

KOPPO AND LADY B

A DOCUMENTARY FILM

SYNOPSIS

Africa, authentic, today.

By chronicling the stories of two charismatic young rap artists, a Cameroonian filmmaker confronts her own identity—and reveals the complex realities of today's urban Africa.

Aretha Louise Mbango is both gatekeeper and thoughtful narrator, providing complete access and an accessible perspective. Born in a small town in Cameroon, then raised for a decade in New York City, Mbango has spent the past 17 years as a television and radio journalist covering music in Cameroon's two largest cities. Mbango breaks through the exotica and idealization that characterize many Western documentaries about Africa. Her world may be entertaining, but her insight is deeply informative and even troubling.

Through Mbango's work at a major radio station, we meet Lady B and Koppo—the two most talented artists in a burgeoning rap music scene. We get to know them over several years, and we encounter a recognizable story: the quest of the young artist to retain a unique voice, appeal to an audience, and make a living.

Behind the glitz and rhythm, this film features the city—in all its contradictions—as a character. The city provides jobs, opportunity and education, but it is straining beyond crumbling. On a global level, this is an urgent narrative: by 2020, half of the world's projected population of 7.6 billion will live in 400 or more megacities each comprising one million or more people. Cameroon typifies Africa's role as a leader in this transformation. Its major cities, Douala and Yaoundé, are two of the fastest-growing in the world.

While Koppo and Lady B live in these crucibles of dynamism, the promise in their lyrics is this: If you don't develop what is yours, then who will? Their aspirations, likewise, are clear—to take what is theirs and dominate the national scene, and then if possible, to go international.

The core of these musicians' paradox is this: as they become more successful, they confront a choice Mbango once faced—whether to stay in Africa or to move abroad. Entertaining, insightful, and unapologetically authentic, *Koppo and Lady B* sheds light on changing African culture and identity—what does it mean to be an urban African today?

