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For Immediate Release

38th Mill Valley Film Festival, October 8 – 18, 2015
Celebrating the Best in Independent and World Cinema

**LATIN FILMS AT THE
38TH MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL**

Highlights include Chilean Oscar® Entry **THE CLUB**,
Columbian Oscar® Entry **EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT**,
Guatemalan Oscar® Entry **IXCANUL**

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. (September 30, 2015) - The Mill Valley Film Festival (MVFF), presented annually by the California Film Institute (CFI), is pleased to highlight the following films from Latin America during the 38th edition of the festival, which runs Thursday, October 8 – Sunday, October 18, 2015. Internationally recognized for showcasing the best in independent and world cinema, the Festival draws thousands of attendees every fall to Marin County for 11 days of films, panel discussions, and musical performances. The Mill Valley Film Festival provides attendees with a chance to catch an early glimpse of potential Academy Award® contenders and discover some of the best films from around the world.

Alias Maria

Child soldiers risk their lives to ferry their commander's newborn baby to safety in director José Luis Rugeles' tense drama. The children are part of a band of leftist guerrillas battling right-wing paramilitaries in the Colombian jungle. Thirteen-year-old Maria; her boyfriend, Mauricio; Afro-Colombian Byron; and Yuldor, a scrawny preteen, face constant danger in trying to protect an infant whose very cries could alert the enemy to their presence. The pressure on Maria is even greater as she tries to hide her own pregnancy from her comrades. In her screen debut, Karen Torres makes palpable Maria's terror, tenderness, and determination, while Rugeles' camera captures both the claustrophobia and lush beauty of the jungle. No mere war drama, Rugeles and writer Diego Vivanco made ***Alias Maria*** to draw attention to the plight of the thousands of children—according to Human Rights Watch—recruited to fight in Colombia's decades-long civil strife.

Screens Saturday, October 10 at 6:30PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Screens Monday, October 12 at 5:30PM at Lark Theater

Blue Blood

Mythological themes are mined from petty human dramas when the circus travels to a volcanic archipelago two hundred miles off Brazil's northeast coast. Exiled as a child by his mother, the Cannon Man returns home to find the years have not diminished the taboo attraction between him and his sister. Natural opposites—the brother is shot into the air in nightly performances while the sister spends her days deep-sea diving—their reunion completes a cycle of fate. Director Lírio Ferreira hails from Pernambuco, the Brazilian state currently incubating a spare, compelling regional cinema, but his inspiration seems to come from elsewhere, borrowing the make-believe aesthetics of Fellini and the soap-operatic intensity of Cacá Diegues. Conscious of its theatricality, the film employs disorienting camera angles, direct address, and stock characters (including a ghost rider and a blind seer played by Cinema Novo's Paulo César Peréio and Ruy Guerra) to ensure the fulfillment of preordained destinies.

Screens Tuesday, October 13 at 8PM at Lark Theater

Screens Thursday, October 15 at 2PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Boxeadora

In Meg Smaker's short film ***Boxeadora***, viewers follow one woman's quest to become Cuba's first female boxer and achieve Olympic glory.

Screens Monday, October 12 at 5PM at Throckmorton Theater

Screens Tuesday, October 13 at 2:45PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

The Club (El Club)

Director Pablo Larrain's follow up to his Oscar® nominated *No*, ***The Club*** follows a crisis counselor who is sent by the Catholic Church to a small Chilean beach town where disgraced priests and nuns, suspected of crimes ranging from child abuse to baby-snatching from unwed mothers, live in seclusion after an incident occurs.

