



## ***The Bronze Men of Cameroon* (55' HD)**

A Documentary Film by Florence Ayisi



### **Synopsis**

*The Bronze Men of Cameroon* is an intimate portrait of a community of bronze artisans in Foumban, the 'City of Arts'. Bronze casting is a valued cultural heritage of the Bamum People in the Western Region of Cameroon. This film presents bronze craftsmen at work, with rare insights into their expertise in producing unique bronze sculptures that are inscribed with symbolic narratives, collective memory and identity of the Bamum

*The Bronze Men of Cameroon* is also about the changing landscape of Bamum bronze casting and the threats to cultural continuity as global trends negatively impact on a treasured way of life. The bronze craftsmen are facing challenges in sustaining their livelihoods and safeguarding their unique cultural heritage that has formed and defined their identity over several generations. The raw materials for making bronze sculptures are scarce. The craftsmen are facing competition from Chinese migrants who buy land export large quantities of these materials to their country. The foundries are closing down, and this established traditional art practice is in decline. Some bronze artists are turning to farming and other trades. The artisans are fearful and uncertain "*whether in the future Bamum's bronze art could disappear*" and, with it, a tradition and their sense of belonging, livelihoods and history. Are these the last generation of bronze craftsmen in the Bamum Kingdom?

**In French and Bamum with English subtitles**

## **Production Crew**

### **Co-Executive Producers**

Margaret White & Peter White

### **Camera Operator**

Florence Ayisi

### **Editor**

James Corning

### **Sound Recordist**

Victorine Ngomele

### **Dubbing Mixer**

James Cooper

### **Additional Camera**

CHRIS Eddy Bannem Lipem

### **Aerial Video**

Mbella Baye Yves & Jeannot Eyoun Patrick

### **Motion Graphics**

Esme Gritten

Colourist

**JAMES CORNING**

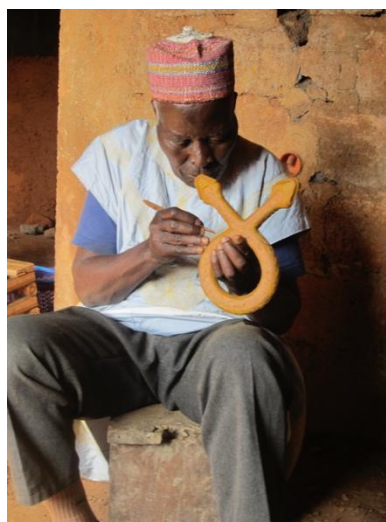
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## Film Festival Highlights: Official Selections, Screenings and Awards

1. **Twin City Black Film Festival (TCBFF)**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA – **Oct 21-24, 2020**
2. **Mosaic Film Festival of Arts and Culture** – Bedford, Nova Scotia – Canada – **Nov 20-22, 2020**
3. **Kwanzaa Film Festival** - New York, USA – **Dec. 26, 2020 – Jan. 1, 2021** – **IMANI 'Feature Film' Award**
4. **Watch-Africa Cymru, - Wales African Film Festival** – **Feb. 19th-28th Feb 2021**
5. **West African Film Festival**, Houston, Texas, USA - February 1– **28, 2021** – **Winner, Grand Prize**
6. **Pan African Film & Arts Festival (PAFF) Los Angeles, USA** - February **14-28, 2021**
7. **Festival International du Cinéma Indépendant de Bafoussam** - Cameroun – **Mar 24-27 2021**
8. **RapidLion - The South African International Film Festival** – **April 5-11, 2021**
9. **Master of Art Film Festival**, Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna, Bulgaria – **April 8-29, 2021**
10. **Cameroon International Film Festival (CAMIFF)** - April 19-24, 2021)
11. **International Black and Diversity Film Festival (IBDFF)**, Toronto, Canada - **June 2021**
12. **The African Film Festival (TAFF)**, Dallas, Texas, USA – **June 1-6, 2021**
13. **Luleå International Film Festival**, Sweden - **24-26th September 2021**
14. **Boden International Film Festival**, Sweden - **April 2021**





## Filmmaker Biography - **Producer & Director**



Florence AYISI was born in Cameroon. She now lives and works in the United Kingdom. She is professor of International Documentary Film at the Faculty of Creative Industries, University of South Wales, U.K. She teaches diverse aspects of film theory and history, and documentary film practice. Florence is also an award-winning documentary filmmaker, whose main vision is to decolonise the image of Africa from Pan-African and woman-centred perspectives by offering rare, subtle and discerning insights, and stories where African *subjects* have ‘agency’ and ‘voice’.

