

2nd edition of the AuthenticA Series Lab opens for submissions

The second edition of AuthenticA Series Lab, beginning in September 2023, is open for submissions and closes on 14 June.



Image supplied. (left to right) AuthenticA Series Lab 2022 participant Tony Sebastian Ukpo, Penny Christodoulou Storyboard Collective, mentor Mehret Mandefro, story consultant Selina Ukwuoma, 2022 participant Chantel Clark, 2022 participant Jessica Leanne Hagan, 2022 participant Angela Wanjiku Wamai and programme director Elias Ribeiro

The AuthenticA Series Lab is a programme designed for African episodic screenwriters to support the development of their series scripts by the Realness Institute, in partnership with the Storyboard Collective, and with the support of Series Mania Forum, the French Embassy in South Africa, and the French Institute of South Africa (IFAS).

It is one of six programmes from the Realness Institute designed, with partners, to grow the African film industry by seeking out new ideas and supporting these in their development process. AuthenticA was designed in collaboration with the StoryBoard Collective.

A monthly stipend, travel, and accommodation costs are covered by AuthenticA. The six-month programme comprises a stimulating combination of online and in-person sessions in a variety of locations from 19 September 2023 to 30 March 2024.

Once again, story expert, Selina Ukwuoma and creative producer Mehret Mandefro, co-founder and director of

development and partnerships at Realness, will mentor the cohort through their creative process.

They will participate in online mentorships and sessions over six months as well as attend in-person residencies in South Africa's at the Coot Club, and the StoryBoard House in Switzerland, culminating with their pitches at the Series Mania Forum 2024 in France.

Participants will work towards completing a concept story pitch deck and a pilot script. The rights of the developed work will remain with each writer.



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5 May 2023



Programme for African episodic screenwriters

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Mandefro says, "Providing African writers the time, space, and support to create brave episodic stories gives them what they need to build new worlds and circulate perspectives that widen what global audiences understand about Africa - from Africans."

The Lab is offered to four African screenwriters from African countries and the Diaspora working in any genre.

The aim is to give episodic screenwriters an indispensable opportunity to bolster their craft, enhance their skills and highlight genuine, up-to-date viewpoints about the continent that frequently receives inaccurate and inauthentic representation.

Mandefro adds, "The relationships and community they build with their peers, along the way, is also part of the curatorial magic we hope to replicate."

Opportunity to immerse yourself

"This programme is the dream — to have enough time to immerse oneself in the development of a series one is passionate about, among like-minded peers, without having to worry about keeping a roof over your head," enthuses Ukwuoma.

This year follows a highly successful first edition, with positive industry feedback and investor deals being negotiated.

"The first cohort of writers grabbed that opportunity and really made an impact at Series Mania," adds Ukwuoma.

"The first edition was a great success. We sense a great desire for creation in many African countries," adds Laurence Herszberg, general director of Series Mania. "Séries Mania wants to be the gateway for those projects to the industry, as we know that there is a strong interest from the international professionals."

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Talented scriptwriters voicing African stories

“StoryBoard is convinced of the power TV series have in shaping new shared narratives, as well as bringing culturally and geographically diverse people together,” says David Rimer, founder of The StoryBoard Collective, a Geneva-based philanthropic organisation that supports the development and impact outreach of transformative stories.

Our first edition confirmed the interest international funders have in talented scriptwriters voicing African stories that showcase authentic and unapologetic cultural perspectives,” explains Rimer.

AuthenticA 2022 alumnus Jessica Hagan speaks of her experience in the programme. “AuthenticA Series Lab was truly an invaluable experience with support, masterclasses, and sessions where we were able to work as a group and get feedback.

“I felt supported all the way, especially on pitch day when I was more confident to pitch the project to producers and development executives.

“My TV series is now in development with a massive UK-based global production company who are passionate about premium content from around the world, including Africa. I’ve also made friends for life with my cohort; we’re constantly checking in on one another”

Information on the criteria and the application process can be found [here](#).

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