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**THE 42ND CHICAGO LATINO FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES
OPENING AND CLOSING NIGHT SELECTIONS AND A DIFFERENT
APPROACH TO BOTH EVENTS**

The Festival, April 16-27 exclusively at the Landmark Century Centre Cinemas, opens with It Was Still Night in Caracas, Mariana Rondón's and Marité Ugás's dystopic vision of modern day Venezuela, and closes with the Ecuadorian comedy The Dog, My Father and Us.

Festival organizers are moving away from the traditional galas and bringing the focus back to the films themselves.

CHICAGO (March 4, 2026) – The 42nd Chicago Latino Film Festival today announces the selections for its Opening and Closing night films as well as changes to the structure of both events.

The Festival opens on **Thursday, April 16** with the Chicago premiere of Mariana Rondón's and Marité Ugás's dystopic vision of modern day Venezuela ***It Was Still Night in Caracas (Aún es de noche en Caracas)***. Both filmmakers will not only attend the event but will be presenting their previous collaboration, ***Zafari***, on **Friday, April 17** and **Saturday April 18** at **8:15 p.m.**

The Festival will close on **Monday, April 27** with the Chicago premiere of the Ecuadorean comedy ***The Dog, My Father and Us (Nosotros, mi papá y el perro)*** from director Pablo Arturo Suárez who will attend the screening. Closing Night is sponsored by Royal Prestige and the Consulate General of Ecuador in Chicago.

Festival organizers this year made the strategic decision to move away from the traditional galas to ensure that the primary focus remains where it belongs: on the films and the stories they tell. Both Opening and Closing Night events will take place at the **Landmark Century Centre Cinemas, 2828 N. Clark St.**, and will start at **6 p.m.** with a reception at the Cinemas' Century Bar featuring appetizers, cash bar and DJ. The event proper will start at **7 p.m.** with a welcome ceremony and conclude with a post-screening Q&A with the filmmakers. Tickets for both events are **\$35 general / \$25 for ILCC members, students and seniors**. Admission includes the film screening and party (food, drinks and live music). Business casual attire is strongly recommended. For tickets and more information, visit chicagolatinofilmfestival.org.

“This shift is a necessary response to a challenging financial landscape. With significant federal funding cuts impacting cultural organizations like the International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago and the Chicago Latino Film Festival, we must be more intentional than ever with our resources. While these celebrations are a beloved tradition, the rising costs of hosting such events have become unsustainable in the current climate,” explained **Pepe Vargas, Executive Director of the International Latino Cultural Center and founder of the Chicago Latino Film Festival**.

“We have traditionally opened our Festival with a film that speaks to the moment or that introduces a little known chapter of our continental history to our audiences. Given recent events in Venezuela, we felt it was appropriate to kick things off with the latest film from the dynamic duo of Mariana Rondón and Marité Ugás. We also like to end the Festival on a celebratory note with a comedy or feel-good drama and Pablo Arturo’s latest film fits that bill,” added Vargas.

The 42nd Chicago Latino Film Festival will present 51 features and 31 shorts exclusively at the Landmark Century Centre Cinemas, **April 16-27**. The full schedule will be announced mid-late March; individual tickets go on sale **Monday, March 23**. Applications for [Media Credentials](#) open **March 4**, and close on **April 6**.

Festival passes (or passports) worth 10 admissions are currently at the bargain rate of **\$110**, a **\$70 savings** over the regular ticket price of **\$17**. This special pre-festival sale ends on **March 26**.

ABOUT THE FILMS

OPENING NIGHT: It Would Be Night in Caracas/Aún es de noche en Caracas
Caracas, 2017. Trapped in a city on the verge of collapse, Adelaida buries her mother and is left completely alone. In the streets of Caracas, anti-government protests are brutally crushed. When she returns home, she discovers her apartment has been

overtaken by women aligned with the regime. With no way out, she hides in the flat next door—only to discover the corpse of her neighbor. Adelaida descends into a claustrophobic spiral of confinement, fear, and growing despair —until she realizes that in order to survive, she must give up her identity and become someone else. In their latest collaboration, Mariana Rondón and Marité Ugás deliver a profoundly universal story about the right to exist.

