

Afda staff, students and alumni bag 6 Simon Mabhunu Sabela awards

By Earle Holmes, issued by AFDA

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Winners of the ninth Simon 'Mabhunu' Sabela KZN Film and Television Awards were announced during the annual Durban International Film Festival on 23 July.



Afda staff, students and alumni walked off with six awards after being nominated for 16. Afda Cape Town honours alumnus picked up the Best Feature Film Award for his horror film *Fried Barry* with Afda Durban taking the other five.

"I'm so proud of the winners of the Simon Mabhunu Sabela Awards from Afda Durban. There were five awards given out on the Saturday night at the ceremony at Durban ICC, hosted by KZN Film Commission. Our head of producing, Richard Green, won Best Director of a Feature Film, for *Tokoloshe*; Sir Roel Twijnstra, programme coordinator for live performance, won a Best Supporting Actor Award for *Tokoloshe*; alumnus Byron McNeil won the Best Actor Award for his role in *Time & Tide*; 2020 honours alumnus, Tanner Mitchison, won Best Short Script Award for *Nineteen-Eighty-Six* his honours script; Tanner Mitchison also won for Best Student Film Award, with his producer, Sphesihle Zama, Afda Durban 2nd year LCC and lecturer.

The Simon Mabhunu Sabela Awards are decided by an external panel for each category, and even though I'm overall chairperson of the Sabelas, I don't have a say in who wins. So these wins are all the sole achievement of the excellence from every Afda Durban staff member and Alumni. What I love about these awards is that it showcases a diversity of talent which epitomises complexion of KwaZulu-Natal. I know Afda Durban plans to keep winning Sabelas for many years to come as the quality of our lecturers and students will continue to excel," says Afda Durban Dean Janet van Eeden.

Afda Durban student films have an extraordinary record at the Simon Sabela Awards, having won the Best Student Film award for the last eight years in a row. On the 16th April 2021, the Simon Mabhunu Sabela Awards Statue was officially unveiled by members of the KZN Film Commission, Afda Durban, members of KZN Tourism and the Mayor's office in a special ribbon-cutting ceremony on the Afda Durban campus.

The Simon Mabhunu Sabela film and television awards recognise outstanding achievement and excellence within the South African Film and Television industry, with a special focus on KwaZulu-Natal. Among those who will be honoured at the

awards are actors, producers, directors and various film and television technicians.

The awards are an initiative of the Department of Economic Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs and are implemented by the KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission. Mr Simon "Mabhunu" Sabela, in whose honour the Film and Television Awards are named, was a legend in both big screen and television. Not only was he South Africa's first Black film director, he also had a long and successful career which saw him feature in over 34 movies, both nationally and internationally.

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