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EDITORIAL

"I don't deserve this award, but I have diabetes and I don't deserve that either." **Woody Allen, upon receiving the Prince of Asturias Award for Arts in 2002.**

To compete or not to compete? That is the question. Are awards fair? Of course they are not. But they help a lot.

For the first time our festival will have three competitive sections, giving awards for Best Documentary, Best Short and a Youth Jury Choice Award for Best Film. We hope that by granting awards we will raise the profile of all of the selected films and that receiving an award will have a major impact on the winning films. Even though awards are never fair, what is fair is the recognition the films will obtain with it.

An award has value, not for the jury's decision as such, but because of what the film represents and the attention the film draws to a particular subject.

When the US director and activist Michael Moore obtained the Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival in 2004 for his film *Fahrenheit 9/11*, he reminded all of us with impressive and powerful images of the brutality of a war that still continues today. In Mexico this year, the most awarded film by the Mexican Film Academy was *El Infierno*, a work that in a darkly comic way shows us the daily corruption, the drug trafficking permitted by everyone and the savage violence occurring in recent years in Mexico. In 1995 the Cuban film, *Fresa y Chocolate*, became the first film from Cuba nominated to the Academy Awards; it depicted the effects of intolerance when someone's sexuality is different from that of the majority. In this way, understanding how award recognition is important is apparent.

In our section for documentary competition we have selected seven films; all of them tell us in one way or the other situations of individuals, of countries or history, that mark us in a unique way. If the award for Best Documentary in our festival helps to put on the table a dialogue about the endless Colombian war, the memory of Chile's history, the sad cases in Mexico of child abuse committed by Catholic priests or what it means to be free in Cuba, we will be more than satisfied for we will have facilitated a fundamental mission of the arts: to speak about what is wrong, to protest, but doing so with an aesthetic, and in this case, with the aesthetic that cinema grants us.

In the end it does not matter if a film wins or loses, for there is intrinsic value in each of these films, a unique reflection of a topic, which is always as universal as it is local.

So let it be that cinema encourages the world to reflect and become better.

Yo no me merezco este premio, pero tengo diabetes y tampoco me lo merezco. **Woody Allen, al recibir el premio Príncipe de Asturias de las Artes en el 2002.**

Competir o no competir. Ese es el dilema. ¿Son los premios justos? Por supuesto que no. Pero si son de mucha ayuda.

Nuestro festival por primera vez pasa a tener tres secciones competitivas, las cuales otorgarán premios por mejor documental, mejor cortometraje y un premio que dará un jurado joven. Con esto pensamos que así las cintas ganadores tendrán un impacto mayor al contar con un premio en su haber. Y si los premios nunca son justos, lo que si lo es, es el reconocimiento que las cintas ganadores obtendrán después.

Un premio vale, no por la decisión de un jurado como tal, sino por lo que la película representa y la atención a un fin que esta pueda causar.

Cuando el director y activista estadounidense Michael Moore obtuvo en el año 2004 la Palma de Oro en el festival de Cannes por su cinta *Fahrenheit 9/11*, él nos hizo recordar con un poder visual impresionante, la brutalidad de una injustificada guerra que hoy todavía se lucha. En México, este año la cinta más premiada por la Academia de Cine ha sido *El Infierno*, la cual devela de una manera cómica la corrupción cotidiana, el tráfico de drogas auspiciado por todos, y la salvaje violencia en el México reciente. En 1995 la cinta cubana *Fresa y Chocolate* se convirtió en la única producción cubana nominada al Oscar en la historia, y esta puso de relieve la intolerancia cuando la sexualidad de una persona es diferente de la común. Así, entender el porque el reconocimiento que otorga un premio es importante se indica fácilmente.

Este año en nuestra competencia de cine documental hemos seleccionado siete películas, las cuales todas, nos hablan de una u otra forma de situaciones de individuos, de países e históricas, que nos marcan de una manera única. Y si el premio al mejor documental en nuestro festival lograr poner en la mesa de discusión la interminable guerra en Colombia, la memoria histórica chilena, los tristes casos en México de abuso a niños por parte de padres católicos o que significa ser libre en Cuba, estaremos más que satisfechos al haber cumplido una misión de las artes que es fundamental: decir lo que esta mal, protestar, pero haciéndolo con estética. Y en este caso, con la estética que el cine nos otorga.

Pero al final no importa que una cinta gane o pierda, el valor impreso en cada una de ellas, es una mirada única de reflexión a un tema, siempre, tan local como universal.

Entonces que así sea, que el cine nos haga reflexionar y ser mejores.

CHRISTIAN SIDA-VALENZUELA
VLAFF Festival Director



The Stories I Saw: VLAFF's 2011 Program

BY CHRISTIAN SIDA-VALENZUELA

Santiago de Chile, September 11, 1973. Mario walks through the hallways of the morgue where he has worked for over 10 years. Today is different; his work place is overloaded with corpses. Among them are faces he has seen and has known. One body piled on top of another. Man, woman, child, it does not matter. Some still breathe, but they will be shot. Just like that.

Bogotá, Colombia. Raúl Trellez works on the streets looking for what could be the master solution of all times for the street people of Colombia and possibly for Latin America (and maybe the whole world): To make the stoplight stay red for 20 more seconds. With those extra seconds, he affirms that the street people will achieve a better life. No one doubts him.

San Salvador, El Salvador. The marimbas are dying. No one wants to play them any more and that beautiful sound may not be heard again. Through the streets of San Salvador I saw a man pushing a marimba. I did not know where he was going; I followed him. I always wanted to know where a marimba is kept at night.

Favelas, Rio de Janeiro. Enough is enough. They have been discussed, they have been filmed, they have been written about, and they have been portrayed by actors. But this time they want to do it by themselves. They know better. For how long could they put up with others deciding instead of them what they think, what they like, what they believe, what they dream about? I believe in these stories, because I believe in this portrayal, the one and only made by themselves.

Guatemala. Don Tomás stares at his daughter; she stares at him. During the civil war in the 1980s she was taken away from him to another village. He wants to express all the feelings he went through during the 20 years he did not see her. She wants to do it as well. But they can only look at each other because they do not speak each other's language, two distinct first nations languages from Central America. She speaks Maya Q'eqchi' and he speaks Maya Quiché. Now they are together, and like them, a whole nation needs to learn the other's language.

Montevideo, Uruguay. Jorge is real, but he acts his own life. He does not really act, he tries, but we believe in his performance. He works at the Cinematheque, or rather, he lives there. One day he is forced to leave, and he decides to do something he never thought of before: To lie with dignity.

Coyoacán, Mexico City. Euthanasia is an act of love. Dhalia may decide so. Who can ultimately decide it? The family? The doctors? The lawmakers? God (whichever one you may like)? Do we have to decide? Is life not a dream while it lasts?

São Paulo, Brazil. Mano arrives at his house to have lunch. The food is not served; his parents are standing looking at each other. His 58-year-old father has just broken the news: He is in love with a man.

Chihuahua, Mexico, 1910. Pancho Villa, one of the greatest Mexican revolutionary heroes, is

the first man to invade the United States. In the US, no one is happy. A price has been put on Villa's head and he must be caught. The US army penetrates Mexico looking for Villa. He is not found. The desert has sided with him this time.

Buenos Aires, Argentina. I hate my sister. But I cannot live without her. She is so selfish, pretentious, a wannabe. She is exactly my opposite, but I need her. I am sure that she hates me too, but she needs me. I don't know who needs each other more. I don't know who hates each other more. But all we have left is to be with each other.

Havana, Cuba. Esteban is in town. It has been more than a decade since I last saw him. He left for Barcelona, like many others. This old house in Havana has remained the same: the same people, the same ideas, and the same revolution that does everything except be revolutionary within itself. Esteban is not surprised, but that does not help. He wishes the old house had changed; he wishes the ideas had changed. He thought that something different from this old house was possible, but everything remains the same. The same ideas, the same views, the same revolution. Does it matter if we are left with nothing, if what we have is not worthwhile?

Vancouver, Canada. Today I dreamt of many images, many places and many people I have not met. In my dream they are situated all in the south of the continent. That place of many colours, many languages and many sounds. 🌈

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Youth Jury 2011 Youth Choice Award for a Fiction Film

As part of the vision of our festival to reach beyond languages, cultures and nationalities to bring people together, this year we have created a special initiative to reach out to youth. We are proud to announce for the first time in the history of the festival, the Youth Choice Award for a Fiction Film. Eight narrative films, selected by our Programming Committee, will be in competition. The Youth Jury will watch and discuss all the films and choose the award winner, who will receive a cash prize of \$500.

The Youth Jury is made up of seven students aged 19-28 from a variety of backgrounds selected from post-secondary schools across Vancouver. Last March, we sent a call for applications to the media, communications and film studies departments of various colleges and universities. Students who were interested filled out an application. Our board and staff reviewed the applications and students were then invited to watch a Latin American film assigned to them and to write a 700-word essay about it. The final seven Youth Jury members were chosen by taking into consideration the quality of their essays, academic experience, and overall interest in learning about Latin American cinema.

For some of these students being part of the Youth Jury is an opportunity to work towards their goals of getting involved in the film industry; for others, it is a way to get closer to Latin American culture, its cinema or another

language. We are pleasantly surprised with the enthusiastic response of the students and the diversity of experiences they bring to this project.

The 2011 Youth Jury:



Maria Camila Arias, age 25, from Colombia. Graduated in 2011 from the Vancouver Film School. Maria was also a film student in Colombia and Cuba, where she gained wide experience in production, screenwriting and film theory.



Nicholas Aubichon, age 28, Métis Canadian. Student at Langara College interested in Latin American culture and politics. From a young age, Nicholas has enjoyed watching films. Being part of the Youth Jury is an important step for him towards his goal of becoming a journalist.



Saki Serizawa, born in Japan but raised in White Rock, B.C., is a student at Langara College. She is working hard towards her goal of getting into the GRS program at UBC. She hopes to continue her explorations of the world and to become fluent in Spanish and French.



