Brown University's First Annual

AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL

RETROSPECTIVE

FLORA GOMES, Guinea Bissau

Wednesday - Sunday
April 14-18, 2004

Cable Car Cinema
204 South Main Street, Providence, RI

Eighteen screenings will be held over five days. Sixteen films (12 features, 4 shorts) from twelve African countries will be shown: Egypt, Morocco/Tunisia, Guinea Bissau, Congo-Kinshasa, Benin, Guinea, Burkina Faso/France, South Africa, Cameroon, Senegal, Tanzania, Ivory Coast.

Directors: Philip Rosen
        Meadow Dibble-Dieng
        Richard Manning

Advisors: Modou Dieng, Réda Bensmaïa, Elliott Colla
Support: Susan McNeil, Carole Cramer, Liza Hebert

ADMISSION
Students: $3.00 per show, $15.00 pass
General: $4.00 per show, $18.00 pass

www.brown.edu/aff
**Film Schedule**

**Wednesday April 14**
7:00pm  *Closed Doors* (1st of 2 showings) with Elliott Colla
9:30pm  *Bedwin Hacker* (only showing) with Richard Manning

**Thursday April 15**
4:30pm  *Mortu Nega* (only showing)
7:00pm  *Afro@digital* (1st of 2 showings) with Olivier Barlet
9:30pm  *Si-Gueriki* (only showing) with Bruce Whitehouse

**Friday April 16**
4:30pm  *Tree of Blood* (1st of 2 showings)
7:00pm  *Director’s Introduction: Nha Fala* (1st of 2 showings) with Flora Gomes
9:00pm  ROUND TABLE: with Flora Gomes, Olivier Barlet, & Meadow Dibble-Dieng
10:15pm  *The River* (only showing)

**Saturday April 17**
12:00pm  *Me and My White Pal* (1st of 2 showings) with Jessica Johns
2:00pm  *African Shorts* (only showing) with Meadow Dibble-Dieng
4:00pm  *Director’s Introduction: Fishers of Dar* (only showing) with Lina Fruzzetti
5:30pm  *Closed Doors* (final showing) with Richard Manning
7:30pm  *Tree of Blood* (final showing) with Philip Rosen
9:45pm  *The Blue Eyes of Yonta* (only showing) with Philip Rosen

**Sunday April 18**
12:00pm  *Afro@digital* (final showing) with Anna Mays
1:30pm  *Nha Fala* (final showing) with Philip Rosen
7:00pm  *Wariko* (only showing) with Meadow Dibble-Dieng
9:30pm  *Me and My White Pal* (final showing) with Richard Manning

**Panels & Discussions**

**Wednesday 4/14/04 @ 7:00pm**
Opening Night: North African film
With Elliott Colla (Comparative Literature, Brown) and Richard Manning (MCM, Brown)

**Thursday 4/15/04 @ 7:00pm**
Digital Africa, With Olivier Barlet (France)

**Friday 4/16/04 @ 7:00pm**
**Digital Africa**
Director’s Introduction: *Nha Fala*
Flora Gomes (Guinea Bissau)

**Friday 4/16/04 @ 9:00pm**
ROUND TABLE with Q&A
With director Flora Gomes, film scholar Olivier Barlet, Meadow Dibble-Dieng (French, Brown) and Winifred Lambrecht (RISD) interpreting.

**Saturday 4/17/04 @ 4:00pm**
Director’s Introduction: *Fishers of Dar*
Lina Fruzzetti (Anthropology, Brown) with Q&A

**Sunday 4/18/04 @ 3:30pm**
PANEL: “The State of African Cinema” with Q&A
With director Flora Gomes and scholars Claire Andrade-Watkins (Emerson), Réda Bensmaïa (French, Brown) moderated by Philip Rosen (MCM, Brown) and Isabel Rodrigues interpreting.
Flora Gomes (Guinea Bissau)

Flora (Florentino) Gomes was born in 1949 in Cadique, Guinea Bissau. She studied film in 1972 at the Cuban Institute of Arts and Cinematography under the direction of Santiago Álvarez before working with filmmaker Paulin S. Vieyra in Senegal. Her later co-directed two short films, La reconstruction (The Reconstruction) and Anos no oça lura. In 1987, she directed her first feature film, Mortu nega. This feature received two special commendations from the jury at the Venice Film Festival in 1988, then Yonta’s Blue Eyes selected for the “Un certain regard” section at the Cannes Film Festival in 1992. Po di sangui (Tree of Blood) was her third feature film, screened in the official competition at Cannes in 1996.

