

VLAFFNEWS

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The Vancouver Latin American Film Festival Newspaper

Welcome to Our Stories



CHEVOLUTION will be screened at VLAFF 2009.

While in *Personal Belongings* a young couple in Havana, one wishing to stay and one wishing to leave, falls in love; in *Paraguay*, the road to a new chapter in the history of the country falls into the hands of an ex-priest and the now current president in *La Tierra Sin Mal*; in the Chilean Pinochet era, an obsessed man embarks on a lethal pursuit of his dream to become Tony Manero of *Saturday Night Fever*; and in a small town in Mexico, a family tries to avoid coming to terms with the death of a father and husband in *Lake Tahoe*. More different these stories could not be—their only similitude is the region they come from.

VLAFF 2009 will not only be a great showcase of Latin American cinema, but it will be a revelation of a Latin American society that has much to say and much to express. From El Salvador (*Ever Amado*) to Peru (*El Premio, Pasajeros*), the films that VLAFF is presenting in this seventh edition are without a doubt an outstanding selection of cinema that will show a range of experience from life in Mexico in the 1930s (*Arráncame la Vida*) to small town Cuba (*El Cuerno de la Abundancia*) to the depths of the Colombian jungle in the present day (*La Milagrosa*).

With great honour, VLAFF brings to Vancouver the razor-sharp dramas of emerging directors Gabriel Medina (*Los Paranoicos*) and Pablo Fendrik (*La Sangre Brota*), which show us a fresh cinema with fresh ideas coming from

Argentina. From Brazil (2008 VLAFF's guest country), the largest country in Latin America and unique because it is a Portuguese-speaking region, we will present the multi-awarded film *Estômago*, along with *Polaroides Urbanas*, *Poeta da Vila*, the documentary *Condor*, and one of the greatest recent short films, *Os Sapatos de Aristeu*, by the 24-year-old director, Daniel Tonacci.

This year our festival will speak Spanish with a Chilean accent, as we welcome Chile as our 2009 guest country. VLAFF will present the works of renowned filmmakers such as Ignacio Agüero, who will be here to introduce his most recent documentary *El Diario de Agustín*; this film takes a fresh look at a much discussed era, investigating with documented facts how the oldest Spanish-language newspaper in the world, *El Mercurio*, played a key role in enabling Pinochet to stay in power. As well, we will screen the latest film from Andrés Wood—one of the most prolific Chilean filmmakers—called *La Buena Vida*, a multi award-winning film of stories from everyday people in the capital, Santiago. Also, the festival proudly presents a showcase from the new generation of Chilean directors. Eight short films from this country will be at VLAFF, including a special screening of films directed by woman including *Camposanto* by Antonia Lobos and *Debajo* by Dominga Sotomayor.

As we welcome you to eleven days of exciting cinema, workshops, and discussions with guest directors, these incredible stories will show you our view of our history and a touch of our reality—all this projected through the eyes of the filmmakers, who are the reflectors and shapers of parts of our identity. ◆

CHECK OUT
THE COMPLETE
PROGRAM FOR
THE 2009 VLAFF
Featuring more
than 60 Latin
American films



TONY MANERO, from Chile. Best film at the Havana Film Festival in 2008.

CHILE: GUEST COUNTRY

With Chilean films on the rise, VLAFF takes a look at the country's new cinema

Chilean cinema will be represented at VLAFF '09 with sixteen films, including fiction and documentaries. » Go to pgs. 4 & 5



LAKE TAHOE
from Mexico
won the critics'
prize at the
Berlin Film
Festival '08.

VLAFF NEWS

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VANCOUVER LATIN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL SOCIETY

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Left to right: (standing) Victor Martínez Aja, Wendy Mendes, Sarah Anton, Adriana Castillo, Jennifer Patterson, Jorge Posada; (middle row, seated) Lisa Pearlman, Laura Jaime, Anne-Mary Mullen, Carolina Ordoñez; (front row) Christian Sida-Valenzuela, Jorge Amigo, Veronica Heringer, Pedro Posada.

EDITORIAL

Si los escritores, músicos y muchos otros artistas latinoamericanos son reconocidos en esa región y en el mundo entero; ¿por qué no pasa lo mismo con el cine de América Latina? Un arte que parece que esta esquinado, hundido, y con muestras de no encontrarse.

Lamentablemente y por diferentes factores, nuestras salas de cine están repletas de películas que vienen de los Estados Unidos en un gran por ciento, nuestro cine apenas se ve, se desconoce enormemente, y con esto también nuestras historias y nuestra manera de ver el mundo.

Es por el cine mismo que la sociedad contemporánea latinoamericana conoce más las historias que suceden en Manhattan, Los Ángeles o Chicago, que lo que pasa en las calles de Santiago, Lima o Ciudad de México. Así, nuestras verdades e historias no se conocen, vengan de Guatemala o Uruguay, y los consumidores, que no espectadores, porque estos últimos participan y no solo consumen un producto visual, parecen encaminados a no cambiar su mirada hacia el sur.

En la pasada Quincena de Realizadores en Cannes, el gran maestro Francis Ford Coppola (el que dirigió *El Padrino* y otras tantas obras ya clásicas del cine universal), llegó este festival con su nueva película bajo el brazo, *Tetro*, cinta de bajo presupuesto, filmada casi en su totalidad en blanco y negro y con locaciones en Buenos Aires. Cuando un periodista le preguntó a Coppola el porqué no había ido a un gran estudio Hollywoodense para buscar

presupuesto, Coppola afirmó que si trató de buscar más dinero, pero le afirmaron “que a las audiencias no les gustaría la cinta”, y Coppola les respondió, “probablemente es cierto, pero ustedes crearon esas audiencias”.

Lo que allí afirmó Coppola sin duda es una gran verdad, pero afortunadamente con honor a los cineastas, al circuito de festivales internacionales y con nuevas leyes gubernamentales a favor del cine en casi cada país latinoamericano, nuestro cine esta renaciendo y forjando su propio camino. Nuestros realizadores cada vez se empeñan más en mostrar nuestras realidades, nuestros dolores históricos pero también nuestras grandezas. Así lo documenta Patricio Guzmán, que no deja que la memoria de la dictadura chilena muera; así lo escribe Claudia Llosa que nos cuenta pedazos de su Perú; así lo vive el porteño Rodrigo de la Serna en cada papel que interpreta.

Es por estos artistas y por muchas y muchos otros mas, que cuando veo nuestro cine me lleno de aliento, de esperanza de que lo nuestro vale, y de que una frase que le escuche a Julio Feo Zarandieta, un excelente crítico de cine hispano-francés, hoy, es más válida que nunca:

“Cuando veo el cine de estos directores, le doy gracias a Dios y a América Latina, por mostrarme que hay vida después de Hollywood”.

Bienvenidos todos a lo nuestro.

If Latin American writers, musicians, and other artists are immediately recognizable on the world stage, what has happened to Latin American filmmakers that they seem to be cornered, isolated and unable to establish themselves?

It is lamentable that our theatres are saturated with movies that come from the United States, while our own films are hardly seen. Because of this trend, we are more aware of stories that take place in Manhattan, Los Angeles or Chicago than what is happening on the streets of Santiago, Lima or Mexico City. Our stories remain unexplored whether they come from Guatemala or Uruguay, and thus our way of seeing the world is largely unknown. This has shaped us into being only consumers of film, as opposed to being an engaged audience, and for the moment, we show little sign of refocusing our attention towards the south.