Victor Borba, age 20, from Brazil. Student at Simon Fraser University in Communications. Since Victor arrived in Vancouver in 2009, he has been following the local arts and culture community.

He considers that being part of the Youth Jury will be an asset to his career.



Arianna Sanelli, age 21, Italian-Canadian. Student at Langara College in Linguistics. Arianna has a great interest in Latin American culture and the Spanish language. Since her trip to Mexico a year ago, she has got to know a part of this culture and was left with the desire to travel and get to know South America.



Kazue Toma, age 21, from Japan. Student at Douglas College. Kazue has been interested in Spanish language and culture for many years and has taken courses in relation to this. At college she started to watch films in Spanish from Latin America. She has observed that Latin American films usually convey meaningful messages and she would like to get to understand Latin American cinema better.



Naomi White, age 20, Jamaican, English and Irish background. Student of Video and Integrated Media at Emily Carr University of Art + Design. Naomi has developed critical thinking skills at school and she is a team worker. She is excited to bring her knowledge to the jury and at the same time to broaden her outlook.

We are proud to have these seven students on board and we welcome them to our team! 🌟

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Cine en Durango

Durango, Mexico—The Land of Cinema

This year as part of our Closing Night Film and Award Ceremony we will screen the Western adventure film *Chicogrande* by Felipe Cazals, a Mexican director and screenwriter with over 20 years of experience in the industry and over 40 titles to his credit.

Chicogrande, his latest work, is set in the early 1900s during the Mexican Revolution. It portrays the last U.S. expedition into Mexico to capture the legendary Pancho Villa, one of the leading revolutionary fighters of that era.

The film was shot in the state of Durango, Mexico, the birthplace of Francisco "Pancho" Villa (born Doroteo Arango in 1878 at the Hacienda del Río Grande). Located 900 kilometres northwest of Mexico City, the state of Durango is geographically speaking one of the largest of the 31 Mexican states. Its capital, also called Durango, is a colonial city known for its abundance of scorpions and as the base for an impressive roster of Hollywood productions.

Since the 1950s Durango has made its mark as a popular location to shoot Western films, and has since donned the nickname "The Land of Cinema." Some of the more famous productions include *Ben-Hur* (1959), Sergio Leone's *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966), John Wayne in *True Grit* (1969), *Star Wars* (1977), *Like Water for Chocolate* (1992) and most recently, the

Coen brothers remake of *True Grit* (2010).

Many renowned actors have passed through Durango, such as Marlon Brando, Clark Gable, Audrey Hepburn, Jack Nicholson, Salma Hayek, Paul Newman and John Wayne, not to mention the state's earliest claim to cinema history as the birthplace of Dolores del Río, one of the greatest stars of the Golden Era of Mexican Cinema.

Not far from the city of Durango are the towns of Villa del Oeste and Chupaderos. Both are set locations in the style of the Wild West featuring a long, dusty street lined with wooden sidewalks and a town bank, sheriff's office and jail, saloons with swinging doors, a brothel, and picturesque wooden houses.

Hollywood productions initially sought out Durango for the beauty and proximity of its varied landscapes, its impeccable weather that almost always delivers clear and sunny skies, and the lively plazas and colonial features of its historic town centres that suited so well the style of Western films. These attributes are evident



Scene from closing film *Chicogrande* directed by Felipe Cazals.

from the first movies ever filmed there, such as *La Vida de Villa* (1912), which also recounted the revolutionary struggles of Pancho Villa. The landscape has always possessed the ability to be transformed. In *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), the Sierra Madre and its snowy vistas became Russia and in *Star Wars* the vast deserts around the state became desolate, futuristic planets.

Although the heyday of moviemaking in Durango has waned along with the popularity of the Hollywood Western, Durango still very much embraces and courts film productions. 🌸

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DURANGO



Interview BY LINA ZÁRATE

Lina Zárate recently interviewed Sergio Gutierrez, the director of the Durango Film Commission, about the current state of cinema production in Durango.

Taking into consideration the history of cinema in Durango, what is the current state of cinema production as compared to the rest of Mexico?

Durango stands out 100% as a film production destination. In the entertainment world of Mexico, Durango is an icon because it understands cinema as an industry that generates jobs and economic growth. There are programs to support productions ensuring the filming process is successful. The government of Governor Jorge Herrera Caldera has reduced the amount of bureaucracy in order to enable national and international productions to have outstanding results. This distinguishes Durango from the rest of Mexico.

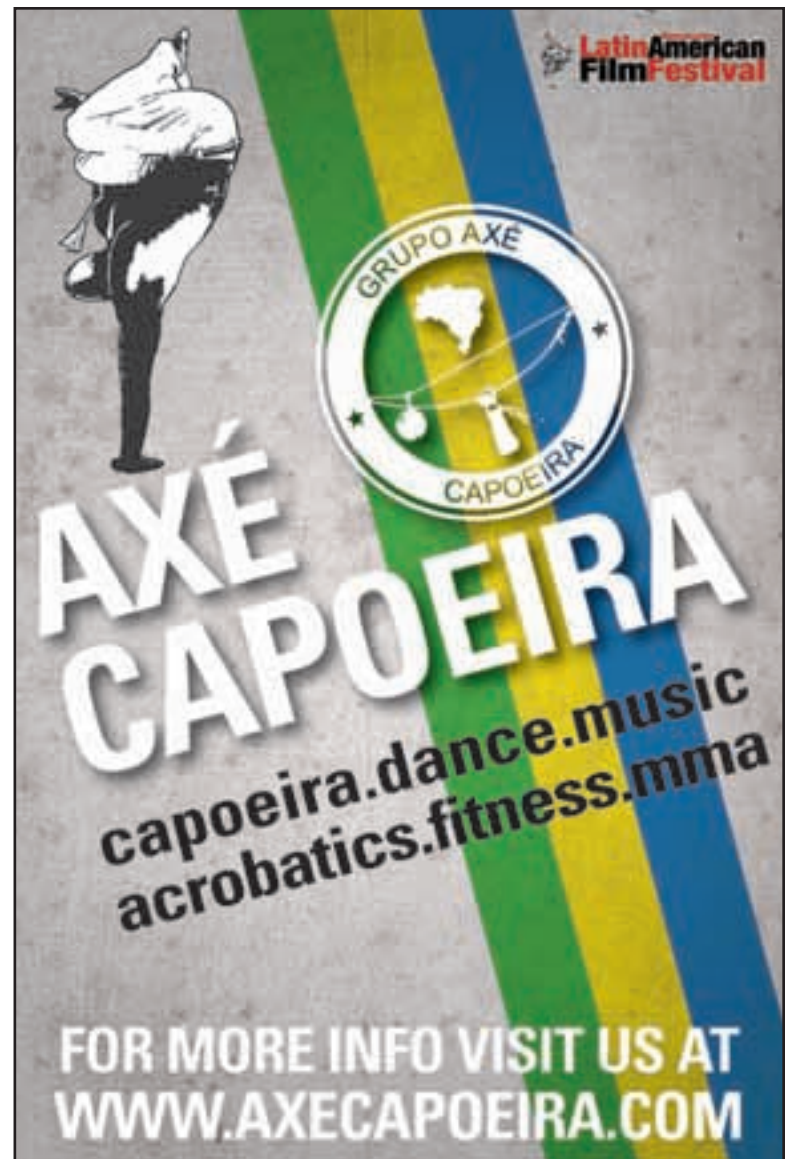
Why is Durango so popular for film productions?

Besides its five different microclimates, from deserts to prairies to mountain forests, Durango supports an office that specializes in dealing with and assisting film producers in researching locations and processing permits. We work hand-in-hand with them to make sure that each production meets its deadlines and we give support to filmmakers interested in shooting in Durango. We have trained staff to handle any kind of production and we provide a friendly atmosphere to work in.

Our closing film is *Chicogrande*, shot in Durango by Felipe Cazals. Taking this into consideration and the popularity of Durango for the cinema industry, what does the Western genre represent in the filmography of Durango?

The Western is and always will be the genre that launched Durango as "The Land of Cinema," a title that still persists today.

It was in the '50s that films first started to be shot in our city and state, and we are proud to say that over 300 projects have been shot to date. We have more than 55 years of film experience. Now we are building on that history. In the last six years we were able to attract 23 national and international narrative films, 10 in the last year alone, which corroborate that Durango still is "The Land of Cinema."



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Competition Shorts

BY MÓNICA HERRERA



Behind the scenes of Asepsia directed by Gustavo Vinagre (Brazil/Cuba)

Short films were the first form of cinema. And even though the movie industry has been widely diversified since its origin, short films continue to be an alternative for filmmakers to explore their craft and tell their stories while keeping total authorship of their projects.

They are also big enterprises. Making one

sometimes takes as much time and effort as making a feature, and it can be even more challenging to tell a well-structured story in less than fifteen minutes than to do it in ninety.

We think such efforts deserve recognition, and this year we decided to take part. VLAFF is launching its first competitive sections with the VLAFF Short Film Award along with the

Al Jazeera Documentary Award. Short films and documentaries are amongst the great pillars of film, and we are proud to be able to show and encourage the work of young Latin American filmmakers who have taken on the task of contributing to our cinema and propelling change.

This short film selection is based on quality. Many of the twelve competing films chosen from over 100 entries have already won awards around the world, and they certainly represent the best of this year's Latin American works.

It is also a selection based on diversity. There are works from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela, all filmed in the most different regions and circumstances and with the most different approaches to subjects that range from family relationships and childhood to violence and corruption.

The filmmakers do not know each other, but they have a lot in common; talent is just one element, great craft is another. But most important, they all manage to give their films great substance. These are pieces that deeply explore their characters and subject matters. Some of them turn political and criticize our current social ills; others touch on inner human conflicts. They all merit regard and I'm sure you'll enjoy watching them as much as I did.

