

# Afda's first Artist in Residence, Vusi Africa is king at 18th AMA Awards

By Earle Holmes, issued by AFDA

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The time for Africa to own African stories is now and has never been better.



Afda is proud to announce that Afda's first Artist in Residence in their Masters (MFA) programme, Vusi Africa, walked off with the Best Director Award for his work on the film *Surviving Gaza* at the 18th Africa Movie Academy Awards held in Lagos, Nigeria, on 30 October 2022. The film also picked up the Best Achievement in Visual Effects and Best Achievement in Sound Awards.

In his speech on receiving the award Vusi said, "Most importantly, I have got a passion, more than anything else, about telling stories. But my passion is not just about telling stories, I've got a passion for this continent. I think it's time Africans take ownership of our songs. It's time we start to take control of our history. It's time we take control of the resources that the world keeps taking away from Africa. The time for Africa to own African stories is now and has never been better. Thank you AMAA's."

In an interview with the *Daily Sun* Vusi said that winning the Best Director award was a game-changer for him. "I think it is such an important message, particularly about young black filmmakers and the future of filmmaking in Africa. Giving this award to a young black director is empowering towards the future of African cinema and the new wave of African filmmaking."

"For me, more than anything, this win represents the beginning of a new journey and chapter. This is Africa's biggest stage and to succeed here, competing with the rest of Africa, is a big deal. This has now become about South Africa and national pride."

*Surviving Gaza* premiered on eMedia's eVOD online streaming platform on 24 February 2022.

The film, which is set against the vibrant kwaito era in South Africa tells the story of Phuzi, a 17-year-old who faces some

difficult decisions when he must choose between his desire for a career in kwaito, love, and a life of crime.

His childhood sweetheart returns to Gaza soon after Phuzi's family bury his grandfather, as if he didn't have enough on his plate already.

Thandeka's homecoming not only gives Phuzi hope for a better future, but it also offers some good news: that a kwaito tournament is looking for contestants. Thandeka believes that Phuzi has what it takes to succeed in the competition. But, at the same time, his friends are set to establish themselves as a crime duo.

The Africa Movie Academy Awards, popularly known as AMAA and The AMA Awards, is presented annually to recognise excellence among professionals working in, or non-African professionals who have contributed to, the African film industry. It was founded by Peace Anyiam-Osigwe and is run by the Africa Film Academy.

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