

Film

BAM presents Wanuri Kahiu's *Rafiki* (2018), Apr 19—25, in its first US theatrical run

March 19, 2019/Brooklyn, NY—From Friday, April 19 through Thursday, April 25, BAM presents the exclusive Brooklyn engagement of Wanuri Kahiu's groundbreaking Kenyan film *Rafiki* (2018) in its first-ever US theatrical release. Kahiu will appear in person during the run.

This Kenyan coming-of-age saga follows the journeys of Kena (Mugatsia) and Ziki (Munyiva), two fearlessly individualistic young women who, despite the fact that their fathers are rival political candidates, form a steadfast bond. When their friendship develops into romance, they must fight to protect their love in the face of societal prejudices determined to tear them apart. With a remarkable feeling for color, music, and the bustling street life of Nairobi, rising star director Wanuri Kahiu crafts an empowering, sublimely moving love story.

The first-ever Kenyan film to premiere at Cannes, *Rafiki* was banned by the Kenya Film Classification Board prior to the festival on the grounds of promoting lesbianism against Kenyan law. In response to the ban, Kahiu sued the Classification Board, and the ban was temporarily lifted by the Kenyan High Court, a decision which made it eligible for Best Foreign Language Film Oscar consideration. While *Rafiki* was not chosen as the Kenyan submission, it played to sold out screenings during the reprieve, and has played major festivals, including TIFF, London, AFI, NewFest, and the Athena Film Festival.

Wanuri Kahiu will be available for select phone interviews, as well as select in person interviews April 18 and 19. Please contact Shelley Farmer at sfarmer@bam.org with all press requests.

Approx. 83 min. | DCP
A Film Movement Release
Director: Wanuri Kahiu
Screenplay: Wanuri Kahiu, Jenna Cato Bass
Cinematography: Christopher Wessels

“Mugatsia and Munyiva have an easy, unfussy chemistry... They're matched by some dreamy visuals, with cinematographer Christopher Wessels plucking out pockets of color wherever they can be found, as with the briefest of shots of a disarmingly vivid row of aubergines slowly ripening in the sun.” –Gwilym Mumford, *The Guardian*

“A BURST OF UNFILTERED TEENAGE ENERGY. Lively and full of vision... [Katiu] has a wonderful eye for detail and lyricism.” –Emily Yoshida, *The New Yorker*

“There's a fresh, engaging giddiness to the love story, and a disarming naturalness to the chemistry between Mugatsia and Munyiva in their central roles, their relationship delicately conveyed with little more than kisses and caresses.” –David Rooney, *The Hollywood Reporter*

**For further press information, please contact:
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About BAM Film

Since 1998 BAM Rose Cinemas has been Brooklyn's home for alternative, documentary, art-house, and independent films. Combining new releases with year-round repertory program, the four-screen venue hosts new and rarely seen contemporary films, classics, work by local artists, and festivals of films from around the world, often with special appearances by directors, actors, and other guests. BAM has hosted major retrospectives of filmmakers like Spike Lee, Chantal Akerman, John Carpenter, Manoel de Oliveira, Luis Buñuel, King Hu, and Vincente Minnelli (winning a National Film Critics' Circle Award prize for the retrospective), and hosted the first US retrospectives of directors





Film

Arnaud Desplechin, Hong Sang-soo, Andrzej Zulawski, and Jiang Wen. Since 2009 the program has also produced BAMcinemaFest, New York's home for American independent film, and has championed the work of filmmakers like Janicza Bravo, Andrew Dosunmu, Lena Dunham, and Alex Ross Perry. The 12-day festival of New York premieres, now in its eleventh year, runs from June 12—23, 2019.

Credits:

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Special thanks to: Clemence Talliander/Film Movement

General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place (between Lafayette Ave and Hanson Place), houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas features first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater) D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
 Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center
 Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.