



KITALÉ FILM WEEK 2025

FILM SYNOPSES

NARRATIVE FEATURE FILMS

Half Life (2024) – Uganda *Drama, Family, Social Issues*

Director: Mulindwa Richard

After losing his son, Moses (Lubega Edris) returns to his village for the burial and is persuaded by his father (Rushabiro Raymond), a seasoned miner, to stay and work in the mines. Reluctantly, Moses agrees, leaving his family behind in the city. However, when his father passes away, Moses is left with a crushing sense of despair. Amidst his grief, he uncovers a piece of gold that could change his life forever. *Half Life* explores the emotional journey of a man grappling with loss, hope, and the untapped potential of Uganda's mineral wealth.

Hanami (2024) – Cape Verde *Drama, Coming-of-Age, Poetic Realism*

Director: Denise Fernandes

On the remote volcanic island of Fogo, Nana (Sanaya Andrade) grows up learning to stay while others leave. Through three pivotal stages of her life—a toddler abandoned by her mother, a child navigating a feverish and surreal adventure, and a teenager reconnecting with her estranged mother—Nana's story unfolds as a poetic meditation on resilience, loss, and the beauty of impermanence. Set against the harsh yet tender landscapes of Cape Verde, *Hanami* blends reality and dreams to explore themes of identity, memory, and the lingering pain carried across a lifetime.

Nawi (2024) – Kenya *Drama, Social Issues*

Directors: Kevin Schmutzler, Toby Schmutzler, Apuu Mourine Munyes, Vallentine Chelluget

Nawi follows 13-year-old Nawi (Michelle Lemuya Ikeny), a bright girl from rural Turkana, whose dream of attending high school is shattered when her father arranges

her marriage to an older man for livestock. Supported by her brother Joel (Joel Liwan), Nawi flees to Nairobi in search of a better future but returns when she learns her younger sister will be forced into the same marriage. This compelling drama, also starring Ochungo Benson, Ben Tekee, Michelle Tiren, Patrick Oketch, Nungo Marriane Akinyi, and award-winning actress Nyokabi Macharia, explores the clash between tradition and the right to choose one's future, shedding light on the devastating impact of child marriage on education and personal aspirations. *Nawi* has earned widespread acclaim, including a nomination as Kenya's entry for the Best International Feature Film category at the 97th Academy Awards (Oscars), and calls for social change through education and empowerment.

Kismet (2024) – Cameroon *Drama, Romance, Social Issues*
Director: Ngang Romanus Ntseh

Amidst religious tensions and societal norms, Wambo (Lum Nora Neba), a courageous young Christian woman, risks everything to bridge the gap between two warring factions when she falls in love with Ibrahim (Nsoh Piepanse Niba), a Muslim man. As their bond grows, Wambo becomes a reluctant mediator, navigating cultural and religious divides in her community. Driven by her desire to preserve their love, she faces immense challenges, showcasing the transformative power of love, sacrifice, and understanding in a divided world.

Mission Xylara (2024) – Uganda *Sci-Fi, Adventure, Thriller*
Director: Denis Junior Dhikusooka

Set in the year 2056, *Mission Xylara* follows a brilliant young Ugandan engineer, Amara (Prim Nabwire), who is on a mission to return to Earth. However, her journey takes an unexpected turn when she is diverted to the distant planet Xylara to investigate a sudden communication breakdown. Upon arriving, she uncovers a deadly alien threat that puts her survival skills to the ultimate test. With limited resources and relying on her technological expertise, Amara must outsmart the alien menace and find a way back home. Linda Namwanje stars as General Amina Okoro in this thrilling sci-fi adventure that blends suspense with high-tech survival.

Sabotage (2024) – Uganda *Drama, Thriller, Social Issues*
Director: Mathew Nabwiso

Set against the vibrant backdrop of a Ugandan kwanjula (traditional wedding), *Sabotage* follows Lucia, a career-driven woman whose joy is shattered when she discovers she is carrying her father-in-law's child as a result of rape. Starring Stella Natumbwe, Sharifa Ali, and Denid Kinan, this gripping drama delves into themes of sexual violence, abortion, and the clash between personal agency and cultural traditions, offering a poignant exploration of resilience and societal expectations.

I Know My Rights (2024) – Kenya *Drama, Thriller, Social Issues*
Director: Lord Muga Brian

Three young filmmakers—Monty (Derrick Kinyanjui), Stevo (Lewis Mussumba), and Dan (Jackson Kenyanya)—find themselves at the mercy of law enforcement after a celebratory night turns into a nightmare. Investigating the murder of their friend Lorna (Emily Nene), they are wrongfully detained and subjected to brutal interrogation by a

rogue police officer. As the night unfolds, they face torture, betrayal, and devastating loss in a harrowing fight for survival. This gripping drama sheds light on the blurred lines between justice and abuse of power, forcing us to question where the law begins—and where it truly ends.

Kintu (2024) – Uganda *Animation, Drama, Mythology*

Director: Denis Junior Dhikusooka

In *Kintu*, a captivating animated tale, the creation story of Uganda unfolds through the journey of Kintu, the first man. The film explores Kintu's search for his purpose and his fateful encounter with Nambi, a celestial young woman who becomes his true love. As Kintu navigates challenges and mystical realms, their love story reveals the deep connections between the human world and the divine. The film blends mythology and romance to explore themes of love, sacrifice, and the origins of humanity. Linda Namwanje, known for her role in *Wizards of Kampala*, voices the character of Nankya, adding a rich layer to this vibrant and timeless tale.

A Country Called Ghana (2024) – Ghana *Comedy, Drama, Cultural*

Director: Frank Gharbin

Starring Ramsey Nouah, Kwadwo Nkansah, Mimi Yankson, Victor Osuagwu, and Charles Awurum, *A Country Called Ghana* is a comedic exploration of Ghanaian culture and the fight to preserve it in the face of foreign exploitation. Set in a small village, the story centers on Professor (Kwadwo Nkansah), the only literate man in town, who becomes the focal point when a foreign mission led by Sir Frank (Ramsey Nouah) arrives, aiming to steal a precious asset from the land. As the villagers unite in resistance, the film blends humor with themes of patriotism, cultural preservation, and the ongoing struggle to protect Africa's heritage from being taken abroad. Touted as one of the most anticipated films of the Ghana/Nigeria collaboration, it delivers an important message about remembering one's roots and standing firm against outside influences.

