

April 2026

SPARK

— ANIM —

Stories. Vision. Industry.

Beyond The Screen

Festivals and Schools shaping
African Animation

Feature

The ecosystem
before the screens

On The Ground
International Festival
Gbaka Animation

In Conversation With

Ali Rguigue, co-founder
of Flow Motion School

Inside The Job

Tracey-Lee Rainers,
Story Consultant

www.lestudioka.com

EDITORIAL

When we talk about African animation, we often focus on production, financing challenges, and content distribution. Yet, as in any industry, the secondary activities that orbit production are very much present across the continent. Behind every animated work, there exists a discreet yet essential ecosystem, still taking shape.

Training, mentoring, structuring : the “side” professions of animation — schools, festivals, consultants, platforms — are becoming genuine strategic pillars of our industry.

In this new issue of Spark, we’ve chosen to shine a light on them.

This month, we’ll explore an animation school in Morocco actively shaping the talents of tomorrow. We’ll examine the role of script consulting firms in South Africa, helping to elevate the narrative quality of our projects. We’ll discover a Togolese platform dedicated to promoting African animation. And we will see more impactful works across the continent.

These initiatives are signs of a broader movement, allowing us to draw the following conclusion: African animation is developing at every level. It is strengthening and professionalizing.

The projects we present are not new, they each have several years of experience, with a broad understanding of both the challenges and the immense potential of African animation.

Enjoy the journey.



Adja Mariam Soro
Editor-in-Chief

MASTHEAD

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In the shadow of stories

THE RIGHT MOVES



FEATURE

The ecosystem before the screens

Beyond the studios, African animation is also taking shape through its schools, residencies, training programs, and festivals. These “parallel” spaces form the backbone that allows the industry to grow, professionalize its talent, circulate its works, and build trust between artists, producers, broadcasters, and international partners.

Across the continent, such initiatives clearly exist. For example, the FICAM in Meknès is a fully-fledged animation festival, hosting international competitions for feature films, short films, and virtual reality animation. In parallel, its Animation Industry Forum brings together studios, art and audiovisual schools, experts, and young talents, with the explicit goal of strengthening the sector.

Similarly, the FIGA (Festival International Gbaka Animation) is establishing itself in Togo as a project for professional development and networking. The festival is presented by its organizers as a space dedicated to animation and digital arts, with clear ambitions for international collaboration, training, and skills development for African talents. Its first international edition took place in Lomé in 2024.

On the training front, interesting North-South bridges are also emerging. Since 2019, Gobelins Paris has partnered with Netflix to offer scholarships for students from the African continent to attend its Master’s in Animation. In 2024, the school also supported an East Africa Animation Bootcamp with Katoto Studio and the backing of the French Embassy in Uganda, combining masterclasses, workshops, and mentorship between Ugandan and French professionals.

Another concrete example can be found in Nairobi, where ADMI offers a Certificate in 2D Animation developed in partnership with Rubika, with a clear commitment to train professionals suited to the animation market’s needs, based on a curriculum designed with a recognized European school. While this type of collaboration doesn’t solve everything, it demonstrates that educational bridges between Africa and Europe already exist.



Another useful model can be observed in South Africa, where the NFFV has formalized a partnership with the French Embassy to strengthen the sector's skills pipeline through training programs, internships, and scholarships, in collaboration with French institutions such as Gobelins, IFAS, Netflix, and the Animation School. Once again, the goal is clear: train, connect, and make the ecosystem stronger.

Therefore, the real issue is not the absence of initiatives, even if they remain relatively few. The challenge lies rather in their dispersion, uneven visibility, and often modest scale. Many African professionals themselves are still unaware of the full range of these events and training opportunities across the continent. An industry can only scale up when its training centers, distribution channels, and marketplaces start functioning as a network rather than in silos.

The second challenge is that the continent still suffers from a lack of data: according to UNESCO's report on the African audiovisual industry, 59% of African countries do not collect economic data on this sector.

Yet this lack of data should not obscure the essential point: on the continent, it is often short films, pilots, student films, TV specials, and series that make expertise visible. These projects allow young creators to circulate their visual signatures, experiment with storytelling, participate in festivals, and sometimes enter international circuits. Investment in schools and festivals has a direct impact on future production capacity.

Training more local talent is also a very concrete matter of economic sovereignty. A skilled local workforce enables better budget control, greater value retention on the continent, and the ability to enter co-productions with more than just a strong idea or visual identity: it brings real production capacity to the table.

In international negotiations, this makes all the difference.



This is why investment in these links of the chain is essential. A well-structured festival does more than just screen films: it attracts professionals, journalists, students, buyers, institutions, and cultural tourists. In 2025, at Annecy, the animation festival brought together 18,200 accredited participants from 118 countries, with 975 exhibiting companies. CITIA estimated its short-term direct economic impact on the region at €32 million.

On a different scale, FESPACO 2025 gathered more than 13,500 accredited festival-goers, including over 3,500 cinema and audiovisual professionals. While FESPACO is not an animation festival, it clearly illustrates what a major African event can generate in terms of circulation, visibility, and catalytic impact for a territory.

The challenge for African animation is therefore not to imitate the major international markets. It is to build events rooted in their core audiences, nourished by African and diasporic productions, yet open enough to engage with the international market. When a festival is well-conceived, it becomes simultaneously a showcase, an incubator, a marketplace, a training tool, and an economic engine.

