

## Heralding change: Promise of the future

Women filmmakers impart important advice to young students.

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**ISLAMABAD: Filmmaking and music video production are traditionally male-dominated where women generally have to claw their way in. For this very reason, Kathryn Bigelow's Oscar win for *The Hurt Locker* was a historic one.**

In Pakistan, independent filmmaker Iram Parveen Bilal and architect/music video producer Zarminae Ansari, are two such examples of women garnering success and recognition in fields still in their infancy in the country. Their example of following their ambitions is as inspirational as their speeches at Froebels on Friday.

Raised in Nigeria and Pakistan, Bilal graduated from the California Institute of Technology and University of Southern California and has received numerous awards including the Nicoll Fellowship in screenwriting, administered by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She is also a Froebels alum.

Her experience of the world grounded as a Pakistani reflects in her work — culture plays an important role in “Marwa” and “Pashok”. She recently wrapped up shooting her first feature-length film “Josh,” a murder-mystery in Karachi. While presenting scenes from “Forbidden Steps”, a film currently in development, she spoke about the balance between professional achievement and remaining true to one’s artistic vision and integrity. Individuality, determination and persistence reflected in her speech.

Encouragement to young students to think outside the box and remembering one’s roots was echoed further by National College of Arts and Massachusetts Institute of Technology alum Ansari. She cited her own example of producing an aesthetically arresting music video “Yahaan” for Rahat Fateh Khan to promote cultural tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Ansari’s professional training as an architect helped in communicating that specialisation in a field is not necessary for success. She has been a part of various projects and papers that promote cultural heritage and sustainment, and has aggressively campaigned for resisting extremist influence in the country, particularly in tribal areas.

Development of such thinking is an important part of education and students seemed to be engaging with the ideas presented by both speakers during the questions and answers session. Frodoc, the school’s film and documentary festival will be held next spring where students will share their work utilising the advice imparted by the speakers.

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