Wamaitha (2024) – Kenya *Historical, Drama, Action*

Director: Kang'ethe Mungai

Set in the late 1950s during the Mau Mau uprising in Central Kenya, *Wamaitha* tells the story of a young woman caught between loyalty to her preacher father and her love for Kung'u (Morris Mwangi), a determined Mau Mau rebel. As the rebellion intensifies, Wamaitha's devotion to her father, a collaborator to the British colonialists, is tested by her growing bond with Kung'u, who fights for the return of Kenyan land and freedom. Torn between love and duty, Wamaitha (Damaris Njambi Mburu) must ultimately choose between the man she loves and her allegiance to her father, a decision that will shape her fate amidst the war for independence. This historical action-packed love story highlights the pivotal role women played in Kenya's struggle for freedom and honors the sacrifices made by both men and women in the fight for independence.

Karamoja (2023) – Uganda *Drama, Romance, Cultural*

Director: Mathew Nabwiso

Karamoja delves into the complexities of inter-tribal marriages in Uganda. James (Nawab Shakarama), a Muganda man, faces cultural barriers and familial expectations when he seeks to marry his fiancée Ritah (Evelyn Atim), the cherished only daughter of

her family. Initially overwhelmed by their demands and the weight of tradition, James retreats—but his love and determination drive him to return and fight for their union. Through his journey, *Karamoja* reveals the power of perseverance and love, and how understanding and respect can bridge cultural divides.

2 Asunder (2024) – Kenya *Drama, Family, Tradition*

Directors: Faki Liwali, Tony Mwaura

Set against the backdrop of a traditional family estate, *2 Asunder* follows Jafari (Bruce Makau) on his wedding day as he prepares to marry Amari (Stephanie Ciku Muchiri) and break free from his family's control. However, a shocking secret revealed during his initiation forces him to confront the weight of his legacy. Torn between honoring his family's past and forging his own path, Jafari faces a life-altering decision that will forever change the course of his future. A compelling drama exploring tradition, family loyalty, and self-determination, *2 Asunder* is a riveting exploration of the choices that shape us. Also starring Sanaipei Tande.

Present Past (2024) – Uganda *Drama, Psychological, Thriller*

Director: N. Salma Bynes

Mercy Mirembe Banadda (Hasifah Nande Nakitende) appears to have a perfect life, but the scars of witnessing domestic violence as a child still haunt her. As she struggles to escape the grip of her traumatic past, Mercy finds herself fighting to hold onto her sanity, career, broken trust, marriage, and future. With everything at stake, she must confront her darkest memories to reclaim control over her present and forge a path toward healing and redemption. Also starring Ssekimpi Johnmary and Ssempijja Fred.

Maria (2024) – Uganda *Drama, Psychological, Social Issues*

Director: Nana Kagga

Maria tells the story of a young woman (Pelly Peninah Nampanga) suffering from childhood trauma without support. As she struggles to cope with the pain, she faces a world that slowly strips away her innocence. The film highlights the generational trauma passed down through women, leading to anger and frustration. *Maria* explores themes of endurance, loss, revenge, and the journey to freedom.

Otis Janam (2024) – Kenya *Romance, Drama*

Director: Zippy Okoth

Otis Janam tells the story of Janam (Nick Kwach), a lazy fisherman who defies the odds by winning a boat racing championship and the hand of Api (Sarah Masese), the daughter of the wealthiest man in town. As their romance unfolds, Janam must confront whether the love of a good woman can truly rewrite his destiny. This heartwarming film, starring Nick Kwach and Sarah Masese, celebrates love, courage, and the transformative power of change.

The Passenger (2023) – Uganda *Thriller, Suspense, Drama*

Director: Hadijah Nakanjako

In October 2021, following a series of bomb explosions on buses in Uganda, chaos breaks out on a bus to Masaka when a passenger is found with a mysterious package. One young man is trying to deliver the package, but another passenger suspects him of being a killer or carrying a bomb and is determined to stop him. Tensions rise as the bus journey becomes a fight for survival. Starring Henry Nathan Katongole, Allen Musumba, and Olot Bonny Elem.

Heroes of Africa: Tetteh Quashie (2020) – Ghana *Biographical, Drama, Historical*
Director: Frank Fiifi Gharbin

Heroes of Africa: Tetteh Quashie is a biographical film that chronicles the life of Tetteh Quashie, a Ghanaian hero credited with introducing cocoa to Ghana and much of Africa. Set against the backdrop of his escape from Fernando Po, the film follows Quashie's daring journey as he smuggles cocoa seeds to his homeland, forever altering the agricultural landscape. His actions set off a ripple effect, making cocoa a key economic contributor to many African nations. Celebrated not only in Ghana but across the continent, Quashie's legacy remains an integral part of Africa's history.

Boda Love (2024) – Kenya *Romantic Drama, Comedy*
Director: Janet Wells

After falling for an internet romance scam, a lonely British woman, Charlotte (Greer Dale-Foulkes), travels to Kenya to find her fiancé, only to discover everything is a lie. Struggling after her belongings are stolen, she is rescued by Jabari (Duncan Murunyu), a humble boda boda driver, who offers her refuge in his busy home in Kaloleni. As Charlotte teams up with Jabari to track down her fraudulent fiancé, sparks fly between them. Despite their past heartbreaks, a new bond forms as they navigate their shared challenges, leading to the possibility of love amidst the chaos.

Screened In partnership with Rushlake Media and TidPix at the Kitale Film Week.

