

# 36<sup>e</sup> FESTIVAL DES 3 CONTINENTS

Cinémas d'Afrique, d'Amérique latine et d'Asie

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## The Inner Journeys of Khady Sylla, or The Word Regained

**Khady Sylla was a Senegalese writer and filmmaker who spent her life giving the unheard a chance to speak, making durable, and irrigating with new images, the legacies of the African word, covered over and threatened with dissolution.**

*"The first film of Khady Sylla that I saw was called An Open Window, it was on the programme at the Cinématographe in a programme reshowing films selected at the Marseille Festival of Documentary Film. This was in 2005. I said to myself then that, for a long time, I would remember that voice, its tone and intonations and its particular scansion, where words, the act of speaking, focus in an urgent and essential fashion on what she says. This voice came from far away, from behind the dividing line of the visible, and it cast on the images the nervous weight of a whole body, a body constrained but, multiple, polyphonic, we might say, contemporary, post-colonised, distraught.*

*Khady Sylla was Senegalese. She died not long ago. As we continue to listen to her, we are also sure to see her, her films will become closer to other films and sometimes the cameras of other filmmakers will in turn bring us back to her. She will be there, sitting on the edge of emptiness, at the window where she observed the servitudes of the world, trying to refind a place there."*

Jérôme Baron, Artistic Director of the Festival des 3 Continents.



*Ce qu'il reste de la folie ©KSVision*

### BIOGRAPHY

Writer and filmmaker, Khady Sylla (1963-2013) was born in Dakar. She confirmed in remarkable fashion the existence of a feminine intellectual and artistic elite in Africa. She made documentaries, *Une fenêtre ouverte* (2005), which won first prize at the Marseille Festival of Documentary Film, sometimes with others, and a fictional short film, *Les bijoux*.

She died in October 2013, leaving a final film, *Une simple parole*, co-produced with her sister Mariama, which will be given a special screening in Nantes.

**Her novel, *Le jeu de la mer*, was published by L'Harmattan in 1992.**

### PROGRAMME

1 *Colobane Express*, Khady Sylla - Senegal - France / Documentary / 52' / 1999

The story of Pape Touré, a driver of express coaches, and his apprentice N'jiassé N'Joye, Khady Sylla takes us into the dense and contrasted traffic of Dakar. Small shops and negotiations, symbolic exchanges and social rituals, a common adventure which takes the temperature of Senegalese society.

*Borom Sarret*, Sembène Ousmane - Senegal / Fiction / 20' / 1963

Borom Sarret, often considered as the first African film by a black African, is also the first film by Ousmane Sembène and a clear stance against all those who believed that independence would solve all Africa's problems.

2 *Monologue de la muette*, Khady Sylla et Charlie Van Damme - Senegal - France - Belgium / Documentary / 45' / 2008

The Girl With No Voice is the life of Amy, and the common bondage that her masters submit her to. The story takes place in the intimacy of her forced retirement in the village where she will give birth to her daughter. At the same time, it is a tale of both hope and dead end.

*La noire de*, Sembène Ousmane - Senegal - France / Fiction / 65' / 1966

The dramatic story of Diouana, a young naive girl, taken on for their holidays in

France by a young couple of volunteer development aid workers. She leaves for Antibes full of illusions. In reality, she only finds the lot of a servant and the cold contempt of her masters. From the bottom of her solitude, she ends up committing suicide. The story is based on a minor news item from the French Riviera in 1958, which Sembène read about in the Nice Matin newspaper.

3 *Une Simple parole*, Khady Sylla et Mariama Sylla - Senegal - Qatar / Documentary / 63' / 2013

In our family, one of the last guardians of our family tree is our grandmother Penda Diogo Sarr. She knows about the exploits of our ancestors and the valuable names of the line of descent. According to the President-Poet Senghor, the only dead person is a person whose name people no longer pronounce. She came to our house when our mother was on her death bed and a very special bond was created between us. She began to transmit the word to us in this obscure period of life. This word was being threatened. In the family, we are the second generation to be able to write. Who is going to continue to tell of the line of descent? To fight against the destruction of this ancestral word, we decided to pass from oral tradition to that of the film.

*Les bijoux*, Khady Sylla - Senegal / Fiction / 22' / 1997

A young girl has a meeting with her suitor. For the occasion, her mother gets out precious earrings. The young girl gets ready during the afternoon surrounded by her mother and her three sisters. The disappearance of the earrings sets off a crisis.

4 *Ce qu'il reste de la folie*, Joris Lachaise - France / Documentary / 100' / 2014

Joris Lachaise takes us to Thiaroye, an inner suburb of Dakar, and into a psychiatric hospital in the company of the writer and filmmaker Khady Sylla.

5 *Une fenêtre ouverte*, Khady Sylla - Senegal / Documentary / 52' / 2005

*Aminta Ngom is mad. She knows it and is not ashamed of it. In front of the camera, she talks about the suffering within her.*

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