

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEB 17, 2004

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THE AFRICAN EFFECT: The Contemporary African Diaspora

MARCH 26 THRU APRIL 1

One week festival to showcase the cinema, art and poetry of Africa and the African Diaspora, March 26 thru April 1 at the **Center for Contemporary Arts of Santa Fe**.

The program features twenty films and videos, a poetry reading by the Affrilachian Poets, an art exhibit featuring Kara Walker and Carla Williams and a panel on the state of activism in African and African American cultures

Art is a powerful intellectual and emotional force for social change. As the twenty-first century begins, we are witnessing a great revolution in mass communications capabilities that drastically reduces the distances between cultures. Images, sounds, and ideas are being exchanged almost instantaneously, creating dynamic hybrid cultures. As Western consumer culture has influenced global society, so it has been invigorated by the differing sensibilities, traditions, and styles of other cultures. Likewise, African film has evolved from its early exploration of colonialism into a new, diasporic, and international consciousness.

Though it remains largely invisible in the United States, African cinema is emerging as one of the most interesting and inventive in the world. **The African Effect**, a one week festival at the Center for Contemporary Arts, will showcase some of the finest works by filmmakers from Africa and the African Diaspora. African Diaspora artists face the challenge of overturning centuries of ethnographic and anthropological misrepresentations of Africa and those of African descent. Their works are vibrant and essential, offering new perspectives of African histories and cultures.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **The Affrilachian Poets**, a reading by poets Frank X Walker and Nikky Finney.
- **Me and My White Pal**, winner of the FESPACO Audience Award.
- **When the Spirits Dance Mambo**, Cuban documentary with director **Marta Moreno Vega** in attendance
- **Freestyle: The Art of Rhyme**, hip-hop documentary with director Kevin Fitzgerald in attendance. Mr. Fitzgerald will also perform a dj set during the reception, Friday, March 26, 5:00pm
- **Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property**, the new documentary by **Charles Burnett**, one of the mavericks of American independent cinema.
- **Art exhibit: Kara Walker and Carla Williams**, acclaimed African American artists.
- **Wariko, the Jackpot**, a light comedy from the Ivory Coast.
- **Reception:** Friday, March 26, 5:00pm, to open the art exhibit and welcome attending artists.
- **Kevin Fitzgerald** performs a Hip Hop dj set at the **Paramount**, Saturday night, March 27, time, t.b.a.

The program was assembled by Co-Curator Mahen Bonetti, Executive Director of the New York African Film Festival; Scholar in Residence Frank X Walker, of the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Museum for African Art; Project Consultant Cornelius Moore, California Newsreel; Luke Dorman, Visual Arts Manager of the Center for Contemporary Arts; and Jerry Barron, Executive Director of the Center for Contemporary Arts.

ALL EVENTS TO BE HELD AT CCA, 1050 Old Pecos Trail. Santa Fe, NM. Call 505 982 1338 for more information. Tickets for all events are \$8/\$6 members. An all-access Patron Pass is \$100. A reception for the artists and poets, and to open the art exhibit will take place at 5:00 p.m. Friday, March 26.

ALL GUESTS AND ORGANIZERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ADVANCE INTERVIEW

HIGH RESOLUTION STILLs OF ALL FILMS AVAILABLE BY E-MAILING: ldorman@ccasantafe.org

PREVIEW CASSETTES AVAILABLE OF ALL FILMS BY MARCH 1

THE COMPLETE PROGRAM



ALEX'S WEDDING

Directed by Jean Marie Teno. Cameroon/France, 2003. In color, 45 min. Bamileke and French with English subtitles.

Alex is getting married...to his second wife, young Josephine. And he is still married to his first wife, Elise. This extraordinary documentary of a polygamous marriage ceremony captures both its rituals and celebration—and the profound, unspoken subtext of those involved.

playing with: RAPBIZZ

Benny Malapa, France. 2002. In color, 20 minutes. In French with English subtitles.

