

Experience the African Diaspora

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nually. Since its inception, the festival has been organized and run entirely by a group of college and community volunteers.

The film festival's opening night will feature, "Scheherazade: Tell Me a Story," (7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 3) at the Hollywood Theatre.

Though made two years before the Arab Spring events in Cairo's Tahrir Square, "Scheherazade" captures the fusion of oppressive politics, repression, and the desire for freedom and creativity that have fueled recent Arab uprisings. The film will be preceded by a short celebratory performance by the Jefferson Dancers II.

The festival's visiting directors include two young filmmakers.

Andrew Dosunmu, a filmmaker, photographer, and creative artist raised in Nigeria, will show his acclaimed first feature film, "Restless City." This film is set in the volatile world of West African immigrants in New York City and will be shown at noon, Thursday, Feb. 9 and 7:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 10 at the Cascade Campus.

In her film, "Broken Dreams," (2:20 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 18, Cascade Campus) Fathia Absie focuses her lens on young Somali-Americans in Minnesota who have disappeared and presumably have gone to Somalia to fight for Al-Qaeda-related groups.

Absie is a former Voice of America journalist from Somalia. Presented in partnership



◀ A scene from 'Scheherazade: Tell Me a Story,' one of 20 films scheduled for the 22nd annual Cascade Festival of African Films.



Fathia Absie

with the Somalia American Council of Oregon, the film will be followed by a discussion with the director and members of Portland's Somali community.

The festival's documentary films will be shown Thursday nights at 7:30 p.m., and 2 p.m. and 3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 4, and 1 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 18 – all at the Cascade Campus venue.

This year's documentaries reveal a number of topics and issues, including the impact of the growing number of Chinese in Africa,

Kinshasa's Kamanguiste Symphony Orchestra, the lost manuscripts of Timbuktu, new perspective on war trials and the hidden lives of Somalis living in Maine and Minneapolis.

The centerpiece film for the festival is one of last year's most talked-about international films, an action thriller from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, "Viva Riva."

The film is a frank presentation of violence, drugs, corruption, and sex in present-day Kinshasa. It has an underlying story of an outsider fighting for recognition and survival

against all odds. It will be shown at noon, Thursday, Feb. 16, Cascade Campus and at 7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 17, Hollywood Theatre.

The festival's Family Film Day will take place on Saturday, Feb. 25, focusing on films that appeal to younger audiences (ages 5 and up).

This year, the animated African folk tales to be presented include "Tinga Tinga Tales" at 2 p.m. and "Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears" at 3 p.m. Storyteller Baba Wagué Diakité of Mali will carry on the tradition of introducing the films with traditional stories from West Africa.

Women Filmmakers Week takes place the final week of the festival (March 1-3 at the Cascade Campus) and coincides with Women's History Month, featuring three films by female directors.

"I Sing Well" is set in the time of the ancient Mali Empire, blending historical epic and romantic melodrama. "Perfect Picture" is Ghana's top-grossing film. It is a romantic comedy about three young women struggling together through life, love, and marriage. "War Don Don" explores the Sierra Leonean rebel leader Issa Sesay and his role in the country's civil war.

For a complete schedule, visit africanfilmfestival.org.

The Cascade Festival of African Films was founded in 1991 by four Portland Community College faculty members and has grown to include more than two dozen dedicated volunteers.

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