Nha Fala/ My Voice (2002)
Po di Sangui/Tree of Blood (1996)
Os Olhos Azuis de Yonta/Yonta’s Blue eyes (1992)

Olivier Barlet (France)


Claire Andrade-Watkins
Emerson College, Visual and Media Arts

Dr. Andrade-Watkins, a historian and filmmaker, has published extensively on French- and Portuguese-speaking African cinema in leading academic journals and film publications including Framework, Research in African Literatures, International Journal of African History, Journal of Visual Anthropology, and The Independent. She is co-editor of Blackframes: Critical Perspectives on Black Independent Cinema. She was a 1995-1996 Fulbright Scholar in Cape Verde, where she conducted research on indigenous cinema in Cape Verde. With a 1997 grant from the American Philosophical Society, she researched colonial cinema in Lisbon. She is currently working on an award-winning “documemoire,” Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican, about the Cape Verdean community in Providence, Rhode Island. Other documentaries she produced include The Spirit of Cape Verde, a half-hour documentary celebrating the bonds between New England, Cape Verde and President Aristides Pereira’s historical first visit to the United States in 1983. She was an Associate Producer on “Odyssey”, a national PBS anthropology and archaeology documentary series, and Assistant to the Producer on Sankofa, an internationally acclaimed feature film on slavery by filmmaker Haile Gerima.

Lina Fruzzetti, Brown University, Anthropology
& Ákos Östör, Wesleyan University, Anthropology

Lina Fruzzetti and Ákos Östör have collaborated on a number of projects, including Fishers of Dar and Khalfan and Zanzibar. They first met Mr. Khalfan while waiting for a delayed flight at Harare airport in 1995. Subsequently they met him often when Fruzzetti and Östör spent a year teaching and carrying out anthropological and film work at the University of Dar es Salaam. Eventually, the two of them decided to make a film about Mr. Khalfan’s life and work and invited Alfred Guzzetti to collaborate. Fruzzetti and Östör previously collaborated on the award-winning film Seed and Earth (1996).
Panelists & Participants

Philip Rosen
Brown, Modern Culture and Media & English
Festival Co-Director
Philip Rosen began teaching African cinema at Brown fifteen years ago. His areas of expertise include film theory and history, media and theories of culture and ideology. Professor Rosen has published extensively on Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembène and on issues in African film.

Meadow Dibble-Dieng
Brown, French Studies (Ph.D. candidate)
Festival Co-Director
Meadow Dibble-Dieng's research interests include French & Francophone literary journals, cultural politics, creative non-fiction, "La Francophonie" and African literature, visual art and cinema. She was a Thomas J. Watson Fellow in '95-'96, for which she conducted 12-months of independent research in West Africa and was co-founder of the Dakar based journal Orange light, which she edited from '95-'00.

Richard Manning
Brown, Modern Culture and Media
Festival Co-Director
Richard Manning is the Film Archivist for the department of Modern Culture and Media and has both curated and organized numerous film festivals during his 15 year tenure, notably, Brown's annual French Film Festival.

Modou Dieng
Festival Advisor
Modou Dieng is a visual artist of Senegalese origin. He organized a series of free public screenings of African films in 2003 at the International Institute of Rhode Island, which served as the inspiration for this festival. Modou Dieng exhibits his artwork widely in the US and abroad. He was co-founder of the Dakar based journal Orange light.

Réda Bensmaïa
Brown, French Studies & Modern Culture and Media
Festival Advisor
Réda Bensmaïa teaches Francophone literature and film in Brown's Department of French Studies. His areas of expertise are 20th century literature and literary theory; Francophone studies; literature and film.

Elliott Colla
Brown, Comparative Literature
Festival Advisor
Elliott Colla teaches Modern Arabic and English literature in Brown's Department of Comparative Literature. His areas of expertise are the Arabic novel, travel literature, postcolonial theory and aesthetics.

Anani Dzidziienyo
Brown, Africana/Portuguese & Brazilian Studies
Anani Dzidziienyo is Associate Professor of Africana Studies and Portuguese and Brazilian Studies at Brown. He has taught courses on Blacks in Latin American History and Society, Afro-Brazilians and the Brazilian policy, Comparative Politics of Africa and Latin America, and the Afro-Luso-Brazilian Triangle.

