

# LADIES' TURN

a documentary film by Hélène Harder



A WOMEN'S SOCCER STREET TOURNAMENT IN SENEGAL  
SOMETIMES YOU NEED TO BREAK THE RULES TO ENTER THE GAME





# KEEP UP WITH LADIES' TURN

[www.wendigofilms.com/ladiesturn](http://www.wendigofilms.com/ladiesturn)

[www.facebook.com/pages/Ladies-Turn/334848443204045](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ladies-Turn/334848443204045)

## FESTIVALS 2013/2014

"VUES D'EN FACE" France  
(audience award)

"FESTIVAL DU FILM DE FEMMES DE CRETEIL" France

"RWANDA FILM FESTIVAL" Rwanda

"CINEFOOT" Brasil

"PITCH FEST" Canada

"ELLES TOURNENT" Belgium

"FIFF DE NAMUR" Belgium

"CINEFFABLE" France

"LES ESCALES DOCUMENTAIRES" France

"FEMMES EN RESISTANCE" France

"LONDON FEMINIST FILM FESTIVAL" England  
(Best feature film and Feminist favourite audience award)

"INTERNATIONAL IMAGES FILM FESTIVAL FOR WOMEN"  
Zimbabwe

"FESTIVAL DU FILM D'EDUCATION" France

"NUIT BLANCHE DU CINEMA" Morocco

"IMAGE ET VIE" Senegal

"LES DERANGEANTES" France

"PINK APPLE FILM FESTIVAL" Switzerland

"L'ICI ET L'AILLEURS" France  
(Plume d'Or)

"AFRIKA FILM FESTIVAL" Belgium

"INTERNATIONAL FUSSBALLFILM FESTIVAL"  
Germany

"FESPACO" HORS COMPETITION Burkina Faso

"FIPATEL" France

# PRODUCTION

Wendigo Films

# DISTRIBUTION

Windrose

# DIRECTOR

Hélène Harder

# PRODUCERS

Jeanne Thibord

Alexis Taillant

# EDITING

Laurence Manheimer

# CINEMATOGRAPHY

Matthieu Cupillard & Hélène Harder

# SOUND

Codou Sène & Mahomet Thior

# ORIGINAL SCORE

Floy Krouchi

# MUSIC

Fatim Sy & Njaaya

Photo credits: Nancy Opagnia - Natacha Adam



" (USING) THE VOICES OF WOMEN WHO ARE LIVING IT  
MAKES THE FILM VERY GENUINE AND OPENS A WINDOW ON  
THE REALITY OF THE OBSTACLES POSED BY PREJUDICES "

Erica Albini (Film Critic) *Italy*

" A HIGHLY ENGAGING AND ASSURED WORK OF  
OBSERVATIONAL DOCUMENTARY "

Annette Kuhn (Film Critic) *UK*

## THEY TALK ABOUT

" THE MOST INSPIRING AND BEAUTIFUL DOCUMENTARY FILM  
HAS SEEN THIS YEAR "

Suzanne Bindels (Visual artist) *Netherlands*

" CONGRATULATIONS !! IT IS A DEEPLY MOVING AND BEAUTIFUL  
FILM (...) IT MADE ME CRY AND LAUGH, THANK YOU ! "

Paul Karsenti *France*

" A BRILLANT AND HUMANE EXPERIENCE OF SPORT AND  
CINEMA "

Cecile Chatrain (Activist) *France*

" THANK YOU FOR MAKING SUCH A BEAUTIFUL AND TRUE FILM  
ABOUT SENEGAL, MY COUNTRY "

