WAX PRINT
Aiwan Obinyan
97 min, 2018

Surprised to learn from her Nigerian grandmother that ‘traditional’ African wax print fabrics were a colonial invention made in the UK and Holland, British-born filmmaker and fashion designer Aiwan Obinyan sets out on a journey across the globe to trace the complex history of these iconic textiles and their significance to today’s African diaspora community.

“Obinyan’s enthusiasm for wax print and her excitement at being witness to the process of its making are infectious. [The film] makes poignant observations about counterfeiting and cultural identity... [and] ultimately ties the fabric’s identity to the black experience itself.” — Debbie Onuoha, Humboldt University, Berlin

LOCATION
Africa
France
United Kingdom

SUBJECT AREAS
African & Diasporic Studies
Globalism
Material Culture & Fashion
Textiles

Pan African Film Festival
Women of the Lens, UK
Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA)
Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF)

THREADS: SUSTAINING INDIA’S TEXTILE TRADITION
Katherine Sender, Shuchi Kothari
58 min, 2022

After a decades-long decline in demand for legacy fabrics, collaborations between designers and artisans have led fashion designers to now recognize the autonomy of artisan textiles makers and the need to work with them. Set in India, this film explores this relationship between traditional weavers and fashion designers.

“Threads tells us that traditional textile makers must welcome the future, and contemporary designers must embrace the past, for both to preserve their livelihoods and lifestyles. In the process, thousands of families survive and we get to keep our roots in the face of faceless screens and social alienation.” — Yasmine Dabbous, Kinship Stories/Espace Fann

LOCATION
India

SUBJECT AREAS
Fashion
Modernity
Traditional Textiles
Southeast Asian Studies

Jaipur International Film Festival
New Delhi International Film Festival
FOLLOWING THE THREAD
Kathy Brew, Roberto Guerra
22 min, 2021

In the Peruvian Andes, textiles are omnipresent in the lives of Indigenous people. This short film takes viewers into contemporary Andean communities where members are involved in the revitalization of traditional dyeing, weaving, and knitting practices. The film also considers the challenges of maintaining artisanal practices in today’s economy.

“The weaving on display is both beautiful and masterful. We see the entire process from shearing the sheep... through the weaving process to the completed products.”
- Video Librarian

(best Documentary Short, Miami Indie Film Awards
Best Documentary Short, San Diego Art Film Festival
Honorable Mention, Toronto Int’l Women Film Festival
International Manhattan Film Awards
Amsterdam Short Film Festival)

SANDANCE! A JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF AFRICA’S ORIGINAL DANCE CULTURE
Richard Wicksteed, Edwin Angless
60 min, 2020

This enchanting film follows San dancers from rehearsals in remote Kalahari villages in Namibia and Botswana to electrifying performances at the Kuru Dance Festival. This film expresses the hopes, fears, and dreams of San dancers as they strive to revitalize traditions threatened by the marginalization of the San’s hunter-gatherer culture.

“Our history will be over. If our children don’t learn... if we don’t maintain the culture in our life, we may as well be dead. If we don’t continue to dance, our spirits will not travel to the spirit world and we will be condemned for denying our ancestors.” – Letshogo Ikaegeng, San elder and dancer

(best Feature Documentary, București Film Awards
Best Feature Documentary, Paris Film Festival
Osaka International Film Festival
African Human Rights Film Festival)
OPHIR
Alexandre Berman, Olivier Pollet
97 min, 2020

Leading up to the potential creation of the newest nation in the world, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Ophir reveals the visible and invisible chains of colonization and its enduring cycles of physical and psychological warfare. The film is a poetic yet dramatic story of an extraordinary Indigenous revolution for life, land, and culture.