Unlike in much of the rest of the world, it is time for investors and professionals to recognize that schools, residencies, festivals, and professional networks are genuine opportunities. They are cultural and economic infrastructures. They are what transforms a collection of talents into a full-fledged industry. And if African animation wants to grow in strength, continuity, and autonomy, this is precisely where we need to invest.



Animating Africa's Future

A Fast-Growing Industry with Untapped Potential



The African animation market is growing at **+7.39%** annually (CAGR)

Source: IMARC Group



Over 15,000 young people have been trained in animation, 3D and gaming in North and Francophone Africa

Source: UNESCO – NET-INFO, Tunisia

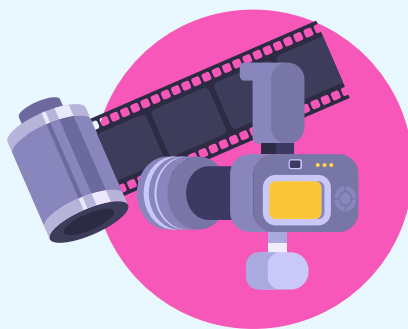
African content represents less than 1% of **global cultural exports** while represents nearly 20% of the world's population

Source: UN DESA

Source: UNESCO, Creative Economy Outlook / UNCTAD data on global cultural trade

Fewer than 20 dedicated **animation festivals** exist across Africa, highlighting a still-emerging ecosystem

Source: industry mapping & festival listings

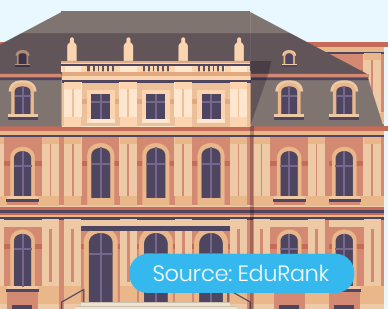


10 Cultural Festivals in Southern Africa generated over \$11.7 million and nearly 3,000 jobs

Source: UNESCO, 2025

Fewer than **10 African universities** appear in global rankings for animation-related research and education

Source: EduRank





Flow
Motion
School

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Ali Rguigue

Ali Rguigue is a Moroccan entrepreneur. After a career in music, he founded Artcoustique Studio in 2011, marking the beginning of his journey in Morocco's animation industry.

In 2022, he took a decisive step forward by launching Flow Motion School, an animation school offering an eight-month training program for the next generation of Moroccan professionals.

In conversation with Spark, he discusses the origins of the project, what sets the school apart, and the dynamic relationship between his students, his own journey, and the broader African animation industry.



Ali Rguigue, co-founder of Flow Motion School, Morocco

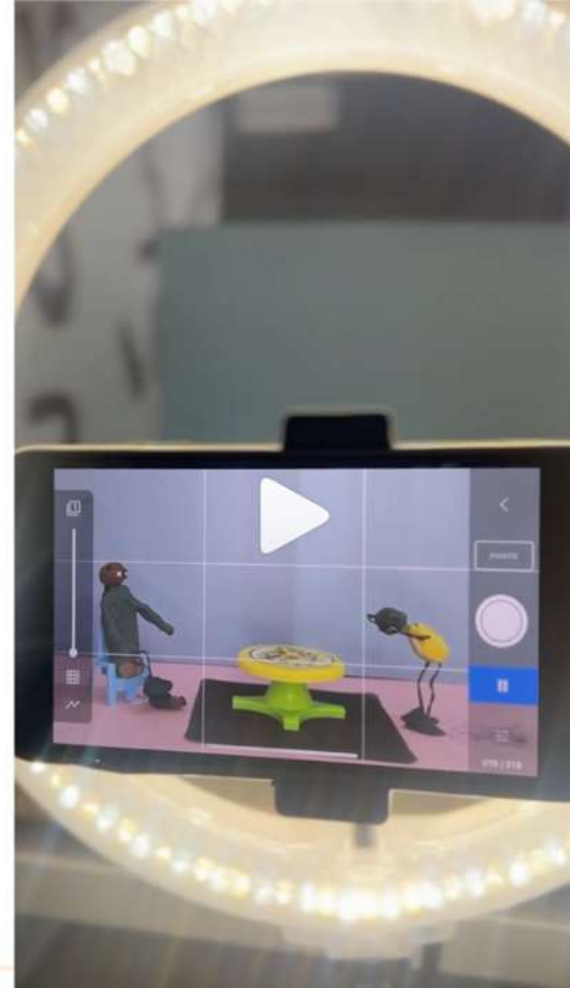
Launching a school is a major commitment. At what point did you feel the need to complement production with talent training?

The need arose from a very clear mutual demand. For several years, we have been encountering extraordinary Moroccan talents, scattered far and wide: in major cities, in villages across all regions of Morocco, but also within the Moroccan diaspora around the world. Many of them are driven by a deep desire to tell their own stories, to illustrate their imaginations, and to bring forward authentic narratives inspired by our culture.

At the same time, as production studios, we were looking for new collaborators capable of contributing to the completion of our projects and supporting the growth of the animation industry in Morocco.

Flow Motion School was born from the intersection of these two needs: talents eager to create, and studios in need of new skills to produce. The idea was therefore to build a concrete bridge between training and production, enabling these talents to express their creativity while offering them real professional opportunities.

Today, this vision has taken the form of a practical, career-focused training program that enables students to master the entire production process of an animated film, from the script to post-production.



How would you describe Flow Motion School, and what makes it unique?

Flow Motion School is the first fully Moroccan animation school, designed to respond to the realities of our country, and more broadly, of the African continent. Our ambition was not simply to replicate an existing academic model, but to build something unique, tailored to our cultural, economic, and creative context. The school is built on several key pillars: accessibility, artistic excellence, and strong industry grounding.

