

**Recent Spanish Cinema, LA OCT 16-19**

by **Robin Minkian** 10/12/2014 09:50:00



The 20th Annual Recent Spanish Cinema returns to the American Cinematheque's Egyptian Theatre, October 16-19.

Since 1994, the Recent Spanish Cinema Series has been presenting the most outstanding current Spanish films. The series is a Seventh Art showcase of Spain's top cinema personalities, who have contributed significantly to putting "Made in Spain" productions in the vanguard of international filmmaking.

Talents like Carmen Maura, Alex de la Iglesia, Bigas Luna, Fernando Trueba, Vicente Aranda, Javier Fesser, and Fernando León de Aranoa, among others, have attended this event and left their personal stamp on the Recent Spanish Cinema Series. Each year, more celebrities and up-and-coming artists in Spanish cinema are adding their names to the list of participants, sharing their experiences in film at the Q&A sessions for the attending audiences.

The Recent Spanish Cinema Series is an initiative of the Spanish Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA), a branch of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport devoted to preserving, fostering, and promoting the Spanish filmmaking and audiovisual sectors, partnered with the American Cinematheque, a non-profit cultural organization in the heart of Hollywood dedicated to public presentation of films of yesterday and today beyond the scope of the big, mainstream productions and EGEDA, the Spanish Audiovisual Producers' Rights Management Association. EGEDA's Los Angeles branch office coordinates and supervises the Series to ensure its ongoing success year after year.

**Thursday, October 16 – 7:00 PM**

**LIVING IS EASY WITH EYES CLOSED OPENING NIGHT PREMIERE.**  
 Spain's Official Oscar Submission! Los Angeles Premiere!

6:00 PM Red carpet  
 7:00 PM Film & Discussion Following.  
 Followed by a reception in the Egyptian courtyard for all ticket holders.

**LIVING IS EASY WITH EYES CLOSED (VIVIR ES FÁCIL CON LOS OJOS CERRADOS)**  
 2013, Outside Pictures, 108 min.

This charming road movie, inspired by actual incidents, earned six Goya Awards, including Best Film and two for writer-director David Trueba. In 1966, teacher and Beatles fan Antonio (a superb Javier Cámara) learns that John Lennon is coming HOW I WON THE WAR in Almería, Spain, and sets off to meet his hero, joined by a pair of young runaways.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

Discussion following with director David Trueba.

**CRITIC'S NOTE:** Actor, writer/director David Trueba, the brother of Academy Award winner Fernando Trueba ("Belle Époque"), takes on the road movie. His political drama "Soldiers of Salamina" ("Soldados de Salamina"), screened in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival, was nominated for eight Goya Awards in 2004, and won the award for Best Cinematography.

**SEQUENCE**  
 The 20 minutes shortfilm SEQUENCE, winner of The Newfilmmakers from Spain short Film contest will screen before the feature.

**SEQUENCE**  
 WINNER 2014 NEW FILMMAKERS FROM SPAIN.  
 2013, 20 minutes by Carlos Torrens.

A man wakes up one morning to realize the entire world has dreamed about him the night before.

**Friday, October 17 – 5:30 PM**

**RECENT SPANISH CINEMA ROUND TABLE, 90 min.** Join us for a panel discussion with filmmakers and performers attending this year's Recent Spanish Cinema series. Hear from the talent behind **LIVING IS EASY WITH EYES CLOSED** (director David Trueba), **CARMINA AND AMEN** (director Paco León), **SPANISH AFFAIR** (actress Clara Lago) and **FAMILY UNITED** (director Daniel Sánchez Arévalo). Moderated by: Julián Daniel Gutiérrez-Abilla (Associate Professor, University of Southern California). This is a free event - first come, first served. At Spielberg Theater inside Egyptian Theatre.

**Friday, October 17 – 7:30 PM Double Feature**  
**CARMINA AND AMEN (CARMINA Y AMEN)**  
 Los Angeles Premiere!

2014, Telecinco, 98 min.  
 Paco León follows up last year's popular **CARMINA OR BLOW UP** with another hilarious (if fictionalized) portrait of his mother. When her husband dies, chain-smoking Carmina Barrios is determined to keep it a secret until she gets a check that he had been expecting. The absurd, sometimes vulgar, comic energy of Almodóvar's early films lives on here!

In Spanish with English subtitles.

**CRITIC'S NOTE:** León's 2012 mockumentary "Carmina Or Blow Up" featured the large than life Andalusian Bar owner, Carmina, bartended with her drunken unemployed husband (Paco Casas), her single-mom daughter Maria (Barrio) real-life daughter, Maria León) and constant bar robberies (she has to pay back a debt for 80 stolen hams.) The cunning Mother Courage outwits all her woes. In León's hotly awaited sequel, Carmina again shows her mettle evading misfortune.

Discussion between films with **CARMINA AND AMEN** director Paco León.

**WITCHING AND BITCHING**  
**WITCHING AND BITCHING (LAS BRUJAS DE ZUGARRAMURDI)**  
 2013, IFC Midnight, 112 min. Dir. Alex de la Iglesia.

On the run after a botched robbery, three hapless crooks (Hugo Silva, Mario Casas and Jaime Ordóñez) take refuge in a Basque village run by a family of witches. Like de la Iglesia's earlier **THE DAY OF THE BEAST**, this kinetic horror-comedy bursts with energy, wild imagery and a couple of jaw-dropping action sequences.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

**CRITIC'S NOTE:** Nobody does over the top with so much wily and dark humor as Alex de la Iglesia ("800 BUñas"; "Crimen Feropeo", both of which played in earlier editions of Recent Spanish Cinema.

