

DOK.network Africa



Sudan, April 2019. Zum wiederholten Mal gehen die Menschen in Khartum auf die Straße. Sie protestieren gegen erhöhte Brotpreise – letztlich gegen den seit 30 Jahren autoritär herrschenden Präsidenten Umar Al-Baschir. So weit die Schlagzeile. Doch wie sehen die Lebensrealitäten im Sudan jenseits kurzlebiger Krisenberichterstattung aus? DOK.network Africa gibt mit Produktionen aus und über Afrika Einblicke in das alltägliche Leben der Menschen vor Ort. 2019 präsentiert der Afrikatag zum ersten Mal einen regionalen Schwerpunkt: drei aktuelle Produktionen erzählen vom östlichen Afrika. Was hält die tansanische Gesellschaft zusammen? Welche Themen interessieren kenianische Filmemacher.innen? Und inwiefern ist unabhängiges Filmemachen im Sudan überhaupt noch möglich?

Sudan, April 2019. Once again the people of Khartoum are taking to the streets. They protest against increased bread prices - ultimately against the authoritarian president Umar Al-Bashir, who has ruled for 30 years now. So far the headline. But how does life in Sudan beyond short-lived crisis reporting look like? DOK.network Africa provides insights into the lives of local people through productions from and about Africa. In 2019, Africa Day presents a regional focus for the first time: three current productions tell stories from Eastern Africa. What holds the Tanzanian society together? What topics are Kenyan filmmakers interested in? And to what extent is independent filmmaking still possible in Sudan? Barbara Off

Sunrise in the East

NEW BEGINNINGS FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS IN EAST AFRICA

Interview by Barbara Off, Head of DOK.network Africa

When Kenyan filmmaker Judy Kibinge decided to create the first East African, not to say the first independent African fund for documentary films, DOCUBOX, in 2013, everything happened fast: The first projects are now completed and are already winning prizes and recognition. One of them – NEW MOON by Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann – will be shown at this year's Africa Day.

We met Judy Kibinge and her partner in crime Peter Mudamba for a breakfast interview in Berlin to tell us a bit more about the origins, work and visions of DOCUBOX.

How did you come up with this idea to create an East African Film Fund?

Judy Kibinge: An independent filmmaker myself, I started thinking about creating a film fund six years ago. In Kenya we are confronted with a system without funding, a system that has no experience in filmmaking. After some research, I realized: We do not only need to create an independent financing structure for filmmaking, but a conducive environment for creative documentary films. You cannot grant film funding without offering training and workshop opportunities. And you need to build a community who watches the new films! All these elements must be taken into account.

So DOCUBOX is much more than a funding institution?

Peter Mudamba: We came up with a mini film hub called 'The Box'. This platform gives upcoming and established filmmakers the opportunity to share their experiences and ideas. Training and mentorship also play a big role in what

we do. With the support of German film schools and funders we bring different film experts and mentors to Nairobi. Last but not least we organise free screenings on a regular basis to build up our audiences. Our 'Shorts, Shorts and Shots' nights are legendary!

Is training not something which film schools or film universities should provide?

Peter Mudamba: There are universities, but they offer mostly theoretical training. When these students hold a camera in their own hands for the first time, they are confused. Professionalising the industry means practical mentorship. A camera person needs to be mentored by a camera person, a sound person by a sound person. At DOCUBOX we rely heavily on this hands-on approach.

How would you describe the documentary filmmaking scene in Kenya?

Judy Kibinge: Many filmmakers in Kenya, maybe all over East Africa, end up doing films for companies or non-governmental organisations to pay their bills. People think that these image films are documentaries. But in fact, they are only marketing or fundraising tools for the contracting organisations.

Why do you want to strengthen documentary film?

Judy Kibinge: I think in East Africa we can gain a lot from documentary film. In countries like Kenya, where archives are lost, where broadcasters evade the responsibility of showing films which reflect our identity and let TV stations be flooded with foreign content with little historical or social value, there is hardly space for programming that helps a

country and its citizens to understand who they are and where they come from. Setting up DOCUBOX happened at a time when we needed to reflect on ourselves. From the very beginning, even before our first call for entries we already knew what kind of films we were going to support: films by local talents with authentic voices who would reflect back the realities we live in. All other documentary films, dealing with these topics, are usually made by foreigners. There were just not enough films that simply said: "This is us, guys. What do you think? Let's talk about it."

How do you select your projects?

Judy Kibinge: In the first selection round in 2013, we called for projects and selected the twelve strongest submissions. Participants received USD 2,500 for the production of trailers. The next step is for the twelve filmmakers to re-submit their projects, from which a small group of experts selects the six best. This was very difficult because all these first projects were very convincing. The finalists were granted another production fund of USD 20,000 each. To date, we have supported 40 East African film projects, including short and feature-length films.

