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Female filmmakers converge at Roxie fest

by [Kelly Connors](#), staff writer

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A plethora of female-driven films focusing on a wide range of topics took over the Roxie Theater for the Woman Make Movies Film Festival.

All of the 22 documentary films shown last week portrayed and were produced and directed by women from all walks of life, from the history of women matadors in Spain in "Ella es el Matador" to female rappers struggling to navigate their way through the male-dominated music industry in "Say My Name."

"So often it takes women to make films that open people's eyes to a litany of horrors that befall women throughout the world," said Barbara Attie, 61, co-producer of "Mrs. Goundo's Daughter," a film depicting the world of female genital mutilation in Mali and a woman's fight for political asylum.

All of the films shown were distributed through Woman Make Movies. WMM is a nonprofit organization that produces, promotes and distributes films made by women and about women, but are to be viewed by everyone.

However, this wasn't a typical film festival. There was no entry date, no nervous filmmakers wondering what critics would comment on and no promise of money for the top film.

All of the films shown are played either on various television stations like the Sundance Channel or are shown at other independent

PHOTO



[Steve Zettler](#) | staff photographer

Rachel Hart sells a customer a ticket for the Women's Film Fest that was held at the Roxie on September 3, 2009.

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cinemas and exhibitions around the country.

"All-female festivals are a great venue for showing the kinds of films that Janet [Goldwater, co-producer of the film] and I make, which focused on personal stories of adversity and resilience in women's lives," Attie said.

For a couple of the screenings, the filmmakers came to the Roxie to discuss their work. Other times people were brought in to conduct a Q&A for films.

Kim Thuy Seelinger, who works for the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies at UC Hastings College of the Law, was asked by Attie and Goldwater to speak about "Mrs. Goundo's Daughter."

"I think it is a deft, sensitive and balanced documentary about an issue that is too easily sensationalized and misunderstood," Seelinger said. "The filmmakers presented many telling nuances that may otherwise escape the debate about FGC [female genital cutting] and gender-asylum here in the US."

Although the subject matter of some of the films was difficult to discuss at times, the audience seemed to enjoy and appreciate what they were seeing.

Andrea Goldman, who viewed "Who's Afraid of Kathy Acker?," a film about the life and times of postmodern writer Kathy Acker, said the documentary wasn't great, but that it was still an important film in telling the story of Acker's struggles and successes.

"I think this was an important film to see, as a fan of Acker's work," Goldman said. "This festival shows the importance of woman in films that are made by women."

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