

Film News

The Academy of Motion Pictures Is Hosting an Entire Evening of Latino Short Films



By Manuel Betancourt | 5 days ago



Talking about “diversity” or “inclusion” in Hollywood is not enough. You need to nurture talent and support budding filmmakers. You need to show their work and materialize your support in tangible ways. That’s clearly what the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is doing this month. They’re sponsoring the fourth edition of the *NewFilmmakers Los Angeles InFocus* series which this September will spotlight films from and about the Latino and Hispanic communities.

The special evening presentation will take place at The Mary Pickford Center Linwood Dunn Theater and will feature two collections of shorts and a feature film. In between, audiences will be able to mingle with the directors and celebrate the powerful work being screened.

Featuring talent from the US, Spain, Brazil, Mexico and Cuba, the shorts are as varied as you’d imagine. *La primera de las mujeres libres* (*First of Free Girls*) looks like a Sofia Coppola-inspired take on the occasion of a girl’s first period. What’s most striking is its dreamlike visual inventiveness. Note the whimsical use of red glitter in Mexican-born Alexandra Velasco and Alexander Kahan’s teaser trailer.



Taking a page out of the low-budget but gripping thrillers out there, Madrileño Jaime Valdueza has cooked up what looks like a pulse-pounding short. *Burned*, which stars Beau Knapp (soon to be seen in Ang Lee’s *Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk*) and *It Follows*’s Maika Monroe, is set in one of those shady motels people hide out in the middle of the night in films sure to scare the crap out of you. Something’s happened and Jason (Knapp) is forced to see how much he trusts his girlfriend (Monroe).



Or if you want some lighter fare, you may enjoy Lainnie Felan’s hilarious take on millennial shut-ins in her post-apocalyptic two-hander, *Couch Potato Chronicles*. When the world ends and you’re left with a camera and a Latina mom who doesn’t seem to care that you lost what you most treasure (read: television as we know it), Zuraya (Felan) will have to find a way to make it through another day. Perhaps even make it outside. Maybe.



And that’s just scratching the surface considering there’s a *Willfred*-like short about two dogs called Sprinkles and Buttons, a tale of a man whose mole recipe has made him and his wife immortal, a look at an undocumented Mexican housemaid’s life working for a spoiled family, and a Cuban road trip flick among others.

The evening will be capped off by *Como en el cine* (*Just Like the Movies*). The Peruvian comedy, about a group of cinephiles intent on making a movie on a shoestring budget is brought to you by Gonzalo Ladines. Taking a page out of his successful web-series *Los cinéfilos*, Ladines is yet again making an avid film fan the lead of his first feature film, one who is just as upset at his girlfriend for cheating on him as he is about the fact that she did so on his vintage *Star Wars* sheets. You can’t get those so easily these days, you know? It’s that broad comedic tone which makes *Como en el cine* feel at once familiar and original at the same time.



The NewFilmmakers Los Angeles InFocus series on Latino and Hispanic communities takes place on September 10, 2016.

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, [New Filmmakers Los Angeles](#). | Friday, September 2, 2016 at 5:47 PM UTC

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