The training is free, inclusive and entirely practice-oriented. Students learn through real-world projects and guidance from industry professionals. This 'learning by doing' model enables them to gain experience that closely mirrors actual production conditions.

The project is also supported by a network of committed partners, including the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH), the Hay Hassani Prefecture, the CPDH, as well as the Drosos Foundation, an important partner supporting initiatives that promote youth empowerment, social inclusion, and access to sustainable professional opportunities. These values are fully in line with the mission of Flow Motion School: to enable young talents to turn their creativity into a genuine life project.

Our vision goes beyond mere training: we want to make Morocco a recognised hub for the creation of animation and visual content in Africa and internationally.



How does teaching influence or transform your perspective as a director?

I have always been an artist, both at heart and in my professional journey. I started very young with music : composing, imagining, creating. This artistic sensibility naturally evolved into visual creation and directing, which I have been developing for over fifteen years with my teams.

Teaching today is, for me, a true blessing. Working with emerging talents allows me to reconnect with a more raw, instinctive form of creation. Students come with fresh ideas, new perspectives, and sometimes unexpected approaches that challenge the habits one can develop with experience.

When you have been directing productions or managing teams for many years, you inevitably develop certain reflexes shaped by production constraints, management responsibilities, and industrial frameworks. Being in close contact with students allows me to step back from these patterns and reconnect with the very essence of creation: emotion, imagination, and the freedom to explore.

It is a constant exchange. I share experience with them, and they constantly remind me why we create.

The public still has little understanding of the various roles involved in animation. How do you raise your students' awareness of the diversity of roles involved in an animated production?

The animation industry in Morocco is still emerging, and one of the key challenges is precisely to better highlight the diversity of professions involved in a production. An animated film requires a wide range of skills: screenwriters, storyboard artists, character designers, animators, editors, composers, post-production technicians... It is a truly collaborative work.

Our role is twofold. On the one hand, we train students in the technical and artistic skills required. On the other, we contribute to the broader structuring of the ecosystem. This notably involves engaging in dialogue with public authorities to help build an environment that supports the development of these professions: funding mechanisms, fiscal benchmarks, support funds for creation, artistic residencies, public commissions, and support for the cultural industries.

At Flow Motion School, we also encourage a multidisciplinary approach. While we train talents specialized in animation, we also urge them to explore hybrid paths with other fields such as visual arts, digital design, visual communication, and gaming. This cross-disciplinary approach is essential in today's creative industries.

In your view, how can Flow Motion School contribute to transforming the animation landscape in Africa?

Flow Motion School is part of a broader transformation of the creative industries landscape in Morocco and across Africa. The school is embedded in a collective dynamic aimed at building a true ecosystem around animation, gaming, and storytelling rooted in our cultures. By training young talents and supporting their transition into employment, we are gradually helping to shape a new generation of professionals capable of producing animation works that can compete on an international scale.

Since the school's creation, more than 120 young talents have already been trained, and a large majority of them have entered the job market within animation studios and creative agencies.

Beyond training, Flow Motion School also carries a cultural vision: enabling African creators to tell their own stories through their imaginations, their languages, their mythologies, and their sensibilities.



ACROSS THE CONTINENT

Where to watch African animation, and the places to learn it

The following pages provide a snapshot of two key entry points into the African animation ecosystem: festivals and schools across the continent.

Through a curated selection of events and institutions, it highlights the initiatives shaping today's landscape. This selection is non-exhaustive and reflects an ecosystem that is still in the process of being built.

While many initiatives are emerging across the continent, there is still a long way to go to fully structure the animation industry in Africa. By 2030, the continent is expected to reach nearly 1.7 billion people, with a predominantly young population, making it one of the most strategic markets in the world for content creation and distribution. This reality highlights both the scale of the challenges ahead and the tremendous potential to be developed.



ANIMATION FESTIVALS IN AFRICA



Late April – Early May

FFAA - Abidjan Animation Film Festival

• **ABIDJAN – CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

International festival dedicated to animation, featuring screenings, training sessions, and professional meetings promoting the industry.

ffaafestival.com

Côte d'Ivoire



Variable

CTIAF – Cape Town International Animation Festival

CAPE TOWN – SOUTH AFRICA

The largest dedicated African animation festival, with screenings, talks and industry networking opportunities.

ctiaf.com

South Africa



May

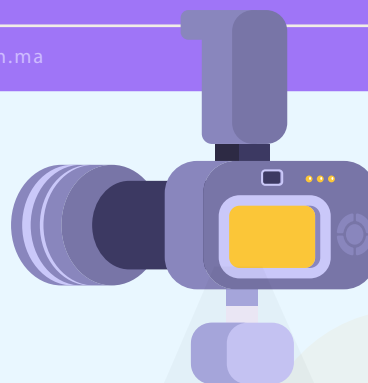
FICAM – Meknès International Animation Film Festival

• **MEKNÈS – MOROCCO**

A leading festival in Francophone Africa, combining international competition, training programs, and professional networking around animation.

ficam.ma

Morocco



October (varies by edition)

LIFANIMA – Lagos International Festival of Animation

• **LAGOS – NIGERIA**

Festival dedicated to promoting African animation, bringing together creators, studios, and industry professionals to develop the sector.

filmfreeway.com/LIFANIMA

Nigeria



February

Animatex Animation Film Festival

• CAIRO – EGYPT

Egypt's biggest animation event and the annual meeting point for all the animation community in the region.

