collects from local distilleries. Finally, it shows Anatsui directing the arrangements of different blocks of patterns into a tableau that will be reworked until the artist is satisfied that it is ready for public display.

In the section entitled "Looking Inward," Anatsui talks about the fact that when he reached his forties and fifties he realized that he was not interested in conventional marriage. It was then that he decided that his art would be his partner and his artwork his children. The viewer is allowed into his home where, as the camera pans across books and knickknacks, Anatsui's voiceover explains that he is not a gregarious person so his artwork fills in for him. This is the most intimate section of the film, with Anatsui discussing how he moved from Ghana to Nigeria, and showing photos of his earliest sculptures as well as some that hold special meaning for him. Toward the end of this section he talks about his upbringing. Even though he does not go into detail about the circumstances of his mother's death when he was a child, it is clear from the prolonged silences that accompany the camera's lingering shots of his face that her death weighs heavily on the artist.

The final section of the video, demarcated only by a brief blackout, returns to Venice and the Biennale's opening, seemingly eavesdropping on viewers commenting on Anatsui's works among themselves, offering opinions about the work to the filmmaker, and talking to the artist. The film ends with Anatsui walking along the red earth roads of Nigeria, crossing apparently seamlessly into the cities that he travels: an echo of the journeys that he has taken throughout his life. The director allows him the final word, in which he declares in a voiceover that he wants his art to be about life itself, and that to him life is a mystery. Thus, he wants his art to reflect that mystery.

There is a whimsy about the film that is accomplished by the camerawork as well as the lighthearted musical scores that are interjected at various points, both of which highlight viewers' voiced impressions of the work, Anatsui's wonderful sense of humor, and his infectious laugh. These all come together to present a complex portrait of an important artist whose work possesses intricate layers of historical, cultural, and aesthetic meaning.

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Nic Young and Joe Kennedy, dirs. *Slave Ship Mutiny*. 2010. 60 minutes. English. U.S. PBS. $24.99.

While the story of the rebellion aboard the slave ship *Amistad* is widely known, little attention has been given to an equally monumental attempt at escape by enslaved people aboard another ship called the *Meeriman* in 1766, almost one hundred years before the *Amistad* rebellion. The PBS documentary *Slave Ship Mutiny*, part of the "Secrets of the Dead" series, combines the

work of a marine archeologist (Jaco Boshoff), a historian (Nigel Worden), and a heritage site activist (Lucy Campbell) in South Africa to retrace the story of what the directors choose to term a "mutiny." This decision to name what transpired on the *Meeriman* a "mutiny" rather than simply a "rebellion" is significant, because the term normally refers to the actions of subordinates conspiring against a ship's captain. It points to the fact that, as the narrator comments, the man who led the effort, Massavana, did not think of himself as a slave. He was a warrior who resisted his enslavement, testifying during his trial that he and his fellow captives planned to become "masters of the ship." Campbell remarks that "underneath the deck they believed they were going to take over the ship because they were free men in their mentality. They were not mentally enslaved." The film intersperses interviews, voiceover narration, and historical reenactments to piece together a story about the experiences of people confronting the greed and corruption of the larger transatlantic system.

The film includes an overview provided by Campbell of the contemporary population's linkages with the history of slavery as well as the general background of slavery in Africa with a focus on Madagascar, Massavana's home country, where he was kidnapped by the king and sold to the Dutch. It also follows Boshoff's attempts to locate the remains of the *Merriman* off the coast of South Africa. It then tells the extraordinary story of how a message in a bottle allowed the slave traders to succeed in their goal of delivering the slaves to the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie [VOC]), how an employee of the VOC managed to trick the captives into believing that he had sailed them back to Madagascar rather than to South Africa, and how the captives managed to acquire the weapons that allowed them to stage the mutiny. The film ends with the story of Massavana's trial and sentencing, with documentation provided by Worden from the VOC archives. It shows that even though Massavana and his fellow freedom fighters failed in their attempt to return to their homeland, they were triumphant in striking a blow against the VOC and therefore against the institution of slavery. His words and actions live on in the history books. Today Massavana, who received a sentence of life imprisonment on the notorious Robben Island, is hailed as one of South Africa's first freedom fighters.

Along with documentaries about *The Amistad* such as *Amistad: The Federal Courts and the Challenge to Slavery* (2002) or *The Amistad Revolt: "All We Want Is Make Us Free"* (1997), the film seeks to uncover a suppressed but important episode in history, although it diverges from these other films in its generous use of dramatic reenactment to tell a compelling story. In fact, dramaturgy is so central to the film that it is reminiscent of PBS's *The Middle Passage* (2000), which straddles the divide between documentary and feature film. Since the film is only sixty minutes long there are many gaps in the narrative, but the shaping of the story as a kind of mystery plot makes it highly accessible and brings this important historical event, with its contemporary relevance, to an audience that is wider

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than that of just scholars and specialists. The film provides a powerful counternarrative to accounts that portray Africans as powerless objects, showing the agency they were able to exercise even under the most dehumanizing conditions.

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Kevin Merz, dir. *Glorious Exit*. 2008. 75 Minutes. English and German (with English subtitles). Switzerland. ArtMattan. $245.00.

Kevin Merz's debut documentary feature, *Glorious Exit*, begins with a performance in the making. In close-up, we see the director's half-brother, Jarreth, putting on his makeup for the final staging of a theater production in Los Angeles. Although this show is coming to an end as the film begins, Merz's nimble camera captures the moment in order to focus on Jarreth's next performance. Offstage, Jarreth's Nigerian father has died, and according to custom, Jareth, as the eldest son, must oversee his father's funeral in a village near Enugu. Yet Jarreth did not grow up with his father in Nigeria. Like Kevin, he was raised primarily in Switzerland by his mother, and then moved to the U.S. to pursue acting. The "return" to his chieftain father's African home entails adapting to a new role in a context that, for Jarreth, is as distant culturally as it is geographically. Merz makes the cultural dislocations Jarreth experiences on the trip to his father's funeral (his "glorious exit") the complex subject of a deceptively simple premise.

The conflict at the heart of both the film and Jarreth's journey quickly emerges as simultaneously financial and philosophical. While still in L.A., Jarreth telephones his family in Nigeria, who have been denied access to his father's bank accounts after his death. Jarreth is incredulous at the impending costs of the funeral, finding it impossible to understand why one should spend money to mark a departure from this world rather than investing in life lived in the present and future. The family needs money to live, yet his deceased father also needs money to die. "Please don't spend any money on those things, on gifts for others right now," he implores his stepmother and three African half-brothers. His brother Edward, for instance, wants to become a doctor like their father, but doesn't have the funds necessary to pay the bribes that determine entrance to medical school in Enugu. Instead, money is being spent on presents of cows and alcohol for his father's relatives so that they will attend the funeral and thereby ensure a safe journey for the deceased to the world beyond. Jarreth draws parallels between his personal experience and what he sees as a generally dismal state of affairs in Nigeria. Gazing at defecating pedestrians and piles of trash crowding the