

ENTERTAINMENT FEBRUARY 1, 2016 10:02 AM

The 33rd Miami Film Festival unveils this year's lineup

HIGHLIGHTS

129 films from 40 countries will be shown at seven venues March 4-13

Several of this year's selections were made by local filmmakers

The new "Marquee Series" offers in-depth conversations with actors and directors



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129 feature-length and short films will unspool at the 33rd Miami International Film Festival, to be held March 4-13 at various venues around the city.

Organizers of the festival, which is presented by Miami Dade College, unveiled this year's lineup at a press conference Monday. The slate includes 12 world premieres, 16 North American debuts and 13 U.S. premieres.

Among them:

- *The Olive Tree*, by two-time Goya-winning actress/director Icíar Bollaín, about a family's decision to sell a 1,000 year-old olive tree from their village in Eastern Spain to a land developer.

- *Queen of Thursdays*, a documentary portrait of Rosario “Charin” Suárez, the former prima ballerina in the Cuban National Ballet, directed by Tower Theater programmer Orlando Rojas and co-written by Dennis Scholl, former vice president of art for the Knight Foundation.
- *Hearts of Palm*, a love story told through science, literature, and music that invokes Miami's mystical undercurrents, directed by Miami filmmaker Monica Peña (*Ectotherms*).
- *The Rebound*, director Shaina Koren's look at the struggles by the Miami Heat Wheels wheelchair basketball team to reach their second national championship game.
- *Un caballo llamado Elefante (Elephant: The Horse)*, director Andrés Waissbluth's fantasy-adventure inspired by autobiographical tales from the childhood of Chilean musician/composer Lalo Parra and his siblings.

Other movies in the lineup:

- *The Lobster*, a bizarre comedy about a future society where single people are given 45 days to find a romantic partner, starring Colin Farrell, Rachel Weisz and Léa Seydoux, directed by the always-provocative Greek filmmaker Yorgos Lanthimos (*Dogtooth, Alps*).
- *Weiner*, an exploration of the mayoral campaign of disgraced New York Congressman Anthony Weiner, which won the U.S. Documentary Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival in January.
- *Tale of Tales*, a trilogy of surreal, outlandish fantasy fables directed by Matteo Garrone (*Gomorrah, Reality*) and starring Salma Hayek and Vincent Cassel.
- *Argentina*, Carlos Saura's latest cinematic celebration of international song and dance, this time focusing on Argentine culture.
- *Palm Trees in the Snow*, a big-budget romantic epic set during the last days of the Spanish colonies in Africa.
- *Nothing Left Unsaid: Gloria Vanderbilt & Anderson Cooper*, a portrait of the relationship between the esteemed artist/fashion designer and her CNN news anchor son, directed by Liz Garbus.
- *Sunset Song*, the coming-of-age story of a Scottish farmer's daughter in the early 1900s directed by Terence Davies (*The Deep Blue Sea, The Long Day Closes*).
- *I've Never Not Been from Miami*, a collection of 10 short films by Miami filmmakers about Miami artists, directed by Andrew Hevia, Joey Daoud, Jonathan David Kane, Monica Peña, Tabatha Mudra, Keisha Rae Witherspoon, Kenny Riches, Jacob Katel, Kareem Tabsch and Tina Francisco.

The festival's opening night selection is the Spanish comedy *My Big Night*, about the madcap backstage antics during the taping of a television New Year's Eve special, directed by wildman Álex de la Iglesia (*The Last Circus, Witching and Bitching, Perdita Durango*). The legendary pop singer Raphael, who appears in the film, will attend the screening.

The festival closes with *The Steps*, director Andrew Currie's comedy about the chaos that ensues after a marriage brings two dysfunctional families together, starring James Brolin, Christine Lahti, Emmanuelle Chriqui and Jason Ritter.

New this year is a “Marquee Series” featuring on-stage conversations by filmmakers as they present their latest work. Monica Bellucci will speak with director Guy Edoïn about playing the mother of a gay son in his latest film *Ville-Marie*. Director Gavin Hood (*Tsotsi*, *Ender’s Game*) will unveil *Eye in the Sky*, starring Helen Mirren, Aaron Paul and the late Alan Rickman about a military officer overseeing a drone operation who is caught in a moral dilemma. Writer-director Deepa Mehta (*Water*) will discuss her career before a screening of *Beeba Boys*, about gang warfare in Vancouver.

Returning for a fourth year is the Lee Brian Schrager’s Culinary Cinema program, which consists of four screenings of food-related movies (including *My Bakery in Brooklyn* and *Sweet Bean*) paired with meals and wines from area restaurants.

Among this year’s seminars is *Making the Leap from Short to Feature Film*, moderated by FilmGate Miami’s Diliaana Alexander; *Producing in Florida and Beyond*; and *From Doodle to Pixels: Over a Hundred Years of Spanish Animation*.

“This year’s lineup is like a prism that invites Miami to see the world with an illumination that only the cinema and the artists that create the work can provide,” said Jaie Laplante, executive director of the festival. “The programmers have populated the program with films and events that are essential to the complex, dynamic, ever-changing Miami of the now.”

The Miami International Film Festival will take place at several venues around the city, including the Olympia Theater, Tower Theater, O Cinema Miami Beach, Coral Gables Art Cinema, Miami Beach Cinematheque, O Cinema Wynwood and the Coconut Grove Cinépolis. Tickets go on sale to the general public on Feb. 12. For a complete festival schedule, visit www.miamifilmfestival.com or call 305-237-3456.

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