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## Film School Africa

Director: *Nathan Pfaff / USA, South Africa / 2017 / English and with English Subtitles / 89 mins / Documentary / Ages 13+*

Katie Taylor, a Los Angeles casting director, leaves her quickly growing career behind in order to teach filmmaking to youth in an impoverished South African community. Originally intending solely to equip them with employment opportunities, she quickly discovers the therapeutic impact on her students as they process life events through their films. Emerging from a wide range of social backgrounds, the students find themselves bridging cultural barriers as they become united through filmmaking.

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### SET THE STAGE | WORDS TO KNOW

- **TOWNSHIP:** underdeveloped and segregated urban areas in South Africa that until the end of apartheid were reserved for non-white people
- **APARTHEID:** system of institutionalized racial segregation in South Africa that existed from 1948 until the early 1990s

#### FILM TERMS:

- **DOCUMENTARY:** a type of film that attempts to explain reality
- **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** the art and technique of making motion pictures. This includes how the film uses light, shadow, color, movement and composition within the frame.
- **VÉRITÉ FOOTAGE:** documentary footage of characters going about their everyday lives as if the camera isn't there  
*For more film terms, refer to the PCFF Film Glossary [pcffri.org/FilmHub](http://pcffri.org/FilmHub)*

### TALK ABOUT IT | DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR BEFORE...

- What do outsiders think of your community? How is it portrayed in the news, if at all? Can mass media ever tell the whole story about a city, town, neighborhood, or the people who live there?
- If you made a film based on life in your community, what would you choose to focus on?

### ... & AFTER FILM VIEWING

- How are racial and cultural differences in South Africa addressed by members of Film School Africa and by Katie?
- Think about the choices Katie made about the film school. Would you make the same or different choices? Who do you think decided what her role in the film would be? How could you find out? Why might it matter?
- Which character did you identify with the most? Why?
- What do we learn about the young filmmakers based on the movies they make?
- How do the filmmakers grow and change over the course of making their movies? How does this help convey the film's message?

### RESOURCES:

- **Official film website:** [filmschoolafrica.org](http://filmschoolafrica.org)
- **Everett** ([everettri.org](http://everettri.org)): Company of professional artists that creates original works and carries out a wide range of education programs as well as mentorship to young artists.
- **Give Me 5** ([giveme5ri.org](http://giveme5ri.org)): Offers film workshops intended to help middle through high school students improve filmmaking and media literacy.
- **PCFF** ([providencechildrensfilmfestival.org/workshops](http://providencechildrensfilmfestival.org/workshops)): Support youth filmmaking!