El Hadji Diene Diouf *Senegal*

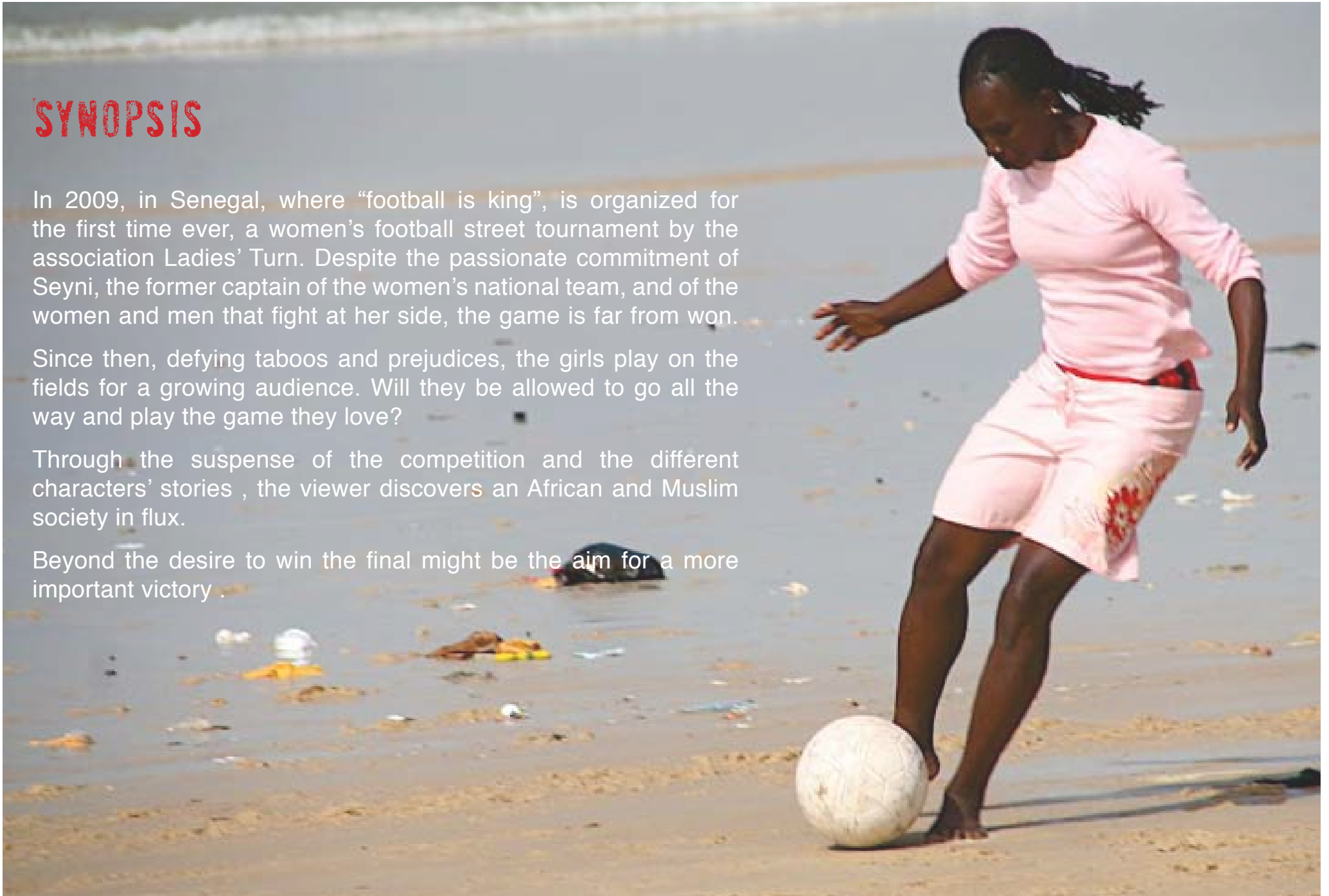
## SYNOPSIS

In 2009, in Senegal, where “football is king”, is organized for the first time ever, a women’s football street tournament by the association Ladies’ Turn. Despite the passionate commitment of Seyni, the former captain of the women’s national team, and of the women and men that fight at her side, the game is far from won.

Since then, defying taboos and prejudices, the girls play on the fields for a growing audience. Will they be allowed to go all the way and play the game they love?

Through the suspense of the competition and the different characters’ stories , the viewer discovers an African and Muslim society in flux.

Beyond the desire to win the final might be the aim for a more important victory .



# THE FILM'S CONTEXT

## WOMEN'S FOOTBALL ON THE SIDELINES

The film opens with the beginning of the Ladies' Turn tournament. Organized by the association of the same name ([www.ladiesturn.org](http://www.ladiesturn.org)), Ladies' Turn for the first time ever plans a women's football on the central neighborhood fields where women have never played. The idea behind the tournament is to bring greater visibility to women's football throughout Senegal.

### **The current crisis in Senegalese Football**

Womens' teams have been around for over 30 years and an annual national championship was created in 2000 . Yet, although football is the king of sports in Senegal , women's football remains a sport misunderstood and stigmatized . Most Senegalese are not even aware of the national team set up in 2002 . Deep-rooted prejudices prominent in Senegal and elsewhere mean players often face harsh criticism or even are banned from playing by their families.