[instagram.com/animatex.egypt](https://www.instagram.com/animatex.egypt)

Egypt



December

CANIMAF – African Animation Film Festival

• YAOUNDÉ / DOUALA – CAMEROON

Festival dedicated to promoting African animation cinema and showcasing emerging talent.

canimaf.org

Cameroon



November

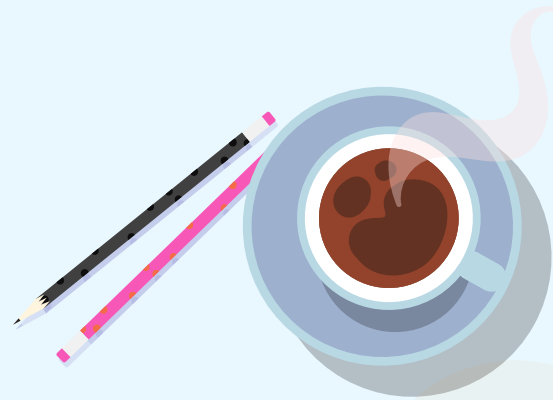
Ziguinchor International Film Festival & Animation

• ZIGUINCHOR – SENEGAL

Platform showcasing the Ziguinchor region through a pan-African and international artistic program.

ziffa.sn

Senegal



November

Rabat International Children and Family Film Festival

• RABAT – MOROCCO

An annual event gathering filmmakers, cinema lovers and social activists around children cinema.

festivalrabat.ma

Morocco



October

The Tanzanite International Animation Festival

• DAR ES SALAAM – TANZANIA

An annual celebration that aims to enhance the visibility of African animation.

filmfreeway.com/Tanzanitefestival2024

Tanzania



Variable

FIFAM – Madagascar International Animation Film Festival

• ANTANANARIVO – MADAGASCAR

Animation festival featuring screenings, a national competition and workshops for professionals and children.

filmfreeway.com/fifamada

Madagascar

ANIMATION SCHOOLS IN AFRICA



February

The Animation School

• CAPE TOWN & JOHANNESBURG – SOUTH AFRICA

School specializing in 3D animation and VFX, known for training talent working internationally.

www.theanimationschool.co.za

South Africa



February

AFDA – School of Creative Economy

• JOHANNESBURG / CAPE TOWN / DURBAN – SOUTH AFRICA

Major creative industries school offering programs in animation, film, and storytelling.

www.afda.co.za

South Africa



February

Open Window Institute

• PRETORIA – SOUTH AFRICA

Recognized institute offering animation, VFX, and digital arts programs oriented toward industry.

www.openwindow.co.za

South Africa



September

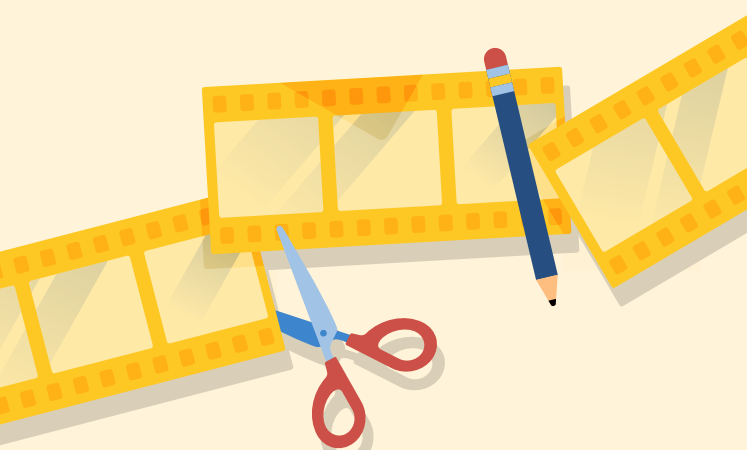
ESAV – Marrakech School of Visual Arts

• MARRAKECH – MOROCCO

Leading school in Francophone Africa offering animation training integrated with cinema and visual arts.

www.esavmarrakech.com

Morocco





September

Magic Lab Academy

• LEKKI – NIGERIA

A school specializing in 2D and 3D animation, offering courses in VFX and game design and Development.

magiclab.studio

Nigeria



Sessions throughout the year

Del-York Creative Academy

• LAGOS – NIGERIA

Academy training in film, animation, and production, with a strong practical focus.

📅 Sessions throughout the year

delyorkcreative.academy

Nigeria



September

Higher Institute of Cinema – Animation Department

• CAIRO – EGYPT

Historic public institution training in film professions, including animation.

facebook.com/higherinstituteofcinema/

Egypt



January / May / September

Africa Digital Media Institute (ADMI)

• NAIROBI – KENYA

School specializing in animation, game design, and digital media for the African creative industry.

admi.ac.ke

Kenya



September

UniMAC - Institute of Film and Television

• ACCRA – GHANA

Public institution training film professionals, including animation.

nafti.edu.gh

Ghana



September

ISAMM – Higher Institute of Multimedia Arts of La Manouba

• TUNIS – TUNISIA

Public institute offering training in animation, multimedia, and interactive design.

www.isamm.rnu.tn

Tunisia



INSIDE THE JOB

Tracey-Lee Rainers, story consultant

The story consultant and story editor Tracey-Lee Rainers is the co-founder and creative director of development hub Story Oasis, a story mentor at various labs including Durban Film Mart and Realness Institute, and a co-founder of the Writers Guild of South Africa, where she remains an active member. She works with animation partners such as Triggerfish Studios, Buthano Pictures, and Freehand Studios. Tracey-Lee is also a mother of two spritely little girls, and her work in animation is motivated by her daughters, who absolutely adore stories told in this medium. She shares her experience and offers her perspective as a story practitioner based in Johannesburg while working internationally.

