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NewFilmmakers LA Reveals Lineup For 2025 ‘InFocus: Latin & Hispanic Cinema’ Film Festival

By Dessi Gomez

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'Lights in the Night Sky' - NFMLA InFocus: Latin & Hispanic Cinema

NFMLA

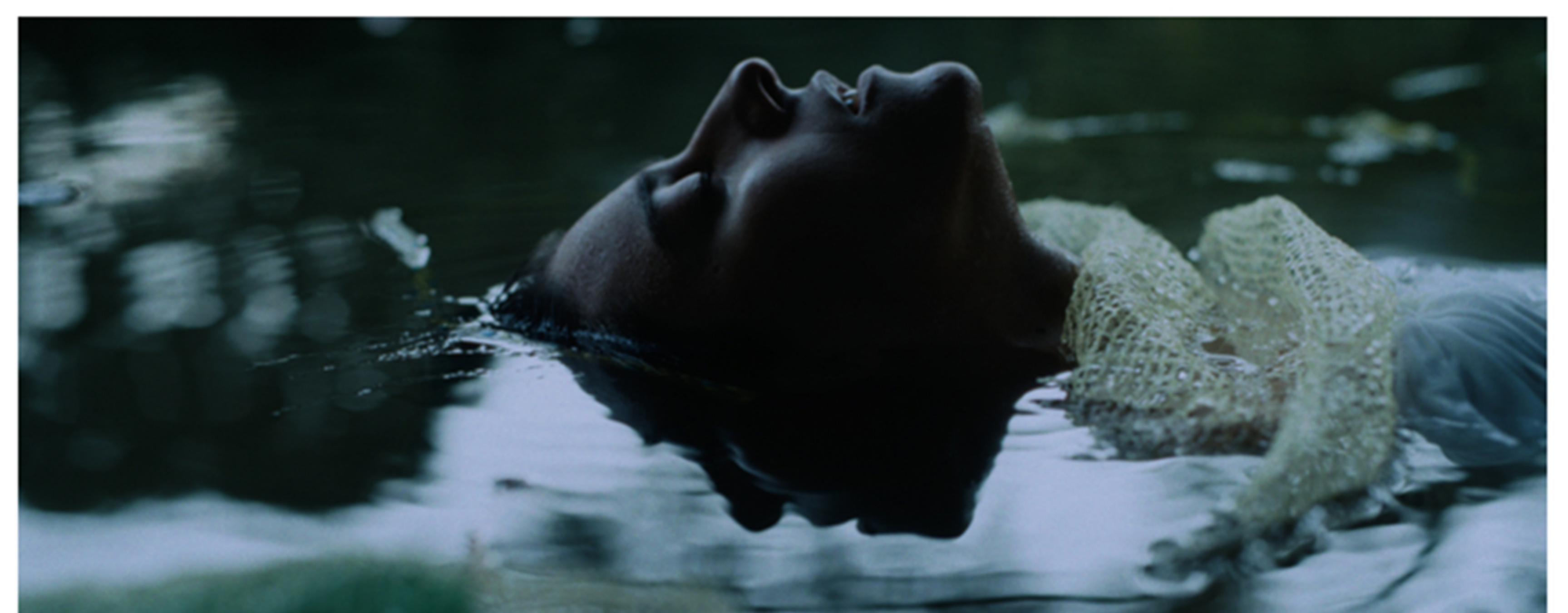
**EXCLUSIVE:** NewFilmmakers Los Angeles ([NFMLA](#)) will host the 2025 edition of *InFocus: Latin & Hispanic Cinema* Film Festival, scheduled for Sept. 19 and 20, 2025. The festival will be held at the 500-seat South Park Center in Downtown Los Angeles.

The festival’s will feature three in-person short film programs with audience Q&A sessions and two live, virtual panels, including *Soup to Nuts: Developing Pitching and Producing with Sonia A. Gambaro*. Gambaro, best known for her producing work on four seasons of comedy series *Acapulco* for Apple TV+, will share her insider advice on the intricacies and nuances of developing, pitching, and producing for television.

Following the masterclass, *Breaking Boundaries: Cross-Platform Storytelling in the Global Market*, will take a deep dive with Raphael Draccon and Carolina Munhóz, who have created a blueprint for moving between bestselling novels, global Netflix series, major comic book properties, and Hollywood feature development. The duo, whose projects span Netflix, WarnerMedia, DC Comics, and Marvel, will share insights into cross-cultural storytelling, adapting intellectual property across mediums, and building international entertainment careers in today’s marketplace.

