

ECRANS NOIRS 2020

International colloquium

call for contributions

Crisis cinema, cinema in crisis: covid-19, an opportunity to reinvent the 7th art in Africa?

Almost all of the studies devoted to the diagnosis of African cinemas are unanimous: it is a sector whose feverishness and extremely fragile health have always worried those who are concerned. (Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike (1994), Olivier Barlet (1997), Sada Niang (2014, 2001, 1996) or Alexie Tcheuyap (2005, 2011), Ngansop 1987).

Born from a difficult childbirth in a context of colonial violence, supported by structures with a foot of clay in the 1970s (FODIC, SIEDEC, CIDC ...), African cinemas face endless problems of economic profitability, insufficient structures and capital, dependence on foreign funding. (Sébastien Kamba, 1992; Guy Jérémie Ngansop, 1987). Tahar Chéria, in 1978, presented them as a head (authors and their films) without a body (without markets, without audiences, without normal distribution structures).

The demise of conventional exploitation with the disappearance of cinemas has come, like a club, to reveal and unveil to the general public, the crisis that the cinematographic activity has always known in Africa. A state that Jean Pierre Bekolo treats of stillborn cinema that must be buried and the infusion stopped, otherwise rot sets in.

However, in this wave tinged with pessimism, digital technology has appeared with its new forms of production, distribution and diffusion; a fertile ground for African cinematographic creation. Like fireworks, new technologies have fostered the emergence of new nuggets, fruits constituting (of) a new generation of filmmakers. However, here is that the dynamism of this generation is unfortunately stopped by the health crisis created by the covid-19 pandemic.

The latter completely disrupted film activities, forces professionals in all fields and in particular in the cinema industry to suddenly stop their activities, forced festival organizers to cancel or postpone them. Facts that knock out a feverish sector.

While it is true that some West African countries like Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso or Benin, have reacted to the pandemic by supporting artists and in good stead, place the filmmakers, by the establishment of aid funds for the 7th art, most African countries still remain sluggish in the face of the cinema crisis aggravated by covid-19.

In Cameroon, the adoption of Law 1076 intended to structure cultural associations is appreciated in an ambivalent manner, so much does it appear sometimes as a desire to organize the sector, and sometimes as a sword of Damocles brandished over companies and cultural groups. At a time when the entertainment industry, and especially the cinema, appears to be strangled, it is crucial to stop and ask ourselves:

- In what and how could the crisis caused by covid-19 constitute an opportunity to reinvent African cinemas?

From this main question, follow the secondary questions:

- What options should be explored to ensure the survival, even the influence of African cinemas? - How to start galloping again, once the pandemic is over or under control?
- Are there new ways of funding to explore?
- Can we continue in the footsteps, shapes and rhythms of before covid-19?
- Certain events and meetings on cinema are quite fortunately held on Zoom, to the point that production and especially distribution are very interested in this technology. Could cinema evolve into a virtual form of entertainment?

It is to the quest for answers to the various questions suggested by the inevitable constraint of reinventing African cinemas after the effects of the terrifying health crisis, that the 2020 Colloquium of the Ecrans Noirs Film Festival seeks to devote itself.

Without being limited to them, the following areas may be discussed during this conference:

- African cinemas before, during and after covid-19: hotlines and breaks;
- The apparent and foreseeable effect and impact of covid-19 on cinema in Africa;
- Getting the cinema out of Africa from its crises: what public policies?
- Covid-19, opportunity or end of the dream of reinventing cinema in Africa?
- Which cinemas in Africa during and especially after covid-19?

- The virtual and the film industry in Africa: potentialities, limits and drawbacks
- Cinema and education, during and after the health crisis.

Scientific committee

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Please send your abstract proposals (around 600 characters) simultaneously to the following addresses:

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Reception deadline

Wednesday September 16, 2020 at midnight

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