

Sithengi success sparks new growth

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Sithengi, the Southern African International Film and Television market, set for 13-16th November in Cape Town, goes into its eighth edition this year.

The 2002 Market attracted over 1600 delegates from 43 countries and launched various new initiatives. After the success of 2002, Sithengi is now more than just a market. It's also a celebration of film from around Africa and the World and a year-round information and business service resource.

Last year's edition was extremely successful. Amongst the many highlights, was the launch of the 1st Sithengi Film Festival, which has now become the Cape Town World Cinema Festival, the 1st Children's Broadcasting Festival and the 1st Animation Festival. We attracted 1617 delegates from 43 countries, had a total of 82 exhibitors stands and featured an exhibition/trade show, conferences, educational meetings, workshops, pitching forums, market screenings, seminars, training workshops and numerous networking functions. In light of the success of Sithengi 2002, we look forward to an excellent market in 2003.

The Sithengi Film Festival, initiated in 2002, is now newly branded as the Cape Town World Cinema Festival and this will include various other programmes including animation, a children's festival and a digital festival. The most significant addition this year, however, will be its new information agency, which will be launched this month. Mike Auret, CEO, explains, "We are re-positioning ourselves as an information provider to facilitate the financing of productions and the sale and trade of finished film and television products."

Sithengi's new information agency will provide information internationally about African producers and product as well as the programming needs of African Broadcasters. It will provide information locally regarding the needs of international commissioning editors, financiers and co-producers.

This service, which will run in conjunction with the new and improved website, will also provide articles pertaining to the local and international industry, discussion groups, polls and weekly newsflashes. "We aim to grow our organizational capacity into a unique information resource which will add to our annual Sithengi Directory and enable us to market the African industry throughout the year," explains Auret. Sithengi will continue upgrading and improving their services and website, so log on to www.sithengi.co.za regularly for the latest news and developments.

NOTE: Sithengi membership allows you full access to our African and International Databases, research facility and other business services.

Sithengi members receive a wide variety of benefits aside from free entry into the market and access to the Sithengi international database. Sithengi also allows members to list all their completed products or projects in development. Once a month all new entries of product and projects will be collected and marketed respectively to broadcasters, buyers, co-producers and financiers in Africa and internationally. In addition, the database will eventually have the capacity to load video clips from films, for maximum exposure.

Another benefit specific to Sithengi members is use of the resource centre at the Sithengi offices in Cape Town, which is stocked with videos, catalogues, magazines and brochures. Members who live outside of Cape Town can, for a minimal hourly rate, make use of Sithengi researchers to find specific information. Membership runs from January to December each year, and members must be paid up by the first day of the market within that year.

Industry Databases - An incredible resource for film and television professionals

As part of the new information service provided by Sithengi, we are developing a comprehensive database for members to access. The databases are divided into the African Industry and International Industry and contain information such as contact details and primary areas of business in many categories including producers, commissioning editors, broadcasters, financiers, distributors, festivals and government organisations from around the world.

A new addition is the product database, containing listings of new African film titles, their production company's details, the year in which they were made, length, genre and format. The aim is to grow this database into a leading catalogue of African film. Whether you are looking for a film for research purposes or to find particular information, the product database is where you will find it. You can also add your own films to be listed on www.sithengi.co.za for exposure both locally and abroad.

If you need any information on the local or international industry please contact our research department at

If you would like to provide us with information that would be of interest to the industry and that you would like to see on the Sithengi website, please email Taryn da Canha at

THE CAPE TOWN WORLD CINEMA FESTIVAL - A FESTIVAL OF WORLD CINEMA WITH AFRICAN FILM AT ITS HEART - 14-23 November 2003

Sithengi 2002 saw the launch of the 1st Sithengi Film Festival, now renamed the Cape Town World Cinema Festival. There were 34 films screened including 3 World Premieres and 4 African premieres. The aim of the Film Festival is to create a viable niche market for World Cinema, in the same way that a market has been created for World Music. Over time the Links with World Music will be defined and expanded to ensure an increasingly "festive" element to the screenings.

The Cape Town World Cinema Festival aims to showcase African and more specifically South African films in the context of other "World Cinema" films. World cinema here encompasses films from South America, Asia and Africa as well as films from the Black diaspora and a special focus on films from indigenous peoples i.e. Aborigine, Maori, Native American, Inuit etc.

In this context films need not be solely from these regions but could also include co-productions or films shot in these regions about subject matter which pertains to those regions and involvement in the making of the film by people from these regions. Through the promotion of top quality international films, we hope to simultaneously place value on African films.

Sithengi is in the process of securing a variety of venues for this year's festival. Currently they have secured Cinema Nouveau at the V&A Waterfront, the Labia Theatre in CPT and are negotiating with Kirstenbosch and the V&A Waterfront for open-air venues. The Bonteheuvel Civic Centre, Guguletu Hall and a mobile cinema are all on the cards for possible screenings.

The Cape Town World Cinema Festival should prove to be an exciting and varied public event with films for everyone's tastes and fun for the whole family.