AFRICAN CLASSICS

Mandabi / The Money Order (1968) – Senegal *Drama, Comedy*

Director: Ousmane Sembène

Mandabi tells the story of Ibrahima Dieng (Makhouredia Gueye), a jobless family man in Senegal, who receives a 25,000 franc money order from his nephew in Paris. Hoping to use the funds to settle his debts, he faces a frustrating maze of bureaucratic obstacles due to his lack of an identity card. As word of his windfall spreads, his neighbors swarm him for loans, and his efforts to cash the check spiral into an absurd series of complications. Ousmane Sembène's second feature film is a sharp, darkly comedic exploration of post-colonial Senegal, exposing the greed, corruption, and poverty plaguing the country. This film is also notable for being the first African film shot in an African language (Wolof). *Mandabi* serves as a biting critique of bureaucracy and societal inequality. In partnership with Institut Français at the Kitale Film Week.

Life Is Rosy / La Vie est Belle (1987) – DR Congo *Drama, Romance, Music*

Directors: Benoît Lamy & Mwezé Ngangura

Set in the vibrant, music-filled streets of Kinshasa, *Life Is Rosy* follows Kourou (played by legendary Congolese musician Papa Wemba), a young man from a small village who dreams of success in the world of music. However, he faces hardships and odd jobs as he struggles to break into the industry. His life takes a turn when he falls for Kabibi (Bibi Krubwa), a young woman eager to become a secretary. Meanwhile, Nvouandou (Kanko Kasongo), a wealthy club owner, also wants to marry her. As Kourou navigates the challenges of love, career, and betrayal, he gets a life-changing opportunity when he sings his way into the city's music scene. *Life Is Rosy* is a feel-good film about persistence, love, and the transformative power of music in the heart of Kinshasa. In partnership with Institut Français at the Kitale Film Week.

Dancing in the Dust / Bal poussière (1989) – Ivory Coast *Comedy, Drama*

Director: Henri Duparc

In a small African village, a powerful chief known as "Demi Dieu" (Bamba Bakary), who already has five wives, marries a young woman, Binta (Tcheley Hanny), as his sixth wife to complete his weekly rotation. Binta, however, is irreverent and free-spirited, disrupting the carefully orchestrated dynamics of the chief's multiple marriages. What was hoped to bring harmony instead causes chaos, as Binta's unconventional behavior shakes the balance of power and tradition. *Dancing in the Dust* is a humorous exploration of greed, arranged marriages, and polygamy, blending traditional and modern conflicts in African society. In partnership with Institut Français at the Kitale Film Week.

The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun / La Petite Vendeuse de Soleil (1999) – Senegal *Drama, Social*

Director: Djibril Diop Mambéty

Set against the vibrant streets of Dakar, *The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun* follows Sili, a young girl with polio, who refuses to accept a life of begging. Determined to carve her own path, she ventures into the world of newspaper boys, defying their expectations and societal norms. Despite the harsh realities and challenges of street life, she finds

solidarity and friendship among the marginalized. With stunning street-level authenticity and a powerful message of resilience, this film is a tribute to the unbreakable spirit of Africa's youth and their ability to rewrite their stories, even in the face of adversity. In partnership with Institut Français at the Kitale Film Week.

Nairobi Half Life (2012) – Kenya *Drama*

Director: Tosh Gitonga

Mwas (Joseph Wairimu), a young man from a rural Kenyan village, dreams of becoming an actor and moves to Nairobi to pursue his passion. However, the bustling city overwhelms him, and after being robbed, he finds himself caught in Nairobi's criminal underworld. What starts with petty scams quickly escalates into more serious crimes. While balancing a job at the Phoenix Theatre and a life of crime, *Mwas* faces a tough choice between fast money and his dream. A gripping portrayal of urban life and the harsh realities of Nairobi, this film highlights the struggles of aspiring artists in a city full of challenges. In partnership with Rushlake Media at the Kitale Film Week.

Bala Bala Sese (2015) – Uganda *Romance, Drama*

Director: Lukyamuzi Bashir

John (Michael Kasaija) is deeply in love with Maggie (Natasha Sinayobye) and is determined to make their relationship work despite facing constant harassment from Maggie's father, Kasirivu (Raymond Rushabiro). With the support of his younger brother Alex (Ssesanga Ismael), John fights to retain Maggie's love, especially when he learns that a wealthy village tycoon (Jabal Dungu) is also vying for her affection. This story of perseverance and love set in the heart of Sese Island explores the lengths one will go to for the woman they love.

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE FILMS

The Destiny of a Truck Driver (2024) – Burkina Faso *Documentary*

Director: Yssouf Koussé

The Destiny of a Truck Driver is a poignant documentary following Massata Cissé, the only woman truck driver in Burkina Faso for over 30 years. At 59 years old, Massata has spent decades navigating the roads of West Africa, driving between the ports and markets of Togo, Benin, and Niger. Despite her passion for the road, she faces the harsh reality of no social security and an uncertain future. With her retirement approaching, Massata dreams of owning her own truck, hoping it will secure her livelihood and allow her to continue her work as an independent businesswoman. This intimate portrait highlights her resilience, dedication, and the pursuit of a future she can call her own.

Descendants of Broken Heroes (2024) – Kenya *Documentary*

Director: John Waiganjo

This compelling documentary delves into the declining mental health of young men in Nyeri County, Kenya—widely regarded as a significant hub of the freedom struggle against British colonial rule. Through real-life stories and lived experiences, the film uncovers a profound connection between the traumas endured by freedom fighters during the colonial emergency and the challenges faced by their descendants today. Exploring themes of generational trauma, suicide, and substance abuse, *Descendants of Broken Heroes* offers an unflinching look at how unhealed wounds of the past shape the present. Nominated for Best Documentary at AFRIFF 2024, this film is a powerful testament to resilience and the enduring impact of history.

Here We Are (2024) – Dominican Republic *Documentary*

Directors: Violeta Lockhart, MinervasFilmRD

A group of young activists defies the odds in the Dominican Republic, winning a congressional seat with a bold, citizen-led campaign fueled by creativity, not money. Through the inspiring journeys of four women challenging a conservative political system, *Here We Are* explores the power of grassroots activism to drive democracy, human rights, and environmental change. This intimate documentary reflects on the complexities of politics and the potential for young people to redefine power, offering a universal call for action and transformation.

