

# Launch of Documentary Filmmakers' Association

The Documentary Filmmakers' Association (DFA), established to nurture and develop the interests of documentary filmmakers in South Africa, will launch at the Encounters Documentary Film Festival in Johannesburg and in Cape Town on 13 and 22 July 2007, respectively.

In July 2005 documentary filmmakers in Cape Town met at the Encounters Documentary Festival to discuss the formation of a representative body. It was unanimously agreed that there is a need for a documentary filmmakers' association.

An interim voluntary committee was set up to draft a mission statement and constitution. Suggestions from this workgroup were used as the basis for discussion at a documentary filmmakers' meeting in Johannesburg in August, where it was agreed that a national body would be established. A constitution was drafted by an interim board, and the organisation has registered as an NPO (non-profit organisation). On 21 April 2007, the DFA held its first annual general meeting and the constitution was unanimously accepted. The first board was elected to serve, on a voluntary basis, documentary filmmakers of South Africa.

The DFA is co-chaired by Tula Dlamini in Gauteng and Miki Redelinghuys in the Western Cape. "We feel strongly that the DFA needs to represent filmmakers from all regions in South Africa, and hope to grow membership in all the provinces. Where there is one filmmaker with a camera, there should be a DFA member."

## Most accessible genre

The documentary film genre is unique in that it can stimulate public discourse; reflect on social, political, cultural and current events in a very immediate way. It can explore history, commemorate heritage and unearth the mysteries of the universe. Documentaries tell stories of ordinary and extraordinary people – they celebrate, question, investigate and reflect. It is one of the most accessible genres of film-making, yet often marginalised within the bigger environment of film and broadcast industry.

The DFA aims to create a unified voice for documentary filmmakers and gain recognition for this genre of filmmaking in South Africa. The association will address the specific needs of documentary filmmakers and network with related industry bodies, in the interests of documentary filmmakers.

The DFA encourages all documentary filmmakers to play an active role in shaping the association, by participating, advising and engaging at all times. The DFA is here for filmmakers, by filmmakers.

The DFA has already established strong links with industry role players, such as the Encounters Documentary Film Festival, which has been promoting and developing documentary filmmakers in South Africa since 1999.

## **“Synergies”**

“We believe there are synergies with a documentary festival and filmmakers. Documentaries are seen as the poor sister of filmmaking, while in fact it is a staple which requires more attention and needs to be taken seriously. One of the ways to ensure that it is accorded due regard is by creating a documentary association,” says Mandisa Zitha of Encounters.

DFA membership is aimed at individual documentary filmmakers and annual membership fees are R250 per individual. Companies can participate as associate members. To make the DFA accessible to new filmmakers, the DFA is offering membership bursaries, sponsored by DFA members, corporate South Africa and international organisations.

Pre-launch membership is already almost evenly spread between these two provinces. Drives to reach potential members in KZN and the Eastern Cape are also already under way.

All DFA members who have signed up and paid before or at the launch, are offered a complimentary ticket by Encounters to any of its 2007 screenings, subject to booking.

For more information, or to request a membership application, contact .

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>