

Agat Films and Mokoari Street
present

ANCESTRAL VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

a film by Lemohang Mosese



France, Lesotho, Germany, Qatar, Saudi Arabia / English / 88min
Aspect ratio 1.85 / Sound 5.1

SYNOPSIS

In *Ancestral Visions of the Future*, filmmaker Lemohang Mosese blurs the lines between reality and reconstruction. Through fragmented narratives and mythic imagery, Mosese reflects on dislocation and belonging, returning to his unnamed city— not for answers, but to remember himself. Yet, *Ancestral Visions of the Future* is more than a story of one man's exile—it is an elegy for a city and a people caught between the weight of memory and the inevitability of loss and it is a poetic ode to cinema.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This film is, at its core, a biographical work. But it is not a story of exile in the conventional sense—it is a meditation on the longing that sustains it. A meditation on beauty, violence, displacement, memory, and the fragile architecture of losing oneself.

When I first arrived in Europe, my laughter was full, deep, untamed—the kind that rises from the belly, needing no permission. But exile teaches restraint. Over time, I learned to shrink it, to contain it, to shape it into something that could exist in spaces where silence was prized.

In the exile of our own making, we wear a thousand masks, each molded to fit an unfamiliar world. But as time moves forward, these masks fuse together into a monstrous patchwork—a face that no longer remembers itself. A collection of borrowed identities that stripped me of my own.

From a distance, home became something else. Time blurred the sharp edges of memory. I forgot the weight of departure, the unease—Lesotho, the most dangerous country in Africa—and in its place, I built a city. A city of light, a sanctuary to which I would one day return, untouched by time, unspoiled by reality.

A city constructed in the mind—part memory, part invention. A utopia stitched together from fragments of childhood, fused with imagination.

The belief in a beautiful city waiting for me carried me through the treacheries of Europa.

The film is a journey—a return to this imagined place, a search for the home I created in my absence. But what happens when memory and reality collide? When the place I longed for does not exist outside the mind that conjured it?

This is not a story of homecoming. It is the story of a mirage—and what remains when it fades. In a way, it is an attempt to recover myself, my true face again, to find that laughter, that roar.

It is not the physical act of returning that matters most, but the confrontation with the self that such a return demands.

The narrative will unfold as a journey through both physical landscapes and the subconscious—blurring past and present, reality and hallucination. Lesotho and Berlin will exist in conversation with each other, like two opposing mirrors reflecting an identity that is both fractured and whole.

The film meditates on violence—not through explicit depiction, but through its lingering presence. It is embedded in a piece of red cloth stretched across the land.

I impose this vile, blood-stained fabric onto the breathtaking landscape of home—a contradiction: red cloth as a motif—violence and beauty intertwined.

This film is also an ode to cinema, an eternal nod to my mother. My mother created a world in the midst of violence to find safety.

"Mme (My mother) vandalized the faces of statues of saints so that I would remember my own."

And then, there was a cinema.

Cinema wasn't just an escape; it was a gateway into something beyond—a sacred place I couldn't name but could feel. Cinema was a breath of God, and He reeked of stench—sacred and foul.

In the abandoned village town hall, where the air hung heavy with the stench of filth—faeces, urine, and decay—this cathedral of human neglect bore no saints, no hymns—only silence. And yet, each weekend, it was cleansed and transformed into a cinema.

EUROPE

Outside Café La Maison, I saw a mad African man—disheveled, lost in his own monologue, speaking in his mother tongue to a mother who wasn't there.

"The Baobab trees have outgrown my pockets, mother!" he yelled. "The land has wept enough!. Mother, it's time to plant."

In Berlin, a city sculpted from cold stone and steel, Baobab trees do not grow. Yet there he was, a relic of another world, carrying a forest within him. His tattered coat, his bare hands, his unwashed face—all bore the weight of a place that no longer surrounded him. He was a man uprooted, yet his roots had followed him.

Sitting in the warmth of the café, I watched him from the other side of the glass. And in that moment, I saw myself reflected in him. The line between us dissolved. This encounter triggered a realization: the beautiful home of return I held in my head may not exist. It may never have. It was a construct, a mirage built out of longing.

"In truth, I had no intention of returning home."

A shift to Chicago—another exile, another ghost. I recall my friend Sejake, who lived for seven years in near isolation. One day, Sejake noticed the absence of flies. In Lesotho, flies were everywhere. A constant presence. Here, there were none.

Then, one day, while photographing from his balcony, he saw a lone fly. A trivial thing, absurd even. But at that moment, it brought him home. He captured it on film.

But when he developed the film, the fly wasn't there. It had never been. It was a figment of his mind, a mirage born of longing.

In the days that followed, he began seeing more flies, unrecorded—as if recording them might disrupt his fragile feeling of home.

And so, I wondered: Had I done the same with my idea of a beautiful home? Had I carried a mirage with me as unreal as that fly on film?

RETURN

So, I decided to go back home. Perhaps the beautiful place of return I had imagined during my self-imposed exile was not just a mirage, but a reflection of something real—home waiting for me.

But upon my arrival, I realized the home I had once carried in my mind did not match the one that stood before me. Its streets had shifted, not in their structure, but in the way they refused to recognize me. Home had become a stranger's house, or perhaps I had become the stranger. Like Sobo, I felt myself fading into something unclaimed—a ghost.

And so, I come to terms with this illusion—the only home I have ever known.

WORLD OF THE FILM

I am the unseen protagonist, a specter moving through these streets, my voice the only trace of my presence. What unfolds is not just my story, but the story of a place that exists in fragments—home as I remember it, home as it is, home as it never was.

