Today was day 1 of the 5 day INTERNATIONAL IMAGES FILM FESTIVAL FOR WOMEN 2023 running under the theme ‘WOMEN OF HOPE’ and the first film screened at the ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE theatre, ‘WATCHER’ was a fitting portrayal encapsulated in a thriller set in Bucharest, Romania. It should have been better attended but the country’s realities such as no real leisure time in the morning for many may have rendered the potential audience oblivious to the fact of this great way of passing the mid-morning hours. It is a pity because both the first and second film were well worth the time and someone was heard saying they wanted to watch both again. There is much excitement about the coming days of the festival due to those two films. The more central venue, B2C at BATANAI GARDENS, showed movies from Senegal and the United States at the same time. Those who missed the films shown at Alliance Française also got in a great start to the festival and there is still a chance to watch whatever you missed at one venue at its next screening at another. ‘XALE’, the Senegalese film, received rave reviews from people who watched it outside Zimbabwe and is evidently set to be a hit at IIFF. Certainly the venue itself, which is new as an IIFF venue, is spacious, airy and very pleasant to be in. While the screenings happened, ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE was quietly getting on with normal activities such as French classes as well as the setting up of the main event at 1700hrs, the Opening of the 20th edition of IIFF (2023). This is being attended by various stakeholders and special guests including representatives from the Spanish, Australian, Netherlands, US and French and Chilean embassies and cultural sections who all contributed to the pool of magnificent film offerings lined up for the next few days until the closing on Saturday.
The film question and answer sessions after screenings turn it into a real ‘watch party ’ where the discussions become an information-sharing forum. Filmmakers who are present tell the audience about the motivation and challenges within the making of their films. These discussions ensure that the audience is on the same wavelength, transforming the cinema experience into something interactive and engaging. The discussions also cover themes and issues contained in the films.

The theme WOMEN OF HOPE, seeks to explore the stories of women who are still on their journey upon deciding on their path at – and after – the crossroads, hopeful that the path will lead to achievement of their goals and realization of their many, different and complex dreams no matter what their station in life may be.

All the venues, which include Hatcliffe and Dzivaresekwa community halls, were carefully selected for the audiences. Each venue will host 13 screenings. The festival will showcase 20 full length films and 15 short films will be screened.

INTERNATIONALES FRAUEN FILM FESTIVAL DORTMUND-KÖLN, an IIFF partner for two years, have given the festival access to select films from their 2023 catalogue while The Embassy of Spain in Zimbabwe have confirmed bringing the film THE YELLOW CEILING along with the producer CARLA SOSPEDRA for a producing masterclass. The Australian Embassy, The Netherlands Embassy, The United States Embassies in Zimbabwe and the Embassy of Chile in South Africa all contributed to bringing in the content at IIFF and paying for the screening thereof.

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