

## SYNOPSIS – 6<sup>th</sup> Latin American and Spanish Film Week at Cinecenta

**Tuesday Sept. 22:** *Huicholes: The Last Peyote Guardians* [Huicholes. Los últimos guardianes del peyote] by Hernán Vilchez (Mexico, 2014) – 125 min.

*Huicholes: The Last Peyote Guardians* is a story about the Wixarika People, one of the last living Pre-Hispanic cultures in Latin America, and their struggle to preserve Wirikuta, their sacred territory and the land where the peyote grows, the traditional plant that keeps the knowledge of this iconic culture of Mexico alive. However, this territory is in danger. In 2010 the Mexican government granted concessions to several mining companies to explore and exploit the area, a natural reserve of 140,000 hectares of desert and hills in the Mexican state of San Luis Potosí, rich in gold, silver and other valuable minerals. This visually stunning documentary explores the struggles and hopes of the Huicholes today.

**Wednesday Sept. 23:** *Big House* [Casa grande] by Fellipe Barbosa (Brazil, 2014) – 115 min.

Exploring issues of class privilege among Rio de Janeiro's decadent elite, *Big House* depicts a teenage boy's struggle to escape his overprotective parents as they covertly spiral into bankruptcy. Both a coming-of-age film and a social commentary on Brazil's social inequalities and uneven development, *Big House* tells a human story, in realist fashion, that captures dreams and anxieties shared by millions of people in today's globalized economy.

**Thursday Sept. 24:** *Behaviour* [Conducta] by Ernesto Daranas (Cuba, 2014) - 108 min.

One of the most heralded Cuban films of the last decade, *Conducta* provides a sensitive, unembellished look at contemporary life in Cuba. Life isn't easy for 11-year-old Chala. When he isn't getting into trouble at school for his violent behavior, or with the police for raising fighting dogs, he has to contend with an alcoholic mother who spends her nights hustling in Havana's nightclubs. Chala has one person on his side: his teacher Carmela, who absolutely believes that no child is a lost cause. But when Carmela falls ill, Chala himself is in danger of falling

through the cracks of an unforgiving system. Winner of the Best Film Prize at the Málaga Film Festival and the 2014 Cuban submission for the Best Foreign Language Film at the Oscars.

**Friday Sept. 25:** *Blondes* [Güeros] By Alonso Ruizpalacios (México, 2014) – 106 min.

“This plucky and effortlessly cool black-and-white film from newcomer Alonso Ruizpalacios follows three restless teens during a student strike in 1999. Federico and Santos are roommates in Mexico City, students ‘on strike from the strike’ now that their university has been shut down, when Federico’s brother Tomás arrives. They hit the streets of the chaotic, exciting city looking for famed rock star Epigmenio Cruz, who once allegedly made Bob Dylan cry.” (AFI Fest) *Blondes* won Best New Narrative Director at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival, the Audience Awards at the Morelia and AFI Film Festivals, and Best Film and Best Director prizes at the most recent Ariel competition, Mexico’s most prestigious film awards.

**Saturday Sept. 26:** *Betibú* by Miguel Cohan (Argentina, 2014) – 100 min.

A powerful industrialist is found with his throat cut in his luxury mansion. The famous novelist Betibú agrees to move into the neighbourhood, a posh country club in the suburbs of Buenos Aires, so she can write the chronicles of the case for a prestigious newspaper, but she soon discovers that this killing is just one in a series of murders of powerful men who share a dark past. *Betibú* is one of the most exciting thrillers coming from Argentina in the last years.

**Sunday 27:** *Living Is Easy with Eyes Closed* [Vivir es fácil con los ojos cerrados] by David Trueba (Spain, 2013) - 108 min.

Beatles fans will recognize the title from the lyrics in “Strawberry Fields Forever,” which John Lennon wrote while in southern Spain playing a minor character in Richard Lester’s anti-war movie *How I Won the War*. This event forms the backdrop of Trueba’s charming road movie about Antonio, a Spanish schoolteacher who is also an avid Beatles fan. When he learns that Lennon is filming in Almería, in southern Spain, he sets out to meet him. Along the way he

makes friends with Belén, a 20-year-old pregnant girl on her way home to her family, and Juanjo, a teenage boy. Lennon's words take on special significance in a story set in Franco's Spain. Winner of four Goya Awards, Spain's top cinematographic prize, including Best Film and Best Director, and the 2014 Spanish submission for Best Foreign Language Film at the Oscars.