

NEWFILMMAKERS CO-FOUNDER LARRY LABOE ON NFMLA'S LATINX & HISPANIC CINEMA EVENT

By Alyssa Schilperoort | September 11, 2019 | [Lifestyle](#)

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In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, NewFilmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA) is showcasing Latinx and Hispanic filmmakers and stories at the NewFilmmakers Los Angeles Film Festival InFocus: Latinx & Hispanic Cinema event. The program will be hosted at The Academy's Linwood Dunn Theater in Hollywood on September 14th. With the event quickly approaching, we asked Larry Laboe, Co-Founder and Executive Director of NewFilmmakers Los Angeles, to give us some insight into the inspiration behind the event and how it has continued to grow and evolve over the years.



How did this event come to be?

LARRY LABOE: Since NewFilmmakers Los Angeles' inception, the programming we've represented and promoted has always highlighted diverse artists and stories. In 2013 we decided to mandate that one program of each NFMLA Monthly Film Festival celebrate a different diversity and inclusion focus. This programming initiative is known as "InFocus." Our topics range from Latinx and Hispanic Cinema, Female Cinema, Black Cinema, Asian Cinema, LGBTQ+ Cinema to Middle Eastern, Arab and Dutch Cinema as well as Canadian Cinema. The organization doesn't only put an emphasis on diversity and inclusion as it pertains to ethnicity, gender, sexual identity/orientation and indigenous heritage. NFMLA also emphasizes representation based on point of view and region.

Since 2013, the program has grown immensely. In 2016, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences joined in our efforts to showcase these filmmakers and their stories. This has led to an expanded audience for the films as well as elevated the experience for attendees, sponsors, partners and the filmmakers. It has also expanded into an additional partnership with the Academy covering our Middle Eastern, Arab and Dutch program which is coming up on December 14, 2019 at the Academy's Mary Pickford Center in Hollywood.

What do you look for when programming films for this festival?

LL: When programming the Festival, our programming department, led by our Programming Director Bojana Sandic, seeks first and foremost filmmakers with unique voices, innovative storytelling skills and the ability to build strong characters. This is a paramount element for any film selected by NFMLA. Following this, we seek gender parity and diversity whenever possible and make a strong effort to include international as well as local filmmakers. Production quality is also an important factor, however, the story and characters always take precedent. We also seek filmmakers who we feel we can really support in taking the 'next steps' in their professional career. NFMLA's mission is to showcase innovative works by emerging global storytellers and we can best support artists who are ready to move into the next stage of their career by providing them with access to connections, resources and professional opportunities such as representation, distribution, funding and more.

Any specific projects or films you're most excited for guests to see this year?

LL: All the films in the line-up are absolutely fantastic. We're presenting 15 short movies reflecting content and artists from 11 countries including Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Spain, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Australia, Canada and the United States. Even more exciting is that all of the international content creators will be flying in to join us. The Los Angeles based filmmakers will also be present during the event. Each program will offer a post-screening Q&A session with moderators including Los Angeles Film Critics Association President Claudia Puig, *Los Angeles Times* Reporter Carlos Aguilar, *Deadline Hollywood* Reporter Dino Ray-Ramos, *Entertainment Weekly* Reporter Rosy Cordero and Seattle International Film Festival (SIFF) and Palm Springs International Film Festival (PSIFF) World Programmer Hebe Tabachnik.

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