From 2007 , Senegalese football is experiencing a major crisis with the defeat of the selection of the male team the " Lions" in qualifying for the CAN ( African Cup of Nations ). The riots that followed in Dakar also reflect the economic and social decline of the country . Once the wealthiest countries in West Africa , Senegal is now ranked among the seven poorest countries of the world .

Power cuts that last several hours a day are just one example of the daily problems that the local population faces. It is in this context that the only women's national championship disappears; which in turn leaves women's teams throughout the country without an opportunity to play organized games. Only passion and solidarity keep the girls on the field.

### **2009- The first round of Ladies' Turn Tournament**

A meeting between Jennifer Browning, a young American football enthusiast and Seyni N'dir Seck, captain of the national team, sparks the idea of a street tournament. The first division teams but also teams of beginners area are invited to participate. Gradually, the tournament increased in popularity thanks to the painstaking hard work of volunteers who join the effort. Through Ladies' Turn, women's football finally received coverage on newspaper articles, radio and TV talk about women's football through this novel initiative. Some Senegalese artists such as Abdou Guité Seck publicly support the initiative ... encouraged by the tournament, the Federation organizes again a national championship for the first division teams. The association Ladies' Turn is created to continue this field work and outreach. But nothing is won yet.

IN 2011, THE SECOND ROUND OF THE TOURNAMENT TAKES PLACE  
THIS IS THE STORY TOLD IN THE FILM





1975 - 2000

Creation of the first women's football teams

2000

Annual organization of the first National championship of women's football

2002

Creation of the first national women's team in Senegal

2007

Disappearance of the National Women's Championship

2009

First edition of Ladies Turn

## CHARACTERS IN THE FILM



OF THE 19 TEAMS THAT COMPETE,  
THIS IS THE STORY OF THREE OF THEM

### Team **YOFF**

Founded 8 years ago in the traditional Lebou village of Yoff, in the suburbs of Dakar, near the atlantic ocean the team was about to disappear when participating for the first time in the tournament in 2009.

### Team **KOUMBAL**

For years, the girls of this remote village have shared a passion for football. Without support or even a ball, they were never able to train regularly before the association helped to build a team. In 2011, they left their village for the first time to play in Dakar ...

### Team **SAINT-LOUIS**

As part of first women's football team in the region, the players in Saint Louis have the strong character and stubbornness of pioneers. In 2011, they participated in the tournament for the first time with only one ambition: to win the title.



## A CAPTAIN FIGHTS TO ORGANIZE THE TOURNAMENT

*«I always dreamed of being a pioneer for women's football. Whether in Senegal or Europe, it was hard for our generation but you must believe in yourself and move forward. »*

Seyni N'dir Seck

alias

PLATOCH

Seyni was the Captain of the Senegalese National Women's Football Team and is now president of Ladies' Turn. Nicknamed «Platoch, like Platini,» she says laughing, Seyni is a charismatic personality. Even as a child, she used to defy the ban of her father and people from her village of Yoff to go play football on the beach with the boys. As she prepares to stop her high level career as a player, Seyni now wants to help her «little sisters» play, too. For Seyni football has changed her life.



## AND THE WOMEN AND MEN THAT FIGHT AT HER SIDES...



GAELLE YOMI

*"Women's football is more than a sport, it is both a struggle and a commitment".*

Gaëlle is the Communications Manager of the tournament and is an activist for women's sports. When she moved from Cameroon to Dakar for her studies, she made her dream of becoming a sports reporter a reality and now works in a large Senegalese daily newspaper.



JENNIFER BROWNING

*«My goal is not so much to help but rather to share this commitment to change and this passion for women's soccer.»*

When Jennifer, an American student, moved to Senegal for work in 2008, she was surprised that women did not have opportunities to play football. She thus created the tournament in 2009. By embarking on this adventure, Jennifer had no idea that it would lead her to stay in Senegal for three more years nor how much Ladies' Turn would grow.

DIABY BASSOURE

*«There is only one football, it has the same rules, the same playing time. Why wouldn't girls have the same right to play as boys?! «*

Diaby pioneered women's football in Senegal and is now the coach of the national team. He still wonders what hinders the development of women's football since women have been active in sport for over fifty years in Senegal.

# INTENTION OF THE DIRECTOR

*"Drawing on the magic of football, this is the story of a struggle and the solidarity that results"*





The Ladies' Turn tournament is a unique adventure in Senegal because it suddenly made a hidden activity visible. Ladies' Turn seeks to promote women playing soccer on fields, prime public spaces, in the heart of Senegalese neighborhoods. It encourages women to occupy a social space from which they are normally excluded.

