

To all the women in the audience, to all the guests and to the all beautiful people who create this festival....

Please receive my humble greetings from Croatia and my deepest apology for not being there with you tonight.

It was my honest wish but my body didn't want to listen to me, it decided to become ill today:)

I just wanted to say a few words to you.

When Irene told me about this festival last summer in Munich, I started to think about the movies I've done so far, about all the roles I created.

And I came up with the fact that in all of my roles I was celebrating woman's power. Her weakness, her pain, her sacrifice, all the boundaries made around her and at the end her struggle, her strength and all what a woman becomes when she is fighting for her being, in any way.

And I know today that I was looking for those kind of roles, and they were looking for me.

I guess I am trying to celebrate and to be my mom through them. Because since the year 1991 and the Serb-Croatian war, she became my only and true hero. A woman who became a refugee with two little girls, who built a whole new life for them and who put them on the right track.

Through her life I learned there is nothing I can't do if I just believe in myself. There are no boundaries, there are no big NO's and there are no excuses if somebody is trying to hurt me, either physically or emotionally.

It would be my life achievement if in ten years or so I will be able to recognize all that what I admire in her for years now.

During the war I saw lot of women suffering and gave up and I saw lot of them who won. But, as Muhammad Ali once said, I am sure in this:

"There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a great competition and rivalry between the two. But there is a third power stronger than both, that of the women."

I hope you will enjoy all the movies through the festival and that you will talk to other people about them.

Because, you know, we, the artists, are doing this with one big dream hidden behind: Hoping that what we do will help changing things for the better.

I'm saying goodbye with one last sentence:

"I shall not change my course because those who assume to be better than I desire it."

— Victoria Clafin Woodhul

Sincerely, with all my love

Zrinka Cvitesic