Chile's Official entry for the Foreign Language Oscar®

Screens Sunday, October 11 at 8:30PM at the Cinéarts Sequoia

Screens Thursday, October 15 at 11:30AM at the Cinéarts Sequoia

Dirty Wolves (Lobos Sucios) - World Premiere

Under ancient yew trees in the Nazi-controlled tungsten mines of northwest Spain, a single mother decides to fight someone else's war—and ends up risking everything. Known mockingly as "The Widow," Manuela was abandoned by her baby's father and now works processing the wolfram (aka tungsten) that the Germans will use to tear through Allied flesh. But it turns out there is more than just the wolf of poverty to keep from the door as Manuela comes to realize that—unlike her country—she cannot remain neutral in a time of war. In a thrilling first feature inspired by actual events, director Simón Casal de Miguel imbues the unrelenting grayness of the Galician countryside with a mysticism as old as the twisting yews and howling wolves that roam beneath them. And in Marian Álvarez's steely, nuanced Manuela, along with the terrific supporting cast, he has mined rich and subtle talent.

Screens Saturday, October 10 at 2:15PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Screens Monday, October 12 at 11:30AM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Embrace of the Serpent (El abrazo de la serpiente) - US Premiere

The Columbian Oscar® entry, this urgent tale startles in lush black and white. Karamakate, "the world mover," is a lone shaman, the last of the Cohiuano people living in harmony with the rainforest. On two separate occasions 40 years apart, he's summoned to help a white man heal his soul sickness, his lack of dreaming. Despite the incursion of missionaries and rubber robber barons, he attempts to reassert traditional ways. The winner of the 2015 top prize at Cannes' Directors' Fortnight, ***Embrace of the Serpent's*** crosscutting stories are based on the travel diaries of Theodor Koch-Grunberg and Richard Evans Schultes. In 1909, Karamakate attends to deathly ill German ethnographer Theo and accompanies him into the Amazonian heart of darkness in search of a fabled sacred medicine plant. Decades later, ethnobotanist Evan seeks the same plant with an older, less assured Karamakate. As colonialism cuts even deeper than before, will they be saved? Will we?

Screens Wednesday, October 14 at 8:45PM at Century Corte Madera

Screens Saturday, October 17 at 2PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Havana Motor Club

Declared an elitist pursuit after the revolution, auto racing in Cuba survives as a clandestine, cop-dodging activity on remote streets and highways. Drivers endlessly tweak the souped-up, tuned-up engines in their 1950s US hotrods, dreaming of the day their underground sport is sanctioned again by the authorities. This vibrant, street-level documentary follows a handful of obsessed grease monkeys through the course of the Cuban Motor Federation's stop-and-go exertions to stage an organized drag-racing event. The top competitors setting engines—and hearts—racing are Reinaldo "Tito" Lopez Fernandez, the fierce gray-haired patriarch whose son drives their classic red-and-white 1955 Chevy Bel Air, and Carlos Alvarez Sanchez, blessed with Clooney-esque looks and a Cuban-American partner who flies in parts for their late-model red Porsche. To overcome the myriad bumps in the road, they and their fellow enthusiasts rely on a uniquely Cuban mix of determination, sacrifice, and macho swagger.

Screens Saturday, October 10 at 11AM at Cinéarts Sequoia

Screens Monday, October 12 at 2:30PM at Cinéarts Sequoia

In the Clouds

Cultural differences threaten to undermine a marriage proposal in Marcelo Mitnik's charming Argentinean short ***In the Clouds***.

Screens Monday, October 12 at 9:15PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Screens Tuesday, October 13 at 5:45PM at Lark Theatre

Screens Wednesday, October 14 at 12PM at Cinéarts Sequoia

Ixcánul

The Guatemalan Oscar® entry with an indigenous cast and the power of a classic fable, ***Ixcánul*** tells the moving story of a Mayan family living in the shadow of a volcano in the Guatemalan highlands. In a rustic cabin, Maria and her parents eke out a living by harvesting coffee with hopes of improving their situation after the local overseer, Ignacio, proposes marriage. Pretty but naïve, young Maria has her eyes instead on a handsome

itinerant worker who wants to travel to the States, and a rash decision imperils everyone's plans. In his beautifully shot debut film, writer-director Jayro Bustamante shows a world where nature is preeminent and rituals a part of daily life. An infestation of snakes that menaces their livelihood provides a rich metaphor for the various threats that face the family in a moving drama that was inspired by Bustamante's interviews with Mayan people about their daily lives.

