



## **PRESS RELEASE AND INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY**

### **Uganda's VJ Culture Takes Center Stage at Prestigious Rotterdam International Film Festival**

#### **WORLD PREMIERE — IFFR 2026**

#### **Forget The Director, This Is Emmy's Cut!**

*An experimental short documentary film by Marion Desmaret  
Featuring Ugandan Video-Joker legend VJ Emmy*

**Rotterdam, January 2026** — *Forget The Director, This Is Emmy's Cut!* will have its **World Premiere** at the **International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR)**, one of the world's most prestigious and forward-thinking film festivals. The film will screen on **January 30th** and **February 1st, 2026**, marking a major international debut for a radical cinematic voice rooted in Ugandan popular culture.

Directed by **Marion Desmaret**, the film dives into the electrifying world of **VJ Emmy**, Uganda's most iconic Video-Joker — a performer, narrator, translator, and cultural commentator who has become one of the country's most recognizable movie stars without ever appearing on screen.

#### **Cinema, Dubbed, Reclaimed, Rewritten**

In Uganda and across East Africa, **VJ-ing** (Video-Jokering) is a deeply rooted form of storytelling. Films (often Western blockbusters or cult classics) are performed live or dubbed onto DVDs with real-time translation, improvisation, satire, and political commentary. Far from simple voice-over, VJ-ing is a **radical act of reappropriation**, transforming imported images into local narratives.

Part oral historian, part stand-up prophet, VJ Emmy remixes action films, martial-arts classics, and local productions in Luganda and English with razor-sharp humor and unapologetic social critique. His voice collapses the distance between screen and audience, fiction and reality, entertainment and resistance.

*Forget The Director, This Is Emmy's Cut!* embraces this tradition as cinema itself, not as a subject to be observed, but as a method to be fully embodied.

## **A Film That Refuses Permission**

Blending vérité documentary, stylized fiction, and layered narration, the film unfolds inside Kampala's disappearing **kibandas**, the makeshift neighborhood cinemas built from wood, speakers, and collective imagination. These communal spaces, once central to urban and rural life, are slowly vanishing under economic pressure and digital consumption.

When Emmy enters one such kibanda, microphone in hand, the room ignites. For one night, cinema becomes communion again: loud, sweaty, participatory, alive. The film captures this moment not as nostalgia, but as urgency.

Rather than explaining Emmy's work, Desmaret hands him the controls. Emmy VJ-s not only famous films, but his own image, his city, and the film itself. The result is a cinematic object that refuses hierarchy: **Forget the director — this is Emmy's cut.**

## **Director's Background**

Marion Desmaret is a French filmmaker based between Uganda, France, and Germany. She began her career at ARTE before working independently across documentary, reportage, and experimental film. Her work spans interviews with figures such as Al Gore, Depeche Mode, and Michèle Lamy, while maintaining a strong focus on counter-cultures and voices operating outside dominant narratives.

In 2022, she directed a documentary on Uganda's Nyege Nyege Festival and continues to collaborate closely with Kampala-based cultural collectives. Her filmmaking centers on stories that actively reshape society — often far from institutional spotlights.

## **IFFR World Premiere**

The selection of *Forget The Director, This Is Emmy's Cut!* for its **World Premiere at IFFR** confirms the film's relevance within contemporary global cinema, not only as a portrait of a cultural phenomenon, but as a challenge to how stories are owned, translated, and circulated.

IFFR is internationally recognized for championing bold, experimental, and politically engaged works, making it a natural home for a film that asks a simple but destabilizing question: **Who owns the story?**

## **Live VJ Performance at IFFR**

Beyond the film's World Premiere, VJ Emmy has also been **invited to perform a live VJ session during the festival**, bringing his legendary Video-Joker practice directly to Rotterdam.

In this rare live appearance, Emmy will do what he does best: hijack the screen in real time. Translating, interrupting, remixing, and re-authoring images with his unmistakable voice, he transforms cinema into a collective, performative experience, collapsing the boundary between film screening, stand-up, and oral storytelling.

This live VJ session extends the film beyond the screen, allowing audiences to experience firsthand the cultural force at the heart of *Forget The Director, This Is Emmy's Cut!*, not as an artifact, but as a living, breathing cinematic tradition

**Photos and other assets for media use can be found here:**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zBGxWkkfitWB9KP3L6FUGFLpje1ErKK5>

## Screenings

International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR)  
**January 30, 2026 (screening and Q&A)**

**January 31, 2026 (VJ Emmy live performance)**  
**February 1, 2026 (screening)**

## Trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uDiBpasVrw>

## Press Coverage

*Culture Custodian*

<https://culturecustodian.com/the-11-african-titles-are-showing-at-the-2026-international-film-festival-rotterdam/>

## IFFR Entry

<https://iffr.com/en/iffr/2026/films/forget-the-director-this-is-emmys-cut>

## More press coverage on Uganda's kibanda and VJ culture

[Kibanda the slum man's cinema hall - Daily Monitor](#)

[Interview of VJ Emmy - MBU](#)

[Trying out her luck in movie translation - Daily Monitor](#)

**For more information and to arrange an interview with VJ Culture contact Joyce Wambura at [joy@zebek.co.uk](mailto:joy@zebek.co.uk) and +254 725 991 228**