



BLACK A.R.T. FILMWORKS PRESENTS:

MINO: Å DIÅSPORIC MYTH

WRITTEN, DIRECTED & PRODUCED BY ÅSHUNDÅ NORRIS

ALL INQUIRIES CONTACT: MINOTHEFILM@GMAIL.COM



MINO: Å DIÅSPORIC MYTH

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

In the utopic haven of Biamara, a Coven of Black women who can conceive without men must consider denouncing one of their own when she chooses to defy the all female code and self produce a male child.

MEDIUM SYNOPSIS:

It is 2079. In a land where Black women build and govern their world with a firm but noble hand, men no longer exist. Led by Sage, the Bia women, who each have the power to self conceive, keep their orb safe by only birthing female beings. When Osa, a woman new to the colony, becomes weary of a place without the male species in it, she takes it upon herself to form a non female seed within her womb space. As each of the Elders come to know of Osa's misdeed, they must determine if her life is more important than the sanctity of the celestial body they've created. Welcome to Biamara.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION



TRT: 18:36

Exhibition Format: Blu-Ray, DCP, DVD

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Shooting Format: 5K RED Scarlett-W

Language: English

Year of Production: 2018

Country of Origin: United States

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The genesis of MINO: A Diasporic Myth began when I kept seeing hashtags such as #trustBlackwomen, #loveBlackwomen, #thankyouBlackwomen along with articles written by non-Black women full of exalting odes to us while my personal life remained the same because I felt neither trusted, fully loved or thanked by anyone except other Black Women. I wanted the planet to be solely owned and nourished by the sacred feminine of the African woman. My response to those empty narratives and the quest for a world I've often craved is MINO: A Diasporic Myth.

The word Mino means 'mother' or 'our mothers' in Fon and is the name given to the only known all female militia formed the ancient land of Dahomey – now Benin. These women fought to protect their homeland and their king. As the African woman is the Original woman, she is, quite often seen as mother to everyone but herself. With MINO, I was seeking to create a tribe of divine, queer African beings who not only reclaim their roles as warriors, but mother themselves and no one else. At its core, MINO shows how a Coven of Black women living in a utopic realm could still be susceptible to daunting conflicts; are we not worthy to care only for ourselves? Do men really need to return to our universe for it to be whole?

I wanted the film to have its own visual aesthetic. Costume designer Mariah Harrison and I had conversations about how we could create such a look with the clothing of the Bia Women. We researched styles from several African lands as well as indigenous cultures across the globe. Our goal was to create a distinct sublimity reserved only for the women of Biamara. The elaborateness of the costumes, hair and makeup was a deliberate choice. My aim was to have the audience be awestruck and movingly overwhelmed each time they looked at one of the Bia Women.

Although MINO is set in the future, I didn't want to rely on technological aspects to indicate a futuristic setting. My goal was to place the characters where I believe society might find itself; solely depending on the land and its resources once again to thrive. I wanted the nature of the land and working it for beneficial life means to be at the heart of the film. The Bia Women are soulful godlike beings who place value in what they cultivate. Conversations with the production designer Chloe Early led to her creating elements that mirror this idea. We used aspects from the past to indicate a new future.

Nearly all of the scenes in the picture are exterior. We had to depend on natural sunlight to create the mood and texture of the film. Cinematographer Joshua Carraso and I discussed how to make Biamara look expansive and unique while also showing the divinity of the Bia Women in each scene. Our goal was to create a distinctive, singular look that allows the audience to honor the Bia Women and the space they inhabit.

My intention with MINO was to show Black queer women loving each other in the most tender, sensual ways, but also challenging each other's belief systems. Cinema has the potential to provide alterative worlds we can believe in and want to inhabit. It is my hope that MINO: A Diasporic Myth has done just that.





ÅSHUNDA NORRIS

WRITER DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

"BLACK CINEMA IS WAR."

Ashunda Norris is a fierce feminist, filmmaker, poet and teacher whose most recent film work has screened nationally and internationally including Kampala, Uganda and Nairobi, Kenya. Born and raised in the heart of rural Georgia, Ashunda is a proud alumna of Howard University and Paine College. She holds MFAs in both Screenwriting and Poetry from Mount Saint Mary's University and Fairleigh Dickinson University. Her latest narrative film *Soft Times* received Best Short Film and Best Lead Actress nominations at the Las Vegas Black Film Festival. Ashunda's honors include fellowships from Cave Canem, the New York State Summer Writer's Institute and a residency at The Lemon Tree House. She currently lives and works in Los Angeles.



