



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO PRESENTS
NOCHES DE CINE: NEW LATINE CINEMA,
A FILM SERIES CELEBRATING BOLD VOICES IN CONTEMPORARY LATINE CINEMA

Curated by Ecuadorian-American writer and director Sebastián Rea, the five-film series brings acclaimed works from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the diaspora to El Museo's historic theater



New York, NY — Wednesday, August 19, 2026 — El Museo del Barrio announces *NOCHES DE CINE: New Latine Cinema*, a new film series showcasing acclaimed and boundary-pushing films from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Latine diaspora. **Free and open to the public**, the five-film series is curated by Ecuadorian-American writer and director **Sebastián Rea** and will unfold monthly from August through December 2026 in El Museo del Barrio's historic theater.

"Before El Museo del Barrio had a collection, it had a classroom. Our founder, Raphael Montañez Ortiz, created El Museo to ensure that Puerto Rican children in East Harlem could see their culture, histories, and experiences reflected in what they learned. More than half a century later, education remains at the heart of who we are, and our historic theater is an extension of that original classroom.

Noches de Cine carries that legacy forward by creating a space for stories that reflect the breadth and evolution of Caribbean, Latin American, and Latine experiences today. These films come from different countries, generations, and perspectives, reminding us that our identities and histories

212-831-7272

Info@elmuseo.org

1230 Fifth Avenue
at 104th Street
New York, NY, 10029



are not fixed—they continue to evolve. By bringing these stories together on the big screen, we invite our audiences to see themselves, encounter one another, and engage with the conversations shaping our communities today.” — **Arturo Agüero, Director of Education and Public Programs at El Museo del Barrio.**

Through five distinctive films spanning drama, horror, magical realism, documentary, and animation, *NOCHES DE CINE* invites audiences to discover compelling stories that spark dialogue, reflection, and cultural exchange. By offering the screenings free of charge, El Museo continues its commitment to creating accessible opportunities for New Yorkers and visitors to experience Latine art and culture while bringing audiences together around the communal experience of cinema.

“This series offers *otra mirada* — another look — at breakthrough Latine cinema that deserves to be experienced on the big screen,” said **Sebastián Rea, curator of *NOCHES DE CINE***. “Screening these films at El Museo creates a space to celebrate together the work of some of the most exciting Latin American and Latine filmmakers working today, while continuing El Museo’s tradition of centering our cultural achievements and sharing them with our communities.”

The series opens in August with Joel Alfonso Vargas’ award-winning *MAD BILL\$ TO PAY*, a Dominican-American coming-of-age story filmed on the streets of the Bronx. September brings Lucio Castro’s *DRUNKEN NOODLES*, an intimate, dreamlike meditation on desire presented alongside El Museo’s exhibition *Teddy Sandoval and the Butch Gardens School of Art*. In October, Guatemalan filmmaker Jayro Bustamante’s acclaimed *LA LLORONA* transforms one of Latin America’s most enduring legends into a powerful reckoning with genocide and historical memory.

November features Simón Mesa Soto’s *UN POETA (A POET)*, a darkly comic examination of art, mentorship, access, and exploitation. The series concludes in December with William D. Caballero’s *THEY DREAM*, a deeply personal Puerto Rican story combining documentary and stop-motion animation to explore family, loss, memory, and the act of creating as a way of keeping stories alive.

All screenings are FREE and open to the public. Advance registration is encouraged.

212-831-7272

Info@elmuseo.org

1230 Fifth Avenue
at 104th Street
New York, NY, 10029

FILM SCHEDULE

AUGUST — A NEW YORK MINUTO: A LOVE LETTER TO THE HUSTLE

Thursday, August 20 | 6:30 – 8:30 PM

MAD BILL\$ TO PAY

Directed by Joel Alfonso Vargas

USA, 2025 | 91 minutes

Rico is nineteen and hustling nutcracker cocktails on Orchard Beach during the Bronx summer, splitting his time between odd jobs, family, and an uncertain future—until a decision threatens to change his life forever.

Shot guerrilla-style over sixteen days with a largely nonprofessional, street-cast ensemble, *MAD BILL\$ TO PAY* captures New York City as a place that does not wait for you to grow up on your own schedule. Funny, tender, and unvarnished, the film finds cinematic beauty in side gigs, informal economies, crowded apartments, family bonds, and the daily hustle to make ends meet.

Curator's Note: "A testament to how hustling is part of a New Yorker's DNA. This is a Dominican-American story, shot in the Bronx by a filmmaker who didn't wait for anyone to greenlight it. It's a reminder that art lives all around us—in the side gigs, informal economies, families sharing apartments, and the everyday work of making the rent."