Florence has made several documentary films in Cameroon and Tanzania including ***Sisters in Law*** (co-directed with Kim Longinotto, 2005), which has won numerous prestigious film awards including *PRIX ART ET ESSAI* at Cannes film festival; *Grierson Award for Best Documentary on a Contemporary Issue*; and *Peabody Award* in USA. ***Sisters in Law*** was also long-listed for an Academy Award nomination (Oscars) in 2006. Her other films include ***Zanzibar Soccer Dreams*** (co-directed with Catalin Brylla, 2016), ***Handing Down Time – Cameroon*** (2012), ***Art of this Place:***



***Women Artists in Cameroon*** (2011), ***Zanzibar Soccer Queens*** (2007), ***Our World in Zanzibar, My Mother: Isange*** (2007), ***Cameroonian Women in Motion*** (2012). Her films have been screened at numerous festivals and on television worldwide. In 2017, ***Zanzibar Soccer Dreams*** (2016) was shortlisted for the prestigious *Research in Film Awards* by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), U.K.

Florence was presented with the *ICON Award* during *Africa Week* (2018), at University of West of England, Bristol, U.K. The award recognises the "exceptional contributions by individuals in promoting Pan-Africanism on a personal, national and global scale". Her practice research activities in film contribute to the thriving research culture in the Faculty of Creative Industries, University of South Wales.

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Practice as Research in Film Website: <https://www.florenceayisi.com/>

## Select Filmography

### ***Marie-Madeleine: A Female Chief*** (2018, 66' HD)



### Synopsis

As Marie-Madeleine beats the *ceremonial* drum on her enthronement day, the gentle sounds signal a break with tradition. This documentary witnesses a new phase in traditional leadership in the village of Nkol Ngok I, in Cameroon. A woman will be their traditional leader; an unusual occurrence in most African societies where the position of chief is customarily handed down from father to son. This film presents a rare glimpse into a community undergoing transformation. Social attitudes toward women's positions and roles are shifting, as men openly acknowledge the importance of women in development; "*women are doing more to encourage development than men. I believe a female chief will bring new things.*"

Even though some villagers consider Marie-Madeleine a 'stranger' because she lives in the capital city of Yaoundé, she is determined to integrate into village life. The villagers are optimistic that she will bring much needed development to the village.

**In French and Ewondo with English subtitles**

**Link to Trailer:** <https://vimeo.com/273540265>



## Select Highlight Film Festival Screenings

19 film festivals in 12 countries: USA (4 festivals), Nigeria (2 festivals), Kenya (2 festivals), Greece, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Cameroon, Denmark, Ireland and Wales, and Tanzania.

1. International Documentary Festival of Ierapetra Awards, Greece
2. International Images Film Festival for Women, Zimbabwe  
<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/34973334591794303/>
3. Wexford Documentary Film Festival, Ireland  
<https://wexforddocumentaryfilmfestival.ie/2020/07/04/marie-madeline-a-female-chief/>
4. Silicon Valley African Film Festival (SVAFF), San Jose, USA - 2018
5. Twin Cities Black Film Festival, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA - 2018
6. Cape Town International Film Market & Festival, South Africa - 2018
7. Lake International Pan African Film Festival, Nairobi, Kenya - 2018
8. Mama Afrika Film Festival, Nairobi, Kenya - 2018
9. Cardiff International Film Festival, U.K. – 2019 <https://www.theciff.co.uk/friday-oct-19-pierhead>
10. Africa International Film Festival, Lagos, Nigeria
11. International Monthly Film Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark – IMDB award-qualifying festival
12. Cascade Festival of African Films, Portland, Oregon, USA -  
<https://2019.africanfilmfestival.org/festival/films/marie-madeleine-a-female-chief/>
13. Eko International Film Festival, Victoria Island Lagos, Nigeria - 2019

14. Mashariki African Film Festival, Rwanda - 2018
15. Equality International Film Festival, Sacramento, USA
16. Cincinnati African & Asian Diaspora Film Festival, USA - 2019
17. Festival International du Cinéma Indépendant de Bafoussam (FICIB), Cameroun – 2019
18. Watch-Africa: Wales African Film Festival - 2021
19. African Women Arts & Film Festival (AWAFFEST), Tanzania – March-April 2021

## ***Zanzibar Soccer Dreams* (2016, 52' - Co-directed with Catalin Brylla)**



Trailer <https://vimeo.com/164375459>

### **Synopsis**

*Zanzibar Soccer Dreams* (**ZSD**) presents the dawn of an era for women's soccer in Zanzibar. This film is a follow-up to the 2007 *Zanzibar Soccer Queens* (**ZSQ**) which focused on **Women Fighters**, a team of strong-willed Muslim women determined to play soccer to better their lives. Playing soccer has taken them beyond the borders of their country, and away from the



confines of negative societal attitudes because they *expose* their bodies. In 2009, the players were invited to Germany. Their visit abroad created a buzz and is changing societal attitudes. Women's soccer has gone mainstream! The once marginalised soccer "hooligans" have not only become visible but are considered 'cultural Ambassadors. As one player declares, *"Men who used to say you are hooligans, have no more words left"*. Muslim schoolgirls can now play soccer as part of their physical education. Despite limited soccer equipment schoolgirls cherish the freedom and right to play and one asserts, *"Something great has happened to girls"*.