Our Land, Our Freedom (2024) – Kenya *Documentary*

Directors: Meena Nanji, Zippy Kimundu

Our Land, Our Freedom follows the remarkable journey of two Kenyan women, Mukami and Wanjugu Kimathi, who are on a mission to uncover the atrocities committed by British colonial rule in Kenya. Mukami, a freedom fighter and wife of Dedan Kimathi, the iconic leader of Kenya's independence struggle, has spent decades searching for the remains of her husband, who was executed by the British in 1957. As Mukami's health fails, her daughter, Wanjugu, takes up the quest to fulfill her mother's wishes. Along the way, Wanjugu uncovers a hidden history of violence, concentration camps, and land theft that has left deep scars in Kenyan society. This powerful documentary explores the personal and collective journey for justice, as Wanjugu transforms into a

fierce advocate for land resettlement and justice for those affected by colonialism. The film challenges colonial narratives and centers Kenyan voices in telling a story of resilience, healing, and the ongoing fight for freedom.

Brief Tender Light (2023) – Ghana *Documentary*

Director: Arthur Musah

This poignant documentary follows the decade-long journey of four African students from Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe as they navigate life at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Capturing their struggles, triumphs, and transformations, the film explores the delicate balance between embracing America's opportunities and staying connected to their African roots. As they reconcile youthful aspirations with the complexities of the real world, *Brief Tender Light* offers a deeply personal look at identity, belonging, and the pursuit of becoming agents of change in their home countries.

Limo On The Run (2024) – Kenya *Documentary*

Directors: Njoki Muhoho, Hanigun Kwenya

Limo On The Run is a compelling documentary that follows Limo Kipkemoi, a renowned ultrarunner and architect, as he tackles the most challenging run of his life: six loops around Mt. Longonot, after several failed attempts. This inspiring journey delves into Limo's passion for running, the physical and mental challenges of ultrarunning, and how he draws motivation from nature. Intertwining his career, personal life, and his love for the sport, the film explores the connections and experiences that running brings. Against the stunning backdrop of Kenya's Rift Valley, *Limo On The Run* highlights the spirit of resilience, triumph, and the boundless potential of the human will.

Afrikki (2024) – Senegal, *Documentary*

Director: Gaëlle Le Roy

Afrikki takes audiences on a powerful journey through 12 years of grassroots activism and civic revolts across Africa. Beginning in 2011 with Senegal's "Y'en a Marre" ("Enough is Enough!") movement, this feature documentary captures the rise of young artists and activists challenging the misuse of power and advocating for a brighter future. Through the eyes of African activists, *Afrikki* chronicles their struggles, triumphs, and setbacks as they rally communities, ignite revolutions, and dream of change. With raw emotion and profound insight, the film celebrates their resilience and unyielding hope for a better continent. This compelling story of courage and unity will leave audiences inspired by the transformative power of collective action and the enduring spirit of Africa's youth.

SHORT FILMS

Half Chocolate Half Vanilla (2024) – Uganda *Drama*

Director: Nodryn Evanci Kabuye

Zenna (Nodryn Evanci Kabuye), a 23-year-old woman living with vitiligo, has spent years masking her true self with makeup to shield herself from societal stigma and isolation. Haunted by fear and self-doubt, she carefully hides her condition, even when she starts a promising connection with a stranger (Mugabire Mulshid) she meets on a dating site. A surprise dinner date puts her secret at risk, and Zenna is forced to face her deepest fears. Will love endure when the mask slips, or will her vulnerability drive him away? *Half Chocolate Half Vanilla* is a heartfelt exploration of self-acceptance and the power of authentic connection.

The Day I Will Never Forget (2024) – Kenya *Romantic Drama*

Director: Viboks Omondi

Alex (Samson Omondi), a devout man, and Sandra (Ivy Collette), a free-spirited woman, navigate an amusing and eye-opening first date after meeting online. A night of cocktails, games, and unexpected revelations leads to a clash of values that tests their beliefs and connection. As morning dawns, honesty and vulnerability bring understanding, proving that authenticity is the key to lasting relationships. *The Day I Will Never Forget* delves into the complexities of modern relationships and the importance of openness in forming true connections.

The Little Things (2024) – Kenya *Drama*

Director: Jevin Mulwa

Trevor (Ritchy Mistri), burdened by painful memories and guilt, leans on his therapist and friend Daisy (Jazz Mistri) as he faces a critical crossroads: self-destruction or healing. Through raw conversations and emotional breakdowns, this poignant story explores the power of human connection and the courage it takes to rebuild a life. *The Little Things* is a moving exploration of mental health, grief, and the transformative potential of support and self-acceptance.

Unasemaje? (2024) – Tanzania *Drama*

Director: Kelvin Kagambo

In a small coastal town in East Africa, a young bride-to-be (Hidaya Boli) discovers she's mysteriously pregnant just weeks before her wedding, claiming immaculate conception. Her mentor (Ziara Shamte), mother (Habiba Cholage), and fiancé (Daniel Faber), each with their own beliefs and emotions, come together in a tense discussion to decide what to do. This compelling drama explores themes of faith, tradition, and the complexities of love and family, delving into the pressures of societal expectations and personal beliefs.

Roots of Renewal (2024) – Kenya *Documentary*

Director: Franklyne Mudulia Manono

Raphael Muli, a Military Geographic Information Systems (GIS) expert in Kenya, leads a movement to restore the environment in his home county of Kitui. Through planting

indigenous tree seedlings and high-value fruit trees, he encourages the community to move away from charcoal burning for income. Despite many challenges, Raphael's dedication and community engagement offer hope for a sustainable future. Produced by Laissa Malih (River of Brown Waters), *Roots of Renewal* highlights the power of grassroots efforts in environmental renewal and the impact of local leadership in combating climate change.