At the most recent Cannes Film Festival, the great filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola (director of *The Godfather* and other works that are now universal film classics) attended with his new film under his arm, *Tetro*, a low-budget production filmed almost in its entirety in black and white on location in Buenos Aires. When a reporter asked Coppola why he didn't get funding from a big Hollywood studio, Coppola reported that he did ask for more money but was told that “audiences would not like the film.” Coppola's response to that was: “That

is probably true, but you created the audiences.”

What Coppola affirmed in that statement is undoubtedly true, but thankfully and with great debt to our filmmakers, international film festivals, and recent government support in almost every Latin American country, our cinema is reviving, thriving and forging its own path. Our filmmakers are making an effort to show our multiple realities—our historic suffering as well as our greatness. This is how Patricio Guzmán documents it so as not to allow the memory of the Chilean dictatorship to die; this is how Claudia Llosa writes it when she tells us of her Peru; and, this is how the Argentine actor Rodrigo de la Serna lives it in every role he plays.

It is because of these artists and many others that when I see our films I am filled with the enormity of how much culture matters, and that a sentiment I heard expressed by Julio Feo Zarandieta, an extraordinary French-Spanish film critic, today, is more valid now than ever:

“When I see the films these directors make, I thank God and Latin America for showing me that there is life beyond Hollywood.”

Welcome all to our cinema.



CHRISTIAN SIDA-VALENZUELA
CHIEF EDITOR

CHILEAN CINEMA: THE TRUTH OF TELLING STORIES

By Jorge Morales

These days, enthusiasm for the New Argentine Cinema has waned (to the point there are doubts that it ever existed), and the once promising Mexican cinema wave receives even less attention, although Carlos Reygadas continues to shine with his own light (*silenciosa*). But in recent years, Chilean film is consolidating as one of the most interesting emerging cinemas on the continent. Awarded prizes in many international festivals, and awakening unprecedented interest among foreign critics, Chilean cinema appears less concerned with gaining audiences than with telling stories. For many years, commercial movies (films that might triumph in the theatres) took over national production, so much so that the only measure of success or failure for a film is still the box office. Now there is a notable change in content. Subjects have diversified, to the extent that the modest output permits, to include practically all genres. The Chilean film industry not only produces dramas and comedies; it also includes horror, musicals, children's animation and even superhero movies, like *Mirageman* (Ernesto Díaz 2008), a notable rarity about a champion of justice at the height of reality: he is poor and without special powers. In addition, a less conventional style has appeared in which narrative form is as or more important than narrative content.

Although neither diversification nor efforts at exploring new aesthetics and narratives have necessarily achieved the production of a totally consistent cinema, recent Chilean filmmaking differs from the fits and starts of the post-dictatorship period in that the new directors seem less aimless with their subjects. Perhaps they are not yet wholly on target, but the explorations seem less tentative. In *El Cielo, la Tierra y la Lluvia*, by José Luis Torres Leiva, the protagonist interpenetrates her surroundings so well that her emotions appear to be reflected in the green locales of the southern hemisphere and vice versa; nature welcomes and rejects, but it is never indifferent. Or, in *Tony Manero*, by Pablo Larraín, in which the violence and moral corruption of the Pinochet dictatorship "infects" a decadent dancer who under the pretext of success kills without blame or remorse like an automaton. Torres Leiva's contemplative, leisurely, foppish and poetic camera sighs in comparison with Larraín's restless, dirty and aggressive barking pulse. Although Torres Leiva has a long history of documentaries and shorts in which he perfected this look, his plasticity and narrative ability and his use of cinematographic time are more suggestive than his reflections, which reveal a certain innocence. Pablo Larraín, who skilfully adopts the style of the Dardenne brothers (*Rosetta*), is much harsher and more shocking, decidedly more manipulative, truculently excessive in his effort to portray the

disturbed mental state of the protagonist and, by extension, Chilean society under dictatorship.

The death that surrounds *Tony Manero*, which is also present in *El Cielo, la Tierra y la Lluvia*, is seen as part of a painful but natural cycle (as the Chilean poet Jorge Teillier would say: *un niño murió y lo sembraron* [a child died and they planted him]). This is also the principal subject of the young filmmaker Sebastián Silva in *La Vida Me Mata*. The comedy works much better mining laughs than exploring its subject, but it is fresher and more alive than other debuts, characteristics that are further evident in his new film, *La Nana*, which won the World Cinema Jury Prize at Sundance for its dramatic portrayal of the inner workings of a family's relationship with their maid of 23 years.

The brood of young filmmakers and their multiple successes at festivals (*El Cielo...* in Rotterdam; *Alicia en País* by Esteban Larraín, in Locarno; *Tony Manero* in Cannes 2008, *Huacho* by Alejandro Fernández, and *Navidad* by Sebastián Lelio, in Cannes 2009) partially overshadowed new films by more experienced directors (who are also more conventional, of course), such as Cristián Galáz and Andrés Wood, whose films are part of the foundational canon in the history of Chilean cinema. Galáz directed *El Chacotero Sentimental* (1999), a light romantic and sexual comedy that created such a box office phenomenon that its successors continue to repeat the formula. Indeed, in July of this year, a similar movie was released, *Grado 3* (an adaptation of the Canadian film *Young People Fucking*), directed by Roberto Arriaguita, who played the leading role in *El Chacotero Sentimental*. Now, with *El Regalo*, Galáz is distancing himself from the more populist framework, but clearly continues to squeeze its commercial vein (with very good results), with an affable plot that is simple and basic, about the relationships between older adults.

From the box office and critical success of *Machuca* (2004) (about a poor child attending a wealthy Catholic school during the most conflictive years of Salvador Allende's socialist government), Andrés Wood, one of the most prolific filmmakers in Chile, produces *La Buena Vida*, an x-ray of Chileans in democracy, with their truncated dreams, their world of appearances, consumerism, and throwaway and utilitarian

relationships. His pessimistic stance conflicts with an unusual institutional optimism, in which authority no longer represents a threat, but is the only sign of stability. It is a conservative film with a narrative that is poorly matched by the classic treatment of interwoven stories.

Of all the films in the group, the most unusual is probably *El Diario de Agustín*. Ignacio Agüero, the best Chilean documentary filmmaker working today, constructs a film that is more reportage and less lyrical than his earlier work, but much braver. Agüero's film is a denunciation of how *El Mercurio* newspaper coordinated with Pinochet's political police to produce reporting montages that hid crimes. Incredibly, the film led to a complicit silence in the general press, which hardly acknowledged it, since *El Mercurio* continues to have enormous influence and power. Through its impact, the documentary ended up demonstrating that the pendular ethos that led to those criminal practices continues to exist, challenging the limits of our democracy and the independence of the press, and offering proof that media concentration causes certain uncomfortable issues to disappear from the public agenda.

What is Chilean cinema's vision of the country? It shows a frivolous, cynical, sad and irresponsible society, as well as, to a lesser extent, a solidaristic, loyal, happy and committed people. Paradoxically, that combination is meritorious because it avoids reducing Chile to a postcard. The nuances, moods, and indeterminate ordering principal are revealed, which are nothing but a desire for freedom. Perhaps Chilean cinema may be still immature, but it has the vocation of opening itself up and experimenting rather than shutting itself in, and over the long-term it will probably bring us a more solid and inspiring cinema. ●

Jorge Morales is a Chilean film critic for *Caras* magazine; he also collaborates with the Peruvian film magazine *Godard!* and is the editor of *Mabuse* (www.mabuse.cl), a website which specializes in world cinema. He has been a jury member in a number of national and international film festivals (Buenos Aires, Havana, etc). He is the current president of FIPRESCI-Chile, the local section of the International Federation of Film Critics.



