Girl power on screen

With the Samsung Women's International Film Festival coming to a close, the international curator for the African Diaspora, June Givanni, shares her experience.

HAVING worked as a film and television programme consultant for over 23 years, June Givanni has experience organizing festivals and has written about film and television. She is currently involved in the fifth Samsung Women's International Film Festival (SWIFF) in the city that ends tomorrow after a week of movies, debates and workshops. Meeting Chennai's talent in theatre, photography, visual arts, etc., "made it an inspiring event for me," she says. We caught up with her to talk about what went right at the festival and plans for next year.

What worked at the festival?
It was particularly rich in networking terms, encouraging exchanges and connections between filmmakers and women festival organizers across the Asian continent and the rest of the world — especially with the representatives from the NAWFF Network of Asian Women's Film Festivals and the filmmakers competing for their prizes.

The audience and festival compared to other parts of the world.

The audiences at SWIFF are appreciative and very enthusiastic. They seem to come from various sectors, all of whom get involved in the talks after the screenings and mingle with the international guests informally. The festival compared well with other small specialized festivals of this nature.

Popular new-age film trends.
Use of technology and wider skills in films; some cross-over between theatre and music and even using film genres to develop new aesthetics in cinema.

Notes on female directors in Africa.
Some of the women, particularly in West Africa, are taking an entrepreneur approach to filmmaking, and are involved as producers, as well as writers and directors of their own films, to try to ensure the integrity of their vision in their films, which is often a struggle.

Your take on mainstream vs. independent filmmaking in India.
From what I've seen of Indian independent films, they are often adventurous. Independent films are made in all sorts of formats and are not always the same; they explore the filmmaking process.

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