
Berlinale
73 Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin
Panorama
All the Colours of the World Are Between Black & White
a film by Babatunde Apalowo

ALL THE COLOURS OF THE WORLD
ARE BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE

A film by **Babatunde Apalowo**
Production **Polymath Pictures**
Production Country **Nigeria**
Production Year **2023**
Running time **92 minutes**
Shooting format **Digital 16:9/4:3**
Screening format **DCP/Digital/5.1**

SALES

2o9ine Films
Lagos, Nigeria
2o9ine@gmail.com
Mobile+2348094210733

PRESS

Polymath Pictures
e-mail: polymathpictures@outlook.com
WhatsApp: +2348030611884
Mobile: +447548031992

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"The rainbow is a part of nature, and you have to be in the right place to see it. It's beautiful, all of the colors, even the colors you can't see. That really fit us as a people because we are all of the colors. Our sexuality is all of the colors. We are all the genders, races, and ages"
-Gilbert Baker





SYNOPSIS

Bambino and Bawa's relationship is tested as they navigate their feelings for each other while riding around Lagos for a photo competition. Bambino grapples with his own self-doubt and uncertainty, while Bawa is convinced that their feelings are a sign of something deeper. When Bambino suffers an accident and is forced to rely on Bawa's assistance, he begins to question his own sexuality. The close proximity between them only intensifies the situation, and Bambino, overwhelmed by confusion and anger, ultimately pushes Bawa out of his life. However, when Bambino returns with an offer of friendship, Bawa insists that he make a decision. In the end, Bambino decides to reject Bawa, leading to a heartbroken and frustrated Bawa exposing Bambino's sexuality to a mob, resulting in a violent attack on Bambino as Bawa watches with mixed emotions.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"Colours" started out as a love letter to a city I love so much - Lagos. The story was about a dispatch rider who fell in love with his city and would take iconic pictures to recapture the lost memories of his dead parents. But that story took a tragic change after I witnessed what was, perhaps, the most haunting experience of my life. I saw a man lynched and killed because of his sexual orientation. The event shocked me, and it began lifting the veil of ignorance from my eyes, to see beyond my initial pompous declaration of love for a city. I realized how dangerous Lagos could be to outsiders or 'others'. People can lose their lives just by turning the wrong corner or by dressing just a little differently. I knew immediately I had to tell the story of Bambino, a metaphorical outsider who finds himself questioning his own identity while reconciling his past. So, what began as a love letter to Lagos, turned into an examination of the people the city rejects; the film is as much about the characters as it is about Lagos.

It wasn't an easy decision to make this film. A gay love story in a country like Nigeria, where queer love is punishable by a prison sentence. However, the most significant challenge wasn't the fear of being sentenced but the doubt in my ability, as a straight person, to tell the story. I feared that I wouldn't be able to appropriately capture their experiences and might inadvertently make a mockery of it in the process. I developed the courage to tell the story when I realized it's a love story, after all.

I could relate to the experiences of the three main characters, as I have experienced love from all their perspectives. I have loved someone I couldn't be with, and I've had my love advances thrown in my face, and it is from this focal point that I pivoted the film on. I discarded every iota of queer stereotype in the film and tried to tell a simple love story between two people. Their sexual identities were not the WHY" but the "BUT" in the sentence of their lives. Further more, I became a great student as I invite friends with such experience to share their stories with me. This grounded approach helped in the other aspects of the film.

I intentionally selected all the in-film shots to come from the point of view of a human being in a 'what-the-eye-can-see' approach. I captured Lagos in a way that the city would be seen by anyone living in the city or otherwise, which means there are no wonderful nor elaborate roaming or drone shots.

I pushed this idea further by using only static shots, which mirrors the rigidity of the lead character, Bambino, and in a way that forces Lagos to be observed differently. Lagos is one of the main characters in the film, and in my opinion, the city has always been presented as this grand and dynamic place that is almost impossible to tame. The intention, however, was not to tame Lagos but to present it in a way that no other person had before.

Another approach I used to further drive this viewpoint is what I call 'Lagos, the faceless city'. The idea is simple; you can't walk twenty meters in Lagos without bumping against someone or seeing a sea of faces surrounding you, so I focused on showing only the faces of the three lead characters in the film. Recognising a face is vital to our social lives and it comes with the emotional value we attach to faces. Removing other characters' faces is not a way to remove their identities but a way to portray how Bambino sees the world in general and his immediate environment. Also, I hope this will force people to see the main characters' faces in their candid moments, as most of the film was shot in wide shots.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

What inspired you to create "All the Colours of the World Are Between Black and White" and what does the film mean to you personally?

All the Colours of the World Are Between Black and White was initially intended to be a love letter to the city of Lagos, celebrating its vibrant energy and culture. However, the film took on a deeper meaning when I witnessed a tragic event that would change the course of the story. While in University, I had a bunkmate who was lynched because of his sexual orientation right in front of me while I watched helplessly. This event inspired me to tell the story of Bambino, a metaphorical outsider who finds himself questioning his own identity while reconciling his past. I wanted to explore the struggles and challenges that he and others like him face in a society that often rejects and punishes those who are different. It is a deeply personal and meaningful film for me, as it touches on themes of identity, belonging, and the human experience in all its complexity. It is inspired by real events in my life and the lives of others, and I feel a strong connection to the characters and their struggles.