Rudi (2024) – Kenya Psychological Thriller

Director: Derrick Njuguna Kinyanjui

Rudi explores the psychological impact of paranormal activity, blurring the line between reality and perception. Driven by love, two characters make a decision that leads them into peril, fueled by paranoia, loneliness, and anxiety. The thriller, starring Anita Siudah and Said Yeri, examines how the mind responds to fear and the unknown, exploring themes of trust, vulnerability, and the dangers of unraveling sanity. Directed by Derrick Kinyanjui, this film delves deep into psychological tension and the terror of the unseen.

Emunyenye (2024) – Uganda Drama

Director: Brian Vons Mukisa

Emunyenye follows a single mother (Brenda Powers Mutesi) and her two children (Ssebagala Dennis Kasolo Afasha, Mayumba Samuel Rogisky) living in a scrap yard community. The eldest child dreams of becoming a singer, but tragedy strikes, causing him to lose a significant part of his life. The film explores the family's resilience and the emotional struggles they face as they navigate loss, hope, and the pursuit of dreams in a harsh environment. *Emunyenye* delves into themes of perseverance, love, and the strength needed to overcome life's most difficult challenges.

Mata Hari (2024) – Kenya Neo-Noir Short Film

Director: Calvin Mandaga Oyula

Mata Hari is a neo-noir short film inspired by the symbolism of the late exotic Dutch dancer, Mata Hari. The story revolves around Ms. Delilah (Ramona Njeri), a femme fatale who entangles Mr. Daniel Oloo (Charles Otieno), a middle-aged therapist, in a web of moral conflict. When Delilah convinces him that her mentally ill husband is an obstacle to their love, Daniel is torn between helping her and committing a crime. As the tension mounts, Daniel grapples with thought triggers, leading him to take regrettable actions that will change their lives forever. *Mata Hari* explores themes of love, betrayal, and the dark choices that arise from desire.

Njambi and The Missing Bananas (2024) – Kenya Family Drama

Director: Wanyuru Muiruri

In *Njambi and The Missing Bananas*, Njambi (Tanis Kawee) is caught in the turmoil of her parents' constant arguments. Seeking comfort at her neighbor's house, she discovers a banana left on the coffee table and is drawn to its tempting sweetness. One day, curiosity gets the better of her, and she indulges in more, setting off a series of events where her secret grows. As the tension builds, Njambi faces the dilemma of confessing her mischief to Auntie T (Nyawara Ndambia). This heartwarming story delves into childhood mischief, family dynamics, and the importance of honesty in relationships.

Obukade Busatu (2024) – Uganda *Comedy/Documentary-style Game Show*

Director: Nsiima Chloe Elizabeth

In *Obukade Busatu*, a comedic 8-minute documentary-style game show segment, two former lovers, Bakkade and Mulungi, compete in a quirky contest to win the grand prize. Set against Uganda's scenic landscapes, the contest is overseen by the drama-loving Muhumuza (Tumusiime Abbey). As the competition heats up, old emotional wounds resurface, leading to Mulungi's (Nsiima Chloe Elizabeth) confession that she still loves Bakkade (Ahabwe Amon). The show concludes with a humorous twist, leaving the contestants with something more valuable than the prize they fought for.

Sounds of Silence (2024) – Kenya *Coming-of-Age Documentary*

Director: Joan Mwhaki Kabugu

Sounds of Silence is a coming-of-age documentary that follows the inspiring life of Felista Wayua Musau, a talented deaf dancer navigating her teenage years. Through her story, the film explores the world of dance from the perspective of a deaf dancer, showcasing the resilience and creativity of Felista and her fellow dancers. The documentary provides an intimate glimpse into the challenges they face while preparing for a national dance competition, highlighting the power of expression beyond sound and the triumph of finding one's voice through movement.

Bahari Bingwa (2024) – Kenya *Documentary*

Director: Samuel Wanjohi

Bahari Bingwa follows Sammy Safari, a dedicated ranger in Kenya working tirelessly to protect sea turtles from poaching. The documentary explores Sammy's mission to educate and raise awareness among local communities about the importance of conservation and sustainable practices. It also reveals the ongoing challenges he faces in balancing human interests with wildlife protection in Kenya's coastal regions. Through Sammy's story, the film highlights his passion, resilience, and the struggle to preserve the natural heritage for future generations while addressing the urgent issue of endangered species protection.

Death Valley (2023) – Kenya *Animated Thriller*

Director: Kennedy Kyalo

Death Valley is an animated thriller centered on a series of perplexing thefts that baffle law enforcement, leading to a high-stakes investigation. As the mystery deepens, the police team faces an escalating series of challenges, ultimately culminating in a final, high-risk mission that pushes them to their limits. Featuring performances from Neddy Lusimbo and Mickey Maingi, the film presents a tense narrative where the team's resolve, ingenuity, and teamwork are tested in a race against time. With suspense at every turn, *Death Valley* explores the fine line between success and failure in law enforcement.

Thief (2024) – Kenya *Thriller*

Directors: Andrew Evans Odera, Greg Kiwo Maole

In *Thief*, Oliver (Lucarelli Onyango), a reformed ex-thief, is pushed to his breaking point when his son falls critically ill. Desperate to save him, Oliver teams up with a wealthy

benefactor, Edward (Neville Misati), to execute a high-stakes heist targeting the fortune of Donna (Helen Keli). As the tension rises, Oliver and Edward find themselves navigating a treacherous world, balancing the risks of their pasts and the dangerous waters of their criminal motives. The film delves into themes of desperation, morality, and the consequences of one's past actions.

Art Piece (2024) – Zambia *Crime Drama*

Director: Chizzi Banda

In the vibrant streets of Lusaka, *Art Piece* follows Vin (Thulani Nkhoma), a talented artist drawn into a criminal underworld when he is asked to replicate a stolen museum piece for a syndicate. Unaware of the dire consequences, Vin's involvement in the scheme sets off a series of events, including betrayal and murder. As he is forced to create counterfeit art under duress, his passion for his craft diminishes. With his life hanging in the balance, Vin must find a way to escape the syndicate's clutches before it's too late.