Screens Thursday, October 15 at 8PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Screens Friday, October 16 at 2:15PM at Cinéarts Sequoia

King's Betrayal

A children's birthday party is the source of sinister doings in David A. Bornstein's tragicomic ***A King's Betrayal***.

Screens Friday, October 9 at 5:30PM at Throckmorton Theater

Screens Saturday, October 10 at 3:30PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

La Tierra Roja – North American Premiere

A stunning ecological thriller and intense love story, director Diego Martinez Vignatti's third feature explores the effects of harmful farming techniques on a rainforest community in northern Argentina. Workers cut down trees and haul them to a paper company for processing, then they cover their faces with kerchiefs and spray poisonous weed killer to increase production. Pierre, a Belgian supervisor for the multinational company, is involved in a passionate relationship with local teacher Ana, and neither can ignore the growing evidence that people are being sickened by the chemicals they're using. As Ana helps mobilize protests and gather evidence that cancer, birth defects, and other illnesses are related to the agrottoxins, Pierre must make a choice. Vignatti, a former cinematographer, captures the region's beauty—and menace. With a cast that mixes seasoned actors and local indigenous people, the film culminates with a dramatic face-off that changes the community, and Pierre, forever.

Screens Wednesday, October 14 at 8PM at Lark Theater

Screens Thursday, October 15 at 3:15PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Marathon

Marathon, by Theo Rigby and Kate McLean, introduces us to an Ecuadorean immigrant whose dream is to run in the New York City Marathon.

Screens Monday, October 12 at 5PM at Throckmorton Theater

Screens Tuesday, October 13 at 2:45PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Marshland (La Isla Minima)

A mesmerizing and moody psychological journey into the underbelly of a small town in 1980, *Marshland* evokes the energy of *True Detective* and the tone of *Twin Peaks* to create a fascinating and haunting first-rate thriller. After teenage sisters disappear from a marshland town in southern Spain, two contrasting Madrid detectives are on the case. As their investigation unfolds, we take a twisty, turbulent ride filled with colorful characters, offbeat situations, and surprising moments of personal revelation. From the opening frames, featuring breathtaking aerial shots of the marshland, it's clear that filmmaker Alberto Rodriguez is in complete control. Each scene is perfectly crafted to capture the emotional and physical reality of that moment while an eerie, understated soundtrack seeps into our subconscious. This meticulous, multilayered cinematic puzzle rewards careful attention by doling out information on a need-to-know basis, assembling a suspenseful and magnetic experience that gives the best kind of movie thrill.

Screens Friday, October 9 at 1PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Screens Monday, October 12 at 8:30PM at Lark Theater

A Perfect Day

Humanitarian aid workers attempt to improve conditions despite facing bureaucracy, violence, cynicism, distrust, and a shortage of necessary materials in this tragicomedy, a kind of *M*A*S*H* comes to the Balkans, set during the waning days of the Bosnian War. The drama begins with Mambro (Benicio Del Toro) and Damir (Fedja Stukan) trying to fish a corpse out of a well. Lack of a proper rope complicates the situation—just one more absurdity for the two men and their co-workers, including wise-cracking B (Tim Robbins), as they go about the business of trying to survive while helping the region thrive once again. Spain stands in for Bosnia in Spaniard Fernando León de Aranoa's gorgeously lensed, funny, and compassionate first English-language feature, a film as attuned to the comic potential of a booby-trapped cow in the road as it is to the challenge of doing the right thing in an impossible situation.

