

Thematic concerns in the emergent Zimbabwean short film genre

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Abstract

The genre of short film has largely arisen as an alternative during the Zimbabwe political and economic crisis post 2000 because film-makers could not afford longer projects. It also provides a site and space for training new film-makers. The short films are making thematic innovations departing from the traditional didactic approaches usual in older Zimbabwean films that carried messages on, for example, HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancy and women's rights in line with donor prescriptions. Although the short films remain donor-sponsored, they are exciting thematically and cinematographically because they are experimental, tackling issues on oratures, animation, the Zimbabwean personality and cosmopolitanism. However, these productions are striking in their avoidance of political subjects for material produced during an obvious crisis period. This article traces the thematic subjects and critically speculates on the absence of political material.

Keyword(s): aesthetics; broadcasting policy; cinematography; emergent thematic concerns; funding; Zimbabwean short films