Bruce Whitehouse
Brown, Anthropology (Ph.D. candidate)
Bruce Whitehouse is a PhD student in anthropology at Brown University, where his research focuses on international migration in Africa. He served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Mali from 1997 to 2000.

Winifred Lambrechtht
Rhode Island School of Design
Winifred Lambrechtht is an anthropologist and filmmaker who teaches part-time at RISD. Of Franco-Belgian ancestry, she was raised in the Congo, Rwanda, and in other tropical countries. She is one of the co-founders of the Providence Festival of Latin-American Cinema (April 23 through May 2, 2004), in its 12th year.

Isabel Rodrigues
Brown, Ph.D. Anthropology

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Retrospective  FLORA GOMES

Nha Fala
My Voice,
Flora Gomes
Creole/French,
Guinea Bissau,
2002, 90min.

Before leaving for Europe to pursue her studies, Vita, a young African woman promises her mother that she will never sing. A family legend has it that any woman in her family who sings is cursed and will die. In Paris, Vita meets Pierre, a young musician and falls in love. Full of joy, she lets herself go and sings. Vita is horrified by what she has done, but Pierre, overwhelmed by her talent, convinces her to make a record. The record is an overnight success. Fearing her mother will learn that she broke her promise, Vita decides to return home... To die! Aided by Pierre, Vita stages her own death and resurrection, showing family and friends that anything is possible, if you have the courage to dare.

Po di Sangui/Tree of Blood, Flora Gomes
Portuguese/Creole, Guinea Bissau, 1996, 90min.

In the village of Amanha Lundgu every time a child is born a tree is planted. These trees grow as the children grow up and outlive them thus becoming the souls of the village people. But day after day, out of necessity, the villagers cut the trees and wood becomes a rare commodity. One day drought and death will come. When Dou returns to the village, his twin brother Hami has just died. Tensions are running high but Dou doesn’t understand what is going on. What did Humi die of? What evil is eating away at Amanha Lundgu? In the eyes of the community Dou must take the place of his twin brother and become a husband to the dead man’s wife and a father to his daughter.

Mortu Nega/Death Denied, Flora Gomes
Portuguese/Creole, Guinea Bissau, 1988, 85min.

Mortu Nega is a bittersweet eulogy to those veterans who gave so much yet often benefited so little from the struggle. It covers the period from January 1973 during the closing months of the war against the Portuguese until the consolidation of an independent Guinea-Bissau in 1974 and 1975. This tiny West African nation’s valiant struggle and eventual triumph over 500 years of Portuguese domination attracted international support and heralded the final anti-colonial wave culminating in the defeat of apartheid in 1994. The revolution’s charismatic leader, the Cape Verdean agronomist, Amilcar Cabral, was assassinated on the eve of victory in January 1973 by Portuguese assisted mainland nationalists.

Os Olhos Azuis de Yonta/The Blue Eyes of Yonta, Flora Gomes
Portuguese/Creole, Guinea Bissau, 1992, 90min.

The “story of three people, each of whom is so much in love with their dreams that they miss the real opportunities which life offers.” Vicente, a hero of the revolution, now a businessman, is so despondent over the failure of his political ideals that he fails to notice the flirtations of Yonta, the beautiful, young daughter of two former comrades. Yonta represents the younger generation who has grown up since independence and replaces revolutionary rhetoric with an unabashed enthusiasm for Western consumer culture. She, in turn, is oblivious to the attentions of Ze, a poor student from the country, who sends her absurdly romantic poems.
**Films**

*A Drink in the Passage*, Zola Maseko
English, South Africa, 1997, 28min.
In 1960, Edward Simelane won a prize for his remarkable sculpture. He did not know that the contest was strictly for whites. While the committee decided to give him the award, it created a nationwide outcry. An Afrikaaner man who is moved by the Simelane’s work invites him to have a drink, but is suddenly afraid to take him inside his flat. Adapted for the screen from the Alan Paton story written in 1963.

**Afro@digital**, Bakupa-Kanyinda Balufu
French/English, Congo-Kinshasa, 2003, 52min.
Afro@Digital begins with a provocative question: “Why speak of new technologies on a continent which lives daily with the terrorism of poverty?” How can Africa escape the logic of poverty and unequal development by making sure that digital technology doesn’t pass it by, become an agent of neo-colonialism or marginalize it still further? The documentary asserts that computing technology may in fact be indigenous to Africa.

