



The quarterly Newsletter by Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe is produced by
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WOMEN FILMMAKERS OF ZIMBABWE

TAKES FILMS TO COLLEGES



Students at an outreach

Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe (WFOZ) in partnership with the Women's Law Centre and the University of Zimbabwe's Gender Department recently held a series of film screenings at the University of Zimbabwe, from where the same program was also taken to the Christian College Of Southern Africa (CCOSA).

The local film 'I Want A Wedding Dress' by Tsitsi Dangarembga, which addresses core issues about HIV/ AIDS among young people from the perspective of a young HIV positive woman was an audience hit. The film comes at a time when so much has been said about 'sexually transmitted marks' which basically refers to sexual favours between students and lecturers, for students to garner more marks, and at a time when support for much needed HIV initiatives in society and communities is drastically decreasing.

Other films screened included 'The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo', a documentary that delves into the disturbing gendered consequences of violent conflict through the lens of the militarisation of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and 'Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai' which tells the story of Wangari Maathai, an ordinary village girl who became the first female to receive a PhD in East Africa and who subsequently became a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Her simple act of planting trees grew into a nationwide movement to improve food security, safeguard the

environment, protect human rights and defend democracy, turning Kenyan women into a powerful force to reckon with.

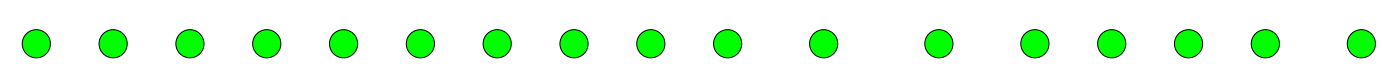
Students were engaged in discussion after each screening by high-powered panels that included representatives from Zimbabwe Young Women's Network for Peace Building, Padare Men's Gender Forum, Musasa Project, Katswe Sistahood, University of Zimbabwe, Women's Law Centre and WFOZ. The overarching message during the discussions was that women's potential must be harnessed to benefit themselves, their families and communities and the nation. This platform provided students with an opportunity to watch, listen and engage with issues from a creative angle.

Completing the CCOSA programme was the South African documentary 'A Country For My Daughter', which explores the huge gap between anti-rape policy and implementation, amid alarming rape statistics in South Africa, despite the country having excellent

anti-rape legislation.

Young women speaking at the recently held Women's Constitutional Conference hosted by the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe appealed for programmes for young women that are interesting to these young people. The WFOZ- IIFF outreach, provided free to schools and colleges, which has reached over two thousand students already this year, engages and inspires the youth by communicating topical messages to the youth in ways that the youth relate to,

WFOZ has carried out similar activities in the past at the Women's University in Africa, Harare Polytechnic, Mabvuku, Epworth, Chitungwiza as well as in Bulawayo, Gwanda