But this displacement of territory does not happen without conflict. It is precisely for this reason that I was interested in this story: the new visibility actually creates responses, provokes resistance, and reflects changes that go well beyond football. Interestingly, as much as it is difficult for girls to play football in Senegal, it remains equally true in much of Europe...

Far from stigmatizing a society and its diverse tensions, I prefer to portray young women like Seyni who teach us something through their drive for change, their freedom and joy of playing through the story of the tournament.

Through their desire to play a sport traditionally reserved for men, women players have struggled to invent different ways of being, caring, and showing, apart from the roles they traditionally hold in their society. These women are in permanent negotiation between their society and a changing world. The film not only describes their commitment and its challenges; in being part of their adventure, it feeds their strength and shares their hope.

## BIOGRAPHY

Helene Harder is a young independent film director. While pursuing studies in philosophy at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Helene Harder made her first experiences in filmmaking.

She has worked since in New York (Arts Engine) and in Paris (Wendigo Films). Over more than 3 years, she has been following in Senegal the unfolding of *Ladies' Turn* and just finished her first feature documentary film on it in 2012. Selected and noticed in many European festivals, the film won the Best Feature Award and the Favorite Audience Award at the LFFF in London (December 2012).

# 3 YEARS BETWEEN SENEGAL AND FRANCE

## FROM SENEGAL TO FRANCE

### The birth of the film

In 2009, Hélène Harder filmed the first round of the tournament. Caught by the magic of the event, she left with the desire to make a documentary film about Ladies' Turn. Alexis Taillant and Jeanne Thibord of Wendigo Film s encouraged her from the beginning of the project. Helene had begun a journey of three years of writing and traveling between Senegal and France, mostly on her own. As the players gradually got used to the presence of her camera, Helene got more familiar with wolof assisted by Codou Sene, Senegalese musician and sound engineer.

### Spring 2011: one month of tournament and one month of filming

In early 2011, Hélène received funding from the CNC, French National Agency for Cinema and the French Ministry of Sports. She then returned to Dakar in March 2011 for more than a month to resume shooting the tournament. Hélène decided to work with a Franco-Senegalese team to complete filming: Codou Sene always faithful to the project, Matthew Cupillard on the second camera, and Muhammad Thior sound engineer, all three gracing the film with their experience, energy and talent.

### Editing

Back in Paris, Helen was fortunate to work with Laurence Manheimer. Together, they immersed themselves in more than 135 hours of rushes and 4 months of editing. Laurence graduated in 2006 from Fémis and has worked on many documentaries and dramas, including several award-winning, such as *Les ombres qui me traversent* by Emilie Carpentier, *Qu'un seul tienne* or *Les autres me suivront* by Leah Fehner (Price Delluc).

### Music

Helene chose the talented artist Floy Krouchi to compose the original soundtrack. Floy, who is an electroacoustic musician was recently recognized by the Prix Italia 2011 for his radio work *Journal Transgenre d'une famille Hijra* (France Culture). Floy's music is a meeting point for different genres and worlds; giving the film an oniric and intimate dimension.

Rising Senegalese hip hop star, Fatim Sy, sets a combatative tone with Diebalou. A former soccer player herself and now hip hop artist in a male dominated industry, Fatim understands Seyni's struggle.

Finally, Dana Mègne (it will bear fruit) from the Senegalese singer Njaaya was chosen for the film's credits. Her enchanting voice is committed to the struggle for women's rights and brings the film to a close on a note of hope.



## SCREENINGS 2012/2013

### PARIS

Ateliers Varan, Docu Club St Denis,  
Cinéma Nouveau Latina, Comptoir  
Général, Studio des Ursulines,  
Maison des Métallos

### HANNOVER

During Discover Football 2012

### ETATS-UNIS

Princeton University

### SENEGAL

Dakar, Yoff, Saint-Louis, Thies,  
Dofane, Koumbal, Fatick, Ziguinchor

### LONDON

Rio Cinema, Bethnal Green Star

### BERLIN

Babylon Kino

### TOULOUSE

with Mix-Cité and Cinéma L'Autan

### LA ROCHELLE

with festival of Escales  
Documentaires

### MARSEILLE

Le polygone étoilé

## COMING SOON IN 2013

NEW YORK, SAN FRANCISCO, RABAT, ...



## PRESS CONTACT

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## PRODUCTION

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## DISTRIBUTION

Windrose

<http://www.windrose.fr/>