What kind of stories were funded by DOCUBOX so far?

Judy Kibinge: The first project DOCUBOX ever chose was NEW MOON by Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann. Now the finished film will be screened at DOK.fest München's Africa Day. Philippa's film started with the idea of telling the story of a port being built in Lamu, an ancient Islamic city on the coast of Kenya, which is a protected UNESCO world heritage

site. And suddenly the government is planning to build this enormous port on this spot, which will change this age-old culture. While she was shooting she realised that was not really the film she wanted to make. Step by step she found herself drawn to Islam and ended up making a film about her own transition. As filmmakers we happily supported that development because we understand how difficult it is to make a film. If your story changes in the middle then it was meant to change. This is just one example of a story our TV broadcasters are not interested in but which make up the fabric of who we are.

How would you describe the Kenyan film industry compared to Nollywood in Nigeria, the biggest film industry on the African continent?

Judy Kibinge: Nigerian businessmen have driven Nollywood from day one. They have built allegiances, audiences and numbers. Thanks to this enormous reach they have been able to attract big investments from corporations like Netflix. In comparison Kenyan films are still fighting for audience figures and revenue. Yet a lot of high quality films are coming out of here. But is that what we need right now? I think we have to talk about how we can make a vibrant professional film industry possible. Co-production treaties would be one important step. Our National Film Commission must push things forward so filmmakers can make a living from their work. The workforce is already here: great writers, really good cinematographers!

So are you lobbying as DOCUBOX political entities like the National Film Commission to bring about change?



The DOCUBOX Family: W. Gathee, J. Mwamunga, J. Kibinge, J. Imali, R. Owen, S. Mbogo, N. Kimani, A. Gichuki, P. Mudamba and A. Njonjo (from the left), photo credit: Phtech Photography

Peter Mudamba: Policymaking is important for us. At the top of our agenda is the fight against censorship and for free expression. Therefore we lobby for the repeal of a law called CAP 222 which controls the making and screening of films, a very prohibitive and outdated regulation we inherited from our colonial past. As the leading East African Documentary Film Fund we are part of the Kenyan Creative Economy Working Group. This organ brings together industry players from the visual arts, film, dance and theatre in one space. The representatives lobby the government and advocate for changes in the arts sector. We want to influence the public perception of the film industry and show that it can employ, support and contribute to the GDP of our country.

How do you see the future?

Judy Kibinge: Suddenly documentary film seems to be working, also due to our efforts. It shows that the whole industry can be transformed if you put in the work for five or six years. I know without a doubt that many of the films that are produced now and that will be released in the next few years would not exist without DOCUBOX. That is really exciting!

Peter Mudamba: To bring about change is hard work. But this is one of the reasons why we are here. It has been an exciting journey so far. We are looking forward to the future and will hopefully soon celebrate some of the best documentaries coming out of East Africa because DOCUBOX exists.

JUDY KIBINGE

is an award-winning Kenyan filmmaker, writer and producer who established the first independent African film fund for documentary films DOCUBOX in 2013.

PETER M. MUDAMBA

DOCUBOX programme director Peter M. Mudamba is responsible for project sighting, supporting filmmakers, their collaborations in film production and impact screening of films.

www.mydocubox.org

AFRIKATAG AFRICA DAY

EAST AFRICA – A REGION IN TRANSITION: WHERE DOES THE JOURNEY LEAD?

Ostafrika – Sehnsuchtsort für Fernreisende: Tausendundeine Nacht auf Sansibar und Safari auf den Spuren von Bernhard Grzimek in der Serengeti. Doch was macht das moderne Ostafrika jenseits von exotischer Kolonial-Romantik aus?

Der ostafrikanische Kulturraum ist sowohl von arabischen Einflüssen als auch von der europäischen Kolonialgeschichte geprägt. Im Spannungsfeld zwischen Islam und Christentum gewinnt die Religionszugehörigkeit an Bedeutung. Sicherheitspolitisch kommt den Ländern am Indischen Ozean eine stabilisierende Rolle für die gesamte Region zu. Gleichzeitig bilden sie eine wichtige panafrikanische Verbindung zwischen Subsahara- und Nord-Afrika.

