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3RD SYDNEY LATIN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL: 6th - 16th March 2008

MICROCINEMA WELCOMES LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKERS TO PADDINGTON

Returning to Sydney Latin American Film Festival for a second year, the popular Microcinema sessions will bring audiences closer to the filmmakers through to an exploration of evolving cultures across Latin America.

This year the Microcinema has been welcomed to the intimate Eastside Arts in Paddington, a unique cultural centre home to the Stone Gallery and the Eastside Music Cafe. This year's Microcinema will offer a chance to engage with the filmmakers in discussion of topics pertaining to their films. The program will explore indigenous struggles in Patagonia, grassroots communities in Buenos Aires, gang culture in Central America and will this year present a special focus on the Amazon from the perspective of 4 different Amazonian communities. All of this will feature as part of the 11-day Film Festival.

The Sydney Latin American Film Festival, which debuted in February 2006, is focussed on presenting new feature films along with documentaries about movements for change, videos made by indigenous communities and stories that convey resilience over adversity. The recent inclusion of the Microcinema represents a space for audiences to participate in the journey of a film and the communities they present. Each session will present a series of themes relevant to contemporary issues and evolutions in Latin America today and will introduce the filmmakers and other guests to join in discussion after the films are shown.

Starting off on Tuesday 11th February with an afternoon session focussed on the significant importance of conservation and culture within indigenous communities in the Amazon, in Brazil, Peru and Ecuador. Collectively the films cover themes of land reclamation, deforestation, traditional medicine and indigenous governance and democracy in the Amazon. The session will conclude with a panel discussion on the state of the Amazon today and predictions of its future in a climatically shifting world with an insight into current and effective conservation campaigns.

Tuesday's evening session will feature the award-winning documentary *Fruits of War* that follows the rising tide of gang culture of Central America, a spill over from the streets of Los Angeles. Filmmaker Josiah Hooper will present the film and afterwards will lead discussion on the phenomenon of gang culture as a result of displacement from years of Civil War in Central America. Representatives from the Central American community in Sydney will join the panel to give their perspectives and engage with the film audience in a Q&A.

Wednesday the 12th's afternoon session features a provocative and ambitious documentary, *Crónicas de la Gran Serpiente (Chronicles of the Great Snake)*, which dissects 500 years of decimation and displacement of the original people of Latin America. Using a clever juxtaposition of moving images, stills and texts, the film underwrites a vision of the social and cultural situation of the indigenous people of America, facing a new millennium of radical social and environmental change.

The evening session presents two strong documentaries resonating the profound social changes unfolding in Argentina 7 years post 'Argentinazo' when banks closed their doors leading the country into turmoil. Abandoning all faith in the system and coining the famous chant 'get them all out' (the politicians), many communities of Buenos Aires and beyond have been building new social structures providing for themselves the education, food distribution, health and worker protection they lost through years of corrupted governance. Filmmaker Marta Bautis will introduce us to these communities in her film *Soñando el Futuro (Dreaming the Future)* and will take part in a panel discussion and Q&A session after the film.

The session will also journey to the south of the country, to Patagonia, where the ongoing struggles of indigenous communities are building momentum. Filmmaker Joao Dujon delivers us his film *La Segunda Conquista (The Second Conquest)*, which traces these communities as they seek justice, and repatriation to their ancestral lands from which over centuries, they have been forcibly removed from. Through the journey of the film, Dujon uncovers the systematic monopolising of Patagonia by foreign companies plundering the land for minerals, large-scale livestock production and more recently, nuclear waste dumping sites. Discussion following the films will centre on the stories depicted in the films and will pull focus on Argentina today, looking through economical and social eyepieces.

The Festival will feature two exciting opening night fiestas with international guests, premiere feature films and fiestas featuring live music and the extraordinary documentary *El Corazon (The Heart)* that takes a

very poignant look at the remarkable medical advances in Colombia as a clever metaphor for quelling the endemic violence of the Country.

The Festival, spanning 11 days will be presented across three venues in Sydney; the Chauvel Cinema (6th-10th March), Eastside Arts (11th-12th March) and Club Marconi (14th -16th March).

Community Sponsorship Program

The Sydney Latin American Film Festival Community Sponsorship Program aims to recognise and support the ongoing work of social justice, environmental conservation and community development organisations across Latin America. This year, the Sydney Latin American Film Festival will proudly donate proceeds from the festival tickets to three international organizations; *Ayni*, located in Alto de los Mores - Piura, Peru, *Arte Acción*, located in Copán Ruinas, Honduras and *Fundación Nueva Vida*, located in San Salvador, El Salvador

To find out full program details visit www.sydneylatinofilmfestival.org
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