

Branding Latin America

Film Festivals and the International Circulation of Latin American Films

Laura Rodríguez Isaza

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Despite receiving little academic attention throughout most of their history, film festivals have become the 'natural' background where most world cinema films are assessed both in terms of their artistic value and their potential for international consumption. Based on their cultural prestige, their crowd-gathering ability and hierarchical dynamics festivals create a multilayered filtering system that determines the varying artistic reputations of films and filmmakers as they travel from one event to another. However, the economic interests and geopolitical biases embedded in the Euro-American dominated system raise challenging questions about festivals' criteria of artistic quality and supposedly objective ability to map world cinema. While festivals have become strategic regulators of world cinema traffic they affect both the commercial possibilities of individual Latin American films in global markets and the interpretive frameworks through which world cinema is assessed and understood.

Using a theoretical framework drawn from the discipline of sociology of art, this research uses the concept of the 'film festival world' to analyse the international reception of Latin American cinemas as part of a cultural and industrial process of selection of the 'best' films from the region. First, it examines the film festival phenomenon in terms of its interaction with the global film industry and the marketing of film products for foreign audiences. Second, it analyses the international historical reception of key Latin American films from the expansion of the film festival circuit in the 1940s. Thirdly, it studies how contemporary films from the region continue to be assessed and interpreted across the film festival world in accordance with contingent notions of quality and well-established auteurist models. Thus, this thesis argues that the 'Latin American cinema' brand has been defined in close connection with the contingent ideas and practices of the film festival world, becoming an interpretive framework that enables the international positioning of cinemas from the region both as cultural artefacts and commercial products.

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Introduction

This thesis studies how the film festival world regulates patterns of international visibility and circulation of Latin American cinemas. Its main premise is that festivals affect not only the commercial possibilities of individual films in global markets, but, more importantly, the very definition of 'Latin American cinema' as an interpretive framework through which these films are assessed and understood. The thesis builds on the hypothesis that, because of their prestige as cultural events, crowd-gathering ability and hierarchical dynamics, festivals create a multilayered filtering system that determines the varying reputations of films and filmmakers as they travel from one event to another. Festival screenings can bring associations of quality and raise the profile of films and filmmakers into the artistic category. However, by the same token, rejection or a cold response from the film festival world brings non-artistic connotations that lower a film's international currency. While the economic interests and geopolitical biases embedded in the Euro-American dominated system raise challenging questions about the discursive locus from where Latin American cinema has been defined, this research provides new insights into how notions of national cinemas, quality and authorship have been (and continue to be) strongly influenced by the contingent ideas, tastes and expectations of programmers, critics and audiences in Europe and North America. In this way, this thesis argues that the study of Latin American cinemas needs to take into account not only the films themselves or their local cultural and economic contexts of production, but also the different international agents that affect their reception as cultural artefacts and their circulation as economic products. As the first academic study entirely devoted to explore how Latin American cinemas are affected by the dynamics and logics of the film festival world, it aims to make an original contribution to our understanding of Latin American cinemas and to address an important gap in existing scholarship on film festivals, a field which is rapidly expanding.

One of the key issues inspiring this research project since the beginning has been to understand how Latin American films travel internationally. The fact that some films from the region have become so widely known abroad, whilst many others have been disregarded and pushed into oblivion, alludes to a particular selection mechanism, the inner workings and logics of which were completely absent from academic and critical discourses I had encountered before commencing this project. The basic questions that emerged, and which drove this research, were *how* are these films selected and *who* participates in this process?

Based on my own personal experience of growing up in Colombia and then spending several years in Mexico before coming to study in the UK, I could tell that there was a mismatch,

not only between the local films that became known in each territory, but most significantly between the radical political Latin American cinema described in English-language scholarship and the films that filled the imaginary of the national and the Latin American in both Mexico and Colombia. This led me to question, not only the mechanisms of selection, but the very idea of 'Latin American cinema' itself. *What* is Latin American cinema actually? Is it any different to the distinct national cinemas from Mexico, Colombia or Brazil? If so, *who* defines it and under *which* criteria? In this sense, I identified a number of related issues that echoed the complaints of most Latin American specialists: a single label for such a vast and diverse region is, to say the least, misleading. In fact, the history of Latin American cinemas is plagued with notorious omissions and over-representations. While very often scholars have tried to solve the problem by giving more visibility to cinemas from under-represented nations, genres or filmmakers, the question in my mind was *why* and *how* those specific countries – in connection with certain films and directors – have become regarded as essential or minor in the cinematic history of the continent?

From a contemporary perspective, it seemed that films regarded as 'less-artistic' – very frequently comedies, thrillers and TV spin-offs – remained local box-office phenomena while widely acclaimed and international box office hits such as *Amores Perros*, *City of God* and *The Motorcycle Diaries* were considered 'quality' films most suitable for international consumption. Indeed, there is something special about these films, but *how* were they selected from the whole Mexican, Brazilian or Latin American production output? It became clear that patterns of international visibility could not be understood by analysing only film production: First, there are always more films produced than those which become known abroad. Second, there are large discrepancies between the actual exports of countries across the region and their production numbers. Apart from Mexico, Brazil and Argentina – the main producers and exporters – could it be that Uruguayan and Chilean films were simply more 'artistic' than the Colombian and Venezuelan ones which have not gained the same level of international recognition? Again, the question is *who* discriminates between the 'artistic' and the 'non-artistic' and *what* happens to the films with international ambitions that are ultimately unsuccessful?

Trained as an art historian, I was well aware of the contingent nature of labels related to the 'artistic' status of cultural artefacts and the sociological processes behind their production, circulation and reception. Therefore, rather than focusing on the internal properties of the objects themselves, I started studying the external processes that lead to the recognition of some films as being of better 'quality' or being more 'artistic' than others and which are therefore deemed to be suitable for international consumption. In this way, my strategy shifted

away from a focus on textual analysis and film production – which are most common in film studies – towards a sociological approach of films’ valuation and reception which required considerable familiarity with the dynamics of the international film industry. In other words, as my main enquiry was about the mechanisms of selection that enabled the more ‘artistic’ Latin American films to circulate and be recognised internationally, I needed to understand both the criteria of inclusion/exclusion and the context in which the agents participating in the process operated.

More often than not, academic approaches to Latin American cinemas, and film studies in general, privilege the analysis of the films themselves both as aesthetic and cultural artefacts (Elena and Díaz López 2003; Hart 2004; see for instance J. King 2000; D. Shaw 2003). This text-centred strategy provides crucial insight into the ways in which films represent and reflect the cultures that produce them. However, for the questions addressed in this study, such an approach would have led to tautological explanations in which films’ narrative and aesthetic properties justify their specific inclusion/exclusion from the ‘artistic’ or ‘Latin American cinema’ categories, but do not account for the processes through which those categories have been formed. In other words, if I had simply accepted the ‘artistic’ qualities and ‘Latin-American-ness’ of widely acclaimed films from the region – say *Central Station* or *Y tu mamá también* – I would have been unable to understand the process through which such films became internationally acclaimed. This is because the criteria underlying these categories elude a text-centred approach, which neglects the issues of who defines quality standards and what Latin American cinema actually is. Moreover, such a strategy would not only presuppose a transparent process of recognition of the ‘best Latin American’ films suitable for worldwide circulation, but, even more problematically, would ignore the role of international agents in the process.

In this sense, it is noticeable how the notion of cinema as a reflection of a country’s or a region’s cultural identity has, for a long time, fuelled a powerful imaginary of distinct national cinemas and Latin American cinema as ‘a continental project’ – as Zuzana Pick has labelled it (1993). At the same time, it has encouraged readings that privilege isolated – local or regional – frameworks, most frequently through studies of national cinemas (Aguilar 2008; Chanan 2004; González Vargas 2006; see for instance R. Johnson and Stam 1995; Mora 2005; Nagib 2007; Noble 2005; L. Shaw and Dennison 2007). While academic studies addressing the operations of Latin American film industries have generally been scarce, frequently they have tended to focus on the cycles – and often the difficulties – of production and circulation within national (Falicov 2007b; R. Johnson 1987; Saavedra Luna 2006) or regional boundaries (Falicov 2002; Getino 2005, 2007; Russo 2008; Sánchez Ruiz 2012; Schnitman 1984). From this perspective, there has been an overarching concern in analysing – and denouncing – the way in which Hollywood’s

hegemony across Latin American screens limits films' intra-regional flow. However, there has not been much interest in studying how some local films have gained visibility and circulation in Europe, the US or beyond in Asia and Africa. Moreover, a common limitation of most studies about Latin American film industries is the tendency to rely too heavily on analysis of the external social, economic and political frameworks whilst treating films on a purely quantitative basis. By approaching films almost as mere economic products, researchers mistakenly assume that they would – or *should* – be consumed regardless of their quality, the marketing techniques involved and the specific audiences they target. As a result, this thesis proposes that an understanding of world cinema traffic requires careful consideration of both economic and cultural aspects of cinema as two sides of the same coin. If a film is traded and put in circulation it is because people in the film industry think – based on its unique aesthetic and cultural characteristics – that there is an audience in a particular market willing to engage with it. In other words, the consideration of films as artistic or cultural artefacts is relevant to the analysis of the economy of cinema because viewers in specific cultural contexts care about the films they watch and, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, select them according to their previous experience and bodies of knowledge.

The increasing international visibility of Latin American films in the past fifteen years has triggered a considerable upsurge in academic studies exploring how specific films from the region have succeeded or failed in addressing global markets (see for instance Barrow 2007, 173–189; Haddu 2007, 153–172; Martin-Jones and Montañez 2009, 334–344; D. Shaw 2007b, 67–85). Attributing the phenomenon to a combination of factors – including changes in the local landscapes of film production, distribution and consumption – scholars have most frequently highlighted a growing international influence in the funding and production processes (Alvaray 2007; Falicov 2007a; Hoefert de Turegano 2004; D. Shaw 2007a, 1–2; Villazana 2008). In many ways, there seems to be an increase in successful Latin American films supported by several international agents which are developed from the scripting stage with an eye on global markets (Nagib 2006a, 95–96). It is clear that international production modes not only ensure that these films are more adequately adapted to the tastes and expectations of foreign audiences and critics, but they facilitate a smoother connection between different agents of their international supply chain. In other words, foreign companies participating in local productions not only bring financial aid to local filmmaking, but provide a way of increasing films' international reception and circulation (Kanzler and Lange 2008) – at least in those countries involved in the production. However, the fact that international successes are not limited to co-produced films – as in the cases of *Amores Perros* or *Nine Queens* – and the fact that not all films with international ambitions are equally welcomed in foreign territories,

suggests again a further process of selection beyond film production. In this sense, a parallel question related to this research relates to the articulation between local and international film industries. *How* and *where* are Latin American films acquired? *Who* participates in that process and *what* are the criteria guiding those commercial transactions?

As a relatively recent development, academic studies dealing with Latin American cinemas in global markets do not yet provide a full picture of how these films are traded or the main dynamics affecting their travelling opportunities beyond national or regional boundaries. Whilst this indicates a gap in the literature that my research aims to address, it also poses the problem of actually understanding how the global film industry handles Latin American films. From an international perspective, scholars have frequently dealt with the film industry from a political economy approach that mostly attempts to explain – and criticise – the workings of Hollywood companies and their pervasive control of global mainstream media (T. Miller et al. 2005; O'Regan 2008; Wasko 2003, 2005). However, their work does not – nor intends to – account for how the international film industry operates in relation to non-Hollywood films. Interesting exceptions include Sylvia Harvey's edited *Trading Culture* (2006) in which most of the articles explore major legal and ethical implications of the international commerce of audiovisual products. Thus, despite offering insightful reflections about these cultural exchanges – mostly from a perspective that privileges the transatlantic trade between the US and a few European countries, especially the UK and France – the volume does not offer a substantial explanation of the inner workings of the international film industry and how they affect Latin American films in global markets.

With very few scholars focusing on the commercial operations behind world cinema, the gap in the existing literature is not, in fact, limited to the Latin American case but to film studies as a whole. As discussed in Chapter 2, this lack of interest is actually ingrained in the discipline itself and is based on the underlying principle of appreciating cinema as an 'art' rather than an 'industry'. In this way, film scholars have generally ignored the economic and logistic transactions related to film commerce, especially of those films identified with a high-artistic or cultural value. However, a global commerce of world cinema clearly exists, with companies and intermediaries investing, buying and selling these films, precisely because of – rather than in spite of – their artistic status. The question then is *how* does world cinema trade affect the films themselves and the ways in which they are circulated and understood?

Beyond the film studies discipline, there is a growing body of literature explaining these dynamics either from a business and marketing academic perspective (Bloore 2010; Durie 1993; Finney 2010; Hoskins, McFadyen, and Finn 1997; Kerrigan 2010) or as manuals geared towards novice film industry practitioners (Durie, Pham, and N. Watson 2000; Litman 1998; Marich 2009;

Parks 2007). Although these sources are not specifically concerned with Latin American films in international markets, they offer useful insights into the functioning of the international film industry for independent or non-Hollywood films. By triangulating the general information they offer with specific data from trade journals such as *Variety*, *Screen International* and *The Hollywood Reporter*, I was able to understand the international contexts in which Latin American films are traded. As a result, a significant proportion of this research's sources are related to film business' academic and practical texts as well as international trade journals.

While film festivals seem to demonstrate the most obvious intersection of local and global contexts, the question of how local producers engage with foreign markets confirmed that these cinematic events are key to understanding films' international travelling. Attending film festivals is not only regarded by producers – and everyone else involved in the international film supply chain – as a necessary step and an unavoidable opportunity for international film promotion, but part of the standardised marketing procedure employed by international intermediaries such as sales agents and distributors. In fact, festival screenings precede foreign commercial exhibition in almost all cases of Latin American films known abroad.

During the first stages of this research, I encountered a paradigmatic case that clearly demonstrated the crucial function of festivals for films in international territories. *City of God*, a film welcomed and celebrated by audiences, critics and scholars in Brazil and everywhere else (Ebert 2008, 149–150; Fitzgibbon 2010, 197–210; Hart 2004, 203–210; R. Johnson 2005, 11–38; Nagib 2007, 101–115; E. R. P. Vieira 2005, 2007), had actually been licensed for worldwide distribution to Miramax International months *before* its world premiere at Cannes in 2002 (Blaney 2002). Moreover, before hitting foreign commercial screens in countries such as the US, Canada, the UK and the Netherlands in early 2003, the film went on a lengthy festival tour with screenings at Toronto, San Sebastian, Vancouver, Chicago, Tokyo, London, Los Angeles, Havana, Rotterdam, to name just a few.

There were many questions that emerged from consideration of the case of *City of God*. If the film was arguably considered to be very good and the Disney-owned Miramax was one of the most powerful and experienced distribution companies of art-house and independent films, why would the company invest time and money in several festival screenings over the course of a year, instead of sending it straight to the theatres to initiate revenue streaming? The case highlighted the importance of festivals for the international film industry. This led me to question *what* films actually gain from festival screenings which justifies such a tour and, more specifically, to *which* festivals Latin American films go and *why*? *City of God's* pre-festival acquisition challenged established notions of the festivals themselves as essentially cultural events for cinematic discovery or as an alternative distribution network. Whilst the supposedly

oppositional festivals were clearly aligned with powerful US-based film industry players, how could they be places for 'discovery' or an 'alternative distribution network' if they screened films that were already lined-up for international distribution? Furthermore, as the film had already been licensed for global distribution before going to the festivals, the case even challenged the wide-spread idea among film professionals of festivals' function as marketplaces for international film commerce.

Therefore, as festival screenings were clearly part of Miramax's global marketing campaign for *City of God*, these events emerged as a crucial link between Latin American film production and international circulation. In most sources film festivals were treated as an optional promotional strategy or as simple screening sites that celebrated cinematic achievements and allowed audiences to access films that would be otherwise unavailable. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 1, film festivals were a generally understudied subject, absent from most academic discourses. Although since this project began in 2008, film festivals have been attracting academic interest at an exponential rate¹, less than a decade ago Julian Stringer pointed out the limited attention that film festivals had received historically from film scholars (2003b, 1). Similarly, in the first academic publication entirely devoted to the subject, Marijke de Valck noted that, regardless of the abundant media coverage given to the events, there was in fact a general lack of studies on the field (2007, 16). Moreover, as she pointed out, researchers have tended to focus on single festivals as case studies, leaving the overall phenomenon and the interconnected nature of the events as a network almost untouched as an academic subject (De Valck 2007, 17).

Regardless of the limited attention devoted to film festivals from an academic perspective, the few scholars pioneering the field – especially Marijke De Valck, Julian Stringer and Thomas Elsaesser – categorically affirmed the overarching influence of the festival circuit not only in the assessment of individual films, but in the ways in which cinema itself had been considered throughout the twentieth century (Elsaesser 2005b, 83; Stringer 2003b, 6). In fact, their work was crucial in guiding my own research, influencing ideas and provoking further questions

¹ In addition to several articles, recent book-length publications devoted to the subject include *On Film Festivals* (Porton 2009) and *Film Festivals: Culture, People and Power on the Global Screen* (Wong 2011). Moreover, the Film Festival Yearbook series published by the University of St Andrews has already issued four volumes: *The Festival Circuit* (Iordanova and Rhyne 2009), *Film Festivals and Imagined Communities* (Iordanova and Cheung 2010), *Film Festivals and East Asia* (Iordanova and Cheung 2011) and *Film Festivals and Activism* (Iordanova and Torchin 2012). Other initiatives include the Film Festival Research Network founded by Marijke de Valck and Skadi Loist as an international network of scholars specialising on the subject (FFRN 2011) and the Film Festival Academy which aims to connect a wider international community of scholars, film professionals and critics (Film Festival Academy 2011).

regarding the way in which the overall film festival phenomenon has affected Latin American cinemas specifically.

One of the key ideas which I drew from Elsaesser and De Valck is the notion of film festivals as a filtering system. Thus one of the pivotal functions of festivals is the accumulation of symbolic capital through their multiple mechanisms of selection, classifying and awarding (Elsaesser 2005b, 96–98; De Valck 2007, 123–161). As the case of *City of God* illustrates, one of the main reasons why films are sent to festivals is because of the prestige of these events, which can add value to films by singling them out for their outstanding quality. In this way, the fact that festivals have established a reputation as the places where the ‘best’ world cinema is assessed and recognised turns them into powerful gatekeepers that regulate the doors of international visibility and market access. Thus the key questions that emerge are: *what* are the criteria applied and *how* were they formed?

As suggested by Stringer, this thesis approaches the film festival phenomenon from an ‘art world’ perspective that considers their collective nature and their institutional role comparable to that of museums and art galleries (2003b, 18–19). Coinciding with the work of Elsaesser and De Valck in highlighting film festivals’ mechanisms of classification that distinguish between ‘art’ and ‘non-art’, his theoretical framework which draws on the sociology of art seemed very well suited to my subject and research questions. Therefore, following Stringer’s proposed framework, this thesis approaches film festivals using the concept of ‘art world’ developed by Howard Becker (2008). As explained in Chapter 1, this entails analysing the festivals and in fact, the whole cinematic field, as a collective activity and an on-going process, in which the multiple personal and institutional agents involved in the whole cycle of development, production, circulation and reception have an impact on how cultural artefacts come to being and whether they are made available to determined audiences or not. In this way, this thesis uses the concept ‘film festival world’ as a means to address the festival phenomenon at large, including, most significantly, the wide variety of festival-goers who are central to any of these events.

A third idea behind this research is that world cinema traffic moves according to certain migratory patterns. In this sense, Elsaesser’s observations on the interactions between film festivals and European cinema not only rings true for the Latin American case, but they provide a key inspiration for the original methodology of this study. As he describes, festivals are a series of hubs that concentrate world cinema traffic and create certain patterns of movement (Elsaesser 2005b, 87). In his words,

Taken together and in sequence, festivals form a cluster of international venues, to which film, directors, producers, promoters and press, in varying degrees of

density and intensity, migrate, like flocks of birds or a shoal of fish. And not unlike these natural swarm phenomena (closely studied by theorist of complex adaptive systems), the manner in which information travel, signals are exchanged, opinion hardens and, consensus is reached at these festivals appears at once to be thrillingly unpredictable and yet to follow highly programmed protocols (Elsaesser 2005b, 87).