We want you to be part of this first short big enterprise. So make yourselves comfortable in your seats, and enjoy! 🍿

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"Yuxtaposición" in Vancouver

BY LINA ZÁRATE



Painter José Luis Ramírez in his studio in Durango, Mexico.

Sombre images of strangled teddy bears, decapitated puppets and armed angels combined with dark, gloomy colours are a defining characteristic of the latest exhibition by the Mexican painter José Luis Ramírez. "Yuxtaposición" delivers what the name itself describes, a series that brings unlikely elements together and places them side by side, mixing rich colours, apocalyptic landscapes and iconic cartoon characters into an extraordinary and at times nightmarish proximity.

Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny and Pluto are some of the film and television characters that populate this series. Like other interconnected forms of art, painting has influenced cinema on different levels. In this case, it is the reverse.

The paintings in "Yuxtaposición" critique the commercialization of the image by taking cartoon celebrities (most of which were created in the United States and that during the height of their popularity have brought in significant revenue) and situating them in wastelands and abandoned universes where their worth is called into question.

In a recent phone interview, Ramírez discussed his motivation for the series. "I wanted to play with the concept of the toy as something innocent, and how at the same time, it can be seen as a symbol of commercialization and capitalism."

A sweet little schoolgirl clutches a Pinocchio doll with a long nose, a symbol of lies. Irony and sarcasm are prevalent throughout these works.

With over ten years experience as a painter, Ramírez has been striving to support himself with the revenue generated from sales of his work. According to him, it is hard to achieve this stability in countries like Mexico where the work of artists is not well paid and where it is often difficult to obtain support and sponsorship from the government. Yet for Ramírez, commercial success, because of its nature, cannot be a primary focus of his career. "I work with what surrounds me and stay true to myself in order to feel at peace, even before thinking about what work could sell."

Ramírez claims that his work is inspired by the reality of his daily life in Mexico to the point that he often uses friends and neighbours as characters. As for how this particular series evolved, he says, "I am a fan of the news. I am

always reading about social issues and current events and the idea for 'Yuxtaposición' first came from watching a clip about how Vancouver is a role model for other cities. I then looked around at my city (Durango) which appeared the opposite: overpopulated, with high rates of unemployment, poor quality of life and a

lack of education and culture."

Ramírez created this series of paintings specifically for this Vancouver exhibition. Inspired by the moving images of cinema, he looked to the heroes of children's cartoons to question: What is the value of what we have created? By juxtaposing apparently sweet and innocent images with a distressing and melancholic chaos inspired by his surroundings, Ramírez's exhibition holds an underlying commentary for "model" cities like Vancouver. His observations suggest that when everything is apparently meant to be nice and orderly, "All that glitters is not gold."

A world where everything is clean and perfect like that of cartoons or "model" cities is strange to him, far from his reality. He concludes, "If I were living in a city like Vancouver my paintings would probably consist of straight lines or light colours, not be as chaotic or dark as they are now." Or would they? ☹

The exhibition, "Yuxtaposición" will be part of the ninth edition of the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival.

Opening Reception: Ayden Gallery in the International Village (formerly Tinseltown)

Friday, September 9 from 7pm – 11pm

Free admission. Cash bar.

José Luis Ramírez will be in attendance.



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Indigenous Films: cornered, entrenched or something else?

BY RAÚL GATICA

I am an Indian, expert in nothing, but I like film and I want to share my thoughts – that's all.

When I was watching *The Mission*, a river overf owed on to the floor. *Avatar* fattened the imagination. *Even the Rain* stripped bare the hypocritical -few exceptions- movie business, actors, directors and producers. And *Apocalyto* planted in me perspectives beyond anthropological and romanticized stereotypes.

The indigenous concept that produced these films shows us half-naked with a loincloth and feathered costumes. We speak our language, sing, dance, we even fall in love, in spite of the tail or blue skin they've invented for us. Of course, we only get secondary roles - main protagonists, never.

Thanks to these and other movies, some people assure us of the existence of an indigenous tendency in film. It doesn't matter if these are full of dead Indians, whether John Wayne's guns shoot them or not. It doesn't matter if we appear dirty, smelly, toothless and like cannibals, competing in 'gorilismo' with King Kong. They talk about one or two Aboriginal names: a director, screenwriter, cameraman - more or less known. And without fail, they'll remind us of a movie in which a native becomes a main character – talking about colonization and suffering – and we "win" something, like *Geronimo* for example.

Is it enough that an Aymara or Papua wields the camera, or X or Z number of Indians act, to assure us of the existence of an audiovisual movement and a record of a fresh indigenous art? No. Definitely not. For example, the documentary, where we are doing our best work, maintains the ideas and standards promoted by archaeologists, sociologists and missionaries. Priority is given to the defense of folklore and cultural environment, community organizing, sustainability and the political. This facilitates the ethnographic vision, not the artistic, creative or technical. That limits our audience, becoming almost an academic and activist's ghetto. It is therefore, a tool of resistance, but no vehicle for presenting our vision of the world.

How is it that with at least 300 million native people and five thousand First Nations, we have not developed an indigenous cinema? From my perspective, it is because we are cornered and entrenched in the documentary. We get trained as actors, directors, writers and photographers and then promote our sacred sites, culture and knowledge like commodities. We show our dreams and struggles from an exotic, historical vision that Hollywood and non-Indians unload on us. Furthermore, we never resist the temptation to use visual arts to make politics, instead of free artistic creation for enjoyment, leisure and pleasure.

As Indians we are not the owners, nor simply the victims of the world. We are part of it, and our proposal will only arise if we dare to create communication not just from the inside for the inside, but also from and to all directions. Our contribution will come from our reconstitution as Nations, when we eradicate our defensiveness toward criticism and when we set our own artistic standards here and now. With the strength of our world view we can play with imagination and narrative, through comedy, science fiction, horror, musical, erotic and even wrestling.

We are still waiting to see what the contributions of the indigenous perspective in film will be, but we have an undeniable glimpse of our artistry in films such as *The Fast Runner*, *Once Were Warriors*, *Water*, *The Heart of the World* and others. In the photographs of Miguel Cruz Moreno and Eufemia Garcia, in the paintings and illustrations of Domitila Dominguez and Angel Leon, the design work of John Anzaldo, and also in the community-TV experiments in Oaxaca and Chiapas, in the festivals of Ecuador, Venezuela and Colombia, in Bolivian and Canadian animations we have a taste of our broader promise in visual arts.

I am optimistic these hints will come of age, becoming a real movement. The cinema will not be another place to cry 'we lost, but at least we made the best songs'. It will be a place of action to democratize and demystify the commercial media, where we reverse the roles of power with the pleasure of the arts. I will be alive to enjoy it.

¿Arrinconados, atrincherados o algo más?

Soy indígena experto en nada, pero gusto del cine y compartir lo que me provoca, es todo.

Cuando vi *La Misión*, un río se desbarrancó al piso. *Avatar*, engordó la imaginación. Aun la lluvia, desnudó al hipocrita -salvo excepciones- negocio del cine, actores, directores y productores. Y *Apocalyto* sembró perspectivas lejos de los estereotipos antropológicos y romantizados.

La concepción indigenista produjo esas películas. Nos muestran semidesnudos, con taparrabo y trajes de plumas. Hablamos nuestra lengua, cantamos, bailamos y hasta nos enamoramos, pese a la cola y piel azul que nos inventaron. Claro, cuando mucho nos dejan el rol de protagonistas colaterales, principales, jamás.

Gracias a esas y otras cintas, algunos pregonan la existencia de un cine autóctono. Que importa si los extras aborígenes mueren, hasta cuando las pistolas de John Wayne no disparan. O que sucios, apestosos, desdentados y caníbales competimos en gorilismo con King Kong. Y mencionan el nombre de algún director, guionista o camarógrafo aborígen, al menos conocido. Sin faltar la película de un nativo como personaje principal y

temática sobre colonización y sufrimiento, donde hasta 'ganamos' algo: Jerónimo, por ejemplo.

¿Basta que un Aimara o Papúa empuñe la cámara o que X o Z cantidad de indios actúen, para decretar la vida de una corriente audiovisual y un registro artístico fresco? No. Definitivamente no. Veamos el documental, donde mejor hemos incursionado. Mantiene ideas y estándares promovidos por arqueólogos, sociólogos y misioneros. Se prioriza la defensa del entorno cultural y folklórico, la organización comunitaria, sustentabilidad y denuncia. Eso facilita lo etnográfico no lo artístico, creativo o técnico. De ahí su limitada audiencia y ser casi gueto de académicos y activistas. Es instrumento de resistencia pero no vehículo para exponer plenamente nuestra visión del mundo.

¿Cómo habiendo al menos 300 millones de nativos y cinco mil naciones originarias, no hemos desarrollado un cine nativo? A mi entender, porque nos arrinconamos y atrincheramos en el documental. Nos capacitamos

como actores, directores, guionistas y camarógrafos cuyo trabajo promueve los sitios sagrados, cultura y saberes como mercancía. Muestra sueños y luchas desde la visión exótica y del pasado que Hollywood y los no indígenas nos endilgaron. Además, no vencimos la tentación de usar el arte visual únicamente para hacer política, en lugar de ejercicio de libre creación artística para el disfrute, esparcimiento y placer.

Los descendientes de los pueblos originarios no somos dueños del mundo ni víctimas de él. Somos parte de él y nuestra propuesta surgirá, si nos atrevemos a crear comunicación no sólo desde dentro y para adentro, sino desde y para todas las direcciones. El aporte resultará de nuestra reconstitución como pueblos, de extirpar la defensiva actitud al abordar nuestro mundo sin criticarlo y del creer en nuestros estándares artísticos aquí y ahora. Con la fuerza de nuestra cosmovisión, viviremos al jugar con la imaginación y contar historias vía la comedia, ciencia ficción, terror, musicales, erótico y hasta la lucha libre.

