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THE 55TH CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE INCREDIBLE CAREER OF GAEL GARCÍA BERNAL

The Award-Winning Actor, Director and Producer To Present His Second Feature Chicuarotes on Saturday, October 26

CHICAGO - **The 55th Chicago International Film Festival** will pay tribute to one of the shining stars of contemporary global cinema, Mexican actor, producer and director **Gael García Bernal** with a Gala Presentation of his second feature as a director, ***Chicuarotes***, on **Saturday, October 26 at 6pm** at the **AMC River East 21 Theatres, 322 E. Illinois St.** Bernal will present the film as well as talk about his long-lasting contributions to international cinema.

Chicuarotes is the latest achievement in a distinguished career on both sides of the camera. Following his breakout role in Alejandro González Iñárritu's drama *Amores Perros*, García Bernal starred in such acclaimed films as Alfonso Cuarón's *Y Tu Mamá También* and Walter Salles' *The Motorcycle Diaries*, more recently lending his voice to the animated hit *Coco* and headlining the award-winning Amazon series *Mozart in the Jungle*. He made his feature directorial debut with 2007's Mexico City set social drama *Déficit*, which also screened at the Festival. He also directed the short films *The Letter* for the full-length feature film *8*; *Lucio* for the collective Mexican film *Revolución*; *La mano visible* for the Sundance Institute Short Film Challenge and *Love of My Life* for the collective feature *Madly* produced by MTV. He has also directed, along with Marc Silver, the four short films *The Invisibles* for Amnesty International as well as some of the episodes for the FOX Latam series *Aquí en la tierra* and for *Mozart in the Jungle*.

"Gael García Bernal is, without a doubt, one of the most talented and versatile actors working in cinema, gifted equally with fierce dramatic intelligence and with impeccable comedic timing. We are proud to have recognized him with a Best Actor award with his star-turning performance in

Amores Perros at the Chicago International Film Festival in 2001,” said Festival Artistic Director Mimi Plauché. “García Bernal has also had an immense influence working behind the camera both as a producer, bringing important stories to the screen, and now with his dynamic second feature as a director. We are thrilled to welcome him back to Chicago to pay tribute to his career.”

About *Chicuarotes*

In García Bernal’s audacious crime drama, lifelong friends Cagalera and Moloteco turn to violence and lawlessness to buy their way out of their hard-scrabble Mexico City neighborhood. Hoping to scrape together enough cash to join a union that holds the promise of steady work, the amateur criminals graduate from petty theft to hostage-taking. But their escapades land the teens in desperate circumstances, both darkly humorous and fraught with danger.

This tribute anchors the Festival’s most comprehensive and exciting **Cinemas of the Americas** programs to date. This year’s program features the works of such acclaimed directors as **Patricio Guzmán** (*The Cordillera of Dreams*), **Jayro Bustamante** (*Tremors*, *La Llorona*), **Andrés Wood** (*Spider*) and **Karim Aïnouz** (*Invisible Life*) and the vibrant work of new filmmakers such as **Maya Da-Rin** (*The Fever*), **Melina León** (*Song without a Name*) and **César Díaz** (*Our Mothers*). Tickets for the gala tribute are \$28.

Cinemas of the Americas

Alelí — Dir. Leticia Jorge Romero, Uruguay, Argentina

The death of patriarch Alfredo sends his heirs into a downward spiral. With the pending sale of their beach house, a repository of childhood memories, three siblings’ long-simmering resentments are brought to a full boil. Alternating between moments of laugh-out-loud absurdity and stirring beauty, *Alelí* is a knowing black comedy about a dysfunctional family that seems willing to set everything on fire.

***August* (*Agosto*)** — Dir. Armando Capó, Cuba, Costa Rica, France

In this sensitive coming-of-age drama set in Cuba’s post-Soviet “special period,” restless teen Carlos plunges headlong into a carefree summer, kicking around with friends as he experiences his sexual awakening. With his country’s uncertain future prompting neighbors and loved ones to flee the island, Carlos finds himself increasingly isolated and emotionally adrift. A lyrical study of adolescence brought into focus through an expressive, historical lens.

***The Cordillera of Dreams* (*La Cordillera de los Sueños*)** — Dir. Patricio Guzmán, Chile, France

In this stunning follow-up to his political reveries *Nostalgia for the Light* and *The Pearl Button*, venerable filmmaker Patricio Guzmán once again focuses on Chile’s topography as a metaphor for its past and present. Here, he spotlights the looming Andean mountain range that acts as both protector and dispassionate observer of the country’s traumas. Winner of Cannes’ top documentary prize, the film is a potent and poetic inquiry into national memory.