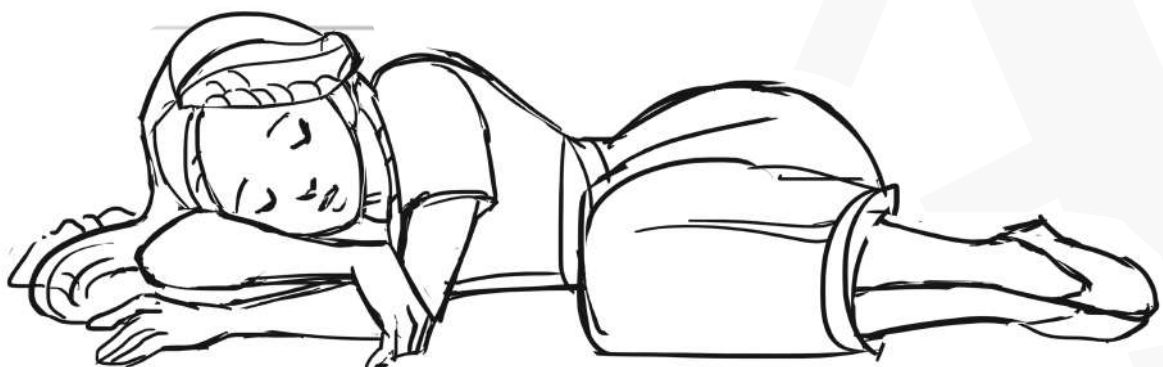
Tracey-Lee Rainers, Story consultant,
South Africa



The art of unlocking a story's full potential

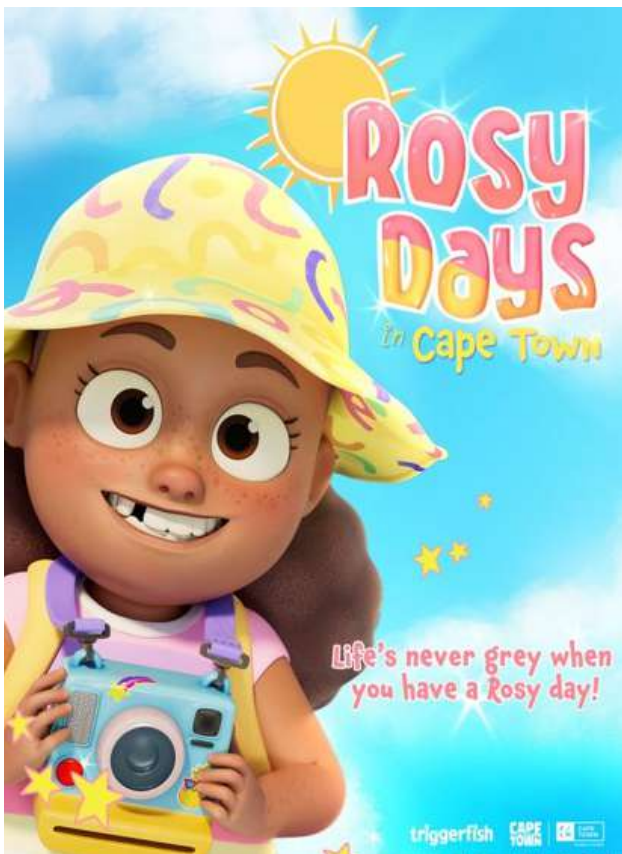
I see myself as a partner on the writer's journey. My goal is to build a process that unlocks a story's full potential, getting the writer's vision onto the page with clear words and honest subtext so it connects with readers, the audience. Consciously, I bring both a professional eye for character, structure, pacing and genre to a development process. Subconsciously, I bring myself to the process, who I am as a human being, my entire life experience and my worldview, sensibilities, values, taste...all of it feeds into story, one way or the other.

Storytelling is deep work, so I stay intentional about what we're trying to say as a team, the story ethos, and how we choose to say it, the treatment and approach. I guide with practical exercises and thoughtful questions to help the story land for the audience.





Tracey-Lee facilitating a story lab



Creative executive on
"Rosy Days"

The steps in story development

I work with writers using a flexible story toolkit that I have created: it is tailored to the particular project. After reading the script or outline and the writer's statement of intent, I offer a story diagnostic, pinpointing what's clear, what isn't, what lands emotionally, and what doesn't. I focus on character, theme, structure and genre when sharing the diagnostic. My goal is to give constructive feedback and possible story solutions designed to spark growth and elevate the story, all the while keeping to the writer's intention, the initial vision.

I collaborate as a story partner. I try my best to honor the writer's path, steering the process to fulfill the story promise and growing my working connection with the writer. I find that my process is appreciated and useful to the writers that I work with as they choose to come back and work on other projects with me.

From the vision to the audience

Writers have wonderful ideas and a vision for their project; the common challenge is how to translate that vision onto the page in words that will be clear for the audiovisual process of storytelling, specifically the animation medium. Working within the realities of finance and time is also vital. We have to take into account that for animation, environments need to be created and characters designed visually. Every single thing in the story will have to have meaning and this is why development is crucial.

A challenge in all stories is how to get the kernel of truth about the story on the page in order for the reader and ultimately the audience to FEEL the story. This is a common challenge and a big part of the solution is to focus on character as the character is the IN, the Trojan horse into the story.

