Cuban Film Festival To Open, Will Pay Tribute to Fidel

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The festival will present 427 Latin American films in 10 days.

Cuba will hold its 38th annual International Festival of New Latin American Cinema from Dec. 8-18 in Havana, the most important cinematographic event in the country.

The organizers of the festival, in a statement on Nov. 28, mourned the death of their revolutionary leader Fidel Castro: "From the International Festival of New Latin American Cinema in Havana we join in the pain of the physical loss of one of our great founders and thinkers in Latin American cinema as a movement that still unites us today ... (Fidel's) idea of promoting culture, and especially the cinema as the major way of liberation for Latin America, has been present in each one of the editions of the festival. The special screening of the film 'La Batalla de Jigüe' ... is a special occasion to recall the struggle that he led that turned Cuba into a beacon of freedom for all the peoples of the world."

The films traditionally presented at this festival have come from several Latin American countries and have contributed to the region's cultural identity, competing under a panel of international judges, including movie directors, screenwriters and actors.

The event will also celebrate 30 years of the International Film and Television School in San Antonio de los Baños, which was created by Fidel and Nobel Prize winner in Literature and Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

According to the head of the festival, Ivan Giroud, this year's edition will also honor Cuban filmmaker Julio Garcia Espinosa. "Julio is an innate provocateur, always contemporary, modern," said Giroud. "In that sense, his ideas are still valid today."

There will be 18 fiction feature films, 22 short and medium length films, 26 documentaries, and 27 animated films, in addition to a German and a Spanish experimental film, as well as productions from other countries in America,

Asia, Europe and Africa.

"The program we present is a luxury for anyone in the world, including film scholars. Seeing in a condensed place 18 Latin American quality films is a unique aspect of the festival, which makes it a world reference," said Giroud.

Known filmmakers like Tristan Bauer from Argentina, Maria Paredes from Spain, Sonia Bragason from Brazil, and Brian De Palma and Oliver Stone from the U.S. will all be attending the festival. Stone will present his new film called "Snowden," about the life of Edward Snowden, a former contractor who leaked information about the NSA to media in June 2013.

There will be a new section called "Restored Classics" where attendees will be able to see restored versions of classic Cuban movies such as Memories of Underdevelopment, A Cuban Struggle Against the Demons and The Survivors, by Tomas Gutierrez Alea, and Portrait of Teresa by Pastor Vega.