

NFMLA & AMPAS Partner for InFocus Latinx Film Festival

By **DANO NISSEN** 

CREDIT: NFMLA

NewFilmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA) and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will present the InFocus: Latinx & Hispanic Cinema Festival on Sept. 14 at the Linwood Dunn Theater in Hollywood.

The event gives the opportunity for emerging Latinx filmmakers from around the world to screen their films and network with industry luminaries. This year's filmmakers hail from Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Spain, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Australia, Canada and the United States and will screen short films over three programs.

NFMLA executive director and co-founder **Larry Laboe** said the festival tends to stay away from pics dominating the film festival circuit, leaving space for those that would otherwise not be seen. "We're serving a niche of filmmakers that are in the same caliber of what you see in the big film festivals that just may not have made it in those festivals," he said.

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The small and niche nature of the festival has its advantages. "We're really able to foster a lot of industry relationships and resources for them as opposed to a bigger festival," he said. One such resource is the high-profile attendees the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences partnership brings along. "Each filmmaker will be meeting one on one with all these industry professionals. That's something unique to what we're offering. The partnership with the Academy really helps to elevate the visibility for these filmmakers."

Bojana Sandic, programming director at NFMLA, said, "When we get to bring people together to meet face to face that's something that we place a really high value on."

As for the event's goals, Laboe said, "We want to see them getting representation. We want to see funding opportunities happening for them. We want to see distributions opportunities happening for them."

NFMLA also reaches out to other festivals for increased exposure. Laboe said, "We're always seeking additional screening opportunities for the films that premiere at our festival after they play." He plans to travel to Oaxaca, Mexico, in October to promote the films to the city's annual festival.

Last year's festival had a few success stories, including one filmmaker signing with UTA and another with CAA, as well as HBO buying one of the shorts.

Tickets cost \$15 and will give access to all three short film programs and pre-reception access to the lounge for mingling with the filmmakers and industry professionals in attendance preceding each program. The festival runs from 3:30-11 p.m.

Industry delegation members include Matthew Brodlie at Disney Plus, Carlos Gaona at Warner Bros., Jessica Rose at Fox Searchlight Pictures, Michael Senzer at the Gersh Agency, Aaron Ashford at Pantelion (Lionsgate Entertainment and Grupo Televisa), Brian Pacheco at Walt Disney Television, Robert Patla at HBO, Christine Davila at Warner Bros. Digital Networks Stage 13, Joan Wai at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Aimee Rivera at Skydance Media, Kate Hurwitz at Cinetic Media, Nacho Gil and Casey Meurer at Vice Studios and more.