“Chilling in many ways. It weaves in the spirit of Bougainville, the people, and the knowledge systems that are trying so very hard to protect against invaders and the greed ripping people and families apart.” – Dr. Ruth Saovanna (Bougainville)

Grand Prix, FIFO Int’l Doc Film Festival of Oceania
Grand Prix ‘Sol de Oro’, Suncine Environmental FF
Audience Award, Noma Int’l Human Rights FF
Best Feature Film, All Living Things Environmental FF
Film of the Year, FICA Festival Int’l de Cine Ambiental
RAI Film Prize & Basil Wright Prize Nominee, RAI FF

DEATH OF THE ONE WHO KNOWS
Dana Rappoport
82 min, 2020

In the Toraja highlands of Sulawesi, Indonesia, Lumbaa is one of the last masters of ritual speech. After his forced conversion to Pentecostalism, he is compelled to stop all ritual activity. By recounting the life and death of Lumbaa, the film shows how the intrusion of a world religion continues to disrupt a Southeast Asian society.

“This documentary concerns the struggle to keep Aluk Todolo and its rituals alive in the face of government efforts at erasure. There is a beauty, order and moral sophistication to Lumbaa... Its brilliance is haunting.” – Tanisha Jowsey, The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology

Royal Anthropological Institute Film Festival
Riga Pasaules Film Festival
Bayonne Film Festival Haibebegi
Maison de l’Aise (EFEO)
MY REMBETIKA BLUES
Mary Zournazi
83 min, 2021

Rooted in early 20th century mass migrations, Rembetika (aka “the Greek blues”) is a music born of exile. Filmmaker Mary Zournazi traces the journey of her forebears from Smyrna in Turkey to Sydney, Australia. Weaving together stories of music and migration, she learns how music connects people during times of struggle and crisis.

“A film that reveals the core of Rembetika that only a Greek from Australia could see. A strong and beautiful film.”
-Renos Haralambidis, Greek Director

LOCATION
Greece
Egypt
Turkey

SUBJECT AREAS
Diaspora
Mediterranean Studies
Memory
Music

PADAUK: MYANMAR SPRING
Jeanne Marie Hallacy, Rares Michael Ghilezan
56 min, 2021

This film looks at the emergence of the student protest movement in Myanmar following the 2021 military coup, and the education of a young generation about the brutal regime that has ruled for decades. Beautifully augmented by poetry and art, the film shows the resilience, determination, and sacrifice of the people of Myanmar.

“This film fits well within the discussion of global protest during 2020-2021 against discrimination and threats to democracy and is highly recommended.”
-Tashia Miller, Educational Media Reviews Online

LOCATION
Myanmar

SUBJECT AREAS
Human Rights
Peace and Conflict
Resistance
South Asian Studies

( ) Gold Remi Doc Award, World Fest Houston Int’l FF
( ) Excellence in Filmmaking, Spotlight Film Awards
( ) Platinum Award, Women’s International Film Awards
( ) Best Documentary Feature, World of Film Int’l FF
( ) German International Ethnographic Film Festival
( ) Melbourne Documentary Film Festival, 2021

( ) Burma Spring Benefit Film Festival
( ) Seoul International Women’s Film Festival
( ) Busan Peace Film Festival
( ) Dharamshala International Film Festival
( ) Myanmar Film Festival of Los Angeles
SANKARA IS NOT DEAD
Lucie Viver
110 min, 2019

After the popular uprising in Burkina Faso in October 2014, the young poet Bikontine starts to question his dreams of seeking a better life in the West. He decides to go meet his fellow citizens along the country’s only rail line. On his journey from south to north, through cities and villages, he learns about their dreams and disappointments.

“Lucie Viver’s film is a beautifully shot and expressively scored portrait of Burkina Faso and its people in this moment of uncertain yet hopeful change. It integrates poetry and travel writing, with splices of Sankara’s speeches and footage of the 2014 revolution to capture people’s experiences in the aftermath of the uprising.” – Benjamin Talton, Jacobin Magazine

John Marshall Award, Camden International Film Festival
Special Jury Prize, AFRIFF (African Int. Film Festival)
Best Documentary Feature, Budapest Int. Film Festival
Big Sky Documentary Film Festival
Göteborg Film Festival
Cinéma du Réel

MUNDO
Ana Edwards
19 min, 2020

Every day, the elderly Matilde tends her herd of sheep and alpacas. Her daily life is steeped in the gospel; the Bible is her faithful companion. Mundo explores the influence of Christianity on the Aymara community’s relationship to the environment and how it is manifested in everyday experiences.