EL DIARIO DE AGUSTIN, one of the most important Chilean documentaries in recent years.

GIRLS AND WOMEN: A LOOK TOWARD THE FEMININE IN CHILEAN CINEMA

By Carolina Urrutia

Within the realm of fiction, Chilean women film directors show a link between the world of intimacy and that of domesticity. It is a certain way of seeing the world where visual, formal and aesthetic dimensions become part of the leading language of the film. Young directors of feature-length films, such as Alicia Scherson (*Play*, 2005 and *Turistas*, 2009), Elisa Eliash (*Mami Te Amo*, 2008), and directors of short films, such as Dominga Sotomayor (*Noviembre*, 2007) and Nayra Ilic (*Ana*, 2008), propose a narrative that weakens the canonical nexus of action/reaction in favour of a narrative technique that is more reflexive around the cinematographic image, where the geographic and spiritual spaces are as or more important than the story itself.

Although this may seem to be a feminine approach, it is certainly not the exclusive domain of women filmmakers. Directors like Rodrigo Marin (*Las Niñas*, 2008), or José Luis Torres Leiva (*El Cielo, la Tierra y la Lluvia*, 2007) also maintain a dispersive filter in which the atmosphere, understood as gesture, play of bodies, scenery and facial expression, subordinates the dynamics of hegemonic cinema in favour of those in which chance seems to be the thread that drives stories and narratives. This new Chilean cinema, with its more alternative nature and more minimalist narrative, is indebted to the new cinema of the 1960s, in that both deal with subjects rather than tell stories: motherhood (*Turistas*, *Mami Te Amo*),

relationships, or contemporary urban alienation (*Paréntesis*, co-directed by Francisca Schweitzer, and *Play*).

There seems to be a changing of the guard, both generationally and in terms of the type of audience that finds a film appealing, that is giving rise to a different cinematographic language. But independently of the era and its commercial character, it is not absurd to propose that there is a tendency for women to offer a centrifugal view in their films, an effort to make their subjects orbit around a centre that at times is not seen. It is the allusion to a problem, a narrative, or an idea, a view of the world filtered through its most mundane gestures. This is not exclusive to the new generation of filmmakers; it is also true of

the recently debuted *Teresa* by Tatiana Gaviola or *Secretos* (2008) by Valeria Sarmiento.

As for documentaries (in Chile, a more common genre than fiction in terms of numbers of annual productions as well as gender), there is a division between two tendencies. There are directors who explore a political, social or cultural problem, undertaking an objective investigation; for example, Betina Perut, Marcela Said or Carmen Luz Parot, who in documentaries such as *Estadio Nacional* or *Opus Day* choose subjects (which since the democratic transition of almost 20 years ago are very rooted in political and social issues) and develop them from a mostly investigative stance. But there is also a growing trend towards autobiographical documentaries (*Calle Santa Fe*, Carmen Castillo, 2007; *Dear Nona*, Tiziana Panizza, 2008) in which the subject is memory, and history is filtered through the remembrances and construction of the directors' imagined realities. Frequently, it is a story told in the first person that defines the atmosphere and guidelines of a type of documentary more often found in local productions.

These are itineraries, personal journeys that typically begin from an "I" and move through narrative spaces centred on the political and cultural aspects of a society that is manifested as still under constant construction. ●

Carolina Urrutia is a film critic and teacher. Based in Chile, she edits the online film magazine laFuga.cl. For the past five years she has been teaching contemporary film and contributing weekly reviews for a national newspaper. She has a degree in aesthetics and is currently pursuing graduate studies in art history and theory.



NOVIEMBRE, Dominga Sotomayor's short will be presented at VLAFF's Reel Journeys.

VLAFF will present a program of short films directed by young female Chilean filmmakers.

THE ARTISTIC REVIVAL OF MEXICAN CINEMA

By Carlos Bonfil

The evolution of Mexican cinema in the last five years has been significant. Although the country's filmmaking seemed condemned to stagnation when only 14 films were produced in 2002, the industry has since improved, with a focus on quality. Currently the average is around 70 productions per annum.

Themes and styles are more diverse; there is greater distance from the solemnity and conventionalism of traditional plots. Many of the feature films best-received by critics in Mexico and in international festivals have been produced under very difficult conditions and with little prospect of breaking even. The best films within Mexico face similar obstacles: they suffer from inadequate distribution, and when they reach the marquee, they stay there only two or three weeks, at disadvantageous times, projected in isolated places or on the art film circuit for limited consumption. The best Mexican cinema survives with a small audience and little publicity, and is overwhelmed by the unequal competition from U.S. productions, which take up more than 90 percent of our country's screens.

National and international publications have promoted the idea that Mexican cinema is experiencing an artistic revival, but this view is derived from the success of foreign films directed by Mexican filmmakers. Alfonso Cuarón (*Children of Men*), Alejandro González Iñárritu (*Babel*) and Guillermo del Toro (*Pan's Labyrinth*), have been justly celebrated for films that only with difficulty could be considered Mexican productions. Their subjects have little in common with the issues that concern the majority of filmmakers based in Mexico, and to attribute Mexican nationality to them is as absurd as considering *Los Olvidados* or *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* by Luis Buñuel, to be films from Spain, just because he was of Spanish origin. The filmmakers have commented on the irony of this mistake, describing themselves as "luxury *braceros*": immigrants who make it to Hollywood to work under more favourable conditions than is possible in their native countries. The success of a handful of Mexican directors, cin-

ematographers, and actors in Hollywood is echoed in a chamber of prizes in international film festivals, and especially, Academy Awards in several categories. All this has contributed significantly to fueling the widely accepted notion that Mexican cinema, despite its lack of a strongly consolidated industry, is currently experiencing a second Golden Age.

The reality is different, and the local press is full of declarations from young filmmakers who continue to stress the same difficulties: lack of visibility for their productions, deficient distribution that is hardly interested in promoting Mexican cinema, unjust exhibition quotas that do not allow sufficient screen time for local productions, an inadequate legal framework for stimulating the development of a strong film industry, lack of political will from the government to support the industry, and absolutely no commitment from television companies to coproduce film. In addition, the official refusal to renegotiate the Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is an important factor. The treaty has been disastrous for Mexican cinema since it prohibits any effort to impose regulatory limits on the massive presence of U.S. super-productions in our country, to the detriment of local productions.

Nevertheless, Mexican artists are producing cinema with an increasing variety of subjects and artistic intents. The epoch of extreme cultural nationalism, in which Mexican films travelled from naturalism to *costumbrismo*, making a permanent stop in social criticism to proclaim the necessity of reflecting national reality, appears to have passed. Young artists naturally defend the cultural specificity of their work and positioning within Mexican culture, but the fundamental concern is no longer transmitting uplifting nationalist messages; rather, the focus is the artistic, pluralistic, and cosmopolitan character of their productions.

