IIFF 2023 Dailies
festival newsletter

Day 4 of IIFF has been just as unforgettable as all three of the previous days with attendance improving as awareness of the festival spread like wildfire. It was particularly heartwarming to see the enthusiastic community response in both DZIVARESEKWA and HATCLIFFE. All scheduled films happened on time and yet another enlightening masterclass kicked off the programme at ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE. Today's masterclass, which covered pitching, was held by ZANELE MTHEMBU who is on this year's jury panel. She is a seasoned media practitioner and current board chairperson of the South African organization, Sisters Working in Film and Television (SWIFT). Ms MTHEMBU also owns an independent audio-visual company, Brown Panther Films, where she is the CEO.

Pitching is something many Zimbabwean filmmakers need to perfect in order to move forward in the industry and this masterclass came not a moment too soon. So many good film projects have not reached fruition due to lack of finance or production support thus pitching skills are absolutely essential to progress. Ms MTHEMBU broke it down to participants in the simplest of terms, giving valuable insights into the mindsets of potential funders or commissioning editors. “Body language is important, watch your body language”, she warned throughout her tutorial which was clearly presented via simple but detailed charts that mapped out the entire pitching strategy.
The Alliance Française venue had its audience watching a cinematographically spectacular and moving action film, “Sira”, based on a very real ongoing conflict where women become chattels, weapons and collateral damage – but always find a way to rise above their pain – on the African continent.

This was followed by another film,”We Don’t Talk”, based in the first world, where women experience the same pain in different circumstances. After this emotional roller coaster it was great to walk into a very pleasant reception hosted by the Netherlands Embassy who had contributed the latter film. All in all IIFF is proving to be the film event of the year and it is hard to believe it has all been free of charge!

By Sylvia Vassilatos