Counterpunch (2024) – Kenya, Uganda *Animated Drama*

Director: Rodney Williams

Counterpunch tells the gripping story of Adala, a former boxing champion, who faces her biggest challenge yet: after suffering a near-fatal head injury, she must return to the ring to settle her debts and secure her family's future. This award-winning animated film explores themes of sacrifice, resilience, and the personal cost of living a life in the spotlight. Nominated at the 2024 Fak'ugesi Festival and a finalist at the AfroAnimation Summit 4.0, *Counterpunch* is a powerful exploration of strength and determination in the face of adversity.

All Equal! (2024) – Senegal, United Kingdom *Animated Historical Drama*

Director: Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Diop

All Equal! is a poignant animated film that takes viewers to a village where a grandfather recounts the painful history of his ancestors' enslavement to his grandchildren. The narrative delves into the harrowing experiences of their great-grandfather and his brothers, who were kidnapped by slave traders and subjected to the brutal realities of forced labor and exploitation. The film shifts from the dark past to a hopeful future, as the grandfather tells of a revolution that led to their eventual freedom and the establishment of their own village. A celebration of resilience, unity, and liberation, *All Equal!* honors the sacrifices of those who fought for freedom.

Ndoto (2023) – Kenya *Drama*

Director: Omar Hamza

Ndoto follows Kisu (Lamar Munene), a timid and introverted boy living in a foreign city, who is determined to conquer his greatest fear: drowning. Against the wishes of his overprotective aunt (Aisha Khamis Mwajumlah), Kisu embarks on a journey of self-discovery to join a group of mischievous Swahili swimmers. Through betrayal, courage, and the quest for identity, Kisu learns the value of friendship and resilience. His journey of overcoming fears and finding belonging is a heartwarming exploration of personal growth and cultural connection.

The Fetish (*Le Fétiche*) (2023) – Côte d'Ivoire *Comedy*

Director: Kouamé Mathurin Samuel Codjovi

In *The Fetish*, Kossivi (Missa N'Dry), a struggling dancer, believes that a powerful traditional force can help him achieve success. He borrows a fetish from a friend but loses it, leading to a series of comedic misadventures as he desperately tries to retrieve it. Through a blend of humor, absurdity, and clever twists, *The Fetish* reveals the true nature of the fetish and the consequences of misplaced belief. This film is a masterclass in comedic storytelling, with its unexpected turns and charming characters offering a delightful journey into cultural traditions and human folly.

As I Dream (2024) – Uganda *Psychological Thriller*

Director: Eunice Acan

As I Dream follows Kevin (Sylvester Douglas Okumu), a man tormented by recurring dreams of a woman named Leah (Modesta May Jacwich). As Kevin embarks on a journey to uncover their connection, he discovers that Leah was once his lover—and, inexplicably, his murderer. The line between dreams and reality begins to blur, and Kevin must confront the painful truths of their past, filled with secrets, betrayal, and forbidden love. His quest for redemption and closure reveals a deep intertwining of fate and time, navigating a haunting tale of love, loss, and the search for truth.

Black Skin (2024) – Central African Republic *Short Drama*

Directors: Nephtalie Tyrana Tobona, Daniel Ananias Momou-Mongui, Safari Ally Sengaire

In *Black Skin*, 8-year-old Joyce (Darielle Djimtoloum) struggles with self-consciousness about her dark complexion, feeling alienated from others. With the love and support of her mother (Belvia Malemoto), Joyce embarks on a journey of self-acceptance, learning to embrace her unique identity. This heartfelt short film touches on themes of beauty, self-worth, and the power of familial love, ultimately empowering Joyce to be proud of her skin and her place in the world.

TicTok (2024) – Central African Republic *Drama*

Directors: Cassandra Ndouba, Aminou Mohamadou, Elvera Nkodia

TicTok centers around Orphée (Océane Pakendji), a young girl obsessed with social media, who is devastated when intimate photos of her are shared online. This revelation forces Orphée to face the repercussions of her digital life and the emotional fallout of her actions. As she grapples with the impact on her sense of self, Orphée embarks on a journey of self-reflection, reconciliation, and ultimately regains control over her life and identity, with the support of her family. This powerful drama explores the dangers of digital culture and the importance of rebuilding one's sense of self.

Grogans Lodge (2023) – Kenya *Supernatural Thriller*

Director: Isaya Evans

Grogans Lodge follows two young women, Joy (Sera Wanjiru) and Susan (Michelle Tiren), as they travel to an isolated lodge for a potential job opportunity to fund their college education. However, their trip quickly turns into a nightmare as they encounter

strange occurrences and the cryptic housekeeper Mrs. Bird (Julisa Rowe). When Susan disappears after attending a mysterious "party," Joy uncovers the dark, haunting history of the lodge. Trapped in a photograph from a century ago, Susan becomes entangled in the spectral legacy of colonialism. This chilling thriller explores themes of exploitation, history, and the sinister ties between the past and present.

I Too, Crave Death (2024) – Nigeria Drama

Director: Uchenna Ugwu

In *I Too, Crave Death*, a mother and daughter (Amanda Ugoh and Tessy Brown) are stranded after a condolence visit, forced to wait for a mechanic in a remote area. As tensions between them rise, a raw confrontation about depression and mental health takes place, revealing hidden emotions and struggles. The encounter takes a dramatic turn when the daughter shocks her mother by revealing her knowledge of a recent suicide in the family. This powerful drama explores mental health, family dynamics, and the secrets that shape relationships, offering a candid look at the deep, often painful, connections between loved ones.

Salamatu's Rhapsody (2024) – Nigeria Drama

Directors: Abu-bakr S. Adamu, Oluwatimilehin Adejumo

Salamatu's Rhapsody follows Salamatu (Hauwa Hajiya Ibrahim), a devout Muslim teenager with dreams of becoming a rapper. However, her ambitions clash with her father's desire to honor his late mother through tradition, setting up a poignant conflict between personal aspiration and family expectations. As Salamatu navigates this emotional crossroads, the film delves into themes of resilience, self-discovery, and the tension between cultural values and modern aspirations, highlighting her journey to balance both worlds.

