Time for talent at Diff 2014

Goodlife Reporter

The 38th Durban International Film Festival (Diff) takes place from July 17 to 27.

During this time Talents Durban, the festival's skills sharing, development and networking platform for emerging film-makers from Africa (formerly named Talent Campus Durban) will be under way.

The names of those selected were released this week and the South Africans among them are Christiaan Kritzinger, Donovan Orr, Alexander Melck, Jozua Malherbe, Shane Vermeulen, Harold Holscher, James Walsh, Diana Ream, Willem Grobler, Francia William Nicholson, Zolani Ndevu, Roger Young, Mangoba Ncisi, Miklas Simeon Mannek, Aidan Whyte, Ophelime Inyang, Saskia Schiel, Morokwu Kaizer Mokgpu, Ntuthuko Qwabe, Caroline Doherty, Mark Middlewick, Penelope Tshilwane, Marcus Hebbelm and Emma Bestall.

In total about 40 film-makers from 10 countries across the continent, including South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Madagascar, Tunisia and Namibia will be in attendance.

The programme consists of masterclasses, in-depth discussions with critically acclaimed film professionals from across the globe, hands-on training programmes as well as networking opportunities for selected participants.

Talents Durban is presented in collaboration with the Berlinale Talents programme of the Berlinale Film Festival with support from the KZN Film Commission, German Embassy, Goethe Institute and Gauteng Film Commission. Talents Durban, with the Durban FilmMart (DFM) (which is a co-production between Diff and the Durban Film Office) forms part of the Durban International Film Festival Industry Programme.

Talents Durban participants will be able to participate in a co-production masterclass with French producer Denis Vasin. Vasin is a producer of documentary and fiction, and his titles include 40 Days of Silence, Solo, The World Belongs to Us, The Hum of Holland and Snack Bar. He heads a Dutch production company, Voyla Films, and co-owns a French production company, Madra Films.

Australian documentary development expert, Julia Overton, will present a Documentary Finance masterclass on documentary financing. Overton is a development and investment manager at Screen Australia where she is instrumental in assisting film-makers with getting their projects produced with local or international support. Overton has been involved in the development of several critically acclaimed films including The Snowman, A Good Man, Forbidden Lies, First Australians, Contact and Salt.

Talents Durban participants will also have access to a masterclass with pitch expert Stefano Teddy, a South African-born, Italy-based producer, director and pitch expert. Teddy has produced and directed numerous films including A World of Pasta, Doctor Ice, Coffee Please and Tea for All and the series Fish Markets - In the Belly of the City. Recent works include Mostar United, Vinjoints and Chor, No Man's Island.

Teddy is a graduate of the Eave programme and director of the Italian workshop, Documentary in Europe, has chaired EDN and is a national co-ordinator for Input.

He also tutors film development and production at numerous universities and organisations including: Biennale Cinema College, Cannes Film Market, Films de 3 Continents - Produire au Sud, Media Business School, Med Film Factory, Scuola Holden, TFF-Turino Film Lab, Zelig Film School.

The above masterclasses will also be open to Durban FilmMart delegates.

Talents Durban will also feature a hands-on training programme including Doc Station, Script Station and Talent Press.

Doc Station selects three documentary projects in development for coaching and mentoring towards participation in a public pitch at the DFM's pitching forum - The African Pitch. Participants are given mentoring prior to the pitch and during preparations at the festival. After the pitch they are given advice from mentors on how to proceed with their projects.

Script Station is a script development programme for short films which pairs four participants with script editors who assist in clarifying a story and getting to an advanced draft of their script.

Talent Press is presented in co-operation with Pipresco, an association of national organisations of professional film critics and film journalists from around the world which lobbies for the promotion and development of film culture and for the safeguarding of professional interests.

The programme invites four critics to cover the films and events of the Durban International Film Festival for online and print publication.

"The Durban International Film Festival welcomes these film-makers to the Industry Programme and are proud to present them as the future of African Cinema," says Diff festival manager Peter Machen.

"The diversity of voices in this selection echoes the theme of this year's Talents Durban - Continent of Contrasts/de Contrastes - inspired by a revered elder of African cinema Djibril Diop Mambéty whose 1968 short films was titled Contres' City (City of Contrasts). We hope this crop of 'Talents at Diff' will follow in the footsteps of giants of African cinema."

To find out more visit www.durbanfilmfestival.co.za.