A new generation of filmmakers chooses to work in Mexico and try out new forms of production and distribution. They go to international festivals in order to gain the visibility that barely touches them locally, and once a director achieves a reputation abroad, official institutions like the Mexican Institute of Cinematography (IMCINE) pay attention and pro-

vide support for some phase of production for the next film. Fortunately, there are signs that suggest a greater sensitivity is emerging for supporting films with non-commercial subjects and styles. There is also a generalized call for finally enacting legislation that supports young filmmakers and guarantees distribution of their work in a market with unequal and arbitrary competition. Once there is a favourable legal framework for Mexican cinema, a new industry will quickly sprout; the filmmakers are there, and many of them have undeniable talent. ♦

Carlos Bonfil is one of the most recognized film critics from Mexico. He studied French literature at the University of Paris (Paris-Sorbonne) and translation at the University of Paris-Dauphine. He was a French literature professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and later on became involved in cultural journalism. Bonfil's articles about film have been published regularly for the past 20 years in the Mexican newspaper La Jornada, and for the last four years in the film magazine Cine Premiere. His collaborations also include local and international specialized publications, such as La Tempestad and Cinémas d'Amérique Latine. He also writes on an ongoing basis for the Variety/Guardian International Film Guide and is the co-author with Carlos Monsiváis of the book A través del espejo: el cine mexicano y su público. Bonfil served on the jury at the 2002 Guadalajara International Film Festival, the 2006 Mexico City's International Contemporary Film Festival, and the 2006 Morelia International Film Festival.

Descriptions for this year's films are available
in our festival catalogue and online at

www.vlaff.org



BRAZIL GETS REEL

During VLAFF 2008, Brazil was highlighted as our guest country, and at our upcoming festival, it will again be well represented by a selection of seven diverse works that reveal its vibrant contemporary filmmaking spirit.

By Lili Vieira de Carvalho

Ever since the first moving image of Brazil's famous Baía da Guanabara was captured in 1896, the nation's cinema has gone through multiple identity crises. True to its colonial history, Brazil wanted to resemble its foreign elders, and early role models were brainy Europe and glamorous North America. From the 1930s on, the well-distributed American movies made reading subtitles second nature to any moviegoer and attracted crowds to darkened rooms. Atlântida, Cinédia and later on, Vera Cruz tried hard to establish a tropical kind of showbiz. Samba dancers and banana headdresses provided background for light comedies, but few blockbusters were actually made. Eventually, Hollywood stole Carmen Miranda and TV stole audiences already tired of old formulas.

In the '60s and '70s Cinema Novo took reels to the north of the country. With its strong slogan, *a camera and an idea*, Glauber Rocha and others joined a larger movement that included the music of Tropicalia and books by João Cabral de Mello Neto and Guimarães Rosa. Metaphors were disguised in dry landscapes to deceive ever-alert censors working for increasingly autocratic regimes—to such a degree that many Brazilians remained mystified by the movement.

In 1974, the creation of Embrafilme, a federal agency for movies, gave directors an opportunity to reach larger audiences, and movies like Bruno Barreto's *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands* in 1976 and Hector Babenco's *Pixote* in 1980 attracted millions of new viewers at home and abroad. The end of the military years, in 1985, opened the doors to freedom and creativity, although they shut again in 1990 with new president Fernando Collor. As part of a bizarre economic plan (which eventually led to his resignation), he ended Embrafilme and cut all government resources for art.

These were tough times for filmmakers who didn't even know for sure how bad they had it, since the cuts included all official stats on the industry itself. Just a handful of movies were shot during the next five years. But when Collor fell, a new era began, with increased incentives and a revised agency for movies called Ancine. Since then, most films in Brazil have been

sponsored by private and public companies using a deductible culture tax credit aimed at fostering regional productions. In short order, Brazil received three Academy Award nominations: *O Quatrilho* in 1995, *Four Days in September* in 1997 and *Central Station* the next year, with the latter also winning the Berlin International Film Festival's Golden Bear.

Instead of just a camera and an idea, directors now get enough support for development and distribution to bring audiences all kinds of images. Writers, actors, directors and cinematographers brave the challenges of making shorts and first features, and documentaries fill in the gaps of our story, past and present.

The selection of Brazilian movies available this year constitutes a vibrant portrait of recent output. Funny and dramatic, old and new, real and wholly imaginative, they are all labours of love. Miguel Fallabella will tickle you with his *Urban Polaroids*, his debut as a director after writing several theatre plays and TV scripts, as well as hosting a talk show for fifteen years.

The movie is an adaptation to the big screen of his campy theatre blockbuster of the '80s, called *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini*.

On the sober side, Roberto Mader brings us *Condor*, a comprehensive research into one of Brazil's darkest moments, in a multiple award-winning documentary. The music of one of Brazil's most prolific composers is shown on a charming background of Rio de Janeiro in the '30s in *The Samba Poet*, directed by Ricardo Van Steen. A caustic comedy written and directed by Marcos Jorge, *Estômago* is an unforgettable punch in your gourmet-fed guts. Three shorts add to this snapshot of filmmaking in Brazilian territory: "Samba de Quadra", "Os Sapatos de Aristeu", and an institutional film showing the work of non-profit Cinema Nosso—which, of course, means Our Movies, without apologies, or bananas. ●

Lili Vieira de Carvalho is the Brazilian film programmer for the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival.



ESTÔMAGO, one of the most acclaimed Brazilian films of 2008.

Ticket Outlets

Advance tickets must be purchased from ticket outlets at least one day prior to the screening. All advance sales end at 9pm the day before the screening. Advance tickets on sale starting Monday, August 31st.



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Open Monday-Friday 1pm-5pm
Cash only.