Thus through detailed archive research I was able to follow the travels of Latin American films through international festivals and commercial screens. In this way, I gained insight not only into their migratory patterns, as Elsaesser predicts, but into the unwritten rules of the festival world that guide these movements. Festivals' hierarchies and uneven dynamics were evident. As Stringer points out, they clearly reproduce the Euro-American dominated political and economic system at large (2001, 137–138). Therefore, while it was clear that even the biggest festivals in the region – such as Havana, Guadalajara, Rio de Janeiro and Mar del Plata – occupied a secondary position in the festival circuit, my research could not be based on these events as case studies, but on the flows marked by the movement of Latin American films and people. In this way, I developed the concept of a 'film festival tour', discussed in Chapter 8, as a term for the sequence of festival screenings which a film undergoes as part of its international promotional campaign.

Although this research is not focused on any film festival in particular, in order to understand their dynamics and logics it was crucial for me to actually attend several film festivals and talk to the people who organise and participate in them. In this way, an additional element of the methodology for this study included fieldwork undertaken at several film festivals. Between 2009 and 2010 I attended the *Rencontres Cinémas d'Amérique Latine de Toulouse* in France, the *Festival de Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano de la Habana* in Cuba, the *San Sebastian International Film Festival* in Spain and the *London Film Festival* in the UK. Moreover, I volunteered as a part of the programming team of the *Discovering Latin America Film Festival* in London in 2009 to gain insight into the efforts and difficulties involved in running a film festival, even though this was a relatively small event specialising in only Latin American cinema. Based on these experiences, I was not only able to understand from a practical perspective what organising and participating at festivals entailed, but, most importantly, I gained access to people who travelled the circuit on a regular basis as part of their work. In this sense, an essential source of information that helped me gain insight into the workings of the international film industry and the film festival world were the conversations and informal interviews I held with different professionals – including producers, directors, distributors, marketers, critics, journalists, festival organisers, fund managers and sales agents – who directly

or indirectly participate in the process through which Latin American productions achieve international visibility and circulation.

Finally, in order to address one of my original lines of enquiry regarding a definition of Latin American cinema, I employed a methodology drawn from the historical reception studies proposed by Janet Staiger (1992, 2005) which shares many of the sociological principles adopted in this study. From this perspective, neither films nor the generic categories they are associated with carry immanent meanings or intrinsic values (Staiger 1992, xi). As a result, the fact that specific films have become widely acknowledged as essential pieces of the region's cinematic history or that Latin American cinema itself has been associated with left-wing politics and social critique, should be understood in relation to contingent processes of reception. In this sense, the question could be rephrased to consider what Latin American *has been* and how the international contexts of reception have affected its definition. In this way, this thesis explores Latin American cinema as an idea, rather than a fixed category, whose changing reputation has been closely linked to its reception in hegemonic European and North American cinephile circles. In particular, this includes the most prestigious film festivals – Cannes, Berlin and Venice – and specialised publications such as *Sight & Sound*, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, *Positif* and *Film Comment*. Precisely because of their high status as cinephile institutions, festivals and specialised magazines function together as a double filtering system with a powerful grip on the artistic reputation of films and filmmakers. Whilst using prestigious festivals and specialised magazines as international contexts through which to study the historical reception of Latin American cinemas, this thesis shows that cinemas from the region are not the exception. In fact, it is surprising how most historical – and contemporary – narratives of Latin American cinema reproduce the choices of European and North American programmers and critics.

In order to understand how the 'best' 'Latin American cinema' has gained 'international circulation', the thesis is divided into three main parts which explore each key term: The first part focuses on the context of 'international circulation', the second one on the historical definition of 'Latin American cinema' and the third on how the 'best' films are selected.

Part I, Film Festivals and Film Commerce, aims to provide a navigation chart for the film festival world and the international film industry, exploring the usually hidden linkages between the two spheres of art and commerce. It is split into three chapters:

Chapter 1, The Film Festival Circuit as an 'Art World', introduces film festivals as an object of study and the concept of 'art worlds' as the main theoretical framework of this study. Through a brief historical overview of the festival phenomenon, the chapter explains how its

hierarchical structure and dynamics are actually embedded within the system itself. It analyses the way in which the current configuration of the festival calendar partly responds to the needs of the international film industry. Moreover, the chapter argues that the hierarchical festival circuit enables specific patterns of movement that encourage a flow from the more prestigious 'business' festivals towards smaller 'audience' events.

Chapter 2, *International Film Trade*, explores some of the key dynamics of the global film industry, frequently hidden behind festivals' cultural flair and films' artistic status. It argues that the presupposed art/commerce opposition inherited from the wider field of cultural production not only conceals world cinema's trade, but underpins core paradigms of film studies and criticism. Through the case study of *Central Station*, the chapter shows how the masking of commerce has become part of the interpretive frameworks used in world cinema and employed as a tool to raise a film's artistic and cultural status. Moreover, the chapter examines the concepts of cultural translation and paratexts as theoretical tools in order to understand how films can overcome some of the barriers of international trade related with audiences' lack of familiarity with foreign material.

Chapter 3, *The Film Marketing Mix*, examines different elements that viewers look for when selecting films for consumption. Drawing from a film marketing approach and using brief case studies, it analyses five different aspects – acting talent, creative team, script/genre, age classification and release strategy – and how these affect the international reception of Latin American cinemas. It argues that at the same time that achieving an international star status has been the exception rather than the rule for Latin American performers, the use of non-professional actors has become an actual asset because it complies with the expectations and demands of authenticity from foreign audiences. Moreover, the international marketing of Latin American films has most frequently relied on concepts of authorship and national/regional cinema which help to raise films' profile by presenting them as the products of individual 'auteurs' and manifestations of unique cultural identities defined by national or regional boundaries. Finally, the chapter explores how the rating and release patterns demonstrate the difficulties of Latin American films in European and North American markets, where they carry the association of being films mainly for adults and whose circulation depends on high-standards of quality.

Part II, What (Is) Latin American Cinema?, studies the way in which the concept of a unified regional cinema has evolved throughout history in close connection with international geopolitics and the development of the film festival circuit. It comprises four chapters (4-7).

Chapter 4, *The Idea of Latin America*, looks at the historical development of the concept of 'Latin America' as a geographical designation and a cultural identity. By exploring its emergence in the mid-nineteenth century and its varying associations throughout the twentieth century, it reveals the contingency not only of the concept of Latin America itself, but also of regional cinema as a social construct. The chapter analyses the role of international players in this process against the changing geo-political contexts of both centuries, arguing that both the region and its cinema have been imagined (i.e. discursively constructed) both from within and abroad. Moreover, it looks at certain ideas about the region as a violent and uncivilised place, defined in opposition to Anglo-America and whose very survival depends on its unity and solidarity. Thus it argues that by becoming ingrained in the international imaginary of the region, these associations have also affected expectations about Latin American cinema held by foreign programmers, critics and audiences in Europe and North America.

Chapter 5, *'Old' Cinemas from México, Argentina and Brazil*, is the first in a series of three chapters that explores the historical reception of Latin American cinema in international cinephile circles dominated by the European festival and critical establishment. It examines critics' responses to the first films from Mexico, Brazil and Argentina sent to prestigious European festivals after the Second World War. By following festival reports in specialised magazines, the chapter shows that, with few exceptions, Latin American cinemas had a rather poor reputation with European critics until the early 1960s. Moreover, at the same time that European critics disregarded most of the films from the region, they drew associations between the few that best suited their expectations of authenticity and social critique, contributing to the notion of regional cinema as a single category and enduring criteria of assessment. Finally, the chapter looks at the first Latin American film festival in Italy (1960-1965), which further legitimated both the idea of a regional cinema as a classification category and the principles of valuation along the lines of a 'new' political cinema.

Chapter 6, *'New' Cinemas from Latin America*, analyses the international reception of films from the region during some of the most politically volatile years of the Cold War between the early 1960s and the late 1970s. It argues that the increasing politicisation of the cultural sphere, as it became the target of political propaganda, enabled the spread of the concept of 'new cinema' as a framework through which Latin American cinemas would gain an unprecedented level of international recognition in European cinematic circles. Beginning with the enthusiastic reception of Brazilian Cinema Novo, the politicised context also brought international attention to the Cuban film project and, most significantly, to the 'new' cinemas of the region as a unified group during the Pesaro film festival in 1968. Furthermore, the chapter explores how the international currency of the militant 'new Latin American cinema', consolidated during the

1970s as committed left-wing cinephiles in Europe and North America, made not only its circulation possible, but also facilitated its upgrade to a respectable academic area of study.

Chapter 7, *Beyond the 'New Latin American Cinema'*, concludes Part II, and my focus on the international reception of the region's cinema, by examining the period from the early 1980s to the present. It argues that by creating its own festival and institutional network during the 1980s, Cuban diplomacy capitalised on the already established 'new Latin American cinema' brand and the international successes of Argentina and Brazil after their return to democratic rule. The effects of Cuban diplomacy were evident in the strong Cuban flavour of *Winds of Change* – a massive retrospective at the Toronto festival in 1986 – as well as in the widespread idea during the 1990s that the region had actually lost its cinematic North after the end of the Cold War. The chapter argues that although each country had its own timescale of development during that decade, the crystallisation of 1998 as a watershed that launched the recent cinematic renaissance of the whole region was not a reflection of a radical shift in the local film industries or in the films themselves, but the result of a shift in their international reception after Berlin's Golden Bear was awarded to *Central Station*. Finally, the chapter analyses how this change in perception among European cinephile circles enabled other films and filmmakers to be welcomed under the label of a renewed, but still unified, regional cinema.

Part III, Artistic Quality and Auteurs, analyses film festivals' filtering mechanisms that regulate artistic (and non-artistic) reputations through concepts of quality and authorship. It is divided in two chapters which explore each of these notions through comparative case studies.

Chapter 8, *Quality Certification and the 'Film Festival Tour'*, studies film festivals' key function of classifying world cinemas according to contingent notions of film quality. It explains how, by touring festivals' hierarchical structure, films accumulate varying amounts of symbolic capital that reflect their perceived quality and appropriateness for international consumption. However, the chapter argues that the criteria of quality applied throughout the film festival world are in fact strongly influenced by both the Euro-American dominated festival system and the leverage of the companies behind each film. By comparing two films whose high-quality has been generally acknowledged by international critics – *Central Station* and *Foreign Land* – it shows how films' patterns of movement between events can be read as a form of reception rather than evidence of their presupposed objective quality. The comparative case studies highlight how the festival hierarchical system becomes a complex mechanism of classification that is imposed on films both through the different symbols of distinction and the amount of media coverage they receive. Thus the chapter argues that through professional marketing by powerful companies on a highly prestigious festival tour, *Central Station* was able to become an international hit, whilst the independently promoted *Foreign Land* could not be declared as a

'discovery' after its low-profile world premiere, despite several critics agreeing on the film's high quality.

Chapter 9, *Reputation Building: Authorship and Art Cinema*, investigates how at the same time that authorship became wide-spread as an interpretive framework for films as artistic artefacts, the idea of films as the product of individual 'auteurs' became ingrained, not only in the expectations of international programmers, critics and audiences, but in international film marketing practices. It highlights that auteurist frameworks have been embedded in the criteria of assessment that European critics have applied to Latin American cinemas from the 1950s until the present. The chapter argues that auteurist assumptions have been simultaneously reinforced by viewers' and critics' interpretations as well as films' promotional strategies that turn directors into celebrities and encourage them to perform the 'auteur' role as a public persona. Through two comparative case studies – Carlos Reygadas and Fabián Bielinsky – the chapter analyses the role of film festivals as powerful institutional agents whose different levels of prestige correlate to their capacity to consecrate film directors as 'auteurs'. It highlights how Reygadas' 'auteur' status was promptly declared by the top of the festival hierarchy, allowing his second film to be welcomed despite acknowledgment that it was a rather difficult cinematic experience. In contrast, Bielinsky crafted the reputation of being a talented, yet 'commercial', director through his first film's rather un-prestigious festival tour. However, his second film was partly rejected because its more demanding narrative made it very different from his popular debut and thus did not match critics' auteurist expectations.

Finally, there are five appendixes at the end of the document that could be useful references for the reader. Appendix A offers a filmography of the films mentioned in the thesis, listing films by their international or UK English title – according to Internet Movie Database (IMDb) – which will be maintained throughout this text for the sake of linguistic coherence. Appendix B provides a list of two letter country codes which are used frequently throughout the text instead of the full country names. Appendix C is a list of the abbreviations used, although whenever they are first mentioned in the text, I include the full name. Appendix D is a list of 75 films distributed in the European Union and the United States between 1996 and 2009. Appendix E is a table of the launch date and major changes of several film festivals around the world that are either very well known internationally or that are relevant for Latin American cinemas. Although I note major shifts whenever possible, this chart does not claim to be comprehensive and should be seen only as a general guide.

Part I.

Film Festivals and Film Commerce

Chapter 1. The Film Festival Circuit as an 'Art World'

At first glance, the current landscape of film festivals is particularly complex and disorienting due to the multiplicity and diversity of events held all over the world. The absence of a functioning regulatory body in charge of establishing clear criteria of classification only adds to the confusion. Currently there is no reliable data that show how many festivals there are annually, nor is there a consensus on how they could be defined. In fact, film festivals are everywhere, innumerable and come in all shapes and sizes, with each festival possessing its own rules and organisational structure. However, as a group they constitute what is commonly understood as the 'film festival circuit,' that is, a series of events organised throughout the calendar year and in different geographical locations all over the world. Yet with thousands of events worldwide, this 'circuit' tends to include only the biggest festivals, whilst an endless and seemingly chaotic world of events lies underneath. Therefore, despite the fact that their relational status might appear confusing to outsiders, festivals operate in a highly competitive and hierarchical environment. An understanding of these dynamics is absolutely essential for both academics and film industry practitioners interested in the ways in which films from Latin America gain access to international arenas.

As a complex phenomenon, film festivals can be studied in relation to many aspects of social, political, cultural and economic life. This chapter offers an introduction to the field from an 'arts world' perspective, aimed at disentangling the way in which the functioning and hierarchical dynamics of festivals affect cinema's patterns of visibility and circulation. In other words, this study understands film festivals as a collective activity and an on-going process in which a multiplicity of participants and historical dynamics have a powerful impact on the way Latin American cinema has been assessed and interpreted by foreign viewers.

Moreover, the chapter offers a historical overview of the way in which the development of the film festival circuit has encouraged certain practices and ideas that have been essential to film studies and criticism during the twentieth century. Rooted in that historical development and with the constant possibility of being modified by festivals' rivalries, the film festival circuit today has a particular configuration and dynamics which are examined at the end of the chapter. The endless variety of global events is explained through two ideal festival types – 'audience' and 'business'. Film festivals form part of a hierarchical system in which Cannes is simultaneously the king and the quintessential 'business' festival, whilst the other festivals slip down the ranking as they fail to provide sufficient opportunities for films' sales, critical acclaim and media coverage. Crystallised in the festival calendar, this hierarchy is reflected in industrial

practices such as the premiering of high-profile Latin American films and their patterns of movement from one event to another. Thus both festivals' rivalries and their specific status within the festival hierarchy mean that films tend to go first to the most prestigious festivals, leaving second-tier and smaller events for later. In this way, the way films move throughout the festival circuit tends to reflect and reinforce festivals' hierarchical structure in which, significantly, Latin American events occupy a secondary place.

a. Film Festivals: Mapping the Field

Within a few years film festivals have gone from being a blind spot and a topic of 'slow development' within film studies (Stringer 2003b, 1) to being in the limelight of academic research with a growing number of scholars working on the field. While it seems almost impossible not to notice the speed at which festivals are multiplying across the globe², scholars have analysed the phenomenon from a wide range of perspectives. Film festivals have been examined in relation to questions of geopolitics, national and transnational cinemas, audiences and different forms of cinephilia, tourism and city marketing, institutional and organisational aspects, film markets, awards, critics and, of course, stardom and glamour (Loist and De Valck 2010). As Stringer points out, festivals should not be understood as 'one thing' that can be studied from a single perspective but as 'multi-dimensional entities' (2003b, 11). In fact, the variety of approaches and academic interest from different disciplines can be viewed as proof of the complexity of the phenomenon and the richness of film festivals as an object of study.

Film festivals can be seen as sites of cultural, political and economic negotiations which are reflected in their profiles, their functioning and the films that are programmed. As several scholars and commentators have pointed out, festivals have been used as a strategy to attract tourists and contribute to the creation of a unique identity for cities worldwide (Harbord 2002; Sassen 1991; Stringer 2001). In fact, the first high-profile film festival in Venice in August 1932 was strategically held at the end of the summer in order to extend the tourist season (Bachmann 1976, 14; Stringer 2003b, 60). The benefits for tourism were evident and, since then, stakeholders in the tourist sector and governmental bodies have been among the most important sponsors and promoters of film festivals all over the world (Harbord 2002, 60; Rhyne 2009, 9). As other cultural events, film festivals can serve as a public display of specific political agendas. Again, the case of Venice festival is revealing as it tended to programme and award

² The approximate number of festivals in the world varies from 700 to almost 4000 depending on the source (Cousins 2009, 155; Festival Focus 2009; Filmfestivals.com 2010; Moullier 2004).

Italian and German films, which triggered the launching of Cannes as a rival festival as a British, French and US initiative at the end of the 1930s (De Valck 2007, 47–49). In the same way that these two festivals alluded to the geopolitical tensions between the emerging Axis and Allied powers, new film festivals around the world can be viewed against the backdrop of the Cold War that followed the Second World War (Fehrenbach 1995, 234–253; Iordanova 2006, 25–37). Likewise, as will be explored in Chapter 7, the Havana Film Festival – launched in 1979 – became an effective tool for Cuban foreign diplomacy throughout the 1980s. In other words, film festivals, as critic and programmer Mark Cousins (2009, 156) argues, are ‘political with a big P’ and it is clear that issues of programming and awards go beyond aesthetic choices and critical discourses about cinema. In this sense, film festivals are important not only for cinematic culture, but in relation to other aspects of social, political and economic life.

Traditionally film festivals have been understood as alternative screening events that programme films which do not circulate in commercial theatres. In this sense, festivals expand cinematic choices for audiences worldwide and enable cultural exchanges as they bring non-mainstream and foreign ‘new cinemas’ to viewers at different locations (Nichols 1994, 16). As Cindy Wong explains in the introduction to her recent monograph on the subject,

festival films more often are distinguished from those in general distribution: they tend to be nonstudio [sic] produced, lower budget, serious movies – similar to what many people label ‘art house’ or ‘art cinema’. Translated into a global context, this means festival films tend to be non-Hollywood, artistic, serious and edgy (Wong 2011, 6).

Thus a common idea, as expressed by Piers Handling, head of the Toronto International Film Festival since 1994, is that film festivals have become ‘an alternative distribution network’ where audiences get exclusive opportunities to see films that would be otherwise unavailable (quoted in Turan 2002, 8). At some level, the programming practices of thousands of events worldwide do seem to support the claim that festivals provide ‘audiences with opportunities to enjoy commercially unviable films in a communal space’ (Peranson 2008, 37). In fact, as places of consumption, festivals have become a vital part of contemporary film culture generally welcomed by audiences and cinephiles in almost every corner of the world.

However, with more detailed analysis, the notion of film festivals as an ‘alternative distribution network’ can be interrogated. In effect, this idea has been frequently challenged by scholars working in the field as it tends to romanticise the actual functioning of the film festival world. As Stringer remarks, ‘alternative’ means in relation to Hollywood ‘mainstream’, which is generally regarded as the antithesis of what film festivals represent (2003a, 202). However,

these 'mainstream' US films are far from being excluded from the major and prestigious events such as Cannes, Berlin, Venice and Toronto; these festivals have actually benefited from the media attention and glitz that has accompanied Hollywood blockbusters and their world-famous stars (Stringer 2003a, 203). In fact, the 'mainstream'/'alternative' opposition is not so clear cut. As this thesis demonstrates, festivals' oppositional stance is also challenged by the increasing involvement of 'mainstream' US companies in the production, distribution and marketing of films labelled as 'alternative' world cinema. Again, in many cases, rather than providing a unique opportunity to see 'alternative' films, festival screenings are merely part of a calculated pre-release campaign of films that have already been sold and which will hit commercial theatres some months after the festival. Moreover, the understanding of film festivals as a 'distribution network' has been severely questioned by Dina Iordanova because, firstly, festivals' basic screening function more closely resembles that of exhibitors than actual distributors and, secondly, they do not tend to work in a coherent networked way (2009, 23–25). Thus, as Iordanova points out, the reputation of big film festivals as 'sites of cultural celebration' quickly fades away when the tense and highly competitive environment in which they operate is examined (2009, 23).

