

Documentaries get international funding, local boost and awards

PUMA.Creative documentary awards will provide financial support, creative counsel and industry recognition to documentary filmmakers whose work addresses creative, social justice, peace or environmental issues globally. Locally, the [National Film and Video Foundation](#) (NFVF) announced its intention to recommend the funding of six feature scripts in development, seven feature films for production and four documentaries for production underlining the importance of documentaries, as can be seen from the recent local audience awards for 'Encounters'.

Agents for change

Puma, announcing its long-term partnership with Channel 4 BRITDOC Foundation late last week in London, involves a number of key awards and programmes to support the medium of documentaries, recognising and rewarding them as powerful vehicles for change.

- The new international rapid-response development fund consists of 40 annual grants of 5,000 Euros each to enable the production of film trailers (an impressive trailer is the catalyst to getting a documentary off the ground.)
- The Impact Award will be given annually to the documentary of the year that has made the most significant social impact. Selected by an independent panel of judges, this 50 000 Euros prize will be split between the filmmaking team and the associated outreach campaigns at the inaugural gala and prize giving ceremony in the Summer of 2011.
- The Catalyst Programme, will provide workshops and education to film makers who do not have access to the main film circuit
- The Mobility Awards, dedicated documentary film grants, will be incorporated into the existing Mobility Awards programme to provide financial support to directors for travel costs at any stage of a documentary's production or release

Applications for grants are now open at www.britdoc.org/puma.

Catalyst Award to South African

Another key element of the relationship is the launch of the PUMA.Creative Impact Awards offering inaugural grants to aid the production of documentaries. The first ten winners were announced at the Awards Ceremony held at the Criterion, London on 10 September, attended by Puma CEO Jochen Zeitz, Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan, His Royal Highness Prince Hamzah of Jordan and UK actress Ophelia Lovibond. One of the winning entries is *The Wretched of the Rainbow*, directed by South African Riaan Hendricks on the xenophobic attacks its poor want to wage against black foreign nationals. This is a story in search of heroes-leaders from the most conflict-ridden areas "affected" by the presence of foreigners. Where, with conviction, they are engaged in a great battle to capture the heart and minds of their communities as they champion justice for a peaceful co-existence.

NFVF production funding needed

At the 3rd cycle meeting of the NFVF Council in early September, its management recommended funding seven feature films and four documentaries, that have previously been funded in development, for production. This is the first time the council has made such a recommendation and is indicative of the rigorous development process instituted over the past three years, with script editors assigned to every promising feature concept or project and a hands-on development process for all documentaries.

Unfortunately, only five of these feature projects can be funded out of this year's budget, with the remaining two being rolled

over for reconsideration in the new financial year, commencing 1 April 2011. A limited number of documentary applications for production may still be considered in the present financial year.

Documentaries festival awards

After a 17-day run in Cape Town and a satellite run in Johannesburg, Encounters has announced the winners of the annual Audience Awards for Best South African and International Documentary of the 12th Encounters South African International Documentary Festival 2010.

- Best South African Documentary winner - The 16th Man directed by Clifford Bestall
- Best International Documentary winner - Of Heart and Courage: Béjart Ballet Lausanne directed by Arantxa Aguirre.
- Second South African runner-up - Afrikaaps directed by Dylan Valley
- Third South African runner-up - Thembi directed by Jo Menell
- Second international runner-up - Yes Men Fix the World directed by Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno
- Third international runner-up - Sathima's Windsong directed by Daniel A Yon

The audience award referee, Professor Tim Dunne, head of Department of Statistical Sciences, University of Cape Town, analysed the eligible ballot forms submitted by the Cape Town festival-goers. The NFVF is the primary sponsor of the Festival.

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