

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

January 20, 2005

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Latino Cinemedia Fest Joins Santa Barbara International Film Festival

The Santa Barbara Latino CineMedia Festival has joined forces with the Santa Barbara International Film Festival and will supply 21 of the 150 offerings at the upcoming film fest, which runs from January 28 through February 6.

CineMedia artistic director Cristina Venegas, an assistant professor of film studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, said the 21 films include documentaries and works of fiction that run the gamut of subject matter. The films are the works of filmmakers based in Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Cuba, Spain, Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, and the United States.

"It's an amazing program, and there are films from everywhere," said Venegas. "And there is a tremendous variety, from love stories to thrillers, to serious documentaries, to art documentaries---just tremendous diversity."

Four of the films will make their U.S. debut at the festival, Venegas said. Five of the films are by women. Several others are by first-time directors. Each of the films will be shown twice, each at least once during prime time. Several films will be shown on campus at UCSB. For a complete listing of films, show times, prices, and venues, visit the Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF) Web site at www.sbfilmfestival.org.

In addition, CineMedia/SBIFF will host three special events during the festival.

At 6 p.m. on **Monday, Jan. 31**, CineMedia/SBIFF and UCSB's Center for Chicano Studies and Center for Black Studies will present a special showing of "Prisioneiro Da Grade Do Ferro" ("Prisoner of the Iron Bars"), a documentary about life in a Brazilian prison, in the Isla Vista Theater. A panel discussion will follow the screening. Panelists will include Venegas; Paul Amar, a professor of law and society at UCSB; Anna Everett, a professor of film studies and director of the Center for Black Studies; and Carlos Morton, a professor of dramatic arts and director of the Center for Chicano Studies.

At 7:30 p.m. **Thursday, Feb. 3**, CineMedia/SBIFF and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art will host a celebration of Latin American and Spanish Cinema at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street. In addition to fine art, film, and food, partygoers can hear live Afro-Cuban music by Ricardo Lemvo and Makina Loca, and Latin American folk music by Jose Elizarraraz and Hugo Macario. Tickets cost \$15 for Museum of Art members and \$20 for all others.

And at 4 p.m. **Saturday, Feb. 5** in the Museum of Art, CineMedia invites beginning filmmakers and interested others to a workshop about "The Life and Times of Frida Kahlo," where Amy Stechler (director), Victor Zamudio-Taylor (producer), Mel Rogers (President KOCE) and Luca Bentivoglio (Latino Public Broadcasting) will discuss the kinds of projects that public television is looking for and how to prepare and submit a proposal.

Venegas said last year's debut edition of the Santa Barbara Latino CineMedia Festival, which featured 15 films, was a good start. But she said the organization is even stronger now that it is allied with the Santa Barbara International Film Festival.

"It's the beginning of a beautiful relationship," she said. "I would like to see it continue and I think Roger Durling, SBIFF's artistic director, would, too."

Venegas said the Latino films to be shown include:

- *Outro Lado Da Rua* (Other Side of the Street): Features Fernanda Montenegro, who was nominated for an Academy Award for best actress in 1999 for "Central Station," as a lonely woman who spies on her neighbors and reports what she finds out to the police.
- *Dirt*: Depicts the life of domestic workers in the United States. Features Mexican actress Julieta Ortiz.

- Crossover Dreams: Features Panamanian actor/musician Ruben Blades as a musician in New York's Spanish Harlem trying to get a crossover English-language recording contract.
- Indocumentados: Leonardo Ricagni's film maps the interconnected lives of undocumented immigrants in post-9/11 New York City.
- The Life and Times of Frida Kahlo: Features interviews with Mexican intellectuals Carlos Fuentes, Carlos Monsivais, Elena Poniatowska and others and turns up new insights into the famed Mexican artist's life.
- Voces Inocentes (Innocent Voices): Set in the mid 1980s El Salvador, in the midst of the country's civil war, a young boy must decide between enlisting in the army or joining up with the guerrilla forces.

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