SEPTEMBER

Thursday, September 24 | 6:30 – 8:30 PM

NEW LATINO SHORT FILMS

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, this special edition of *Noches de Cine* steps outside the feature format for a single night of short films from across the Americas. Different countries, different generations of filmmakers, different ways of working with the camera — together, tracing a hemisphere's worth of Latine and Latin American storytelling, one short film at a time.

OCTOBER — SILENCED VOCES: HORROR AS ACTIVISM

Thursday, October 29 | 6:30 – 8:30 PM

212-831-7272

Info@elmuseo.org

1230 Fifth Avenue
at 104th Street
New York, NY, 10029



LA LLORONA

Directed by Jayro Bustamante
Guatemala, 2019 | 97 minutes

An aging general and his family barricade themselves inside their home as protestors demand justice for a genocide he has never answered for—but the ghosts seeking their own reckoning are much harder to keep out.

Guatemalan filmmaker Jayro Bustamante reimagines the familiar legend of La Llorona as a haunting examination of political violence, historical memory, and justice, transforming folklore into a powerful vehicle for confronting the genocide of Maya communities in Guatemala.

Curator's Note: "Many audiences know La Llorona through commercial representations or an abuela's ghost stories. Bustamante repurposes the legend to demand a reckoning with the genocide against the Maya people in Guatemala. The way the film subverts horror to spotlight a specific historical event is extraordinary."

NOVEMBER — THE COST OF BEING FOUND: ¿QUIÉN PAGA? / WHO PAYS?

Thursday, November 19 | 6:30 – 8:30 PM

UN POETA (A POET)

Directed by Simón Mesa Soto
Colombia, 2025 | 124 minutes

A struggling poet takes a substitute teaching job and discovers a gifted teenage writer, forcing him to reckon with how much of his generosity is mentorship—and how much is fueled by his own ambition.

Darkly funny rather than sentimental, *UN POETA* explores the beautifully uncomfortable territory where artistic discovery, class, access, power, and exploitation intersect.

Curator's Note: "This film understands that access and exploitation can sometimes wear the same clothes. It asks us to consider what it means to be 'discovered' by someone with power—and reminds us that recognition is rarely a simple or uncomplicated gift."

212-831-7272

Info@elmuseo.org

1230 Fifth Avenue
at 104th Street
New York, NY, 10029



DECEMBER — BORICUA MEMORIES

Thursday, December 17 | 6:30 – 8:30 PM

THEY DREAM

Directed by William D. Caballero

USA/Puerto Rico, 2026 | 90 minutes

After twenty years of chronicling his Puerto Rican family on camera, director William D. Caballero and his mother face devastating losses and respond by building intricate miniature sets and stop-motion animations of the people and homes they have lost. Along the way, they discover that every act of creation can also become an act of letting go.

Closing the season, *THEY DREAM* offers an intimate examination of Puerto Rican identity, generational memory, grief, and the hopeful labor of building something small enough to hold something much larger.

Curator's Note: "The film frames Puerto Rico through the eyes of the people who never stopped carrying her with them. Through documentary and animation, it captures something central to El Museo's own work: creating and sharing something in order to keep it alive."

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Sebastián Rea is an Ecuadorian-American writer and director who grew up in Queens, New York. Most recently, he served as a Story Editor on Universal's *Fast & Furious* television series and as a Staff Writer on Peacock's *Devil in Disguise: John Wayne Gacy*. His storytelling blends his Andean heritage and New York City upbringing to explore identity, legacy, and survival.

Rea holds a degree in Film, with a minor in Political Science, from SUNY Purchase College. Earlier in his career, he worked at Nuyorican Productions and spent seven years as Content Manager at Tribeca Enterprises. He is also the founder of the 30 Under 30 Film Festival, which ran for eight years in New York City.

His work has received recognition from GLAAD and the Critics Choice Awards. He is a fellow of NBCUniversal's TV Writers Launch Program and has participated in programs and fellowships from Netflix and the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival, Outfest, Lincoln Center, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Aspen Ideas Festival.

ABOUT EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

212-831-7272

Info@elmuseo.org

1230 Fifth Avenue
at 104th Street
New York, NY, 10029



El Museo del Barrio is the nation's leading Latine and Latin American cultural institution. The Museum welcomes visitors of all backgrounds to discover the artistic landscape of these communities through its extensive Permanent Collection, varied exhibitions and publications, bilingual public programs, educational activities, festivals, and special events.

The Museum is located at 1230 Fifth Avenue at 104th Street in New York City. The Museum is open Thursdays through Sundays from 11:00am – 5:00pm. Pay-what you can. To connect with El Museo via social media, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#). For more information, please visit www.elmuseo.org.

PRESS CONTACT:

Pamela H. Hower, El Museo del Barrio | T: 212.660.7102 | E: press@elmuseo.org

212-831-7272

Info@elmuseo.org

1230 Fifth Avenue
at 104th Street
New York, NY, 10029