How To Submit a Film to the Cape Town World Cinema Festival for possible selection:

If you believe your film fits the criteria for the festival, and you would like to submit it, you can register on www.sithengi.co.za and then send us a copy, to be received on or by the 15 August 2003 at the Sithengi Offices, c/o SABC Building, 209 Beach Road, Sea Point, Cape Town. For further information, call Taryn da Canha on 021 430 8427 or email

2003 CO-PRODUCTION MARKET SET TO BETTER SERVE PRODUCERS AND REDEFINE THE SPACE FOR PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT

The "Co-production Market" will become a more effective pipeline for product from the African continent to more developed

markets in Europe such as Cinemart or IDFA. A call for entries will soon be put out to producers of all African nations. Sithengi will be raising the bar for entries to the co-production market in order to attract better projects, which will satisfy potential international partners. Projects will only be accepted where there is a producer attached with either money or broadcast commitment.

In order to try to improve the quality of projects submitted to the market Sithengi will be working with the National Film and Video Foundation, NFVF, SASWA, the UPI, AVEA and regional organisations like SACOD, the Southern African Community of Documentary Film makers and ASDF, the African Script Development Fund to ensure that there is a training programme for producers which will lead to improved projects being developed for Sithengi.

Discussions are ongoing as to the shape of the producer training and details will be provided as soon as a training strategy is agreed to.

Member filmmakers can also enter film and video product to be listed in our product database on www.sithengi.co.za. Once a month, all new product entries will be collected and marketed to broadcasters and buyers in Africa and internationally. In addition, the database will eventually have the capacity to load video clips from films, for maximum exposure.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCRIPTWRITERS BEING EXPLORED FOR SITHENGI

Sithengi, SASWA, the ASDF and the NFVF have begun discussions to institute a "treatment competition" at Sithengi. The competition would be designed to offer prizes to the writers with the best ideas. The prize would include presentation of the writers at Sithengi and arrangement of meetings with interested producers. The winners would also receive funding to attend a script development process in the following year conducted by SASWA and the ASDF and there would also be funding for script development and possibly international marketing. The objective of the Treatment Contest is to attract new and existing screenwriters from Africa and to give these writers the incentive to produce highly competitive and attractive World Cinema stories.

Watch the Sithengi website, www.sithengi.co.za for further details of this exciting development.

CANADIAN DELEGATION AT SITHENGI 2002 A SUCCESS

Canada is the only country with whom South Africa currently shares a co-production treaty. As a result of a visit to Banff in 2001 and the follow up Focus on Africa at Banff 2002, there was a strong Canadian presence at Sithengi 2002.

The Canadian Film and Television Producers Association, CFTPA, arranged a delegation of 29 to visit Sithengi funded by Telefilm Canada and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Foreign and International Trade.

The Canadian delegation participated in discussions around co-production as well as film finance and appeared on many of the panels at the market, including a conference on co-production, the documentary, feature and animation pitching panels and a film finance workshop. The delegation was well-balanced and included producers, broadcasters, distributors and government finance bodies. As a result of the many meetings taken by the Canadian delegation with local filmmakers, there have been a number of co-production ventures undertaken.

Some results of the Canadian Delegation from 14 producer respondents:

Co-production deals completed - 1

Co-production discussions started - 21

Number of Projects found to work on - 13

In a report issued by the CFTPA reporting the results of the delegations visit to South Africa, it was concluded that Sithengi was an effective vehicle for "developing existing co-production relationships and developing new ones with real business possibilities." As one producer stated, " Our conclusion is that South Africa is a country about to burst onto the international co-production scene. The marketplace was surprisingly active as was the interest and talent of the South African

companies. We see major opportunities for business and we're following these up."

RESPONSES FROM CANADIAN DELEGATION ON:

How effective the Sithengi market was as a place for doing business

- It was effective. We already had a co-pro partner and achieved a lot with them while there. We also found an interesting partner with whom we will likely work in future.
- For me it was a great opportunity to get to know potential co-producers and understand where financing can be found in South Africa.
- I found it terrific, but I felt I had a real advantage teaching the Pitching Workshops and hearing close to 50 pitches, which certainly gave me insight in to some of the strongest projects and producers at the market.
- Our conclusion is that South Africa is a country about to burst onto the international co-pro scene. The marketplace was surprisingly active and the interest and talent of the South African companies was surprising. We see major opportunities for business and we're following these up with meetings, phone calls and a recent delegation came from South Africa to meet us at NATPE in New Orleans. So the business possibilities are real.
- We made a number of contacts that will further the projects we have in development. I believe we will return to negotiate production deals and to market film.
- Very effective as in doing business with South Africans and being allowed the opportunity in initiating relations with other Canadians.
- Very effective. Made some wonderful contacts and was able to have meaningful meetings with them.
- It was very useful both to get an overall sense of the film, TV and animation industries and to meet individual producers who might be potential co-production partners. I found it unusually useful, having attended many other TV markets.
- Very effective. Our meetings were mainly with African broadcasters and they generally don't have the money to travel to markets that are farther afield. It would have been nice if there was more North American and European participation, but Sithengi really feels like a market that will continue to grow.
- As I wasn't there to do "Business" but more of a research trip, I found the market invaluable as it brought together the African continent to one venue.
- The market allowed me to learn from local producers and buyers about their working conditions and production opportunities and to be better informed about market conditions in the context of the decisions I make. It also allowed me to inform them and their govt. reps. about Canadian incentives and possibly generate more activity for Canada. Finally, it allowed me to see Canadians at work in the marketplace.

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