Gas (2024) – Kenya Animated Short

Directors: Emmanuel Chege, Rebecca Keli

Gas is an animated short that follows Jacob, a middle-aged man in Nairobi who faces a dangerous and chaotic reality after a power plant explosion releases toxic gas. He races to pick up his son from school, but as he steals a bike to escape the city, he begins to question the truth of his situation. Gradually, Jacob realizes he doesn't have a child, and the entire event may be a hallucination stemming from his schizophrenia. As alien species observe his actions, they make a chilling decision to destroy Earth. *Gas* explores themes of mental illness, perception, and existential crisis, blurring the lines between reality and delusion.

The Equalizer (2024) – Kenya Documentary

Director: Brenda Maina

The Equalizer is a documentary that tells the story of an all-women film crew breaking barriers in the male-dominated film industry. Through intimate interviews and behind-the-scenes footage, the film highlights the struggles and triumphs of female filmmakers—directors, producers, cinematographers, and editors—as they collaborate to create a groundbreaking film. The documentary shines a light on gender bias, self-doubt, and industry pressures while celebrating the resilience and creative energy of women reshaping the future of filmmaking. *The Equalizer* is not only a story about

filmmaking but also a transformative narrative about sisterhood and the power of women in redefining the industry.

Love Sweet Sound (2019) – Kenya *Drama*

Director: Neha Manoj Shah

Love Sweet Sound follows Keya (Aseem Sharma), a young woman who denies her blindness and resists stepping outside her comfort zone. Her world is turned upside down when she encounters Anthony (Alfred Munyua), a reclusive and struggling man, and they form an unexpected bond. Together, they embark on a path of healing, confronting their emotional scars and personal challenges. The film addresses important themes of disability, friendship, self-reliance, and courage, while promoting women's empowerment and inclusivity. Through Keya's journey, *Love Sweet Sound* offers a powerful and authentic portrayal of people living with disabilities, highlighting their resilience and capacity for self-empowerment.

Unyagoni: Bahati's Sex Education Journey (2024) – Kenya *Documentary*

Director: Saitabao Kaiyare

Set in the coastal city of Mombasa, *Unyagoni* follows Bahati Ngazi, a popular radio star known as "Mtoto Rangi Pesa," as she embarks on a transformative journey in sex education. From her beginnings as a novice ("Mikleso") to becoming a respected educator ("Kungwi"), Bahati learns from seasoned Swahili women, whose cultural teachings about intimacy and relationships inform her own approach. The documentary blends modern perspectives with traditional wisdom, celebrating Swahili customs while capturing Bahati's bold commitment to opening up discussions around taboo subjects, fostering knowledge, and empowering communities through education.

Stray Flower (2022) – Namibia, Germany *Historical Drama*

Director: Nandi Nastasja

Set against the backdrop of the 1904 genocide of the Herero and Nama people in German-occupied South West Africa, *Stray Flower* follows Hinavandu (Tjiurimo Kandjii), a young Herero woman who finds refuge in a collection center after fleeing the violence. As the war ends, the refugees are hopeful they can return to their villages, but Hinavandu soon realizes that their survival may come at an even greater cost. Through evocative visuals, moving performances, and haunting music, *Stray Flower* reflects on a dark chapter of history, capturing the resilience and heartbreak of a people devastated by colonial violence.

The Street Chase (2024) – Kenya *Thriller*

Director: Rabin Lucas Makori

The Street Chase follows Nuksi (Gabriel Mukuya), a young man from the streets who becomes entangled in the dangerous world of illegal biochemical trade and money laundering. After a deal goes horribly wrong, Nuksi is framed for a crime he didn't commit, setting him on the run from both the police and ruthless criminals. As he fights to survive and prove his innocence, Nuksi must navigate a complex web of betrayal and deception. A high-octane thriller, *The Street Chase* explores themes of loyalty, survival, and the brutal realities of navigating a criminal underworld in an unforgiving urban landscape.

Endless Loop (2023) – Nigeria *Drama*

Director: 'Che Messiah

In *Endless Loop*, Tunji (Chibuiké Emmanuel) is consumed by grief after the death of his wife, Feyi (Sylvia Obodoakor), turning to alcohol for solace. Trapped in an unrelenting cycle of sorrow, his life takes a pivotal turn when he meets Mrs. Obi (Jumoke Omojola), whose words compel him to confront his emotional pain. Determined to heal, Tunji embarks on a transformative journey of reflection, love, and self-discovery. *Endless Loop* is a powerful exploration of the complexities of grief, the strength of human connection, and the possibility of emotional renewal.

Binti Maji and the Ocean (2020) – Kenya *Animated*

Directors: Sheldon Mutei Ndumbu, Gift Kyansimire Oroni

In this animated film, Binti Maji, a brave teenage girl from a coastal village, discovers the devastating effects of human pollution on the ocean she cherishes. Witnessing the destruction of marine life, Binti is motivated to take action and protect the sea that sustains her community. A heartfelt tale of environmental awareness and activism, *Binti Maji and the Ocean* underscores the urgency of balancing human progress with the preservation of nature, as Binti leads the charge to save her beloved ocean from destruction.

Tiny Winnie (2023) – Kenya *Psychological Drama*

Director: Joshua Kasyu Wambua

Tiny Winnie follows the harrowing journey of Winnie (Rose Wesanza), a 38-year-old woman struggling with schizophrenia. Fueled by her strong religious beliefs, Winnie becomes consumed by a delusion, leading her to make a life-altering decision based on a questionable revelation. As her convictions spiral her deeper into mental turmoil, Winnie grapples with the blurred lines between reality and illusion. As she faces escalating danger and the consequences of her fractured mind, *Tiny Winnie* offers a gripping and emotional exploration of mental health, faith, and the fragility of the human psyche.