CINEMATOGRAPHER | JOSHUA CARRASCO

Josh Carrasco was born and raised in California. He attended The Los Angeles Film School, where he received his degree in Science for Film. Captivated by film since his early childhood, Josh has lensed several short films including *SOFT TIMES*, *ALTERNATIVE* and *SLIT*. He works in Los Angeles as a freelance cinematographer.



COSTUME DESIGNER | MARIAH HARRISON

A native of Virginia, Mariah Elise Harrison graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2014 with a BFA in design. Her dramatic and theatrical style echoes a surrealistic element and her background in fashion design has given her a strong working knowledge of textiles and garment construction. With over 5 years of industry experience Harrison has worked with directors such as Steve Vasquez, Lukas Colombo, and Audrey Rosenberg. In addition to her own works, she has also been hired in the costume departments of the James Franco production, *RIO*, and several award winning Pepsi commercials that campaigned throughout Japan.



KEY MAKEUP ARTIST | BRITTANY VICTORIA

Originally from Houston, Texas, Brittany Victoria is an artist skilled in beauty, SFX makeup and wardrobe styling. She has the natural gift to create and explore new things. She works mainly on films and to list a few, she has worked on *"MINO"*, *"Indigo Valley,"* *"The Education of a Negro,"* *"The Dawn of Zombie Apocalypse,"* *"One under the Sun"*, *"The Chase"*, *"Juicy Ladies,"* and *"Loqueesha."* Personally, the sun brought Brittany to LA, she may be one of the pickiest eaters in the world and her favorite thing to do is laugh.



FÀITH IMÀFIDON

Faith Imafidon is a proud first-generation Nigerian and Boston native. An actor and writer, Faith is pleased to add producer as a new Theatre of NOTE member. She holds both a MFA in Acting from the Institute for Advanced Theatre Training and BA in English from Harvard University. Favorite credits include: For The Love Of (NOTE, CTG), And Then They Fell (Brimmer Street Theatre Company), The Last Days of Judas Iscariot (Hudson Theatre) and The Fertile River (Mabee Theatre). When not performing Faith enjoys cooking and finding new fabrics at JOANN Fabrics. Special thanks to Ashunda and the lovely women of Mino: A Diasporic Myth for their passion and black queendom.



OLUSHOLÀ FÀGBÀMILÀ

Olu Grace Fagbamila is a Nigerian-American actor, recording artist, and fashion designer. Fagbamila was born in Stockton, California to Aderemi Agoro-Fagbamila and Bayo Fagbamila, the youngest of a family of three children. She started acting by age 8 years old, influenced by the theatre program at her primary school Fagbamila developed a passion for performance art. In 2018 she participated in the Hollywood Fringe Festival as a principle in The Goddesses Guide: Adura for the Women of the African Diaspora, as well as a series of supporting roles on stage and on camera.





CAST

Sage: Faith Imafidon

Osa: Olushola Fagbamila

Aya: Sheila Jaye

Xula: Kym Allen

THE ELDERS

Nahid: Robbie Danzie

Rania: Pjay Phillips

Wasifah: Veletta Marshall

ZAMINGA WARRIORS

Ami: Dazelle Yvette

Shaka: Regina Bowmen

Zuri: Abena Appiah

Mansa: Seyline Cuffy

Jariah: Aminah Hall

Bahati: Korra Obidi

BIA WOMEN

Bikita: Lisa Ivey

Amina: Colette Owens

Maat: Christine Twyman

CREW

Written, Directed & Produced by: Ashunda Norris

Cinematographer: Joshua Carrasco

Costume Designer: Mariah Harrison

Production Designer: Chloe Early

Composer: Dara Taylor

Editor: Rock Chang

1st Assistant Director: Kelz Morgan

Script Supervisor: Karen Tolliver

Production Coordinator: Lynn Lipinski

1st Assistant Camera: Jordan van der Keyl

2nd Assistant Camera: Shania Malone

Key Grip/Gaffer: Rob E. Bennett

Sound Mixer: Gary Casey

Make Up Artists: Brittany Victoria, Jennifer Mitchell

Hairstylists: Loreanne Larbi, Traci Mackey, Elise Gamble, Precious Boyden

Storyboard Artist: Brenna McNamara

Sound Designer: Hemang Prajapati

Colorist: Yijia Xu

Visual Effects Artist: Andrew Dickinson

Wardrobe Assistant: Sidney Walker

Production Assistants: Shania Malone, Anthony Solorzano II, Myracle Ross, Cheyanna McLaren, Freddy Buggs, Tajah Enge

Set Photographers: Breiana Autena, Breanna Dickson, Monique Solorzano

