



IOWA AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL INAUGURAL EDITION — DES MOINES, IOWA

Welcome to the inaugural Iowa African Film Festival, Iowa's first platform for African storytelling. Celebrating our narratives through screenings, conversations, and community engagement. Join us to connect, inspire, and build bridges through the power of cinema.

Jack Chimbetete | Festival Executive Producer

venues are Sussman Theatre, Aliber 101, and Harkin.

Thursday 6 August 2026 | Opening Day (Starts 2:00 PM)

TIME	FILM / SESSION	RUNTIME	VENUE
2:00 PM	Opening Events and Culture Exhibition / Performance	— Performers	Aliber 101
2:30–5:30 PM	Early film block (titles to be confirmed by Jack before finalizing)	— Manning Documentary, Local Iowa Films	Aliber 101 / Harkin / Sussman Theatre (per theme)
6:00 PM	Registration and Welcome Reception — light refreshments	— ALN Board Chair	Aliber 101
6:30 PM	Opening Ceremony — Welcome from Festival Director, One Voice DSM, and Drake University	Opening Keynote -	
7:00 PM	The Coruskan — Dir. Fred Eyriey France/Réunion Feature Film Official Selection • Mental Health, Grief & Identity	1 hr 59 min	Sussman Theatre
	Silent Grief — Dir.	14 min	Harkin

	Loyiso Paul Pududu South Africa Short Film • Mental Health, Grief & Identity		
	Beat the Saddle — Dir. Soliman Mohamed Hamza Egypt Short Film • Mental Health, Grief & Identity	15 min	Harkin
	Being a Man — Dir. Rabia Joy Danladi Burkina Faso Short Film • Mental Health, Grief & Identity	6 min 50 sec	Harkin
	Son of Shadow — Dir. Chabel Ngoubili Congo Short Film • Mental Health, Grief & Identity	11 min 33 sec	Harkin
	Unread — Dir. Akua Agyekumwaa Ghana Short Film • Mental Health, Grief & Identity	9 min 53 sec	Harkin
	Not Just a Brother — Dir. Thomas-Jeffery Seaman Nigeria Documentary Short • Disability Inclusion	4 min 21 sec	Harkin
	What Is The Black Body? — Dir. Amira Barrett United States Documentary Short	14 min 30 sec	Aliber 101
	Echoes from the Past — Dir. Ayodeji Sanni United Kingdom Short Film	20 min	Aliber 101
8:00 PM	Q&A — Filmmaker conversations following short film	— Dr Shah, Film makers	Harkin Aliber 101

	blocks		
9:00 PM	Q&A — The Coruskan — Post-screening conversation	— Moderator and panelists (CultureALL)	Sussman Theatre
9:15 PM	Networking and Close (outdoor option)	— Hospitality	Aliber 101

Friday 7 August 2026 | Full Festival Day

TIME	FILM / SESSION	RUNTIME	VENUE
10:30 AM	Registration and Morning		
11:00 AM	Panel Discussion — "African Cinema and the Human Experience" Filmmakers, curators, and community leaders	— Guest Panelists	Aliber 101
12:00 PM	Lunch Break — Open networking Cultural exhibition viewing		Aliber 101

Block 1 — 1:00 PM — Harkin and Aliber 101 simultaneously

TIME	FILM / SESSION	RUNTIME	VENUE
1:00 PM	A Touch of Sugar — Dir. Vennessa Hanshaw Jamaica Short Film • Mental Health, Grief & Identity	13 min 17 sec	Harkin
	The Noise Around Her Black — Dir. Odaro Eguavoen Nigeria Short Film • Mental Health, Grief & Identity	20 min	Harkin
	Till Death — Dir.	20 min	Harkin

