

# SHASHAMANE

a film by Giulia Amati

*“We’ve been Niggers, and from Niggers we went to Negroes, from Negroes we went to Blacks, from Blacks we went to African Americans. And why? When our central foundation is: we are Africans.”*

Sister Patrice/**SHASHAMANE**

# CREDITS

**Produced by:** Blink Blink Prod.  
**A Co-Production with:** Rai Cinema

**Director:** Giulia Amati  
**Executive & Creative Producer:** Flavia Lauricella  
**Camera, Sound, Editor:** Giulia Amati  
**Sound Editor:** Matteo di Simone  
**Music:** Piernicola di Muro

**with**

**In Ethiopia** Ras Mweya Masimba, Patrick Campbell aka Brother Trika, George Isles aka Ras Kamba, Meme Noel Dyer, Pametria Blackman aka Sister Pam, Sister Patrice Jonier, Anne Marie Bough, Anthony Nevers aka Brother Moses, Desmond Martin aka Brother Desi, Ruel McLaughlin aka Brother Bunny, Gwendolyn James aka Sister Gwen, Teddy Dan, Sister Carol Rocke, Ras Kawintesab K. M. Selassie, Legal Wolfe, Isabelle Beize aka Sister Seba **In Jamaica** Ka'buma'at Keru, Dr. Clinton Hutton, Ivan Coore, Alan "Skill" Cole, Carel Colington **In UK** Derek Bishton.

**appearing as themselves**

# Technical Information

*“We were the only ones that really were abused, and misused, and murdered like we were some misfit race, as if they wanted to remove us from the earth. That’s the way that sometimes you would feel in America, growing up in the South. Even now, the police are persecuting black men.”*

Sister Pam/**SHASHAMANE**

Length:	<b>80 minutes</b>
Shooting format:	<b>AVCHD, 52’/80’</b>
Aspect ratio:	<b>16:9</b>
Language:	<b>English, French</b>
Location:	<b>Ethiopia, Jamaica, UK</b>
Year:	<b>2016</b>

*As an African that was born in the West, it was very important to know who I was. I knew I was an African taken from Africa, born in the West. All of us who made it up here, who have reached the land of Shashamane in Ethiopia, we are the true revolutionaries.*

Ras Mweya Masimba/**SHASHAMANE**

# SYNOPSIS

The journey towards Shashamane in Ethiopia where a community of Afro-descendants has returned to live on their forefathers' land, as sung by Bob Marley. An exodus of coming-of-home, that for some has become a haven, but for others a cage of no escape. **SHASHAMANE** chronicles a chapter of the lengthy history of the African diaspora, through the voices of men and women who have left the West after 400 years since the dawn of slavery, seeking their promised land.

**SHASHAMANE** is the second film of a promise land - themed trilogy. After the Palestine of "This Is My Land... Hebron", Giulia Amati paints the land of Shashamane in Ethiopia. Through the eyes of the director we embark on an extraordinary journey of men and women who have stood the test of time to reclaim their African identity.

*"It was a complete challenge to make it here to Ethiopia. And a lot of people couldn't do it. So whenever you see people coming from outside to Africa, you have to respect them. Because there are so many people who don't have the guts to leave the developed countries to come here."*

Bro Trika/**SHASHAMANE**

*"Our parents were not African conscious but we became African conscious. Our children are the perpetuation of our lineage here on African soil, they are the fruit of our conquest, they will inherit what you have strived and gained for."*

Ras Mweya/**SHASHAMANE**

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

It has taken 3 years of investigation to tell this story, 3 months of fact-finding trips and 6 months of sharing the homes and the lives of the men and women in 3 different continents. I filmed in Shashamane in Ethiopia, Kingston in Jamaica, and Birmingham and London in Great Britain. The community that I present is some of the descendants of the enslaved Africans who grew up in the technological, modern and contradictory West, and decided to return to Africa through a complex physical and spiritual journey. The documentary gives us a look into the community, but from within itself. The realisation of **SHASHAMANE** became my personal test. Apart from the difficulty of filming by myself in a remote location in Ethiopia, the biggest challenge was to be accepted by the inhabitants of the community, who avoid contact with the media and gazes from the outside. I lived with them, shared their meals and their daily lives, listened to their stories and told my own with honesty.

