

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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## CINEMA TROPICAL FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS SOME OF THE PAST YEAR'S BEST LATIN AMERICAN FILMS

**The 2016 festival celebrates Cinema Tropical's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an opening night reception; festival films include one U.S. and two New York premieres**

**February 26–28, 2016 at Museum of the Moving Image**

Astoria, Queens, New York, February 11, 2016—**Museum of the Moving Image** and **Cinema Tropical**, the acclaimed New York-based organization dedicated to promoting Latin American cinema in the United States, co-present the 2016 edition of the **Cinema Tropical Festival**. This year's festival, which is also a celebration of Cinema Tropical's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, showcases six feature films—from Argentina, Guatemala, Panama, Peru, and Puerto Rico—including winners and nominees from the **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Cinema Tropical Awards**, which were announced in January.

Founded in 2001 by Carlos A. Gutiérrez and Monika Wagenberg with the mission of distributing, programming, and promoting what was to become the biggest boom of Latin American cinema in decades, Cinema Tropical has become the leading presenter of Latin American cinema in the United States. In its 15 years of existence, it has theatrically released 25 Latin American feature films, more than any other U.S. distributor, and has produced numerous film series with multiple cultural organizations. Through a diversity of programs and initiatives, Cinema Tropical is thriving as a dynamic and groundbreaking 501(c)(3) non-profit media arts organization experimenting in the creation of better and more effective strategies for the distribution and exhibition of foreign cinema in this country.

The Cinema Tropical Festival brings the best of contemporary Latin American cinema to New York City audiences, offering a chance to experience the dynamic and inventive film productions from the region. The opening night screening, on February 26, of ***Mala Mala***, winner of the Cinema Tropical Award for Best U.S. Latino Film, will be followed by a discussion with filmmakers **Dan Sickles** and **Antonio Santini** and one of the film's subjects, **April Carrión**; and a reception celebrating Cinema Tropical's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The festival will feature the U.S. premiere of the Tiger Award winner ***Videophilia (and Other Viral Syndromes)*** by **Juan Daniel F. Molero**, which became the first Peruvian

film ever to receive the top prize at the Rotterdam Film Festival, with the filmmaker in attendance. The lineup also includes the New York premieres of **Juan Schnitman's** debut feature ***The Fire***, winner of the Best Film Award at the Transylvania Film Festival, and **Abner Benaim's** ***Invasión***, Panama's first film to be submitted for the Best Foreign Language Oscar.

From Guatemala, Best First Film winner and recipient of the Silver Bear Alfred Bauer Prize at the 2015 Berlinale, **Jayro Bustamante's** ***Ixcanul*** will screen on Saturday. The Argentine film ***Jauja*** by **Lisandro Alonso** starring **Viggo Mortensen**, and winner of the Cinema Tropical Award for Best Latin American Film of the Year, will close out the Festival on Sunday evening.

### **SCHEDULE FOR 'CINEMA TROPICAL FESTIVAL,' FEB. 26–28, 2016**

All screenings take place in the Sumner M. Redstone Theater or the Bartos Screening Room at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Avenue in Astoria, New York. Tickets for MOMI screenings are \$12 adults (\$9 seniors and students / \$6 children 3–12) and free for Museum members at the Film Lover and MoMI Kids Premium levels and above. Advance tickets are available online at <http://movingimage.us>. Ticket purchase may be applied toward same-day admission to the Museum's galleries.

#### ***Mala Mala***

**With Dan Sickles, Antonio Santini, and April Carrión in person; reception follows**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 7:00 P.M.

Dirs. Dan Sickles and Antonio Santini. USA/Puerto Rico, 2014, 87 min. In Spanish and English with English subtitles. **Winner Best U.S. Latino Film – Cinema Tropical Awards**

The critically acclaimed *Mala Mala* explores the intimate moments, performances, friendships and activism of trans identifying people, drag queens, and others who defy typical gender identities in Puerto Rico. The film features Ivana, an activist; Soraya, an older sex-change pioneer; Sandy, a prostitute looking to make a change; and Samantha and Paxe, both of whom struggle with the quality of medical resources available to assist in their transition. Hailed as "Sensitive and thoughtful" by the *New York Times* and winner of the audience award for documentary film at the Tribeca Film Festival, *Mala Mala* affirms that the quest to find oneself can be both difficult and beautiful. A Strand Releasing release.

#### ***Invasion (Invasión)***

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 12:30 P.M.