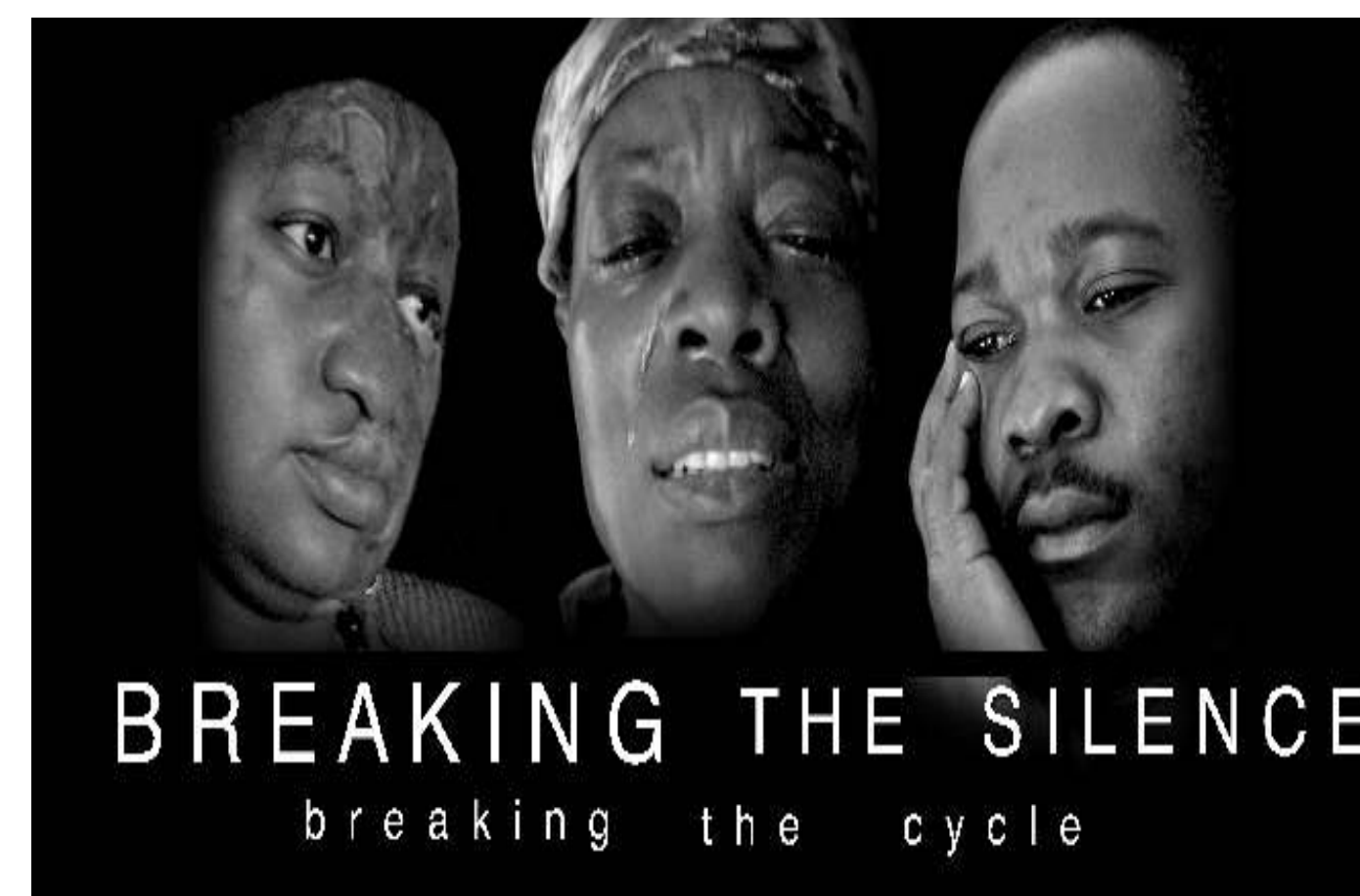
BREAKING THE SILENCE: A Programme for People Power in Zimbabwe

The Institute of Creative Arts for Progress in Africa (ICAPA) Trust has launched the peace project BREAKING THE SILENCE: A Programme for People Power in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is in the grip of a chronic

pandemic of violence, from the domestic sphere to the police and military, from the school to the roads. Zimbabwean life has become cheap to other Zimbabweans and perpetrators appear to get away literally with murder because the survivors are too numbed and intimidated to act. Silence becomes the perpetrators' greatest shield. Breaking the Silence tears through the veil of silence by bringing the debate on endemic violence in Zimbabwe by bringing the issue into the centre of the public domain. Survivors of any kind of violence are given the chance to share their stories with the nation and with international audiences through a competition that rewards the bravest stories. The stories will be worked into finished narratives in the genres of community theatre, literature, documentary and feature films by local experts in the respective fields. It is currently increasingly accepted in scientific research circles that narrative techniques, including audiovisual techniques, can be useful in reshaping people's behaviour.

The project addresses the disempowering effects of endemic fear in Zimbabwean communities, fear that inhibits the people of Zimbabwe from shaping the Zimbabwe they want to live in and demanding that leaders be held accountable for delivering this desired Zimbabwe to the people. The project functions at two levels. First it provides motivation for people to overcome the fear they have felt over the last decades at the actions of perpetrators. Secondly it encourages Zimbabweans to act in a self-affirming manner that negates the

original fear.



