
Latin American Features in San Sebastian Film Festival

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This year's festival, running from September 19 to 27, had an especially Hispanic feel, as Antonio Banderas and Diego Luna landed in the Basque city, while the Latin Horizons section highlights the booming Latin American film industry.

Mexican actor-turned-director Diego Luna has used film as a vehicle to bring the world's attention to an important figure in Mexican history, making a flying visit to present his biopic Cesar Chavez.

Based on the famous union leader's fight to improve working conditions for immigrants employed in Californian vineyards in the 1960s, Chavez's story still reverberates today, according to Luna.

"There's no reform taking place in immigration law in the united states," Luna told teleSUR.

"You can take a trip to the U.S. countryside and you'll still find enormous injustice. It's a new type of slavery. The system uses you but doesn't recognize your existence. It's wrong," Luna continued.

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Luna took four years to finish this film, produced by John Malkovich, also attending the festival, and stars many actors with Latin American heritage, including Michael Peña, America Ferrera

and Rosario Dawson.

The actors wanted to tell the story not only of Chavez, whose story is little known outside of Latin America, but also of the movement that sprang up around his demands for rural workers. Luna thinks his "story is still relevant," and that new generations can learn from it.

"We can't forget it, can we? The potential for change is in our hands, if we want it, if we get involved and if we believe we can achieve it," Luna told teleSUR.

Cesar Chavez is competing in the Pearls category for the public's prize, along with two other Latin American productions: documentary *The Salt of the Earth* about acclaimed Brazilian photographer Sebastian Salgado, and comedy *Wild Tales*, directed by Argentine Damian Szifron.

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The category most Latinophiles will have their eyes on is the Latin Horizons category, where Argentina is also being represented with the premiere of two dramas, *Natural Sciences*, director Matias Lucchesi's first film, and *The Princess of France*, directed by Matias Piñeiro.

Brazilian film *Futuro Beach*, documenting the relationship between a German tourist and a Brazilian lifeguard opened for the Latino films, whose judging panel includes Brazilian Producer Sara Silveira.

Denzel Washington and Benicio del Toro are being awarded The Donostia prize for achievement this year, while Antonio Banderas is hoping to take the Golden Shell prize as producer for his sci-fi film *Automata*.

The festival's third day saw the premier of actor John Malkovich's film *Casanova Variations*. Look out for an exclusive teleSUR interview with Malkovitch, coming soon.
