

Joburg AFDA student films win in New York

Two Johannesburg AFDA student films, Kanye Kanye and Umkhumbi Wethu, have won awards at New York City Picture Start Film Festival, which was held from 2-6 June 2013, in New York City.



A collection of short films from around the world were screened at the 17th NYC Picture Start Film Festival. The festival director, Ben Arredondo, visited South Africa earlier in the year and four SA films, which were selected to go to festival. Founded in 2002 by Greg Segal, NYC Picture Start Film Festival (NYCPSFF) showcases short films from all over the world from emerging filmmakers as well as those already established in the industry.

Kanye Kanye, directed by Miklas Manneke with cinematography by Charles Hunter Ryder, which won an award for Best Cinematography is a romantic comedy about a forbidden love affair between two young township teenagers. The town is divided by a long line to mark territories belonging to the "red" and "green" camps. However, Thomas, a young man from the "greens", falls in love with Thandi, from the "reds". The romantic comedy tells the tale of how the two youngsters, who are warned against any affiliation, get to communicate without their parents and communities knowing.

The 27-minute film has also won nine Gold Awards at AFDA's annual awards and was selected as the SA film for the Student Academy Awards, as well as the Durban International Film Festival, which takes place from 18 to 28 July.

"It is an honour for everyone involved in the making of Kanye Kanye to be awarded on this international platform to represent AFDA at the beginning of our careers," said Manneke.

A work of art that will resonate worldwide

Gina Bonmariage, director of AFDA, Johannesburg, said: "Kanye Kanye is a reflective short film by a student director and a team whose attention to detail has made it a work of art that will resonate worldwide."

Umkhumbi Wethu (Our Ship), directed by Garon Campbell, won the award for Best Director and Best Actor. Campbell, made the film in his Honours year at AFDA and has sent the film to festivals around the world. This is the first time the film stepped up from the student category and was nominated against professionally made short films.

"It's an incredible honour to go to an international film festival and watch the film screen among an array of excellent short films made by such talented filmmakers, only to culminate with me walking up onto stage to receive the award for Best Director. It was truly a great experience and a privilege to meet the other filmmakers and hear first-hand from the judges that the film received Best Actor and Best Director. I wish my crew could have been here to bask in the praise as we all worked equally as hard to produce a great film that has touched so many," said Campbell.