Drei Filme aus und über den Osten Afrikas nehmen uns mit auf eine Entdeckungsreise: Mit dem Zug fahren wir in TANZANIA TRANSIT durch die Weite Tansanias. Unterwegs verhandelt Jeroen Van Velzen die Rolle der Frau, der Religion und der ethnischen Zugehörigkeit. In NEW MOON begleiten wir die kenianische Filmemacherin Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann auf ihrer Reise zu sich selbst: zu spiritueller Identität zwischen moderner Lebensart und muslimischem Glauben. Und mit TALKING ABOUT TREES von Suhaib Gasmelbari machen wir uns auf den Weg in das nordöstliche Afrika. Wir tauchen in die sudanesischen Filmgeschichte ein und erleben, wie Politik und Religion die Film- und Lebenskultur beeinflussen.

Im Anschluss an die Filme werden wir mit den Filmemacher:innen und Expert:innen diskutieren: Was verbindet die Länder des östlichen Afrika – Tansania, Kenia und Sudan? Welche Rolle spielt die Religion? Entsteht in Nairobi mit der aufstrebenden Filmszene gerade eine neue wirtschaftliche Kraft im Zentrum Ostafrikas? Welcher Stellenwert kommt dabei dem Dokumentarfilm zu?

Die Veranstaltung findet auf Englisch statt.

East Africa – a place where many long to travel: Thousand and one nights in Zanzibar and safari in the footsteps of Bernhard Grzimek in the Serengeti. But what characterizes the modern East Africa beyond exotic colonial romanticism?

The cultural region of East Africa has been lastingly influenced by the Arab as well as by European colonial history. In the interplay of Islam and Christianity, religious orientation is gaining in importance. In terms of security policy, the countries on the Indian Ocean play a crucial role for the stability for the entire region. At the same time, they form an important pan-African link between Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa.

Three films from and about East Africa take us on a voyage of discovery: In TANZANIA TRANSIT we take the train through the wide landscape of Tanzania. On the way Jeroen Van Velzen discusses the role of women, religion and ethnicity. In NEW MOON we accompany the Kenyan filmmaker Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann on her quest for spiritual identity between modern lifestyle and Muslim faith. And with TALKING ABOUT TREES by Suhaib Gasmelbari we set off for northeastern Africa. We dive into Sudanese film history and experience how politics and religion influence film and life culture.

Following the films, we will discuss with the filmmakers and experts: What connects the countries of Eastern Africa - Tanzania, Kenya and Sudan? What role does religion play? Is the emerging film scene in Nairobi just becoming a new economic force in the centre of East Africa? How important is documentary film in this context?

The event will be held in English.

Panel discussion participants: Jeroen Van Velzen (director of TANZANIA TRANSIT, Netherlands), Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann (director of NEW MOON, Kenya), Peter Mudamba (programme director, East African Documentary Film Fund DOCUBOX, Kenya), Murad Abu-Eisheh (coordinator Pan-African Film Projects Robert Bosch Foundation, Germany), Moderation: Barbara Off (Head of DOK.network Africa)

12th May 2019, 2:00 - 09:30 pm
Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film, Kino 1

2:00 - 3:30 pm
Film: TANZANIA TRANSIT (NL 2018, Jeroen van Velzen, 75 min.) in the presence of director Jeroen van Velzen

4:00 - 5:30 pm
Film: NEW MOON (KE 2018, Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann 71 min.) in the presence of the director Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann and programme director Peter Mudamba East African Documentary Film Fund DOCUBOX

6:00 - 7:00 pm
Reception in the Festivallounge

7:00 - 8:30 pm
Film: TALKING ABOUT TREES (SD 2019, Suhaib Gasmelbari, 93 min.)

8:30 - 9:30 pm
Discussion: EAST AFRICA – a region in transition: where does the journey lead?



Auswärtiges Amt



Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung

Bayerische Staatskanzlei



Landeshauptstadt
München
Kulturreferat



Robert Bosch
Stiftung





NEW MOON

Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann
Kenia 2018, Farbe & s/w, 71 Min., Kiswahili,
Englisch, Untertitel Englisch

So 12.05. 16.00 HFF - Kino 1
Di 14.05. 19.00 Neues Maxim

„Ich sammle Geld für einen Film, den ich nicht machen will“, eröffnet die Regisseurin Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann im Prolog. Der Film sollte sich um ein gigantisches Infrastrukturprojekt der kenianischen Regierung drehen. In Lamu wird der größte Hafen an der ostafrikanischen Küste entstehen. Noch bestimmen der Ruf des Muezzins und die arabisch geprägte Swahili-Kultur das Leben auf dem 57 Quadratkilometer großen Eiland. Im angespannten politischen Klima gestalten sich die Dreharbeiten schwierig. Die Inselbewohner fragen nach Geld, Frauen wollen nicht gefilmt werden. Der Prozess gerät ins Stocken. Mehr und mehr transformiert sich das Projekt zur Selbstfindung einer jungen Frau: zwischen liberaler Modernität, muslimischem Glauben und Spiritualität. Am Ende steht ein nachdenklich-poetischer Foto-Film-Essay. *Barbara Off*
An investigative documentary about a giant harbour project on the coast of Kenya – that was the original idea. Yet the search for the right approach to the topic on the island of Lamu leads to a more personal exploration. Filmmaking as an existential process.