These challenges to the idea of festivals as an 'alternative distribution network' reveal that they are more than just places for film screenings or celebrations of cinema. Whilst in relation to their audiences festivals can be seen as alternative spaces for the consumption of mostly non-mainstream cinema, they also play a key role in the international film business. For most non-Hollywood films with international ambitions – and even for some films supported by companies linked with the US film industry – festival screenings have become both a filtering process which they need to pass through and part of their standardised marketing strategy. The significant media presence makes big festivals great places for film promotion. As Tom Bernard, co-president of the art-house distribution company Sony Pictures Classics explains, big festivals like Sundance are 'better than a junket. We get interviews and stories placed on our movies that we couldn't get if we weren't at Sundance'³ (quoted in D. Kennedy 1999, 1). For distribution companies the main strategy consists of creating awareness – especially by good reviews and word-of-mouth – through the festival circuit so that independent and smaller non-English language films can gain visibility before their release in commercial theatres. Thus in contrast to the festival jargon that frequently treats films as natural phenomena that 'emerge' or are

³ A press junket is 'a two or three day period during which the stars and filmmakers of a movie meet with the press (both domestic and international) to answer questions about the film' (August 2005).

'discovered', behind any film there is a strong element of human agency in the variable number of stakeholders – each with its own leverage – whose main interest is to get those films onto the festival circuit. In fact, more often than not, festivals' film suppliers are not directors or producers, but intermediaries – especially distributors and sales agents – who represent the films in international arenas and are actively engaged in their marketing. In this sense, festivals have become an integral part of the global film industry and festival screenings have been naturalised as a standard procedure between production and the actual distribution of films in international markets.

As media events, high-profile festivals provide the perfect place to launch both new Hollywood films hoping to gain high-brow status as well as smaller films from all over the world seeking to open international doors. Known for their concentrations of paparazzi, journalists and critics, some festivals attract global attention and can make or destroy reputations. Moreover, as a network of prestigious institutions, festivals enable a process through which films and filmmakers can raise their profile by collecting awards and critical acclaim. In this sense, Thomas Elsaesser notices that through the festival circuit films can acquire 'the cultural capital and critical prowess necessary to subsequently enter the national or local exhibition markets on the strength of their accumulated festival successes' (2005b, 87). Expanding on this, Marijke De Valck explains this as a process of value-adding in which films' quality is assessed and established. In her words,

festival selection and programming reaches beyond the level of personal preference and becomes more or less – according to the festival's prestige in the international film festival circuit – globally acknowledged as evidence of quality (De Valck 2007, 186–187).

Therefore festivals enable both films and filmmakers to create a reputation that can help them to reach global audiences. By engaging in the reception of new cinematic productions, a wide-variety of festival participants contributes to the creation of reputations which will affect the future life of films and filmmakers. International travelling will be easier for those films and filmmakers who become widely recognised across the festival circuit for their quality and talent. Yet, by the same token, a bad reputation can seriously endanger filmmakers' careers and limit films' international visibility. In this sense, festivals function as powerful gatekeepers that regulate world cinema's access to international recognition and circulation.

The pivotal role that festivals play in films' and filmmakers' international positioning is based on these events' potential to bring together great numbers of people related to the global film industry. In addition to the presence of journalists and critics, film festivals are

frequently attended by those who make, buy, sell or promote films in one way or another. In the evocative passage quoted in the introduction, Elsaesser describes the film festival circuit as a series of nodes that articulate the migratory movements of world cinema's films and people (2005b, 87). Expanding on this idea, De Valck explains that when mapping out the movements of world cinema, big international film festivals become 'bustling nodes of activity where people, prestige and power tend to concentrate' (2007, 36). Therefore, by connecting different stages of the film supply chain, festivals become strategic business hubs for the gathering of film industry professionals. In this sense, film festivals function as markets where there are many buyers and sellers willing to do business and as networking spaces for specialists in the field.

Strengthening their role as nodal points of world cinema traffic, festivals have tended to expand and offer more services to the different sectors of the film industry. Although the first official film market related to the festival circuit was launched in Cannes in 1959, this tendency has been more visible since the 1990s. In an effort to improve their film supply and make more attractive events, many festivals currently provide services to the industry: 'they organize film markets, industry meetings, producer's networks, training for script development and production, and all kinds of seminars' (De Valck 2007, 109). Moreover, as part of an expansive dynamic to compete and stand out in an overcrowded market, some festivals have even extended their activities to setting up all year round programmes to promote film production, especially in developing or third world countries. While the initiatives are generally welcomed by the filmmakers and producers that benefit from them, the huge scale of some film festivals has caused critics to question the necessity and convenience of such mega-events (Peranson 2008). In fact, competition is not always loyal to the cultural aim to which festival organisers lay claim and the film festival world is notable for being highly hierarchical and unequal. Whilst some film festivals are global centres of power and prestige, there are many others with limited local impact that are struggling for films, funding, media and industry attention.

Regardless of disagreements over how the festival circuit *should* work, it is clear that some mega-festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Sundance, Toronto and Rotterdam have become key institutions that significantly affect the production, reception and international circulation of world cinema. In this regard, Elsaesser points out that film festivals impact both economic and cultural aspects of cinema. He argues that,

with respect to Europe, the festival circuit, I want to claim, has become the key force and power grid in the film business, with wide-reaching consequences for the respective functioning of the other elements (authorship, production, exhibition, cultural prestige and recognition) pertaining to the cinema and to film culture (Elsaesser 2005b, 83).

However, this situation is not exclusive to European cinema but it also includes the majority of world cinemas, especially those from developing regions such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This is partly because prestigious film festivals can help to create production and distribution arrangements of films aimed at the generally wealthier markets of Europe and North America. However, it is also because recognition from the Western dominated world of film festivals is key for the cultural positioning of films and filmmakers in the landscape of cinematic culture. In this sense, Stringer emphasises the existence of deep inequalities in international film culture that become visible both on an economic and a discursive level. Thus the process of 'discovering' non-Western cinemas in the Western world not only tends to be linked to major North American and European film festivals, but frequently 'assumes that non-Western cinemas do not count historically until they have been recognized by the apex of international media power' (Stringer 2001, 135). As the geographical distribution of power within the film festival circuit tends to reproduce broader inequalities, the most prestigious and important events are concentrated in Europe and North America, although their influence can be perceived worldwide.

In effect, for non-Western cinemas the film festival circuit, with its capacity to create and fix discourses, has been instrumental in their international reception and circulation. In the case of New Iranian Cinema, Azadeh Farahmand argues that international film festivals have played a crucial role in processes of canon construction and 'generification' (2006). In a similar way, Chia-chi Wu explores their role in the 'ascent' of Chinese language cinemas to the 'pantheon of modern world cinema' (2004, 2). For Wu, film festivals are evidence of the 'scopic regimes' that 'define the patterns of visibility by which Chinese language cinemas have been channelled to international exhibition' (2004, 3). Thus by selecting, classifying, labelling and awarding films, the world of film festivals – dominated by a few Euro-American events – contributes actively to the discursive construction of specific national, regional cinemas, discourses about quality and other related film categories such as 'auteur' and 'art'. As De Valck maintains, these categories should be better understood, not as inherent characteristics of cinema but as 'part of the strategic discourse of the international film festival circuit' (2007, 15). However, at the same time, the labels and discursive categories established within the film festival circuit are what enables world cinema to gain the necessary credentials to travel successfully to foreign territories. As Stringer argues very frequently this is done under the label of a national cinema that functions as a form of 'cultural currency' (2003b, 60). In this sense, film festivals have a crucial role in defining the patterns of visibility and circulation of a significant proportion of world cinema, including almost all Latin American films that reach international theatres. Although this power is not equally distributed throughout the festival circuit – or precisely

because of this – the understanding of film festival hierarchies and dynamics becomes fundamental for any analysis related to the international circulation and reception of the world cinema (both in economic and cultural terms).

Against this backdrop, the pivotal role that film festivals can play in contemporary cinematic culture becomes clear. As a multifaceted phenomenon, film festivals provide a rich field for analysis of a wide range of issues, including questions pertaining to local audiences and communities, cultural exchanges and reception, discursive formations of national or transnational cinemas, cultural politics and the dynamics of global distribution and the international film industry. With an analogous interest in the work done for the Iranian (Farahmand 2006), Chinese-language (C. Wu 2004, 2007) and Japanese (Stringer 2003b) cinemas, this study aims to shed light on the relationship between film festivals and the process by which Latin American cinema has been put into circulation and become visible via the film festival circuit. This process has to be understood both as an economic and cultural exchange that simultaneously affects the commercial distribution/exhibition of film products from the region and discourses that fixate meanings and values about those films and ideas about Latin American cinemas. In other words, if as De Valck argues film festivals have become necessary ‘sites of passage’ through which the doors of international distribution and recognition can be opened (2007, 35), then their dynamics and mechanisms of selection become crucial for understanding how certain Latin American films (and not others) have achieved international circulation.

b. Art Worlds

In his seminal book *Art Worlds*, Howard S. Becker proposes this concept as a way of looking at how art functions in society throughout its circular process of production, distribution, consumption and reception. As a sociologist, Becker is not only interested in analysing how people coordinate their actions to do things together, but he defines art itself as an intrinsically collective activity. In his words,

All artistic work, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number, of people. Through their cooperation, the art work we eventually see or hear comes to be and continues to be. The work always shows signs of that cooperation. The forms of cooperation may be ephemeral, but often become more or less routine, producing patterns of collective activity we can call an art world (Becker 2008, 1).

Against traditional notions that regard art as the product of a creative moment of an individual genius – i.e. the artist – Becker proposes an understanding of art as a collaborative and on-going

process that integrates all stages that precede and follow the actual production of the object or performance generally recognised as the work of art. Put simply, it is not individual artists who produce art, but the collective process he calls 'art world'.

While art requires an extensive division of labour, the specific activities that artists and support personnel – i.e. non-artists – do are not natural or predetermined by the medium itself (Becker 2008, 14). In fact, what someone does in order to receive the honorary 'artist' title is the result of a social convention that can, and does, change over time and space (Becker 2008, 16). Thus by demonstrating the contingent nature of the 'artistic' activities implicit in the 'artist' label, this approach questions the romantic figure of an exceptionally talented and gifted individual who creates 'art' almost single-handedly in a spontaneous outburst of creativity. Instead, Becker focuses on conventions as they help to coordinate the routine or standardised way of doing things among all those involved in the artistic activity: from artists and support personnel to intermediaries and audiences (2008, 28–31). As the result of a collective process, the way art is produced, distributed, consumed and received has a crucial impact on the object itself which acquires certain physical and aesthetic characteristics according to the functioning of the whole system. This implies the frequent use of conventions that guarantee a more efficient form of collaboration, not only among those involved in the actual production of the work, but also in terms of how the different receivers react to and make sense of it.

Becker's observations on the whole cycle of artistic production provide very useful insights for understanding the international circulation of films frequently labelled as 'art' or cultural products. From this perspective, the proposal is to go beyond the traditional focus on directors, films texts and their production – which is generally a way of referring to the actual shooting while ignoring the crucial and lengthier pre- and post-shooting phases. In other words, the suggestion is to understand cinema as a collective activity and an on-going process, not only at the level of production – which also tends to be intrinsically collaborative – but also at the stages of distribution, marketing and reception. Although this thesis focuses more on the reputation of films after their completion – especially their festival and critical reception – it is crucial to have in mind the idea of a cyclical process, in which the ways films are produced, affect their possibilities of gaining international visibility and circulation. In turn, films' reputations – and that of their makers – have a strong impact on the life of subsequent film projects. Therefore, an 'art worlds' perspective allows us to analyse the continuous role of institutional and individual agents such as film festivals and their diverse participants in how – and which – films are produced for and put into international circulation.

This sociological strategy, however, tends to go against the grain of well-established ideas about cinema as an artistic and cultural activity. Most critical and academic approaches to film

studies have assumed the logic of cinema as 'art', which is ingrained in the discipline (Dyer 1998, 4). In fact, linked to the historical positioning of cinema as serious object of study, film scholars have frequently ignored the collective nature and industrial practicalities of the medium, in favour of a rationale based on the romantic figure of a film director consecrated as an 'auteur' (i.e. an 'artist') who is to be regarded as the master-mind in full control of the film's creative process. As will be further discussed in Chapter 2, by adopting an approach that regards cinema as a fundamentally 'artistic' or 'cultural' production, film studies have generally endorsed most of the contradictions and romanticisation derived from the idea of art as the product of individual artists. According to this rationale, as Becker explains, there is a correlation between art and artists, whose reputations are then intertwined and reinforce one another (2008, 22). The logic dictates that if you are an artist, what you do must be art. The opposite is also true: if you do art, you must be an artist (Becker 2008, 18). As will be further explored throughout this thesis – especially in Chapter 9 – this implies that the positioning of a film in the artistic category raises the reputation of its director to that of an artist or an 'auteur'. By the same token, a non-artistic profile of either the film or the filmmaker has the opposite effect, resulting in less positive treatment and reception from everyone else in the film world for both film and filmmaker. Thus whilst artistic reputations become crucial for the future of films and filmmakers, festivals, as the places where cinematic 'art' is recognised, play a fundamental role in how films are circulated and understood.

Film festivals have been a crucial locus where ideas about aesthetic value in cinema have been developed and put into practice. Meanwhile the festivals themselves have been a sort of blind spot within film studies, often viewed as 'simple' cultural events forming an alternative distribution or exhibition network that does not have a major impact on the films themselves. It is hardly a coincidence that this omission is based on the mainstream art-made-by-artists logic which assumes that artistic films are the result of a talented director who makes films unconcerned with, and independently from, the rest of the chain of distribution, consumption and reception, including, of course, the festivals. However, as Becker highlights, a fundamental need within any art world is to draw the lines between art and non-art (2008, 36) by distinguishing those individuals who have the gift and who deserve the honorific title of 'artist' from those who do not (2008, 14). Thus as self-appointed and widely accepted centres for the celebration and renewal of cinematic art, festivals have strengthened and capitalised on the notion of a talented and gifted individual who creates great films and requires recognition. Rather unsurprisingly then, film festivals have simultaneously positioned themselves at the core of international cinematic culture and the global film industry, as strategic places of 'discovery'

of talented filmmakers and film masterpieces whose reputations are closely linked to events on the festival circuit.

As a crucial mechanism which identifies the gifted individuals who deserve the 'artist' title, reputations are routinely created by art worlds as part of the social process in which objects are received and discussed. As Becker affirms,

Art worlds, in a variety of interwoven activities, routinely make and unmake reputations – of works, artists, schools, genres and media. They single out from the mass of more or less similar work done by more or less interchangeable people a few works and a few makers of works of special worth. They reward that special worth with esteem and frequently but not necessarily, in more material ways too. They use reputations, once made, to organize other activities, treating things and people with distinguished reputations differently from others (Becker 2008, 352).

Thus reputations are not limited to works and artists, but they also extend to groups of works – schools, genres and media – that share certain characteristics and are treated in distinct ways according to their specific standing. In audio-visual production this is clear in the status crafted by 'waves', 'movements', genres and formats that suggests that they possess more or less artistic value than other groups of films and formats. In the same way that film is regarded as a more artistic medium than television or digital video, films labelled as 'Cinema Novo' have generally a more artistic reputation than, for example, Brazilian 'chanchadas' or Mexican 'melodramas', to mention two cases relevant to this study. In this sense, it is crucial to bear in mind that reputations affect not only celebrated films and filmmakers, but even more problematically, those disregarded as non- or less-artistic and thus, in most cases, rendered invisible by the limited attention and circulation they receive.

Because distinct reputations imply a different treatment from festivals, buyers, critics, audiences and everyone else in the film supply chain, building a good reputation is essential for anyone interested in promoting a film at any level. There are undoubtedly greater advantages for those films that belong to more respected film groups or whose directors have been widely acknowledged as talented 'auteurs'. In the same way that films' and filmmakers' prestige reinforces one another, their artistic reputation and status are linked with the wider categories in which they are inscribed – i.e. waves, movements, genres, national or regional cinemas. As will be further discussed in this thesis, reputations are not only about assessing the artistic worth or market positioning of films and filmmakers, but about the definition of the generic categories to which they are linked and the associations they all carry. Thus while filmmakers

like Glauber Rocha and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea in the 1960s and the 1970s crafted strong international profiles as left-wing radical filmmakers, the category of 'Latin American cinema' was embraced in association with a 'new' militant cinema and left-wing politics related to the Cuban revolution, at the expense of the – already discredited – 'old' melodramas, musicals and comedies that audiences across Latin America had enjoyed for decades.

Reputations also affect the festivals themselves. The relative position of each festival within the hierarchy of events depends precisely on what those professionals travelling the festival circuit say – and do – about the festivals. In other words, festivals build specific profiles and reputations, for which they become 'known' and which guarantee that they will receive a particular treatment in the future. Examples of this include the hundreds of programmers travelling to Rotterdam because of its reputation as a great place for discoveries of experimental and underground cinema; sales agents attending San Sebastian's *Cine en Construcción* in search of new Latin American talents or – as we shall see in Chapter 6 – a few left-wing international critics and programmers going to the festival in Viña del Mar in 1969, which had been declared the 'birth place' of Latin America cinema the previous year by the magazine *Cine Cubano*. Moreover, festivals' reputation is closely connected to their power to enhance the visibility and recognition of the films and filmmakers they celebrate. In this sense, each festival's potential to transfer symbolic capital to films and filmmakers depends on its institutional prestige. This means that top awards at a high-profile event, as in the case of Venice, are widely recognised as being more important and prestigious than those events with a lesser-profile, such as San Sebastian or Cartagena. In this sense, the hierarchical structure of the system is based on festivals' reputations, which means that organisers are not only constantly boosting the importance of their event, but they need to – and generally do – take criticism very seriously.

As events whose major capital depends on their reputation and their ability to consecrate films and filmmakers into the arts category, festivals have a very special relationship with the media in general and particularly with specialist film magazines, widely acknowledged as the home of the most serious film criticism. In this sense, festivals' functioning should be analysed in connection with prestigious magazines as another key cinephile institution that emerged in parallel to the network of events throughout the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War. Thus publications such as *Film Comment*, *Sight & Sound*, *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Positif* have covered film festivals since both the events and the magazines themselves were launched. Issued every one or two months, they generally publish festival reports in the first or second issue following the event. However, the timing of the report and the space devoted to each festival generally match its perceived importance. In this way, these prestigious

publications have become strategic custodians that maintain and reproduce the film festival hierarchy: providing prompt coverage of Cannes above all, less prominent reports of Berlin and Venice and irregular information about other events, sometimes with many months of delay. Hence, one of the clear advantages of screening films in Cannes, Berlin and Venice is the coverage that these three festivals receive from specialised film magazines whose cinephile readership generally coincides with the target audience of those films in international markets.

Screenings at those prestigious festivals open up possibilities for a film or a filmmaker to be put in the spotlight by those influential publications. However, as several cases in the history of Latin American cinema suggest, regardless of the section or the award received, there is no guarantee of such a stamp of approval from these magazines which very often ignore prestigious prize-winners or declare great 'discoveries' in parallel sections. As will be discussed in Chapter 8, films' value-adding process entails not only several stages with different festival participants at each event (De Valck 2007, 126–128), but also several festival screenings during films' festival tour. Thus, while festivals' institutional power lies mostly in their agenda-setting role of putting programmes together and allocating awards, specialised magazines' critics impose further value judgements expressed both through the amount of coverage and their discussions about the films. In combination, festivals and specialised magazines have an unmatched power that can have long-lasting effects on cinematic reputations, not only in consecrating auteurs but also in developing interpretive frameworks through which those works will be understood.

Yet again, as Becker maintains, aesthetic judgements are not the exclusivity of critics or aestheticians. In fact, most participants in the art world make their own opinions – which may or may not coincide with critics' assessments – contributing to the reputation making of works and artists (2008, 131–132). This explains, on the one hand, the frequent disagreement between critical reviewers and audience behaviour, and on the other, the word-of-mouth phenomenon, which can make films grow – or sink – depending on the recommendation of viewers who pass on their opinion to their personal networks. While the assessment of festivals and specialised magazines most typically results in a barrier impossible to bypass, in some exceptional cases positive word-of-mouth and the support of a few key critics can help films to reach international audiences. A case in point, as analysed in Chapter 9, is the film *Nine Queens*, which, despite having a relatively low festival-profile and being neglected by serious publications like *Film Comment* and *The Village Voice*, became an international success, supported by the influential *The New York Times* and by a remarkable word-of-mouth phenomenon.

