



The Diaspora Suite

A five-part film series by Ephraim Asili
Filmmaker in Person!

Wednesday, October 30th at 7:00pm
Keefe Campus Theater, Amherst College
Free admission

Ephraim Asili's five-part series *The Diaspora Suite* is both a personal and global study of the African diaspora. Created over the course of seven years, every film in the series has a unique rhythm built around a specific amalgam of footage shot in American and international locations — each an important site within the African diaspora. *Forged Ways* (2011) travels between Harlem and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; *American Hunger* (2013) features Philadelphia, Ocean City, and Cape Coast,

Ghana; in *Many Thousands Gone* (2014), Harlem and Salvador, Brazil; in *Kindah* (2016), Hudson, New York, and Jamaica; and in *Fluid Frontiers* (2017), Detroit and Windsor, Canada.

Locating a shared geographical and historical lineage, *The Diaspora Suite* charts a movement from decoding to encoding, documenting and creating within the landscape.

"Asili has concluded a five-part film suite that examines the African diaspora through a series of immeasurable equations: America and abroad (with films shot in Ghana and Ethiopia, as well as Brazil, Jamaica, and Canada); personal and collective history; the past and the present; imaginations and realities; and image and sound. Abandoning digital video for 16mm, Asili has developed his documentary impulse into something more spontaneous and musical, his eye attuned to the unexpected rhythms afforded by montage."

— Jesse Cumming, *Cinema Scope*, Fall 2017

Featuring:

"Forged Ways," Ephraim Asili, 2010, 16mm, b&w and color, sound, 15 min

Filmed on location in Harlem (NY) and Ethiopia, *Forged Ways* oscillates between the first person account of a filmmaker, a man navigating the streets of Harlem, and the day to day life in the cities and villages of Ethiopia.

"American Hunger," Ephraim Asili, 2013, 16mm, b&w and color, sound, 19 min

Oscillating between a street festival in Philadelphia, the slave forts and capitol city of Ghana, and the New Jersey shore, *American Hunger* explores the relationship between personal experience and collective histories. American fantasies confront African realities. African realities confront America fantasies.

"Many Thousands Gone," Ephraim Asili, 2014, 16mm, color, sound, 8 min

Filmed on location in Salvador, Brazil (the last city in the Western Hemisphere to outlaw slavery) and Harlem, NY (an international stronghold of the African Diaspora), *Many Thousands Gone* draws parallels between a summer afternoon on the streets of the two cities. A silent version of the film was given to jazz multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee to use an interpretive score. The final film is the combination of the images and McPhee's real time "sight reading" of the score.

"Kindah," Ephraim Asili, 2016, 16mm, color, sound, 12 min

Kindah was shot in Hudson, NY and Accompong, Jamaica. Accompong was founded in 1739 after rebel slaves and their descendants fought a protracted war with the British leading to the establishment of a treaty between the two sides. The treaty signed under British governor Edward Trelawny granted Cudjoe's Maroons 1,500 acres of land between their strongholds of Trelawny Town and Accompong in the Cockpits. Cudjoe, a leader of the Maroons, is said to have united them in their fight for autonomy under the Kindah Tree — a large, ancient mango tree that still stands to this day. The tree symbolizes the kinship of the community on its common land.

"Fluid Frontiers, Ephraim Asili, 2017, 16mm, color, sound, 23 min

Fluid Frontiers is the fifth and final film in the series entitled *The Diaspora Suite*, exploring Asili's personal relationship to the African Diaspora. Shot along the Detroit River, *Fluid Frontiers* explores the relationship between concepts of resistance and liberation, exemplified by the Underground Railroad, Broadside Press, and artworks of local Detroit Artists. All of the poems are read from original copies of Broadside Press publications by natives of the Detroit/Windsor region, and were shot without rehearsal.

Ephraim Asili is a Filmmaker, DJ, and Traveler whose work focuses on the African diaspora as a cultural force. His films have screened in festivals and venues all over the world, including the New York Film Festival, NY; Toronto International Film Festival, Canada; Ann Arbor Film Festival, MI; San Francisco International Film Festival, CA; Milano Film Festival, Italy; International Film Festival Rotterdam, Netherlands; MoMA PS1, NY; LAMOCA, CA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; and the Whitney Museum, NY. As a DJ, Asili can be heard on his radio program *In The Cut* on WGXC, or live at his monthly dance party Botanica. Asili currently resides in Hudson, NY, and is a Professor in the Film and Electronic Arts Department at Bard College.

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