

Sept 29 - Oct 2 | 2021



# 21st aluCine

Latin Film + Media Arts Festival

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### Message from the Mayor

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and a warm welcome to everyone participating in the 21<sup>th</sup> edition of the aluCine Latin Film Festival.

Congratulations on this year's virtual festival that will showcase more than 25 films with a focus on Afro Latinx Filmmakers and Caribbean Cinema. The arts are an integral component of Toronto's cultural and economic fabric and I am delighted that new and emerging artists have the opportunity to showcase their talent and creativity.

I am delighted that wonderful events like this are taking place in Toronto. Arts and culture can be incredible forces for the development of an individual, group or community, and they promote intercultural connections including tolerance, understanding, friendship and social cohesion.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable event and continued success.

Yours truly,

John Tory  
Mayor of Toronto

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
100 QUEEN STREET WEST, TORONTO, ONTARIO, M5H 2N2

# Welcome to aluCine 2021!

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***I take immense pleasure in welcoming you*** to the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of aluCine Latin Film + Media Arts Festival, Canada's longest-running Latin American film festival.

Over the past 20 years, aluCine Latin Film + Media Arts Festival has risen to become the leading exhibitor of coveted Latin works. We stand apart as one of the most comprehensive forums for independent Latin media makers in North America, with a deep focus on works from artists across Canada and the globe.

We at aluCine always strive to be an accessible festival with PWYC events and discounted tickets for seniors and students, and this year is no different – all programming is FREE!

Many thanks to the artists for trusting us with your work, gracias to our loyal audience, and a big GRACIAS to our community partners who make an effort to ensure that the Festival reaches new audiences increasingly and steadily. Thanks to the #aluCine21 team; this year's festival wouldn't be possible without your incredible dedication.

Enjoy the films!

Sinara Rozo, Artistic Director

# A Message from the Programming Team

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***This year has been an interesting one,*** to say the least. In the midst of countless ups and downs and openings and closings, film festivals – and many arts communities – have had to adapt to whatever came our way. But throughout all of this uncertainty, film has served as a respite; a world to escape to when distraction is needed.

When aluCine first began the process of programming our films for 2021, our programming team knew that we wanted to create something particularly beautiful this year, to help offset the chaos. However, this was no easy task. We received over 100 submissions – a new record – and had so many wonderful films to choose from. We knew that we wanted one of our central themes to be Caribbean cinema, and we wanted to ensure that our film choices shared the voices of marginalized and underrepresented communities. We spent hours poring over each of our submissions, gravitating towards films that brought us joy or sparked hope. Cinema can serve as such a powerful influencer of emotions, and we wanted to use this power for good.

After months of careful consideration, I feel a great pride in the work we have done and the films we have selected. Our 2021 festival is a celebration of Latinx culture in all its forms. aluCine 2021 is a fiesta, a classroom, a warm hug, a tropical getaway... These films hold so much, and are just waiting for you to take a look.

We hope that this year's films bring you as much joy as we felt while programming them. While we may not be able to unite for a fully in-person festival just yet, we are so grateful to each and every one of you for sticking with us and joining us for this celebration of arts, culture, and Latinx identity.

From the bottom of my heart – and on behalf of the entire aluCine team – thank you so much for being here, wherever you are, and for supporting aluCine Latin Film + Media Arts Festival.

Aaron R. Brown

Aaron Rachel Brown, Programming Manager

# Festival Team

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## **Artistic Director**

Sinara Rozo

## **Festival Coordinator**

Carlos A. Sanchez

## **Programming Manager**

Aaron Rachel Brown

## **Festival Assistant**

Lucia Linares

# ***Lifting Voices***

## Opening Night Gala

Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM ET

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***Identity, empowerment, and self-acceptance*** take the spotlight in our opening night program. Tonight's films lift the voices of afro-latinx women, sharing their unique experiences in poetic, emotional ways. Featuring two films - a short and a feature - created and directed by black women, these works will educate and inspire.

The program begins with the short film *The Ritual to Beauty*. Through this work, spoken-word poetry and documentary blend together to create an introspective and beautiful reflection on identity. Dive into the minds of three generations of Dominican women as they discuss and explore their feelings about their hair.

Following this film is the documentary feature *Negra*, which transports you across Mexico to meet several black women and learn their stories. Artfully told, this film is at times meditative, pensive, and heartwarming. You are sure to love these women as they share their lives with you.