Characters are what we remember, what stays with us. Think about your favorite films, normally a character will spring to mind. As a storyteller, I spend a lot of time on character and theme, and this goes hand in hand with story structure. I believe that the more authentic you are to your characters, the more accessible your story becomes to an audience. I am also a firm believer in universal truths such as love, loss, grief, revenge, etc.

They are universal. As a story consultant, I am focused on keeping a story authentic and foregrounding the universal truth in the story. I ask a lot of questions in order to dig deep and uncover what the universal truth is that the writer intends.

The Impact of well-written protagonists

Not long ago, I was the lead story editor on a feature-film animation with a compelling, quirky protagonist. The character was great in description and characterization, but the story wasn't finding its shape. I believed that it lacked direction or a reason for me to care or connect to the protagonist's journey. From experience, I find that a protagonist with a clear goal does add value to the story. By pinning down a tangible goal for the protagonist and exposing a relatable flaw through character work, the story that I was guiding, elevated.

I also shared methods to help the writers express the characters' objective and flaw more vividly using action instead of dialogue. In a visual medium like animation, we try to steer away from telling the story and instead show the story. From my perspective, story development for animation is the script, the sound and the visual images. These all form part of a story language.

The 3 key-words to strengthen a writer's position

Connect. Collaborate. Write.

I consider myself a project matchmaker. If I meet a writer with an engaging story, I'll introduce them to the right visual artists and producers. If I find a visual artist with a killer idea but not the words to express it, I'll pair them with a writer. The core idea is collaboration.

My advice would be, while creating and writing, make connections, attend festivals, markets, and networking sessions to meet fellow developers. Another advice to writers: believe in your work, and don't be afraid to show it to story editors or consultants for feedback. And when feedback comes in, be clear about what you'll use and what you'll pass on, and this is where intention comes in. Other advice to writers, if you are intentional about your story and what you want to say with it, the notes that work for the story and the notes that don't will be easy to distinguish.



Creator and executive producer of
« Cosmic Rays »

Toile de Papillon



un film écrit et réalisé par **Falle Xela**



OFFICIAL SELECTION

**GBAKA
NATIONAL
AWARDS**

2025



Makole Adzo isdora Ruthia (ismydora) /
ADODOKPO Kokou Armand (AKA) /
Swenn Mohn / Emmanuel yemey

ON THE GROUND

International Festival Gbaka Animation

Today, Togo holds a special place on the animation landscape. Every year, the city of Lomé welcomes many Togolese and international animation professionals for the Festival International Gbaka Animation (FIGA). Founded by Daniel Atchali, the creator of Mess Pictures and president of the Togolese Animation Cinema Association (ATCA), FIGA has rapidly established itself as one of the continent's most significant animation events.

A Hub for Professional Networking

The festival was born out of a clear need: there was no dedicated platform in Togo to celebrate and structure the professional animation industry. Togolese animators were producing and creating, yet had no space to meet, benchmark against international standards, or gain recognition at home.

In 2019, in partnership with the French Institute of Togo, Mess Pictures launched the Togolese Animation Celebration. These early editions demonstrated that both an audience and a community existed. The mission was precise: create the conditions for true professionalization of the sector on an international scale. Training, connecting, distributing. These have been the festival's three guiding pillars from the outset. In 2024, the Festival International Gbaka Animation was officially launched.

Challenges on Multiple Levels

The first challenge was structural: African animation suffers from a lack of institutional recognition. Securing funding for an animation festival in Lomé, with no direct precedent and no established label, meant navigating uncharted territory.

The second challenge was human: assembling a team capable of simultaneously managing an international program, film selection, juries, panels, and training sessions, in a context where the local professional ecosystem is still emerging. The festival relied heavily on volunteers and fragile partnerships.





The third challenge was international credibility: persuading filmmakers, studios, and distributors to take a new festival seriously without a track record. The participation of Michel Ocelot at the very first international edition in 2024 was a game-changer: his return to African soil after nearly 30 years sent a strong signal to the global animation community.

The fourth challenge, and the most pressing on a day-to-day basis, remains funding. FIGA has proven it can attract top-tier names, but each invitation for an international professional represents a difficult budgetary decision. This is precisely why the festival is developing sustainable institutional partnerships: to ensure that the quality of guests no longer depends solely on the funding available for a single edition.

A multi-faceted festival

FIGA is not just a screening festival, it is a fully integrated platform. It relies on a complete ecosystem: Gbaka Animation combines masterclasses, professional training, a pitch space (Gbaka Connect), a residency program, and a resource hub for financing opportunities. Three structural features set them apart:

- **An International Competition Open to All:** Any country submitting at least five films activates its own National Prize, awarded by an international jury. This system eliminates the hierarchy between major producing markets and emerging territories. In 2025, over 15 countries benefited from this mechanism including Benin, France, Germany, Switzerland, Taiwan, and many others.
- **The African Animation Market (MAA):** Operational since FIGA 2025, this market has two layers. The first is a traditional professional market: project pitches, rights negotiations, and co-production opportunities. The second layer is what makes it unique: a space to sell merchandise inspired by African animation, created directly by African animators, local artisans, stylists, and partner studios.
- **A Cosplay Fashion Show Reimagined:** This initiative invites stylists, often without stable opportunities, to enter the animation economy through artistic costume design. FIGA provides them with a stage, a professional audience, and creative legitimacy. The goal is to connect these talents with productions in need of art direction, character design applied to textiles, or costumes for promotional events, a bridge between two industries that too often remain isolated.

