



Deutsche Afrika Stiftung e.V.
Fondation Allemande pour l'Afrique
German Africa Foundation

Summary

Presentation of the Honorary Award of the German Africa Foundation to Alex Moussa Sawadogo

21.6.2023, 18:30 – 19:30

Habel am Reichstag, Berlin

Context

With more than 3,300 films a year, West Africa is the continent's leading region in film production. This development is not only due to the Nigerian film scene Nollywood, but also significantly to the largest and most renowned pan-African film festival Festival panafricain du cinéma et de la télévision de Ouagadougou (FESPACO), which takes place every two years in the Burkinabe capital Ouagadougou.

Alex Moussa Sawadogo has been the director of the FESPACO festival since 2020 and is committed to international cooperation, especially with the African diaspora, as well as to promoting the francophone film scene. Other key areas of his work include changing the image of Africa through the medium of film, German-African cooperation in the film and cultural scene and the support of African talent, which he advocates in numerous projects and initiatives. In 2007, he founded the Berlin film festival AFRIKAMERA and has been its artistic director ever since. With various other projects, he also supports new talents and is thus involved in the discovery and training of a new generation of African filmmakers.

Highlights

- AFRIKAMERA promotes active exchange with the audience and, by showing unvarnished realities of the African continent, questions the prevailing stereotypical images in Germany.
- As curator of FESPACO 2021, Sawadogo aimed to bring local and diaspora artists closer together again to strengthen cinema from Africa as a whole.
- German policy could support the African art scene, for example, through an adequately funded film fund and thus promote German-African co-productions.

Welcoming address

Dr. forest Christoph Hoffmann, MdB

Chairman-in-Office of the AWZ and DAS Board Member

Laudatio

Dr Uschi Eid

President, German Africa Foundation

Interview

Alex Moussa Sawadogo

Artistic director and co-founder, AFRIKAMERA

Sabine Odhiambo

Secretary General, German Africa Foundation

Closing words

Kirsten Krampe

Head of Africa Department, Heinrich Böll Foundation



Presentation of the Honorary Award of the German Africa Foundation to Alex Moussa Sawadogo

Against this backdrop, Alex Moussa Sawadogo receives the Honorary Award of the German Africa Foundation 2023. The award is intended to honour his outstanding commitment to the film and cultural scene from Africa and his great dedication to changing the image of Africa in Germany through the medium of film. Dr. forest Christoph Hoffmann, Member of the German Bundestag, emphasised that the media provide a more realistic picture of the everyday reality in other cultures. Dr Uschi Eid, President of the German Africa Foundation and patron of AFRIKAMERA since its beginning, also mentioned this aspect and added: "AFRIKAMERA not only offers an artistic showcase for a differentiated image of Africa, but also provides important impulses for German-African cooperation."

The beginnings of AFRIKAMERA

The reason for the award coincides with the vision of the AFRIKAMERA team. Until its founding year in 2007, Berlin was the only major European city without a festival for films from Africa. The founders of toucouleur e.V., the association behind AFRIKAMERA, were Sawadogo and former fellow students from the Hamburg Institute for Cultural and Media Management. They wanted to create something new together, an artistic platform that depicts undisguised realities, serves the exchange with the audience and thus contributes to changing perceptions. However, they were faced with the great challenge of placing their festival concept in an environment where there was a lot of talk about Africa and its culture, but rarely with the involvement of African actors. Uschi Eid was an important support in this, especially in the area of funding, as Sawadogo recalled.

FESPACO and the role of the role of the diaspora

Sawadogo's newest role as curator of the FESPACO film festival has another mission. In 2021, the pan-African festival took place in his home country Burkina Faso under the title "Cinemas d'Afrique et de la diaspora: Nouveaux regards, nouveaux défis" for the first time under his direction. His decision to accept the job depended to a large extent on the artistic and conceptual freedom. It was very important for him to incorporate his experiences not only in artistic terms but also as an African living abroad. The diaspora plays an important role for him because it can bring in new perspectives. It is also an appeal to artists abroad to remember their roots and to strengthen the art scene in their home countries with their works. His own contribution would be, for example, the founding of the Ouaga Film Lab, a platform that would facilitate access to national and international funding for young talents.

Requests to the German cultural policy

Sawadogo would like to see more support for cultural actors from German politics in the form of networking and financial assistance. This should enable artists to make their contributions not only in the political sphere, but also in other relevant areas. This also includes the promotion of German-African co-productions. For example, through an adequately funded German film fund that directors from African countries could access. In addition, Germany is well equipped in the technical field, which also makes material support possible. Furthermore, support could also mean that the films are available in German, which would make it much easier for African films to access the German market.