhir Mishra tackles the revolutionary student movement during the Indira Gandhi era.

India has also sent a children's film called "Heda Hoda" ("the blind camel") by Vinod Ganatra. It has been entered in the children's film competition.

Several Indian filmmakers have accepted the invitation to attend the Berlin festival. Mishra was the first to arrive. Others expected here are Rakesh Sharma and Vishal Bharadwaj. — IANS

**Chandigarh Tribune <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2004/20040211/edit.htm#8>**

## **BACKGROUND MATERIAL**

### **FILMS**

#### DOCUMENTARIES

An Inconvenient Truth (Al Gore)  
Black Gold (Nick and Marc Francis)  
Guzo (Aida Ashenafi)  
Living with Hunger (Sorious Samura)  
Meteni (Gem TV)  
Sicko (Michael Moore)  
Stolen Childhood (Gem TV)  
Supersize me (Morgan Spurlock)  
Triumph of the Will (Leni Riefensthal)

#### FEATURE FILMS

Teza (Haile Gerima)  
Hotel Rwanda (Terry George)

## **WRITTEN MATERIAL**

### **WEB ARTICLES:**

**[www.mediarights.org](http://www.mediarights.org)**

devoted to maximising impact of social issue documentaries and shorts

**[www.sociallyresponsiblefilms.blogspot.com](http://www.sociallyresponsiblefilms.blogspot.com)**

**[www.bpfilmsllc.com](http://www.bpfilmsllc.com)**

website about Blue Planet Investments project to support films promoting social change

**[www.theroadtofallujah.com](http://www.theroadtofallujah.com)**

Details of recent joint venture between US and Iraqi film-makers giving access to voices from all sides of the conflict.

**[http://www.close-](http://www.close-upfilm.com/features/Interviews/carmeninsouthafrica.htm)**

**[upfilm.com/features/Interviews/carmeninsouthafrica.htm](http://www.close-upfilm.com/features/Interviews/carmeninsouthafrica.htm)**

an interview with makers of a South African version of the opera Carmen

### **BOOKS:**

Aufderheide, P. (2007), *Documentary Film, A Very Short Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press

Figgis, M. (2007), *Digital Film-making*, London: Faber and Faber

Rabiger, M. (2004), *Directing the Documentary*, Oxford: Elsevier

Richter, H. (1986), *The Struggle for the Film: Towards a socially responsible cinema*, Aldershot: Gower House

Rosenthal, A. (2002), *Writing, Directing and Producing Documentary Films and Videos*, USA: Southern Illinois University Press

Watts, H. (1997), *On Camera*, Borehamwood: Aavo