Thursday 10	Friday 11	Saturday 12	Sunday 13
 <p>ARRANCAME LA VIDA <i>(Tear This Heart Out)</i></p> <p>Mexico / Spanish with English subtitles</p> <p>Director: Roberto Sneider</p> <p>Based on Ángeles Mastretta's novel of the same name, <i>Arrancame la Vida</i> is set during Mexico's post-revolutionary period of the 1930s and '40s. The story begins with the beautiful Catalina Guzmán (Ana Claudia Talancón) marrying at an early age the much older, charismatic and cunning general, Andrés Ascencio (Daniel Giménez Cacho). Dazzled by his world, Catalina escorts Andrés on his political campaigns, witnessing the fascinating political system as she pursues social justice. She soon discovers, however, that by dedicating her life to Andrés, she has lost her freedom. <i>Arrancame la Vida</i> is considered one of the most widely acclaimed and expensive films in the history of Mexican cinema.</p> <p>GR 7 7:00 PM</p> <p>Opening Gala Film</p>		<p>Master Lighting Workshop Seminars Advancing the art and craft of filmmaking. Sept 12, 13 & 20. <i>For more info please visit vlaff.org.</i></p>	<p>LA TIERRA SIN MAL <i>(The Land of No Evil)</i> Paraguay / Spanish with English subtitles Paraguay. Fernando Lugo, a former bishop running for president, represents the country's hope to finally build a better future. Preceded by EVER AMADO SFU 3:00 PM Free Admission</p>
	 <p>EL DIARIO DE AGUSTIN <i>(Agustin's Newspaper)</i> Chile / Spanish with English subtitles For five generations, <i>El Mercurio</i> was the most powerful and influential newspaper in Chile. Its role during the Pinochet dictatorship makes it among the most taboo topics in Contemporary Chilean history. SFU 4:00 PM Free Admission</p>	 <p>PERSONAL BELONGINGS Cuba / Spanish with English subtitles Ernesto has been trying to leave the country for as long as he can remember. His only activity is going from embassy to embassy, trying to get a visa. SFU 3:00 PM Free Admission</p>	 <p>PASAJEROS <i>(Passengers)</i> Peru / Spanish with English subtitles After completing a five-year prison sentence, Jano reunites with his childhood friend, Martin, and the pair enthusiastically plans to pursue their dream of joining their friend, Adolfo, in Chicago and starting a new life. SFU 5:00 PM FREE ADMISSION</p>
	 <p>LA RONDA <i>(Love By Accident)</i> Argentina / Spanish with English subtitles A mysterious woman, a real estate agent, a painter, and actress, a film director and a waitress become entangled in a series of connected meetings that form a surprising circle. PC 5:00 PM</p>	 <p>INCOMODOS <i>(Awkward)</i> Argentina / Spanish with English subtitles Esteban Menis' quirky comedy follows an unlikely threesome – Nicolás, Abril and Alfred – on their road trip to Miramar. SFU 5:00 PM Free Admission</p>	 <p>SANTO CONTRA LA INVASION DE LOS MARCIANOS <i>(Santo Versus the Martian Invasion)</i> Mexico / Spanish with English Mexican Sci-Fi classic from the '60s. PC 5:00 PM</p>
	 <p>SATANÁS Columbia / Spanish with English subtitles A stunning woman cons rich men out of their money, a priest struggles with the secrets he keeps, and a teacher longs for one of his students. PC 7:00 PM</p>	 <p>POLAROIDES URBANAS Brazil / Portuguese with English subtitles The story of a teenager in conflict with her mother — a therapist who cannot solve her own problems. PC 5:00 PM</p>	 <p>ESTÔMAGO <i>(A Gastronomic Story)</i> Brazil / Portuguese with English subtitles The world is made of those who eat and those who get eaten. Raimundo Nonato, our protagonist, finds an alternative way: he cooks. VCT 5:00 PM</p>
	 <p>LEONERA <i>(Lion's Den)</i> Argentina / Spanish with English subtitles Julia wakes up in her apartment, surrounded by the bloody bodies of Ramiro and Nahuel. Ramiro is still alive. Both have been her lovers and Julia is now expecting the baby of one...</p>	 <p>CHEVOLUTION Mexico / English and Spanish with English subtitles In 1960, Cuban photographer Alberto "Korda" Díaz captured a photo of Ernesto "Ché" Guevara during a mass funeral for the victims of an explosion in Havana Harbour – a watershed moment in the emergence of a new Cuba. PC 7:00 PM</p>	 <p>NOEL - POETA DA VILA <i>(Noel: The Samba Poet)</i> Brazil / Portuguese with English subtitles. At 17, Noel is a funny guy with a twisted chin who likes to taunt his friends with samba improvisations. A middle-class white guy, he prefers the company of blacks from the wrong side of town, factory girls and hookers. VCT 7:00 PM</p>
		 <p>EL REGALO <i>(The Gift)</i> Chile / Spanish with English subtitles <i>El Regalo</i> is the story of three close friends – Francisco, Pacheco and Tito. Francisco, widowed and recently retired is having a difficult time. To cheer him up, his two friends decide to give him a gift, inviting him to the hot springs in Chillán. VCT 7:00 PM</p>	 <p>EL CUERNO DE LA ABUNDANCIA <i>(Horn of Plenty)</i> Cuba / Spanish with English subtitles News rocks a little town in Cuba: everyone with the last name Castiñeiras will receive a generous inheritance left by some nuns in a bank in England in the 18th century. PC 7:00 PM</p>
		 <p>LOS PARANOICOS <i>(The Paranoids)</i> Argentina / Spanish with English subtitles An aimless, narcoleptic loner who works children's birthday parties for a living, aspiring Luciano lives in fear – fear of success, STDs and his doorman, for starters. PC 9:00 PM</p>	<p>LA MILAGROSA <i>(The Miraculous)</i> Colombia / Spanish with English subtitles In 1999, an upper-class young man from Bogotá is kidnapped by a guerilla group. His life is radically transformed as he tries to live in captivity in the midst of a violent armed conflict involving the regular army, the guerrillas and paramilitary groups. PC 9:00 PM</p>

Tickets and General Festival Information

VLAFF Memberships - \$2

As a registered non-profit society, the VLAFF screens films that have not been seen by the BC Film Classification Board. Under BC law, any person wishing to see these unclassified films must be a member of the VLAFF society and be **18 years or older**.

The membership fee is \$2 and is valid until August 31, 2010. Please carry your membership card with you at all times, as you will be required to show it at all VLAFF screenings, including special screenings throughout the year.

Tickets

Single Tickets: \$10

Opening Night film: \$10

Closing Night film: \$10

Closing Night film and Concert: \$20

Villa Grimaldi: Film-Concert-Visual Art: \$10

SFU Screening: Free Admission

(2009 VLAFF membership required)

Festival Passes: \$120

(Available for purchase at VLAFF Ticket Outlet at Pacific Cinémathèque only.)

Festival Pass: \$120

This pass gives you access to all VLAFF screenings held at Pacific Cinémathèque and Vancity Theatre, including Opening and Closing Night films. Passholders must arrive 20 minutes prior to the screening time to claim an entrance ticket from the Box Office. A festival pass does not guarantee seating to sold-out shows. **Passholders must carry a valid VLAFF membership card.**

Master Lighting Workshops / Seminars Sept. 12, 13 and 20

(Registration available onlythrough www.vlaff.org)

Ticket Outlets

Advance tickets must be purchased from ticket outlets at least one day prior to the screening. All advance sales end at 9pm on the day before the screening.

Advance tickets on sale starting:
Monday, August 31, 2009

Videomatica:

1855 West 4th Avenue (between Burrard and Cypress)

Open daily for ticket sales: 11am- 9pm

Cash only. Free parking available in back of store.

VLAFF Ticket Outlet at the Pacific Cinémathèque:

1131 Howe Street (at Helmcken)

Open Monday to Friday: 1pm to 5pm

(Closed on Labour Day)

Cash only.

Online Ticket Sales www.vlaff.org

Advance tickets must be purchased online at least one day prior to the screening.

Online sales end at midnight.

There is a \$2 service charge per order.

Tickets at the door - Cash Only

On the day of a screening, tickets may be purchased at the venue only. The Box Office opens 30 minutes prior to the first screening of the day.

Will Call

Will Call opens one hour prior to the screening for all films. Please arrive in advance to allow time to pick up your order. You must present your confirmation number in order to pick up your tickets.

Rush Tickets

If a show is sold out, rush tickets may be available at the door. Any unclaimed seats will be released just prior to the screening on a first come, first served basis.

SFU Harbour Centre

Tickets for the free screenings and events at SFU Harbour Centre are available at the door on a first-come first-seated basis starting 30 minutes prior to each event. Attendees are required to purchase a \$2 VLAFF membership.

Latecomers are not guaranteed seating. Please arrive early; tickets are non-refundable.