# DIRECTOR & PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY

## Giulia Amati

Giulia Amati is an Italian-French filmmaker. She has directed several ads and commercials for corporates, NGOs and International organizations such as FAO and Caritas International. In 2010 she co-directed, with Stephen Natanson, the feature-length documentary "This Is My Land... Hebron", which won more than twenty awards, including the Aljazeera International Documentary Film Festival, the Festival International du Film des Droits de l'Homme de Paris, The Buenos Aires Human Rights Film Festival and the Italian foreign press association's Golden Globe Prize. The film also earned a special mention at the Nastri D'Argento, it was a finalist for the David di Donatello Award and was selected by the Human Rights Watch Film Festival for their festivals in London, New York and Chicago. "Shashamane" is Amati's second feature-length film.

# THE STORY

The film **SHASHAMANE** recounts a story that has never been told before. The only existing book documenting this epic story is “Exodus!: Heirs and Pioneers, Rastafari Return to Ethiopia” by French researcher Giulia Bonacci. Very few people know of the existence of this community in Shashamane, Ethiopia and of the consequences of their pivotal decision to leave the West, in search of a home and of their identities. As the famous “Exodus” sung by Bob Marley proclaims, these people have made his legacy a tangible reality.

The Shashamane land-grant is 200 hectares of land in Ethiopia, 250 km south of Addis Abeba, that were donated to all blacks in the world by the Emperor of Ethiopia Hailé Selassie in 1950. Ras Mweya Masimba is one of the key characters in the film, he moved to Shashamane in 1990. He is an English-born artist of Jamaican origins who depicts the deeds of his people in his animated films. Today African descendants from around the world — France, Jamaica, the United States, the United Kingdom, and various Caribbean islands - live with him in Shashamane. All of them were motivated by the desire for self-affirmation, after centuries of humiliation, and a longing to bring up their children in a nurturing context devoid of racism.

*“After being so long in the Western world, it’s a joy to be back in Africa. But it’s a very great challenge. We are coming back here now as foreigners. People don’t remember who we are, or forget that they sold us into slavery, or how we left here. It is a hard task of re-integration with the people on all levels.”*

Ras Kamba/**SHASHAMANE**

Time and effort were taken to tell this unique story, becoming an occasion to display from a new perspective, the strong presence of the social scars of slavery and how they still play a crucial role in society today. Moreover, “Shashamane” can help us reflect on the societal and political processes that occur when issues of such a scale continue to persist without being resolved, therefore opening up questions concerning reparatory justice, its validity and the method by which it could be implemented to move towards human progress and morality.

A transatlantic triangle between nations is created geographically as Europe, the Americas and Africa are bound together by the slave trade. In “Shashamane” these 3 continents become the background in which the characters recount their stories from their very own point of view: the community of

**Shashamane in Ethiopia, those who came to Shashamane but gave up and returned to the West, and finally those who travelled from England to Ethiopia to bring a special gift for the inhabitants of the promised land.**

**Three generations have passed since the birth of the community of Shashamane. The children bear the choices of their fathers. The founders were so determined to return that they have had to make enormous sacrifices, such as renouncing their freedom of movement. Many of the descendants of the enslaved Africans who settled to Ethiopia, in fact are not free to exit the country, because they lack citizenship and official documentation. Consequently, their children are afflicted by the same constraints.**

*“Sometimes in life you have to make a decision that is a sacrifice for what you believe in. I struggled, and I have seen my brothers and sisters struggle to make this place our home. It wasn't easy and it is still not easy. This is what we have to think about: Is it really home? Can we make it our home?”*

**Bro Trika/SHASHAMANE**

**The psychological and geographical limbo in which the inhabitants of Shashamane live does not stop their battle in seeking a social system that would recognise their fundamental rights. Still today, there are cases of brutal violence against the black population in the United States. Europe is crushed by the vast odyssey of Africans risking their lives to reach the Western coasts in search of a better life. The construction of a multicultural society seems yet to be a long and complex feat to achieve.**