“Edwards not only expresses deep respect toward Matilde but also, and more importantly, models a practice of profound understanding.” – Samuel Lagunas, PhD, Autonomous University of Querétaro, Mexico

“The film is a short yet effective look into one woman’s crisis of faith... It’s simple, yet riveting.” – Video Librarian

Best of Fest, IDFA
Best Short Documentary, FESAALP
Athens Ethnographic Film Fest
Festival Cine+Video Indígena
THE HEALER AND THE PSYCHIATRIST
Mike Poltorak
74 min, 2020

On the island group of Vava’u, the traditional healer Emeline Lolohea treats people affected by spirits. A day away by ferry, the only Tongan Psychiatrist, Dr. Mapa Puloka, has established a well-known public psychiatric clinic. Although they have never met, the film creates a dialogue between them and about the nature of mental illness and spiritual affliction.

“The Healer and the Psychiatrist is a very moving and intense documentary that speaks to the value of ethnographic research over a long period of time. It explores the value and limitations of Tongan indigenous and Western medicine.”
- Jacquie Leckie, University of Newcastle, Australia

EXTRAS
Watch a panel discussion with the filmmaker and several guest scholars on our website

THE BUDDHA MUMMIES OF NORTH JAPAN
Shayne Dahl, Satoshi Watanabe
20 min, 2017

In temples throughout northeastern Japan, the robed bodies of self-mummified Buddhist monks are worshiped as “Living Buddhas.” Thought to heal the sick and protect the living, their ascetic discipline continues to inspire monks. The film includes interviews with attending monks and details the descriptions of the intense dedication to dieting and other austerities required for self-mummification.

“[T]he inherent stunning visuals, the historical layers, interwoven doctrines, and surrounding socio-demographic challenges of the subject (rural depopulation, an aging society, declining parishes) offer filmmakers — several of whom are scholars in the field — ample material to explore.”
- Caleb Carter, Kyushu University, Religion and Society Reviews

EXTRAS
Best Feature Film, SVA Film & Media Festival
Commendation, Webner Award, RAI Film Festival
FIFO (International Oceanian Documentary Film Festival)
German International Ethnographic Film Festival
London International Documentary Festival
Eyes & Lenses Ethnographic Film Festival

EXTRAS
Best Graduate Student Film, SVA Film & Media Festival
Royal Anthropological Institute Film Festival
Taiwan International Ethnographic Film Festival
INDIGENOUS STUDIES FILM INITIATIVE

Launched in early 2022, the Indigenous Studies Film Initiative reflects our commitment to decolonizing and indigenizing our film collection. We strive to keep this archive of works available for future generations as a resource for both learning about the hundreds of Indigenous communities documented and to offer insight into the evolution of documentary filmmaking practices.

Showcasing topics such as language, healing practices, land and water, and cultural revitalization efforts of Indigenous people around the globe, these films have the power to change audiences’ perspectives and foster greater cross-cultural understanding.

We continue to work to find new ways to ensure the accessibility of these films and to move towards more equitable filmmaking, distribution, and archiving practices. To make searching our film collection easier and to increase visibility and accessibility, we designed the following three tools:

INTERACTIVE WORLD MAP
Designed to be a more accessible interface offering easily searchable community locations on a global scale and highlighting the relationships of Indigenous communities to their ancestral lands.

CULTURE GROUP INDEX
Uses preferred community self-denominations and offers contemporary alternatives to the legacy terms applied by colonial entities that are now viewed as outdated, offensive, or even derogatory.

SUBJECT HEADING CATEGORIES
New subject categorization using best practices in the application of topics concerning Indigeneity worldwide with the intent of being used by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE INDIGENOUS COLLECTION

All of these films were made by Indigenous people or reflect in-depth collaborations between filmmakers and Indigenous community members.

AT THE AUTUMN RIVER CAMP
Quentin Brown, Asen Balikci, 59 min, 1967
An intimate film from the Netsilik series about a community in the Pelly Bay region of the Arctic showing the reality of traditional Inuit life before European acculturation.

