



*YouTube, the Pan African Film Festival and The Africa Narrative
Announce the Winners for the I Am Africa Short Film
Competition, Spotlighting Filmmakers in Sub-Saharan Africa*

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LOS ANGELES -- YouTube, in partnership with The Pan African Film Festival (PAFF) and The Africa Narrative at USC Norman Lear Center, announced today the winners of the I Am Africa Film Competition - a project geared at finding new storytelling talent based in Sub Saharan Africa. PAFF jurors and YouTube's global audience have narrowed down more than 160 submissions from around the continent.

The competition's winning directors are listed below. These individuals are invited to fly to Los Angeles to participate in a day of workshops, production training and networking with the entertainment industry at YouTube Space LA as well as a red-carpet screening at the Pan African Film Festival, which runs from February 13-23, 2020.

PAFF is the largest Black film festival in the United States and the largest Black History Month cultural event in the nation with more than 200 Black films and 100 fine artists from around the world. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) has designated PAFF as an official qualifying film festival for live action and animation short films.

JURY AWARD WINNERS

EYELASH

Country: South Africa

Director: Mpendulo Myeni

Genre: Drama

Synopsis: When two childhood best friends fall in love they are too afraid to tell each other; blowing an eyelash becomes the only way to realize their wish.

MIRACLE

Country: South Africa

Director: Bongzi Ndaba

Genre: Drama

Synopsis: A single mother on a quest for absolution travels from church to church seeking a miracle for her daughter who is afflicted with a mysterious disability.

WHO KNOWS

Country: Kenya

Director: Nick Wambugu

Genre: Documentary

Synopsis: Six ambitious teenagers from the slums of Nairobi strive to succeed and make a better life for themselves through dance.

YOUTUBE AUDIENCE AWARD WINNER

THE LETTER READER

Country: South Africa

Director: Sibusiso Khuzwayo

Genre: Coming-of-age

Synopsis: While struggling to adapt to a new environment, Siyabonga, a 12-year-old boy discovers the impact of reading letters to people. One day a letter with bad news lands in his hands.

All of the winners and semifinalist films can be viewed on YouTube at this [link](#).

"I am honored to be recognized amongst my fellow African Filmmakers," said Mpendulo Myeni, director of *Eyelash*, a jury award winner from South Africa." The YouTube Audience Award winner, South African director Sibusiso Khuzwayo of *The Letter Reader* added, "In a time when Africa is rising to its greatness, I feel blessed and privileged to have been used as a conduit to tell this beautiful African story."

"YouTube provides a platform for Africa's creatives to share their ideas and passion with the world," says Dayo Olopade, content partnerships lead for Africa. "This partnership is a way for us to celebrate and support the emerging and established film sector across the continent. We congratulate the winners and wish them continued success as creators."

"The African continent is bursting with creative talent waiting to be discovered by the rest of the world, which is why this initiative is so exciting," added Michelle van Gilder, founder of The Africa Narrative. "These young directors represent the excellence of Africa's filmmaking community, and it's a joy to see their stories brought to a global audience."

"We are excited to partner with YouTube and The Africa Narrative in the initiative to bring a global perspective to storytelling from Africa and beyond," said Marc Brogdon, head of marketing at PAFF. "This

partnership is consistent with our mission of the cinematic promotion and cultural exploration of people from the Diaspora. And it's important that we continue to find new and innovative ways to present and showcase the broad spectrum of Black creative works from around the world."

ABOUT THE PAN AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL (PAFF)

The Pan African Film Festival, now in its 28th year, has cemented its role as a hub for breakthrough and award-winning films and filmmakers from around the world. PAFF is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to the promotion of cultural understanding among peoples of African descent. It is PAFF's goal to present and showcase the broad spectrum of Black creative works, particularly those that reinforce positive images and help destroy negative stereotypes. We believe film and art can lead to better understanding and foster communication between peoples of diverse cultures, races, and lifestyles, while at the same time serve as a vehicle to initiate dialogue on the important issues of our times. www.paff.org

ABOUT THE AFRICA NARRATIVE

The Africa Narrative is a global initiative to engage the world in new stories of contemporary Africa. Based at the Norman Lear Center at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, the initiative seeks to broaden awareness and engagement with the continent through innovative research, outcomes driven forums, and media and entertainment centered collaborations with partners from around the world. www.theafricanarrative.org

ABOUT YOUTUBE

Launched in May 2005, YouTube is the world's most popular online video community allowing billions of people to discover, watch and share video. YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform

and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small. YouTube is a Google company. www.youtube.com



PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mpendulo Myeni, director of EYELASH; Bongsi Ndaba, director of MIRACLE; Nick Wambugu, director of WHO KNOWS and Sibusiso Khuzwayo , director of THE LETTER READER.

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