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South Of South: Audio-Visual Technology And The San Of Zimbabwe

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The paper is an ethnographic account based on the author's experiences teaching the San of Sabase Village, Bulilima, Matabeleland South in Zimbabwe to make video-films. It explores how the San, as a marginalized community in Zimbabwe, have interacted with, negotiated with and appropriated filmmaking technology. The community at the centre of the study lies on the periphery of Zimbabwe's social and economic spectrum. Between 2018-19, they encountered (as users), some of them for the first time, video technology such as DSLR cameras, smartphones, drones and editing equipment, when they were trained by a team of Zimbabwean researchers. The study focuses on how the San, regarded as Africa's First People, appropriated this filmmaking technology to confront as well as articulate their 'everyday'. It contributes to the representation of African futures in film by analysing the spatial and temporal aspects of San life, focusing on the Sabase community's history, present circumstances and future aspirations as conveyed through a film that they produced, titled *The San of Twai Twai*. It not only focuses on the film's content but also on the circumstances of its production. The article, therefore contributes to the growing discourse of Afrofuturism, recently re-enthused by the universally acclaimed *Black Panther* film. From that perspective, the San's endeavours and the resultant film represent alternative realities to those that appear in mainstream films about the San and other First People made by 'dominant' outside groups. The research was designed as a participatory action research in which data was collected using the participant observation method as well as focus group discussions with members of the San community, including the filmmakers. It also incorporates an analysis of the documentary film created by the San.

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