ITAM HAKIM HOPIIT
Victor Masayesva, Jr., 58 min, 1984
Hopi filmmaker Masayesva presents a poetic visualization of Hopi philosophy and culture that shows history as a cyclic pattern. Made at the time commemorating the Hopi’s 1680 revolt against Spanish rule.

UKSUUM CAUYAI: THE DRUMS OF WINTER
Sarah Elder, Leonard Kamerling, 90 min, 1988
The film follows the elders of Emmonak as they prepare for a ceremonial potlatch with a neighboring village. In the men’s house, they practice their traditional songs and dances.

ZULAY, FACING THE 21ST CENTURY
Jorge Prelorán, Mabel Prelorán, Zulay Saravino, 110 min, 1989
Filmed over a period of 8 years, this film is based on a dialogue between Zulay, an indigenous Otavaleña from Ecuador, and Mabel Prelorán, an Argentine anthropologist living in Los Angeles.

VOICES OF ORCHID ISLAND
Hu Tai-Li, 73 min, 1993
The film explores the Yami community’s complex and often troubled relationship with the outside world by looking in detail at three different cases of “invasion” they have experienced.

TIME WHEN DREAMS MELT
Alexsei Vakhrushev, 14 min, 1996
Yupik filmmaker Vakhrushev shot the film in an area occupied by the Yupik of Northeast Asia for millennia. The story is based on the life of the Yupik from earliest history to the present.

THE REDFERN STORY
Darlene Johnson, 60 min, 2014
Documents the crucial work of a group of Redfern activists in the 1970s who used theater to bring the struggle for Indigenous rights in Australia to a wider public.
NEW RELEASES | INDIGENOUS FILMMAKERS

WAAKÌ (SANCTUARY)
Victor Masayesva, Jr.
56 min, 2019

Renowned Hopi filmmaker Victor Masayesva, Jr. explores the centrality of corn for the Hopi, Nahua, and Maya, tracing the place of corn from creation stories to today’s struggles against climate change. By tracing the lineage and mysterious origins of corn, we gain a deeper understanding of the ancestry of communities that transcend borders.

“Waaiki presents Hopi knowledge with a self-assured visual sovereignty.” – Dorothy Christian, Simon Fraser University

“The film is a fascinating blend of genres – part ethnographic, part documentary and part animation.”
– Vicky Westover, University of Arizona

LOCATIONS
Mexico
United States

SUBJECT AREAS
Food Ways
Indigenous History
Ritual Practices

Victor Masayesva, Jr. Retrospective,
ImagineNATIVE Festival

SWEETHEART DANCERS
Ben-Alex Dupris
13 min, 2019

The “Sweetheart Dance” is a celebratory contest held at powwows and previously open only to heterosexual couples. Sean and Adrian, a Two-Spirit couple, are determined to challenge and rewrite the rules of Native American culture. A great film for exploring the intersection of Native and LGBTQ+ identities.

“Expert cinematography and editing make Adrian and Sean’s relationship and emotion immediately legible. When they’re first turned away from competition by organizers who insist that “a couple must consist of two people. One man. One woman,” you feel their devastation intimately. A year later, when they win third place at a sweetheart dance open to all partners, you feel their elation and their love just as keenly.”
– Washington City Paper

LOCATIONS
United States

SUBJECT AREAS
Indigenous
LGBTQ+
Performance

Big Sky Documentary Film Festival
Seattle International Film Festival
AFI Docs
THE AX FIGHT – DIGITALLY REMASTERED EDITION

Featured in the YANOMAMÓ SERIES, REMASTERED VOL. 1 collection

Timothy Asch, Napoleon Chagnon

30 min, 1975, Remastered 2022

This ground-breaking film explores Yanomami kinship, alliance, and conflict resolution. At the same time, it raises questions about how anthropologists and filmmakers make sense of and translate their experience into meaningful words and coherent, moving images. Now available with Spanish and Portuguese subtitles. Completed in 2022, The Ax Fight is a digital restoration from a new 4K scan and was funded in part by the National Film Preservation Foundation.

ARCHIVAL LEGACIES OF THE YANOMAMÓ SERIES - RESTORATION AND RETURN

DER co-hosted a panel at the Smithsonian’s 2022 Mother Tongue Film Festival discussing the restoration of the Yanomamó film series which expanded the boundaries of ethnographic and documentary filmmaking.

