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Ghana



Kukurantumi — Road to Accra

1983. Color. 1.33 format. 16 mm. 83 min.

Producer: Peter Wohlgemuth-Reinery/*Director:* King Ampaw/*Screenwriters:* Ampaw, Ralf Franz/*Cinematographer:* Eckhard Dorn/*Editor:* Anja Cox/*Music:* Amartey Hedzoley/*Principal Cast:* Evans Oma Hunter, Amy Appia/*Production Company-Print Source:* Reinery Verlag + Filmproduktion GmbH, Wassigertal 16, 5480 Remagen, Federal Republic of Germany

Festival: MOMA New Directors 1984

Kukurantumi, the first feature from Ghana since 1976, considers how change, that inevitable force, affects one family. *Kukurantumi*, a small village near Ghana's capitol, translates as "the place where everything is too heavy to pick up"; with the influx of industry and socio-economic reform, rural ways are ending. When Addey loses his job as a lorry driver, pride and ambition prevent him from resuming agrarian work; he leaves a wife and daughter to make it in the city which one friend claims will set Addey free. If the village hinders men economically, it restrains women socially as well. Frustrated by her family's provincialism, Abena is smitten with a visiting friend's cosmopolitan manner; when Abena's father, Addey, interferes with her love life to promote his own interests, she flees to Accra.

In his first feature, King Ampaw contrasts the serenely dull village of thatched huts with the dusty, bustling city and its sea of galvanized metal rooftops. In a city where the price of beer is double the average daily wage and economic self-sufficiency for women entails prostitution, one anticipates crisis. However, through thoughtful direction and an astute use of ellipsis, Ampaw underplays the melodramatic potential. Because Ghana has no feature film industry to speak of, Ampaw supplemented his 42-member crew with nine German collaborators and some otherwise unavailable technology. Particularly noteworthy is the camera-work; in the extensive tracking and craning shots, the camera ambulates through any space with ease.

—Laura Thielen

Also at Pacific Film Archive: Mon, 4/16, 9:30 pm