Zafari

Directed and written by Mariana Rondón and co-written and produced by Marité Ugás, the film begins with the arrival of a hippopotamus named Zafari at a small depopulated zoo in an anonymous Latin American city. Ana, Edgar and their son Bruno watch all the action from the windows of their decadent high-class building. Amidst shortages of food, water and electricity, Ana scavenges for food in the building's abandoned apartments; but strange noises in the dark corridors drive her deeper into a paranoid state of mind. *Zafari* is a bold and unsettling exploration of a society pushed to its limits.

CLOSING NIGHT: *The Dog, My Father and Us/Nosotros, mi papá y el perro*

Sebastián is going through a quiet midlife crisis: he loses his job, his marriage grows distant, his relationship with his son is strained, and living with his father becomes increasingly difficult. When his younger brother suddenly reappears with a business proposal as absurd as it is desperate, long-buried family wounds resurface, forcing Sebastián to confront everything he has been avoiding for years. *The Dog, My Father and Us* is an intimate comedy about male vulnerability, the complex bonds between fathers and sons, and the need to reconcile with those we love before it is too late.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Mariana Rondón: Born in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, the writer, director, producer and visual artist started her journey in film studying animation in Paris and as part of the first generation of graduates from Cuba's International Film and TV School founded by Gabriel García Márquez. Her first feature film, 2000's *At Midnight and a Half* co-directed with Marité Ugás, was an official selection of over 40 international film festivals. Her third feature, *Pelo malo* (2013), won the Golden Shell for Best Film at the San Sebastian Film Festival. Alongside filmmaking partner Marité Ugás, she founded SUDACA FILMS in the early

90's, trading roles with her in their projects as director, producer and writer for more than 25 years.



Which brings us to...

Marité Ugás: Born in Lima, Perú, her credits as a solo director include such groundbreaking, critically acclaimed films as *The Kid Who Lies* (1999) and *Contactado* (2020, an official selection of the 27th Chicago Latino Film Festival). After receiving a degree in Communications from the University of Lima, she was also part of the first generation of graduates from Cuba's International Film and TV School, where she directed *Belen Neighborhood*, a documentary film about Havana's harbor.

Pablo Arturo Suárez: The Ecuadorean film and commercial spot director completed a Master's Degree in Directing at the Cinema and Audiovisual School of Catalunya (ESCAC) in 2011, where he directed two short films: *The guitar* (2011) and *When the Morning Burst Forth* (2013). The latter was an official selection of the Huelva Ibero-American Film Festival and was screened at over twenty international festivals, including the Short Film Corner at the Cannes Film Festival in 2013. He released his debut feature, *An Ocean Between Us/Tan distintos*, in 2016.

SPONSORS

The 42nd Chicago Latino Film Festival is sponsored by: Humboldt Park Health, Beam Suntory, Illinois Film Office, Illinois Lottery, US Bank, Lopez & Co., The Whitehall Hotel, Tristan & Cervantes and Prado & Renteria.

Media Sponsors: WTTW, CAN TV, La Raza, NBC-5/Telemundo Chicago, Chicago Latino Network, and XR Space.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The 42nd Chicago Latino Film Festival receives additional support from: Chicago Film Office, Reva & David Logan Foundation, Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Art Works Fund, DCASE (Chicago Dept. of Cultural Affairs and Special Events), Illinois Arts Council -State Agency, Instituto Cervantes, The Joyce Foundation, Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, the Consulate General of Ecuador in Chicago and the Consulate General of Chile in Chicago.

ABOUT THE ILCC

The International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago is a pan-Latino, nonprofit, multidisciplinary arts organization dedicated to developing, promoting, and increasing awareness of Latino cultures among Latinos and other communities by presenting a wide variety of art forms and education, including film, music, dance, visual arts, comedy, theater, and culinary arts. The Center prides itself on its outstanding multidisciplinary local and international cultural programming which spans Latin America, Spain, Portugal, and the United States.

Born out of the Chicago Latino Film Festival, The International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago also produces other programs, including the Chicago Latino Music Series, which is celebrating its 20th edition this year; Film in the Parks, also in its 20th season; the monthly Reel Film Club, already in its 18th year; the Chicago Latino Dance Festival, now in its fourth year; and many more.

All in all, the audience has grown from 500 people in 1985 for the first Chicago Latino Film Festival to more than 50,000 (Latinos and non-Latinos) who enjoy the year-round multidisciplinary cross-cultural exchanges offered by the Center.

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