



WILD TRACK newsletter

IFF celebrates 10 years

The International Images Film Festival for Women (IFF) is the only regular women's festival South of the Sahara. This festival provides much needed space for women to tell their stories of their joys, sorrows, triumphs and sadness in a country which has one of the highest rates of abuse of women in the world. And this year, against all odds, IFF celebrates its 10th Anniversary. So our Zim society cannot be so bad after all!

Ten years is a long time for women to work together in harmony and produce a world-class festival like IFF. What bonds the Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe together to make sure the festival is a success every year is passion. This passion began in 2002 when the inaugural Miss Malaika beauty contest was held, and soon beauty pageants were springing up all over the country. There was even a Miss Rural Zimbabwe where the girls paraded bare-breasted. That might all be well and good: a woman has to earn a living, after all. But IFF decided to challenge the notion that a woman's worth is in her "bare" essentials.

Challenging society's notion of women as objects of male satisfaction and second-class citizens who can only achieve first-class status through personal relationships with men has brought IFF a long way. In the ten years since IFF was founded, Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe have celebrated women's passion, women's fighting spirit, women's transformation, women's power. And now this year we celebrate women's goals with our 10th anniversary theme Women With Goals. Every woman has her own personal goals and WFOZ will screen films which show how women have persevered and attained those goals. At the same time, the theme for this year's festival, Women With Goals, reflects the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Clearly, constituting more than half of Zimbabwe's population, women cannot be removed from the development equation. Equally clearly limiting women's development to MDG 3, which concerns promoting gender equality and empowering women, could cause women to be marginalized with respect to all the other goals. So everybody, come to IFF 2011, 18 -26 November in Harare and 1 – 3 December in Bulawayo, to find out how women the world over have realised ALL their goals! Working together and sharing ideas, we in Zimbabwe will reach all our goals too!

WILDTRACK with its international and locally trained team will bring you more ideas about what film is, and what makes a good film in our later editions. WILDTRACK is quarterly. So it will appear four times a year. While we wait for these later editions, another sign that Zimbabwean cinema is at a new coming of age state of development is that I WANT A WEDDING DRESS has proved popular not only at home but also elsewhere on our wonderful continent.

Zim Artist Designs Polish Film Fest Trophies

Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe have achieved yet another goal! One of our most important aims is to provide income generating careers for women. This year WFOZ was asked to choose an artist to design the awards trophies of AfryKamera, the biggest African film festival in Poland. Due to many years of support through thick and thin, WFOZ unanimously passed the honour on to arguably Zimbabwe's most outrageous costume and set designer, Funkie Loader. Funkie says her designs are original and that we as Zimbabweans are not trying to copy anyone are striving to retain our uniqueness through originality.

How WFOZ came to be asked to provide the artist for the Polish festival is another story in itself. Przemek Stepień, director of AfryKamera, which takes places in Warsaw every year, fell in love with Funkie's costume design in films such as Kare Kare Zvako and Nyaminyami (Nyaminyami is still to be released). Stepień, who was a guest at IFF 2010, was just as knocked out with Funkie's designs for the IFF trophies, the Zimbo version of the Oscars. The (IFF) International Images Film Festival trophy is that of a curvaceous woman with her hands up. Funkie Loader points out that her designs are from available materials and on a low budget, which suits IFF entirely. In 2010 Funkie designed colorful wooden pegs for the

I want a wedding dress - a film for everyone



I WANT A WEDDING DRESS, a Nyerai Films and Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe co-production, funded by the United Nations Population Fund has finally hit the big screens. It ran at Rainbow City 3 from March 25 until April 1. This production has set a new benchmark for donor driven feature films, showing you can engage with any story, even the heartbreaking story of a young girl who is infected with HIV when she has a relationship with a sugar daddy in order to get the money for a beautiful white wedding with her true love Terrence (played by Gift Marovatsanga)! Poor Kundi Sai Sande, played by Esther Dauramanzi learns the hard way. The audience takes in what happens in Zimbabwe today the easy way, with lots of laughs and heart-warming situations. Yes, in spite of the hardships endured in the last decade or so, we Zimbabweans still have hearts. These hearts are often warm. I WANT A WEDDING DRESS shows how we can make the best out of the worst

situations.

The question is, how often do we as Zimbabweans admit how bad a situation really is? I WANT A WEDDING DRESS, probes this question that every thinking Zimbabwean asks from time to time. With this perspective, the film's story about two ordinary young people who want to get married, Kundi and Terrence, shows Zimbabwe cinema culture is beginning to come of age when our own films tackle such deep personal questions. The fundamental premise of film studies taught at any university is that film is a story about a person who has goal and faces obstacles in realising that goal.

This Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe and Nyerai Films collaboration, which has brought I WANT A WEDDING DRESS to audiences across the continent was honoured by being selected for the competition in the Best Video and Television Production at the just ended pan-African film festival, FESPACO, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Nyerai Films graphic artist, Mehluli Hikwa, expected to attend the festival in the West African French-speaking country, did not do so in the end due to poor travel arrangements by FESPACO left him grounded in Harare. This allegedly happened to several filmmakers from Anglophone Africa. So WFOZ is committing to screening many more films by and about continental women and Diaspora women to balance out the Francophone, Anglophone film festival equation! Meanwhile, all credit to the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust who committed the visa fees to enable Mehluli to attend the premier festival.

