

Cover Letter – RETURNEE

Film: RETURNEE – Fiction, 20 min 08s

Dear Festival Team,

It is with deep emotion that I present my first short film, **RETURNEE** (fiction – 20 min 08s), a work born from both a personal and universal experience: exile, the return to one's roots, and the search for balance between two worlds.

Inspired by my own journey as a young Beninese woman who immigrated to France, the film tells the story of **Faty**, a 36-year-old businesswoman who, after a family tragedy, decides to leave France for good and return to Benin, her native country. There, she confronts her memories, local traditions, and the misunderstandings that often arise when one comes “home” after many years abroad.

Through this film, I wanted to **pay tribute to my father**, while also highlighting a reality faced by many within the African diaspora: to leave, to stay, to return, to start over. **RETURNEE** speaks of the pain of displacement, but also of the beauty of returning — because “*no matter which path we choose, there is always light at the end of the tunnel.*”

As a **first-time filmmaker**, my approach is both sincere and ambitious. With this film, I hope to:

- give the story **international visibility**,
- **connect with professionals in film and culture** to learn and collaborate,
- open doors to **new projects and acting opportunities**,
- and pursue my ultimate dream: to bring my voice and talent to the global stage, all the way to **Hollywood**.

Your festival, with its openness and recognition of authentic storytelling, represents a unique opportunity to share this film with audiences and professionals alike. I would be honored if **RETURNEE** could be part of your official selection.

Thank you sincerely for your time and for your dedication to supporting independent cinema.

Sincerely,

Prisca Ogouma

Director