From Yesterday to Tomorrow

The first international edition of FIGA in 2024 exceeded expectations on multiple fronts. Michel Ocelot, creator of Kirikou and the Sorceress, served as the guest of honor. The program combined competitions, professional panels, cosplay, and screenings, with juries composed of industry professionals from around the world.

FIGA 2025 marked a significant consolidation: two separate juries (international and African), a dedicated animated documentary competition, a new voice-over competition, and a decentralization of screenings to Notsé. The guest of honor for this edition was Zaven Najjar, director of Allah n'est pas obligé, whose participation was made possible with the support of Pathé Touch Afrique. Submissions increased, the awards lineup expanded, and the call for films for FIGA 2026 is now listed on Short Film Depot, the platform used by international professionals.

FIGA 2026, which will take place from 3 to 10 October 2026 in Lomé, aims to consolidate three main axes:

- **Strengthening the African Animation Market (MAA):** Increasing participation from partner studios, local artisans, online shops, and connections with international distributors.
- **Expanding national competitions:** Ensuring broad representation of animation from around the world.
- **Developing the cosplay fashion show:** Establishing it as a platform connecting stylists with industry professionals.

This year, the market will also focus on animation and video game schools worldwide, inviting students to B2B meetings with industry professionals, and positioning FIGA as a bridge between training and the professional sector.

On an institutional level, the MAA is evolving into a meeting space for African producers and international distributors, with the goal of expanding partnerships across festivals and platforms so that each FIGA award opens concrete professional opportunities.



Daniel Atchali, founder of International Festival Gbaka Animation, Togo.

“Today, FIGA helps to make visible and legitimate a sector that was almost entirely unrecognized institutionally just ten years ago. On both the African and international level, FIGA is beginning to establish itself as a meaningful meeting point. The ambition is for it to become a must-attend reference in the global animation festival circuit—not through size, but through relevance: a festival that speaks with authority on African animation, showcases the continent’s best projects, and connects them with the key decision-makers.”

INDUSTRY WATCH

Animation takes time, money, and resources. But little by little, many projects reach new stages of production, while others achieve major recognition. Here are some inspiring examples.



EJO

Next Step for EJO

EJO, an animated feature film co-produced by Nigerian studios Basement Animation, ANIMOON, Special Touch Studios, and IYUGI, has been nominated for the 2026 Eurimages award at Cartoon Movie.

The project is among a select few competing for the Best Development Award, part of the Eurimages – Council of Europe Co-production Development Award, an initiative that supports international co-productions from the earliest stages of development. This selection marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for EJO.

A New Animation Festival in Africa

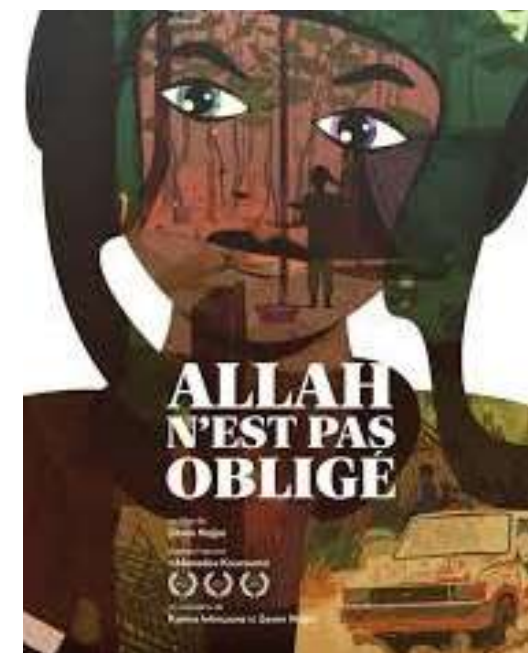
From March 24 to 26, the city of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, hosted the Impact Frame Festival, a celebration of comics, illustration, and animation. Over three days, professionals and enthusiasts gathered for exhibitions, panels, masterclasses, comic competitions, cosplay events, and much more.

The festival also welcomed international guests, including the Afro-Caribbean studio Nzonzi Studio, Franco-Ghanaian mangaka Just Loui, and Beninese international animator Mokoo Gjimm.

Masterpiece !

On March 4, the animated film Allah is not Obliged was released, directly inspired by the eponymous novel by Ivorian author Ahmadou Kourouma, which tells the story of a child soldier.

Co-produced by Franco-Cameroonian Sébastien Onomo of Special Touch Studios, the project has received critical acclaim, winning the Best Animated Feature at the 2026 Anima Awards and the European Producer of the Year award at Cartoon Movie 2026, among other honors.



Allah is not obliged

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Every month, across the globe, remarkable events bring together professionals from African film and animation, showcasing the projects of our talented teams. Here are some events and opportunities to look forward to.



The Alexandria short film festival

Alexandria Short Film Festival is an Oscar-qualifying international short film festival. The festival was founded by the Art Circle Association and supported by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture in order to give filmmakers a chance to present their work to the public.

Event dates: April 27, 2026 – May 2, 2026

Location: Alexandria, Egypt

More information: <https://alex-sff.com/>



FFAR (Abidjan Animation Film Festival)

FFAA is an international event dedicated to animated film, held annually in Abidjan.

Over three days, the festival highlights animation as a driver of employment, development, and cultural exchange. The program includes film screenings, panels, training workshops, and award ceremonies.