BUCH Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann **KAMERA** Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann **MONTAGE** Angie Wamai **MUSIK** Tiago Correa-Paolo **TON** Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann & Eric Musyoka **PRODUKTION** Thirsty Fish **PRODUZENTIN** Philippa Ndisi-Herrmann



DOCUBOX
most efficient
documentary film fund



TALKING ABOUT TREES

Suhaib Gasmelbari
Frankreich, Sudan, Deutschland, Tschad,
Qatar 2019, Farbe, 93 Min., Russisch,
Englisch, Arabisch, Untertitel Englisch

So 12.05. 19.00 HFF - Kino 1
Mi 15.05. 18.00 Rio 1
So 19.05. 15.00 Museum Fünf Kontinente

„Es gibt Zeiten, wo sogar das Sprechen über Bäume ein Verbrechen ist.“ Mit diesem Brecht-Zitat umschreiben Manar und seine Freunde Ibrahim, Suliman und Eltayeb das aktuelle politische Klima im Sudan. Die vier älteren Herren, Filmemacher, die in den 70er-Jahren in Deutschland und Russland studierten, erinnern sich noch an andere Zeiten. Seit mehr als 40 Jahren halten sie mit der Sudanese Film Group die Filmkultur am Leben: in Hinterhöfen zeigen sie afrikanische Klassiker oder MODERN TIMES von Charlie Chaplin. Jetzt wollen sie ein verfallenes Open-Air-Kino, das „Theater der Revolution“, wiedereröffnen. Mit vereinten Kräften und viel Humor nehmen sie den Kampf auf. Ein seltener Einblick in die vergessene sudanesishe Filmgeschichte und eine Liebeserklärung an das Kino, das Filmemachen und die Freundschaft in Zeiten der Unfreiheit. *Barbara Off*
The Sudanese filmmakers Ibrahim, Manar, Suliman and Eltayeb want to re-open an outdoor cinema, the “Revolution Theatre” in Khartoum. With creativity, humour and a love of film the old men fight against power outages, the call of the Muezzin and the authorities.

PRODUKTION AGAT Films & Cie **PRODUZENTIN** Marie Balducchi **KOPRODUKTION** Made in Germany (Melanie Andernach), Goï Goï Productions **WELTVERTRIEB** Wide House



Museum
Fünf Kontinente



TANZANIA TRANSIT

Jeroen van Velzen
Niederlande 2018, Farbe, 75 Min., Kiswahili,
Untertitel Englisch

So 12.05. 14.00 HFF - Kino 1
Mo 13.05. 19.00 City 2

„Es fühlt sich an, als ob man einen Esel reitet“, meint der Maasai Isaya zu seinem Enkel William. Dicht gedrängt in der dritten Klasse fahren die beiden mit dem Zug von der tansanischen Hauptstadt Dār as-Salām in die Provinz zu ihrem Stamm. In der zweiten Klasse erzählt die Barbesitzerin Rukia aus ihrem bewegten Leben. Priester Peter heilt Kinder und sorgt für das Seelenheil der Mitreisenden. Ein Geschäft, welches das Reisen in der ersten Klasse möglich macht. Neben eindrucksvollen Bildern der Landschaft bietet die dreitägige Zugfahrt als rollender Mikrokosmos faszinierende Einblicke in die tansanische Gesellschaft. Die Rolle der Religion und der Frau wird verhandelt. Und wie schwierig es heute noch ist, sich in dem 1964 gegründeten Staat als Tansanier zu fühlen und als solcher behandelt zu werden. *Barbara Off*
A train journey through Tanzania, which takes us across the vast landscapes of the East African country and gives us a glimpse into its society. In the microcosm of a train carriage we get to know two Maasai, a priest and a bar owner and learn what it means to be Tanzanian.

BUCH Jeroen van Velzen, Esther Eenstroom **KAMERA** Niels van Koevorden **MONTAGE** Patrick Minks **MUSIK** Christiaan Verbeek **TON** Tim van Peppen **PRODUKTION** SNG Film **PRODUZENTIN** Digna Sinke **SENDER** EO / IKONdocs **WELTVERTRIEB** Journeyman Pictures **WEB** www.sngfilm.nl/en/film/tanzania-transit