The project is overseen by an advisory board that consists of nine members. -Mr Patrick Muusha from Manicaland, Mr Cont Mhlanga from Bulawayo, who is the project's spokesperson; Reverend Siwela from Masvingo and Chief Gambiza (Deputy Chairperson) from Midlands, while writer Eresinah Hwede, Mr Kevin Hazangwi (Padare Men's Forum), Ms Stembile Mpofu of the Centre for Conflict Management Trust (Chairperson) and Ms Sylvia Chirawu of Women in Law In Southern Africa and Ms Catherine Makoni are based in Harare. The project has drop of boxes for narratives at Amakhosi, Township Square in Bulawayo and at the National Gallery premises in Bulawayo, Harare and Mutare, as well as at Musasa Project in Gweru. Further drop off boxes for stories are to be made available in Gwanda, at the Edward Ndlovu Memorial Library, Binga at ZUBO, c/o Balsilwizi stand 291 at the Binga Business Center and in Masvingo at 726 Robertson St, opposite

Consumer council. Deadline for the submissions is the 31st of July.

ICAPA Trust was formed in 2009 as an umbrella organisation for the work of Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe and Nyerai Films, as well as several other local arts organisations.

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I I F F 2012 Entries

The International Images Film Festival (I I F F) opens this year on the 23rd of November and closes on the 1st of December in Harare before moving to Bulawayo, Gwanda, and Binga. This eleventh edition of the festival, celebrated under the theme, 'Women Alive', is set to screen more than 60 films at selected venues in and around the capital.

Five months ahead of the date, the festival has already received a total of 16 entries from the embassies of Italy, Iran, Israel and Japan as well as filmmakers from Congo Brazzaville, Egypt, Niger, France, Kenya, the United States of America and Zimbabwe.

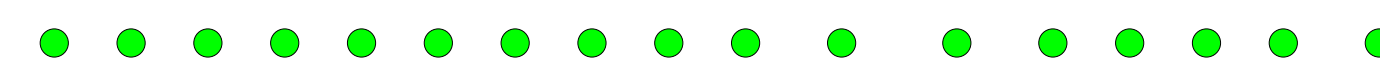
The films, ranging from shorts to

documentaries and features portray women as agents of their own experiences rather than as just undergoers of experience, and how women remain alive physically, mentally and spiritually in intensely misogynist times and nations. Zimbabwean women and men are afforded a chance to step into other women's experiences to see how these women triumph over their daily battles and challenges, ranging from institutional, state and personal violence to environmental degradation, migration and climate change. Also of interest in the films screened, is how men are on occasion great allies to women by recognising that the human struggle is common to all and is not gender specific.

The theme celebrates women's agency in transition and recognises the positive, peace-building change that individual women and groups of women and their allies can bring to their homes, communities and nations. The theme engages with the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number 3, promoting gender equality and empowering women, in relation to all the other MDGs.

Each year, I I F F provides a unique focus theme that showcases the best and most interesting films from around the world. I I F F has not only witnessed a growing

number of entries since its inauguration in 2002, but it has also managed to build a network of critical film and social analysts. This memorable event engages, interrogates and inspires positive images of women and women's narratives through film screenings.