Tony, an African immigrant in Paris, dreams of becoming a rap star, but his buddies don't believe he has what it takes. Seizing control of his own destiny, Tony heads out, demo in hand, to meet the industry bigwigs. Not getting any results, he decides to work with a producer from the Ghetto. Starring French rap stars Stomy Bugsy and Princess Erika.



CITIZEN KING

Directed by Orlando Bagwell and Noland Walker. USA, 2004. In color, 106 minutes. In English.

In the summer of 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered one of the most memorable speeches of all time. With extraordinary passion and vision, he proclaimed his dream for a nation free of racism and injustice. In commemoration of what would have been King's 75th birthday this January, veteran filmmakers Orlando Bagwell and Noland Walker explore the final five years of King's life in their richly textured documentary

Citizen King. Framed by the "I Have a Dream" speech and King's assassination in Memphis, the film weaves together archival footage, personal recollections, and eyewitness

accounts to evoke a powerful sense of the time and key moments in King's personal and political transformation as he struggled to dedicate himself beyond the civil rights movement and embrace a larger quest for equity and social justice in American society.



COAL BLACK VOICES

Directed by Jean Donohue and Fred Johnson. USA, 2001. In color, 56 minutes. In English.

Coal Black Voices is an intimate mosaic of images, poetry and storytelling by the Affrilachian Poets as they offer glimpses of life in the American Black South and Appalachian region. The ensemble of African American writers challenges simplistic notions of an all white Appalachian region and culture while drawing on traditions such as the Harlem Renaissance, the Black Arts Movement and experiences of the African Diaspora. The poetry of the Affrilachian Poets celebrates their African heritage and rural roots while encompassing themes of racism and Black identity, and giving voice to the

pleasures of family, land, good food, artistic community, music and transformation. **ATTENDING ARTISTS:** Frank X Walker and Nikky Finney



FREESTYLE: THE ART OF RHYME

Directed by Kevin Fitzgerald. USA, 2003. In color, 74 minutes. In English.

This film explosively documents the world of improvisational rap and provides an authentic look into the life, music and culture of hip-hop in America today. Featuring Mos Def, Freestyle Fellowship, The Roots, Tupac, Notorious BIG, Jurassic-5, Lord Finesse, Juice, Craig G, and Supernatural MC. This critically acclaimed documentary is packed with rare and archival footage of some of the most amazing hip-hop MC's ever to bless the MIC! 1/2 art house cinema 1/2 underground mix-tape, Freestyle is not to be missed.

Attending Artist: Director Kevin Fitzgerald



KOUNANDI

Directed by Apolline Traore. Burkina Faso, 2002. In color, 49 minutes.

Infusing human warmth and passion into a magical tale of a mutating healing spirit, Apolline Traore creates a character who is both human and miraculous in her wonderful featurette, **Kounandi**. Just as a couple brings their marital dispute in front of the village king, a strange woman mysteriously enters the village and gives birth to a baby girl before dying. The king baptizes the child Kounandi and bequeaths her care to the couple in hopes that she may resolve their differences. But their problems endure over the

years, and Kounandi, who seems to embody their marital stagnation, grows up a dwarf. Poetic and beautifully crafted, **Kounandi** is a heartwarming and emotionally moving tale about love and the cycles of life, and marks an auspicious directing debut.



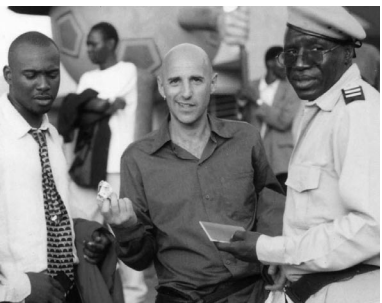
playing with: **BIG MAMA**

Directed by Tracy Seretean. USA, 2000. In color, 35 minutes. In English.