***The Fever* (*A Febre*)** — Dir. Maya Da-Rin, Brazil, France, Germany

Justino, an indigenous Brazilian who works as a security guard in the Amazonian port city of Manaus, falls mysteriously ill just as his daughter prepares to leave for Brazilia to study medicine. As his fever continues unabated, Justino struggles to stay alert by day, while by night, a mysterious creature pursues him, pulling him back to his tribal lands. This uncanny, mesmerizing character study presents a finely drawn portrait of one man caught between two worlds.

Initials S.G. — Dirs. Rania Attieh, Daniel Garcia, Argentina, Lebanon, U.S.

Sergio Garces (a hilarious Diego Peretti) is a struggling Buenos Aires actor afflicted with anger management issues and bad luck. When his nose gets broken in a bike accident, a series of unfortunate events ensues, including an affair with an American film executive (Julianne Nicholson) that takes an unexpectedly dark turn. Set against Argentina's bid for World Cup victory, *Initials S.G.* is a twisted black comedy of mid-life misfortune.

Invisible Life (*A vida invisível*) — Dir. Karim Aïnouz, Brazil, Germany

Rio de Janeiro, 1950. Eurídice, 18, and Guida, 20, are inseparable sisters living at home with their conservative parents. Eurídice dreams of becoming a renowned pianist; Guida of finding true love. When they are separated by their father and forced to live apart, the siblings take control of their destinies, never giving up hope of finding each other. *Invisible Life* is Brazil's selection for the Oscar® for the Best International Feature.

La Llorona — Dir. Jayro Bustamante, Guatemala, France

Both thrilling and deeply moving, this reimagining of the legend of La Llorona transplants the ghost tale of the Weeping Woman to a modern-day Guatemala in need of healing and justice. General Enrique Monteverde has just been acquitted on technicalities after being found guilty of atrocities committed during the Civil War years earlier. Following his release, the aging general and his family are haunted by the spectacle of angry protesters on the streets and the specter who has taken up residence inside their home.

Litigante — Dir. Franco Lolli, Colombia, France

Director Franco Lolli (*Gente de Bien*) returns to the Festival with this personal and powerful portrait of one woman's trials and triumphs. Hard working attorney and single mother Silvia is already stretched thin caring for her domineering cancer-stricken mother. When she becomes unexpectedly entangled in a corruption scandal at work, Silvia must forge her own path to peace and reconciliation. This emotionally engrossing drama features an extraordinary breakout performance by Carolina Sanín.

Lives with Flavor: From Earth to the Michelin Star—Carlos Gaytán (*Vidas con sabor*) — Dirs. Pablo Gasca Gollás, Ruth Zachs Babani, Mexico

This delectable documentary chronicles the arc of celebrated Chicago chef Carlos Gaytán's incredible life journey: After emigrating to the U.S. from a humble home in the mountains of Guerrero at age 20, he worked his way up to assisting chef Dominique Tougne at Lincoln Park's

Chez Moi. Against all odds, Gaytán opened his own restaurant, Mexique, and became the first Latin American chef to receive a coveted Michelin star.

Maternal (Hogar) — Dir. Maura Delpero, Italy, Argentina

The lives of three young women intersect in unexpected ways in this sensitive, insightful drama about motherhood and desire. Novitiate Sister Paola, preparing to take her final vows, works at a Buenos Aires shelter for teen mothers. Rebellious young mother Lu desires only freedom and escape, while Fatima, pregnant with her second child, finds solace within the walls of the institution. When Paola forms a deep attachment to an abandoned infant, she must confront troubling doubts about her true vocation. *Spanish with subtitles. 90 min.*

The Moneychanger (Así habló el cambista) — Dir. Federico Veiroj, Uruguay, Argentina, Germany

Seizing on the shaky regional economy to earn a quick fortune, enterprising Montevideo money launderer Humberto Brause ruthlessly plays the currency markets, embarking on increasingly shady deals. Blinded by ambition, he's soon juggling multiple illegal schemes across South America, but his success could come with a steep price. Though rooted in history, this idiosyncratic 1970s-set thriller bristles with immediacy as Humberto's position becomes ever more precarious. *The Moneychanger* is Uruguay's selection for the Oscar® for the Best International Feature.