Screens Friday, October 16 at 5PM at the Cinéarts Sequoia

Screens Sunday, October 18 at 11:15AM at Smith Rafael Film Center

The Pawn

Guatemalan teen Astrid was kidnapped and held for ransom. Her family paid and she was released, but the family still gets phone calls from her abductors, calling her a pawn and threatening to snatch her again. Desperate, she enters the U.S. illegally and faces deportation. In Guatemala, one person is kidnapped every day. Targets are frequently children who have family in the United States. Ninety-eight percent of the kidnappers are never punished. Swiss journalist and documentarian Jean Cosme Delaloye examines the problem of abductions for ransom by focusing on Astrid's case, and two others. A father mourns the murder of his kidnapped wife and struggles to raise two young sons who witnessed their mother's death. Fifteen-year-old Kelly was snatched, brutally raped, and murdered. Most of Kelly's family has fled to the U.S., but her cousin Karin remains in Guatemala, working with the Survivors Network group to put Kelly's kidnappers in prison. The film follows court cases that will decide the fates of Astrid and some of the kidnappers.

Screens Sunday, October 12 at 3PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Screens Tuesday, October 13 at 3:15PM at Cinéarts Sequoia

Viaje

After 20-somethings Pedro (Fernando Bolaños) and Lucia (Kattia González) meet cute on the stairs of a costume party—he's in a bear suit; she's in schoolgirl overalls—the twosome spend the night together. The next morning, they impulsively decide to go on a camping trip; since he's heading out to work at a remote biological research facility and she's leaving the country, this may be the last chance they have to get to know each other. Filmmaker Paz Fábrega's romantic character study is like a Costa Rican *Before Sunrise*: The longer this couple muses about their dreams, desires, and how much this chance encounter has dinged their emotional defense systems, the downright sexier this film gets. Between its gorgeous black-and-white cinematography and the leads' breezy chemistry, this modest little gem of a movie packs more beauty, melancholy, and body heat into its 70-minute running time than most films twice its length.

Screens Saturday, October 10 at 8:30PM at Smith Rafael Film Center

Screens Monday, October 12 at 3PM at Lark Theater

Complete MVFF38 program is available online at www.MVFF.com.

Complete Press Materials are available at: [MVFF38 Filmmaker Materials](#)

About the 38th Mill Valley Film Festival

Presented by the California Film Institute, the 38th Mill Valley Film Festival runs October 8-18, 2015 at the CinéArts Sequoia (25 Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley), Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center (1118 Fourth Street, San Rafael), and other venues throughout the Bay Area. With a reputation for launching new films and creating awards season buzz, MVFF has earned a reputation as a "filmmakers' festival" by celebrating the best in American independent and world cinema, alongside high profile and prestigious award contenders. MVFF welcomes more than 200 filmmakers representing more than 50 countries.

About the California Film Institute

The non-profit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through the presentation of the Mill Valley Film Festival and year-round exhibitions at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, film distribution by CFI Releasing, and building the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through the CFI Education program. For more information visit www.cafilm.org or call (415) 383-5256.

Supporters

As a nonprofit arts organization, CFI relies on the generosity of its community to sustain not only the Festival, but also the year-round programs of the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center and CFI Education. The invaluable support of our sponsors, foundations, and individual donors ensures our continued success as we celebrate our 38th year.

CFI is once again proud to acknowledge the leadership support of Christopher B. and Jeannie Meg Smith and Jennifer Coslett MacCready, and the continued major support of Ken and Jackie Broad Family Fund, Drusie and Jim Davis - Drusie Davis Family Fund, The Bernard Osher Foundation, The Gruber Family Foundation, Michael and Susan Schwartz Fund, The Christine Zecca Foundation and The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. We are also fortunate to have the contributions of the following Signature and Major Sponsors of the Mill Valley Film Festival: Wells Fargo, Jackson Square Partners, Lucasfilm, Ltd., Maroevich, O'Shea & Coghlan Insurance Services, Zaentz Media Center/A Wareham and Development, Bellam Self Storage and Boxes, Delta Airlines and San Francisco Chronicle.

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For Calendar Editors

The 38th Mill Valley Film Festival

**One of the Nation's Top 10 Film Festivals, celebrating the Best of Independent and World Cinema
Marin County, California**

Thursday, October 8 through Sunday, October 18, 2015

Tickets & information: mvff.com

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