2000 Academy Award Winner, Best Documentary Short Subject

"When, exactly, are you too old to love your own grandchild?" asks Viola Dees. **Big Mama** depicts a devoted grandmother's struggle to raise her orphaned grandson under the watchful eye of a complex and difficult social welfare system. **Big Mama** follows 18 months in the lives of Viola Dees, an African American grandmother, and Walter, her grandson, as she tries to raise him alone in South Central Los Angeles. Dees has taken care of Walter since the age of four, when his father (Viola's son) died. Walter appears

in the documentary as bright and sweetly loving to his grandmother, but also profoundly troubled, affected by his mother's prenatal drug intake. In the film, Walter is nine, and Dees is turning 90. **SPECIAL GUEST:** Anna Marie Carter, "the Seed Lady," Director of the Watts Garden Club, will discuss the films.



ME AND MY WHITE PAL

Directed by Pierre Yameogo. Burkina Faso/France, 2003. In color, 90 minutes. In French & Moore with English Subtitles.

Winner of the RFI Audience Award at FESPACO

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. The job allows him to discover all kinds of secrets, including a stash of drugs. A friend convinces him that they can move the drugs and become rich, but evading the dealers is tougher than they expect.



THE MEANING OF THE BUFFALO

Directed by Karin Slater. South Africa, 2004. In color, 60 minutes. In English.

The arid village of Lekgopung, South Africa, is home to the Balete—the People of the Buffalo. Karin Slater is a wildlife filmmaker who is an outsider to the village. This poetic documentary is her attempt to understand how the Balete people came to take the buffalo as a totem. Slater's search leads to three generations of a family whose shop is the hub of village activity. Rene, the youngest woman, strives to be the first black female game ranger in neighboring Madikwe Game Reserve; her 85-year-old grandmother, the matriarch of the family, dreams of seeing a buffalo before she dies. Mystified and skeptical of the totem, Slater finds herself tracking buffalos in the game reserve and, in so doing, embarks upon a powerful, personal exploration of identity.

INVITED: Director Karin Slater



playing with: **THE SKY IN HER EYES**

Directed by Ouida Smit and Madoda Ncayiyana. South Africa, 2001. In Color, 11 minutes. In English and Zulu with English subtitles.

The Sky in Her Eyes is a sensitive homage to the strength of the millions of children who have lost parents to AIDS in Africa. When little Dudu's mother dies, she must devise her own unique, creative way of coming to terms with the death.



NAT TURNER: A TROUBLESOME PROPERTY

Directed by Charles Burnett. USA, 2002. In color, 60 minutes. In English.

Nat Turner's slave rebellion is a watershed event in America's long and troubled history of slavery and racial conflict. **Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property** tells the story of that violent confrontation and of the ways that story has been continuously re-told during the years since 1831. Nat Turner was a "troublesome property" for his master and he has remained a "troublesome property" for the historians, novelists, dramatists, artists and many others who have struggled to understand him. Interspersing documentary footage and interviews with dramatizations of different versions of the story, the filmmakers

chronicle an extraordinary history of attempts to create and to recreate the man. Such a complex film required a unique collaboration between MacArthur Genius Award feature director Charles Burnett, acclaimed historian of slavery Kenneth S. Greenberg and award-winning documentary producer Frank Christopher. **INVITED:** Director, Charles Burnett



THE QUEEN MOTHER

Directed by Idrissou Mora Kpai. Benin/France/Germany, 2003. In color, 62 min. French and Bariba with English Subtitles.

Winner of Best Documentary at Namur

Director Idrissou Morai Kpai, 33, is a member of the Wassangari tribe of northern Benin. Once a tribe of fierce warriors ruled by rigid traditions, the Wassangari people have maintained their strict patriarchy to this day. 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 continued oppression as women, but is surprised to find

his mother liberated. Today, she has received the title Si-Gueriki, "the queen mother,"—the female equivalent of a king. **The Queen Mother** is the story of a young man's confrontation with his culture and traditions. It's an intimate, personal film—an insider's view of an ancient culture.



playing with: **PETITE LUMIERE**

Directed by Alain Gomis. Senegal, 2002. In color, 15 minutes. In Wolof and French with English subtitles.

Fatima is a very curious 8 year-old girl in Senegal. This beautifully composed and thoughtful film follows her thoughts as she figures out life's 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.



