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Sarah Buchanan juries at international film festival

Summary: Sarah Buchanan, UMM associate professor of French, was one of seven women worldwide chosen to participate on the jury for the Second International Women's Film Festival held in early September 2006 in Salé, Morocco.

(October 20, 2006)-Sarah Buchanan, University of Minnesota, Morris associate professor of French, was one of seven women worldwide chosen to participate on the jury for the Second International Women's Film Festival held in September 2006 in Salé, Morocco. Buchanan was invited by the director of the Moroccan National Film Library, Abdellatif Laasadi, whom she met during a research trip to Morocco in October 2005.

Along with Buchanan, the jury was composed of the following individuals.

- Anca Mitran, director of the Romanian film archives
- Carole Abboud, chair, Lebanese actress
- Souad Amidou, Franco-Moroccan actress
- Sarita Marchesi, Italian-Dutch actress
- Marie Vermillard, French film director
- Bina Paul Venugopal, film editor and Indian film festival artistic director

According to Buchanan, the jury members were treated like celebrities. Moroccan newspapers covered the festival events daily, and the crowds knew Buchanan's name as she walked the red carpet with international actors and actresses. The celebrity treatment helped Buchanan, a cinema expert, "get into the mind of a star or of a director."

Beneath the festival's glamour was an important goal: to promote women around the globe in filmmaking industries and to raise awareness of problems confronting women. The featured films depicted the struggles of women from many countries. "Maria, Full of Grace," a Columbian film, shares the plight of women forced to become drug runners. "Hi-Bi," a Japanese film, tells the story and struggles of a single mother, a potter in Japan, and her son who is combating leukemia. Films from Egypt, Canada, Syria, Iran, Morocco, Spain and other countries were also shown, many directed by women. The festival provided an opportunity to recognize the talents of these women filmmakers.

As part of her jury duties, Buchanan selected a film to represent the United States. She chose "North Country," the story of a woman miner. The film was shown on a special outdoor screen immediately following the opening ceremonies of the festival.

Twelve of the many films shown throughout Salé and the area over the festival week were judged. Five prizes were awarded. Best film was awarded to "Play" by Alicia Scherson, Chili. Best scenario was awarded to "Juanita de Tanger" by Farida Belyazid, Morocco. Jury choice was awarded to "Sous le toit" by Nedal Addabs, Syria. Best actress was awarded to Yûko Tanaka, who played the mother in "Hi-Bi" by Banmei Takahashi, Japan. Best actor was awarded to Mahmoud Hemida, who plays the center role in "Roi et écriture" by Kamila Aboudiky, Égypt.

Buchanan, who teaches courses in African and French cinema at UMM, will draw on the festival experience in her classroom. She is currently writing a book, tentatively titled "Inside-Out," about films by Muslim women immigrants in France.

For more information about the film festival, visit [Film Festival](#).

Submitted photo: Sarah Buchanan, right, on stage with two fellow members of the jury.

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