

Film

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



Screenshot of 'Maxima: This Land of Mine' trailer

By [Manuel Betancourt](#) | 3 hours ago

NewFilmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA) will be hosting the largest celebration of Latinx and Hispanic filmmakers in its history this fall. In partnership with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) and hosted at the Academy's very own Samuel Goldwyn Theater in Beverly Hills, the annual ***InFocus: Latinx & Hispanic Cinema*** event will be presenting a powerful lineup of local and international films by world-class emerging filmmakers from Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Spain, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Argentina, and the United States across three short film programs. The evening opens with a collection of stories that explore everything from time travel to forbidden love, being caught between two words, abusive work environments, and the importance of community.

Dealing with everything from undocumented immigrants living in Boston to Spanish gay couples struggling to form a family, the shorts at *InFocus* offer a wild selection of what up-and-coming filmmakers are doing right now. **Federico Torrado Tobón's *The Plague***, which combines the Colombian-born director's deftness with magical realism and surreal characters, for example, has the kind of premise that makes you sit up and take notice: Teenage twins Julie and Julian take refuge in a secluded forest cabin to avoid becoming infected by a mysterious and deadly plague, when they encounter a stranger in need of their help. From the dreamy visuals offered in the trailer, which is scored to an eerie lullaby-like tune, this US production is but one of the many shorts that you don't want to miss.

Elsewhere — the *InFocus* program is broken up into three shorts program, each consisting of five shorts — you can also find filmmakers playing around with form and genre. **Jonathan Ostos Yaber**, the Mexican director who's known for writing, directing and producing both live-action and animated films, will be celebrating the world premiere of ***The Morphable Man*** at the Academy's fest. The synopsis sounds cryptic enough to intrigue: A man deals with the consequences when he is no longer able to hide a condition that makes him transform into random objects depending on his emotions. But to see the trailer for the short film — which shuttles between simple animated sketches and special effects that visualize just how morphable Adio really is; at one point he's pixelated, at others he's being covered with CGI goo — is to see the potential of seeing what it'd be like to literally wear one's emotions in one's sleeve.

Part of the joy of catching a slew of short films is getting a chance to follow a number of stories with characters from all over the world. There are hormonal Mexican teenagers (***Evaporated***) and questioning Haitian ones (***The Doubt***); there are Spanish dancers (***Bailaora***) and Brazilian actors (***Synopsis***). Take Peruvian director and photographer **Mariel Sosa's** film, for example. Her documentary ***Maxima: This Land of Mine*** transports audiences to the green rolling hills of the Peruvian Andes. The short doc is a portrait of a farmer who is putting a halt to the plans of one of the biggest mining companies in the world over the place she calls her home.

With pre-screening receptions, where attendees can sip cocktails and mingle with industry professionals and festival selected filmmakers in the lounge, this filmmaking showcase is designed to build community within and outside the industry. So be sure to check out a [video recap of last year's event](#) and grab tickets to 2018's *InFocus* program.

[InFocus: Latinx & Hispanic Cinema](#) will take place on Saturday, September 8, 2018.

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, [InFocus: Latinx & Hispanic Cinema](#), [New Filmmakers Los Angeles](#).
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