



# FOOTPRINTS OF PANAFRICANISM

A FILM BY SHIRIKIANA AINA



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## SYNOPSIS

In the 1950's African-Americans from all walks of life followed Kwame Nkrumah's call to come home to live and work in Africa. It was a call to rebuild the independent country of Ghana, and more importantly a call to join in the creation of a liberated Pan African territory.

On the day of the proclamation of Ghana's independence, the country's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, stated that the independence of Ghana was meaningless unless it was linked to the liberation of the whole of Africa.

The African diaspora constituted an essential indispensable part in this global Pan African vision for liberation, which in the 50's, 60's and 70's ushered no less than a Black political and cultural revolution. After all, people such as WEB DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Alphaeus Hunton, Paul Robeson, George Padmore helped to fire up young thinkers like Kwame Nkrumah crystalize and implement the greatest ideals of this ever-burning desire for freedom.

Intertwining the struggles of the Diaspora and Africa, FOOTPRINTS OF PANAFRICANISM remembers these powerful bonds that were so crucial for this era to the center of its work. While one was struggling for equity and the other for independence, both movements were rooted in a determination to re-assert their humanity and recover from the impact of slavery and colonialism.





## THE FILMMAKER

Shirikiana Aina is an independent filmmaker based in Washington, D.C. where she resides with her family.

Shirikiana has over the span of 35 years directed a number of films, notably:

- BRICK BY BRICK — a documentary on housing and displacement in Washington, D.C. in the 1970's;
- THROUGH THE DOOR OF NO RETURN — a personal journey as filmmaker attempts to bridge a 400 year gap between herself and the African Continent; and
- FOOTPRINTS OF PANAFRICANSIM — a documentary, which narrates a period in which Africans on the continent and in the Diaspora, participated in building a liberated Pan African territory.

Shirikiana also co-produced a number of acclaimed movies such as SANKOFA, TEZA, and ADWA. All of her films and that of her husband, Haile Gerima, are produced under Negod Gwad Productions and distributed through Mypheduh Films – both of which are companies that she and her husband founded and manage.

Shirikiana is a mother of six, who has taught film at Howard University and is currently the owner of Sankofa Video and Bookstore in Washington D.C.





## THE PRODUCTION HOUSE

### **Negod-Gwad Productions**

Negod-Gwad Productions was established in 1987 by Haile Gerima and Shirikiana Aina, with the mission to produce stories about people of African descent. As the meaning of its name suggests, Negod-Gwad, which means “thunder” in the Ethiopian language of Amharic, aspires to be a powerful force whose stories are heard by all. For decades, Negod-Gwad has engaged in co-production relationships with a number of European television companies, notably: Channel 4, WDR/ARTE and the BBC. The historical bi-product of this relationship and the resulting production value is demonstrated in an impressive film repertoire ranging from “Ashes and Embers, which explored the experiences of an African American Vietnam veteran, to the production of “Teza”, which is the tale of an Ethiopian revolution shot in Ethiopia and Germany; and the acclaimed “Sankofa”, which is a dramatic film about slavery in America. Negod-Gwad also produced “Through the Door of No Return” is one that explored the Pan-Africanist ties to the African continent.

### **Mypheduh Films Distribution**

Mypheduh Films Distribution Company – a sister company to Negod-Gwad Productions – was founded by Haile Gerima and Shirikiana Aina in 1982. Over the past three and a half decades, Mypheduh Films has established a record of successfully distributing films locally and internationally. Mypheduh transcends usual distribution platforms to include community cultural centers, universities, and institutions such as museums and prisons across the U.S. and Canada. The company created an alternative, grassroots theatrical distribution strategy for one of its films Sankofa in over 32 cities throughout the U.S. This strategy was fast appraised by many scholars as historical due to its reach, its community-based approach and its inclusive process, which considered partners as stakeholders. This release strategy subsequently became a model approach emulated by numerous independent filmmakers across the country. Mypheduh means “guardian of culture” in Ge’ez (the ancient and liturgical language of Ethiopia). It is also the name of the cloth, which covers and protects the tabernacle in the Ethiopian Orthodox church setting. The founders chose to name their distribution company Mypheduh, because that was the vision with which they founded it.





**2017 AWARDS  
& ACCLAIM**



February 2017 – Footprints of Panafricanism was awarded The Grand Nile Prize for Best Long Documentary at the 2017 Luxor African Film Festival in Luxor, Egypt.



May 2017 - Footprints of Panafricanism was officially selected for screening at the 24TH African Film Festival in New York City.



August 2017 - Footprints of Panafricanism was officially selected for screening at the 6th Annual BlackStar Film Festival in Philadelphia, PA.



August 2017 - Footprints of Panafricanism was officially selected for screening at the 2017 BronzeLens Film Festival in Atlanta, GA.



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## CREDITS

### **Produced by**

NegodGwad Productions

### **Directed by**

Shirikiana Aina

### **Co-Producers**

Haile Gerima and Shirikiana Aina

### **Assistant Director**

Yemane Demissie

### **Original Music**

Lafayette Gilchist and Eric Kennedy

### **Editors**

Haile Gerima and Shirikiana Aina

### **Director of Photography**

Rick Butler