Our Mothers (Nuestras Madres) — Dir. César Díaz, Guatemala, France, Belgium

Forensic anthropologist Ernesto works tirelessly to identify the remains of the victims of the Guatemalan Civil War. When he meets an old Mayan woman who might have information that could lead him to his father's remains, Ernesto embarks on a crusade that promises to bring solace to the wounded community and help him uncover his own roots. This subtle yet powerful social drama, winner of the best first feature award at Cannes, gives layered expression to the legacy of profound national trauma.

The Prince (El Príncipe) — Dir. Sebastián Muñoz, Chile, Argentina, Belgium

In this 1970s-set Chilean prison drama, hot-tempered inmate Jaime finds favor with a charismatic older man known as "The Stallion" who teaches him how to survive life behind bars. Drawn to one another, the two embark on a clandestine romance, but violent power struggles inside the penitentiary threaten their bond. A searing story of survival at all costs, *The Prince* is a deeply affecting exploration of masculine aggression and desire.

The Sleepwalkers (Los Sonámbulos) — Dir.: Paula Hernández, Argentina, Uruguay

Spending the summer holidays with the extended family at her mother-in-law's cottage has Luisa on edge. Long-simmering tensions with her husband are surfacing and her teenage daughter Ana, who has become interested in boys, is sleepwalking naked at night. Something isn't right. Permeated by a mysterious and disquieting mood, this beautifully photographed slow-burning film patiently builds to an explosive finale.

***Song without a Name* (Canción sin nombre)** — Dir.: Melina León, Peru, U.S.

When Georgina, a penniless and pregnant young Quechuan woman, hears an ad for a women's clinic in Lima, she travels to the free health center to give birth, only to have her newborn literally snatched away from her. The distraught mother frantically scours the city in search of her baby and for justice until she finds a journalist willing to take up her cause. Exacting black-and-white photography lends force and immediacy to this sorrowful, ripped-from-the-headlines tale of corruption, exploitation, and loss.

***Spider* (Araña)** — Dir.: Andrés Wood, Chile

In this gripping thriller, three young friends join a far-right terrorist group intent on bringing down Allende's Communist government. Almost 50 years after the violent coup, Justo and Ines, now husband and wife, enjoy a comfortable life as part of the country's elite—until their former comrade Gerardo's unexpected return. Toggling seamlessly between 1970s and present-day Santiago, director Andrés Wood (*Violeta Went to Heaven*) spins a provocative tale of power, deception, and desire.

***Tremors* (Temblores)** — Dir. Jayro Bustamante, Guatemala

After affluent family man Pablo is outed as gay, he is spurned by his evangelical Christian family and fired from his job. Just as he beginning to pick up the pieces and build a new life with lover Francisco, his devout wife demands he undergo conversion therapy—or she will deny him contact with their children. This heartrending drama gives voice to Pablo's plight as it examines the precarious intersections between faith, responsibility, and identity. *Spanish with subtitles. 107 min.*

***Waiting for the Carnival* (Estou Me Guardando Para Quando O Carnaval Chegar)** — Dir. Marcelo Gomes, Brazil

Welcome to Toritama, a.k.a. "The Capital of Jeans." With insight and good humor, Marcelo Gomes returns to the rural Brazilian city of his youth, which now produces 20 million pairs of blue jeans annually. Across garages and backyards, the town's self-employed inhabitants toil over denim and zippers around the clock every day—except for the annual carnival season when they try to take a well-earned break. But in this thoughtful and provocative film, Gomes wonders: Are they shrewd entrepreneurs or slaves to capitalism?

Festival Information

The 55th Chicago International Film Festival runs Oct. 16-27, 2019 at the AMC River East, 322 E. Illinois St., and features more than 150 films, with a vast diversity of offerings, including numerous competitive categories and several highlight programs such as Black Perspectives, Cinemas of the Americas, International Comedy, Women in Cinema, Out-Look, After Dark and the City & State program (showcasing films made in Chicago and throughout Illinois.)

Festival Sponsors and Partners

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About Cinema/Chicago

Cinema/Chicago, the presenting organization of the Chicago International Film Festival, is a year-round nonprofit arts and education organization dedicated to fostering better communication between people of diverse cultures through the art of film and the moving image. Cinema/Chicago's programs include the Chicago International Film Festival, Summer Screenings Program, CineYouth Festival, and year-round Education Program. Celebrating its 55th edition October 16-27, 2019, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival. For more information, please visit www.chicagofilmfestival.com or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [Twitter](#).

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