Not So Evil

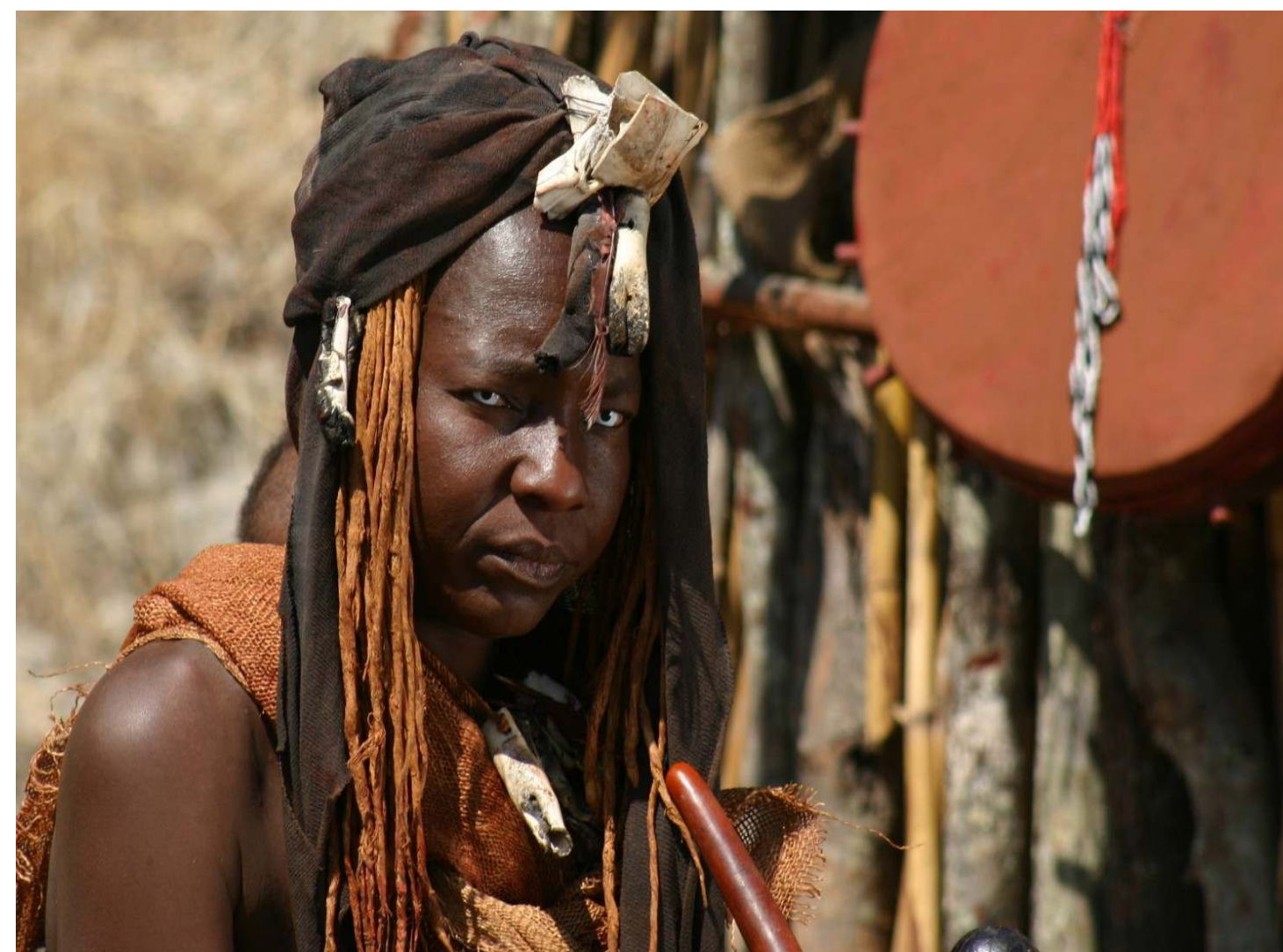
Nyaminyami and the Evil Eggs, the new musical short film by veteran filmmaker Tsitsi Dangarembga continues to break new ground for Zimbabwe on the international film festival circuit. Fresh from screenings in Milan, Italy in April, the film will feature at the fifth Samsung Women's International Film Festival, SWIFF5, to be held at the Inko Centre in Chennai, India in July, after being spotted by programmers at the Luxor African Film Festival held in Luxor, Egypt in February this year. Inko stands for India-Korea, and points to the increasing collaboration in the arts in the Asian region. The 5th SWIFF has in store over 135 powerfully engaging, diverse feature, documentary and short films from India, Korea and a number of countries around the world selected by international curators from Korea, India, the UK, the Netherlands, Italy, Iran and Mexico.

From India the highly original Zimbabwean short - which is based on Tonga legends

about the mystical river goddess Nyaminyami who lives in the Zambezi River while incorporating other traditions that include the *mbende* or *Jersuarema* dance so as to impart a broader national perspective - moves on to the Durban International Film Festival (DIFF), which runs from 19 to 29 July in the South African City.

DIFF's objectives are to produce a world-class, professionally implemented international film festival that presents a broad selection of culturally diverse, high quality films from around the world, with a special focus on South African and African cinema. At the same time DIFF offers a relevant seminar and workshop programme aimed at filmmakers, aspirant filmmakers, and the general public, reaching the latter through a comprehensive and meaningful outreach screening programme that strategises effective audience development in all areas and levels. The 2012 festival will present around 200 screenings, across a variety of venues that provide high-profile screening platforms with accompanying press and publicity. A range of industry seminars and workshops also take place, in addition to the 5th Talent Campus (in cooperation with the Berlin Talent Campus) and the 3rd Durban FilmMart (a co-production market in partnership with the Durban Film Office). The growing event's wider objective is to develop new film audiences, particularly in township areas where facilities are either lacking or non-existent. Thus the festival aims to broaden the appreciation of film in as inclusive a way as possible.