These two works weave together a vibrant tapestry of family, friendship, culture, community, and self-love. Although these films explore the external prejudices and internal conflicts that these women face, they ultimately bring a message that conveys hope, and the power to be found in the strength of women.

## The Ritual to Beauty

*Directed by Shenny de Los Angeles and Maria Marrone*

2020 – United States – Documentary – 14 mins

The Ritual to Beauty is a mixed media piece integrating the stylization of documentary and spoken word. Inspired by Shenny's one-woman show "What Happens to Brown Girls Who Never Learn How to Love Themselves Brown?", this piece invites you to witness the meaning of beauty through three generations of Dominican women.

The grandmother, the mother, and the daughter. In learning about the ritual to beauty that was passed down to each woman, there is a pain buried deep in the denial of their blackness. It is only through the secret voice in the water, that the daughter is able to release herself from a pain she's been holding onto since she was born. By forgiving herself and the women before her, will she finally see just how beautiful she is when she's free?



## Negra

*Directed by Medhin Tewolde Serrano*

2020 – Mexico – Documentary – 72 mins



I was about seven years old the first time someone called me "black" on the street. I turned around to see who they were talking to, until I realized it was me. That day I understood I was black, and the laughter it caused among the people nearby made me think being a black person wasn't that great... Was this only happening to me? Or did it happen to other black women?

"Negra" shows the director in her search of exploring what it means to inhabit Mexico as a black woman. It tells the story of five afro-descendant women from southern Mexico, exposing racism, resistance and processes of self-acceptance, strategies for transcending stereotypes, and the celebration of their identity.



## ***Latinidad***

### **New Works by Latin Canadian Filmmakers**

Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM ET

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***Showcasing new works from local artists*** is a proud tradition at aluCine, and this year is no exception! See what's hot and new in the Latin-Canadian film scene, and dive into ten new short films from Latin-Canadian filmmakers.

This program includes filmmakers that you may recognize from previous years, but it also brings new and emerging Latinx creators to the spotlight. A vast range of artistic styles and genres are explored, including animation, experimental, documentary, and fiction.

Support local artists, and find new filmmakers to enjoy!

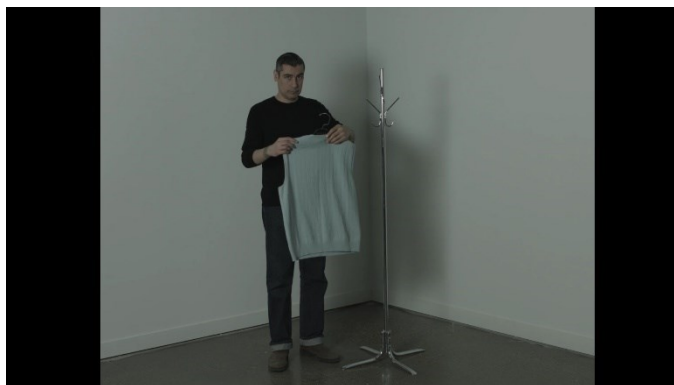


## The Sweater

*Directed by Jean-Pierre Marchant*

2020 – Canada – Documentary/Experimental – 5 mins

"The Sweater" blends 16mm hand processed film with found footage and video to explore childhood memories triggered by finding the last thing my deceased father gave me. Using short vignettes, I tell several stories that defined our relationship to each other, and how the world shaped us both.



## Parkdale Dreams

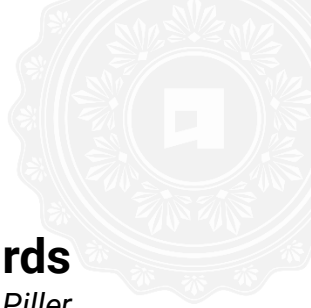
*Directed by Jerusa Leão*

2021 – Canada – Fiction – 1 min



Parkdale dreams is a short film that portrays the ambiguous underground lifestyle of one of the most iconic and rough neighbourhoods of Toronto. This neighbourhood has been going through a process of gentrification in the last decade which allowed us to create a story about the ambivalence and the multi-faceted realities of its dwellers. This short film intends to expose the importance and the impact of mental health and awareness.

