
Cannes Film Festival Leaves out Africa, Most of Latin America

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Just one Latin American movie — and no films from Africa or the Middle East — will compete for the Palme d'Or award at the Cannes Film Festival in May.

The list of contenders, released Thursday, includes the film “Aquarius,” about a retired music writer who can travel through time, by Brazilian critic-turned-filmmaker Kleber Mendonca Filho. That's the only film from all of Latin America that's contending for the top prize.

The Cannes Film Festival, founded in 1946, is the most prestigious international awards ceremony, known for featuring more independent picks than the U.S.'s Academy Awards.

An Argentine movie by Francisco Marquez and Andrea Testa set during that country's military dictatorship, “La larga noche de Francisco Sanctis,” is in the “Un certain regard” category, which honors innovative works from younger artists.

The full lineup for the top prize features one movie from Egypt, one from Chad and one from Iran, but the category is heavily dominated by U.S. and European picks. Mexican cinema, traditionally a Cannes favorite, is notably missing.

Just three of the 20 directors up for the Palme d'Or are women, but that's nonetheless a record for the French film festival.

As the contenders were announced at a press conference in Paris, a small pack of students and theater workers silently held signs to protest the new French labor law, which they said would affect their unemployment and insurance benefits. They told Deadline that they will organize more actions at the festival.

The lineup features a sparse selection of movies from outside of Europe and the U.S., with the vast majority of contenders directed by men.

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INTERVIEW:

Mockumentary Invents Ecuador's Place in Latin American Boom

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WATCH: Mexico's Alejandro G. Iñárritu Wins Oscar, Again

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