Event dates: April 27 – May 3, 2026

Location: Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

More information: <https://ffaafestival.com/>



The Cairo Francophone Film Festival

The Cairo Francophone Film Festival (CFFF) is an annual event promoting the film industry in Egypt, the Francophone world, the Arab world, and beyond. The aim of the Festival to allow meetings between professionals and to build bridges between workers in the field of cinema from different cultures.

Event dates : May 2 – 7, 2026

Location: Cairo, Egypt

More information: <https://filmfreeway.com/CairoFFF>



Call for entries - Tangier Film Festival

The Tangier Film Festival is a 15-year-old festival showcasing a competitive selection of feature films, fiction shorts, animation shorts, and documentary shorts. It welcomes the presence of distributors and festival agents from around the world.

Location: Tangier, Morocco

Who can apply: Filmmakers with short films and feature films in fiction, animation, and documentary.

Submission deadline: April 30, 2026

More information: filmfreeway.com/TangierFilmFestival



The Cape Town International Animation Festival

CTIAF is a festival that brings together the fresh talent, top studios, and animation lovers from across the continent and the globe for a few epic days of creativity, connection, and pure inspiration. From exclusive screenings and behind-the-scenes masterclasses to workshops, talks, and networking events, CTIAF is all about celebrating the art of animation and helping the next generation of creators level up.

Event dates: May 30, 2026

Location: Cape Town, South Africa

More information: ctiaf.com



Recruitment – Studio KVR

As part of its mission to bring African narratives to life through powerful visual experiences, Studio KVR is beginning the adaptation of its comic Doomsday. The studio is seeking creatives who are passionate about storytelling, experimentation, and shaping the future of African animation.

Who can apply: Animators, storyboard artists, writers, sound engineers, and voice actors

Location: Accra, Ghana

More information: studiokvr1@gmail.com

Call for Projects– Francophonie TV5MONDE plus Fund 2026



The fund dedicated to works intended for exclusive distribution on the global, free French-language platform TV5MONDE+, is launching a call for innovative original formats/series aimed at young audiences.

Who can apply: Creators of “360” series/formats targeting French-speaking youth worldwide (ages 15–25).

Submission deadline: 3 mai 2026

More information: <https://www.imagesfrancophones.org/-soutiens/fonds-francophonie-tv5mondeplus/presentation> and [HeritageInternationalFilmFest](https://www.heritageinternationalfilmfest.com/)

Call for Entries– FIGA 2026 | Festival International Gbaka Animation



The Festival International Gbaka Animation (FIGA) will take place from October 3 to 10, 2026, in Lomé, Togo. FIGA aims to structure, showcase, and connect the African animation ecosystem at an international level.

Who can apply: Creators of animated works, including independent projects, student films, and professional productions

Submission deadline: June 30, 2026

More information: <https://gbakanimation.xyz/figa/>



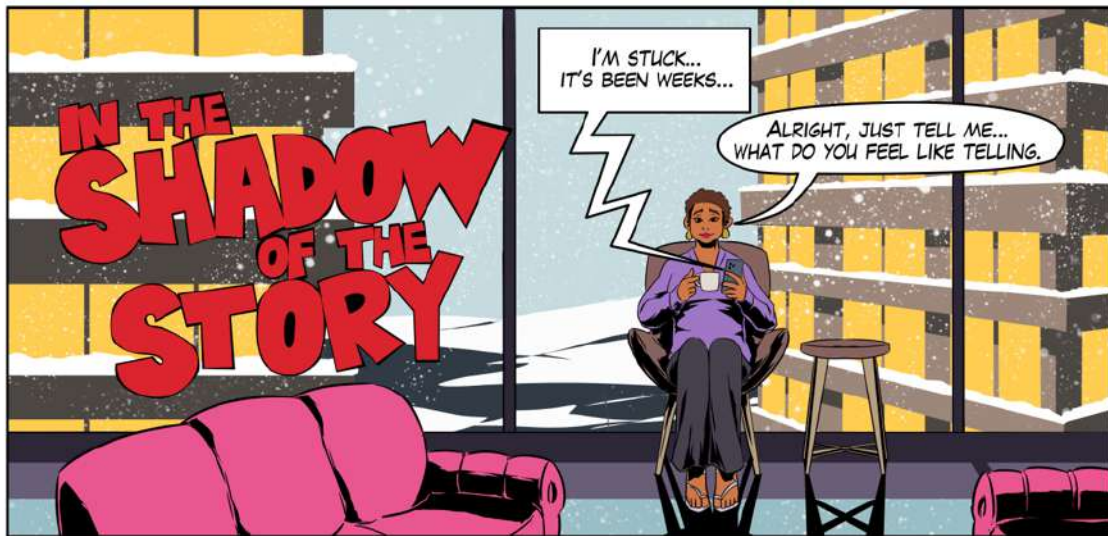
Save the Date – Crowdfunding Launch for Boy Boi

Kenyan studio Pungulu Pa Productions is launching a crowdfunding campaign in May for their new animated series, Boy Boi. The story follows a 6-year-old whose imagination is so powerful it spills into the real world.

The studio is looking for partners to help bring this production to life.

More information: <https://www.punguluproductions.com/boy-boi>

THE NOTES





“What we tell our students is simple: ideas, emotion, and artistic sensitivity can never be replaced by a tool. Today, we live in a fast-paced era, sometimes saturated with images and technology. The “prompt” has become a new way of writing or co-creating, but it will never replace artistic intention or the human ability to tell a story.”

Ali Rguigue

founder of Flow Motion School
and Artcoustic Studio