THE RIVER

Directed by Mama Keita, Guinea/ France. 2003. In color, 96 minutes. In French with English subtitles.
After having avenged the death of his best friend, Alfa returns home to his country of Guinea. He begins a journey of initiation which 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 his journey by his affectionate but overbearing cousin, Marie, whose sincere yet adolescent love for him grows despite his aloofness. Starring French rap star Buggy Stomy, and featured at the Tribeca Film Festival.



WARIKO, THE JACKPOT

Directed by Fadika Kramo-Lanciné. Ivory Coast, 1994. In color, 100 min. French and Bambara with English subtitles.

A traffic cop very unexpectedly wins the lottery. There's only one problem—the winning ticket has disappeared. To make matters worse, relatives from the village have already heard the news and want to get their share. As Ali looks high and low through his society for help, his quest turns hilariously allegorical in this 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, the answer to a prayer, or merely an accident...



WHEN THE SPIRITS DANCE MAMBO

Directed by Marta Moreno Vega. Cuba, 2003. In color, 91 minutes. In Spanish and English with English subtitles.

Shot in Cuba, this dynamic documentary provides an insider's view of rich and sacred African traditions taken to Cuba and transformed into the cultural experience known as Mambo. In civil society, popular culture and contemporary creative life, these traditions continue to have global impact. The film features priests and priestesses, scholars and traditional and popular musicians that fill the movie with the vibrancy. Featured musical groups include Grammy Winners Yoruba Andabo and Clave y Guaguanco, Estrellas

Cubana, Anonimo Consejo, Los Munequitos, Orlando "Puntilla" Rios and The Folklorico National Dance Company of Cuba, with scenes from Carnival in Santiago de Cuba. **ATTENDING ARTIST:** Director Marta Moreno Vega.



SHORTS PROGRAM: These four highly acclaimed short films point to the diversity of African and African Diaspora filmmaking

SHORT ON SUGAR

Directed by Joseph Anaya. USA, 2003. In color, 10 minutes. In English.

Lynn Anderson wrote and stars in this hilarious short film. When Pam spies a sexy musician in her cafe, she conspires to create a chance encounter with the stranger. What better ploy than the old "Can I borrow some sugar" routine. Simple enough, but the path to love is rarely smooth.

HIS/HERSTORY

Directed by Nzinga Kemp. USA, 2003. In color, 20 minutes. In English.

His/Herstory revolves around Faida, a talented journalist who reclaims her identity after her fanatically Afrocentric husband decides to take a second wife. Starring Atlanta-based poet and artist Jessica Care Moore, this film reflects on the complexities that arise when a thinking woman becomes involved in the chauvinist art world.



CANDOMBE

Directed by Rafael Deugenio. Uruguay, 1993. In color, 16 minutes. In Spanish with English subtitles.

More than two hundred years ago, there was an influx into Uruguay of slaves from Africa who, after being freed, continue to make up the poorest and most marginalized stratum of society. Fernando Nuñez, a Black man, a musician, and a maker of drums, sees himself as the heir to "Candombe," an important cultural legacy from his slave forefathers.



A DRINK IN THE PASSAGE

Directed by Zola Maseko. South Africa, 1997. In color, 28 minutes. In English.

Winner of the special prize for short film at FESPACO.

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 nation-wide outcry. An Afrikaaner man who is moved by Simelane's work invites him to have a drink, but is suddenly afraid to take him inside his flat. The film shows how class differences and racial prejudice can prevent us from connecting with each other. Adapted for the screen from the Alan Paton story written in 1963.



THE AFFRILACHIAN POETS: Reading by Frank X Walker and Nikky Finney

The work of Frank X Walker is an eclectic, powerful mixture of liberating style, profound insight, and unwavering organic connection to the intellectual, political, and cultural struggles of a people. He stands in the tradition of DuBois, McKay, Robeson, Hughes, and other great writers, poets and performers whose contributions have transcended time to give generation after generation pause and hope.