Taking a look back-IFF 2010

After a successful festival in 2010 under the theme WOMEN OF DECISION, Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe decided to get together with sponsors, well-wishers and friends to find out how to make the festival even bigger and better. That major management event took place on Friday, February 4 at the Martin Luther Church, Fife Avenue. As the only festival amplifying women's voices South of Sahara, WFOZ wanted to make sure that the festival continues to amplify women's voices and to tell women's stories in a big way. Not everyone knew each

other, so we started off by playing charades, which involved acting out titles of the films screened during IFF 2010. There was much laughter when one of the teams had to act out UNGOCHANII, which was made by a WFOZ member. Fortunate to have our board members present, Mr. Charles Chirikure, who sits on the board of the Institute of Creative Art for Progress in Africa (ICAPA, the umbrella body to WFOZ) welcomed everyone and stressed that IFF had come and gone with great success and he was optimistic that the flaws experienced would be tweaked through joint efforts of ICAPA and its partners to guarantee the success and growth of the festival in future. The WFOZ program Officer, Yvonne Jila reminded us how Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe was founded in 1996, so that the present generation of members constitutes the third generation! The report from the Office Administrator, Mrs Mahaso on WFOZ finances was not so cheering. But we were all amazed with what we were able to do with only a quarter of the budget necessary that had been raised. This is where we give kudos to local corporates who helped out, including Cresta Hospitality, Sakunda Energy, Newsday. Many great ideas for a bigger and better festival in 2011 came from Roberta Wagner, the Director of Zimbabwe German Society (ZGS), Ms Hanifa Gutu from the British Council, Ms Chipso Muwezwa from the Culture Fund, Terrence Mapurisa the ZBC Arts Editor, as well as representatives from the National Gallery, and other media organisations. SIDA, Culture Fund, UNIFEM and Afrykamera were amongst our major sponsors, however there would have been no review without all the countries who donated films and grants that all came together to make it happen, and to help us learn the lessons we did. We would like to acknowledge the corporate sponsorship that came from Sakunda Energy, Cresta Hospitality and News Day, it is our hope that more sponsorship continues to come from our fast recovering corporate scene. To all who made me say Thank You, Siyabonga, Tinotenda for your contribution made during this IFF postmortem to have IFF 2011 even bigger, better and more successful.

FEATURE: to learn or not to learn - WFOZ members attend aspiring Directors' Workshop at the Mannenberg Feb 8-18

The Swedish Institute has seen the need to trainupcoming local filmmakers to be professionals. As Zimbabwean filmmakers, we are often dreadfully lacking in professionalism although we do not see it ourselves. We don't need to blame ourselves as aspiring filmmakers too much. How can we see these shortcomings when we do not have a single official international standard film training institution in the country! This was the predicament of aspiring young Zimbabwean directors, Morepower Nyandoro and Miriam Kandishaya, both Harare Polytech students on attachment with ICAPA (Institute of Creative Art for Progress in Africa which incorporates WOMEN FILMMAKERS OF ZIMBABWE and NYERAI FILMS DEPARTMENT), were overjoyed to attend a two week long workshop that was held at the Mannenberg, courtesy of Pamperi Trust. WFOZ believes in partnerships and collaboration, WFOZ's idea is that working together benefits not only the organisations involved, but the entire arts industry in Zimbabwe. This is because working together provides more intellectual and practical opportunities than going it alone.

Proving the point, WFOZ and Pamperi Trust have had a mutually rewarding relationship over the last five years. Pamperi Trust bailed out WFOZ when the women's organisation was in need. WFOZ initiated projects at the Fife Avenue Arts venue that have gone on to be adopted by a host of other players, to everyone's benefit.

So Miriam and Morepower, as well as other WFOZ members, jumped at the chance of attending the aspiring directors' workshop. Katrina Nitsch and Beatrice Eckstrom, who traveled to this part of the world courtesy of the Swedish Institute, Stockholm, taught Zim's young talent a host of skills. Among other topics, participants learnt basic editing skills using the final cut pro software. A huge bonus of the program was meeting other people in the film industry at the workshop, who worked in different sectors of film, such as graphic designers and visual artists just to mention a couple of the variety of participants.

The workshop certainly opened up new avenues of creative thinking and imparted new skills that are not learnt in the curriculum to the WFOZ interns. The entire workshop was results rather than retention based, although our local education system seems to emphasize the latter. Participants were placed in groups and assigned tasks. These tasks had to be completed fully, and the WFOZ interns were inspired by the dedication of the trainers, who made sure, with great patience, that everybody did complete the task in one way or another. This opened up a whole new way of thinking about learning. Everyone who attended the workshop was impressed by the high level of professionalism displayed by the two filmmakers from Sweden.



ENCORE WITH MANY THANKS!

It is a hugely significant matter for a group of women who have not yet been mainstreamed to come so far as to produce a quarterly newsletter. We refer, of course, to Zimbabwe's huge resource of creative, artistic women. WFOZ, as part of that eminent society, would not have made it to its tenth anniversary without the support of regular partners, as well as new and old friends who made IIFF 2010 a resounding success. We love you all:

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"Our international festival guests Oshoheni Hiveluah, Przemek Stepień and Nicole Davidow enjoyed their stay at the Cresta Lodge"

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Feedback and comments are welcome. Please send to wfoz@mango.co.zw, or info@nyeraifilms.com.

**IIFF 2011: WOMEN WITH GOALS:
Harare, 18 - 26 November
Bulawayo 1 - 3 December
Venues to be announced**

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