Cierto que todavía falta saber cuáles serán los aportes de la perspectiva indígena en el cine, pero tenemos innegable señas de su arte en películas como *El corredor*, *Algunas vez fuimos guerreros*, *Agua*, *El corazón del mundo* y otras. Y en la fotografía de Miguel Cruz Moreno y Eufemia García. En las pinturas e ilustraciones de Domitila Domínguez, Ángel León y el diseño gráfico de Juan Anzaldo. En los experimentos de TV-comunitaria en Oaxaca y Chiapas, así como en los festivales de Ecuador, Venezuela, Colombia y los comic Bolivianos y Canadienses tenemos una probadita de lo que promete ser nuestra arte.

Soy optimista que estos barruntos serán movimiento con mayoría de edad. El cine no será más, lugar para llorar: 'perdimos pero hicimos las mejores canciones', sino ejercicio para democratizar y desmitificar los medios comerciales, donde revirtamos los roles del poder con el placer del arte. Viviré para disfrutarlo. 🍷



Still from VLAFF's short film series, *Young Women in Film*: Peru.



How do we select a film?

BY CHRISTIAN SIDA-VALENZUELA

Each year there is one question that the festival programmers confront more than any other: How is a film selected? The best way for me to answer this question is to take you directly inside the process of what is behind the festival programming.

STEP 1: Festivals

Festivals, festivals and more festivals. We are constantly looking at other national and international film festivals to see what new Latin American films are being programmed and who the emerging directors are, always with an eye as to which of these films might appeal to our local audience. We do extensive research to ensure we keep up-to-date with all the new films coming out in the past year.

However, research has its limitations and attending festivals is probably the best way to select a film. At festivals, we have the opportunity to talk with other programmers, meet filmmakers and most important, watch films on the big screen with a live audience. In this way we can get the feeling of how a film is received. VLAFF's programmers normally visit at least two of the most important Latin American film festivals each year: the International Festival of New Latin American Cinema in Havana, Cuba and the Guadalajara International Film Festival in Mexico. The first one takes place in December and the second in March, being great timing for us to watch films and start planning for our festival in September.

STEP 2: Call for Submissions

Each year we publicize a Call for Submissions for fiction and documentary films, both feature-length and short. All the films we receive are given to the members of our Screening Committee to review and discuss. 95% of the short films that we program come from submissions from independent filmmakers.

STEP 3: Distributors

Not all feature films, but most of them, are sold to distribution companies around the world. An interesting phenomenon is that many Latin American films are sold to European distribution companies. How we secure the rights to screen a film would deserve a whole chapter, but in short, negotiations proceed in terms of rental fees, formats available and where the distributors want to show their films (sometimes they have a preference that a film premieres in a specific festival and therefore do not allow it to screen elsewhere beforehand, etc). Every film has its own story of how it is obtained from a company because all the companies work in a different way. Certainly for us, the easiest way to secure a film is directly from the director, though only 10% of the films we screen are available this way.

STEP 4: Films

We look for films that have a balance in terms of quality, production, cinematography, script, etc. (For example, a low-budget film may be chosen if the acting and script are extraordinary, even if the camera quality is not as high as a professional



Scene from the opening film from Argentina, *El hombre de al lado* (The Man Next Door) by Mariano Cohn and Gastón Duprat.

production.) We aim to program a range of styles and subjects, paying close attention to those films that may be of interest to our multifaceted audience. We don't necessarily program the films we individually like, but those we think will best enrich the cultural landscape of Vancouver and that demonstrate the accomplishments of a variety of highly talented filmmakers from within Latin America and the Latin American diaspora.

The final consideration is the way in which a particular film fits into the different sections of the festival: Documentary Competition, Canada Looks South, specific programs, etc. We need to weigh all of these factors before selecting a film in order to create the best program possible. It may seem simple, but every film we screen at VLAFF has been selected from hundreds that we have seen. It's all about bringing the best Latin American cinema to Vancouver. 🍷

VLAFF celebrates Vancouver's 125th Anniversary

VLAFF is proud to be part of the activities for the 125th Anniversary of our City.

We will host an evening of screenings of short films made by Latin American directors based in Vancouver.

We have also compiled a brochure that portrays the history of Latin Americans in Vancouver and the influence they have had in the shaping of the city.



View of the SOLEfood farm on Hastings St., from the documentary *Seeds of the Inner City* (Preview) by Andrés Salas. Photo by Andrés Salas

Join us at the Vancity Theatre on Sunday September 4 at 7 PM.

You will have a chance to talk to the filmmakers and share their experiences as Latin American artists based in Vancouver.

After the films, we will enjoy a night of Latin music by *La Trova Nuestra*.

The line up for these screenings:

KID COLOURS. Director: Ruben Castelblanco

BREAKING GROUND. Director: Olesia Shewchuk

NOMADIC BRUSHSTROKES. Director: Roxana Slujitoru

HAPPINESS. Director: Sandra Vigil Fonseca

SEEDS OF THE INNER CITY (PREVIEW). Director: Andrés Salas

Al Jazeera Documentary Award

For the first time in nine years VLAFF will have a documentary competition sponsored by the Al Jazeera Documentary Channel. There will be seven documentary films in competition and the winner will be awarded \$3,500.

We had the opportunity to interview the Al Jazeera Documentary Channel supervisor in Doha, Qatar, Mohammed Zantout.

Many people may wonder, where the interest in Latin American documentary filmmaking originates, from a channel so far from our geography?

We are interested in many cultures and we consider our channel one that tries to connect and reflect the richness, diversity and similarities between the different documentary filmmaking industries worldwide with particular emphasis on

Scene from one of the competing documentaries, Impunity, directed by Juan José Lozano and Hollman Morris.



the Middle East. So even though geographically the channel is far away from Latin America, Al Jazeera Documentary Channel likes to present to its viewers stories that reflect the differences and similarities of human stories even though they are in different parts of the world.

What is the current state of documentary filmmaking in the Arab world?

The state of documentary filmmaking in the Arab world is in its infancy, and one of our objectives is to support and encourage the documentary filmmaking industry throughout the Middle East and try to be the first point of call for any filmmaker who wants to learn or understand about documentary films.

What is the level of interest, if any, in Latin American cinema in the Arab world? Is it well known?

There is a raised level of interest in Latin American cinema and Al Jazeera Documentary is trying to broadcast more Latin American, African and Asian documentaries to try and raise our viewers' awareness of these wonderful and diverse regions. And one of the things we try to achieve is to break the stereotypical ideas that exist by showing a multitude of films that can achieve this.

The Al Jazeera Documentary Channel with Al Jazeera Satellite channel in Arabic and Al Jazeera English among many others, are part of the Al Jazeera Network. 🌐

Al Jazeera Network FACTS

- Al Jazeera Documentary Channel was launched in 2007 becoming the first all-documentary 24-hour broadcast Arabic channel in the Middle East.
- Although the channel says its media coverage will focus on the cases of Arabs and the less fortunate societies, it will not confront Arab governments.
- Al Jazeera is the most watched news channel on YouTube receiving 2.5 million views a month.
- Launched on April 16, 2007, the Al Jazeera English YouTube site has more than 10,000 videos currently live.
- Al Jazeera Network has more than 3,000 staff members across the world, including more than 400 journalists from more than 60 countries.

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DONATE: SUPPORT VLAFF 9

Have you ever wondered what it takes to establish an arts festival in Vancouver?

Creative people, vibrant ideas, a huge commitment of time, dedicated volunteers and, sadly, money.

You hold the key to our continued success. With significant cuts to provincial arts funding already being felt, we need your support more than ever to continue making Latin American cinema accessible to Lower Mainland audiences.

We are now a registered charity, so your contributions are tax-deductible.

There are three easy ways to DONATE:

- 1. ONLINE:** www.vlaf.org/en/donate (VISA/MasterCard American Express)
- 2. BY MAIL:** (Please make cheque payable to: Vancouver Latin American Film Festival) Vancouver Latin American Film Festival Society, 420- 111 Hastings St. West, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1H4
- 3. IN PERSON:** Talk to one of our membership volunteers at the festival to help you fill out a donation pledge form.

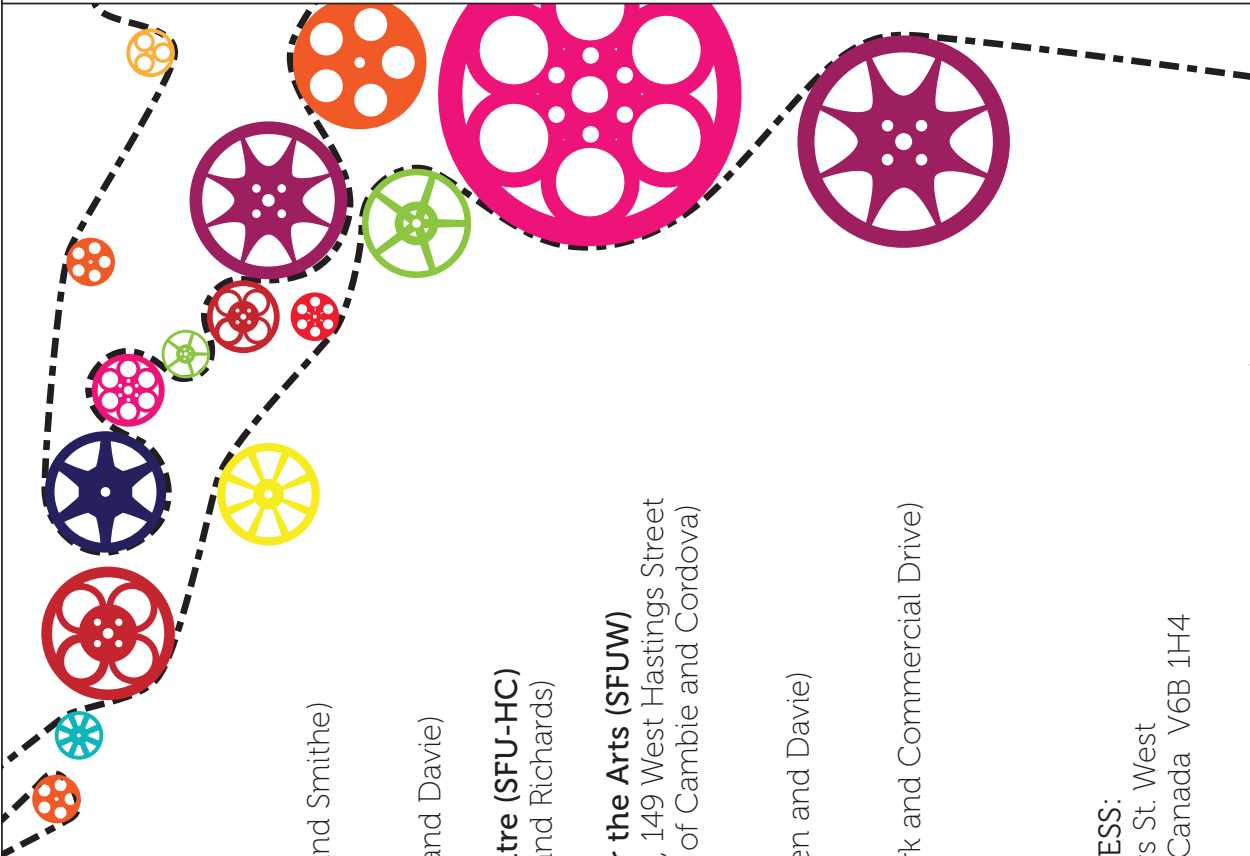
*Registered Charity #888586104 RR0001. Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20 or more. **Personal Information that you provide will only be used to send information on donation benefits as well as a copy of our monthly e-newsletter.

