

Call for Close-Up Submissions

Sambizanga (1972): Aesthetics and politics
in the film of Sarah Maldoror—Black, African,
anti-colonialist, feminist

Black Camera invites submissions for a Close-Up focused on the 1972 film *Sambizanga*, by the French filmmaker of Caribbean descent, Sarah Maldoror (1929–2020).

Sambizanga centers the experience of a young Angolan mother, Maria, as she searches for her husband Domingos after he is kidnapped by colonial police, and in the process pictures the underground movement for Angolan independence a decade before the film's production. Adapted from José Luandino Vieira's novella *The Real Life of Domingos Xavier* (1961), *Sambizanga* has been described as the first feature film directed by a Black woman. Utilizing non-professional actors, Maldoror's film mixes the personal narrative of Maria and her husband with explicitly revolutionary political messaging and contemplative, decentered images and sounds that constitute a kind of feminist *and* anti-colonial modernist picture.

After decades of general unavailability, the restoration of *Sambizanga* by the African Film Heritage Project was completed in 2021, just after Maldoror's death due to complications of Covid-19. The film's 2022 release by Criterion has already facilitated increased spectatorship and renewed appreciation, providing an ideal moment for renewed critical assessment and interpretation of the film's methodologies, techniques, images, and arguments. Moreover, the choices and effects of *Sambizanga*'s restoration and circulation also demand contextualization and analysis. What of the film's images has gone unremarked and unexamined over the past fifty years? And what are the stakes and affordances of viewing this Black African anti-colonial film in 2023?

We welcome for publication consideration essays, commentary, and interviews exploring *Sambizanga* from diverse disciplinary, analytical, and contextual perspectives.

Essays should not exceed 9,000 words; commentary and interviews, 4,000 words. Suggested topics include:

- *Sambizanga*'s feminist perspective and African anti-colonial cinema
- Revisioning *Sambizanga*: the film's restoration and its aesthetic and political implications
- Adapting *Sambizanga*: from José Luandino Vieira's novella *The Real Life of Domingos Xavier* (1961) to the screen
- *Sambizanga* in relation to Maldoror's less frequently viewed other films
- Aesthetics of *Sambizanga*: modernism in anti-colonial African struggle
- *Sambizanga* in 2023: viewing anti-colonial images in the post-colonial present
- Revolutionary Pan-Africanist cinema: *Sambizanga* and radical film of the diaspora
- Sarah Maldoror: revolutionary filmmaker and feminist
- *Sambizanga*'s reception and sites of deployment in anti-colonial movements

Please submit completed essays, a 150-word abstract, as well as a 50 to 100-word biography by **November 31, 2024**. Submissions should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition. Please see journal guidelines for more on the submission policy: <https://blackcam.sitehost.iu.edu/call/#guidelines>.

Direct all questions, correspondence, and submissions to guest editor Gust Burns at ghburns@uw.edu.