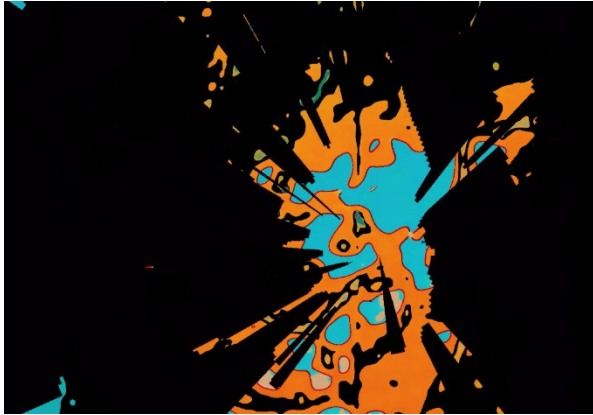




## Birds

*Directed by Madi Piller*

2021 – Canada – Experimental – 3 mins



A cameraless film that expands the hybrid modes of material exploration. The film starts with plant leaf imprints and organic processes on 16mm film. It is optically printed, DIY, for additional digital manipulations. Pixels and film textures weave in this abstract film to create new hybrid experiences, blurring the lines of the origins of the material.

The soundtrack was made in close collaboration with Stefan Voglsinger (Vienna). I transmitted the idea of flapping

images of birds and Stefan created the sound environment for the images. We worked online due to COVID-19.

## Fragmentos

*Directed by Juan Pablo Pinto Mendoza and Sebastian Ignacio Oreamuno*

2021 – Canada – Experimental – 7 mins

*Fragmentos* draws on Julio Ramón Ribeyro’s short story *Alienación* to explore the journey of a young man who suppresses his Latino identity. The short film captures a moment in time in which the suppressed self recognizes the process of fragmentation, breaking down, that he has endured and begins to resist.



Exploring the intricacies of identity formation, *Fragmentos* aims to draw focus to the significance of reflecting and reflection, and how these practices shape our understanding of ourselves and our being in the world. The piece speaks to themes of solitude and community, individualism and collectivity, diaspora and identity, capitalism and “third-world” manifestations of “first-world” desires.





## **BORRACHERO**

*Directed by Gustavo Cerquera Benjumea*

2019 – Canada – Animation – 8 mins

"Borrachero" is an experimental animation that tells a story of psychotropic plants, crime, and Colombian society. Borrachero, or the brugmansia tree, is a powerful psychotropic plant originally used by Indigenous people in Latin America for medicinal and religious purposes. It is also used by criminal gangs as the main ingredient of the intoxicant 'burundanga', a dangerous substance that can



induce a trance-like state and block the free-will of its victims.

This Colombian-Noir begins with a woman involved with a criminal gang that uses the Borrachero tree to rob unsuspecting victims. After a job goes wrong, she flees to her hometown but soon encounters a mysterious figure, which might be the embodied spirit of the plant. This dream-like and eerie animation becomes a reflection on how Brugmansia, once used for healing, now fuels criminal enterprise. "Borrachero" is also a genre-piece about the resilience and mysterious power of these plants.

## **Jatun LLaxta, Noh Kaah....**

*Directed by Marcos Arriaga*

2020 – Canada – Experimental – 8 mins



Some of the world's oldest archeological sites take on new form and meaning when viewed from a different perspective, raising pointed questions about how our history is curated and presented.



## Alerta!!

*Directed by SoJin Chun*

2020 – Canada – Experimental – 1 min



Alerta! was created as part of the Exquisite Corpse Video Project, an online international project with contributing video artists around the globe using this surrealist technique for collective artmaking. Using contemporary archival footage from YouTube, I responded to the early days

of the pandemic while witnessing the mediocre responses to Covid19 by politicians around the world.

## Unarchive

*Directed by Cecilia Araneda*

2020 – Canada – Documentary – 13 mins

*Unarchive* juxtaposes the filmmaker's father's life with the political history of Chile – his birthplace – over the past century. It reflects on how we remember and how we forget, and the role of the camera in transcending the complex space in between.



