

Urban Kidz Film Festival

Written by Robert ID2616
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The Urban Kidz Film Festival is a subsidiary of the San Francisco Black Film Festival, which was founded in 1998 to highlight the range, depth and diversity of the African-American experience in films from around the world. Paying particular attention to independent releases, the SFBFF has been a driving force integrating the work of independent Black filmmakers into the mainstream.

Created with young viewers in mind, Urban Kidz Film Festival (UKFF) unveils its fifth season on Saturday, June 3 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the African American Art and Culture Complex, 762 Fulton Street. UKFF is an offshoot of the San Francisco Black Film Festival (which opens June 6 and runs through June 11) and features a striking assemblage of short films, special presentations and hands-on instruction designed to spark the imaginations of the 5-to-12-year-old set.

Staffed by successful directors, screenwriters and actors of color, UKFF workshops offer inspiration as they uncover the inner workings of cinema. Hip kid sessions like Black Animation introduce African-American youth to a broad range of independent filmmaking careers and role models they can relate to. More than providing practical instruction, Urban Kidz workshops provide kids a platform for exploring life's possibilities.

This year's hands-on training is provided courtesy of BAYCAT, whose three-hour "Go! Music Video" workshop guides students with no video experience through the process of creating a music video for a song that they write. Based on their interests, students will be assigned to one of two teams. The first team will be led by instructor Will Hammond Jr., who will present students a basic beat on the Apple Powerbook and direct them to collaboratively write and record lyrics on a positive subject important to their lives. Meanwhile the second team, led by instructor Ariel Dovas, will rehearse and shoot the video for the song. After a short break and snack, the two teams will merge to complete the final music video shoot. Students will be able to see their footage in real-time on TV.

The festival launches at 10:00 a.m. with an impressive schedule of screenings and then segues into the awards presentation and closing reception. Films run the gamut from three to thirty minutes, topical to comical, stories of the girl next door to exotic tales from afar. See how curiosity gets the best of Toni, who is supposed to stay away from Mother's precious knick-knacks in Toni and the Great Paddle Cap.

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Journey with Ramon and discover the importance of kindling creative flames with care in ISH. Hard times are in store for seven-year old Jalil when he's adopted by a Philly family and transplanted to the 'hood. His new address is so rough that even a trip to the corner store is fraught with danger in The Battle of Eshu and Iku. Learn how Jalil finds a safe haven among Uncle Adisa's African artifacts.

Golden Blaze uses fast-paced, animated action to tell the tale of African-American schoolyard rivals. After an accident, both boys' fathers develop lethal superpowers and proceed to battle at the behest of their offspring. Even more amazing than the acclaimed world premiere of A Girl Like Me at this year's Tribeca Film Festival is the film's director, who's just fifteen years old! Kiri Davis explores self-esteem issues and standards of beauty imposed on young black girls through frank interviews with her high school gal pals. Innovatively animated and told in the voice of a cool cat named Scat, Ella Fitzgerald: The Tale of a Vocal Virtuosa is a stunning take on the singular legend. The story of how Ella got her sound, this snazzy short is jazzily narrated by Billy Dee Williams. Two tales from Oakland, Breathless written and directed by middle school student, Nikosazama Nkululeko about two teens both suffering from asthma and Runners High, six students from the mean streets of East Oakland and their quest to participate in the Los Angeles marathon.

Though billed as a children's event, Urban Kidz founder Ave Montague finds the festival appeals just as strongly to adults. "Urban Kidz Film Festival fosters a sense of childlike wonder along with the feeling of limitless possibilities. That's an irresistible mix, whether you're five or fifty-five."

Urban Kidz unfolds Saturday, June 3 inside the African American Art and Culture Complex on 762 Fulton Street. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. and screenings begin at 10:00 a.m. Since this is a children's festival, adults must be accompanied by a child to gain admittance. Tickets for the morning session (9:30 am to 12:00 noon) are \$7.00 children/\$10.00 adults; tickets for the afternoon session (12:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.) are \$10.00 children/\$12.00 adults and include awards reception admission. All-day passes are \$15.00 children/\$ 20.00 adults and may be purchased online at <http://www.ticketweb.com>. The three-hour BAYCAT "Go! Music Video" workshop costs \$20.00 per student; due to limited space, advance registration is required. For a complete schedule of screenings and events, please visit the Urban Kidz Film Festival website at <http://www.ukff.org> the San Francisco Black Film Festival website at <http://www.sfbff.org> or call 415-771-9271.