

Afda alumnus Walter Mzengi wins Netflix X Unesco 'African Folktales, Reimagined' Short Film Competition

 By [Earle Holmes](#), issued by [AFDA](#)

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After launching a groundbreaking competition to find some of sub-Saharan Africa's up-and-coming filmmakers, entitled '*African Folktales, Reimagined*' Netflix and Unesco announced the six winners.



Walter Mzengi

Afda is proud to announce that Afda Cape Town 2019 Motion Picture Medium graduate Walter Mzengi, from Tanzania, is one of the six.

"I am so proud to hear that Walt was selected by Netflix X Unesco for this amazing African Folk Tales Reimagined project from hundreds of entries from all over Africa. Walt showed his talent at Afda with '*Gulf*', a film with great conceptual depth and cinematic style. He is a very special filmmaker who will make his country and continent proud, with meaningful entertaining stories infused with an African sensibility that will carry on a global level. The world is crying out for this kind of content and I have always believed that Walt will make an impact here. The sky is now his limit," says David Max Brown, Afda programme poordinator for Productions and Industry Liaison.

Each winner will receive \$25,000 plus a production budget of \$75,000 to create short films through a local production company and under the guidance of Netflix-appointed supervising producer and industry mentors from across the continent. Staying true to the competition's aim of showcasing Africa's rich cultural heritage, the short films will feature reimagined African folktales presented in multiple African

languages.

"Being one of the six winners of the African Folktale Reimagined competition feels incredible. The next step is to head into development and I'm delighted to do so with the backing of both Netflix and Unesco. Since graduating, I have realised how much I gained from my time at Afda, especially the relationships, on-set experience, and the importance of understanding 'your story'. I'm proud to say that I continue to carry these takeaways forward, and I cannot wait for what the future brings," says Afda alumnus Walter Mzengi

The six filmmakers will now go into the development phase of their projects, before starting production on the short films that will eventually premiere on Netflix as part of '*An Anthology of African Folktales*' later this year. They will be mentored by acclaimed African filmmakers which include Femi Odugbemi, Afda alumna Jenna Bass, Leila Djansi, Pape Boye, Bongiwe Selane and Tosh Gitonga.

The competition was launched by Netflix and Unesco in October 2021, with the goal of promoting diverse local stories and bringing them to the world. The competition was also a step towards creative equity – as part of the Netflix Creative Equity Fund, which aims at enabling new voices from underrepresented communities within entertainment to bring their perspectives to a global audience

"Congratulations to the six winners! The fact that their films will be shown to a global audience is part of our commitment to promote cultural diversity around the world. Like the African movie sector itself, these six individuals have a very bright future ahead of them. The laureates, and all the participants in this competition more broadly, highlight the rich, diverse and ever-evolving culture that sub-Saharan Africa has to offer and that Unesco wants to promote. We cannot wait to celebrate these films at a special premier at Unesco headquarters in Paris at the end of this year." – Audrey Azoulay, director-general of Unesco.

Ben Amadasun, Netflix director of Content in Africa said, "It's been a truly inspiring journey for us to experience the level of creative talent from our candidates. From the thousands of applicants we've received to the Top 21 and finally, the six winners – it's evident that Africa is filled with amazing storytelling talent that is ready to share their different perspectives and celebrate Africa's rich culture and heritage. Congratulations to the winners – and to emerging filmmakers who didn't make it – we urge you to continue your passion of telling African stories. The world is ready to experience your talent and we at Netflix, will continue to be your biggest cheerleaders on this journey."

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