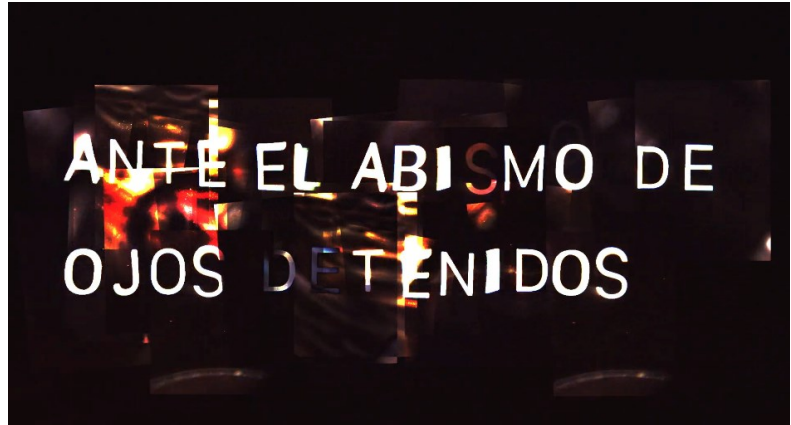


## **Wayfarers/Caminantes**

*Directed by Francisca Duran and Vanessa John*

2021 – Canada – Experimental – 7 mins

A collaboration between sound artist Vanessa John and experimental media artist, Francisca Duran. Featuring a poem by Chilean poet, Rosabetty Muñoz.



## **Ride Fair**

*Directed by Javier Lovera*

2021 – Canada – Documentary – 7 mins



Three fearless community organizers with a history of standing up against big tech corporations, embark on an uphill political fight to regulate Uber and Lyft in Toronto so that these companies operate in the public interest, respecting communities, drivers and passengers.



# ***Quiéreme Como Soy***

## Spotlight on Queer Cinema

Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 PM ET

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***Join us in celebrating queer identities*** as we screen four outstanding short films from queer filmmakers. Featuring a range of genres including documentary, drama, and sci-fi, this program provides new perspectives... and sometimes even takes you out of this world!

These works are timely and relevant, discussing important issues in creative ways. In this program: a loving mother goes off in search of her missing daughter and uncovers unexpected secrets; an alien comes to earth in search of her first kiss during a pandemic; a nonbinary documentary filmmaker reveals a family history and a search for acceptance; a young girl attempts to navigate her blossoming sexuality while getting ready for a party with friends.

Sample a spectrum of queer creativity in our queer short film program!



## **Sinvergüenzilla in "First Kiss"**

*Directed by Anita Abbasi*

2021 – Canada – Fiction – 9 mins

Sinvergüenzilla, a music-loving blue alien deity, visits Earth to experience her first human kiss. But as she arrives in Toronto during the COVID-19 pandemic, her search gets complicated.



## **Ni Aquí / Ni Allá**

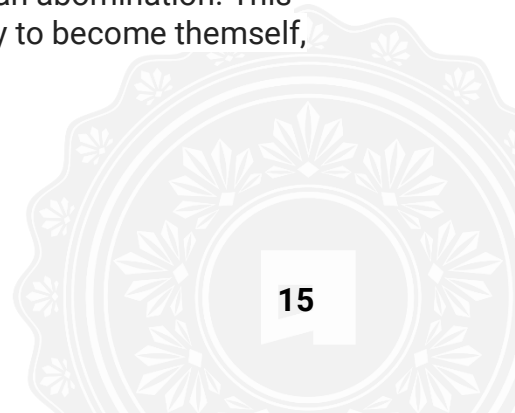
*Directed by Ley Comas*

2020 – United States/Costa Rica/Dominican Republic – Documentary – 15 mins



Ni Aquí/Ni Allá is a personal documentary that centers a conversation between filmmaker Ley Comas and their mother about their gender identity. As the middle child of christian pastors, Ley never imagined that transitioning was possible. Growing up, in the Dominican Republic, Ley only witnessed trans people

portrayed as evil characters, punchlines in movies and TV shows, or outcasts and victims. At home, anything that went against God's word was an abomination. This documentary follows Ley's physical and psychological journey to become themselves, while struggling to find a middle ground with their family.







## Girls & the Party

*Directed by Paloma Lopez*

2020 – United States – Fiction – 5 mins



A group of girlfriends prepare for the anticipated summer party in a cramped bathroom. Between boy talk and makeup, Mercedes navigates her blossoming attraction.

## Inabitável / Unliveable

*Directed by Matheus Farias & Enock Carvalho*

2020 – Brazil – Fiction – 20 mins

In Brazil, where a trans person is murdered every three days, Marilene searches for her daughter Roberta, a trans woman who went missing.

While running out of time, she discovers a hope for the future.