Dir. Abner Benaim. Panama/Argentina, 2014, 93 min. In Spanish with English subtitles). New York Premiere. **Winner, Best Documentary – Cinema Tropical Awards**

Using reenactments and interviews, filmmaker Abner Benaim documents the collective memory -as well as the selective amnesia- of his fellow Panamanians around the 1989 U.S. invasion to overthrow General Manuel Noriega. The lives of the people of the Central American nation were deeply shaken by the American military incursion. *Invasion*—Panama's first film to be submitted for the Best Foreign Language Oscar—is a witty and engaging documentary that talks about the perils of sovereignty, democracy and endangered virtues of today's ultra-capitalist world. The film not only explores the mechanisms in which memory is turned into

history, but holds a mirror to the present to show how the recent past shapes the current Panama.

### ***Ixcanul***

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 3:00 P.M.

Dir. Jayro Bustamante. Guatemala/France, 2015, 93 min. In Kaqchikel and Spanish with English subtitles. **Winner, Best First Film – Cinema Tropical Awards**

Winner of the Berlinale's Silver Bear Alfred Bauer Prize—the top honor ever won by a Central American film—*Ixcanul* marks the auspicious debut of Guatemalan filmmaker Jayro Bustamante. The film follows María (played by María Mercedes Coroy), a 17-year-old Mayan girl who lives and works in a coffee plantation that sits at the base of an active volcano in Guatemala. Although Maria dreams of going to the 'big city,' her condition as an indigenous woman does not permit her to change her destiny, and an arranged wedding is waiting for her. A snake bite forces her to go out into the modern world where her life is saved, but at a steep price. *Ixcanul* is a beautiful and poignant meditation on the clash between tradition and modernity. A Kino Lorber release.

### ***The Fire (El Incendio)***

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 5:00 P.M.

Dir. Juan Schnitman. Argentina, 2015, 95 min. In Spanish with English subtitles. New York premiere. **Nominated, Best First Film – Cinema Tropical Awards**

On the way to closing the contract on their first home, Lucía and Marcelo withdraw a hundred thousand dollars in cash from their bank. The seller can't make it to the signing and it gets postponed to the next day. Frustrated, they head back to their old place and put the money away. The next 24 hours will unveil the true nature of their love, the crisis they are in, and the violence within themselves. "A riveting chamber piece of subtle shifts and evenhanded power struggles (*Variety*), Schnitman's debut feature film was the winner of the Best Film Award at the Transylvania Film Festival.

### ***Videophilia (and other Viral Syndromes) (Videofilia [y otros síndromes virales])***

**With director Juan Daniel F. Molero in person**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 7:00 P.M.

Directed by Juan Daniel F. Molero, Peru/USA, 2015, color, 102 min. In Spanish with English subtitles. U.S. Premiere. **Nominated, Best First Film – Cinema Tropical Awards**

The first Peruvian film to ever win the Tiger Award at the Rotterdam Film Festival, *Videophilia (and Other Viral Syndromes)* follows Luz, a teenage misfit from Lima who meets online Junior, a weird slacker who is obsessed with conspiracy theories, Mayan prophecies of the end of the world, and underground porn. They try to hook up in the real life but supernatural events start to unfold to guide their destinies. Set in Lima, Juan Daniel F. Molero's exhilarating debut fiction film is a playful mashup of internet cafes, slackers, not-so-innocent schoolgirls, amateur porn, Google Glass, acid trips, and guinea pigs as extras in an exorcism.

### ***Jauja***

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 4:30 P.M.

Dir. Lisandro Alonso. Argentina/Denmark/France/Mexico, 2014, 108 min. In Danish and Spanish with English subtitles. **Winner Best Fiction Film – Cinema Tropical Awards**

An astonishingly beautiful and gripping western starring Viggo Mortensen, *Jauja* begins in a remote outpost in Patagonia during the late 1800s. Captain Gunnar Dinesen has come from abroad with his fifteen-year-old daughter to take an engineering job with the Argentine army. Being the only female in the area, Ingeborg creates quite a stir among the men. When she falls in love with a young soldier and runs away with him, Dinesen decides to venture into enemy territory, against his men's wishes, to find the young couple. A Cinema Guild release.

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*For more information, screeners for review, hi-res images or to schedule an interview with the filmmakers, please contact Laura Schwab at [press@cinematropical.com](mailto:press@cinematropical.com) or (212) 254-5474*

**MUSEUM INFORMATION**

Museum of the Moving Image ([movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In its stunning facilities—acclaimed for both its accessibility and bold design—the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings of significant works; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, craftspeople, and business leaders; and education programs which serve more than 50,000 students each year. The Museum also houses a significant collection of moving-image artifacts.

Hours: Wednesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday–Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. **Holiday hours:** The Museum will be open on Monday and Tuesday, February 15 and 16, from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3–12. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, tickets are \$12 adults / \$9 students and seniors / \$6 children 3–12 / free for Museum members at the Film Lover level and above. Advance purchase is available online. Tickets purchase may be applied toward same-day admission to the Museum's galleries.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)

Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and located on the campus of Kaufman Astoria Studios. Its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals.