

Obo's 'Children of the Nile' flows onto Africa's biggest film stage

Film. In *Children of the Nile*, Ugandan filmmaker Tina Obo listens to those voices; elders, children, fishermen, healers, and translates their stories into a hybrid documentary that moves between lived experience and mythology. Selected for the Durban FilmMart Pitch and Finance Forum, the project marks a new kind of Pan-African storytelling: slow, ethical, and deeply rooted in care.

BY MUSINGUZI BAMUTURAKI

A Ugandan documentary series titled *Children of the Nile* has been selected for the annual DFM Pitch and Finance Forum 2026 by the Durban FilmMart Institute (DFMI). The series, produced and directed by Ugandan filmmaker Tina Obo, is among 36 African film projects chosen for the 17th edition of Africa's leading film finance and co-production market. The event will take place from October 9 to 12 in Durban, South Africa.

A platform for African stories

This year's market presents a diverse array of projects, including eight animations, ten fiction features, ten documentary features, and seven series projects in development. Alongside the Pitch and Finance Forum, a robust industry programme will focus on current trends, innovations, and challenges facing the African film industry.

"Our stories are our voices," says Magdalene Reddy, DFMI director. "They represent our culture, our history, our joy, our pain, and our victories. DFM is honoured to present a unique selection of African stories that will add to the successes that have gone before."

Reddy adds that the DFM provides an important platform not only to showcase the creative work of filmmakers but also to support them in building a cross-continental community, creating networks and access.

The 36 selected projects will receive online one-on-one mentorship from leading industry experts to prepare for their participation. This ensures that filmmakers are collaborator- and investor-ready when they arrive in Durban

for their in-person pitch. The eight animation projects, including *Children of the Nile*, will receive additional support through the Digital Lab Africa (DLA) programme, presented by DFM partner Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct.

Children of the Nile

Children of the Nile is a hybrid documentary series that follows the River Nile across Africa, exploring how memory, spirituality, and daily life come together in the communities along its banks. The series begins in Uganda, then moves to Ethiopia and Egypt.

The project examines how the Nile shapes the spiritual, cultural, and emotional lives of riverside communities. Combining observational live-action footage with stylized animation rooted in oral storytelling, the series moves fluidly between lived experience and mythology.

The first phase focuses on three countries: Uganda, Ethiopia, and Egypt. Each represents a distinct relationship with the river, its source, flow, and legacy. Through the voices of elders, children, and ordinary river communities, the Nile emerges as a witness to ancestry, resilience, and transformation.

Tina Obo is a Ugandan filmmaker.



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A youthful narrative perspective guides the viewer, allowing the series to bridge generations while maintaining intimacy and wonder. Animation functions as a narrative tool to visualise memory, ancestral presence, and spiritual belief, elements that resist traditional documentary form. The pilot episode, set in Uganda, serves as a proof of concept for the series' visual and narrative language. *Children of the Nile* is designed to expand in future phases to include all countries connected by the river, creating a long-term Pan-African documentary project grounded in respect, collaboration, and shared heritage.

Who is Tina Obo?

Tina Obo is a Ugandan filmmaker working at the intersection of documentary, memory, and experimental storytelling. Her work is rooted in observation, ethical collaboration, and a deep respect for lived experience. She is particularly drawn to stories that explore land, water, spirituality, and inherited knowledge within African communities.

Obo's approach prioritises listening over explanation. She works through slowness, consent, and long-term relationship building, allowing stories to emerge naturally rather than imposing narrative frameworks. Her interest in hybrid documentary forms has led her to use animation as a tool to visualise memory, oral tradition, and spiritual belief systems.

Children of the Nile emerged from a personal return to the river and a desire to understand belonging outside of trauma-driven narratives. The project was developed through an extended research journey along the Nile in Uganda and a visual proof of concept created as part of the THU Talent League 2024. This process allowed Obo to test the project's ethical methodology, visual language, and hybrid form.

She is committed to long-term Pan-African storytelling that centres African perspectives and values care as a creative methodology. "Children of the Nile" marks her first long-form documentary series and a sustained artistic commitment to the Nile as a living archive.

The Nile, often depicted as a geographic or political entity, is reimagined here as a living archive of memory and spirituality. With additional mentorship through the Digital Lab Africa programme, Obo will refine her pitch and production strategy, ensuring the project is both artistically rigorous and financially viable.

If successful, *Children of the Nile* could set a new benchmark for Pan-African documentary series, proving that slow, relationship-driven storytelling can thrive within the international film market. Its long-term vision, to eventually include all Nile-basin countries, underscores a commitment to regional collaboration and shared heritage, moving beyond extractive production models toward mutual care and creative exchange.