On behalf of the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival, its board of directors, and its committed volunteers, we would like to say **THANK YOU!** for supporting the exhibition and promotion of Latin American cinema in Vancouver.

Did You Know?

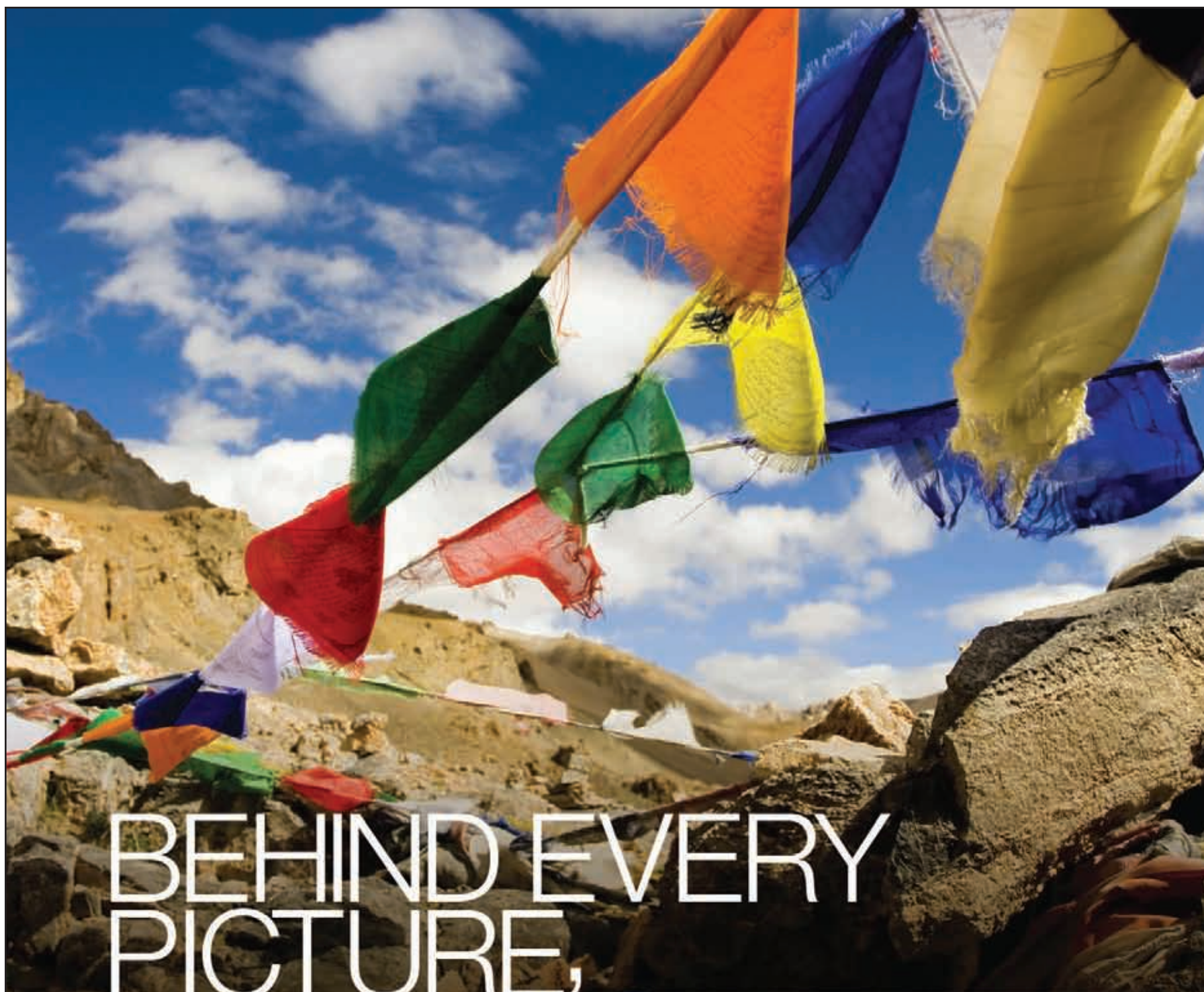
- THE FIRST FILM shown at VLAFF was *Señorita Extraviada* by Lourdes Portillo from Mexico in 2003.
- IN 2003 VLAFF only presented 3 feature-length films, and in 2011 VLAFF is presenting 27.
- THE PERSON that sold you the membership is one of our 70 volunteers!
- VLAFF HAS YEAR-ROUND EVENTS, such as retrospectives and monthly presentations.
- 2009 WAS THE FIRST time VLAFF selected a film from Paraguay, *La Tierra Sin Mal*, by Anna Recalde.
- OUR OPENING FILM this year, *El Hombre de al lado*, won the Best Cinematography Award in the World Dramatic Competition at Sundance 2010.
- JULIO HERNÁNDEZ CORDÓN, the director of the Guatemalan film presented this year at VLAFF, *Las Marimbas del infierno*, received 30,000 euros for his next work, *Polvo*, from the World Cinema Fund of the Berlin Festival.

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY							
<div>VENUES</div> <div><div>Ayden Gallery (AG) International Village, 2nd Floor 88 West Pender St. (at Abbott)</div><div>Granville 7 Cinemas (GR 7) 855 Granville Street (between Robson and Smithe)</div><div>Pacific Cinémathèque (PC) 1131 Howe Street (between Helmcken and Davie)</div><div>SFU Downtown Campus Harbour Centre (SFU-HC) 515 West Hastings (between Seymour and Richards)</div><div>SFU Woodward's/ Goldcorp Centre for the Arts (SFUW) Djavad Mowafaghian Cinema, 3rd Floor, 149 West Hastings Street (enter from the courtyard at the corner of Cambie and Cordova)</div><div>Vancity Theatre (VCT) 1181 Seymour Street (between Helmcken and Davie)</div><div>The Waldorf Hotel (WALD) 1489 East Hastings Street (between Clark and Commercial Drive)</div></div> <div>FESTIVAL INFO</div> <div><div>604.708. 5657 www.vlaff.org info@vlaff.org</div><div>MAILING ADDRESS: 420-111 Hastings St. West Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 1H4</div></div>				<div>1</div> <div>OPENING NIGHT GALA</div> <div>7PM - GR7 El hombre de al lado (The Man Next Door)</div> <div>Followed by Opening Night Party at the Waldorf Hotel</div>	<div>2</div> <div>3 PM - SFU-HC Verano de Goliat (Summer of Goliath)</div> <div>3 PM - PC O samba que mora em mim (The Samba Within Me)</div> <div>4.45 PM - SFU-HC Detrás del milagro (Beyond the Miracle)</div> <div>5PM - PC Dos hermanos (Brother and Sister)</div> <div>6.15 PM - SFU-HC A f or de piel (To Flower from Skin)</div> <div>7.15 PM - PC Besouro</div> <div>9.15 PM - PC La sociedad del semáforo (The Stoplight Society)</div>	<div>3</div> <div>1 PM - PC Gatos Viejos (Old Cats)</div> <div>3 PM - PC Las marimbas del infierno (Marimbas from Hell)</div> <div>3:30 PM - SFU-HC Indigenous Film From BC & Beyond</div> <div>5 PM - PC Impunity</div> <div>6.30 PM - SFU-HC El cielo abierto (The Open Sky)</div> <div>7 PM - SFUW Post Mortem</div> <div>7 PM - PC Operación Diablo (The Devil Operation)</div> <div>9 PM - PC El infierno (Hell)</div>	<div>4</div> <div>1 PM - PC La vida útil (A Useful Life)</div>	<div>5</div>	<div>6</div>	<div>7</div>	<div>8</div>	<div>9</div> <div>3 PM - SFU-HC Young Women in Film: Peru</div> <div>3 PM - PC Verano de Goliat (Summer of Goliath)</div> <div>4.30 PM - SFU-HC Agnus Dei: Cordero de Dios (Agnus Dei)</div>	<div>10</div> <div>1 PM - PC</div>