Monday 14	Tuesday 15	Wednesday 16	Thursday 17	Friday 18	Saturday 19	Sunday 20
 <p>EL DIARIO DE AGUSTIN <i>(Agustin's Newspaper)</i> Chile / Spanish with English subtitles For five generations, <i>El Mercurio</i> was the most powerful and influential newspaper in Chile. Its role during the Pinochet dictatorship makes it among the most taboo topics in Contemporary Chilean history. PC 6:00 PM</p>	 <p>NOEL - POETA DA VILA <i>(Noel: The Samba Poet)</i> Brazil / Portugese with English subtitles. At 17, Noel is a funny guy with a twisted chin who likes to taunt his friends with samba improvisations. A middle-class white guy, he prefers the company of blacks from the wrong side of town, factory girls and hookers. PC 4:00 PM</p>	 <p>ESTÔMAGO <i>(A Gastronomic Story)</i> Brazil / Portuguese with English subtitles The world is made of those who eat and those who get eaten. Raimundo Nonato, our protagonist, finds an alternative way: he cooks. PC 4:00 PM</p>	 <p>CHEVOLUTION Mexico / English and Spanish with English subtitles In 1960, Cuban photographer Alberto “Korda” Díaz captured a photo of Ernesto “Ché” Guevara during a mass funeral for the victims of an explosion in Havana Harbour – a watershed moment in the emergence of a new Cuba. PC 4:00 PM</p>	 <p>SHORT SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL Mexico / Spanish with English subtitles The Mexico City International Film Festival joins forces with VLAFF to present a selection of the best works presented in one of the most important short film festivals in Latin America. SFU 3:00 PM FREE</p>	 <p>EL CIELO, LA TIERRA Y LA LLUVIA <i>(The Sky, the Earth, and the Rain)</i> Chile / Spanish with English subtitles The story of Ana, Verónica, Marta and Toro – four lonely people enduring the routine and silence of the south. SFU 3:00 PM FREE ADMISSION</p>	<p>TBA</p> <p>The most popular films of VLAFF '09 will be screened again</p> <p>PC 3:00 PM</p>
 <p>LAKE TAHOE Mexico / Spanish with English Subtitles Juan, who crashes the family car after his father dies, heads out on foot, encountering various characters – and decidedly various situations – on the Yucatan Peninsula. VCT 6:00 PM</p>	 <p>PERSONAL BELONGINGS Cuba / Spanish with English subtitles Ernesto has been trying to leave the country for as long as he can remember. His only activity is going from embassy to embassy, trying to get a visa. PC 6:00 PM</p>	 <p>EL CUERNO DE LA ABUNDANCIA <i>(Horn of Plenty)</i> Cuba / Spanish with English subtitles News rocks a little town in Cuba: everyone with the last name Castiñeiras will receive a generous inheritance left by some nuns in a bank in England in the 18th century. PC 6:00 PM</p>	 <p>CONDOR Brazil / Portuguese with English subtitles The films title comes from the code name given to the collaboration between South American military governments, which ended up with the kidnapping and murder of thousands of innocent people in the 1970s. PC 6:00 PM</p>	 <p>REEL JOURNEYS: SHORTS BY CHILEAN WOMEN Chile / Spanish with English Subtitles Each film offers a unique perspective of Chile of today, a nation both diverse and exciting. Five short films. SFU 5:00 PM FREE ADMISSION</p>	 <p>CONDOR Brazil / Portuguese with English subtitles The films title comes from the code name given to the collaboration between South American military governments, which ended up with the kidnapping and murder of thousands of innocent people in the 1970s. SFU 5:00 PM FREE ADMISSION</p>	<p>TBA</p> <p>The most popular films of VLAFF '09 will be screened again</p> <p>PC 5:00 PM</p>
 <p>LOS PARANOICOS <i>(The Paranoids)</i> Argentina / Spanish with English subtitles An aimless, narcoleptic loner who works children's birthday parties for a living, aspiring Luciano lives in fear –fear of success, STDs and his doorman, for starters. PC 8:00 PM</p>	 <p>TONY MANERO Chile / Spanish with English subtitles In the midst of the tough social context of Pinochet's dictatorship, Raúl Peralta, a man in his 50s, is obsessed with the idea of impersonating Tony Monero, John Travolta's character in <i>Saturday Night Fever</i>. PC 8:00 PM</p>	 <p>LEONERA <i>(Lion's Den)</i> Argentina / Spanish with English subtitles Julia wakes up in her apartment, surrounded by the bloody bodies of Ramiro and Nahuel. Ramiro is still alive. Both have been her lovers and Julia is now expecting the baby of one... PC 8:00 PM</p>	 <p>LA VIDA ME MATA <i>(Life Kills Me)</i> Chile / Spanish with English subtitles Gaspar is a cameraman prone to depression who has not been able to get over his older brother's untimely death. PC 8:00PM</p>	 <p>SECRETOS <i>(Secrets)</i> Chile / Spanish with English subtitles With seriousness and a dash of humour, <i>Secretos</i> reveals how, after a decades-long exile, a former left with militant returns to Chile to come to terms with his role in the death of a comrade and legendary social leader nicknamed the “Voice of the People.” PC 5:00 PM</p>	 <p>PARPADOS AZULES <i>(Blue Eyelids)</i> Mexico/ Spanish with English subtitles Mariana has just won a trip for two to paradise. She also discovers that she has nobody to share the prize with. PC 5:00 PM</p>	<p>LA BUENA VIDA <i>(The Good Life)</i></p> <p>Director: Andres Wood</p> <p><i>La Buena Vida</i> tells the story of four characters – Teresa, Edmundo, Mario and Patricia – in Santiago, Chile in 2008. All are strangers to each other, but live in the same bustling city. All of them are chasing their dreams: Teresa tries to save lives as a psychologist; Edmundo is a hairdresser who dreams of owning a car; Mario wishes to join the Philharmonic; and Patricia works on surviving daily life.</p> <p>GR 7 7:00 PM</p> <p>CLOSING GALA FILM</p>
 <p>PARPADOS AZULES <i>(Blue Eyelids)</i> Mexico/ Spanish with English subtitles Mariana has just won a trip for two to paradise. She also discovers that she has nobody to share the prize with. VCT 8:00 PM</p>	<p>FESTIVAL PROGRAM For full film synopsis go to www.vlaff.org</p>			 <p>EL PREMIO <i>(The Prize)</i> Peru / Spanish with English subtitles Alex is having a love affair with his cousin Lisbet, a young woman married to taxi driver who is involved in dirty business. PC 7:00 PM</p>	 <p>TONY MANERO Chile / Spanish with English subtitles In the midst of the tough social context of Pinochet's dictatorship, Raúl Peralta, a man in his 50s, is obsessed with the idea of impersonating Tony Monero, John Travolta's character in <i>Saturday Night Fever</i>. PC 7:00 PM</p>	
	<p>VENUE INFORMATION</p> <p>Pacific Cinémathèque (PC) 1131 Howe Street (at Helmcken)</p> <p>Granville 7 Cinemas (GR 7) 855 Granville Street (at Robson)</p> <p>SFU Downtown Campus Harbour Centre (SFU) 515 West Hastings (at Richards)</p> <p>UBC Robson Square (UBC Robson) 800 Robson Street (below the Vancouver Art Gallery)</p> <p>Vancouver International Film Centre, Vancity Theatre (VCT) 1181 Seymour Street (at Davie)</p> <p>Vancouver Community College (VCC) 1155 East Broadway (at Clark Dr)</p> <p>Clairmont Camera Film & Digital 1225 E. Keith Road, #2, North Vancouver</p> <p>PS Production Services 8301 Eastlake Dr., Burnaby</p>			<p>ARCHEOLOGY OF MEMORY: VILLA GRIMALDI A Multimedia Event Film – Concert – Art Chile/ Spanish with English subtitles Villa Grimaldi was a concentration camp run by Chile's secret police during Pinochet's dictatorship. A survivor of the camp goes back to the place of terror to retrieve his memories and to confront his demons. VCC 7:30 PM</p>		