The film is structured as a portrait of an unnamed city teetering between life and death, seen through the fractured gaze of its inhabitants. At its core, two figures emerge: Sobo, The Puppeteer, and Manthabiseng, The Mother, both bound to the city in ways that reveal its contradictions—its brutality and its tenderness, its indifference and its memory. And then, there is the car—death itself, with an engine and steel.

Sobo, The Puppeteer

Sobo is a man who does not fight death but tries to outmaneuver it. A street healer, an alchemist of time, he sells herbal remedies that promise longevity—not as an escape, but as a second chance. He believes people are too beautiful to be confined to a mere 75 years, too brief to rise beyond the mistakes of those who came before them, too fleeting to complete the soul's journey. He is a puppeteer of the unseen, navigating a city that does not always believe in what it cannot touch.

Manthabiseng, The Mother

Manthabiseng is based on Senatsi Manthabiseng, a real-life figure who tragically lost her life in 1991 at a Taiwanese-owned shop, murdered by security after her baby took something from the store. The violence that followed saw all foreign-owned shops looted and gutted, leaving 35 people dead—violence written into the architecture of the city.

In the film, Manthabiseng is a woman shaped by the weight of the streets, hardened by their promises and betrayals. She sells in the market. She has seen things—things no mother should see. And so, she carries her grief the way one carries a child, close to her chest, beneath the folds of her red cloth.

Khoho-ea-Lira (The Bird of Death)

Death is not an abstraction here. It has a name. It does not whisper—it circles, it watches, it waits.

In Basotho legend, Khoho-ea-Lira is the herald of death, a bird that does not sing, only arrives. In this film, death has been given wheels. It moves in the form of a BMW 325is E30, the infamous Gusheshe, a car whose very silhouette is etched in fear. In the 1980s, it was the ride of criminals, a machine synonymous with lawlessness.

A car that doesn't just pass through the city—it marks it. Wherever it appears, something is taken, something is left behind. Blood.

MADNESS

Perhaps it is here, in the swirling depths of absurdity, where reason falls silent—that home is not a destination, but a state of being. It was never about the finality of arrival or the sorrow of departure. Not about walls, borders, bricks, or mortar. Perhaps home is something far simpler—the feeling of the familiar. Maybe familiarity itself is the first step toward home. And perhaps to truly return—to enter this home in any real way—one must first abandon the self.

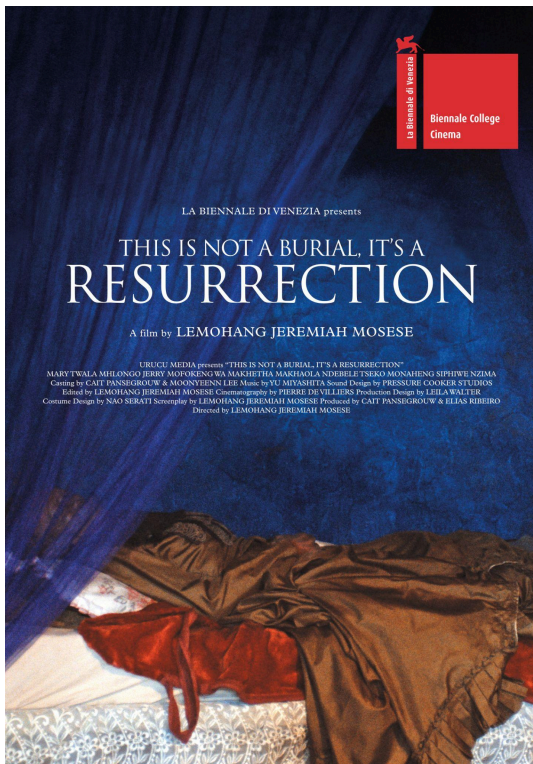
In this space, memory becomes fluid, time folds into itself. The past and present blur. Home and exile blur into one face that wears the ones who left, the ones who stayed.

DIRECTOR – Lemohang Mosese

Lemohang Mosese, a Berlin-based filmmaker and visual artist from Hlotse, Lesotho, explores identity, time, and the cycles of life, death, and rebirth. A self-taught filmmaker, his visual essay *Mother, I Am Suffocating, This Is My Last Film About You* premiered at Berlinale Forum 2019 and has been featured in renowned festivals and institutions like MoMA. His acclaimed film *This Is Not a Burial, It's a Resurrection* won over 30 awards, including Sundance's Visionary Filmmaking Jury Award, and is part of the Criterion Collection. Mosese's video installations, including *Sculpting God* and *New God*, have been showcased globally. As a juror and lecturer, he has contributed to Berlinale, Locarno, and Cambridge University.



FILMOGRAPHY



2025 - ANCESTRAL VISIONS OF THE FUTURE
Berlinale Special

2019 - THIS IS NOT A BURIAL, IT'S A RESURRECTION

Venice Biennale Cinema, Sundance - World Dramatic Special Jury Award for Visionary Filmmaking

2019 - MOTHER, I AM SUFFOCATING. THIS IS MY LAST FILM ABOUT YOU

Berlinale Forum

2015 - BEHEMOTH OR THE GAME OF GOD (short)
Clermont-Ferrand

2014 - MOSONNGOA (MOCKED ONE) (short)

ANCESTRAL VISIONS OF THE FUTURE - CAST

Siphiwe Nzima

Manthabiseng

Sobo Bernard

Herbalist, Puppeteer

Mochesane Kotsoane

Old Man

Rehauhetsoe Kotsoane

Child

ANCESTRAL VISIONS OF THE FUTURE - CREW

Director

Lemohang Mosese

Screenplay

Lemohang Mosese

Cinematography

Lemohang Mosese
Phillip Leteka

Editing

Lemohang Mosese
Andrès Hilarion

Sound Design

Diego Noguera

Executive Producer

Marie Balducchi

Co-producers

Lemohang Mosese
Laura Kloeckner
Anan Fries