Regardless of the scant attention paid to them by academic studies, festivals are central to both the development of the discipline and of an international film culture and industry. A rather multifaceted phenomenon, festivals not only come in an endless variety of sizes, locations and profiles but they are the meeting point for a complex mixture of political, economic and cultural interests. Thus festivals can gather a wide-range of participants, frequently with clashing agendas, who subjectively define and assess the events. In fact, it is this ability to connect, at the same time and place, almost everyone involved in the long chain of a film's life – from production to reception – that have made some festivals a privileged arena where discourses about cinema and specific films' reputations are negotiated. Unsurprisingly it is its crowd gathering capacity that underlies Cannes' dominance of the festival hierarchy. As Marijke de Valck puts it:

Cannes remains the world's leading festival precisely because everybody who is anybody in the film business will gather in the small area around the festival palace and the short strip of beach in front of it every single year in May (De Valck 2007, 38).

In this sense, the definition of film festivals cannot be limited to their organisers, programmes, awards and their institutional prestige (De Valck 2007, 35). From an 'art worlds' perspective, festivals, like cinema itself, need to be understood as both a collective activity – including all participants and their different activities: from the travelling crowds of media and film professionals to the local authorities and audiences – and an on-going process – especially in relation to the status within the festival hierarchy and the associations that each event carries.

c. Crafting the Hierarchy A Brief History of Film Festivals

The idea that 'film festivals' *in general* have such significant power on cinematic reputations and regulate the doors of international visibility and distribution is slightly misleading. In fact, the film festival world follows a strict hierarchical structure and very few festivals have the actual capacity to bring together big crowds of influential media and industry participants. Thus festivals operate in an extremely competitive environment where they are in constant rivalry and where each festival's reputation determines the quality and quantity of films and participants as well as the prestige that each event bestows on the films it screens and awards. Much of the hierarchical dynamics and configuration of the film festival circuit have historical roots in its development. Although it is not possible here to analyse this process in detail, a brief overview of its expansion is necessary to understand festivals' hierarchical structure and the way in which changes in the functioning of the film festival circuit have affected Latin American cinemas' incursions into international arenas.

The first high-profile film festival was held in Venice in 1932 as part of the 18th Biennale di Venezia, a well-established international art exhibition that included visual arts, music and theatre. Supported by Italy's Fascist leader Benito Mussolini and stakeholders in Venice's touristic industry, the successful film exhibition was held again in 1934 and since 1935 has been an annual event (La Biennale di Venezia 2010a). Although other amateur film festivals had been held irregularly in Europe before, the Venice film festival was the first one to propose such a prestigious diplomatic event: inviting nations to participate with films that would represent them in a series of screenings attended by an unprecedented number of stars and personalities of the film industry. Like other international fairs, exhibitions and competitions, film festivals then became showcases for nation-states' and films' achievements were regarded as a matter of national prestige attuned to geo-politics. In 1934 Venice introduced a major competition and awards that tended to celebrate Italian and German films, reflecting Italy's fascist politics during the 1930s (De Valck 2007, 48). Venice's politically-charged awards policy caused controversy among representatives from the future Allied powers of the Second World War, who launched a rival festival in France at the end of the 1930s.

The Cannes film festival began on September 1st 1939, but it was cancelled after two days of screenings because of the outbreak of the Second World War (Festival de Cannes 2009). After the war, both Cannes and Venice resumed and re-emerged as the earliest and most prestigious events in the international film calendar, gathering a growing number of – mostly European – critics, journalists, filmmakers, producers, distributors and film enthusiasts of all kinds. From this very early stage, newcomers to the film festival scene would have to rival Cannes and Venice in their efforts to gain international attention and to convince producers to send high-profile films to their events. As we shall see below, this was particularly the case for festivals in Latin America which, arguably, was not at the centre of the so-called 'international' political, economic and cultural life. Thus while the European-based Venice and Cannes fiercely competed to maintain their top-tier status, all new festivals, particularly the non-European ones, had to settle for a less-prestigious profile, with fewer stars, media and industry participants as well as films with a lesser-profile that had been already seen at other festivals or that were regarded as of a mediocre or poor quality. At the same time, the privileged position of Cannes and Venice meant that films from Latin American countries would compete and be assessed in these foreign scenarios in accordance with the rules and criteria of their, mostly European, participants. In other words, rather than playing at home, Latin American cinemas at prestigious festivals would always be competing on foreign soil.

The emergence of the rival Venice and Cannes festivals shows that geo-politics have been closely linked to the functioning of the festival circuit since the very beginning. As Marijke de

Valck explains, until the late 1960s international festivals were widely regarded as an opportunity for enhancing national prestige in which the countries themselves had decision-making power over the films that would represent them at the festivals (2007, 53). Thus during the first decades of Cannes and Venice, their programming relied not on the selection of films – as is the case nowadays – but on the extension of invitations to specific countries and the allocation of a certain number of films depending on the size of their film industry and their political alliances. As discussed in detail in Chapter 5, this meant that while several films from Argentina – which maintained cordial diplomatic relationships with Italy and Germany – were screened in Venice during the 1930s, the Allied-friendly Mexico was the only Latin American country invited to participate in the first edition of Cannes in 1946. Moreover, by inviting nation-states, festivals capitalised and reinforced the imaginary of a ‘national cinema’, by which films were expected to have clear national credentials and international co-productions occupied a grey area. As discussed below, not all festivals had this nation-based criterion and since the 1970s also top-tier festivals have assumed greater control over their programmes. However, most festivals insisted on classifying and programming films in series according to their presupposed unique cultural identity – regardless of films’ frequent international links – which reinforced not only the category of national/regional cinemas, but the festivals’ role as ‘discoverers’ of marginal films coming from remote locations.

Although Venice and, in particular, Cannes have successfully maintained their positions at the top of the hierarchy, the practice of launching film festivals became very fashionable all over the world after the Second World War. As the British publication *Sight & Sound* noticed at the time, during the late 1940s film festivals ‘mushroomed’ all over Europe in places such as Karlovy Vary and Mariánské Lázně in Czechoslovakia in 1946 as well as in Edinburgh in 1947, Knokke in Belgium and Locarno in 1948, Biarritz in 1949 and Berlin in 1951 (‘Festivals: A summing-up’ 1949, 24; De Leeuwe 1950, 95). This tendency continued during the 1950s, with festivals appearing not only in European cities like San Sebastian in 1953, Cork in 1956 and London in 1957 but also outside Europe in places like Punta del Este in Uruguay in 1951, Mar del Plata in Argentina, São Paulo, Sydney and Tokyo in 1954 and San Francisco in 1957 (see Appendix E).

The overall effect of the increased number of film festivals was a fierce rivalry among them and the need for hierarchical distinctions (De Valck 2007, 53–57). Neither the established festivals – Cannes and Venice – nor the Paris-based Fédération Internationale des Producteurs des Films (FIAPF) were happy with the development. Therefore they tried to prevent the

'excess' of film festivals by creating categories of accreditation and convincing producers to send films to only certified festivals⁴ ('International film festivals' 1954, 10; De Valck 2007, 54). Expanding and modifying its categories (FIAPF 2009, 32–34), FIAPF has continued since then with its, rather unsuccessful, attempts of regulating the film festival world. Whilst there is nothing to prevent events taking place outside of FIAPF's supervision, there is currently a disproportionate ratio between thousands of unaccredited events worldwide and only a few dozen festivals that are certified by the organisation. Moreover, the great success of unaccredited festivals – such as Sundance and Rotterdam – or the huge importance of events labelled as 'non-competitive' – like Toronto – over 'competitive' ones – such as Mar del Plata or Montreal – demonstrate the extent to which FIAPF's categorizations have become irrelevant to the actual significance that specific festivals have within the festival hierarchy and especially to film producers.

Film festivals have never been the exclusive interest of professional film producers, but also local governments, tourist boards, investors, cinephile groups and audiences. As such, regardless of FIAPF's historical attempts to regulate the film festival world – and Cannes and Venice's interest in eliminating their competitors in the 1940s and 1950s – events have continued to proliferate until the present. During the decades that followed the Second World War, in particular, hosting a film festival was seen as an effective way of building national identities and gaining distinction among other countries by showcasing local cinematic achievements (De Valck 2007, 56). Film festivals kept on appearing everywhere, because of their appeal for governments and the tourist industry, as well as the opportunity that they presented for cinephiles, critics and filmmakers to screen, watch and discuss films that were not widely available on commercial screens.

Simultaneously, with the development of a worldwide cinephile culture throughout the first half of the twentieth century, as early as the 1920s cine-clubs were launched in Latin American cities like Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo (Couselo 2010; Dimitriu 2007, 15–17; Ramos and Miranda 1997, 128–130; Viany 1959, 95; Zapiola 1985a, 1985b). These groups of committed cinephiles developed a strong cinematic culture that enabled the creation of the region's first cinematheques in São Paulo in 1948, Buenos Aires in

⁴By 1954 the FIAPF had established four categories of events: 'A' for the competitive Cannes and Venice; 'B' for non-competitive events in São Paulo, Mar del Plata, Berlin and San Sebastian; 'C' for events specialising in particular themes or kinds of films; and 'D' for national festivals such as Locarno and Edinburgh ('International film festivals' 1954, 10). In 1956, the festival in Berlin was also included in the 'A' category – with Cannes and Venice – and was allowed to give awards allocated by an international jury (De Valck 2007, 54).

1949 and Montevideo in 1952. Thus, as in many other parts of the world, film festivals sprung up in Latin America after the Second World War, as a mixture between both high-level political and economic interests as well as the emergence of culturally-orientated groups of cinephiles, critics and filmmakers who functioned as festival organisers and participants. During the 1950s, the festival phenomenon spread to Latin America where different kinds of events were launched. Among the first attempts to host high-profile international festivals were those in Punta del Este⁵ in Uruguay between 1951 and 1952; São Paulo's one-off event in 1954; Mar del Plata⁶ in Argentina launched in 1954 and held intermittently until 1970; Acapulco in Mexico was launched as a non-competitive 'festival of festivals' and held between 1958 and 1968 and the Cartagena⁷ film festival in Colombia was launched in 1960 and is currently the oldest running festival in the region. Other festivals were geared towards more innovative programming such as Montevideo's festival specialising in documentary and experimental cinema which hosted eight editions between 1954 and 1971⁸ (Amieva 2009, 3; Martínez Carril 1981, 37). Significantly, this Uruguayan festival was frequently attended by several Latin American filmmakers⁹ and in 1958 held the first Encuentro de Cineistas [*sic*] Latinoamericanos Independientes (Meeting of Independent Latin American Filmmakers) that can be viewed as a precursor to other future meetings of the Latin American film community during the 1960s (Amieva 2009, 6).

There are many specific reasons behind the lack of continuity of most of these events, although all of them faced similar difficulties in trying to position themselves in the international festival calendar (see also Rodríguez Isaza forthcoming). A paradigmatic case is the Festival Internacional de Cinema do Brasil in São Paulo in January and February 1954. Planned as a one-off event to commemorate the city's fourth centenary, the film festival complemented the activities of the second Bienal Internacional de Artes Plásticas. The non-competitive event had a

⁵ As far as I have been able to establish, this festival was in fact the first one in Latin America. It was supported by the Uruguayan government and organised by the Argentine entrepreneur Mauricio Litman, who had extensive investments in the seaside resort of Punta del Este (Magnan 1951, 58–60).

⁶ The festival in Mar del Plata was organised in 1954 by the Peronist government as part of its plan to improve its international image and promote a certain democratization of the resort town of Mar del Plata (Kriger 2004, 118–119). After Perón was ousted from power in 1955, the festival was held intermittently between 1959 and 1970. It was restarted as an annual event in 1996 as the 12th International Film Festival of Mar del Plata (Triana-Toribio 2007, 25–45).

⁷ The Cartagena festival was founded by the journalist and cinephile Víctor Nieto, who directed the event for 48 years until he passed away in 2008 (A. M. De la Fuente 2008).

⁸ Organised by Cine Arte, the film department of the Servicio Oficial de Radiotelevisión y Espectáculos (SODRE), the festival in Montevideo was held in 1954, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1965, 1967 and 1971 (Amieva 2009, 3).

⁹ The festival received filmmakers such as Nelson Pereira Dos Santos from Brazil, Jorge Ruiz from Bolivia and the Argentinians Fernando Birri and Leopoldo Torre Nilsson (Amieva 2009, 6).

serious cultural profile with retrospectives, workshops and seminars (Ramos and Miranda 1997, 238). Nevertheless, through effective diplomatic lobbying, the festival managed to attract a dozen foreign delegations, including the world's leading producers – US, France and Italy – whose films and glamorous stars immediately grabbed the attention from local media and audiences (Bresser-Pereira 1954c; Jonald 1954, 6–8). High-profile guests included renowned figures like directors Erich Von Stroheim and Abel Gance, the director of the French Cinémathèque, Henri Langlois, as well as critics from prestigious European film magazines such as *Cahiers du Cinéma's* André Bazin (1954, 23–29) and *Sight & Sound's* Ernest Lindgren (1956, 171).

Although the São Paulo event was a relative success, the idea of hosting it regularly never gained much currency. Whilst its elitist practices and excessive budget were generally disapproved of by Brazilian commentators (Bresser-Pereira 1954a, 1954b), both local and international critics questioned the low quality of the programme. As the sympathetic Bazin explained, regardless of the efforts and good intentions of São Paulo's organisers, the reality was that producers understandably preferred to save their best films to premiere in the more prestigious European festivals (1954, 27). Although the São Paulo festival never took off, it exemplifies the recurrent struggle – faced by all Latin American festivals and most other newcomers to the festival circuit – to put on programmes that could raise their status in the international festival hierarchy. Indeed, although screening films already premiered and acclaimed at other festivals would not have been a problem for local audiences, this kind of programming was unattractive for prestigious international participants who required both high-profile and unseen films. If festivals were unable to get hold of coveted premieres they crafted less-prestigious reputations over the years that eventually meant that international participants tended to avoid the festival altogether.

The expansion of the film festival circuit did not, of course, take place in isolation from the wider political, economic and cultural world context, especially the pervasive backdrop of the Cold War. As international meeting points for filmmakers, critics, scholars, cinephiles and activists, some European film festivals were crucial for the development of fresh ideas about cinema that incorporated political and social problems. During the 1960s, the idea of a 'new cinema' with left-wing and anti-imperialist connotations became widespread and frequently discussed in European cinematic circles. It was a response to an increasingly complex political situation worldwide including decolonization wars in Africa and Asia, the Vietnam conflict, nuclear war tensions and an aggressive antagonism between capitalist and communist countries. A period of overwhelming political and military pressures, the Cold War was characterised by a propaganda war, in which both sides used cultural terrains to promote their

political discourses and the presupposed advantages of each model. In this way, the idea of a 'new' and 'young' cinema – opposed to the 'old' studio-modelled one and 'free' from the constraints of the market – was supported by left-wing members of the international film community. In cinematic terms, the Cold War tensions were translated into a binary opposition between Hollywood as the paradigm of 'old' commercial cinema and the 'new' political cinema that was starting to gain currency around the world. As will be discussed further in Chapters 6, these debates were taking place during the early years of the Cuban Revolution in the early 1960s, when the whole region became a symbol of 'revolutionary' and radical politics. Unsurprisingly the concept of 'new cinema' became the key theoretical framework through which European critics and intellectuals embraced Latin American cinema.

Both festivals and specialised film magazines became key promoters of the idea of 'new cinemas' that represented both aesthetic renovation and political left-wing commitment. Events committed to the promotion and analysis of this type of 'new', 'young' and 'free' cinema appeared throughout Europe while its significance and very existence were debated by journalists and critics. As reported by the sceptical Geoffrey Nowell-Smith in *Sight & Sound*, the Festival of Free Cinema at Porretta Terme Italy in the early 1960s had led the way for another, the Festival of the New Cinema at Pesaro Italy in 1965 (1965, 174). For the British critic the term 'new cinema' was rather ambiguous and there was clearly an excess of rhetoric and political propaganda during the festival held at Pesaro (Nowell-Smith 1965, 175). In contrast, other critics, such as *Cahiers du Cinéma's* Jean-Louis Comolli, praised Pesaro precisely because of its project of 'revealing new filmmakers' that, from the first movie, allowed 'the new and young cinema' to speak (1965, 9). Following editorial changes, and as a result of the growing politicisation of the whole cultural sphere in the mid 1960s, the influential *Cahiers* devoted considerable attention to discuss the concept of 'new cinema' and analyse the relationship between film and politics (Bickerton 2009, 54). Together with *Positif*, *Cahiers* led the field of French specialist magazines endorsing the idea of a politically engaged (i.e. left-wing) cinema that enabled the acceptance of 'new cinemas' from around the world in European cinematic circles (Figueirôa 2004, 51–52). As will be discussed in Chapter 6, this was particularly the case with the Brazilian Cinema Novo – literally 'new cinema' in Portuguese – which benefited both from the expanding festival circuit and the spread of left-wing ideas among European critics, filmmakers and cinephiles.

The concept of 'new cinema' not only developed in relation to the film festival circuit, but was also closely supported by the expanding network of events that tended to build an identity around the idea of cinema as a non-commercial product. In this sense, the role of film festivals in the discursive construction of 'new cinema' should not be overlooked. In particular, the

festival at Pesaro which even included the 'new cinema' label in its title and quickly became an active meeting point for renowned left-wing filmmakers, critics and scholars (Comolli 1965, 8–9; Davis 1966, 30–33; Lane 1965, 52–54; Roud 1967, 178). According to the left-wing leaning of its organisers, it was conceived as a non-competitive festival specifically committed to the 'new' political cinema and encouraged not only screenings, but debates, paper presentations and further publications (Fondazione Pesaro Nuovo Cinema 2010). Thus while festivals became key hubs for cinematic culture, cinephile debates during the Cold War reflected the politicisation of the cultural sphere through the concept of 'new cinema' as an umbrella term for left-wing political cinemas.

The year 1968 marked a watershed in the film festival circuit. The revolutionary spirit and political turmoil that changed the world in a broad sense during the 1960s also affected the international film landscape, including the festivals. While the whole world experienced unrest with political demonstrations and anti-war movements, in France the protests were also related to the dismissal of the founder and director of the Cinémathèque Française, Henri Langlois (Mendes-France 1968, 62–70). When the Cannes Festival began in May 1968, there was a general strike in the country and very soon a group of filmmakers, headed by Jean Luc Godard and François Truffaut, called for the festival to be halted as a gesture of solidarity with workers and students (Houston 1968, 115). The disgruntled filmmakers also wanted a restructuring of the festival that they saw as focusing excessively on glamour and competition and not offering equal opportunities for all films. They formed the Société des Réalisateurs de Films (SRF) on the spot and arranged the creation of the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs (Directors' Fortnight) as a new parallel programme controlled by the filmmakers organisation (French Directors Guild 2010a).

While the possibility of more disturbances haunted festivals in June at Karlovy Vary and Berlin, similar protests actually disrupted events at Pesaro in June and Venice in late August (Milne 1968, 180). At Venice, the disturbances led to a two-day interruption of the event and a general atmosphere of confusion and dissatisfaction. The festival responded by screening all the films in a non-competitive category that year and subsequently abandoning the giving of awards for more than a decade (La Biennale di Venezia 2010b). Moreover, the Venice film festival entered into a period of decline that led to it being suspended in 1973 and 1978 and from which it did not start to recover until it resumed its awards process in 1980. Although Berlin was not interrupted that year, in 1969 festival organisers tried to prevent disturbances by adopting more democratic measures such as hosting film discussions, offering cheaper prices and relaxing dress codes (Wilson 1969, 176). However, the spectre of the upheaval of protest, the increasingly favourable reputation of the Pesaro film festival as the home of 'new cinema' and the new Directors' Fortnight at Cannes increased the pressure for changes in the Berlin film

festival (Gregor 1997). In 1971 it therefore included a parallel section entitled Internationales Forum des jungen Films (International Forum for New Cinema) in order 'to support progressive and avant-garde developments in film from around the world' (Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin 2010).

The structural and programming changes at Cannes, Venice and Berlin led to an important transformation of the dynamics of the film festival world. According to Marijke de Valck, it was the beginning of the 'age of the programmers', a period from the late 1960s/early 1970s until the mid 1980s, in which festival organisers took full control of the programme selection, advocating criteria of artistic quality (2007, 168). Rather than inviting countries to present their films, international festivals would choose over the films they considered the best representations of cinema as an art (De Valck 2007, 63). Undeniably, the alterations at the top of the festival hierarchy had the crucial effect of legitimating the role of festival organisers as programmers. However, taking the late 1960s/early 1970s as a turning point for the whole festival world is somewhat problematic because increasing control over the programme selection was, in fact, a parallel practice of smaller and medium-size festivals such as Locarno, Edinburgh, London and San Francisco that was subsequently adopted by the most prestigious ones.