I approached the process with a focus on authenticity and emotional honesty, wanting to tell a love story that was grounded in reality and universal in its themes. I am proud of the work that went into bringing this film to life, and I hope that it will have a meaningful impact on its audience. I believe that this film has the power to inspire empathy and understanding in its viewers, and to help bridge the gap between different cultures, communities, and individuals.

How did Lagos influence the film?

The setting of Lagos played a crucial role in the film "All the Colours of the World Are Between Black and White." Not only did it provide the backdrop for the story, but it also served as a character in its own right,

influencing the experiences and choices of the main characters, Bambino and Bawa. The vibrant and fastpaced energy of the city added to the film's atmosphere and served as a metaphor for the struggles and obstacles that the characters faced in their relationship. Lagos is a city that is full of life and energy, but it can also be dangerous and unpredictable. Its beauty and chaos were integral to the film and it would not exist without the city. In this way, Lagos added depth and complexity to the story, serving as both a backdrop and a driving force in the film.

What are the challenges faced while making the film?

One of the main challenges we faced while making the film was finding the right cast. As the film deals with sensitive and potentially controversial themes, it was important for us to find actors and crew members who were committed to the project and understood the vision for the film. However, this proved to be difficult, as many male actors in Nigeria turned down the roles due to concerns about how it might affect their careers. Despite these challenges, we were eventually able to assemble a talented and dedicated team.

Another challenge we faced was navigating the societal expectations and norms in Nigeria, particularly with regards to LGBTQ+ themes. While we were determined to tell an authentic and honest love story, we also had to consider the potential risks and challenges that this might pose. Additionally, we encountered some unexpected challenges on location in Lagos, such as noise and interference from the surrounding area.

However, we were able to creatively incorporate these elements into the aesthetic of the story. There were also instances where we were arrested by the police and chased by a mentally unstable man on set, which added to the challenges of production. Overall, it was a challenging but rewarding experience to bring this film to life.

In the film, there is a focus on the faces of the three main characters while the faces of all the supporting characters are hidden. Is there a reason for this?

Yes, there is a reason for this stylistic choice in the film. The focus is on the three main characters and their experiences, so I wanted to highlight their faces and emotions. This creates a sense of intimacy and connection with the audience, allowing them to better understand and relate to the characters' struggles and challenges. The supporting characters, on the other hand are meant to represent more abstract or symbolic figures, so we chose to obscure their faces in order to convey this idea. This not only adds to the overall aesthetic and atmosphere of the film, but also serves as a narrative device to symbolize the isolation and loneliness that the main characters feel, and to represent the larger societal forces that are acting on them. By choosing to have a distinction in how we show faces in the film, I hope to underscore the themes of identity and belonging that are central to the story.

What impact do you hope this film will make in society?

I believe that this film has the potential to make a real difference in society. By tackling themes of identity, belonging, and love, it can inspire people to think more deeply about these issues and challenge the societal norms and expectations that can limit our understanding and acceptance of others. I hope that the film will spark important conversations and encourage people to be more open-minded and empathetic towards those who are different from them. Ultimately, I believe that this film has the power to inspire social progress and contribute to a more inclusive and understanding society. As a filmmaker, it is my greatest hope that it will have a meaningful impact on its audience and inspire positive change in the world.

The film is visually stylish and seems to have a formal presentation. What was the idea behind this?

The visual style of the film was an important aspect of the storytelling, and we took an experimental approach, We wanted to create a unique and memorable aesthetic that would help to immerse the audience in the world of the film and enhance the themes and emotions of the story. We also decided to tell the story as objectively as possible, grounding the camera and, in turn, the viewers to what a human eye can see. This approach helps to create a sense of realism, like we are just watching real life unfold in real time. The formal presentation and use of stylized visuals were meant to convey the sense of longing and desire that the main characters feel, as well as the societal constraints and expectations that they are struggling against. We also wanted to create a sense of intimacy and connection between the characters and the audience, and the visual style helped to achieve this effect. Overall, the visual style was an integral part of our creative vision for the film, and we hope that it will be memorable and meaningful for the audience.



DIRECTOR'S BIO



Babatunde Apalowo is a film director and screenwriter based in the UK. He won the Homevida competition sponsored by the United Nations and his short film "A Place of Happiness" has screened at several international film festivals. In 2022, he won the AMVCA for Best Editor and was nominated for Achievement in Screenwriting at the African Movie Academy Awards. His debut feature film is "All the Colours of the World Are Between Black and White."

CAST

Key Cast



Bambino
Tope Tedela



Bawa
Riyo David



Ifeyinwa
Martha Ehinome Orhiere

CREW

Director	Babatunde Apalowo
Producer	Damilola Orimogunje
Screenplay	Babatunde Apalowo
Cinematography	David Wyte
Editing	Babatunde Apalowo
Colourist	Matt Mahmood-Ogston, Josh Borrill
Music	Richard Kett, Catherine Shrubshall
Sound Design	Richard Kett, Kolade Morakinyo
Sound	Bankole Adedoyin
Production Design	Art Anekwe
Art Direction	Jeffrey Agama
Costumes	Valerie Okeke
Make-Up	Uduoghene Alakpa
Assistant Director	Joan Inegbe
Production Manager	Bolaji Gelax
Executive Producer	Ezra Olubi
Co-Producers	Imafidon Gift Jesurobo-Owie, David Wyte, Babatunde Apalowo
Associate Producer	Nkechi Okere

Co-Productions	Creative Blacks Production, Lagos, Realm360 Production, Lagos 2o9ine Films, Lagos


Your first time should be special.
It should be with someone you love,
with someone that loves you.
— BAMBINO