

*Guests of
the Institute*

**African Filmmaker:
Idrissa Ouédraogo**

Idrissa Ouédraogo (b. 1954 in Burkino Faso), is one of the most prolific and successful of African filmmakers. He has made eight feature films, including four that have been selected for the Cannes Film Festival where he won the Jury Prize in 1990 for *Tilai*. He has also made many short films and documentaries on AIDS in Africa. He was even included as one of the 40 international directors (alongside directors like Wim Wenders, Spike Lee, and David Lynch) invited to make a 50-second film with an original Lumière camera to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the cinema in 1995; the result can be seen in the award-winning compilation film, *Lumière and Company*. Beyond filmmaking, Ouédraogo has served as a member of the Jury at the Venice and Tokyo Film Festivals, among others, and presented lectures in Paris as well as in the United States at Harvard and New York University. He is the Director of the new African Filmmakers Cooperative, aimed at increasing international opportunities for African directors. Ouédraogo is truly one of the most exciting filmmakers in the world today.

Ouédraogo's visit was hosted by Richard Neupert (Film Studies, Dept. of Drama) and Karim Traoré (Comparative Literature and African Studies). His campus-wide lecture was a presentation to 150 people, on Thursday, October 18th. His discussion, on *Filmmaking in Africa today*, was even simulcast on the internet by the New Media Institute.

During his visit, Ouédraogo met with hundreds of UGA students. Neupert's large Introduction to Cinema class screened a 16mm copy of *Tilai* for 300 people, and Idrissa spoke afterward about the movie and answered questions. He also met with Traoré's African Cinema class, Neupert's History of Cinema, and a combined session of Charles Eidsvik's Directing for Camera and Freda Scott Giles's Directing for the Stage classes.

In addition, he met with a variety of campus organizations. He held a lively discussion in French with the new French Language Community in Mary Lyndon Hall, hosted by Catherine Jones (French). Ouédraogo also met with Michelle Garfield's Franklin Residential College group and help an evening Brumby Residence Hall question and answer session.

His visit was a great success. He had an impact on a

by Richard Neupert
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wide range of students, and Film Studies and African Studies both received an important boost from the publicity surrounding this impressive and genuinely charming visiting artist. Idrissa Ouédraogo not only introduced a large body of students to cinema most never knew existed, he also began a dialogue with faculty at UGA, and invited us to attend the African Film Festival hosted every other year in Burkina Faso. *Film Quarterly* has also asked expressed interest in an interview/article on Idrissa Ouédraogo and his move *Tilai*; the effects of his visit will thus continue to be felt for some time to come.



Ouédraogo and Karim Traore

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I am particularly encouraged by the student initiatives for the Ghana environmental project, KIU ART and the Healthy Living project (formation in progress) in Tanzania, and students who have picked Africa for their term projects in various non-traditional disciplines like journalism, law and business administration.

The Institute status we achieved on July 1, 2001 was a result of a lot of hard work and dedication from the Africanist faculty, students, staff, and a support from the administration and friends of African Studies. The African Studies Institute stands on a strong foundation that can support the challenges outlined above. I am optimistic about the growth and I welcome all to the farm, it is time to plough. When the rains come, we should be ready to plant the seeds to ensure a good crop at harvest.

Have a great holiday season and be safe. Come back invigorated and join us in a semester long of celebrating our success including the Darl Snyder Annual Lecture anniversary celebrations.