
Colombian 'Birds of Passage' Wins Best Film at Cuban Festival

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The Film received the highest award at the 40th International Festival of New Latin American Cinema.

The Colombian film "Pajaros de Verano" (or Birds of Passage), directed by Cristina Gallego and Ciro Guerra, was crowned with the Coral prize for the best fiction film at the 40th International Festival of New Latin American Cinema held in Havana, Cuba.

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"Pajaros de Verano" is a story set in the seventies, when the cultivation and sale of marijuana brought enormous wealth, and also decadence, to some families of the Wayuu indigenous community in the Colombian department of La Guajira.

The film, which was presented at the Directors' Fortnight at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival and has been shortlisted to represent Colombia at the Oscars, also received the Coral prize for best original music at the Havana Festival.

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According to Jenn Sepulveda, a Colombian film critic, the film's success stems

from its ability to become something more than an ethnographic description.

Its plot reconstructs the socio-cultural scenario faced by a couple of foreigners who came to La Guajira looking for cannabis. Their search, which might seem simple and trivial, ends up leading to drug trafficking, a business that merges power, violence, and death.

The story unfolds between 1975 and 1985, a time when Colombia went through episodes of violence derived from the competition between marijuana producers and cocaine traffickers.

"We looked for a feminine perspective for a genre that always tells its stories from the male voice. We looked for those silent stories they had not told us," Gallego said, as reported by Canaltrece.

[@NLP_365](#) 'Pájaros de verano', la transformación del ritual <http://dlvr.it/QtfLmN>

"Birds of Passage" the transformation of the ritual

At the center of that story is Ursula Pushaima, a character who embodies the female perspective from the Guajira, a matriarchal community in which strong, empowered women face everyday life within a conservative, macho society.

The film is infused with the magical realism of a culture where the value of words influences people's relationships with the dead, dreams, and nature.

"The word is a means of negotiation. It is a way through which [the Wayuu] have been able to find peace, stability, and protection, despite not having clear rules as a community," explained the female director of "Birds of Passage."

This year's edition of Havana Film Festival, which kicked off Thursday, will screen 333 Latin American films until Dec. 16.