	Yana Billé-Chung United States Short Film		
	The Space Between US — Dir. Thomas-Jeffery Seaman Nigeria Short Film	6 min 54 sec	Aliber 101
	Check — Dir. Andrew Brow Mayaba Zambia Short Film • Mental Health, Grief & Identity (tentative)	5 min	Aliber 101
	Imagination of Shadow — TBC Egypt Short Film	12 min	Aliber 101
	Beneath the Veil — Dir. Hazar Abbassi Tunisia Short Film	13 min 24 sec	Aliber 101
2:00 PM	Q&A and Break — Filmmaker conversations across all venues 20 min	— Rev Dr Jonathan Whitfield and panelists	Aliber 101

Block 2 — 2:30 PM — Harkin and Aliber 101 simultaneously

TIME	FILM / SESSION	RUNTIME	VENUE
2:30 PM	50 Kwanzas — Dir. Jesualdo Muvuma Angola Animated Short	4 min 10 sec	Harkin
	Plans — Dir. Jesualdo Muvuma Angola Animated Short • Mental Health, Grief & Identity (tentative)	7 min 42 sec	Harkin
	Eid Mubarak — Dir. Ayobami Temitope Shittu Nigeria Short Film	2 min 25 sec	Harkin
	Tribes — Dir. Youssef Gharian Tunisia	17 min 9 sec	Harkin

	Short Film		
	4 Letters — Dir. Natasha Chirambo et al. South Africa Experimental Short	18 min 25 sec	Harkin
	Nibbling of the Night — Dir. Gabi Bania United Kingdom Animated Short	10 min	Harkin
	The Spot — Dir. Mohamed Anaanaa Morocco Short Film	11 min	Aliber 101
	Words — Dir. Youssef El Makkaoui Morocco Short Film	5 min 18 sec	Aliber 101
	A Quiet Night — Dir. Yehya Mohy Eldien Egypt Short Film	11 min	Aliber 101
	Israel Anthem — Dir. Abdelaziz Elraghy Egypt Short Film	4 min 14 sec	Aliber 101
	Final Touch — Dir. Mohamed Kentaoui Morocco Short Film	14 min 22 sec	Aliber 101
	Dipanda Dya N'Ngola — Dir. Jesualdo Muvuma Angola Animated Short	1 min 50 sec	Aliber 101
3:30 PM	Q&A and Break — Filmmaker conversations across all venues 20 min	— CultureALL	All Venues

TIME	FILM / SESSION	RUNTIME	VENUE
4:00 PM	Panel Discussion — Session 2 — "African	—	Aliber 101

	Cinema and the Global Diaspora"		
5:00 PM	Cultural Exhibition and Networking — Sponsor activations Open to all festival ticket holders	—	Aliber 101
6:00 PM	16 Bars: King of Bawo — Dir. Mirriam Phiri Malawi Feature Film Official Selection • GBV, Child Abuse & Related Trauma	1 hr 28 min	Sussman Theatre
7:30 PM	Q&A — Feature Films — Post-screening conversations	—	Sussman Theatre Aliber 101
8:00 PM	Destiny of a Migrant — Dir. Omar Brams Mbaye Senegal Documentary Feature Official Selection • Migration, Diaspora & Legacy	1 hr 6 min	Sussman Theatre

Saturday 8 August 2026 | Motherland Experience and Awards Evening

TIME	FILM / SESSION	RUNTIME	VENUE
11:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Motherland Experience — African Festival Food, Music, Dance, Performances and Fashion In collaboration with The Motherland Experience	—	Western Gateway Park, 1205 Locust St, Des Moines, IA 50309
6:00 PM	Dinner, Awards Ceremony — 8 Categories — Adjudicating panel Audience Choice Award	—	Johanson

	Award winners and recognitions		
10:00 PM	Close of Festival — Thank you remarks from the Festival Director	—	Drake University

Film Index — 30 Official Selections

All running times confirmed from FilmFreeway submission records. This is a working draft — programme subject to change.