## In Swahili with English Subtitles



## Handing Down Time – Cameroon (2012, HD - 53')



## Synopsis



***Handing Down Time - Cameroon*** is a dynamic documentary portrait of Africa's diverse cultures located in one nation. It presents a kaleidoscopic journey through the distinct ethnic groups and cultures in a country often referred to as 'Africa in miniature'. It is a non-verbal film celebrating the living traditions through sumptuous display of song and dance, picturesque beautiful costumes, crafts, wrestling and traditional horseracing. This is a glimpse of Cameroon's rich cultural heritage, filmed during a *National Festival of Arts and Culture*. The film is episodic and is framed around the *griots*, traditional storytellers, musicians, poets and praise singers, who observe, preserve, and pass on collective cultural memory. The *griots* instruct children to "listen, watch, bear witness, and remember" their culture. As storytellers and custodians of culture, the griots affirm the flourishing diverse traditions in Cameroon; co-existing in harmony with contemporary ways of life despite threats from transnational encounters and transactions.



Full length film here: <https://vimeo.com/florenceayisi>

***Art of this Place: Women Artists in Cameroon*** (2011, HD - 40')



## Synopsis

This documentary film is about Cameroonian women artists. It presents an intimate portrait and rare insights into the rich variety of women's creative expressions in visual arts. From wood sculptures to different forms of painting and ceramics, their artwork reflects their individual passion for the arts. Making art provides a platform for their freedom of cultural and artistic expressions. The women frankly share their ideas about what art means to them in the wider context of their identities and visions as African women. Their creative impulses challenge simplistic notions of traditional, prescriptive, roles ascribed to women, arguably, in most African societies. We see them at work and hear about their confidence as they proudly articulate their dynamic ideas and formulated identities in a society where according to one woman "...the woman is still considered fit only for marriage, cooking and bearing children."



Full length film here: <https://vimeo.com/florenceayisi>

## **Zanzibar Soccer Queens (2007, 52')**





## Synopsis

***Zanzibar Soccer Queens*** film documents the lives and football activities of *Women Fighters*, a team of predominantly Muslim women. It presents a community of strong-willed women determined to better their lives and define new identities through playing soccer. Their involvement with soccer goes beyond the pitch; they travel, party on the beach, and play soccer with men. The film presents viewpoints from women determined to achieve personal goals beyond their prescribed traditional roles and expectations. The very concept of Muslim women playing football is not only a novel idea, but it also challenges widely held negative perceptions about the role, image and status of women in Muslim countries where women have many restrictions such as concealing their bodies and not being in public with men who are not their relatives. What motivates these women to play football? How do they deal with society's attitude towards Muslim women exposing their bodies?



Full length film here: <https://vimeo.com/florenceayisi>

## ***Our World in Zanzibar* (2007, 35')**



### **Synopsis**

This documentary is an exposé and frank personal accounts of migration stories of *foreign* women living in Zanzibar, Tanzania. Through workshops, candid discussions, interviews and staged performances, the film presents the micro worlds of women from the USA, The Netherlands, Peru/Spain and Britain. Why have they journeyed to Africa? What are they escaping from? What made these women to leave their comfortable lifestyles in the West? Is this 'reverse migration' - from the wealthy West to a continent consistently represented as a place of perpetual poverty, despair, disease and so on? The women speak honestly about why they left their homelands. What can Africa, supposedly the poorest continent, offer a woman from America, one of the richest countries in the world? What are they running from? What are they searching for? Is Zanzibar a dreamland where one can "*be a big fish in a little pond*"?





Full length film here: <https://vimeo.com/florenceayisi>

***Sisters in Law*** (Florence Ayisi & Kim Longinotto, 2005, 104')



## Synopsis

***Sisters in Law*** is a fascinating look at the work of a courthouse in a small town in Cameroon, Central Africa. The tough-minded state prosecutor, Vera Ngassa and judge, Beatrice Ntuba, are dealing with cases of domestic violence and child abuse, and encouraging the women and children involved in be courageous despite pressures from family to remain silent. Through their emotional stories and courage, the extraordinary work of women in the judicial system shines through. With fierce compassion, the female prosecutor and judge dispense wisdom and justice in fair measure; handing down stiff sentences to those convicted. This film presents another reality of African Women's agency and their resilient spirit, courage, hope and fight for justice and gender equality.



Full length film here: <https://vimeo.com/florenceayisi>