<p>3 PM - PC Detrás del milagro (<i>Beyond the Miracle</i>)</p> <p>5 PM - PC Hermano (<i>Brother</i>)</p> <p>7 PM - SFUW Abel</p> <p>7 PM - VCT ¡Fiesta 125! A Celebration of Latin American Culture in Vancouver</p>	<p>1 PM - PC Operación Diablo (<i>The Devil Operation</i>)</p> <p>3 PM - PC El edificio de los chilenos (<i>The Chilean Building</i>)</p> <p>4.45 PM - PC Besouro</p> <p>7 PM - PC Casa Vieja (<i>Old House</i>)</p> <p>9.15 PM - PC El hombre de al lado (<i>The Man Next Door</i>)</p>	<p>5 PM - PC Agnus Dei: Cordero de Dios (<i>Agnus Dei: Lamb of God</i>)</p> <p>7 PM - SFUW 5xFavela: Agora por nós mesmos (<i>5xFavela: Now by Ourselves</i>)</p> <p>7.15 PM - PC Las marimbas del infierno (<i>Marimbas from Hell</i>)</p> <p>9.15 PM - PC La sociedad del semáforo (<i>The Stoplight Society</i>)</p>	<p>5 PM - PC Soy libre</p> <p>BRAZILIAN GALA</p> <p>7 PM - PC As melhores coisas do mundo (<i>The Best Things in the World</i>)</p> <p>7.15 PM - PC Gatos Viejos (<i>Old Cats</i>)</p> <p>9.15 PM - PC Dos hermanos (<i>Brother and Sister</i>)</p>	<p>5 PM - PC O samba que mora em mim (<i>The Samba Within Me</i>)</p> <p>7 PM - PC La vida útil (<i>A Useful Life</i>)</p> <p>9 PM - PC El infierno (<i>Hell</i>)</p>	<p>4.45 PM - PC Las buenas hierbas (<i>The Good Herbs</i>)</p> <p>6.30 PM - SFU-HC Casa Vieja (<i>Old House</i>)</p> <p>7 PM - SFUW Hermano (<i>Brother</i>)</p> <p>7 PM - PC 5xFavela: Agora por nós mesmos (<i>5xFavela: Now by Ourselves</i>)</p> <p>7 PM - AG Yuxtaposición (<i>José Luís Ramirez Art Exposition</i>)</p> <p>9.30 - PC Abel</p>	<p>3.15 PM - PC As melhores coisas do mundo (<i>The Best Things in the World</i>)</p> <p>5.15 PM - PC El edificio de los chilenos (<i>The Chilean Building</i>)</p>	<p>TAMPA También la lluvia (<i>Even the Rain</i>)</p> <p>3.15 PM - PC As melhores coisas do mundo (<i>The Best Things in the World</i>)</p> <p>5.15 PM - PC El edificio de los chilenos (<i>The Chilean Building</i>)</p>
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<p>1 PM - PC El cielo abierto (<i>The Open Sky</i>)</p> <p>3.30 PM - PC Impunity</p> <p>MEXICAN GALA</p> <p>5 PM - GR7 Las buenas hierbas (<i>The Good Herbs</i>)</p> <p>5:15 PM - PC Post Mortem</p> <p>7.30 PM - PC Audience Favourite</p> <p>9.15 PM - PC Audience Favourite</p>	<p>11</p> <p>TICKET OUTLET</p> <p>Pacific Cinémathèque 1131 Howe Street (between Helmcken and Davie) CASH ONLY</p> <p>August 22-September 1 Monday - Friday, 12 noon-4pm</p> <p>September 2-11 Daily from 4pm-9pm</p> <p>Online ticket sales start: Thursday, August 18 www.vlaff.org</p> 	 	<p>TICKET INFO</p> <p>Single Tickets • \$10</p> <p>Opening Night Film • \$15 (Includes membership)</p> <p>Opening Night Film & Party • \$20</p> <p>¡Fiesta 125! • \$10</p> <p>Brazilian Gala Film & Reception • \$15</p> <p>Mexican Gala Film & Reception • \$15</p> <p>Closing Night Film • \$10</p> <p>VLAFF Festival Pass • \$120 CASH ONLY. Available at the VLAFF Ticket Outlet at Pacific Cinémathèque only.</p> <p>2011 VLAFF Membership • \$2</p>
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DOCUMENTARY



VLAFF Volunteers

BY LINA ZÁRATE

Behind the scenes of the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival there is a big family made up of volunteers who play a vital role in making every event and screening run. In fact, VLAFF only came into existence because of the dedication of the founding members who donated countless hours to organize the first festival in 2003. Since then, the contributions of many volunteers have been the pillars of the organization, enabling VLAFF to grow into an 11-day festival with over 60 screenings representing at least 13 different countries.

Throughout the years, we have seen more and more volunteers involved in helping VLAFF to thrive. In 2008, approximately 50 volunteers worked with VLAFF while in 2011, over 80 volunteers have already committed to the festival.

The volunteer program provides a way for people to get involved at a different level and deepen their connection with Latin American culture and cinema. Surprisingly a large majority of the volunteers are English-speaking Canadians. The second largest group is of Latin American origin (both Spanish and Portuguese speaking), and smaller percentages are Canadians of Asian and other backgrounds. We even have some volunteers who are visiting from other countries and are just seeking a way to get to know people during their stay in Canada.

Midori Kawahara is one of the volunteers from Japan, and this is her first year volunteering with the festival. She has been studying Spanish for many years and enjoys Latin American culture. After attending a screening last year, Midori was inspired to get more involved.

"I'd like to have Spanish language exposure while I am volunteering. So far I only volunteered at one special screening event, but it was fun. I'm looking forward to September!"



A group of volunteers from VLAFF 2010

People from all ages are involved with VLAFF. This year, the majority of volunteers are in their 20s and 30s, and approximately 30% in their 40s to 60s.

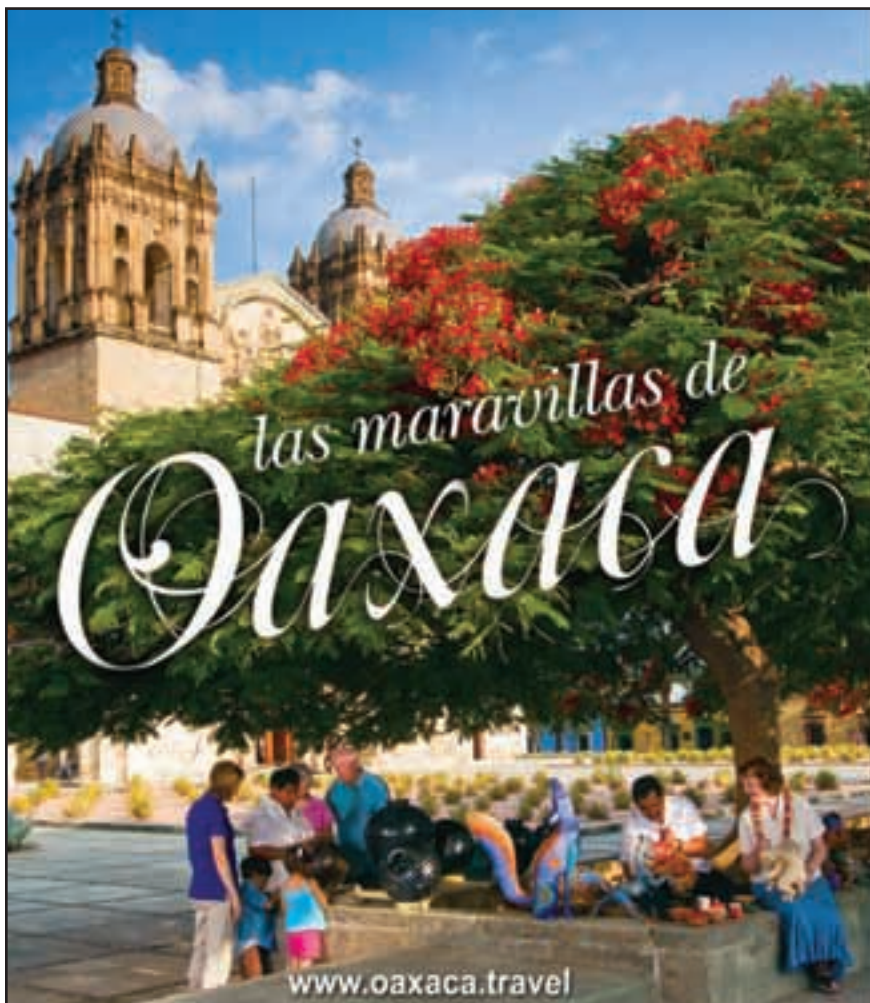
There are different levels of involvement in

the volunteer program: some people like to help out at theatres taking care of the box office, membership sales or ticket-taking, whereas others volunteer in the office in the planning stages of the festival like Kristy Perkins who helped with the design of this newspaper and Mónica Herrera who was our Programming Coordinator.

Sergio Muñoz, from Mexico, has been working with VLAFF for over four years. He volunteers before and during the festival doing all kinds of different tasks. Before the festival starts, he often delivers posters and flyers to coffee shops, restaurants and bookstores. He has jumped in many times to help with receptions and special events when we have been short of hands. Because he has been involved with the festival since 2007, he has noticed the growth in both the numbers of volunteers and attendees.

"It motivates me to keep volunteering for the festival because I get to support a cultural cause that is fun and where lots of different cultures get together. I have also made good friends thanks to the festival, which is gold."

