

Film industry is no short walk



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THE problem of working behind the scenes is that you remain behind the scenes until you decide to creep out but creeping out sometimes takes a few years or sometimes forever.

Those who eventually do, have something to talk about like Namibia's Ebony and Ivory – filmmakers Oshosheni Hiveluah and Michaela Bauer - whose unique interactive film Three and a Half Lives of Philip Wetu on HIV/ Aids was launched last month.

Oshosheni and Michaela whose company Media Logistics Namibia produced the movie are two of very few women in the film industry today.

Both admit it is not easy to find one's way in a male dominated field especially in Namibia where opportunities do not come on a silver platter.

Bauer who left her social work profession to embark on a film career in Cologne, Germany said if one has passion, they can always come in from a side.

"I started as a runner. Later I became a unit manager. Film is not a short walk," she says.

Later, Michaela would be involved in producing soaps and features for television before coming to Namibia in 2000.

She says in those early days, there was not much work to do in the industry and she had to participate in the performing industry. Later, she was to be one of those who founded the Wild Cinema film festival.

"It started as something for interested people but now it's grown. It's also encouraging that there is a lot of local content," she explains.

Oshosheni who was born in Angola before relocating to Germany eased into the film industry after attending a workshop although she has no formal training just like Michaela.

"I fell into the film industry. I like telling stories," she explains shyly.

Oshosheni is one of African filmmakers working on a Pan African film project whose theme is Killing Africa, Healing Africa. Her story will be on Namibia about a man who was tortured during the liberation war but meets his tormentor later.

While she admits there are very few women in the film industry today, Oshosheni says those few who are already in are encouraging others to come in.

"It's like getting your foot in the door and allowing others to come in," she says complaining that the local film industry is hamstrung by individualism.

"People are secretive about their work. Everybody is starting their own productions under cover. There is no co-operation," she explains. Although Oshosheni started as a freelancer for Media Logistics Namibia, Michaela says they are Ebony and Ivory, two sides of the same brain contributing to the same thought.

"We compliment each other," Michaela says. "She has some attributes which I do not have. I have attributes, she does not have. "I am here for logistics and finances while she is the content producer. You need two angles to be successful."

Three and a Half Lives of Philip Wetu is one of the three movies Media Logistics has worked on this year. The other two are Taste of Rain and the Quest for the Good Life.

Last year, the company was involved in three movies – When the Heart Speaks, Lost in Hands and Africa in the Heart – while since 2001, the outfit helped in the making of more than 13 movies in Namibia.

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