

Film is growing in Africa

If you go to a cinema in Europe or the US, it's very unlikely you will see a film from Africa. There are films made in Africa. There are many documentaries about African wildlife that you can see on television. Africa is an exotic location for film makers – even part of a James Bond film was shot in Madagascar. But films that are written by African writers, with African actors and an African director and that make it into mainstream cinemas are very rare. There are different reasons for this. Films are expensive to make so there is a problem of funding – finding who will pay the money for the film to be produced. Very often the money to make films comes from outside Africa. Then, when you have made the film, there is a problem of distribution – who will buy the film, make copies and persuade cinemas to show it. One way to achieve this is to show a film at festivals. Over the years African films have been well received at Cannes. Films by Abderrahmane Sissako from Mauritania, Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, from Chad and of course Senegal's Sembène Ousmane were very popular among the audiences there. But this did not often lead to films reaching a wider audience. However, things are beginning to change. In major cities in Europe and the US there are African film festivals. These festivals attract not only audiences from the ex-patriot community but also people interested in finding out more about Africa and African art.

Nollywood, the film industry based in Nigeria, is now the second largest film producer outside Hollywood. In the early days producers made films cheaply to be sold as DVDs. They made more money this way as there are not so many cinemas in Nigeria or in neighbouring countries. But since 2000 they have increased production and now they sometimes release over 1000 films per year. Often the films were pirated onto DVD. Films started to be shared over social media too. Now online streaming companies like Netflix have become interested. Netflix had a few films on its list for a few years. Now more and more people are interested in African films, so they have decided to increase their list. But although Nigeria produces most of the films in Africa, we shouldn't forget that there are 53 other countries with stories to tell.

Initiatives like streaming could be the answer for other African film-makers. For Appoline Traore this could be an opportunity for her film to reach a wider audience. She was born in Burkino Faso in 1976. She studied and graduated in the US and started work on small independent films there. After a short time she decided to return to Africa. Her two most recent films,

Moi Zaphira (2013) and Frontieres (2017) were both highly appreciated at the Pan African Festival of Film and Television. Now that Netflix is looking for wider global audiences, perhaps people all over the world can appreciate young African talent like Appoline.

New words for this article

to shoot a film	to make a film
release a film	show a film in public

Comprehension Questions

Indiquez si les expressions suivantes sont vraies (True) ou fausses (False).

1. There are many films made in Africa
2. It is difficult to find financial support for film making
3. Showing a film at a festival will make money for the film
4. Nollywood produces more films than Hollywood
5. Netflix has been interested in African films for a long time

5	False
4	False
3	False
2	True
1	True

Comprehension questions

Answers