No matter their level of involvement, our volunteers are essential to making VLAFF successful. We simply couldn't do it without them! ☺



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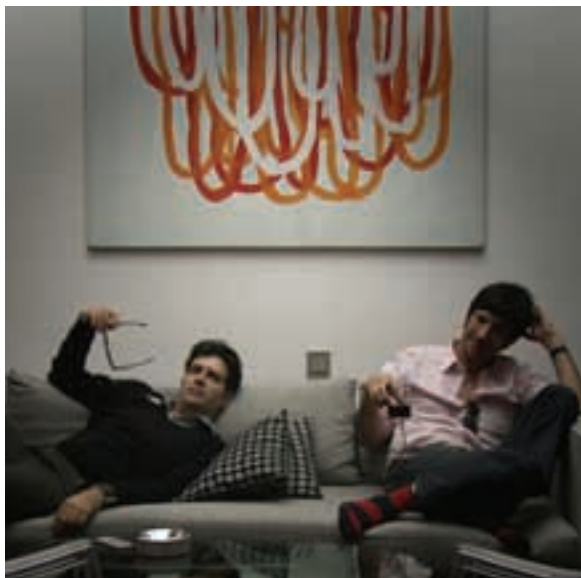
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Synopses

OPENING FILM (Argentina)



THE MAN NEXT DOOR / EL HOMBRE DE AL LADO

GASTÓN DUPRAT, MARIANO COHN

Leonardo, a successful industrial designer, lives with his family in an architectural wonder, a Mid-Century modern Le Corbusier house in Buenos Aires. One morning, he wakes to an irksome noise and is appalled to discover that workmen next door are constructing a large window that faces directly into his home. Victor, the neighbour, is an odd and extroverted character whose attitude is very friendly, yet threatening at the same time. He provokes in Leonardo both a strong dislike and an uncomfortable submissiveness to his will. This minor incident starts to take over Leonardo's time, taking him away from his work and family and calling into question all his bourgeois illusions of power.

CLOSING FILM (Mexico)



CHICOGRANDE

FELIPE CAZALS

In 1916, following the failed invasion of the town of Columbus (New Mexico), Pancho Villa retreats, only to be injured in the leg by Carranza's troops in the city of Guerrero. The U.S. Cavalry, on Mexican territory, launch a massive campaign to capture him dead or alive. Needing to convalesce, Villa takes refuge deep in the mountains. Chicogrande, an ardent follower, is given the task of finding medical assistance and is prepared to give up his own life in the attempt to save Pancho Villa.

ARGENTINA

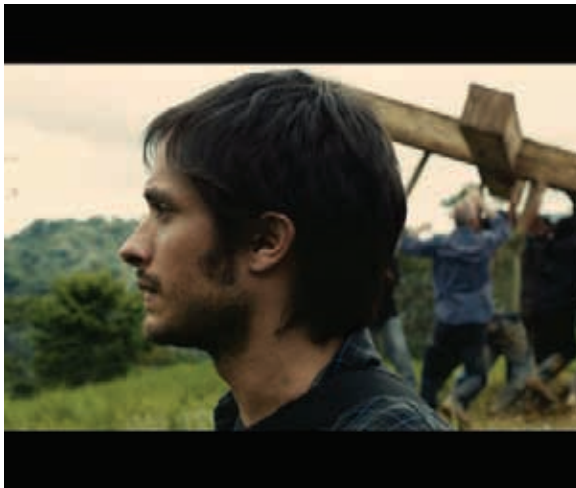


BROTHER AND SISTER / DOS HERMANOS

DANIEL BURMAN

After sixty years living within a maternal grip that is overbearingly protective and suffocating, Marcos, an educated and delicate goldsmith, believes he may finally have found freedom upon the death of his mother. However, at 64 years old, he still finds himself dogged by unresolved family matters. His flamboyant sister, Susana, a dubious real estate negotiator and unscrupulous social climber, decides she is the one now to decide what's best for him. His search to fulfill pent-up dreams clashes against a reality from which he cannot escape for as much as he despises his sister, he needs her. In this dark comedy, two siblings vie to settle the score between the one who cares and the one who controls.

BOLIVIA/ SPAIN



EVEN THE RAIN / TAMBIÉN LA LLUVIA

ICÍAR BOLAÍN

Sebastián and Costa arrive in Cochabamba, Bolivia, to make a period film about Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas. They are on the tightest of budgets, but the shoot gets off to a smooth start. Not long after though, things get complicated when their extras and leading actor, all locals of Cochabamba, rise up against the privatization of their drinking water. The filmmakers' battle to get their film made intertwines unexpectedly with the fight of their Bolivian crew, who are being deprived of their most basic rights, prohibited from collecting even the rain.

BRAZIL



BESOIRO

JOÃO DANIEL TIKHOMIROFF

In 1920s Brazil, former black slaves still suffer under the heel of oppressive white plantation owners who forbid them from engaging in their cultural practices, such as the traditional martial art of capoeira. When the leader of the resistance movement is assassinated, his protégé Besouro must take up his mantle. Using his mastery of capoeira and the supernatural abilities given to him by ancient West African deities, Besouro becomes an untouchable mystic, freedom fighter and symbol of revolt. Based on the life of legendary capoeira master, Besouro Manganga.



5XFAVELA: NOW BY OURSELVES 5XFAVELA: AGORA POR NÓS MESMOS

CACAU AMARAL, CADU BARCELLOS, LUCIANA BEZERRA, MANAIRA CARNEIRO, RODRIGO FELHA, WAGNER NOVAIS, LUCIANO VIDIGAL

In 1961, five middle-class filmmakers who belonged to the student movement collaborated to make a film called *Five Times Favela*. After four decades, the idea has been revisited although this time the cameras have been taken up by the residents themselves of favelas in Rio de Janeiro. *5xFavela: Agora por nós mesmos* is entirely written, directed and produced by young filmmakers mentored in professional workshops administered by big names in Brazilian cinema like Daniel Filho, Walter Salles, Fernando Meirelles and others. Composed of five different stories that achieve the feat of dialogue among each other, these films show the realities of honest families who are in need, whose lives can't help but intersect with the complex life of the favela and the wider world outside.



THE BEST THINGS IN THE WORLD / AS MELHORES COISAS DO MUNDO

LAÍS BODANZKY

Mano is a 15-year-old boy experiencing the tumultuous transition from childhood to adulthood within the bustling metropolis of São Paulo, Brazil. He has to cope with his parents' divorce and the discovery that his father is gay, his rebellious brother, conflicts with his peers, the discovery of his own sexuality, and the joys and pains of first love. *The Best Things in the World* approaches the experiences of modern, urban teenagers with honesty and humour.



Synopses



THE SAMBA WITHIN ME / O SAMBA QUE MORA EM MIM

GEÓRGIA GUERRA-PEIXE

Set in the Mangueira Hill favela in Rio de Janeiro during the pre-carnival period, this visually stunning documentary begins in the Estação Primeira de Mangueira samba hall, the place where director Geórgia Guerra-Peixe rediscovers her own family history in relation to the tradition of carnival. From the dance hall, she weaves her way up the Hill of Mangueira through the narrow streets and into peoples' homes, driven by her desire to go beyond the samba to get to know the residents and history of her neighbourhood. Her camera's viewpoint acquires melancholic variations and different rhythmic cadences, resulting in a composition that could be called the *samba of a glance*. Beyond the hall lies the samba of Geórgia Guerra-Peixe, a samba that is a way of being, of living and also, a way of singing and dancing.

Competing for the Al Jazeera Documentary Award

CANADA



SUMMER OF GOLIATH / VERANO DE GOLIAT

NICOLÁS PEREDA

Shocked by her husband's sudden departure, Teresa embarks on a mission to find out what happened. Instead of finding answers, her mission becomes a journey through the streets and homes of the people she encounters. Blending fiction and documentary, *Verano de Goliat* depicts her wanderings against the backdrop of the town and its inhabitants. Constructed through characters and the village's corporeal landscape, the film drifts with Teresa through spaces and people suffering the effects of lost loved ones, broken promises, disconnection and eternal longing.



BEYOND THE MIRACLE / DETRÁS DEL MILAGRO

ORLANDO ARRIAGADA

The figures are amazing and so are the men. When they finally got out of the hellish mine, Los 33, as they are known, became popular heroes. They are assailed by the media, recognized in the street, always in demand. But beyond their miraculous rescue, who are these men that everyone is fighting over? The film has attempted to penetrate the mystery by talking to four of them, gaining privileged insight into their reality and new lives, which began in the heat of the spotlight.



TO FLOWER FROM SKIN, A BOUQUET FROM COLOMBIA / A FLOR DE PIEL, UN RAMO DE COLOMBIA

SARAH & SIMON CHARLAND-FAUCHE

Behind its grim statistics, Colombia has one of the largest biodiversity of flowers in the world, and a population equally as diverse—50,000 species of little-known flowers, just like the stories of its districts and the work of its people, their resistance, their dreams. Workers in factory greenhouses, vendors in the streets and cemeteries, social workers, unionists, peasants, ex-guerillas, artists and children of the street, all open their hearts in this documentary that explores the darker side of the flower industry in Colombia and the daily struggles of its inhabitants to make a living in an industry that tends to disguise its exploitation and fickleness. It draws up in front of our eyes, a bouquet of testimonies from which real life blooms.

CHILE



POST MORTEM

PABLO LARRAÍN

Where were you on September 11th, 1973?

55-year-old Mario works in a morgue typing out autopsy reports. In the midst of the 1973 Chilean coup d'état, he daydreams about his neighbour Nancy, a cabaret dancer, who disappears mysteriously on September 11th. Following a violent search by the army of her family's house, Mario learns that they have arrested her brother and father, a staunch Communist and supporter of Salvador Allende. Beside himself with worry over the disappearance of his would-be lover, Mario begins a frantic search for Nancy that takes him into the very core of his country's violence.



OLD CATS / GATOS VIEJOS

SEBASTIÁN SILVA, PEDRO PEIRANO

Isadora and Enrique live a comfortable life. They have a modest yet elegant apartment in Santiago's old downtown district - complete with a lovely terrace and mountain views. Well into their eighties, they both maintain their independence and live happily with their books, their eclectic art and, most of all, with their two beloved and rotund cats. Isadora's passionate "wild child" daughter, Rosario, and her butch female lover, Hugo, come for a visit with a new "scheme" of how to make them all rich. From the creators of *La nana*, this is another great film about family.



Synopses



THE CHILEAN BUILDING / EL EDIFICIO DE LOS CHILENOS

MACARENA AGUILÓ

Towards the end of the 1970s, the militants of MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) who had been exiled in Europe decided to return to Chile in order to support the fight against the military dictatorship. Some had had children while abroad, but felt it was not safe to return with them. Many of these children ended up growing up in communes run by MIR comrades referred to as their "Padres Sociales," estranged from their parents and the struggle to regain Chile. Director Macarena Aguiló was one of these children.

