

## “...Capturing history and humanity in a site of Freedom”

By Jakob Preuss



*...a good place to think together what options filmmakers, academics and sponsors have to improve situation of archiving... It would be a shame if the treasures of African culture will again only be found in European libraries and archives like it had been during the dark times of colonization.*



[Jakob Preuss - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

“FREEDOM Park” was a great venue to hold a festival. The history of this former prison, which was turned into a space for cultural creativity, encounter and dialogue, was a very appropriate venue to hold a documentary film festival looking into the necessity and the *status quo* of “Archiving Africa”.

Most of my time in Lagos I spent therefore in Freedom Park at the Festival. I had the chance to watch a number of very interesting films on wide ranging topics from illegal gold mining in Ghana to the Afrobeat Generation in Nigeria told by the son of a famous music journalist of the time. The style and class of the ‘70s were brilliantly recalled in this short documentary.

It was great to meet colleagues from all over the world but besides the professional exchange, I also got academic insights into the history of *Nollywood* by a specialist in the matter.

Even the recent history such as *Nollywood* films are currently not properly archived and, there is a danger of a loss of this important part of recent artistic history of the country, we learnt from an American Professor.

The festival was a good place to think together what options filmmakers, academics and sponsors have to improve this situation. It would be a shame if the treasures of African culture will again only be found in European libraries and archives like it had been during the dark

times of colonization.

The reactions to my film, which was screened open-air to a highly concentrated mixed crowd were very positive and differentiated. I rarely had in the south of the Mediterranean such a nuanced debate on migration and film making. The public would less blame “the West” and “the others” for the misery their countries are still experiencing but were looking instead for explanations rather within their own society and discussing possible improvements Nigerians have to aim at.

There was also a great interest in the technical and artistic aspects of the film and the possibility for Nigerians to get funding for example in Germany to tell a migration story from their own perspective. Something I wholeheartedly encourage and would advocate with commissioning editors.

I know.

Happy birthday dear IREP, I have best memories of my stay at your festival... I wish you a lot of great corona-free festival years to come and, I hope I will be able to join soon again!

- *Preuss is a filmmaker based in Berlin*