**Saturday, October 18 – 7:30 PM Double Feature**

**SPANISH AFFAIR (OCHO APELLIDOS VASCOS)**  
 Los Angeles Premiere! 2014, Film Factory, 98 min. Dir. Emilio Martínez Lázaro.

Love-struck Rabi (Dani Rovira, in his feature debut) pursues a Basque woman (Clara Lago), pretending to be Basque himself to gain her father's approval. This screwball comedy take on regional stereotypes quickly became one of the biggest Spanish-made box office hits of all time.

In Spanish and Basque with English subtitles

**CRITIC'S NOTE:** Emilio Martínez Lázaro's "Spanish Affair" ("Ocho Apellidos Vascos") broke all Spanish Box Office records. Like Danny Boon's runaway French hit "Welcome To The Sticks", "Spanish Affair" plays with regional stereotypes: in this case the view Spaniards have of the Basque. Everything's fair game: Andalusian identity and Basque nationalism, past and present Spanish politics and prejudices, all spice up Lázaro's romcom. Lázaro's best known here for "The Other Side Of The Bed".

Discussion between films with **SPANISH AFFAIR** actress Clara Lago.

**THREE MANY WEDDINGS (TRES BODAS DE MÁS)**  
 Los Angeles Premiere!

2013, 94 min. Dir. Javier Ruiz Caldera

What's worse than getting invited to your ex's wedding? Getting invited to three of them! Inma Cuesta stars as Ruth, a luckless-in-love biologist who gamely runs the gauntlet as boyfriends Pedro (Benito Romero), party-heavy surfer Miki (Paco León) and transgender Alex (Laura Sanchez) get hitched. This brightly colored, gag-filled farce was Best Comedy winner at the Feroz Awards.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

**Sunday, October 19 – 7:30 PM Double Feature**

**FAMILY UNITED (LA GRAN FAMILIA ESPAÑOLA)**  
 Los Angeles Premiere!

2013, Film Factory, 101 min.

Acclaimed director Daniel Sánchez Arévalo takes a comedic look at a Spanish family's chaotic reunion for a wedding taking place during the 2010 FIFA World Cup final. With Patrick Criado and Arancha Martí. "Shot through with a distinctive wit and flair, the film] cannily shows how it's possible to straddle the mainstream/housewife divide." - Jonathan Holland, The Hollywood Reporter.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

**CRITIC'S NOTE:** Etkain, the youngest of five rural brothers, planned to get married the same day Spain plays the world cup. The action takes place on the family farm during his wedding, with flashbacks referencing the father's favorite film, Stanley Donen's "Seven Brides For Seven Brothers". There are touches of Hollywood heartwarming family films of the 50's as well as Spain's old school regional "costumbrismo" films.

Discussion between films with **FAMILY UNITED** director Daniel Sanchez Arévalo.

**ISMAEL**  
 U.S. Premiere!

2013, 106 min. Dir. Marcelo Piñeyro.

With a return address on an envelope his only guide, 8-year-old Ismael (Larson da Amaral) runs away to Barcelona in search of his estranged father (Mario Casas) but finds instead a grandmother (Belén Rueda) who hadn't known of Ismael's existence. As in his earlier **KAMCHATKA**, Piñeyro displays a sure hand with young actors and serious subjects, and this tale of family reconciliation is both touching and frequently funny.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

**CRITIC'S NOTE:** Like Argentine director Marcelo Piñeyro's masterful "Kamchatka", "Ismael" takes on the world as seen through the eyes of his young protagonist. It features a strong cast, headed up by Belén Rueda ("The Orphanage"), Sergi López ("Pan's Labyrinth") and Spanish star Mario Casas (also seen in Alex de la Iglesia's "Las brujas de Zugarramurdi" (The Witches of Zugarramurdi)).

**WED OCT 22**

Along with the new films, we salute a giant of Spanish cinema with a double feature of classics by José Luis Borau, **POACHERS** and **LEO**, October 22, at 7:30 at the Egyptian theater. Two more films by the writer-director, **MY DEAREST SENORITA** and **B MUST DIE**, will screen in a free program at USC followed by a panel discussion.

**CRITIC'S NOTES:** Spanish producer, screenwriter, writer, and film director José Luis Borau Moradell (8 August 1929 – 23 November 2012) won the Goya Award for Best Director in 2000 for "Leo". Borau served as president of the Spanish Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (1994–1998), and was elected to the B seat of the Real Academia Española in 2008.

"Poachers" (Furtivos)'s harsh oedipal drama, set in the isolated woods around Segovia

won best picture at the San Sebastián International Film Festival in 1975. Shot the year before Franco's death, it is a meditation on secrecy. Angel (David Montorio) is an "alimañeco", a hunter in charge of culling wolves to protect deer in a hunting wild reserve. To survive, he poaches wild game and sells the meat and skins. The secret poacher is a metaphor for the secret thoughts of Spanish people under Franco's dictatorship. DP José Luis Cuadrado's beautiful chiasmus compositions echo the work of El Greco and Josepe de Ribera.

"Leo" (2002), Borau's self-produced tough revenge drama, the story of homeless woman Leo (Leonora-Iciar Bollain) and security guard Salva (Salvador-singer Javier Batanero) takes place in an industrial zone on the outskirts of Madrid.