

Lakaywood, a New Name for the Film Industry and the Haitian Cinema

Inspired by Hollywood, Bollywood and Nollywood, the first Lakaywood International Film Festival in Haiti was a Success under the Theme "Haiti, a Story to Tell."

CAP-HAITIAN, HAITI, September 2, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Thursday, August 15, 2024, Haitian film producer and organizer, Pierrot Mervilier, brought together movie lovers, filmmakers, actors, and actresses to celebrate Cap-Haitien's 354th anniversary with the inaugural edition of the Lakaywood Film Festival. This event marked the birth of "Lakaywood," a new name for the Haitian film industry, inspired by Hollywood, Bollywood, and Nollywood. The festival was a resounding success under the theme, "Haiti, a Story to Tell."



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Pierrot Mervilier

The initiative was warmly welcomed by the local community, with strong support from the local government. Cap-Haïtien's Mayor, Mrs. Yvrose Pierre, expressed her desire to make the Lakaywood Film Festival an annual tradition, while Deputy Mayor Patrick Almonor suggested using the front of City Hall to showcase films to the public for free, given the lack of cinemas in the country. He emphasized the importance of providing positive entertainment options for youth, many of whom are vulnerable to gang activities due to the absence of healthy

leisure programs.

The festival highlighted the dire state of Haiti's cinematic infrastructure, with the iconic Versailles Cine in Cap-Haïtien now serving as a church instead of a movie theater. Pierrot Mervilier sees Lakaywood as the best socio-economic and cultural tools to offer Haitian youth a pathway out of

poverty, enabling them to achieve dignity and financial freedom.

Hollywood produces over 730 movies annually, contributing more than \$5 billion to the U.S. economy. Bollywood, with 1,256 films each year, adds \$2 billion to India's economy. Nollywood, producing 2,500 films annually, plays a crucial role in providing social mobility to over 1 million African youth, helping them rise from poverty to the middle class.

Since the birth of cinema, Haiti has been in the spotlight. A representative of the Lumière Brothers visited Haiti and organized the first public screening in Port-au-Prince, at the famous Catholic school "Petit Séminaire College Saint-Martial," on December 14, 1899. Since then, Haitian cinema has had its ups and downs. Hollywood left its mark in 1988 with the horror film "The Serpent and the Rainbow", starring Bill Pullman, based on a book about a Haitian story and shot partly in Cap-Haïtien. However, local filmmakers made strides, leading to the creation and the naming of "Lakaywood" as the Haitian film industry. This development represents a significant step forward for Haitian cinema, symbolizing hope and potential for the future.

Jimmy Jean-Louis, a renowned Haitian actor, proudly stands as a Lakaywood Star. His impressive career spans across major film industries, including Hollywood, Nollywood, and most recently, Bollywood, where he starred in "The Goat Life." Haiti can proudly claim him as one of its finest, representing the nation's talent on a global stage.

These film industries not only entertain but also drive significant economic and social change in their respective regions.

As a call to action, the Lakaywood Foundation, led by CEO Pierrot Mervilier, is launching a nationwide film contest, inviting all 146 municipalities in Haiti to produce a feature film or



documentary for next year's festival. The foundation promises to provide technical assistance to those interested in participating.

Stay tuned for more information about the contest and the Lakaywood Film Festival. This is your chance to shine—who knows, you might be the next Lakaywood star!

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