The programming strategy of selecting films in accordance with festival organisers' criteria – rather than inviting specific countries – had been a practice of the festival world for a long time. An early example is the Locarno film festival that, since 1948, had bypassed official channels by approaching distributors directly and picking up films selected by a committee (Koval 1950, 50). Similarly, the Edinburgh film festival, launched in 1947, earned the reputation of being 'serious' precisely because of its careful programming selection ('International film festivals' 1954, 10). The difficulty for Cannes, Venice and Berlin – which screened films selected by national committees – was that their organisers had to assume the responsibility for the quality of a programme that they could not fully control. In an attempt to solve this problem, Venice introduced a new policy in 1956, in which all delegations would submit their films to a festival committee that would then select only fourteen for the main competition, regardless of the country of origin (L. Anderson 1956, 86). However, the measure was resented by international producers, especially from the US, who refused to present their films under such conditions and neither Berlin nor Cannes adopted a similar strategy.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s new festivals that emerged mostly from critics and cinephiles groups also affirmed their desire to have a greater control over the films that they screened. Therefore festivals in London and San Francisco, both launched in 1957, established a policy of presenting the 'best' films from other events, basing their programmes on the own

tastes and curatorial criteria (Lambert 1958, 24; Prouse 1957, 60). This practice also became popular among French critics who negotiated with the Cannes film festival the screening of more experimental and innovative films in a new parallel section programmed by them. In 1962 they launched the *Semaine de la Critique* (Critics' Week) which featured screenings devoted to the new tendencies that were less popular among production companies and film festivals. Likewise, the Berlin film festival revised its selection procedures in 1963 and decided to screen not only the films presented by each country but to give the option to the festival director to include others 'of artistic significance to enrich the programme' (Alfred Bauer quoted in De Valck 2007, 64). As festivals continued to appear in the 1960s, this new form of curatorial programming started to become the rule for other events, including the short-lived *Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano* (1960-1965) – as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5 – and festivals in New York (1963), Chicago (1964), Pesaro (1965) and Toronto (1966). Because these events arose mostly from the efforts of cinephile and critics, they tended to be more concerned with the cultural and political aspects of cinema rather than cinema as a high-profile diplomatic affair and a display of national prestige as it tended to still be the case at the top European festivals. However, very often programme sections in these festivals fuelled a powerful imaginary of 'national cinema'. Thus, whilst the *Rassegna* presented cycles, retrospectives and roundtables about Brazilian (Gómez Mesa 1961, 31) or Mexican cinema (*Colombianum* 1962) Pesaro presented the advances of 'new cinemas' in relation to their specific nation-states (Lane 1965, 52).

The protests and political turmoil that disrupted the film festival circuit in the late 1960s put pressure on the festivals at Cannes, Berlin and Venice to adapt to the new circumstances and reflect what most critics, filmmakers and cinephiles of the time thought cinema should be. The festivals embraced the idea of a 'new cinema', each in a unique way: Cannes accepted the parallel existence of the *Directors' Fortnight* in addition to the already established *Critics' Week*. Venice became a non-competitive event for the subsequent decade and strengthened the display of retrospectives, while Berlin encouraged debates about the films, a more informal environment and introduced the *Forum* as a sidebar for 'new cinema'.

These changes at the top of the festival hierarchy had crucial consequences for the international reception of films coming from Latin America. On one hand, they implied a more open attitude to films of non-European origin under the banner of the 'new' and the 'revolutionary' such as the *Brazilian Cinema Novo* and the *New Latin American Cinema*. On the other hand, they strengthened the power of prestigious festivals that could not only select whatever films they liked according to their own tastes, but which also had a more complex layout of categories. In fact, the greater number of sections within each festival implied a

tougher classification system in which films from marginal genres or regions could be safely screened under the appropriate label while the prime competitive spots – with the lion’s share of media attention and the greater possibility of prestigious awards – were reserved for those films that festival organisers regarded as aesthetically superior and less risky in terms of politics. Somewhat paradoxically, top European film festivals were more open towards ‘new cinemas’ whilst establishing a more elaborate hierarchical system of distinctions in which they could articulate more precisely their ideas and expectations about world cinema.

d. The Festival Calendar: Navigating the Film Festival World

While rooted in historical trends and events, the current configuration of the film festival world naturally responds to a post-Cold War context where the idea of a ‘market-friendly’ cinema is not necessarily rejected as being intrinsically contradictory to cinema’s higher aesthetic and cultural aims. Consequently, one of the most evident trends amongst festivals since the 1990s has been the increase of industry-orientated initiatives which support film projects at different stages of development: from script to post-production and distribution. At the same time that festivals have expanded their activities, the hierarchical structure of the circuit has also been modified. The increasing international importance of relatively new events, in particular Sundance and Rotterdam, has arguably been linked to their successful supporting mechanisms: the former through Sundance Institute’s multiple international activities, workshops and awards since the late 1980s and the latter via the Hubert Bals Fund and its co-production market CineMart, launched in the early 1990s. Following a herd-like behaviour – which in fact is very common in the festival world – the successful initiatives have been imitated and expanded by other festivals. Thus Cannes launched its own Paris-based school called the Cinefondation with four-month residencies for a handful of directors, while Berlin has both a festival-camp called Talent Campus and the World Cinema Fund. Noticeably, the Spanish festival in San Sebastian launched two supporting schemes for projects from specific geo-cultural regions: Cinema in Motion for the Maghreb in Northern Africa and Cine en Construcción for Latin America. Launched in conjunction with the Toulouse film festival in 2002, the latter has been a very successful strategy not only in the post-production and promotion of Latin American films, but also in the positioning San Sebastian festival as key hub for Spanish-language cinemas.

Unfortunately there is not enough space in this thesis to discuss in detail these initiatives. However, current research on the subject¹⁰ suggests that they have been crucial in both the growing importance of festivals to the global film industry and to the internationalization of Latin American cinemas of the past two decades. These programmes enable festivals to attract a wide-variety of film professionals who participate in the film supply chain, including directors, producers, investors, broadcasters, distributors, sales agents and festival programmers. By gathering many of these influential international participants, festivals facilitate the production and circulation of films whilst simultaneously reaffirming their role as places for ‘discovery’ and hubs of contemporary cinema. Moreover, these initiatives enable film projects to be promoted and tested in the international market-place from the early stages. In this way, these development schemes allow films and filmmakers to start raising international awareness and building a high profile that will help the project in future stages of the film supply chain. While this gives greater advantages to the supported films in international markets, it also means that those discarded by festival support programmes tend to experience more difficulties in terms of international positioning. In this sense, the stamp of approval given by prestigious film festivals – through selecting and awarding mechanisms – is even more important than the actual economic reward, which in many cases is actually only a fraction of the overall film budget.

Regardless of their expanding industry-friendly activities, the rivalry between festivals remains tougher than ever. In fact, the changing configuration of the festival hierarchy is a consequence of the competitive environment in which they operate. The increasing number of events worldwide has encouraged certain common trends, especially at the top of the hierarchy, where festivals cannot afford to slip down the ranking as this compromises both their ability to access the film supply and, longer term, their own survival. In this way, the most prestigious festivals have tended to prioritise the needs of the international film industry, which can guarantee them access to high-profile films, more influential participants and therefore a more prestigious overall status to the event. While it is obvious that not many festivals can be at the top of the hierarchy, the thousands of festivals launched worldwide since the Second World War have responded to this overcrowded market each in its own way according to their specific

¹⁰ Academic sources include general overviews of the phenomenon (Wong 2008), studies on specific cases – such as Rotterdam’s CineMart and Hubert Bals Fund (Steinhart 2006, 1–13) and Pusan Promotion Plan (Ahn 2008, 269–311) – and their effect on national/regional cinemas, especially from Asia (Ran 2009, 116–135; Zhang 2002, 15–41) and Latin American cinema (Falicov 2010, 3–21; Miriam Ross 2010, 171–187, 2011, 261–267; Triana-Toribio forthcoming). Moreover, in Latin America the phenomenon has often been studied in connection with other international funds for the region, especially Ibermedia (Dennison forthcoming; Falicov 2007a; Nagib 2006a, 95–103; Villazana 2008, 65–85).

organisational constraints and local conditions. In other words, instead of trying to attract coveted premieres and prestigious international travellers, most festivals have focused on programmes that satisfy their local audiences and sponsors. Yet again, smaller or discredited events tend to have more difficulties obtaining films and attracting international participants whose audiences expect to find at the festival. Thus at every level festivals tend to boost their own importance frequently by introducing some of the initiatives for which top-tier events are known and celebrated.

In an attempt to describe this situation, programmer and critic Mark Peranson proposes two ideal models of festivals: 'audience' and 'business' events. As he explains, most festivals would actually combine elements of the two (Peranson 2008, 38). However, the tension lies between these two extremes and depend on which participants' needs an event gives priority to. Thus 'audience' events put the needs of local communities first, followed by those of sponsors, governments, buyers/sellers, sales agents, critics and filmmakers. In contrast, the 'business' festivals' priority list is headed by buyers/sellers, sales agents, sponsors and governments – followed by audiences, critics and filmmakers (Peranson 2008, 39). Whilst each festival organisation has to balance its own priorities, Peranson's varied list of participants and stakeholders confirms a point made by several film festival scholars about the multiplicity of conflicting agendas, activities and discourses that characterise the festival phenomenon (Dayan 2000, 45; Harbord 2002, 60; Rhyne 2009, 20). In fact, Peranson' subjective position as a critic – which he sees as being a rather low priority in the concerns of both festival types – reflects this conflict of interests. However, as this thesis reveals, the role of critics and the media in general is paramount for the reputation of films, filmmakers and the festivals themselves. Moreover, as will be further explained in Chapter 8, critics are a constitutive part of the mechanisms of selection in the film festival world that regulate films' and filmmakers' international visibility and circulation.

The idea of two main types of festivals is not new. In fact, it echoes what other festival insiders have called 'retail' and 'wholesale' events (Bachmann 2000, 1; Wittkowsky quoted in Kelly 1999, 14). The types are explained by North American critic Jonathan Rosenbaum, who delineates between 'those that mainly exist in order to facilitate seeing movies and those that mainly exist in order to facilitate selling movies' (2009, 154). While 'audience' events may take an endless number of shapes, sizes and varieties, depending on their local contexts, 'business' events follow similar patterns with a dual strategy of copying successful initiatives launched by their competitors, whilst trying to craft a unique identity (Elsaesser 2005b, 86). As Peranson asserts, these strategies most significantly include: high budgets (not depending on ticket sales), focus on premieres, major corporate sponsorship, guests for most films, parallel markets or

business activities, large staff, a major competition (i.e. awards), development/production initiatives, retrospectives, a high number of submissions, Hollywood studios' involvement and an expansive tendency (2008, 38).

When put together these characteristics are most clearly represented by Cannes, as the prototypical 'business' festival, followed by a handful of other mega-festivals currently at the top of the festival hierarchy: Venice, Berlin, Toronto and Sundance. In addition to these top-tier festivals, there are several other prestigious events that combine at different degrees the 'business' and 'audience' characteristics like Rotterdam, Karlovy Vary, Locarno, San Sebastian, New York and London. However, the complexity of the festival phenomenon means that the reputation of each festival is subject to contestation and dependent on many changing and subjective factors, thus making it impossible to have a precise ranking of film festivals. While it can be confusing for outsiders, festival hierarchies are necessary and put in practice by different types of film industry professionals and cultural workers who travel and work across the circuit. In fact, regular festival participants and guests need to keep a fairly accurate map of the festival hierarchy which informs their decision-making at all levels and the management of each event. A clear example of this situation is the different treatment that festivals get from sales agents and distributors: while the most prestigious events are under pressure to premiere certain films in their programme, small festivals need to lobby hard and pay expensive fees to get these films as second-runs (Peranson 2008, 40).

Top-tier 'business' festivals control most of the world cinema traffic, attracting not only the attention of the international media and the film industry but most high-profile world and international premieres, including those associated with Latin America. In fact, when considering Latin American films distributed internationally over the past fifteen years, there is a strong correlation between their commercial success and the prestige of the festival in which they have had their international or world premiere (see table below). Therefore, when we look at the Top-10 Latin American films in the European Union it becomes clear that they have only premiered at a small selection of festivals: Cannes (4), Sundance (2), Montreal (1) Venice (1), Toronto (1), and Locarno (1).

Table 1. Top-10 Latin American Films Distributed in the EU and the US (1995 – 2009)¹¹

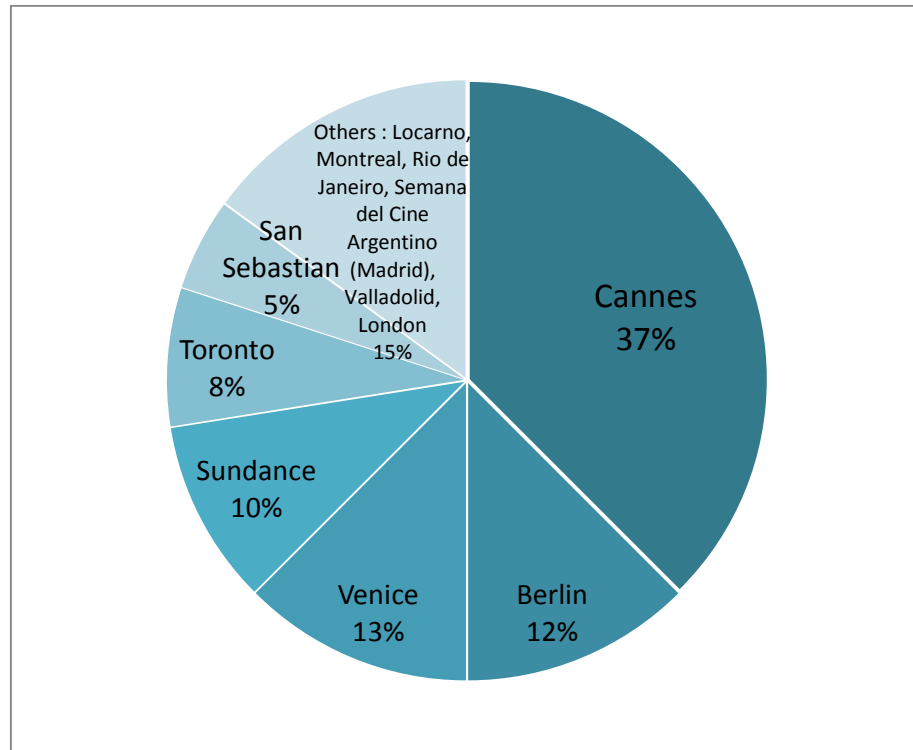
Films	Admissions / EU 27	World* / Intl. Premiere ¹²
<i>Babel</i> (US/FR/MX dir. Alejandro González I. 2006)	5,987,150	Cannes *
<i>Pan's Labyrinth</i> (ES/MX dir. Guillermo Del Toro 2006)	3,876,873	Cannes*
<i>The Motorcycle Diaries</i> (US/DE/GB/AR/CL/PE/FR dir. Walter Salles 2004)	3,427,585	Sundance *
<i>Central Station</i> (BR/FR/JP dir. Walter Salles 1998)	1,951,916	Sundance *
<i>Son of the Bride</i> (AR/ES dir. Juan José Campanella 2001)	1,776,627	Montreal
<i>City of God</i> (BR/FR/DE dir. Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund 2002)	1,653,039	Cannes *
<i>Y tu mamá también</i> (MX/US dir. Alfonso Cuarón 2001)	985,619	Venice
<i>Amores Perros</i> (MX dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu 2000)	842,498	Cannes *
<i>Devil's Backbone</i> (ES/MX dir. Guillermo Del Toro 2006)	870,126	Locarno
<i>The Secret in Their Eyes</i> (AR/ES dir. Juan José Campanella 2009)	851,133	Toronto

Likewise, from a bigger sample of the Top 40 Latin American films released both in the European Union and the US, the trend is more or less consistent: Cannes (37%= 15 films), Berlin (12.5%= 5 films), Venice (12.5%= 5 films), Sundance (10%= 4 films), Toronto (8%= 3 films), San Sebastian (5%= 2 films) and six other festivals with one film each (see table below).

¹¹ Films listed by admissions in the European Union. Table made with information from Lumiere Database (European Audiovisual Observatory 2009c). See also Appendix D for more information.

¹² Festivals call a film's first official public screening a 'world' premiere, while the 'international' premiere is reserved for when a film is released in its 'domestic' market. Whilst defining the 'domestic' market could be a rather contested issue in the cases of international co-productions, the extent to which screenings are public or private also leaves room for interpretation. In this sense, festival expert Christopher Holland warns filmmakers to never call a small screening for friends and family 'premiere' because it may prevent some festivals from accepting the film (C. Holland 2009, 25).

Table 2. World/International Premieres of Latin American Films (1995 – 2009)¹³



Although it is somewhat striking that the most successful Latin American films in international markets are consistently premiered in festivals outside the region, the situation clearly points out the relatively low prestige of contemporary regional events. These include those currently held in Guadalajara, Cartagena, Mar del Plata, Rio de Janeiro and even Havana, which, as will be discussed in Chapter 6, became the most emblematic Latin American festival during the 1980s and is still held in a high esteem, mostly by left-wing sympathisers. Moreover, the historical difficulties in establishing prestigious festivals in Latin America – capable of competing with Cannes or Venice – demonstrates the role of film festivals in sustaining the film festival world’s hierarchical structure from the beginning. As festival specialist Christopher Holland explains ‘premieres are the stuff of which glitzy events and organizational prestige are made’ (2009, 13). In other words, because unseen films (i.e. premieres) tend to attract a greater number of the more prestigious and influential participants, festivals promote themselves as places where international travellers can ‘discover’ new films and uncharted territories of world cinema.

¹³ Table based on a sample of the Top 40 Latin American Films (listed by admissions in the EU) distributed in the European Union and the US (Box Office Mojo 2010b; European Audiovisual Observatory 2009c; The Numbers 2010). See Appendix D for the full list.

As shown in the case of São Paulo film festival in the 1950s, there is a tension between offering high-quality films already screened at other events – which will not appeal to international travellers – and including premieres of films with a lower-profile – which can raise serious criticisms about the festival programme. However, as not everyone can actually attend a film’s ‘world premiere’, most festivals welcome films that have been screened at other events, especially when they have been praised and awarded, because this allows them to offer a high-quality programme that their participants will appreciate. Spread throughout the calendar year, film festivals form a sequence of events that receive the travelling crowds of films and people, evocatively compared to migratory birds or fish by Elsaesser (2005b, 87). However, with thousands of events worldwide, the image ignores the fact that these patterns of movement are also regulated by the festival hierarchy (see table below as an indicative). Because festivals’ prestige is related to the presentation of quality films otherwise unavailable for their participants (i.e. their role as ‘discoverers’), they establish geographical zones of influence where the most important events use films’ premiere status to boost their profile. In this way, festivals announce different levels of premiere exclusivity in their programmes: international, regional, national or even city premieres. This means that whilst Cannes reaffirms itself as the top of the hierarchy by hosting a film’s ‘world premiere’ in May, Toronto can establish its regional position with the film’s ‘North American premiere’ in September and London can claim the ‘UK premiere’ in October.