**Al Abwab Al Moghiaka/Closed Doors**, Atef Hetata
Arabic, Egypt, 1999, 105min.
Set during the Gulf war, this engrossing feature debut by Hetata centers on a teenage boy, Mohamad, caught in an ever-tightening vise between his incestuous longings for his mother and the authoritarian temptations of a local religious leader. Mohamad’s feelings of betrayal escalate and push him to embrace fundamentalist ideas as a way of dealing with the confusion of adolescence and sexual awakening.

**Alex’s Wedding**, Jean Marie Teno
French/Bamilike, Cameroon/France, 2003, 45 min.
A chronicle of a rather particular afternoon during which the lives of three people change dramatically. Alex, the husband, goes to his in-laws to bring home his second wife. Else, Alex’s childhood sweetheart and first wife, accompanies him—as she must, according to tradition. Josephine, the young bride, leaves her parents to begin a new life. A polygamous marriage ceremony.

**Bedwin Hacker**, Nadia El Fani
Arabic/French, Morocco/Tunisia, 2003, 98min.
From an apartment jammed full of computer equipment, Kalt spends her days hijacking the frequencies of foreign television channels and using them to broadcast messages in Arabic, signed by a moving cartoon character, a camel named Bedwin Hacker. Julia, alias Agent Marianne, from the Paris counter-hacking department recognizes the signature as that of Kalt, her old rival. A game of cat-and-mouse, energetic and warmhearted, a modern portrayal of North African women and culture.

**Le Fleuve/The River**, Mama Keita
French, Guinea/Pariss, 2003, 96min. After having avenged the death of his best friend, Alfa returns home to his country Guinea. He begins a journey of initiation that is not only to escape from the brother of the person he’s killed, but also to discover Africa and regain his equilibrium. He is accompanied on this journey by his affectionate but overbearing cousin, Marie. Starring French rap star, Bugsy Stomy.

**Moï et mon blanc/Me and My White Pal**, Pierre Yameogo
French, Burkina Faso/Pariss, 2003, 90min.
Mamadi is living in France, and like many other African students, his country has not paid him his scholarship money for six months. To survive, finish his thesis, and renew his residence permit, he takes a job as a parking attendant, which allows him to discover all kinds of secrets, including a stash of drugs. His friend convinces him that they can move the drugs and become rich. Evading the dealers is tougher than they expect. Mamadi and his white pal escape to Burkina Faso, but find that their adventures don’t end there.

**Petite lumière**, Alain Gomis, Senegal, 2002, 15min.
Fatima is a very curious eight-year-old girl in Senegal. This beautifully composed and thoughtful film follows her thoughts as she figures out life’s little mysteries, from whether the light shuts off inside the fridge when it’s closed to whether people exist when you can’t see them. A poignant exploration of childhood wonder and philosophical inquiry.

Tony, an African immigrant in Paris, dreams of becoming a rap star, but his friends don’t believe he has what it takes. He decides to take destiny into his own hands and with his sample tape he heads out to meet the decision-makers in the industry. Not getting any results, he decides to work with a producer from the projects. Starring French rap stars Stomy Bugsy and Princess Erika.
**Samaki wa Dar es Salaam/Fishers of Dar**
Lina Fruzzetti & Ákos Östör, English, Tanzania/USA, 2001, 38min.
Samaki wa Dar es Salaam/Fishers of Dar is an ethnographic film about the fishermen and women of downtown Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It explores the continuity and integrity of traditional fishing practices in new, contemporary settings. Dar es Salaam is a metropolis of 3 million people yet the city's demand for fish is entirely met by equipment, methods and tools that have been used here for hundreds of years.

**Si-Gueriki/The Queen Mother**
Idrissou Mora Kpai, French, Benin, 2001, 62min.
Idrissou Morai Kpai, 33 is a member of the Wassangari tribe of northern Benin, once fierce warriors ruled by rigid traditions. Following the death of his father, the director returns to his village after a ten-year absence. He is disheartened to see his sisters and nieces suffering from continuing female oppression. But he is surprised to find his mother liberated. When Mora Kpai was a child, his mother, a stranger to him, was simply one of his father’s wives, a mere shadow in the family compound.

**Wariko/The Jackpot,** Fadika Kramo-Lanciné
French, Ivory Coast 1994, 100min.
A traffic cop very unexpectedly wins the lottery. Only one problem: the winning ticket has disappeared. As Ali looks high and low through his society for help, his quest turns hilariously allegorical: it is pure satire on the African Dream of socio-economic success. If money makes the world turn, one can never be sure whether striking it rich is a miracle, an answer to a prayer, or merely an accident.