# Caribbean Night

Friday, October 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 PM ET

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***These days, we could all use a vacation.*** Let aluCine take you on an island getaway with this collection of short films from the Caribbean! Journey to Colombia, Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Trinidad & Tobago, and Puerto Rico, experiencing unique stories that highlight the amazing creativity that Caribbean filmmakers can produce.

Featuring both fiction and documentary shorts, each of these films will captivate you in new ways. Stories of love and loss, of family and friendship, of growth and adventure play across diverse island landscapes.

Traverse the islands in an hour and a half - all from the comfort of your living room!



## Chien

*Directed by Pascal Sanchez*

2019 – Canada/Guadeloupe – Fiction – 20 mins



In a Guadeloupean village, a young boy adopts a stray dog. Devastated by his new companion's sudden disappearance, he sets out on a quest through this unknown island.

## Nearest Neighbours

*Directed by Rhonda Chan Soo*

2019 – Trinidad & Tobago – Documentary – 22 mins

In 2019, at least 16,000 Venezuelans are confirmed to have fled to Trinidad and Tobago, since 2015. The twin island republic is one of the most economically viable options for asylum-seekers, yet many are unaware of the reality that is to welcome them. *Nearest Neighbours* interweaves the stories of four main sets of characters: a journalist; a couple with three young children and their abuela;



a woman who is living in a horse stable among other refugees; and a computer engineer turned construction worker and his family. The film explores how these refugees and asylum-seekers navigate their environments daily and work to move their lives forward amidst many unexpected challenges, including rampant xenophobia and a lack of legal rights due to the absence of local refugee legislation.



## **La Capa Azul / The Blue Cape**

*Directed by Alejandra López*

2019 – Puerto Rico – Fiction – 5 mins

In hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico, medicine can be hard to come by. A little boy has to grow beyond his limits if he is to help his grandfather.



## **Fishing Her: Mujeres de Sal**

*Directed by Ana María Jessie Serna and Javier Camilo Aranguren*

2018 – Colombia – Documentary – 11 mins



Twelve women fishermen of the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, through their experiences at sea, challenge a work seen as masculine and write an extraordinary story in relation to the sea, fishing, and their daily lives.





## Chakero

*Directed by Alejandro Ángel Torres*

2020 – Colombia – Fiction – 15 mins



In San Basilio de Palenque, Grandfather Florentino is seriously ill and his grandson Keyner must tell his uncles who live in Mahates, another town in the area, to visit him before it's too late. Keyner, without any ways to communicate,

embraces the ancestral tradition of the chakeo and becomes a messenger who brings the news to his family.

## Flight

*Directed by Kia Moses*

2018 – Jamaica – Fiction – 13 mins

A Jamaican boy sets out on a dream, ten times his size, to fly to the moon, despite his circumstances and opposition from his father.



## ***Un Traductor***

### Closing Night Gala

Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM ET

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***Our twenty-first festival ends*** with a tour-de-force feature film that transports you to 1980s Havana, just after the Chernobyl crisis. Based on a true story, this gripping docudrama is captivating and refreshing, with an endearing cast of characters that will linger in your thoughts long after the film is over.

The film follows a Russian literature professor who is suddenly reassigned to work as a translator at a hospital, working with Russian children suffering the effects of radiation poisoning. This film reveals the human side of a piece of history that many may not be aware of; how many Russian patients were transported to Cuba for medical care after the events of Chernobyl.

While the content may seem heavy, this piece is far from tragic. With bright, colourful set design, stunning cinematography, and emotional, powerful acting, this film is a beautiful contemplation of life, and is sure to tug on your heartstrings.

# Un Traductor

*Directed by Rodrigo Barriuso and Sebastian Barriuso*

2018 – Cuba/Canada – Drama – 107 mins



In the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, Malin, a Russian literature professor at The University of Havana, is sent to translate between Cuban doctors and children sent from the USSR for medical treatment. Torn from the abstract world of academia and forced into the relentlessly real world of medicine, Malin becomes increasingly depressed. When he meets a child who tells him a story, Malin connects with the kids and finds his way through. Just as he adapts to his new job, the Berlin Wall falls and Cuba enters the deepest economic crisis the island has ever known. But Malin is now so entrenched in the lives of the Chernobyl Children that he doesn't notice his young family suffering. He must find his way back to his wife and child through the lessons he learns at the hospital – and become a better person on the way.

# Special Thanks to Our Supporters

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## Co-Presenters:

