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12th HAVANA FILM FESTIVAL NEW YORK – ¡SI CUBA! PARTNER

Celebrates Latin American Cinema APRIL 7-15, 2011 – Special Free Events April 1 & 8

21 FILMS COMPETE FOR THE HAVANA STAR PRIZE

New York City, March 18, 2011. The 12th annual **Havana Film Festival New York (HFFNY)** opens April 7-15 with a program of award-winning films, panel discussions, and Q&A sessions with distinguished international directors, actors, and producers. **HFFNY's Cuban films are part of ¡Sí Cuba! Festival**, a city-wide celebration of Cuban arts and culture. 14 New York institutions convene to celebrate the rich artistic vitality of Cuba by showcasing the diversity of Cuban culture from the traditional to the modern. (See www.SiCuba.org)

HFFNY features more than 50 highly anticipated and influential films from and about Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the U.S. including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Venezuela and the U.S. They span a variety of genres and themes, ranging from comedy, thrillers, action, drama and documentaries to children's tales, and gay/lesbian topics as well as films from and about indigenous peoples from Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia and Chile.

Special kick-off free events: April 1, 6-10 pm, The **Bronx Museum of the Arts** presents *Eso que Anda / Van Van Fever*, an entertaining documentary by Ian Padron that follows the band Van Van on their 2010 tour in Cuba. A party with DJ Asho and a live performance by The Pedrito Martinez Project follows the screening celebrating the music of Cuba. **April 6, at 6:30-8:30 pm** **Nuevo Cine at El Museo del Barrio** presents the **world premiere of *Los rostros detrás de las muñecas / The Faces Behind the Dolls*** (Freddy Vargas), a tribute to the life-long dedication of Dominican and Latin American factory workers who create beautiful dolls that provide happiness to children and adults around the world.

The Opening Night Ceremony and special preview is by invitation only, April 7th. **HFFNY opens Fri. April 8 at 1 pm** for a week of screenings at the Quad Cinema 34 W. 13 St. with **the NY premiere of the Chilean film, *Qué pena tu vida*** (Nicolas Lopez). The **Tribute to Gerardo Chijona begins at 9 pm** with the **NY premiere of *Boleto al paraíso*** /Ticket to Paradise that had its world premiere at Sundance Film Festival. Chijona will be present at the screenings of his films: *Adorable Lies, Love by Mistake, Kid Chocolate, Después del baile, and Una vida para dos*.

An exciting program, bringing Latin American Cinema to Queens, is set for the week-end at the magnificently renovated, Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Avenue, Astoria. Beginning **Fri. April 8th at 7 pm** with the **NY premiere of *Los colores de la montaña*** /*The colors of the Mountain* (Colombia-Panama). Shot in a remote, mountainous, breathtakingly scenic corner of rural Colombia, this film shows local families fleeing to safer locations as their kids find ways to have a "normal" life. Director Carlos C. Arbélaez will be present for a Q&A. **Sat. April 9th at 6:30 pm**, the **NY premiere of *Casa Vieja*** /*Old House* (Cuba) based on the play by Abelardo Estorino, The film begins as Esteban returns home due to his father's illness. He will face the same problems he ran into 14 years earlier when he left. Director Lester Hamlet will be present for Q&A.

Sun. April 10th at 6:30 pm the NY premiere of Director Roberto Santucci's, *Alucinados / Riding High* (Brazil) will be presented by the producer, Francisco Chagas. A psychological thriller in which Julia, a housewife is kidnapped in an armored car by two young men from the slums of Rio. A complex plot links the characters' pasts and presents.

A special program for children ages 6 years and up takes place on **Sun. April 10 at 12 noon in the Quad Cinema.** *Valentino and the Can Clan* (Director David Bisbano), an animated and fun-filled film from Peru, depicts the life of a small, brave dog who after losing his family, is lucky to find a group of dogs that are fun and loving and with whom Valentino will have many adventures.

Continuing to serve the filmmaking industry and film aficionados, HFFNY has organized a panel discussion with guest directors and key industry figures, moderated by Sandy Lieberman (Chair, Film London). **Meet the Industry, April 12, 7:30 pm at King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, NYU.** Panelists include Alfredo Calvino (CEO Latino Fusion), Susana Molina (VP, ICAIC) Rebeca Conget (VP, Film Movement) and filmmakers, Gerardo Chijona, Jorge Perugorría, Estela Bravo, Lester Hamlet, Carlos C. Arbelaez, Malu de Martino, Fabian Hofman, Vladimir Cruz, Francisco Chagas, Fernando Mielles, Mario Rosales and Esteban Ramirez. Simultaneous translation will be provided by LART. Reception to follow. Presented by NALIP. Co-sponsored by U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce and Delta Airlines. **Admission Free**

Highlights of the festival include the **U.S. premiere of *Operation Peter Pan: Flying Back to Cuba*** (Estela Bravo), **Sun. April 10 at 5:30 pm (Quad).** The film tells the story of more than 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban children who were sent by their parents to the U.S. between 1960 – 62 to “save them from the Revolution. Fifty years later, a group of Peter Pans return to Cuba to make peace with their past. We expect some of the Peter Pan's to be present at the screening along with the director. **Tues. April 12th, 8:45 pm (Quad),** the **NY premiere of *Afinidades by beloved Cuban actors Jorge Perugorría and Vladimir Cruz*** who become first time directors in this contemporary look at 2 married couples that facing emptiness and the lack of answers for many problems take refuge in sex. The result is fleeting, and the attempt has unpredictable consequences. Both directors will attend the festival. **World premiere, Sun. April 10th 1:30 pm, *Villa-Lobos Por Uma Soprano / Villa-Lobos by a Soprano (Ivy Goulart)*** An inspiring and intimate reflection on the work of the greatest Brazilian composer, Heitor Villa-Lobos, by Brazilian soprano Estela Brandão. **A compilation of films made by or about indigenous groups in Mexico, Guatemala, Chile and Colombia.** “Every year we program films that talk about the indigenous peoples from Latin America but this year we wanted to have films made by native filmmakers. We were impressed by films made by Mayan and Totonacan filmmakers,” says Diana Vargas, Artistic Director of HFFNY. ***Corazon del tiempo / Heart of the time*** (Alberto Cortés), Sonia a Tarahumara girl, falls in love with a Zapatista, defying all the traditions and jeopardizing her community and the insurgent army in Chiapas. ***Ixquic, Ri-Wachik*** and ***La pila***, three shorts made by Mayan filmmakers who participate in the Centro American Workshop by Casa Comal and ***Voladora, El llanto de la tierra*** from Centro de las artes indigenas of Veracruz. From Chile, the compelling documentary ***Newen Mapuche: La fuerza de la gente de la tierra*** (Elena Varela), a film that started with a purpose of telling the story of the struggles of the largest indigenous group in Chile and evolve into Varela's arrest and her unconditional release. ***Robatierra / Stolen Land*** (Margarita Martinez and Miguel Salazar) is a riveting documentary illustrating the decades-long, often violent resistance movement of the indigenous Nasa people of Colombia over rights to their native land stolen from their ancestors.

Free events at special venues include **The Eighth Floor** at 17 W. 17 St., **Mon. April 11, 6 pm, *EICTV 25 Years*** celebrates the 25th anniversary of the International Film and Television School of San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba, with a selection of its students' best short films, presented by Cuban filmmaker Gerardo Chijona. **King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center at NYU 53 Washington Sq. So. Tues. April 12th at 6 pm,** a selection of **Dominican Shorts: *Pedro de Bella Vista y su sueño*** (Rodrigo Montealegre), NY premieres ***Papá está en el cielo*** (Francisco Rodriguez), ***Morir en Montecristi*** (Frank Lopez) and ***García*** (Student Collective); U.S. premiere ***¿Tú te acuerdas?***

(Jorgy Cruz Soto). **The Center for Cuban Studies** 231 W. 29 St. 4th floor, Thurs. April 14, 7:30 pm, will host the U.S. premiere **Mi Pogolotti querido** (Italy-Cuba) by director, Enrica Viola. In the early 1900's, Dino Pogolotti bought land west of Havana in Marianao, with the goal to create a much needed community. In 1912 the Barrio was inaugurated and houses assigned through a raffle. There were 950 houses, an aqueduct, a school, a cinema and a food shop. It was the first working class neighborhood built in Havana and is historically very important to Cubans.