The two-part roundtable focused on the technical and aesthetic issues underlying the processes of film preservation and digital restoration and explored the value of these films for the Yanomamó and anthropologists interested in more equitable collaborations.

Watch the full presentation and panel discussion on our website:
der.org/archival-legacies-of-the-yanomamo-series-restoration-and-return
FORSAKEN FRAGMENTS
Robert Gardner
84 min + extras, 1958-2010

A collection of short films and unfinished “fragments” from renowned filmmaker Robert Gardner. These short works span Gardner's life and career and reflect his interests, from ethnography to the art world. Though presented here as a set, the pieces stand alone as riveting cinematic experiences, offering insight into Gardner’s personality and curiosity.

**Films:** The Old Lady; Tide; The Photographer; Salt; Creatures of Pain; Three Non-Commercials; Anthem; Healing; Supplicating Women; Life Keeps on Passing; Hauling Sharks; It Could be Good, It Could Be Bad; Deus Ex Boltsansi; Still Journey On.

“Because of Gardner's wide range of fascinations, the sequence of ‘fragments’ creates considerable cinematic surprise. Several reveal dimensions of Gardner's filmmaking that even some familiar with his career might not be aware of; others reference Gardner’s better-known films or offer additional insight into earlier work.” - Scott MacDonald, Afterimage

A YEAR IN THE FIELD
Dennis Lanson, George Gmelch
33 min, 2020

A Year in the Field follows Estonian anthropologist Joonas Plaan as he studies the impact of climate change in a Newfoundland fishing village. The film shows how cultural anthropologists carry out their research through participant observation, and explores both the value of long-term ethnographic fieldwork and the personal challenges it presents.

“A Year in the Field weaves its observation of a young anthropologist’s rigorous fieldwork methods with his personal story in a Newfoundland fishing village and his discovery that the human cost of overfishing and global warming is the end of a cultural world. ...a valuable addition to introductory and methods courses in anthropology.” - Peter Biella, San Francisco State University

**LOCATION**
Multiple Locations

**SUBJECT AREAS**
Artist Profiles
Filmmaking
Visual Arts

**DVD EXTRAS**
Director’s commentary, audio recording of Q&A with Gardner, and companion booklet

**LOCATION**
Newfoundland

**SUBJECT AREAS**
Climate Change
Cultural Anthropology
Field Work
Maritime Anthropology
SURVIVORS
WeOwnTV
84 min, 2018

Through a unique community filmmaking initiative, Survivors chronicles the stories of three Sierra Leoneans during the 2014-2016 Ebola epidemic. While the film exposes the conflicts between national identity and international aid, it foregrounds the incredible work and compassion of the people of Sierra Leone, who risk their own health for the sake of their community.

“Sierra Leoneans emerge as reflective commentators on their experience of this terrible disease, displaying a quiet heroism and love not often noted in myriad representations of Africa.”
— Pamela Scully, Professor of African History and Women’s Studies, Emory University

LOCATION
Sierra Leone

SUBJECT AREAS
African Studies
Epidemiology
Global Health
Medical Anthropology

( ) National Broadcast, POV, PBS
Nominee, Peabody Awards
Nominee, Outstanding Social Issue Doc, Emmy Awards
Nominee, Amsterdam Human Rights Award, IDFA
Nominee, Planetary Health Film Prize, Global Health FF
HUMAN International Documentary Film Festival

DEMOCRATS
Camilla Nielsson
104 min, 2015

Director Camilla Nielsson’s (President, 2021) first film about democracy building in Zimbabwe. The film presents a rare, first-hand account of the country’s steps on the road to democracy. It offers unprecedented access to the drafting of the first post-independence constitution and shows how Paul Mangwana and Douglas Mwonzora, representatives of rival political parties, are determined to end decades of corrupt, authoritarian leadership.

