Celebrating the New Wave of Ibero American Cinema

Hosted by the Division of Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American and Iberian Studies, Department of Languages & Literatures of Europe & the Americas, University of Hawai’i at Mānoa

WHEN March 7-11, 2016

Monday, March 7, 2016
CHINESE TAKE-AWAY (Un Cuento Chino) – See trailer
Sebastián Borensztein / Argentina, Spain / 98 min / 2012 / Spanish and Mandarin with English subtitles
5:00 PM, BUSAD A102
Argentina’s national treasure, Ricardo Darín, plays Roberto, a gruff, anti-social loner who lords over his tiny hardware shop in Buenos Aires with a meticulous sense of control and routine, barely allowing for the slightest of customer foibles. After a chance encounter with Jun, a Chinese man who has arrived in Argentina looking for his only living relative, Roberto takes him in. Their unusual cohabitation helps Roberto bring an end to his loneliness, but not without revealing to the impulsive Jun that destiny’s intersections are many and they can even divulge the film’s surreal opening sequence: a brindled cow falling from the sky.

Tuesday, March 8, 2016
WRINKLES
Ignacio Ferreras / Spain / 89 min / 2014 / Spanish with English subtitles
5:00 PM, BUSAD A102
Based on Paco Roca’s Award-winning graphic novel, Wrinkles illustrates the visual beauty and tender emotion that can be created by traditional animation, as it tackles a universal subject matter with humor and acerbic wit. Former bank manager Emilio is dispatched to a retirement home by his family. His new roommate is a wily, wheeler-dealer named Miguel, who cheerfully swindles small amounts of cash from the more befuddled residents, but is also full of handy insider tips that are crucial to survival. We are introduced to daily pill regimens, electric gates, and an eccentric cast of characters who rebel against institutional authority, while doing everything in their power to avoid being assigned to the dreaded assisted living wing—from which there is no return. The hand-drawn animation style allows the film to move freely between the reality-bound daily lives of the ‘inmates’ and their more colorful dementia-induced fantasies, leaving plenty of room for both tears and laughter and pulling no punches in its critique of society’s attitude towards the elderly.

Wednesday, March 9, 2016
BAD HAIR – See trailer
Maríana Rondón / Venezuela / 93 min / 2013 / Spanish with English subtitles
5:00 PM, BUSAD A102
A nine-year-old boy’s preening obsession with straightening his hair elicits a tidal wave of homophobic panic in his hard-working mother, in this tender but clear-eyed coming-of-age tale. Junior is a beautiful boy, with big brown eyes, a delicate frame, and a head of luxurious dark curls. But Junior aches to straighten those curls to acquire a whole new look befitting his emerging fantasy image of himself as a long-haired singer. As the opportunity approaches to have his photo taken for the new school year, that ache turns into a fiery longing. Junior’s mother, Marta, is barely hanging on. The father of her children has died, she recently lost her job as a security guard, and she now struggles to put a few arepas on the table for the new school year.

Thursday, March 10, 2016
BAREFOOT IN THE KITCHEN (Con la Pata Quebrada) – See trailer
Diego Galán / Spain / 86 min / 2014 / Spanish with English subtitles
5:00 PM, BUSAD A102
Co-produced by Pedro Almodóvar’s production company El Deseo and veteran Spanish producer Enrique Cerezo, this illuminating survey was put together by Diego Galán, a noted Spanish film critic and former director of San Sebastian Film Festival. Reflecting changes in the political sphere, Barefoot in the Kitchen chronicles how Spanish cinema has portrayed the evolution of women from the 1930s to the present day, using film fragments from 180 movies. Galán demonstrates how landmarks in the recent history of Spain can be directly indicated by shifts in social mores in cinema. By the time of All About My Mother (1990), women had turned the tables on men and on cinematic sexism, present since the early days of the talks. – Jaie Laplante, Miami International Film Festival.

Friday, March 11, 2016
ASIER AND I (ASIER ETA BIOK)
Amalia Merino, Altor Merino / Spain / 93 min / 2013 / Spanish and Basque with English subtitles
5:00 PM, BUSAD A101
Asier and I tells the story of the friendship between Altor and Asier Aranguren from their time growing up together in the conflict-affected and politicized eighties of Pamplona. Eventually, Altor moved to Madrid to pursue his dream of becoming an actor and Asier joined the terrorist group ETA. Years later, Asier was arrested and interned in a French prison, where he was detained for eight years. When Asier was released in 2010, Altor wanted to recover his relationship with his childhood friend and to understand what could have led to him to join ETA, so he went to his release in France with a camera in order to tell this story. Beyond the story of Asier, Altor, and the Basque conflict, the film raises universal questions: can we justify blood crimes on the name of an ideal? Can friendship transcend ideology and political extremism? Narrated with humor and cinematographic devises such as direct address, Asier and I does an excellent job at keeping the spectator engaged throughout the film. The documentary remained in Spanish theaters for an impressive four months.

The Spanish Film club series was made possible with the support of Pragda, The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Spain, and SPAIN arts & culture.

SUPPORTED BY