While Nyaminyami and the Evil Egg runs in the short film competition, Dangarembga brings further honours to the local sector, having been appointed to sit on the international jury at this year's edition of the Durban festival, which is the biggest and most important international film festival on the continent. Said Dangarembga, "This appointment gives me the opportunity to show fellow international jurors that the Zimbabwean film expertise is competitive. It is also a chance to gather first hand information on new trends that I can share with the sector when I return, as well being a much needed chance to network with international players. This kind of networking is essential for the proper development of our own industry." The filmmaker will judge over twenty international feature films in the main competition, which excludes the short films.



Chief witch in Nyami-nyami

Get Well Soon, Book Café

By WFOZ correspondent

When the Book Café's Pamberi Trust disclosed it was leaving its well known venue at Fife Avenue Shopping Centre last year, I called the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust in a panic. I implored them to do something and laid out a plan for investing in arts venues in the capital city that involved private enterprise and the relevant government departments in a private-public partnership or PPP, a catchphrase that was so beloved of government barely two years ago.

I was in a panic because Zimbabwe cannot boast an internationally benchmarked arts industry without internationally benchmarked arts venues. Demise of arts venues means demise of Zimbabwe's creative industries. In terms of this no-brainer, with one or two of the following organisations only barely making the international grade, Harare's international standard non-governmental creative sector performance venues was topped by The Book Café, Theatre in the Park, the Zimbabwe International Film Festival (ZIFFT) and Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA). Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe's (WFOZ's) International Images Film Festival for Women (IIFF) does not feature in this list for the simple reason that it has never

been in the enjoyable of having a venue of its own.

HIFA, on the other hand, enjoys support from the international community and from local corporates said by good sources to be worth millions, and has branded Harare Gardens as its venue. ZIFFT, in the years before the economic meltdown and rapid turnover of festival directors had also enjoyed regular support from similar sources, although at a fraction of the value, enabling it to provide an arts venue in Kensington. Even, after the meltdown, however, ZIFFT, survived by increasing its ties with the Zimbabwe Film and Television School of Southern Africa which is housed at Production Services and which is operated by the Department of Media Information and Publicity. Theatre in the Park, with its venue in Harare Gardens, claims it is funded largely from a private family investment. Finally, there was Pamberi Trust, which also enjoyed some support from the International Committee and was housed at Fife Avenue.

As a marginalised but indomitable women's organisation, the difference WFOZ observed between these organisations was openness. Theatre in the Park one year made a donation of plastic chairs, which was much appreciated. In contrast, HIFA ordered IIFF in another year to stop activities at its stall in the crafts arena that had been agreed to and paid for. Similarly attempts to engage ZIFFT

in co-productions for the good of the industry failed dismally.

Pamberi Trust behaved differently, from helping out with locations when WFOZ made no-budget films, to offering festival venues, and assisting with guest hospitality for the gutsy, practically no-budget women's film festival. In between Pamberi Trust enabled the highly popular IIFF outreach programme to flourish by providing a weekly screening venue at The Mannenberg opposite the Book Café. In the last few difficult years the Book Café did request a nominal charge for the use of the space as a festival venue, and this was understandable. In return, WFOZ helped popularise The Mannenberg as an arts venue. The will to persevere and to produce high impact events that are about excellence and national vision remained a driving force with both organisations and held them together. By embracing the wider community, Pamberi Trust, and the arts that it supported at the Book Café and The Mannenberg, was well placed to provide a local platform where the arts could contribute from various different perspectives and at different levels to ongoing debates in the nation that concern every Zimbabwean. I personally did not like everything that happened there, just as not everybody likes every film screened at IIFF. That is the beauty of variety and inclusiveness: enabling each person to make up her or his mind, and even enabling individuals to change their minds by providing comprehensive facts and

arguments.

In any case, none of the propertied arts organisations mentioned above are women's arts organisations. At best - or worst, depending on how you look at it - most of the male-founded and dominated organisations above have developed women's or gender departments, further eroding resources that should be availed to women artists deciding with, by and for women artists. The participation, empowerment and production of women in the arts, as women, for women, with women and by women, thus becomes a test of democracy. However, an organisation that contributes widely and significantly to development in the arts is hardly to blame when it is preferred by resourced sponsors. So, as a departing member of WFOZ, and as someone completely vested in the success of Zimbabwe's creative sector, I say, "Get well and come back soon Book Café!"