"LIKE A NEVER-ENDING DISCOVERY OF AMERICA"

— Ignacio Agüero, *El Diario de Agustín*, Chile

The Latin American film industry has indeed produced strong and important films in the last years, but more than solely a regional phenomenon, it has become an important focus for film critics and film lovers who have seen Latin American films selected in international festivals such as Cannes, Berlin or Toronto. This year the Peruvian film, *La Teta Asustada*, won the Golden Bear for Best Film at the Berlin Film Festival, a tremendous milestone in Peru's film history; at Sundance, a Chilean film, *La Nana*, took the International Jury Prize for Best Film. The list of Latin American films that have gathered awards all over the world in the past decade is extensive, and yet, our films are still largely unknown in the commercial film circuit.

And so, what are the visions of Latin American filmmakers for cinema in their respective countries? Some of the directors whose work we are proud to feature at VLAFF '09 help us to answer this question:

Latin America produces very good film from an artistic point of view; the region has a strong presence in important festivals and new interesting filmmakers are appearing on the scene. The problem is that there is very little public for this type of authorial cinema. A better balance between art and commerce is needed so that the public will come to the theatres. I'm not advocating betrayal of personal visions or making crude concessions. I believe that Latin American film should explore its own identity, but it should move away from the hermetic tendencies into which it has fallen.

In Colombia, film production has increased and become more professional in the last five years thanks in part to legislation supporting the industry (Law 814). The problem is that Colombian cinema today is not a profitable business, most Colombian films lose money.

Andrés Baiz, *Satanás*.
Colombia.

Latin American film still has to work precisely to get rid of at least some part of this regional descriptor, especially when it becomes overly defined as "local film," or "Mexican, Colombian, Argentine, Brazilian...Latin." In my opinion, the best kind of cinema is this: FILM, a universal form that can communicate to any culture, whether or not it is Latin. I envision film that, while drawing on its own identity and culture, employs language, standards of quality, and especially, narrative structure and cultural codes that allow us to transcend our marginality as Latin in every sense. Unfortunately, in Mexico and the rest of Latin America we continue making mostly "Mexican movies for Mexicans," "Colombian for Colombians," etc.

Rafa Lara, *La Milagrosa*.
Mexico-Colombia.

Documentary cinema in Mexico is currently thriving partly because festivals for documentaries have created new audiences and

raised the level of production. Mexican public funding offers significant possibilities, including support from IMCINE (Mexican Film Institute) and tax incentives. As someone from the outside (London) who has made my life in Mexico, I find a freedom there which does not exist in England, where documentary filmmakers are dependent on TV commissions, or the U.S., where at the moment, the window for funding for documentaries appears to have peaked.

We saw our audiences as not only in Mexico, but also in the vastly extensive Latino community north of the border and in Canada, too. *Chevolution* reflects this new way of working:



CHEVOLUTION, a film about how Korda's photo of Che became universally known.

it was produced in Mexico with co-producers in the U.K. and U.S. It's a film which crosses borders.

Trisha Ziff, *Chevolution*. Mexico-UK.

Although there are great quality films throughout our continent, we Latin Americans have few opportunities to see them. We have not succeeded in creating a market for our films and we continue to be confined within our countries without much chance of distributing our own movies throughout Latin America and the world. Thus, great works are only seen within small circles. This problem directly limits the ability to recover the costs of production at the same time that it impedes increased production. There are many stories,

a lot of talent, but limited opportunities to make films.

Our big challenge is to develop distribution networks so that the Latin American public can see Latin American film.

Andrea Ugalde, *El Regalo*. Chile.

There is an explosion of new filmmakers and projects because of emerging talent, new technologies and favourable production conditions, especially in Argentina, Mexico and Brazil. In my country, we also have new filmmakers, like Claudia Llosa (*La Teta Asustada*), who won best film at the most recent Berlin festival.

Andrés Cotler, *Pasajeros*. Perú.

Argentina is producing a great diversity in its films, from the subjects and visual styles to the modes of production. This is very healthy. It would be even healthier if there were better conditions for the distribution and exhibition of these films; this is a pending issue under permanent discussion. But little by little, one way or another, new

avenues are opened through current technologies that allow us to bring the films to potential audiences.

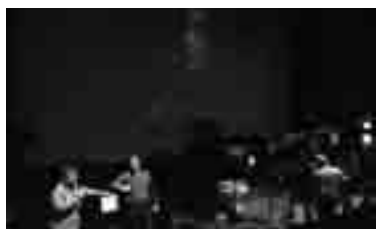
Esteban Menis, *Incómodos*. Argentina.

Latin America and Mexico are producing films that are highly risky and inventive, but films are also being produced that try to imitate Hollywood movies in a mediocre way. I like films that have little to do with regions and more to do with individuals.

Fernando Eimbcke, *Lake Tahoe*. Mexico.

MASTER LIGHTING

WORKSHOPS / OPEN HOUSE / SEMINARS



Advancing the art and craft of filmmaking

September 12th, 13th and 20th 2009

Proudly hosted by: **Clairmont Camera Film & Digital** and **PS Production Services**

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WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF SHORT FILMS?

Short films are largely relegated to the film festival circuit, rarely shown—if at all—in commercial theatres. In general, minimum budgets and lots of imagination come together to make these films. Despite numerous obstacles to success, short films do launch the careers of great filmmakers, though all too often, they never know a life beyond school projects or line items on résumés. With short films consistently denied the respect and attention they deserve from the film exhibition industry, what is the real purpose of short films?

Nine directors participating in VLAFF '09 answer this question, giving us their personal vision and their opinion of what role short films play in the countries they are from.

A short allows the filmmaker's creative voice to be heard without taking on the (innumerable) expenditures of a full-length feature or without compromising the artistic vision, which can be affected by the need to secure financing. The short is a practical, economic and valuable medium for promoting original artistic work, with the hope of attracting the attention of producers interested in financing the filmmaker's vision.

Ana María Carrizales, *Playback*. Perú.

Colombia's film policy uses tax incentives to promote the exhibition of nationally produced shorts in commercial movie theatres before the main attractions. This creates a small (I should say not very free or "democratic") space for shorts, and allows filmmakers to recover part of their investment.

The short film helps strengthen and professionalize skills as a way to discover strengths and weaknesses as a filmmaker. It is much better to identify these attributes with a short, which involves less financial risk than a full-length feature, and the filmmaker can experiment with narratives and ideas, take risks and construct cinematic identities for future national projects.

Tatiana Villacob, *Dolores*. Colombia.

Shorts are useful for sharing experiences and points of view from and for a relatively specialized audience, which is limited to the universe in which shorts can be distributed. I don't know up to what point this is necessarily negative.

Antonia Lobos, *Camposanto*. Chile.

