



OAKBOOK

OAKLAND LOWDOWN

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BAGGAGE CLAIM CI



by Jen Loy

Mateen Kemet wants you to fall in love with Oakland. Seeing the city through his eyes, it won't be hard. Oakland is a beautiful black woman. She's a bit of a flirt. You can't take your eyes off her. And she's coming soon to a baggage claim near you.

Kemet is one of four artists whose work will be featured on the new 30-foot media wall in Oakland Airport's Southwest Airlines terminal. The Port of Oakland commissioned Kemet to create "Oakland B Mine," a 15-minute film that will welcome travelers to Oakland, or Oaklanders back home.

"'Oakland B Mine' is my take on a traditional travelogue," Kemet says. Rather than the usual tourist tips you'd see while cooling your heels in a hotel room, Kemet has transformed his hometown into a character all her own, and the Travel Channel list of hot spots into a love story.

The beguiling main character teases the visitor on a tour that takes him around the city. From the Alice Arts to the Mormon Temple, China and Korea Town to Up and Downtown, he falls for the temptress as the viewer falls for Oakland.

Kemet, a 41-year-old former Wall Street bond trader, school teacher and lifelong martial artist, has lived in Oakland on and off since 1988. And while he's worked in film since 1997 — earning 17 film awards and international recognition — 2007 was the first year he spent as a full-time filmmaker.

"My art has been supporting me. And I support my art," Kemet says. In 2007, his writing and directing were featured on the Steven Spielberg/Mark Burnett reality show "On the Lot." He placed seventh among 50 directors, and as a finalist received a two-year "first look" deal with Fox. "It took a while, but now I have people in Hollywood that will work for me. They have to look at what I produce and they have to give feedback," Kemet says.

Before Hollywood calls, Mateen Kemet plans to shoot his full-color love story in 16 mm this spring. "Nothing captures daylight like film," he says. And nothing captures Oakland like a love story.

Jen Loy was a volunteer member of the Port of Oakland's Public Art Committee when Kemet first presented Oakland B Mine. When OakBook asked Loy to interview an Oakland filmmaker of her choice, she was thrilled to have the chance to catch up with Mr. Kemet.

CHECK OUT MATEEN KEMET'S WORK

On YouTube search for his submission to the TV show "On the Lot." It's a short horror film called "Profile" about a black driver and white cops.

Kemet's website: www.runawayfilmworx.com

Mateen Kemet has just finished a script basked on a children's ecology book. His next big project is "The Fillmore Flower," a film noir Samurai story that will recreate The Fillmore's jazz heyday.

Photography by Sophie Lan Hou

NEMA