Table 3. The Film Festival Calendar

January	February	March	April	May	June
Sundance Palm Springs	Berlin Rotterdam Portland Fantasporto Punta del Este	Thessaloniki Hong Kong Miami Toulouse Bergamo Fribourg Guadalajara Cartagena	Tribeca NY (New Dir) San Francisco Málaga Lleida Buenos Aires	Cannes Seattle Philadelphia Braz. Fest Miami	Moscow Los Angeles Sydney Springfest NY
July	August	September	October	November	December
Karlovy Vary Melbourne Cinemanila Galway Plein Air Paris Brasilia	Locarno Edinburgh Montreal Lima Gramado	Venice Toronto San Sebastian New York Telluride Boston Rio de Janeiro	London Pusan Tokyo Vancouver Warsaw Vienna Chicago Valladolid Biarritz Film Forum Paris Sao Paulo Bogotá Morelia Valdivia	Mannheim Torino Los Angeles/AFM Amiens Huelva Fort Lauderdale Sarasota Belfast Birmingham Belfort Gijón Nantes Mar del Plata	Cairo Camerimage Aspen Havana

While a few festivals reaffirm themselves as leaders within their zone of influence, this encourages a pattern of movement in which films travel from the more prestigious events towards those with a lower-profile in the festival hierarchy. For each festival, the programming of films already screened in rival events would mean accepting their competitors' greater importance as places of 'discovery', thus risking the possibility that international participants instead attend those events in the future. In this sense, it is rather unsurprising that top-tier festivals tend to be very strict with their demands for world premieres which, more often than not, prohibit films' festival screenings in their own country (Quintín 2009, 48). If film producers want to enjoy the greater prestige and media coverage provided by Cannes, as a general rule they must ensure that the film is not screened in other events before May, noticeably missing regional festivals like Cartagena and Guadalajara, both held in March, or the Buenos Aires Festival de Cine Independiente (BAFICI) in April. Indeed, because festivals use films' premiere status to boost their prestige within the hierarchy, one of the main unwritten rules of the festival world is that films tend to move from more to less prestigious events, as will be explored in a number of case studies – most notably *The Motorcycle Diaries/ Diarios de motocicleta* (AR/US/CL/PE/BR/UK/DE/FR dir. Walter Salles 2004) in Chapter 7 and *Japón* (MX/ES/NL/DE dir. Carlos Reygadas 2002) in Chapter 9. By the same token, when a prestigious festival accepts a film that has already been screened at another event, it acts as a very powerful stamp of approval for both the film and the festival which 'discovered' it first. Yet again these are exceptional cases that confirm the rule. In most instances, the hierarchical system of film festivals suggests that while Latin American films with international ambitions need to pass the filtering process of top-tier European and North American festivals, regional events are consigned to a lower-position, either screening high-profile films after they have premiered or selecting films from the entries discarded by prestigious festivals.

Conclusion

As this chapter has argued, film festivals are a complex phenomenon that can be studied from many different perspectives. Through an analysis of the international circulation of Latin American cinemas, this study uses an 'art worlds' approach that takes into account the broad impact of film festivals in this process. In contrast to the traditional film studies' paradigm, this sociological perspective challenges the notion of cinema as an individual artistic filmmaking practice, based on the romantic idea of an 'artist', inherited from the broader artistic field. Instead, it proposes an understanding of both cinema and film festivals based on their collective nature, including their wide-range of participants. Moreover, the study considers festivals to be

on-going cyclical processes involving several steps. In other words, cinema is not limited to film-texts and the shooting stage, but also in relation to the whole supply chain: from development to consumption and reception. In this way, as a collective process, film festivals need to be viewed in relation to the specific reputation that each event has carved for itself throughout the years and the way in which their hierarchical configuration regulates world cinema's international reputations and the actual traffic of films and people from one event to the other.

Analysis of the historical development of the festival circuit reveals that these events are a key locus where ideas about cinema have been both developed and put into practice. This overview permits a better understanding of the dynamics of the film festival circuit underlying the process by which the concept of 'Latin American cinema' gained international currency as a 'new cinema' during the 1960s. Moreover, this historical perspective provides crucial insight into the contemporary configuration of the film festival circuit and the main dynamics underlying its hierarchical structure, particularly festivals' fierce competitive environment, key changes in their programming practices and their focus on film premieres as a one of the key mechanisms that fuels each event's prestige.

Regardless of the apparent chaos reigning among the thousands of events worldwide, the different types of festivals are spread out during the calendar year in accordance with the level of business and media opportunities they can offer. As demonstrated by an overview of the premiering practices of high-profile Latin American films over the past fifteen years, the contemporary festival calendar is dominated by a handful of European and North American events – topped by Cannes and followed by Berlin, Venice, Sundance and Toronto. With these festival dynamics in mind, the following chapter will explore some key issues of international trade that affect the international circulation of Latin American cinemas. Thus, while Chapter 1 aimed to provide a navigating chart for the hierarchical world of festivals, Chapter 2 seeks to explore the international film business hidden behind festivals' cultural flair.

Chapter 2. International Film Trade

Since its creation, the festival circuit – with its hierarchical dynamics and multiplicity of participants – has provided spaces where ideas about cinema can be articulated and enforced in the form of both critical reaction and symbols of recognition. On one hand, this has undeniable consequences for processes of canon formation and historical narration which, as Julian Stringer reminds us, tend to be structured around ‘award-winning’ films (2001, 134–135). On the other hand, the historical practice of screening internationally-targeted films at film festivals has meant that touring the festival circuit has acquired the status of an unquestioned stage in the lives of films and filmmakers. Thus it seems almost ‘natural’ that films undergo a series of festival screenings around the world before they are commercially released or, as it is generally assumed, in order to get international distribution. In addition to the historical rationale underlying the practice, there are important reasons as to why films from Latin America continue to be sent and promoted in international film festivals.

This chapter explores key concepts of the international film trade in order to provide valuable insight into the phenomenon of the ‘festival tour’ as an effective strategy through which films can increase their chances in the global market place. First, it analyses the tendency of festivals and companies to conceal the commercial operations behind those films generally labelled ‘artistic’ or ‘cultural’. The chapter discusses the way in which the presupposed ‘art’/‘commerce’ divide underlies the core categories employed in film studies and criticism such as ‘world’, ‘national’, ‘art’ and ‘independent’ cinema. Through analysis of the case of *Central Station*, it demonstrates how the disavowal of films’ commercial operations not only creates a romantic misrepresentation of the international film industry, but emphasises artistic credentials of films and facilitates their alignment with such categories. Second, the chapter explains the concepts of cultural translation and paratexts, which can be employed as analytical tools in order to help understand the difficulties of international reception which affect film trade.

a. Behind the Film Festivals Scene

As discussed in Chapter 1, film festivals have increasingly become a constitutive part of both contemporary film culture and the international film industry. In the case of Latin American cinemas, the correlation between films’ international success and the prestige of the festival in which they are premiered demonstrates the impact of festivals’ hierarchy in international film marketing practices. In fact, almost invariably, Latin American films with

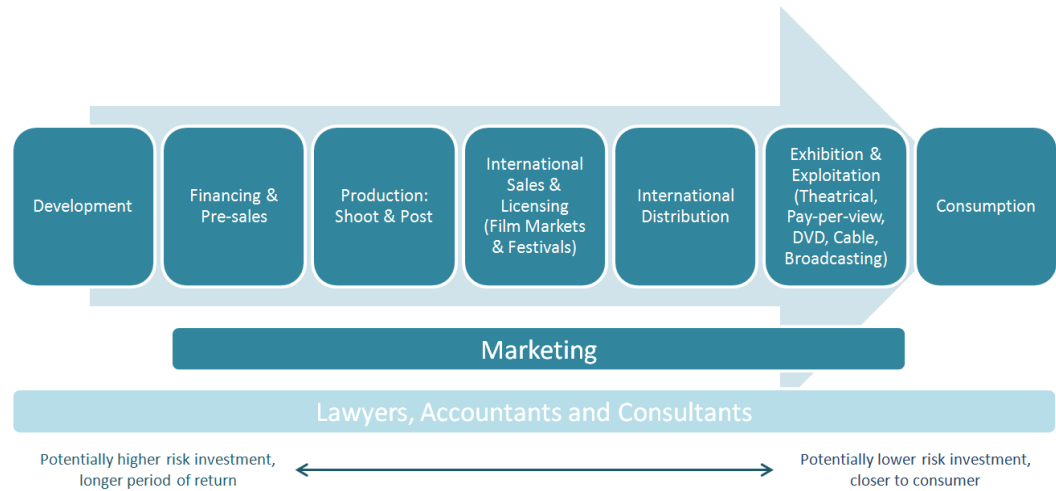
international ambitions undergo several months of successive festival screenings worldwide before they hit international commercial screens (if indeed they do at all). The premise underlying this practice is that festival screenings are necessary in order to get international distribution deals which grant the buyer the right to exploit a film for a certain period of time in either one or several countries. According to this logic, films would be completed independently within the framework of their local film industry. Subsequently films would be sent to international film festivals where they would be seen by foreign distributors who would then acquire the rights for their respective territories. The commonly-held belief is that films are created *somewhere* in a single location – generally where the shooting takes place –, then exhibited in film festivals around the world where they are sold for international distribution. Although there are some exceptional cases that follow such a dynamic – for example, *Nine Queens/ Nueve reinas* (AR dir. Fabián Bielinsky 2000), analysed in Chapter 9 – this is a rather romantic misrepresentation of how the international film industry actually works.

Generally speaking, the different stages in the film value chain of independent productions (see Table 4 below) can be better understood as linked through the increasingly common practices of co-production, pre-sales and through the direct business-to-business relationships between international producers, sales agents and distributors. In fact, few films produced in a completely ‘independent’ way (i.e. without any connections to the international film industry) ever reach foreign screens and they tend to be less successful in international markets¹⁴ (Alvaray 2007, 55; Kanzler and Lange 2008, 11–12). More often than not, there are a significant

¹⁴ International agreements takes different shapes, beyond official co-productions – such as funding support at different stages of development, sales representations, licensing for theatrical, broadcasting, DVD or online distribution, etc. However, co-productions have been clearly identified as a positive factor which increases films’ international circulation and box office success. According to the European Audiovisual Observatory, 64% of Latin American films distributed in the EU since 1996 were made in co-production with an EU partner. Moreover, these films took on average almost six times more admissions than the films produced exclusively by a non-EU country (Kanzler and Lange 2008, 11–12). Likewise, from the sample of Top-40 films distributed in the EU and the US in this thesis (see Appendix D), only six films (15%) were listed in Lumiere Database as products from a single Latin American country: *Nine Queens* (AR dir. Fabián Bielinsky 2000), *City of Men* (BR dir. Paulo Morelli 2007), *Elite Squad* (BR dir. José Padilha 2007), *The Year My Parents Went on Vacation* (BR dir. Cao Hamburger 2006), *The Violin* (MX dir. Francisco Vargas 2005) and *Amores Perros* (MX dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu 2000). However, all of these films had other types of international links: *Nine Queens*, *The Year My Parents Went on Vacation* and *City of Men* were indirectly produced with US investments from Disney’s co-production ventures Patagonik and Miravista in the first two cases and by Fox Filmes do Brasil in the latter. *Elite Squad* is actually listed on IMDb as an international co-production (BR/NL/US/AR) and it had international sales handled by the US-based The Weinstein Company. *The Violin* was supported by Cannes’ Cinéfondation in 2005 and was presented twice in Cine en Construcción in Toulouse (March) and San Sebastian (September) 2005. *Amores Perros*’s international sales were handled by the US-based Lions Gate International.

number of international commercial operations behind the complex process of production and circulation of films labelled ‘independent’, ‘art-house’, ‘auteur’, ‘national’ or ‘world cinema’.

Table 4. The Independent Film Project Value Chain¹⁵



As Peter Bloore explains, the film value chain of independent films requires the collaboration of a complex network of individuals and organisations, which is characterised by a persistent tension between fragmentation and integration, especially during the financing stage (2010, 12). A common strategy to overcome this problem is the establishment of formal and informal relationships with other companies in the chain which helps to simplify the process (Bloore 2010, 13). Likewise, Angus Finney remarks that the process of green-lighting and financing ‘independent’ (i.e. non-Hollywood) films requires the agreement of a considerable number of industry players and frequently involves pre-sales, i.e. licensing a film for local or international distribution before it is a finished product (2010, 37–38). In this respect, Durie *et al.* argue that very often what is sold is actually an idea or a film project that the buyer thinks will be exciting and therefore consumed by a paying audience when it is completed (2000, 5). Therefore, for an independent film to reach foreign screens, it needs to be geared towards two different types of audiences at different steps: first, film professionals – international agents and distributors – and subsequently, cinemagoers in the territories if it has been acquired (Durie, Pham, and N. Watson 2000, 3).

¹⁵ Graphic adapted from ‘Re-defining the independent film value chain’ (Bloore 2010, 8).

Sales of distribution rights can be made almost at any point before or after completion of the film. However, selling a film project early on – on the basis of a production package or a rough cut – helps the project to be market-tested and, as a result, it tends to increase the film's chances in the international marketplace (Finney 2010, 31). A 'pre-sale' means that films already have distribution agreements for certain territories before completion. Thus they could potentially be theatrically released in these markets soon after completion. However, these 'independent' films are invariably promoted through a 'festival tour', that is, a series of festival screenings around the world before they undergo theatrical distribution in art-houses and multiplex theatres.

As the mainstream media generally focus on the final film products when (and if) they become available to their readership, they tend to reproduce – voluntarily or not – a romanticisation of cinema that privileges its cultural elements while omitting the operations of the international film industry. However, many of these international transactions are reported in the trade press – especially in English-language publications such as *Variety*, *Screen International* and *The Hollywood Reporter* – which is a crucial source of information for film professionals' tracking of box office performances and general trends in international markets (Durie, Pham, and N. Watson 2000, 37). In this sense, trade journals serve not only to inform, but to promote a film project among their readership of film professionals worldwide. Therefore, films' international marketing campaign should include consideration of these publications, which devote several pages to film projects which are listed in their different stages of development (Durie, Pham, and N. Watson 2000, 60–63). In this way, receiving coverage from international trade journals becomes part of a standardised marketing procedure and films' presence in those publications can be read as reflective of their international profile – both intended by the producers and recognised by the journals' editors. Unsurprisingly, the pre-production process of films with a clear international vocation is generally well-documented in these sources, whilst those produced in local contexts which target domestic audiences generally go unreported in the international trade press.

Regardless of the undeniable benefits of marketing film projects with the international industry in mind, companies involved in the independent or world cinema trade tend to handle information about their commercial transactions very carefully as it can diminish films' artistic aura and reduce their perceived cultural value. Among other things, companies want to avoid films being perceived as the product of a calculated commercial strategy rather than an artistic or cultural artefact. Therefore, as some insiders have acknowledged, films are frequently acquired before or around the time when prestigious festivals publicise their programming choices, but the deals are only announced during the festival event (Hindes 1998b, 1; L. Smith

1998, 201). In this way, the announcement of the purchase can be used to get media coverage, particularly in film trade journals. However, in actual fact, the two companies will have already reached an agreement beforehand. The confidentiality of these distribution deals – either in the pre-sales format or as direct sales after the film's completion – makes it difficult to know how these arrangements affect the films themselves and their festival screenings in each case. However, the fact that they are considered industry secrets highlights that within the film industry there is a general interest in maintaining the impression that films go to film festivals in order to gain international distribution. A crucial reason for this is to preserve the idea of festivals being, above all, spaces for cultural celebration where additional distribution deals take place, rather than strategic sites for film marketing where sales agents and distributors launch their latest acquisitions.

This process resonates with Pierre Bourdieu's insights into how cultural institutions tend to conceal their economic transactions and interests in order to safeguard their prestige and authority within the cultural field (1980). Thus within the logic in which cultural goods are produced and circulated, the only legitimate form of accumulation of capital and the basis for cultural agents' power of consecrating certain artists over others is their reputation (Bourdieu 1980, 262). Their function as 'symbolic bankers' depends on presenting themselves as acting in a disinterested way which requires an open disavowal of the economic interests associated with art commerce and the masking of their own financial needs and transactions (Bourdieu 1980, 264). Operating under a similar logic, cultural agents related to film commerce – such as festivals and companies that produce, trade and distribute films – tend to conceal the existence and minimise the importance of their economic manoeuvres. In this way, festivals can maintain a symbolic capital (i.e. their prestige and authority) that can be further transferred to the films and filmmakers through the various forms of distinction that they award and allocate (i.e. prizes, sections, prestigious venues, privileged access, jury-memberships, special programmes etc.). At the same time, film companies can profit from the prestige and recognition that festivals grant to some films and filmmakers by legitimating their cultural value through their consecration as 'works of art' and 'artists' (i.e. 'auteurs' or 'authors').

The tendency of festivals to keep their institutional structure and their negotiations with the industry secret has already been pointed out by scholars and festival insiders (Iordanova 2009, 27; Peranson 2008, 40–41; Quandt 2009, 61; Stringer 2003b, 41). While very often films promoted through the festival circuit – and often labelled 'world cinema', 'art-house', 'auteur', etc. – have pre-sold distribution arrangements for key international territories, the romanticisation of the process in which they are traded has become part of the marketing strategy itself. Therefore, by hiding the commercial transactions and interests behind them,

these films emphasize their 'cultural', 'artistic' and even 'oppositional' credentials that are embedded in their understanding and in how audiences relate to them. As Bourdieu explains, within the cultural field there is a presupposed antagonism between 'non-commercial' and 'commercial' objects which underlies the separation between 'art' and 'non-art' and is related to a series of other oppositions such as small/big scale, avant-garde/traditional and classic/best-seller (1980, 268). Because both festivals and film promoters benefit from maintaining festivals' cultural flair, it is not surprising that their dealings and associations remain concealed from the public.

A central assumption behind this misrepresentation of the international film trade is that films are – or should be – essentially artistic or cultural products which serve as a means of expression of their individual creators and their distinct cultures. Following the rationale that Bourdieu analyses, this paradigm is based on the dichotomy of art vs. commerce which has been an essential component of historical definitions of 'national' and 'world' cinemas as functioning in opposition to Hollywood's 'commercial' cinema. Within this binary model – which developed simultaneously to the broader Cold War context, as explained in Chapter 1 – the US film industry is generally taken as a negative example that 'new', 'young' and 'independent' world cinemas should avoid in order to remain on the artistic side of this divide.

The problem with allowing cinema's international commercial transactions to become too obvious is that they may reveal fundamental contradictions in the interpretative framework based on the art/commerce opposition. In other words, it would become apparent that in most cases the production of 'artistic' feature films *also* responds to 'commercial' imperatives, sometimes established from the script and the pre-production stages. Instead of being regarded as the expressive work of individual creators or artists films labelled 'auteur' are usually produced in collaborative environments where directors are not the only creative minds behind them. Furthermore, these films undergo a lengthy process of green-lighting which requires the approval and contribution of a wide range of film professionals.

Furthermore, the increasingly international nature of commercial transactions and filmmaking practices challenges the idea that films come from *somewhere* – a distinct culture and a specific place – or are geared towards domestic audiences only – which are both implicit in the concept of 'national cinemas'. Although a growing number of film scholars have pointed out this globalising tendency as a form of post- or trans-national cinema (Higson 2006; Thanouli 2009), international critics, festivals and audiences continue demanding and supporting 'authentic' films, 'rooted' in local culture. Thus very often these extremely multi-national films – both in terms of production and consumption – are unproblematically labelled with a single

nationality and commonly presented as 'emerging' or 'new' cinemas coming from a remote place – rather than concocted by neighbouring veteran European co-producers.

Finally, a closer look at the operations of the international film industry raises questions about the assumed opposition between Hollywood and the rest of the world. Establishing a clear divide becomes difficult, not only because there are companies of all sizes operating under similar principles worldwide, but also because many US-based companies and Hollywood's specialist divisions – particularly Sony Pictures Classics, Disney's Miramax and Universal's Focus Features – have become instrumental in the production, distribution and marketing of many films labelled as 'independent', 'national' and 'world' cinema.

With the blurring of categories, establishing clear-cut definitions of what concepts such as 'world', 'national', 'art-house' and 'auteur' cinema actually mean becomes a daunting, if not impossible, task. Although it is not the objective of this thesis to redefine these contested concepts which have been at the core of film criticism and academic studies for decades, it is clear that their definition has frequently followed a negative logic similar to the art/commerce divide. In other words, just as 'national' and 'world' cinemas have been traditionally defined in relation to their opposition to Hollywood, 'art-house', 'auteur' and 'independent' cinema have been defined by their presupposed non-commercial and non-industrial characteristics.

For Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee Lim, the notion of 'world cinema' can be understood as analogous to 'world music' or 'world literature', used as a label for 'non-Western' cinema and as a development of the idea of a 'third cinema' linked to oppositional and non-commercial film practices (2006, 3–5). The concept of 'world cinema' has been opposed to US or Hollywood cinema as a response to the US-centrism that dominates not only the world's screens but also academic discourses and historical narratives about international cinema (Dennison and S. H. Lim 2006, 7). As Lúcia Nagib's call for a 'positive definition of world cinema' acknowledges, the term has been defined as 'non-Hollywood cinema' which unwillingly, and rather problematically, reproduces a core-periphery model where Hollywood is still at the centre (2006b, 30). While continuing to advocate for a 'polycentric' approach to world cinema, Nagib *et al.* point out the persistence of the binary model (2011, xxii). This is clearly visible in the notion of 'classical Hollywood cinema' proposed by Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson (1985) which, from the perspective of many film scholars, exists in opposition to 'the "modern" elsewhere' (Nagib, Perriam, and Dudrah 2011, xxi). Regardless of contemporary academic interest in theorising 'world cinema' beyond a negative or binary framework, these efforts demonstrate, precisely, that the art/commerce dichotomy analysed by Bourdieu in relation to other fields of cultural production has also been central to this concept. Noticeably, festivals have been attuned to the increasing currency of the label 'world cinema' using it in different

instances such as the World Cinema festival launched in Montreal in 1977, Toronto's celebrated section Contemporary World Cinema launched in 1983 (Coburn 1983, 6) as well as other World Cinema programmes established in festivals like Edinburgh, London and Sundance since the mid-1990s (British Film Institute 1995; Johnston 1993, 15; Weiner 1996).