The festival will also showcase 20 short films by emerging filmmakers from and working in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Spain, the United States and Venezuela. Among the selections are new works from returning NFMLA alumni. Programming includes the Los Angeles premiere of Maria del Mar Rosario’s LALIFF/Netflix Inclusion Fellowship film, *Punta Salinas*, the West Coast premiere of Victoria Garza’s *The Fish Tank*, the West Coast premiere of Daniel Larios’ *Piñata Prayers*, and *Bye Bye Barbarito*, the latest from NFMLA’s 2020 Best New Filmmaker of the Year, Michelle Salcedo.

“We are proud to spotlight so much wonderful, compelling and important work from emerging talent again this year, and to look to the past and future as we celebrate the accomplishments of our alumni from this program,” said NFMLA Programming Director Bojana Sandic and Executive Director/Co-Founder Larry Laboe.



'The Fish Tank' – NFMLA InFocus: Latin & Hispanic Cinema

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NFMLA will bring together industry professionals, executives, and creatives to support the programmed filmmakers and projects in the 2025 edition, including Andrea Juarez Wax at Cinetic Media, Christine Dávila at Mucho Más Media, D’Angelo Louis at Proximity Media, Joanna Chacón at Gravitas Ventures, Justin Perea at Sony Pictures Entertainment, Kevin Heffernan at Range Media Partners, and Roxanna Pompa at Diamond Moving Pictures, among others. In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, opening remarks will be delivered by Miguel Santana, President and CEO of the California Community Foundation.

The programming continues with InFocus: Latin & Hispanic Cinema II, a collection of stories that confront injustice, inequality, systemic failures, and colonialism. Themes include the exploration of these issues, battles for justice, finding strength, deconstructing limiting beliefs, and seeking a better future, presented through drama, documentary, and horror. The festival concludes with a final short film program, InFocus: Latin & Hispanic Cinema III, a poignant program highlighting the importance of our connections across generations and lifetimes. The featured stories focus on connection and loss, deep and transformative love, building meaningful shared moments, transmuting grief, and letting go.

The official selections can be found below:

- Beyond (Dir. & Writ. Bettina López Mendoza)
- Bye Bye Barbarito (Dir. Michelle Salcedo & Writ. Susannah Drissi)
- First Check (Dir. & Writ. Christian Mejia)
- Heaven Doesn’t Know My Name (Dir. & Writ. Carol AÓ)
- Hour of Blood (Dir. & Writ. Marcella Ochoa)
- Ialu (Dir. & Writ. Sebastian Nazario-Colon)
- Lights in the Night Sky (Dir. & Writ. Octavio Daniel Carreño)
- Lucia & Nicole (Dir. & Writ. Marlene Emilia Rios)
- Mean Goals (Dir. & Writ. Ahuatl Amaro)
- Mija (Dir. & Writ. Yashira Ponce)
- Piñata Prayers (Dir. & Writ. Daniel Larios)
- Punta Salinas (Dir. & Writ. Maria del Mar Rosario)
- Reprogrammed (Dir. & Writ. Christopher Guerrero)
- Side Spin (Dir. & Writ. Nick Betancurt)
- Sueño (Dir. & Writ. Raul Martin Romero)
- The Almost Adults (Dir. & Writ. Rafaella Buzzi)
- The Fish Tank (Dir. & Writ. Victoria Garza)
- The Interpreter (Dir. Sofia Rovaletti & Writ. Victoria Mariscal)
- The River Between Us (Dir. Sophia Lafaurie-Munoz & Writ. Alex Miranda)
- The Vote (Dir. & Writ. Sylvia Ray)



'Sueño' – NFMLA 'InFocus: Latin & Hispanic Cinema'

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Alumni of the *InFocus: Latin & Hispanic Cinema* program have gone on to achieve significant opportunities in the film industry. Most recently, Alberto Belli, recognized by NFMLA as Best New Filmmaker of the Year in 2021, directed the newly released 2025 American action-comedy adventure film, *Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado*. Gabriela Ortega, named Best New Filmmaker of the Year by NFMLA in 2022, has recently joined the cast of Todd S. Yellin’s international thriller, *52nd State*. Meanwhile, Miguel Angel Caballero, whose short film *The Ballad of Tita and the Machines* won the 2024 Best of NFMLA Award for Best Short Film, Drama, is developing a feature version of the project with Cabaldana Alchemy and Driven Equation. The film has also been selected for the Frontières International Co-Production Market at the 2025 Fantasia Film Festival.

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