



Short bio for Gaston Kaboré:

While studying history at the Sorbonne in Paris (earning both license and MA degrees), Kaboré was drawn to documentary films but found that they continued to perpetuate racial prejudices and injustices inherent in the colonial system. He wanted to change this, and so enrolled in film school at École Supérieure d'études Cinématographiques (ESEC). After earning his film degree in 1976, Kaboré returned to Burkina Faso and became Director of the Centre National du Cinéma. He later served as Secretary-General of the Pan African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI) (1985-1997). In 2005 he founded Imagine, a school and cultural center in Burkina Faso's capital of Ouagadougou, a center for training professionals in the television and cinema industries.

Kaboré's films—many of which focus on Burkina Faso's rural cultural heritage, a topic previously rarely considered worthy of depiction—include *Je Reviens de Bokin*, and *Wend Kuuni* (God's Gift)(1982), a breakthrough film that depicted oral myth in cinema, that was Kaboré's first feature film and only the second film to be made in Burkina Faso; and *Zan Boko* (1988), his second feature film, which focuses on social disparity and conflict between traditional and modern life in post-colonial Burkina Faso. *Rabi* (1992) was a film made after being invited by the BBC to contribute to their 'Developing Stories' series of films on environmental and developmental issues, which won the first prize for young people's films at the Okomedia International Ecological Film Festival and which was shown at the first New York African film festival in 1993. He also made *Lumière and Company* (1995), a film made as part of a project during which 40 filmmakers from developing countries were each asked to make a film using the Cinematographe invented by the Lumière Brothers. *Buud Yam* (1997), a sequel to *Wend Kuuni*, is a story of self-discovery based on oral tradition and set in the 19th century, that was the most popular film in Burkina Faso for many years. His films also include *Madame Hado* (1991), a short documentary about a celebrated singer and dancer; *La Vie en Fumée* (1992); *Un Arbre Appelé Karité* (1993); and *Roger le Fonctionnaire* (1993).

Kaboré has received numerous significant awards for his work, including France's César award for best French language film in 1986 for *Wend Kuuni*, and Grand prize at the 15th PanAfrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO) for *Buud Yam*, a film also in contention at the Cannes Film festival. Kaboré has also written screen plays for other filmmakers, including *Le Joueur de Cora* (the Kora player) (1996), and has written and directed practical documentaries, such as *Stockez et Conservez les Grains* (1978), documentaries on current culture, such as *Regard sur le Vième FESPACO*, and *Props sur le Cinema* (1986) that documented a conversation between two leading film directors, Malian

Souleymane Cissé and Mauritanian Med Hondo; as well as short films, such as *Le Loup et la Cigogne* (5 min) (2007).

In an interview with Jude Akudinobi, Kaboré noted that, “I inspire myself with oral traditions, the traditional way of telling stories in my culture, and invest that with my expertise in film because I want to tell stories to my people first. I know that through this approach I can, also, reach audiences all over the world. My films have proved that this is possible.”