For the 2nd second year, 21 films will compete for the **Havana Star Prize** in the categories of **Best Film**, **Best Director**, and **Best Screenplay**, and for first time the Havana Star prize will also be awarded for **Best Documentary**. *"The selection of films participating in both competitions comes from looking for stories that reflect the styles, genres and perceptions of filmmakers that dare to make movies in places where local filmmaking is not yet an industry but has started to compete for the audiences with foreign movies. Sometimes, because those movies are labeled "commercially successful," they are excluded from the festival circuits,"* added Diana Vargas. Internationally renowned Cuban artist Yoan Capote designed the *Havana Star Prize* especially for HFFNY. This year the **Best Film will also receive the Cuban Visions Art Award of \$1,000.**

The winners will be announced at the Closing Night Ceremony on April 15 at 7 pm at the New York Directors Guild Theatre followed by the NY premiere of *Del amor y otros demonios* based on a García Márquez novel. The film tells the story of Sierva Maria whom a rabid dog bites. She is declared possessed and the bishop orders her exorcism. The priest and the girl find themselves seduced by a demon more powerful than faith and reason. Director Hilda Hidalgo will be attending. There will be an after-party at LQ Nightclub.

The films competing for the Havana Star Prize in Fiction are: *Boleto al paraíso*, Dir. Gerardo Chijona, Cuba; *Casa Vieja*, Dir. Lester Hamlet, Cuba; *Los colores de la montaña*, Dir. Carlos C. Arbelaez, Colombia; *Qué pena tu vida*, Dir. Nicolás Lopez, Chile; *Gestación*, Dir. Esteban Ramirez, Costa Rica; *Prometeo deportado*, Dir. Fernando Miele, Ecuador; *Corazon del tiempo*, Dir. Alberto Cortes, Mexico; *Viaje Redondo*, Dir. Gerardo Tort, Mexico; *Afinidades*, Dir. Jorge Perugorria & Vladimir Cruz, Cuba; *Lisanka*, Dir. Daniel Diaz Torres, Cuba; *Alucinados*, Dir. Roberto Santucci, Brazil; *Te extraño*, Dir. Fabian Hofman, Argentina-Mexico; *El regreso de Lencho*, Dir. Mario Rosales, Guatemala; *Como esquecer*, Dir. Malu de Martino, Brazil.

The films competing for the Havana Star Prize in Documentary are: *Robatierra*, Dir. Margarita Martinez & Miguel Salazar, Colombia; *Operation Peter Pan: Flying Back to Cuba*, Dir. Estela Bravo, U.S.-Cuba; *La Salsa Cubana*, Dir. Eric Johnson & Sarita Streng, U.S. – Cuba; *Newen Mapuche: La fuerza de la gente de la tierra*, Dir. Elena Varela, Chile; *Blattangelus*, Director Araceli Santana, Mexico; *Interactivo, la película*, Dir. Tané Martinez, Cuba –U.S.; *Los rostros detrás de las muñecas*, Dir. Freddy Vargas, Dominican Republic – U.S.

The presenting sponsor of HFFNY 2011 is NBC 4 / Telemundo 47. Additional sponsorship is provided by El Diario La Prensa, The National Arts Club, TD Bank, Latino Artists Round Table (LART), Pie Derecho, U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, Delta Airlines, NALIP, WNYC, Mexican Cultural Institute, Pro Chile, Xael Charters, Flowers by Special Arrangement, Two Boots, Havana-Cultura.com, Marazul Charters, Courtyard Travel Ltd, Rockamedia, Copacabana Pizza & Grill, Giovanna's, Sombrero, Il Buco, and Brazil Grill. Official hotel sponsors are the Maritime Hotel, and Bowery Hotel. HFFNY is made possible with public funds from the NYS Council on the Arts, a state agency and supported, in part, by public funds from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs. HFFNY is also supported by Mayor Bloomberg's Latin Media and Entertainment Commission (LMEC).

The Havana Film Festival New York is a project of American Friends of the Ludwig Foundation of Cuba (AFLFC), a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization building cultural bridges between the U.S. and Cuba through programs in the arts. *"Since 2000, we have been working towards that end. With ¡Sí Cuba! we are definitely doing that,* explains Carole Rosenberg, Executive Director of HFFNY and President of AFLFC.

For Havana Film Festival New York information and schedule visit www.HFFNY.com # # #