

...Where we share communion of our Humanity

By Donna Obaseki-Ogunnaike



At the closing event of each edition of the iREP Film Festival, warmth enveloped each of us; already the nostalgia would have set in – we knew we would miss that day when we awake the next day and deeply yearn, as we did the year before, for the next edition of the Festival



IT is a funny thing, the concept of community.

To be considered part of a community, one should share a common interest in a thing or at least have the same attitude towards a common subject. In the course of exploring the commonality within a community, interaction is inevitable. And communion.

This is where the delicate mysteries of the *iREP International Documentary Film Festival* dwells: its ability to draw the most unlikely peoples into communion regardless of how disparate their ideologies and identities may be.

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We all find ourselves sat side by side -- drinking, as one, from the wealth of wonders examined and discovered in documentaries.

We would together laugh, cry, sigh, eat, drink, dance and return again to deeper expressions of humanity as each topic is visited through the eyes of the documentarian: we were sure to find profound explorations in realms of culture, politics, humanity, music, art, dance and society. As one should, having experienced a good body of work, we ended each viewing with a definite response: anger, joy, sadness, sorrow, resolve, disagreement or a resolve to look closer... question what remains to be unearthed.

Still, regardless of how heated the banter became or the sweetness of breaking bread together as the walls of a former prison echoed peals of laughter from its centre, we knew – every single season – that we had found one another: our intercepted thoughts agreeing to co-exist in this comfortable community, free to think, to question and to explore.

At the closing event of each edition of the iREP Film Festival, warmth enveloped each of us; already the nostalgia would have set in – we knew we would miss that day when we awake the next day and deeply yearn, as we did the year before, for the next edition of the Festival. We would drink palm wine, dip *akara* in deliciously divine stewed peppers and laugh loudly. And as we headed towards our cars at the end of that last day, I looked back at Freedom Park where the Festival is held, and smile, knowing that Femi Odugbemi and his family of non-conformist dream makers, had together created a wildly wonderful and beautiful thing!

Isn't it just likely that, for these dream makers, a prison could turn its charms into freedom?

Stranger still is the pleasant tickle of how these dream-makers have fostered the birth and growth of a community of thinkers for the last 10 years; we have been held in the choral harmony of a unified purpose: to question, to explore and to exchange thought and ideas. Many Congratulations!!!

May we ever drink, laugh, think and explore freely!
Salute.

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