Fatherhood (2024) – Kenya, Uganda *Drama*

Director: Amisha Mukasa

In *Fatherhood*, Maina (Arabron Osanya-Nyyneque), a grieving widower, finds solace in his weekly cinema nights with his teenage daughter, Michelle. But when Michelle secures a scholarship abroad, Maina faces the daunting prospect of an empty home and his unresolved depression. With the encouragement of his spirited sister, Wanjiku, Maina begins recording heartfelt video messages for Michelle, hoping to bridge the emotional gap between them. What begins as a clumsy attempt to reconnect becomes a transformative journey of vulnerability, self-expression, and healing. This intimate story explores fatherhood, grief, and the profound emotional connections that define relationships.

Kuyo (2024) – Kenya *Psychological Horror*

Director: Don Otieno Okinyi

Kuyo tells the story of a young woman (Laura Kibonyi Wanjiku) who, after the devastating loss of her child, is haunted by eerie, supernatural occurrences in her dimly lit bedsitter. As mysterious sounds and unsettling events disrupt her grief-stricken life, she clings to prayer for solace. The film explores the complex emotions of loss and guilt, while blurring the line between reality and the supernatural, as the woman is confronted with manifestations of her deepest fears. *Kuyo* is a chilling exploration of grief, fear, and the struggle for emotional peace.

Angel in the Stone (2024) – Nigeria *Drama*

Director: Doyinsola Ajayi

Angel in the Stone follows Shalewa (Ebunoluwa Oluwarinu), a quiet autistic teenager, who is tormented by two troublemakers in her village. Despite this, she finds peace in collecting discarded items, which fuels her inventive spirit. When her family faces financial hardship, Shalewa uses her resourcefulness to build a makeshift engine for a canoe. Alongside her mother (Margret Chetachi), they embark on a journey that brings hope, unity, and empowerment to their community, highlighting Shalewa's unique talent and determination to overcome adversity. This inspiring film showcases the resilience and brilliance of a young woman overcoming challenges and forging her path.

He Knows This Place (2024) – Kenya, United States *Documentary*

Director: Melissa Lefkowitz

In *He Knows This Place*, 23-year-old Liu Yi Meng Han, raised in Nairobi, reflects on his deep connection to Kenya amidst rising tensions and suspicion toward Chinese nationals in the country. As he navigates the complexities of his identity, the film explores his personal journey of belonging, grappling with the challenges of reconciling his Chinese heritage with the realities of life in Kenya. This intimate documentary delves into themes of identity, race, and the notion of home, shedding light on the experiences of a young man caught between two worlds.

The Boy From Kampala (2024) – Uganda *Drama*

Director: Vieri Kavuma

In the ghettos of Kampala, two boys, Ntonio (Anthony Kambale) and Mwanje (Phillip Wathum), dream of becoming filmmakers but have nothing more than a broken smartphone to make their film. *The Boy From Kampala* is a powerful retelling of their life stories, highlighting how poverty hinders dreams but also showcasing their unyielding determination to overcome adversity. This poignant film explores resilience, creativity, and the pursuit of hope despite overwhelming odds, offering a moving look at the lengths people go to in order to make their voices heard. Also starring Aidah Nakigozi.

Broken (2024) – Uganda *Drama*

Director: Clive Nshiime

Broken tells the harrowing story of a young woman who attempts to escape the ritual that claimed the life of her older sister. Through its exploration of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), the film portrays the painful realities of this violation that continues to impact countless girls and women. *Broken* aims to raise awareness about the devastating effects of FGM and advocate for an end to this harmful practice. With a cast

including Edith Baganda, Nalule Winningsone Trinnie, Brian Kirya, and Salim Damulira, the film is a powerful call for social change and protection of girls' rights.

Fractured (2024) – Uganda *Animated Drama*

Director: Josephine Mary Namirembe

Fractured tells the story of Murungi (Ramona Kirabo), a woman who has meticulously crafted a flawless exterior to hide her true self. Behind a porcelain mask of perfection, she navigates life in secret discomfort. When an accidental slip exposes a crack in her mask, Murungi embarks on a desperate quest to repair it. However, at a gathering hosted by her husband (Joy Alisanyukirwa Matovu), her mask fails completely, revealing her vulnerability. Murungi's longing for a vibrant art gallery becomes the spark for her defiant choice to remove the mask and embrace her authentic self. Though her husband recoils, a gesture of acceptance from a woman in the gallery signifies the beginning of an empowering journey toward self-acceptance.

Dawn After Darkness (2024) – Rwanda *Horror Drama*

Director: Muhire Methode

In *Dawn After Darkness*, Anna (20), a college student, struggles with terrifying nightmares that invade her sleep. After long study sessions into the night, she is haunted by disturbing visions in a classroom filled with dark creatures and strange sounds. As apparitions appear, including a horrifying transformation of her boyfriend, Alan, Anna is relentlessly pursued by these unsettling entities. Despite the terrifying ordeal, she greets the new day with resilience, facing both the supernatural horrors and the challenges of her daily life as a student.

The Sorghum Sisters (2024) – Kenya *Documentary*

Director: Tabitha Maina

The Sorghum Sisters offers a hopeful and empowering narrative about a group of Turkana women in Kalobeyei who are tackling the impacts of climate change with resilience. Through the cultivation of sorghum, a crop known for its ability to withstand harsh conditions, these women are not only providing for their families but also advocating for food sovereignty. This documentary shifts the narrative away from the conventional portrayal of Turkana County as a place of hunger and poverty, highlighting the strength and agency of these women as they adapt and thrive in a changing environment.

1992 (2024) – Kenya *Drama*

Director: Gilbert Lukalia

Set in 1992 Nairobi, *1992* delves into the complexities of relationships during the rise of HIV & AIDS stigma. As Jackso (Nyakundi Isaboke), a man working at a hospital, prepares for a night out with his long-term girlfriend, Beth (Shirleen Wangari), he discovers pills she has been secretly taking—pills distributed to sex workers. This revelation shakes their relationship and forces them to confront hidden truths about trust, intimacy, and the fragile foundation of their bond. The film explores themes of secrecy, stigma, and the impact of health crises on personal connections.