#	Film / Director	Runtime	Country	Venue / Block	Theme
FEATURES					
1	The Coruskan — Fred Eyriey	1 hr 59 min	France/Réunion	Sussman — Thu 7:00 PM	Mental Health, Grief & Identity
20	16 Bars: King of Bawo — Mirriam Phiri	1 hr 28 min	Malawi	Sussman — Fri 6:00 PM	GBV, Child Abuse & Related Trauma
DOCUMENTARY					
14	Destiny of a Migrant — Omar Brams Mbaye	1 hr 6 min	Senegal	Aliber 101 — Fri 6:00 PM	Migration, Diaspora & Legacy
SHORT FILMS					
16	Not Just a Brother — Thomas-Jeffery Seaman	4 min 21 sec	Nigeria	Aliber 101 — Thu 7:00 PM	Disability Inclusion
18	What Is The Black Body? — Amira Barrett	14 min 30 sec	United States	Aliber 101 — Thu 7:00 PM	History & Race
12	Son of Shadow —	11 min 33 sec	Congo	Harkin — Thu 7:00 PM	Mental Health, Grief &

	Chabel Ngoubili				Identity
17	Echoes from the Past — Ayodeji Sanni	20 min	United Kingdom	Aliber 101 — Thu 7:00 PM	History & Race
2	Till Death — Yana Billé-Chung	20 min	United States	Harkin — Fri Block 1	Morality, validation, and co-dependency
3	50 Kwanzas — Jesualdo Muvuma	4 min 10 sec	Angola	Harkin — Fri Block 2	Grief, resilience, and systemic violence
4	Silent Grief — Loyiso Paul Pududu	14 min	South Africa	Harkin — Thu 7:00 PM	Mental Health, Grief & Identity
5	Plans — Jesualdo Muvuma	7 min 42 sec	Angola	Harkin — Fri Block 2	Mental Health, Grief & Identity (tentative)
6	Beat the Saddle — Soliman Mohamed Hamza	15 min	Egypt	Harkin — Thu 7:00 PM	Mental Health, Grief & Identity
7	Nibbling of the Night — Gabi Bania	10 min	United Kingdom	Harkin — Fri Block 2	Grief, resilience, and systemic violence
8	Eid Mubarak — Ayobami Temitope Shittu	2 min 25 sec	Nigeria	Harkin — Fri Block 2	Faith, memory, belonging
9	4 Letters — Natasha Chirambo et al.	18 min 25 sec	South Africa	Harkin — Fri Block 2	—
10	Tribes — Youssef Gharian	17 min 9 sec	Tunisia	Harkin — Fri Block 2	—

11	Being a Man — Rabia Joy Danladi	6 min 50 sec	Burkina Faso	Harkin — Thu 7:00 PM	Mental Health, Grief & Identity
13	The Spot — Mohamed Anaanaa	11 min	Morocco	Aliber 101 — Fri Block 2	—
15	Words — Youssef El Makkaoui	5 min 18 sec	Morocco	Aliber 101 — Fri Block 2	—
19	A Touch of Sugar — Vennessa Hanshaw	13 min 17 sec	Jamaica	Harkin — Fri Block 1	Mental Health, Grief & Identity
21	Dipanda Dya N'Ngola — Jesualdo Muvuma	1 min 50 sec	Angola	Aliber 101 — Fri Block 2	—
22	Final Touch — Mohamed Kentaoui	14 min 22 sec	Morocco	Aliber 101 — Fri Block 2	—
23	A Quiet Night — Yehya Mohy Eldien	11 min	Egypt	Aliber 101 — Fri Block 2	—
24	Check — Andrew Brow Mayaba	5 min	Zambia	Aliber 101 — Fri Block 1	Mental Health, Grief & Identity (tentative)
25	Unread — Akua Agyekumwaa	9 min 53 sec	Ghana	Harkin — Thu 7:00 PM	Mental Health, Grief & Identity
26	Imagination of Shadow — TBC	12 min	Egypt	Aliber 101 — Fri Block 1	—
27	Beneath the Veil — Hazar Abbassi	13 min 24 sec	Tunisia	Aliber 101 — Fri Block 1	—
28	The Noise Around Her Black —	20 min	Nigeria	Harkin — Fri Block 1	Mental Health, Grief & Identity