“Outstanding, urgent, vivid... Finally a film that deserves to be called necessary.” — New York Times

“As excellent a documentary about politics as you will ever see.” — Village Voice

( ) Best Documentary Feature, Tribeca Film Festival
Best Feature Length Film, SVA Film & Media Festival
Best Director, One World Human Rights Film Festival
Reel Talent Award, Special Jury Mention, CPH:DOX
ALL GOD’S CHILDREN
Robert Lemelson
67 min, 2021

Idris is a nonverbal autistic boy living in rural Java who has difficulty communicating and connecting with others in his village. This is his story and a story of how grassroots disability awareness movements, local cultural models of inclusion, and religious principles can come together to better support all members of a community.

Best Ethnographic Film, New York Int. Film Awards
Finalist, Best Doc, 4th Dimension Independent Film Festival
SVA Film & Media Festival
Peloponnisos International Documentary Film Festival
Golden Door International Film Festival
Glendale International Film Festival

WAWAN’S PRAYER
Robert Lemelson
23 min, 2021

Wawan, an autistic boy from Banjarmasin, Indonesia, struggles to have his needs met at home. His parents make the decision to send him to a school on another island where he will receive a specialized education and therapeutic support. Together, Wawan and his teacher learn how to build an inclusive community for youth on the spectrum.

Quarter Finalist, ReelAbilities Film Festival: New York
Honorable Mention, DisABILITY Education Film Festival
German International Ethnographic Film Festival
SEAxSEA: Southeast Asia x Seattle Film + Literature Festival
Malibu Film Festival
MULTIMODAL ETHNOGRAPHIES FROM STEVEN FELD

These ethnographic works by the anthropologist Steven Feld offer a multimodal point of entry to his pioneering work in the anthropology of sound and ethnomusicology. These “deluxe editions” bring together text, audio, and video for a rich ethnographic experience.

VOICES OF THE RAINFOREST: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF BOSAVI
Steven Feld, Dennis Leonard, Jeremiah Ra Richards
Book, Blu-ray, and CD, 2019 (Vox Lox)

Feld conducted extensive anthropological and ethnomusicological fieldwork in Bosavi from 1975 to 2000. The original Voices of the Rainforest CD was produced during this time (1991) with production support from Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart.

Working with acclaimed sound editor Dennis Leonard at Skywalker Sound in 2016-2017, Feld remixed a 25th anniversary Voices soundtrack. A return to Bosavi in 2018 with filmmaker Jeremiah Ra Richards and the digitization of Feld’s archival photographs led to the creation of the immersive film featuring the 7.1 surround sound audio. The photo book documents Feld’s time in Bosavi and is a vivid companion to the film and CD.

All sales benefit the Bosavi Peoples Fund, which works for environmental and cultural justice in a remote part of Papua New Guinea.

COOL RUNNING: GHANA’S HONK HORN LORRIES & POR POR MUSIC
Steven Feld, Nii Yemo Nunu, Hannah Schreckenbach
Book, DVD, and CD, 2021 (Vox Lox)

The deluxe hardback edition of Cool Running includes over two hundred captioned photos, essays, a music CD featuring the La Drivers Union por por Group, and a DVD with two documentary films: The Story of Por Por and M.V. Labadi.

Drawing on five years of research and work with the Drivers Union, Steven Feld and photographer and oral historian Nii Yemo Nunu take readers into the stories of the drivers, their vehicles and the invention of por por music through photographs and text, including complementary historical essays and a classic black and white photograph section by German photographer Hannah Schreckenbach.

Nunu and Feld collected, transcribed, and translated twenty-five video interviews with elder drivers. These interviews formed the basis of The Story of Por Por, one of five films in Feld’s Jazz Cosmopolitanism series.
AVAILABILITY & ACCESS

EDUCATIONAL VIEWING
DER films are available to educational institutions on DVD, educational streaming platforms, and through digital site licenses (DSL). All include limited public performance rights.

HOME VIEWING
Many titles are available on DVD and for home streaming from our website. Selected titles are also available on Vimeo On Demand and other home streaming platforms.

SCREENINGS
DER films screen around the world at campus cinemathques, museums, art house theatres, film festivals, and non-profit events. 16mm print rentals of many of our classic titles are also available for screening.

To arrange a screening, use the form on our website:
der.org/films/host-a-screening

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