In his study of European cinema, Thomas Elsaesser explains that the concept has historically been structured around notions of 'art' and 'auteur' cinema whilst maintaining a common anti-Hollywood stance shared by the different European 'national' cinemas (2005a, 16). Similarly, in many other different contexts, the 'national' has been frequently established as a form of defence of local culture and identity against the pervasive presence of Hollywood 'commercial' cinema. As Stephen Crofts argues, concepts of 'national cinema' have often been tied to strategies that emphasise cinema's cultural value and raise its status to that of other artistic practices that deserve protection and encouragement within each nation-state (2006, 45). Although there are several other forms of local film production – such as political, ethnic or commercial cinemas – that might be included in accounts of 'national cinema', – a crucial strategy of product differentiation for films in international markets has been to establish a clear national identity and reinforce their 'artistic' quality through auteurist frameworks (Crofts 2006, 52–53). As argued in Chapter 1, a crucial, yet overlooked, factor are festivals' programming practices that have reinforced a powerful imaginary related to nations and regions. Between the 1930s and the late 1960s, top European festivals encouraged associations with single nationalities by inviting countries, rather than films. A telling example, discussed in Chapter 5, is the Golden Palm-winner *Black Orpheus/ Orfeu negro* (FR/IT/BR dir. Marcel Camus 1959). Presented as a French entry in 1959, the film and the prize were celebrated without question as a French achievement despite having an undeniable hybrid identity. By awarding the 'French' submission, the festival simultaneously reaffirmed the film's artistic and national credentials. Meanwhile, smaller and medium-size events presented cycles devoted to specific geographies, as in the case of Pesaro or the Latin American Rassegna in Italy, further discussed in Chapter 5.

The concept of 'independent' cinema has gained the most currency in the US since the late 1980s – underscored with the awarding of Cannes' Golden Palm to *Sex, Lies and Videotape* (US dir. Steven Soderbergh 1989) – as an oppositional form of filmmaking that defies Hollywood's big budgets and mainstream narratives and styles whilst emphasising the creative role of the director. As Geoff King questions, *how* independent these films are is a rather uncertain terrain (2005, 1–2). However, *what* they want to be independent from is quite certain: Hollywood and its commercially-driven structures. In fact, in most contexts, when the label – such as in 'independent world cinema' or 'independent national cinema' – is used, it refers to non-

Hollywood or low-budget films which are often taken for granted as being 'more artistic' and 'non-commercial'.

Beyond the commercial benefits of marketing films in relation to labels of nationality and artistic status, concepts of quality and cultural value are at the core of any serious discussion about what 'national cinema' is and which films should be included in the canon that embodies it. Hence many national cinemas have relied heavily on the elusive category of 'art' and the related notion of a romantic 'artist' or 'auteur' that expresses him – or herself – through the cinematic medium. Despite masking the collaborative complexities of filmmaking, the idea of an 'auteur' as the single creative source of a film became instrumental in raising both the status of cinema to 'art' and of film studies to a respectable academic discipline (Dyer 1998, 4; P. Watson 2007, 96–97). As cinema required a better positioning vis-à-vis other forms of mass culture, the strategy was to take on the established art/commerce opposition, embracing its artistic side with most of its theoretical assumptions and contradictions.

Regardless of the complexities that these concepts entail for film scholars, for those in the business of selling, promoting and assessing films, these labels become effective conventions that allow them to communicate the experience a particular film involves to audiences. It is thus not surprising that, despite their profound contradictions, categories such as 'art', 'auteur', 'independent', 'national' or 'world cinema' continue to hold currency across the international film festival circuit, industry and audiences. While festivals and companies aim to maintain and increase the 'artistic' status of their films – defining them as cultural rather than commercial products – they tend to be very cautious with information related to their logistical and economic arrangements. Confidential agreements present, of course, a barrier for outsiders and scholars. Sometimes it is simply impossible to know with absolute certainty when specific films have been acquired and how this affects the film. However, whether distribution deals are in place or not, the general trend remains that films go to several festivals worldwide before they hit commercial screens. Even when films are actually acquired *after* their festival premiere – most frequently this happens (if it happens at all) after the first or second screening at a major festival but not afterwards at smaller audience events – the financial operation does not prevent the film from further touring the festival circuit. In fact, most distributors prefer to delay the commercial release for around one year and coordinate the launching of the film with prestigious festivals on a regional or international level.

b. Concealing Art Commerce

Most of the best known and commercially successful Latin American films of the past two decades have undergone a lengthy festival tour worldwide, despite having already several

international distribution deals in place. In fact, touring the festival circuit as part of a pre-release campaign is a standardised marketing technique which has been used for films such as *Like Water for Chocolate/ Como agua para chocolate* (MX dir. Alfonso Arau 1992), *Central Station/ Central do Brasil* (BR/FR/JP dir. Walter Salles 1998), *The Son of the Bride/ El hijo de la novia* (AR/ES dir. Juan José Campanella 2001), *Y tu mamá también* (MX/US dir. Alfonso Cuarón 2001), *City of God/ Cidade de Deus* (BR/FR/DE dir. Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund 2002) and *The Motorcycle Diaries/ Diarios de motocicleta* (US/DE/GB/AR/CL/PE/FR dir. Walter Salles 2004). However, despite distributors using festivals as part of their pre-release campaign, they tend to hide the international connections and financial transactions behind their films as a strategy to emphasise their artistic and cultural credentials.

An illustrative example – whose reception and festival tour is analysed in detail in Chapters 7 and 8 – is *Central Station*. From the scripting stage, *Central Station* was developed as an international project which received support and advice from international cultural agents as well as acquiring financial commitments with several foreign territories. However, the information circulating in international media about how the film was connected to the global film industry – and the fact it had already distribution deals worldwide – was rather misleading. While it emphasised the image of the film as an independent, low-budget, small, spontaneous and purely Brazilian effort, it tended to overlook the complex multi-national network of expert professionals involved in its development, production, distribution and marketing. Moreover, these omissions included Walter Salles' international profile and expertise before *Central Station* was made. Indeed, running a production company since the mid 1980s, Salles had already worked on several documentaries with European broadcasters, directed the Miramax-production *Exposure/ A grande arte* (US/BR 1991) and co-directed the Portuguese-Brazilian *Foreign Land/ Terra estrangeira* (BR/PT dir. Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas 1995). Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 9, he was presented as a local young filmmaker and a newcomer to the international film industry because this coincided with established expectations on authorship.

Developed with the support of several international institutions and companies, *Central Station* became 'hot' property among major festivals and distributors before its premiere in Sundance in January 1998. In late 1997, at the same time that its world premiere was coveted by both Berlin and Cannes festivals (McDonald 1999, A19), the film was presented to a handful of specialised distributors in New York and Los Angeles who bid fiercely for international distribution rights (Hindes and Petrikin 1998, 5). In December 1997 Sony Pictures Classics – Sony Corporation's art-house division – announced *Central Station's* acquisition for the North American market (Hindes and Petrikin 1998, 5), but the film was not actually released there

until almost a year later, in November 1998 (Box Office Mojo 2010a). Similarly, a month later, in January 1998, Disney-owned Miramax International also made the purchase of most of *Central Station's* worldwide rights public. These would include the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Central and South America (except Brazil), Africa, Eastern Europe, Greece and the Middle East (Hindes 1998a). Yet again the film was only released in key territories such as Germany, France and Italy approximately a year later in December 1998 (European Audiovisual Observatory 2010a). In the UK and Ireland *Central Station* only reached commercial screens in March 1999 (James 1999, 12). However, the distributor Buena Vista International – also owned by the Disney media conglomerate – enabled screenings in several local festivals in 1998, such as those held in Galway (July), Edinburgh (August), Cork (October), London (November), Belfast (November) and Birmingham (November) (see Chapter 8 and Table XX). In other words, despite the powerful US-based international distributors – Sony Pictures Classics and Miramax – being able to release *Central Station* in several international markets as early as January or February 1998, their preferred strategy was to delay the commercial release of the film for about one year and promote it instead in several film festivals around the world.

Both highlighting and fuelling its international profile, *Central Station's* production process was well documented in the international trade press. In January 1996 a script submitted by Walter Salles to the Sundance Institute was one of the five winners of the Cinema 100/Sundance International Award (Klady 1996, 1). A joint initiative between Sundance and several Japanese-based organisations,¹⁶ it awarded US \$10,000 to each of five directors from the U.S., Europe, Latin America, China and Japan, and most importantly it included a pre-sales agreement of US \$300,000 for Japanese broadcasting rights. For Sundance, the one-off initiative was part of a wider strategy of internationalisation that it has pursued since the early 1990s. It included visits from several international advisors to the institute, increasing the festival's focus on foreign cinema, a subsidiary festival in Tokyo and screenwriting workshops in Europe and Latin America¹⁷ (T. McCarthy 1996, 27; Parker 1995; Weiner 1996).

¹⁶ These were the Japanese-based broadcaster NHK Group, the film magazine Kinema Junpo and the Organizing Committee of Sundance Film Festival in Tokyo.

¹⁷ Sundance had manifested a long-standing interest in Latin America specifically since the late 1980s that continued throughout the 1990s. In 1989 it launched an official programme which included support for developing films at Park City workshops, Latin American guests at the institute and screening films in a Latin American section during the festival (Wolin 1990, 17). In July 1993 it sponsored a huge conference of Latin American producers in Toluca, Mexico and strengthened the Latin American programme under the directorship of Patricia Cardoso-Reneau with the financial support of the MacArthur Foundation (Moore 1996b, 59). In 1995 it launched a special jury prize for Latin American films while maintaining a special section for Latin American films called 'Pan-American Highway'. In 1996 it

In March 1996 the winning project was discussed by Salles in a short interview in *Variety*, in which he was introduced in a very positive light as an award-winning young filmmaker who declared to be interested ‘in stories that are at the same time local and universal’ (Hoineff 1996, 56). Before commencing the shooting of the film in November that year, *Variety* published another interview with Salles, in which he explained Sundance’s key role in developing the film beyond the actual prize money, notably helping ‘with rewrites and presales to a dozen markets’ (Moore 1996a, 78). As Salles revealed in another early interview, ‘the \$300,000 prize launched [the project] into the international market place and made it very easy to raise the rest of the budget’ (Cowan 1998, 72). In fact, Sony Pictures Classics executives had the opportunity to read the script during pre-production and had already a longstanding relationship with producer Arthur Cohn (Harris 1998b). However, these international commercial connections – and their effect on the final product – were generally absent from public discussions about the film and its promotional campaign during 1998 and 1999. In this sense, an interesting fact was disclosed by Walter Salles in a later interview where he explained that it was Cohn who – considering its greater market potential – chose a more optimistic ending for the film in which the little boy, Josué, is reunited with his brothers and the possibilities of him finding his father are kept open (Buena Vista Home Entertainment [DVD Extras Central Station] 2002).

In addition to Sundance’s contribution to *Central Station*’s development, in January 1997 the project was also presented in a rough cut in Rotterdam’s co-production market, CineMart (IFFR 2010). Two months later the trade press reported that Swiss producer Arthur Cohn was officially attached to the project along with the experienced lawyer and producer Tom Garvin (Paxman et al. 1997, 47). Strategically tagged as ‘Oscar-winning’, Cohn had effectively won three Oscars and had the prestige of being a long-time collaborator of the renowned Italian neo-realist director Vittorio de Sica (IMDb 2012a). Garvin – who represented *Central Station* in several international negotiations – was a specialist in international film funding having published articles on the subject and serving as a long-time Sundance advisor (Garvin 1998, 80; Sundance Institute 2010c). Furthermore, the project incorporated the veteran French producers Martine and Antoine de Clermont-Tonnerre – through their company MACT Productions – who

replaced this section with a broader one called ‘World Cinema’, although it maintained the Latin American award until 2002 (Sundance Institute 2012; Weiner 1996). In the late 1990s it held producers’ meetings and several scriptwriting workshops in Cuba, Mexico, Brazil and Chile (Natale 2002). Significantly, in April 1999 Sundance backed the first Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema (BAFICI) with a seminar about international distribution and the presence of Sundance’s festival director Geoffrey Gilmore, main programmer Rebecca Yeldham and Walter Salles, who was promoting both *Central Station* and Sundance’s involvement in the film (Hudson 1999a, 52; Quintín 1999, xxi–xxiii; ‘Sin Redford, pero con el alma del Sundance’ 1999).

had been involved in international hits such as *The Return of Martin Guerre/ Le retour de Martin Guerre* (FR dir Daniel Vigne 1982) and *Cinema Paradiso* (FR/IT dir. Giuseppe Tornatore 1988). More significantly Antoine de Clermont-Tonnerre had been working in high ranking positions in the French film industry, including being Culture and Communications Adviser for the French government in the 1970s and heading the French Society of Film Producers (SFP) in the early 1980s (MACT Productions 2000).

Regardless of *Central Station's* high-profile and international connections, the media – most certainly encouraged by press releases and other marketing material – tended to conceal these commercial operations, maintaining the romantic appearance of a ‘small’, ‘independent’, ‘national’ Brazilian production disconnected from the global film industry in general and from US-based companies in particular. Throughout the festival tour, and especially during the Berlin film festival, the media helped to produce and maintain the perception that in contrast with Hollywood’s high-profile productions also in the German competition – such as *Jackie Brown* (US dir. Quentin Tarantino 1998), *The Big Lebowski* (US dir. Joel and Ethan Cohen 1998) and *Wag the Dog* (US dir. Barry Levinson 1998) – *Central Station* was an underdog Brazilian film. *The Guardian's* Derek Malcom, for instance, celebrated the film winning the Golden Bear because of its Brazilian and Latin American origins and even more so, because ‘it beat several Oscar-nominated Hollywood titles’ (1998a, 8). Likewise, the French newspaper *Sud Ouest* praised the award as ‘a victory of David against Goliath’ (‘Un ours brésilien’ 1998). *Central Station* was frequently presented as a ‘low-budget’ film, whose \$3 million budget contrasted with those of Hollywood that generally reach tens and hundreds of millions of dollars (Aufderheide 1998, 77; Geitner 1998). However, the big-US-studio-production/small-Brazilian-independent-film opposition was only partly true. Most reporters failed to mention that an average film production in Brazil costs between US\$ 1.5 and \$2 million (A. M. De la Fuente 1998, 9). Therefore, within the Brazilian context – and, in fact, for a great majority of world cinema productions that do not have the excessive overheads demanded by stars or the investment in expensive settings and special effects – a \$3 million budget is actually a rather comfortable one.

Part of *Central Station's* image as a ‘small’ film coming *from* Brazil was based on maintaining the secrecy about its international pre-production process and its distribution deals worldwide – in place at least from January 1998 – which were frequently presented as a consequence of its critical and festival success. For example, according to an article published in *The Guardian* around the Edinburgh film festival in August that year, the repeated successes at Sundance and Berlin, were followed by another at the Galway Film Fleadh ‘where the film was picked up by major mover Buena Vista for European distribution’ (Flynn 1998a, 10).

Commenting on the presupposed acquisition and the successful reception of *Central Station*, the journalist declared:

That's impressive; what's amazing is that it was made by a Brazilian documentarist, most of the cast and crew had never worked in film before, and one of the leads is a nine-year-old shoeshine boy who had never been to a cinema (Flynn 1998a, 10).

By ignoring the international links of the film's pre-production and distribution agreements, the article reinforced the idea of a purely local film coming *from* Brazil made by an inexperienced crew in an almost miraculous way. In this sense, the 'Brazilianness' of *Central Station* was underscored by focusing on the process of production and shooting in Brazil – specifically location scouting and the casting process of the 'shoeshine boy' (non-professional) actor that plays Josué, one of the main characters (Allen 1999; Coles 1998; Flynn 1998a, 10; Macnab 1999, 12). Therefore media discourses about *Central Station's* production process emphasized its Brazilian identity by linking it to the internationally-established knowledge of filmmaking in Brazil: a difficult low-budget enterprise that entails the use of non-professional actors and location shooting – especially in the mythical *sertão* (i.e. the Northern backlands). Moreover, *Central Station's* local character was further established by the allegorical meaning so skilfully explained by Walter Salles of a boy in search of his father as a metaphor of a country in search of its national identity (James 1999, 12). While, in hindsight, this association seems almost an 'obvious' layer of meaning, the fact that it had initially escaped experienced critics, such as *Sight & Sound* editor Nick James, evidences how films' meanings are the result of a process rather than inherent to the films themselves.

It is important to mention that when the film received nominations for the US Academy Awards Salles was presented not only as a director making films in opposition to Hollywood, but as 'not giving a damn' about the nominations and even as being 'rather anti-American' (O'Sullivan 1999, 9). In other words, relying on the presupposed Hollywood/national cinemas antagonism, Salles' oppositional stance reinforced his and *Central Station's* Brazilian credentials. However, developed with strong support from Sundance and handled worldwide by US-based distributors, the film could hardly claim to be 'anti-American'. In fact, given its international connections, it is actually surprising that the film's Brazilian and Latin American identity was never under discussion, with both Sundance and Berlin festivals and the media labelling it 'Brazilian' without question. Although *Central Station* was an official co-production between Brazil, France and Japan, developed under the close supervision of the US-based Sundance Institute, with support of the Dutch programme CineMart and whose main producers were the Swiss-born Arthur Cohn and the French couple Clermont-Tonnerre, these were facts rarely or

only casually mentioned by reporters and reviewers who invariably spoke of a 'Brazilian' film (Ab Zagt 1998; Aufderheide 1998, 77; 'Berlin film festival: The netherworld' 1998, 86, 'Un ours brésilien' 1998; Dunkley and Hansen 1998; Flynn 1998a, 10; Geitner 1998; Macnab 1998, 10; Malcolm 1998a, 8).

At the same time that the media tended to conceal the complex multi-national operations behind *Central Station*, it helped to reproduce the romantic view that this was an independent low-budget Brazilian film, developed and produced only by the young Salles with an inexperienced local crew, with no international pre-sales or audiences in mind and whose commercial operations came only after its artistic and cultural value was recognised by international critics, festivals and audiences. In other words, by concealing the financial and logistic operations behind the film, the media contributed to its promotion as an essentially 'artistic' or 'cultural' artefact – rather than a commercial production – whose value could be appreciated through frameworks of authorship and national/regional cinema.

c. Cultural Translation for International Audiences

In their seminal book *Global Television and Film*, Hoskins *et al.* argue that when film and television programmes are traded internationally they tend to suffer a 'cultural discount' because of audiences' lack of familiarity with such material. As the authors explain,

A cultural discount for traded programmes or films arises because viewers in importing markets generally find it difficult to identify with the way of life, values, history, institutions, myths, and physical environment depicted. Language differences are also an important reason for a cultural discount, as the appeal of viewing is reduced by the need to dub or subtitle and by the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents (Hoskins, McFadyen, and Finn 1997, 4).

One of the consequences of foreign films' cultural discount is that, at least in English-language territories, they tend to attract fewer viewers than similar domestic products (Hoskins, McFadyen, and Finn 1997, 33). A foreign comedy film or a soap opera will tend to attract a smaller audience than a local production with similar characteristics, production values and star power. Among the evidence supporting this claim there is an increasingly common Hollywood practice of 'remaking' successful world cinema. Cases in point are the Argentine *Nine Queens/ Nueve reinas* (AR dir. Fabián Bielinski 2000) remade as *Criminal* (US dir. Gregory Jacobs 2004) and the Japanese *Dark Water/ Honogurai mizu no soko kara* (JP dir. Hideo Nakata 2002) which was remade under the same English-language title and directed by Walter Salles (US 2005). By remaking films in a more familiar setting, with a well-known cast and in the English-language, US producers try to get rid of the uncomfortable aspects that tend to prevent a film from travelling

beyond the art-house circuit and reaching a wider audience. Although film critics often accuse remakes – frequently with good reasons – of getting rid of the elements that made a film interesting in the first place (Segrave 2004, 183), the fact is that it tends to be an effective strategy to repackage a story into a format that more viewers are able to embrace.