	Odaro Eguavoen				
29	The Space Between US — Thomas-Jeffery Seaman	6 min 54 sec	Nigeria	Aliber 101 — Fri Block 1	—
30	Israel Anthem — Abdelaziz Elraghy	4 min 14 sec	Egypt	Aliber 101 — Fri Block 2	—

FEATURED FILMS

Five highlights from the 2026 IAFF Official Selection — ranked by adjudication score. Trailer links, poster artwork, and filmmaker interviews available on request: marketing@iowaafilmfestival.org

#1 — Score 100 | Gold Award | *The Coruskan*

Dir. Fred Eyriey | France / Réunion | Feature Film | 1 hr 59 min

Theme: *Mental Health, Grief & Identity*

Screening: *Opening Night — Thursday 6 August, 7:00 PM | Sussman Theatre*

Fred Eyriey is a filmmaker and producer based in La Réunion. *The Coruskan* — shot in the remote mountain cirque of Cilaos in Creole Réunionnais — is his debut feature, produced through Lithops Films. Released in Réunion cinemas November 2025, the film received the highest score of any IAFF 2026 submission and was selected unanimously for Opening Night.

Trailer / Info: youtube.com/watch?v=dRXDPDJpWrE

#2 — Score 97 | *Till Death*

Dir. Yana Billé-Chung | United States | Short Film | 20 min

Theme: *Morality, Validation & Co-dependency*

Screening: *Friday 7 August, Block 1 | Harkin*

Yana Billé-Chung is a writer and director whose short *Till Death* — a darkly funny study of human fragility and co-dependence — won Best Screenwriting and Best Actress at the 2026 Diversity in Cannes Short Film Showcase. It makes its LA premiere at the LA Shorts International Film Festival July 30 to August 12, 2026 — just weeks after its IAFF screening. Stars Nancy Ma, Rosie Lee Hooks (3x NAACP Image Award recipient), and Kieran Roberts.

#3 — Score 95.5 | Silver Award | *50 Kwanzas*

Dir. Jesualdo Muvuma | Angola | Animated Short | 4 min 10 sec

Theme: *Grief, Resilience & Systemic Struggle*

Screening: *Friday 7 August, Block 2 | Harkin*

Jesualdo Muvuma is a Luanda-based animator who wrote, illustrated, edited, and scored *50 Kwanzas* independently. The film follows Tchicolassonhi, an Angolan street vendor, on her daily pursuit of better conditions for herself and her family. It made history as the first Angolan production to screen and win at the Paris International Animated Film Festival (PIAFF 2025), taking Best Message Weight and Best Soundtrack.

Trailer / Info: youtube.com/watch?v=V5lCH44meLI

#4 — Score 93.5 | Silver Award | *Silent Grief*

Dir. Loyiso Paul Pududu | South Africa | Short Film | 14 min

Theme: *Mental Health, Grief & Identity*

Screening: *Thursday 6 August, 7:00 PM | Harkin*

Loyiso Paul Pududu is a South African filmmaker. *Silent Grief* deals with the weight of unspoken sorrow and mental health, told through restraint and precision. The adjudicating panel described it as deeply affecting, noting the emotional depth with which the film handles its subject. It screens Thursday opening night alongside the feature *The Coruskan*.

Trailer / Info:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GNZUYovOspuhLqJWWw1KMUEQKhoMXc0u?usp=drive_link

#5 — Score 90 | Silver Award | *Beat the Saddle*

Dir. Soliman Mohamed Hamza | Egypt | Short Film | 15 min

Theme: *Mental Health, Grief & Identity*

Screening: *Thursday 6 August, 7:00 PM | Harkin*

Soliman Mohamed Hamza is an Egyptian filmmaker. *Beat the Saddle* is a kinetic and visually inventive short that channels mental anguish through physical movement, shot against the landscapes of Egypt. A formally accomplished piece of storytelling about the body as a site of emotional memory.

Trailer / Info: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rr11-_KafkOmOwJa37-zH7O1RVYlxngP/view?usp=sharing