As filmmakers, the short film always forces us to face our ability to synthesize. The question *What story do I want to tell?* has to be resolved quickly because time is running out.... As a spectator it's a pleasure to



VLAFF will be screening more than 30 short films from up and coming Latin American directors. Here, *La Ropa Sucia*.

live "other lives" for a few moments, especially given that hurriedness rules in our society.

Yoame Escamilla, *La Ropa Sucia*. México.

Scorpio Rising or *Night and Fog*, the world would be lame.

Vittorio Farfán, *La Sombra de Don Roberto*. Chile. (Producer)

Their short duration forces you to be precise in the content and allows you to try out your style in a holistic way. The fact is that shorts are poorly distributed; there is insufficient awareness and interest in them to develop professional standards and affordable and effective promotional systems.

Felipe Azua, *Al Final del Día*. Chile.

There is neither money nor popularity for the shorts industry in Chile, and truthfully, there is not much of an industry either. They are purely an investment in your image as a director, a demonstration of style and production that is used as a guarantee to raise money for feature films.

Constanza Fernández, *No me Pidas que no lo Lamente*. Chile.

It's an opportunity with many purposes. What I'm looking for or enjoy when I do a short film, is the freedom I have. I can work with a complex idea, whether it's mature, or just a hypothesis. This is a freedom that neoliberal cinema does not allow...besides, if it weren't for transcending short films such as

Shorts are like a bucket of water, if you run into one, you will surely get wet, but when water starts to get scarce, so will shorts, and that is when they will be valued to the extent they deserve. In the meantime, I film, film and film, and if I begin to wonder what the purpose of a short is, I think I never would have made one...

Pablo Trujillo Novoa, *Mañana*. Chile.

In Praise of Shorts. The short is a good *entrée* for first-time filmmakers. Like short stories or vignettes, short films are not only a creative endeavour—and so often a labour of love because they have little or no budget—they are also an ideal way to break into the industry. It's a manageable package that can lead to bigger things. In the words of an ancient Chinese proverb: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Jennifer Patterson, *Papalote*. Canada.

LITERATURE IN FILM

Since its inception, film has fed off the soul of literature and the Latin American cinematic tradition is no exception. We have all witnessed classic stories turned into magnificent scripts, and debated cinema's influence on authors at the time they write a story. We recognize the courage that it takes for an author to transform a novel into a screenplay, and the struggles and frequent failures of screenwriters who attempt to adapt literary masterpieces to the screen.

This year VLAFF's Opening Night film testifies to the symbiotic relationship of film and literature. *Arráncame la Vida* (*Tear This Heart Out*), a masterful novel written by Ángeles Mastretta (published in 1985), was adapted to the screen in 2008 by Roberto Sneider, also the director of the film, and it is quickly becoming one of the most successful films in Mexican history. This tradition has run a lively course: in 1985, the acclaimed Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa saw his great novel *La Ciudad y los Perros* turned into a screenplay and then into a successful film of the same name, directed by Francisco J. Lombardi and adapted by José Watanabe. Whereas, the Nobel Prize winner, Gabriel García Márquez, saw his novel *Love in the Time of Cholera*, turned into a script in English by Ronald Harwood for the 2007 film by Mike Newell, which, in spite of the popularity of the original novel, was received with mixed reviews.

There are authors who seek to avoid some of the pitfalls of adaptation by encompassing the role of both screenwriter and filmmaker, such as the case of the Argentine writer and director Lucía Puenzo (XXY, *El Niño Pez*), who turned her novel, *El Niño Pez*, into a script and produced a very successful film that is now travelling the world.

A Vancouver-based, Peruvian writer and filmmaker, Ana María Carrizales, has experienced this challenge firsthand. She wrote a short story for a literary workshop, given by the acclaimed Canadian writer Caroline Adderson, for those who choose to write in English even though it is not their first language. At the end of the workshop, the Vancouver Public Library published her short story, *Playback*, which Carrizales then turned into a script and into her debut short film, titled the same, which was selected to screen in this year's festival. Printed here is the complete original short story.



PLAYBACK

by Ana María Carrizales

In the next fifteen minutes Mira is going to die again. I'll hear the sounds coming out from deep down in her stomach as if all her organs were drowning on the last spasm of sorrow. And the camera will offer the same choices; stop, pause, fast forward, rewind. But I'll play it all over again.

She yells her pain out and scratches her legs and arms until they bleed. Sometimes her jaw gets dislocated and that's the worst. She calls for me, fully alive; eyes wide open, lungs full of air until she collapses again. When the red light in the right corner of the camera turns into a green one, I know for sure that's finally over. And I fear the stillness of the empty bed she left behind and the horrible buzz that the silence voices. I need Mira to keep calling for me. I need her to fill this room. I need her words to soften my heart.

I have this dream where I am jumping over the abyss. My body lands over this big pond of shit and as I try to get away from it I end up buried under it. When I am finally awake, I have to push away seventy tapes to make my way up. Four hundred and fifty hours.

Mira's pain is suffocating me in reverse. I turn myself into some kind of alter-ego. I feel I am eating all the sorrow she threw up to the world in this room.

I need to stop the tape. But I can't. The red light will blink as a little scared puppy; hot air will pant in and out the camera's fan. Even with the subtlest touch it'll tremble as a pulse, as a nerve would do...

I am her sickness. I spread disease into Mira's system until she rots; right in front of my eyes, slowly paced, until she dies. I own her destiny. What should I do? What should I do? If I pause, I'll freeze her in pain, if I rewind she'll relive it ten times more but if I fast forward the pain might leave faster...

Only if I watch closer she'll tell me what she wants. ●

Love Latin Cinema?

We know you do! In the past seven years the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival has brought over 450 films from across Latin America and the diaspora to Vancouver, reaching audiences of close to 5,000. By presenting a selection of short films, documentaries and features representing at least 13 different countries, we celebrate our culture and share the Latin American experience with Canadian audiences. VLAFF offers an annual free screening series at SFU Harbour Centre – an integral part of our commitment to make these films accessible to all. We also organize educational workshops for local emerging filmmakers led by such renowned artists as Academy Award-winning cinematographer Guillermo Navarro (*Pan's Labyrinth*).

You Hold the Key to Our Success.

We need your support to continue presenting the dynamic and ground-breaking work of Latin American filmmakers. Eighty per cent of the films we screen are Canadian premieres, and for many, VLAFF provides the only opportunity in Canada to see these amazing works.

We invite you to become a part of what we do by donating to VLAFF.

Every Dollar Helps: \$20...\$35...\$60...\$100...\$500 and counting.

No amount is too big or too small — every dollar donated to VLAFF helps support the festival's mission to bring Latin American cinema to Vancouver. We are also pleased to announce that we have recently become a registered charity and will issue tax receipts for all donations of \$10 or more.

There are **three easy** ways to **DONATE**:

- 1) ONLINE:** www.vlaff.org (VISA/MasterCard/American Express)
- 2) BY MAIL:** (Please make cheque payable to: Vancouver Latin American Film Festival)
Vancouver Latin American Film Festival
 209 - 55 West Broadway
 Vancouver, BC V5Y 1P1 Canada
- 3) IN PERSON:** Talk to one of our membership volunteers at the festival to help you fill out a donation pledge form.

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 Latin American cinema in Vancouver.

Muchísimas gracias,

Vancouver Latin American Film Festival Society





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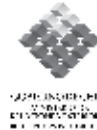
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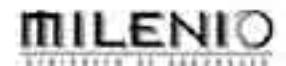
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