

Africa & I takes home the gold at Paff

Africa and I, adventurer Othmane Zolati's feature documentary about his trip from Morocco to South Africa by bicycle, skateboard and on foot, through 24 countries over 30,000km, won Best First Feature Documentary at the Pan African Film Festival (Paff) in Los Angeles.



Image supplied: A still image from *Africa & I*

Co-directed by Zolati and Chris Green and produced by Both Worlds Pictures, the film was also selected for the Portland Film Festival 2021, the Africa World Documentary Film Festival 2022 and the American Documentary and Animation Film Festival (Amdocs) 2022.

Established in 1992 by Danny Glover, the late Ja'Net DuBois and Ayuko Babu, Paff is renowned for showcasing an extensive array of Black creative film works from across the globe, highlighting those that reinforce positive images and help to dismantle harmful beliefs and stereotypes.



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11 May 2022



Africa and I is the story of Zolati's life when he left everything behind him and spent four years walking, cycling and skateboarding his way through Africa, from Morocco to Cape Town. On his journey, he saw that the continent he was warned about before he left home, the dark continent that the media shows us all, full of crime, disease and despair, was not the real story. Zolati found a continent that was vivid, varied and alive, full of beauty and surprises.

Zolati said, “After seven years of hard work, my African dream became reality. A truly glorious moment for me and my entire team. This accomplishment will be a lifelong motivation enabling me to fulfill my future achievements. This is my very first award in the film industry, for which I, personally, am so grateful. Being here today, and after all that I have been through, is quite emotional for me.”

“Reminiscing on how I started from scratch, as a 20-year-old boy from El Jadida, Morocco with a mere \$80 in his pocket hoping to have his dream come true, seven years later, Sitting here today, with an award under my belt, is a motivation to keep me to continue and never, ever give up,” he continued.

Producer Thierry Cassuto said, “From the first day Othmane showed me some of the 200 hundred hours of beautiful footage he had filmed during his journey, making *Africa & I* has been an intense labour of love for the entire Both Worlds team and co-director Chris Green, who helped Othmane shape and tell his amazing story. We are grateful to the jury of the Pan African Film and Arts Festival for recognising this first film by a young director who will, I am sure, take us through many more amazing adventures in the future”.

“This year’s film roster reflects the times we are in,” said Paff General Manager Asantewe Olatunji. “Many focus on social justice issues such as gender equality, police and community relations, and the changing lifestyle norms. Of course, several of the Paff 2022 films focus on our well-known and sometimes obscure sheroes and heroes whose stories told by their own people give a new perspective of history and view of our world.”

Africa & I is available to view on Showmax.

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