

Durban FilmMart to present programme on women's challenges in filmmaking

The Durban International Film Festival and the Durban FilmMart (DFM) will present an in-depth programme that addresses the inequalities, challenges and successes that women face within the film industry, specifically in South Africa and on the continent.



Image © [Durban FilmMart SA Facebook page](#)

The programme, 'Women Led Film - Disrupting the Status Quo' takes place within this year's DFM from Friday, 14 July 2017 – Monday, 17 July 2017, in Durban.

Calling for an inclusive dialogue on the role of women, the eThekweni Municipality's film industry arm - the Durban Film Office, the Durban International Film Festival, the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), the lobby and advocacy organisation Sisters Working in Film and Television (SWIFT), and international partner CaribbeanTales Media Group, are all providing input into the programme.

"Despite major leaps for female equity across many industries, the film industry, especially behind the camera, is still very much male-dominated and requires quantum shifts to ensure that women begin playing a more equitable role going forward," says Toni Monty, of the Durban Film Office, speaking on behalf of the DFM. "The objective of our women-focused programme is to bring a variety of voices together to discuss and unpack these challenges and to find useful and tangible ways to make the change needed and desired."

The programme will present a number of workshops, roundtables and panel discussions with leading women in film.

“In a world of vast gender inequalities, it is inevitable to reflect at such bitter reality and more importantly start working towards their redress, which starts with creation of platforms. The Women Led Film Focus becomes one of the many attempts in securing platforms to acknowledge, deliberate and celebrate woman excellence in the film milieu,” adds David wa Maahlamela, director of UKZN’s Centre for Creative Arts, hosts of the Durban International Film Festival.

Sara Blecher, well-known South African filmmaker and co-founder of Swift, which aims to nurture and redress the inequalities faced by women in the South African audiovisual industry, echoes these sentiments. “As the women’s struggle in film begins to finally garner the attention it needs around the world, we need to look to achieving some concrete results. We have to start looking at the local film landscape and our status within this. The focus on women at DFM will help shine the spotlight both on the representation of women on the screen, but also more importantly on the women behind the screen.”

Films made by women part of DIFF

Parallel to the DFM focus, the DIFF will be highlighting films made by and about women within its screening programme. Festival manager, Chipu Zhou says, “The festival has this year taken considered strides to ensure that the inclusivity of participation by women is measurable across the board from selection, jury and facilitator panels throughout the different facets of our event. The quality of film submissions by women this year demands that a space is created, to ensure the momentum in the quantity of projects by women is not only maintained but also augmented. This is a conscious move towards making this a permanent feature of the festival as our contribution towards the redress that is urgently required within the film industry.”

The NFVF has been working within this space for some time, and will be presenting the successes of their Female Filmmaker Project at the DFM. “The decision to focus on women for the NFVF is a deliberate one. The objective is to break down the barriers to entry faced by women in the industry, especially black women who are the most marginalised. If the industry is to grow, thrive and become sustainable then all South Africans need equal opportunity to participate and contribute. Programmes focused on women will continue to be prioritised and we are encouraged and proud of the success witnessed by the previous female project funding recipient,” said Zama Mkosi, CEO of the National Film and Video Foundation.

For more information, visit the [Durban Film Mart website](#).

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