Author Nikky Finney has written yet another book destined to leave its mark on the world. Her brilliant new collection of poetry entitled *The World is Round* deals with the intimacies of struggle, community, sensuality, hatred and hunger, among other important themes. In this breakthrough volume, Finney continues to show us how deeply she believes that human beings can be better. Poets, poetry lovers and lovers of words alike will soon understand the importance of this book.

What is an Affrilachian poet? A term coined by Frank Walker in his poem "Affrilachia" to describe people of color living in the Appalachian region, "Affrilachian" became the name of a group of like minded poets who came to get for mutual support and encouragement. As Walker explains, "One of the things I've encountered traveling outside of Kentucky is having to defend the fact that people of color actually live here... I'm trying to say, not only are we here, we're here in a very large way, we're part of Kentucky's history, we're part of the landscape..."



THE AFRICAN EFFECT: Kara Walker and Carla Williams

Kara Walker's work deals with the perpetuation of the notions associated with slavery in the realm of the collective unconscious. Appropriating the art of paper silhouetting, a craft tradition popular during the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe and America, Walker creates evocative and provocative scenes and silhouettes of slaves and masters from the antebellum South.

Similarly, **Carla Williams'** series *How to Read Character* juxtaposes nineteenth century images and texts on racial differentiation and categorization with contemporary self portraits. Such juxtapositions suggest to the viewer that these precedents, while seemingly absurd and outdated, still contain a great deal of resonance and power with respect to the way we read and respond to contemporary images of African American women.



PANEL: Activism in Contemporary African and African American Culture Led by Anna Marie Carter

Anna Marie Carter, also known as "The Seed Lady" of Watts, is a certified Master Gardener through the University of California who practices direct action by building free, organic gardens for people who suffer from AIDS, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, and other illnesses.

ORGANIZER BIOGRAPHIES:

Mahen Bonetti, Co-Curator

Mahen Bonetti is a native of Sierra Leone who has lived in the U.S. for more than 20 years. In 1990 she founded and became director of the New York African Film Festival.

Frank X Walker, Scholar in Residence

Author/Educator/Artist Frank X Walker has served as Executive Director of the Bluegrass Black Arts Consortium, the Program Coordinator of the University of Kentucky's King Cultural Center and the Assistant Director of Purdue University's Black Cultural Center. The University of Kentucky awarded Walker an honorary Doctorate of Humanities in 2001, for his collective community work and artistic achievements. Transylvania University awarded Walker an honorary Doctor of Letters degree in 2002. He has held government appointments to the Cabinet for Education, Arts & Humanities and the Committee on Gifted Education. The former president of the National Conference of Governor's Schools, he resides in Louisville, where he currently serves as Vice President of the Kentucky Center for the Arts and the Executive Director of Kentucky's Governor's School for the Arts.

Cornelius Moore, Project Consultant

Cornelius Moore is the director of the Library of African Cinema, the largest source of African film and video in North America. He has curated African cinema programs for the San Francisco International Film Festival, the Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema, the American Film Institute and the Washington DC International Film Festival. He has been an invited speaker at the Festival Pan-Africain du Cinema a Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, Vues d'Afriques (Montreal), the Cinema Africano Festival (Milan) and Sithengi, the Southern African International Film and Television Market (Cape Town).

Luke Dorman, CCA Visual Arts Manager

Luke Dorman is a recent graduate of the College of Santa Fe Fine Arts Program and began his work at the Center for Contemporary Arts as a Senior Intern, before being named Visual Arts Manager. As an artist, Dorman has shown by the Santa Fe's Museum of Fine Arts and Linda Durham Contemporary, among others. He is represented by Evo Gallery.

Jerry Barron, Project Curator, CCA Executive Director

Jerry Barron, the long-time curator of film at the CCA Cinematheque, was recently named Executive Director of the Center for Contemporary Arts. Barron is also the Artistic Director for the Santa Fe Film Festival and created the annual festivals: Film Noir: Summer in the Dark; The African Effect; the Santa Fe Lesbian and Gay Film Festival; The 3-Minute Film Fest; and co-founded the Native Cinema Showcase.