

June offers encounters with world's best documentaries

The 15th Encounters South African International Documentary Festival runs from 6-16 June 2013 at the Bioscope in Jozi, the Nu Metro at the V&A Waterfront and The Fugard in Cape Town. It will screen the most talked-about documentaries from around the world.

These include two 2013 Oscar nominees (The Gatekeepers and How To Survive A Plague) and winners from Berlin (Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present; In Heaven Underground), DOK Leipzig (Colombianos), and Sundance (Queen of Versailles; The House I Live In).



ENCOUNTERS
South African International Documentary Festival

"Documentaries broaden our experience of the world, showing us places few of us would otherwise see," says new festival director Lesedi Oluko Moche. The lineup goes from the biggest home in America (Queen of Versailles), the world's richest apartment building (Park Avenue) to one of Jordan's poorest villages (Rafea: Solar Mama). From the locker rooms of Wimbledon (Venus & Serena) to behind-the-scenes at The Museum of Modern Art in New York (Marina Abramovic: The Artist Is Present); and from farms in Zimbabwe (The Bag on My Back) to a 130-year-old Jewish cemetery in Berlin (In Heaven Underground).

The documentaries will introduce you to an influential pimp in America (Iceberg Slim: Portrait of a Pimp); a divorced Moroccan wedding videographer (Camera/Woman); an Argentinian classical pianist (Bloody Daughter); Colombian immigrants in Sweden (Colombianos); drummers in Africa and Europe (The Fellowship of The Drums); and persecuted female bloggers in Cuba, China and Iran (Forbidden Voices).

This year's lineup also shines a spotlight on some of the world's most debated issues, including poverty (Poor Us: An Animated History; Rafea: Solar Mama); the war on drugs (The House I Live In); inter-cultural adoption (Mercy Mercy - A Portrait of True Adoption); HIV/Aids (How To Survive a Plague); and Israel/ Palestine (The Gatekeepers, The Village Under The Forest).

Africa well represented

However, Encounters is not just about looking outwards: there are 13 documentaries investigating Africa. Comrade President profiles Mozambican president Samora Machel, while No Harm Done, which won Best Documentary at FESPACO, is the story of agnostic Tunisian documentary filmmaker Nadia el Fani's double battle against cancer and a radical Islamist hate campaign.

Hot from Hot Docs, Riaan Hendricks' *The Devil's Lair* will have its African premiere as the opening night film at Encounters. It is a jarring story of fatherhood, drug dealers and assassinations on the Cape Flats. Aryan Kaganof's *An Inconsolable Memory* follows the story of the Eoan Group from the vibrant era of Cape Town's District Six to present day. Dylan Valley's *Incarcerated Knowledge* follows a reformed gangster from his release from Pollsmoor as he tries to turn his life around; Shannon Walsh and Arya Lalloo's *Jeppe On a Friday* is part Jozi travelogue, part urban allegory.

Mark Kaplan and Heidi Grunebaum's *The Village Under The Forest* explores the hidden remains of the destroyed Palestinian village of Luby, which lies under the purposefully cultivated forest plantation called South Africa Forest. Shelley Barry's *Mr. Shakes - The Passion To Live* follows the Port Elizabeth disco king; and Tamarin Kaplan and Marla Altschuler's award-winning *The White Picket Fence Project* is a coming-of-age documentary about two young men: one in post-war Kosovo, the other in Gugulethu.

"We're incredibly excited about this year's streamlined lineup," says Lesedi. "Every year, most of the screenings sell-out, so we recommend booking early."

Its main sponsors are the NFVF, Bertha Foundation, The City Of Cape Town, Wesgro and the V&A Waterfront. For more, go to www.encounters.co.za.

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