

# Entertainment industry heavyweights flying the AFDA MFA flag high

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AFDA are very excited to have the highly experienced film industry professionals Richard Starkey and Adze Ugah studying the AFDA Master of Fine Arts in Motion Picture Medium.



"It is great to see the AFDA MFA attracting seasoned industry professionals such as Richard Starkey and AFDA alumnus Adze Ugah. They have both made invaluable contributions to the creative economy and we are honoured to welcome them into the AFDA MFA programme," says AFDA CEO Teresa Passchier.

The MFA degree is a two-year part-time programme tailored to the needs of working professionals in the creative economy. Participants attend four retreats per year, complete a research thesis and collaborate on a film project according to their disciplines.

"I obtained my Bachelor of Arts Honours degree from AFDA in 2005, this qualification is largely responsible for my successful career in the South African film and television industry. It is logical and likely that a Masters degree acquired from the same institution will further advance my career beyond the shores of the continent. AFDA alumni have also excelled in every sphere of the South African film and TV industry, this is a testament to its outstanding learning facility and course curriculum. AFDA is also the only premium film institute on the continent that offers world-class film education, which is rooted in a strong African context," says Adze Ugah.

Adze's career began at the National Film Institute, Jos, Nigeria. In 2001 he wrote, produced and directed his first video feature, *VIYA*, which earned him a Nigerian National Film and Video Censors Board Award. He decided to cross borders and enrolled at AFDA Johannesburg for his honours degree.

With a string of music videos and commercials to his credit, he has also featured as a director on several South African television drama series such as *Society II* and *III*, *Zone 14*, *Tshisa II*, *Skwizas II*, *My perfect family II*, *Isibaya*, *Room 9*, the acclaimed pan-African TV series, *Jacob's Cross*, which he also co-created, and *Mfolozi Street*.

His 2008 documentary, *The Burning Man*, travelled the globe extensively and garnered several international and local awards.

His first feature film, *Gog'Helen*, was released in late 2012. His most recent films include the box office success stories, *Mrs Right Guy*, starring Dineo Moeketsi and fellow AFDA alumni, Thapelo Mokoena, and *Looking for Love*, starring Celeste Ntuli.

"I'm passionate about film editing, but have also always been passionate about teaching and doing a Masters Degree at AFDA seemed like a great way of getting myself qualified, so that I can use my experience as an editor to help others navigate the post production process. I was a little worried I wouldn't be able find the time to study, but the key is passion: I'm passionate about the subjects I'm pursuing, so it doesn't feel like work. Doing a Masters is an incredible way of allowing myself the luxury of spending time learning things I want to learn about, allowing myself to pursue knowledge for its own sake, and to broaden my horizons in a humble yet exciting way," says Richard Starkey.

Richard began his film industry career in the first digital audio suite in SA, back in 1991. Five years later he joined Cutaways and trained as an editor under two of the country's top offline editors, cutting high-end commercials and music videos.

In 2003 he branched out into TV drama and feature films, working on groundbreaking SA series like *Yizo Yizo 3* and films like *The Flyer* and *Straight Outta Benoni*.

More recently Richard has been cutting international TV series and films for the likes of Universal, SYFY Channel, HBO, Sony Pictures, Starz, National Geographic Channel, Showmax, BBC, ZDF and Lifetime Channel. As creative post supervisor and occasional colourist, Richard loves to be involved with all aspects of post, especially grade and final mix.

Part of his thesis for his Masters Degree at AFDA Cape Town is researching the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in high-end post-production.

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