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Indigenous Stories Put "InFocus"

Since 2007, the non-profit NewFilmmakers Los Angeles has sought to champion diverse and emerging filmmakers with their monthly film festival screenings and programs. Therefore, November was the perfect month to celebrate Indigenous stories from different cultures around the globe both in their short film and feature presentations on November 18th at South Park Center in Downtown Los Angeles.



Actor Hector T. Plascencia and director/writer Ahuatl Amaro attend NFMLA's November Film Festival

Indigenous Stories at the NewFilmmakers Los Angeles Event

Inclusion is integral to NFMLA's programming through its InFocus series, which combats the lack of diversity in media by celebrating underrepresented voices. Voices amplified through November's InFocus shorts program, "InFocus: Indigenous Cinema," were as varied as they were insightful – spanning the systemic seizure of First Nation children in Canada during the 1960's to the impacts of diamond-mining on indigenous cultures in present-day Africa.



George Gomez, NFMLA Programs
Coordinator

Expanding America's horizon on the breadth of the indigenous stories was very much top of mind when programming this month's short film presentation. NFMLA's Programs Coordinator, George Gomez, weighed in on the diversity of stories being told:

"I would say many US citizens think indigenous are only the Native Americans coming from here, but they're also Aboriginals, there are people native to northern North America....there are indigenous peoples all over the world. Getting those stories out there really just puts them to the forefront and puts the word out that they are people and these people deserve to have their story told."

Nevertheless, American indigenous films were highlighted with "Warehouse," a timely short about queer and indigenous workers of color standing up to neglectful and punitive management, and "A Bear Named Jesus," a delightful animated short that examined the impacts of Christian evangelical indoctrination on indigenous communities in America. To promote further engagement, some of the filmmakers participated in Q&A's after the screenings of their films.



"Warehouse" director/writer Ahuatl Amaro participates in a panel at NFMLA InFocus

More About NFMLA

Nurturing emerging filmmakers is not only honorable, but is also more necessary than ever in the wake of the writers and actors strikes this year. In addition to their monthly festivals, NFMLA hosts an array of workshops, panels, competitions, and networking programs for up-and-comers as well. "It really is just doing your due diligence doing your research. There are so many different organizations, different programs that you can be taken advantage of," Gomez advises emerging filmmakers, "And so getting involved with the community, grassroots organizations like this really helps you put your work out there."



Event Photos by <u>Margaret Seid</u>.