Competing for the Al Jazeera Documentary Award

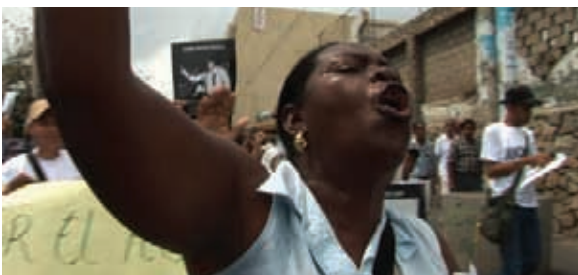
COLOMBIA



THE STOPLIGHT SOCIETY / LA SOCIEDAD DEL SEMÁFORO

RUBÉN MENDOZA

Stoplights at city intersections are a black hole for thousands of people displaced from their native rural settings and forced to come beg in the streets of urban centres. One such man is Raúl, a recycler alienated from society by stubbornness, a desire for total freedom and a reckless pursuit of drugs. He is bent on using the little knowledge he possesses to rig up a few improvised devices to allow those working the stoplight to control when it changes from red to green, thereby lengthening the acting time for the jugglers, disabled beggars, and street vendors. In the middle of a fantastic delirium, the circus-like halo encircling this street society slowly changes to a symphony of despair, hopelessness, and all-out anarchy.



IMPUNITY

JUAN JOSÉ LOZANO, HOLLMAN MORRIS

What kind of war for Colombia? Colombia today: the biggest trial against paramilitary armies—accused of killing thousands of Colombians—is designed to create "peace and justice." Instead the

process comes to an abrupt halt, when the political and economic interests in the paramilitary war are uncovered. Are the victims' families doomed to stay victims forever or are they able to fight Impunity? One witness testifies, "My brother was playing with his friends by the river when they saw a few armed men. They hid themselves, but the men caught them and cut off their heads...When night fell, we went to look for him. I carried his body on my back and my father carried his head."

Competing for the Al Jazeera Documentary Award

CUBA



OLD HOUSE / CASA VIEJA

LESTER HAMLET

Upon learning that his father is on his deathbed, Esteban travels from Barcelona back to his native Cuba after an absence of fourteen years to be with his family in their time of grieving. But in his childhood home he encounters a past that has not changed: old family secrets, resentments and unresolved misunderstandings make time itself an apparent prisoner of the old house.

Competing for the Al Jazeera Documentary Award



I AM FREE / SOY LIBRE

ANDREA ROGGMON

Faces, sounds and voices from Havana. We watch unidentified Cubans as they get crammed onto the bus, run through rain-soaked streets, or wash hair on a rooftop, while off-screen and with complete honesty, other Cubans tell us about their ideas of freedom. They are well aware of the restrictions placed on them: "I can do whatever I want," says one subject, "but only within a clearly defined context, place and time." The public enemy number one and only identifiable speaker is Yoani Sánchez, who in her controversial blog, Generación Y, aims to overcome

apathy and silence by exposing the nature of the system. She is one of the few dissidents to have ever left Cuba and then returned, believing she can help shape a different future for her country.

Competing for the Al Jazeera Documentary Award

GUATEMALA



MARIMBAS FROM HELL / LAS MARIMBAS DEL INFIERNO

JULIO HERNÁNDEZ CORDÓN

Don Alfonso plays the marimba, a traditional Guatemalan instrument that resembles a large xylophone. More and more he faces the public's lack of interest for his folkloric music, considered out-of-date and unfashionable. Blacko is a pioneer of the heavy metal Guatemalan underground scene. He is also a doctor in the public hospital but nobody wants to be treated by him because of his long hair and rocker tattoos. An odd circumstance brings Don Alfonso and Blacko together and they decide to combine their talents to form a band called "Marimbas from Hell." All kind of havoc is unleashed when mallet meets metal in this artsy, hilarious, head-banger of a film.

MEXICO



ABEL

DIEGO LUNA

Abel, a nine-year-old boy, has stopped talking since his father left home. One morning he starts to speak again, pretending to be the head of the family. No one dares to challenge this miracle and Abel begins to act like the man of the house. Despite their confusion and irritation, Abel's family try their best to accept his actions and keep him happy. Things start to look up for the small family, as everyone begins to adjust to their new lifestyle. That is until the day a man shows up at the door: his father.



Synopses



THE GOOD HERBS / LAS BUENAS HIERBAS

MARÍA NOVARO

Dalia, who is separated from her husband, lives with her young son, Cosmo and works for a community radio station. Her mother, Lala, is an ethnobotanist in charge of the Botanical Gardens at the University of Mexico. These two ordinary lives march on slowly until one day Lala is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and asks her daughter to prepare to take charge of her before she completely loses control of her mind. Lala gives Dalia her latest research on plants and herbal remedies that according to pre-Columbian Mexican traditions, cure the human soul. *Las buenas hierbas* is a story about brain chemistry, the chemistry of plants and human emotions; of the invisible bonds that unite the living with their dead and of nature, to which we all belong.



HELL / EL INFIERNO

LUIS ESTRADA

Mexico 2010: Benjamin García, otherwise known as "El Benny," is deported from the United States and upon returning to his village, comes across a devastating scene. The irrational violence, widespread corruption and economic crisis that have gripped the country have completely devastated his hometown. Seeing no alternative, and in order to help his family get ahead, El Benny gets involved in drug dealing and, for the first time in his life, he prospers and has plenty of money, women and power. However, he will find out soon enough that even though a criminal way of life is tempting, it does not always pay off.



THE OPEN SKY / EL CIELO ABIERTO

EVERARDO GONZÁLEZ

First came the word, then the fatal bullet, then silence. So begins this hard-hitting documentary about Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero, the priest who gave a voice to El Salvador's voiceless. In the throes

of one of the region's bloodiest civil wars, Monsignor Romero dared to state that the Church's mission was solidarity with the poor. He was assassinated on March 24, 1980, a crime that was long heralded, judging from *The Open Sky*, which treats his death as inevitable given the situation in El Salvador. The architecture of this film is faultless, offering a clear overview of the facts leading up to the death of a man who is still mourned.

Competing for the Al Jazeera Documentary award



AGNUS DEI: LAMB OF GOD / AGNUS DEI: CORDERO DE DIOS

ALEJANDRA SÁNCHEZ

When Jesús Romero was eleven years old, he was sexually abused by his parish priest. Now an adult, Jesús decides not only to denounce his aggressor but to find him and confront him. This is a story that reveals the impunity of the Catholic Church towards acts of pederasty committed by some of its members, while at the same time, shows how courage and self-respect become the most powerful defences for a man whose childhood was stolen from him.

Competing for the Al Jazeera Documentary Award

PERU



THE DEVIL OPERATION / OPERACIÓN DIABLO

STEPHANIE BOYD

Father Marco Arana is being followed. A private investigative firm is photographing and videotaping his every move. This humble priest has spent two decades defending Peruvian mountain farmers from a US-owned gold mine, earning him the nickname "El Diablo." When Father Marco's allies are tortured and assassinated, he and his supporters take action

and develop a counter-espionage plan. They obtain graphic footage, photos and reports taken by the spies worthy of a Hollywood spy flick. This real-life thriller exposes the new wave of corporate terrorism faced by Latin America's human rights defenders.

Competing for the Al Jazeera doc award

URUGUAY



A USEFUL LIFE / LA VIDA ÚTIL

FEDERICO VEIROJ

At the age of 45, Jorge still lives with his parents. He has been the film programmer and technical manager at the local cinémathèque for 25 years. He also has a show at a Montevideo radio station where he conducts interviews and talks about movies with filmmakers. With attendance down, the cinémathèque is struggling to make a profit, threatening to leave Jorge unemployed. For the first time, he is forced to change his way of life in order to adapt to the new world he faces. *La vida útil* is a film for all those cinephiles who, like Jorge, find their lives consumed by movies. Featuring a unique send-up to Mark Twain's satirical essay "On the Decay of the Art of Lying."

VENEZUELA



BROTHER / HERMANO

MARCEL RASQUIN

Daniel is an exceptional footballer, a phenomenal striker. Julio is the team's captain, a born leader. As brothers they grew up playing football together in a Caracas slum called "La Ceniza." While Daniel dreams of playing professional football, Julio supports the family with "dirty" money; he has little time to dream. The opportunity of their lives arrives when a football scout invites them to tryout with the city's best team: the Caracas Football Club. But tragedy looms nearby. They must choose, on a dusty football pitch, what is most important: family unity, revenge or the chance of a lifetime. On this pitch, life is on the line.



Last November, the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival moved to its new office space in the Woodward's Heritage Building in the Gastown district. At these brand new offices, several not-for-profit arts and community organizations now have their headquarters thanks to the support of the City of Vancouver. Organizations such as Theatre Terrific, Powell Street Festival, urban ink and W2: Community Media Arts are our neighbours, and it has been inspiring for us to be linked with all of these organizations in a common purpose to create a city where art, culture and community events thrive. Working each day in this historic district and building has also allowed us to be part of Vancouver in a deeper way, since we are located in the area where the roots of the city are found. 🌱

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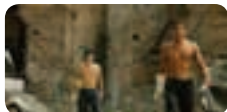
POST MORTEM, Chile
Saturday, Sept 3 at 7PM
Premiered at Venice Film Festival, and won top prizes at Guadalajara and Havana Festivals.



ABEL, Mexico
Sunday, Sept 4 at 7PM
Premiered at Sundance, Official Selection at Cannes and Best Latin Film at San Sebastián Festival.



5XFAVELA, Brazil
Tuesday, Sept 6 at 7PM
Premiered at Cannes 2010, and has been a milestone in Brazilian filmmaking.



HERMANO, Venezuela
Friday, Sept 9 at 7PM
One of the most awarded Venezuelan films in history, earning top prizes at Havana, Moscow and Los Angeles Festivals.

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