

# Tango With Me

Mahmood Ali-Balogun's vision becomes reality



Africa is not considered the easiest country in which to make a film, let alone a feature on 35mm, but respected Nigerian director/producer Mahmood Ali-Balogun aims to instigate change. His motive for selecting Kodak 35mm film for his big budget psychological drama, *Tango With Me*, centres around his determination to alter the "subsistence digital nature" of the Nigerian film industry. He strongly believes that Africa in general and Nigeria in particular have the ability to create internationally-acclaimed movies.

Nigeria's impressive movie legacy dates back to the 1960s. Nowadays, 'Nollywood' boasts one of the largest movie industries in the world. Between 1,000 and 2,000 titles originated on video are released each year, all of which are put onto DVD or VCD and the demand is increasing from within Africa and worldwide. Ali-Balogun, however, is earnestly addressing the issue of the quality of movies from his country. As he explains, "Our industry needs to develop a cinematic culture. Although there are many incredible stories to be told on film which would attract large audiences, movies from Africa face a great deal of competition, particularly those aimed at international release. I am seeking to encourage African filmmakers to move away from the video format and embrace the universally and professionally accepted format of 35mm, which provides ready access to international film festivals."

Ali-Balogun continues: "Kodak was instrumental in enabling me to achieve my objective of shooting on 35mm and was phenomenally supportive throughout the whole process of making *Tango With Me*. I first met Kodak officials at their stand at the Cannes Film Festival in 2006 and discussed with them my desire to shoot the feature on 35mm. I spoke to them again the following year and they were more than cooperative. They came to Nigeria, met with the Nigerian Film Corporation and offered me a fantastic deal. Through their vision meeting mine, I was able to make this project happen."

Ali-Balogun explains why he opted for film, instead of taking the digital route for his landmark movie: "I believe that when it comes to movies, digital is inferior to film. Film is still the best

medium in the world and I knew that *Tango With Me* would lend itself to the film feel." His long-awaited movie, which explores serious issues in society, was shot on KODAK VISION2 500T 5260, KODAK VISION2 200T 5217 and KODAK VISION2 100T 5212.

Ali-Balogun enhanced production values with an experienced American crew and British director of photography Keith Holland, who is currently Los Angeles-based. They were supported by a locally-hired team. Ali-Balogun invited colleagues from the Nigerian movie industry to observe aspects of the film shoot and involved three students from the Nigerian Film Institute (NFI) in the making of *Tango With Me*. "Forgiveness is the central theme of *Tango With Me*. It is a story of how communication, faith and love can conquer marital difficulties and I believe it will have universal appeal" says Ali-Balogun, a religious family man who is well known for his evocative documentaries.

"Filmmaking is my passion," states Ali-Balogun. "It is a collaborative art and the more we improve our standards and the higher we aim, the better our chances of success. It's a tough and cumbersome process, but it is incredibly worthwhile. My ambition is to contribute to the emancipation of Africa. I believe that if my film is successful it will encourage the African movie industry to create better and better productions."

*Tango With Me* is produced by Brickwall Communications Limited. The film will follow the international film festival route before being officially released in cinemas and theatres. Release on DVD will be long after the cinema run. Ali-Balogun hopes that its release will prove to be a defining moment for film in Africa. This is an edited version of the story. For the full-length version, please see [http://motion/kodak.com/US/en/motion/Publications/In\\_Camera/index.htm](http://motion/kodak.com/US/en/motion/Publications/In_Camera/index.htm)

For further information about the movie visit [www.tangowith-mefilm.com](http://www.tangowith-mefilm.com).

For further details about Keith Holland please check out his website at [www.keithholland.com](http://www.keithholland.com)