In contrast with the widely-accepted remakes, foreign films tend to occupy a marginal space in the marketplace. Additionally, film sequels and television series which draw upon successful formats and build up a loyal following ‘are less demanding for the consumer, who already knows the characters’ (Hoskins, McFadyen, and Finn 1997, 120). The exact opposite applies to foreign films, which tend to be more demanding for viewers who not only ignore the characters and main plot, but who might not even understand the film’s language or cultural codes. In recognition of this, foreign language films were included in the definition of ‘specialised films’ by the extinct UK Film Council. The concept was part of an institutional attempt to delimit those films eligible to have additional support from the institution due to their educational, aesthetic and intellectual merits (UK Film Council 2002, 6). According to the council, specialised films include, among others:

Foreign language films particularly those that, because of the creative originality of their form or content, challenge audience expectations, emotionally, aesthetically or intellectually (UK Film Council 2002, 6).

In this way, the organisation tacitly acknowledged the cultural discount that foreign films experience in the UK market because of the language barrier and their tendency to challenge audiences’ expectations. Nevertheless, as Hoskins *et al.* note, while the language and cultural differences can act as barriers for international trade, they also provide niche opportunities to cater for some small market segments (1997, 120). In other words, a higher cultural discount does not necessarily mean an insurmountable barrier for international film trade, but result in the tendency of foreign films to operate in niche markets.

A further consequence of films’ cultural discount in foreign markets is the requirement of additional explanations that help international audiences to make sense of a foreign film. Through the comparison of two blockbusters – one Thai and another from the US – Julian Stringer argues that in contrast with the US film, the Thai one requires an extra level of cultural ‘translation’ and explanation for international audiences who are not familiarised with Thai language, culture and cinematic tradition (2003a, 206). Therefore, in order to succeed in foreign markets, a film from Thailand, Brazil or Colombia needs to find ways to compensate for its relatively high cultural discount and provide foreign audiences with clues that help them to engage with the material. Regarding the case of Korean cinema, Stringer clarifies that, in their

search for these clues, audiences in diverse locations tend to draw upon the knowledge they already have, not only of the film, but about more general related categories, such as its genre and country of origin (2005, 96). Indeed, the question of how a film is classified and linked to specific labels becomes of crucial importance for its international reception. As Stringer remarks, the genre with which a film is associated is not a predetermined or an inherent property of the film itself, but the result of a process of classification related to how a film is produced, mediated and consumed (2005, 95). In this sense, Stringer explores how international film festivals provide strategic places of discourse production and negotiation where films are classified and associated with generic categories which can be different than those used in local markets (2005, 99–100). By operating as spaces of mediation and cross-cultural relations, film festivals enable the articulation of discourses that serve as cultural translators and allow foreign audiences to engage with a film through established categories such as genre, national cinema or authorship.

Therefore a crucial reason for distributors investing time and effort into the festival tour of films with a potentially high cultural discount in the global market place is to enable the production of discourses that ‘translate’ and explain these films to international audiences. As Stringer explains, a crucial function of a film festival is to offer ‘frames of reference’ – most frequently through the classification mechanisms embedded in their programmes – that guide the expectations of both festival participants and outsiders (2003b, 136–137) In this way, festivals help to compensate the relatively high cultural discount of ‘unknown’ foreign films because critics and audiences can then link them to the body of knowledge with which they are already familiar. As this thesis argues, in the specific case of Latin American cinemas this existing knowledge has been most frequently related to the political cinema of the 1960s and 1970s and ideals of a realistic social critique that attracted so much praise amongst international and local cultural elite.

Related to this, Brazilian scholar Alexandre Figueirôa has pointed out the persistence of the Cinema Novo paradigm in French critics’ assessment and understanding of contemporary Brazilian national films (2004, 14–15). Thus not only were some films of the 1980s and 1990s rejected by critics because of their lack of commitment to Cinema Novo’s aesthetic and thematic ideals, but others were celebrated precisely because of their association with the renowned Brazilian movement. In other words, more than twenty years after Cinema Novo was positively received by French critics, the movement remained their main reference point for Brazilian cinema. For Figueirôa, the underlying reason for this old-fashioned adherence to a ‘frozen idea about Brazilian cinema’ was the crucial role of French critics in the ‘invention’ of Cinema Novo and the theoretical strategies related to it during the 1960s. Thus,

this invention allowed French critics, until today, to feel they could freely draw upon that strategy as much as they needed to guide any analysis of the films made in Brazil and thus it remained as the paradigm image of Brazilian cinema in France¹⁸ (Figueirôa 2004, 15).

According to Figueirôa, this was precisely the case of *Central Station*, which was praised by specialist magazines such as *Cahiers du Cinéma* in accordance with the same discursive strategies and paradigm of the 1960s (Figueirôa 2004, 15). Thus *Cahiers du Cinéma* satisfactorily assessed *Central Station's* value against the model established by Cinema Novo: 'social realism, the search for a national identity and the *sertão* as a mythical space within the opposition of rural *versus* urban contexts'¹⁹ (Figueirôa 2004, 16). As Lúcia Nagib argues, the film invited comparisons and maintained a constant connection with the Cinema Novo films – especially through its locations, casting, camera movements and symbolic references (2007, 37–44). In fact, the film's positive reception and the high cultural value that French and international critics attached to it, depended precisely on its closeness to the themes and ethical values of the 1960s movement.

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, *Central Station's* reception throughout its festival tour allowed the international co-production to be linked with established notions of national and regional cinema. Therefore, after *Central Station* won Berlin's top prize, the influential *Cahiers du Cinéma* announced 'the return' of Cinema Novo, not only for Brazil, but for the whole region. In this way, the magazine raised expectations of a continental revival which employed the political cinemas of the 1960s as main reference points. In July/August 1998 *Cahiers* introduced this renaissance as follows:

For some time there was no news about Latin American cinema. Sweetened by sentimental and pseudo-poetic stories, devoured by television and *telenovelas*, impressed by a social reality on the verge of implosion, a cinematic tradition appeared to be dead, buried forever. Now it is reborn, benefiting from a political will, economic renewal and a new cinematic landscape. It was time to map the

¹⁸ My translation, in the original: 'Essa invenção permitiu à crítica francesa, até hoje, sentir-se à vontade para convocar essa estratégia o quanto for preciso para guiar qualquer análise sobre os filmes realizados no Brasil e permaneceu como o paradigma da imagem do cinema brasileiro na França' (Figueirôa 2004, 15).

¹⁹ My translation, in the original: 'O realismo social, a busca de uma identidade nacional e o sertão como espaço mítico na oposição meio rural *versus* meio urbano (Figueirôa, 2004, p. 16).

contours, sometimes still changing and uncertain, of this geography of young Latin American cinema²⁰ (Naranjo Sotomayor 1998, 48).

In addition, the article explained that part of the new scenario was that filmmakers were 'forced to fight against the hegemony of Hollywood's cinema'²¹ by reconsidering their relationship with local audiences (Naranjo Sotomayor 1998, 48). For *Cahiers*, this revival was represented by 'young', unsentimental 'political' films which opposed Hollywood dominance by recovering their local audiences. In effect, this was more or less the picture described during the promotion and reception of *Central Station* regardless of the film's not so young or inexperienced director²², its team of veteran international advisors and producers, its openly emotional tone – frequently described as being 'sentimental' (Malcolm 1998b, 8), 'an emotional portrayal' (Dunkley 1999) and even as a 'a three-hankie weeper' (Aufderheide 1998, 77) – and most noticeably, its strong linkages with the US film industry – including support from Robert Redford's Sundance Film Institute and early distribution agreements with Sony Pictures Classics and Miramax International.

Despite some scepticism regarding *Central Station's* worth, after it won top awards at the Berlin film festival in February 1998, the successive festival screenings worldwide allowed for a discussion – both in oral and written format – that contributed to a better understanding of the film as inheritor of a Brazilian filmmaking tradition rooted in the internationally recognised Cinema Novo movement. The process of articulation between the film and the wider discursive category of national cinema is encapsulated in the reaction of *Sight & Sound's* editor Nick James, who failed to recognise *Central Station's* value on his first viewing (1999, 12). However, the persuasive Salles – who had been very actively involved in the promotion of the film – managed to convince the critic in an interview during the London Film Festival of the film's multiple psychological and metaphorical layers of significance. In light of this, James not only

²⁰ My translation, in the original: 'On n'avait plus de nouvelles du cinéma d'Amérique latine quelque temps. Edulcorée par les histoires sentimentales et pseudo-poétiques, dévorée par la télévision et les *telenovelas*, impressionnée par une réalité sociale au bord d'implosion, une tradition de cinéma semblait morte, définitivement enterrée. Voilà qu'elle renaît, profitant d'un volontarisme politique, d'un renouveau économique et d'une nouvelle configuration cinématographique. Il était temps de dresser la carte, aux contours encore parfois changeants et incertains, de cette géographie du jeune cinéma d'Amérique latine' (Naranjo Sotomayor 1998, 48).

²¹ My translation, in the original: 'Contraints de lutter contre l'hégémonie du cinéma d'Hollywood, les cinéastes d'Amérique latine considèrent cette relation avec leur public comme une possibilité de salut' (Naranjo Sotomayor 1998, 48).

²² Born in 1955, Salles was over 40 years old when his third feature film, *Central Station* was launched (1998). Moreover, he had been making television, adverts and documentaries since the early 1980s and had established his production company Videofilmes in 1985 (Ramos and Miranda 1997, 485).

declared *Central Station* 'a touchstone movie for Brazil' but he endorsed the words of the Brazilian critic José Carlos Avellar, who related the film and the overall recovery of Brazilian cinema of the late 1990s to the 'groundbreaking Cinema Novo movement of the 60s' (1999, 12). Reaching an unprecedented level of recognition, *Central Station* was featured on *Sight & Sound's* front cover in March 1999, becoming the first Latin American film that has received such a stamp of approval from the influential British magazine since its creation in 1932. As the case of *Central Station* illustrates, festival screenings enable negotiation regarding films' worth and meanings. Moreover, festivals allow the articulation of discourses which provide clues for interpretation or 'translation' to international viewers who might otherwise neglect or avoid engagement with the 'unknown' foreign material.

d. Paratexts: Drawing on Audiences' Knowledge

The relatively high cultural discount of films in foreign markets and the need for interpretative clues when audiences encounter foreign films are closely related to the process by which consumers select films that they would invest time and/or money watching. As film marketing scholar Finola Kerrigan explains, the consumption of a film entails an inherent risk factor because viewers need to actually see the film in order to assess whether they enjoy it or wish to continue watching it at all (2005, 233). A common strategy employed by viewers in order to reduce this risk is to make decisions based on previous experiences and the associated knowledge they have of the unseen film. Viewers choose to watch a film in accordance with a wide range of elements such as the creative talent (actors, writer, director, etc.), the genre, the distributor, critical reviews, awards, marketing material and personal recommendations (Kerrigan 2005, 233–234). While the influence of each of these elements is highly variable, consumers generally prefer films with features with which they are familiar with.

In agreement with this, Jonathan Gray suggests that, because viewers are generally involved in 'speculative consumption', this extra-textual information has a crucial role in audiences' process of film selection (2010, 24–25). Gray applies the literary concept of 'paratexts' to cinema, stating that all the discourse proliferation accompanying every media text prepares viewers for consumption (2010, 1). As he affirms, paratexts – produced by promoters, festivals, critics, the media or end consumers – are not simple extensions of the texts but they actively help to construct the meaning and management that viewers give to media texts (Gray 2010, 6). Expanding on this, he argues that,

paratexts tell us what to expect, and in doing so, they shape the reading strategies that we will take with us 'into' the text, and they provide the all-

important early frames through which we will examine, react to, and evaluate textual consumption (Gray 2010, 26).

In this way, paratexts help to mediate between films and potential audiences, shaping viewers' expectations and providing frameworks of reference for understanding the texts. A powerful strategy of paratexts is the creation of associations with other films, stars or established genres (Gray 2010, 50–51). By comparing a specific film with others that viewers might be familiar with, marketers and reviewers can easily convey ideas about the type of film they are describing – which presumably is unseen by the potential audiences they address. In doing so, paratexts propose associations between films and actively contribute to the process of genre classification. Paratexts thus construct meaning by emphasising inter-textuality and drawing upon information that audiences might already have. In the case of foreign films, where significant cultural translation is needed, paratexts become a fundamental tool in the process of promoting and understanding otherwise 'unknown' and 'riskier' films.

Although a significant number of paratexts are generated by the industry and those interested in promoting a film for a specific audience, there are also many audience-created paratexts. In this sense, Gray includes both end-consumers and critical reviewers, who supplement and negotiate with the paratexts and meanings created by the industry side (2010, 143–145). However, it is crucial to bear in mind that some paratextual creators are more powerful than others, depending on their ability to reach large audiences. As Gray explains, critics occupy a hybrid space between producers/promoters and general audiences not only because they have privileged access to media products very early on in the supply chain – despite being independent from the industrial marketing objectives – but also because of the greater visibility and impact of their interpretative frameworks (2010, 166). Indeed, as most practitioners and scholars working on the film industry agree, critics do have the power to influence the box-office results of specialised films (Durie, Pham, and N. Watson 2000, 77). Because very often specialised or foreign films do not have an internationally-known cast or crew with which to attract viewers, good critical reviews become crucial for both marketers promoting a film and audiences trying to select a film which they will enjoy. Thus paratexts not only provide frameworks of interpretation in relation to the meaning of a film but also in relation to its value and quality (either positively or negatively).

For Kerrigan, the key element underlying the different aspects that drive viewers' choices is an established relationship of trust between consumers and those individuals or institutions behind films that viewers have experienced before (2005, 233). Drawing on the broader marketing discipline and her specific fieldwork within the film industry, Kerrigan suggests that trust is established when audiences' expectations are consistently met (2010, 111). Therefore,

whether a film succeeds or fails in attracting viewers depends on how well it meets audiences' expectations according to its genre (Kerrigan 2010, 111). The problem with 'unknown' foreign films is that potential audiences might lack the interpretative clues that can attract them to a film that requires a higher level of cultural translation. While the consistent meeting of audiences' expectations can help to create a following (i.e. a relationship of trust), foreign films frequently end up in the opposite situation in which no trust has yet been established. In these cases, audiences simply do not have enough information about a foreign film which, additionally, is in competition with all other films and forms of entertainment in the marketplace.

As explored in more detail in Chapter 8, a powerful strategy offered by the film festival world is the granting of symbols of prestige to films that serve as guarantors of 'quality' recognised internationally. While there are no universally accepted notions of what makes a 'good' film, the assumption is that awards are directly proportional to a film's quality and artistic value. Therefore, when a film is endorsed by prestigious awards and selections the trust which viewers have in the granting institutions may be transferred to the film. Thus, although very often foreign films do not possess many known elements to attract international viewers – as in the case of *Japón*, discussed in Chapter 9, a Spanish-language film with non-professional actors by a first time director and with a difficult narrative – awards and prestigious selections can attract viewers who trust the festivals where the film has been recognised. In this sense, festivals are very effective in providing paratextual frameworks related to a film's quality and artistic value. These will generally affect the treatment it receives from audiences, reviewers and other film professionals. Although prizes and festival selections do not provide a guarantee that audiences will flock to theatres – in fact, a wider consensus involving critics and audiences is required – marketers frequently boast that films' award-winning credentials are proof of their quality. Furthermore, awards tend to increase a film's media presence – depending on the prestige and coverage of the granting institution – which, in turn, increases audiences' awareness and their chances of watching the film if it becomes available subsequently.

Conclusion

Although Latin American films face multiple barriers in international territories, there are niche markets of different kinds of cinephiles worldwide who are willing to engage with the more challenging foreign films. As argued throughout this chapter, international film critics, academics and audiences have dealt with those films through frameworks derived from an assumed opposition between art and commerce, such as 'world', 'national', 'independent' and 'art' cinema. Therefore, as these categories have become ingrained in the definition of cinema

as a culturally and artistically valuable practice, both festivals and companies tend to conceal commercial operations and transactions that could lower the artistic status of the films that they promote. At the same time, by emphasising the artistic nature of the films they deal with, festivals preserve their cultural legitimacy and their authority to consecrate artists and masterpieces in the art world, in other words, their power to 'discover' new auteurs, films and trends.

Discourses surrounding a film's marketing and festival reception tend to rely on a romanticisation of the international film industry in which films come from a single location and international commercial transactions are a consequence of festival screenings. As the case of *Central Station* exemplifies, despite having multiple international connections and a considerable cohort of veteran producers and advisers behind it, the film was successfully promoted as a 'small', 'independent' and 'national' Brazilian production made by a 'young' newcomer to the global film industry. By concealing information regarding its international commercial operations, the film could simultaneously raise its artistic profile and positioned itself within established frameworks of reference that rely on the presupposed art/commerce divide.

Moreover, established categories such as 'world', 'national', 'independent' and 'art' cinema are crucial for the reception of foreign films that are otherwise unintelligible or simply unappealing for international viewers. Indeed, because audiences might be unfamiliar with the material screened, foreign films experience a relatively high cultural discount and require a considerable amount of cultural translation in international markets. Moreover, as audiences viewing choices are most frequently made without actually having watched the films, consumers rely on paratexts or discourses surrounding any film text. Thus, while paratexts affect potential viewers' expectations and interpretive frameworks, film festivals provide spaces where information and discussions about films are abundant. Despite the fact that films very often have distribution deals in place, marketers rely on festival tours where discourses can be articulated as a strategy to reduce their cultural discount, thus preparing international audiences for consumption. Unsurprisingly, in these cases, paratexts produced by both film promoters and receivers – such as critics and audiences – tend to emphasise films' internationally-known elements, especially those linked with ideas of national/regional cinema, quality and authorship. As will be further discussed in Chapter 3, because audiences look for certain clues when selecting films for consumption, marketers need to consider these elements when trying to position a film in the marketplace.

Chapter 3. The Film Marketing Mix

Whilst films tend to experience a relatively high cultural discount in international markets and often require paratexts which provide cultural translation for viewers unfamiliar with the film's cultural codes, audiences base their viewing choices on certain clues, in order to reduce the risk of wasting time and money on films which will not satisfy them. Thus film marketers have identified a series of key elements that affect the way in which potential viewers select films for consumption. Finola Kerrigan proposes the concept of the 'film marketing mix', a set of 'clues which consumers look to in order to select films within the marketplace' (2010, 81). Far from universal, these 'clues' are culturally bound and strongly linked with viewers' contexts and cultural codes. In this sense, marketers tend to emphasise the aspects of a film that may appear familiar to specific audiences. Adapting the concept from the wider literature on marketing, Kerrigan includes in this 'marketing mix' several elements such as acting talent, creative team, script/genre, age classification and release strategy (2010, 82). Drawing on Kerrigan's conceptualisation of a film's marketing mix, and with consideration of a number of case studies, this chapter explores the way in which these different aspects affect the international reception and circulation of Latin American films.

Although the film marketing mix is viewed as a checklist of elements that promoters should take into account when creating a campaign for a specific film, these aspects are considered here because they are central to viewers' selection and consumption of films. Other analysts of the international film industry, such as Angus Finney, approach similar concerns through a list of questions that producers and distributors should take into account when dealing with film marketing (2010, 109). According to Finney's checklist, it is crucial to consider the kind of film, target audience, release strategy, responses to test screenings, strategies to deal with critics and the media and marketing tools available, particularly in relation to the film's Unique Selling Points (USP). As each film is actually a prototype product, this last point is crucial because promoters need to tailor the marketing campaign to each film in the best possible way. Finding the USP, that is, the key characteristic(s) that can attract audiences and help to differentiate a film product in the marketplace is essential for promoters. In this way, the discourses produced by marketing campaigns – and in fact by all other forms of paratexts – tend to emphasise certain elements in a film while overlooking others that are seen to be less important, less appealing or that are neglected altogether. Thus the information released about a film and its filmmakers is carefully handled according to a tailor-made strategy that tries to present them in the most appealing way for specific audiences.

a. Stars and Non-Professional Actors

The role of stars is one of the most studied elements that serve as a point of reference for viewers when choosing or evaluating a particular film (Kerrigan 2010, 82). Although there is no definitive conclusion regarding the exact impact of stars in terms of box office results, both the film marketing literature and film industry practices – such as the exorbitant salaries paid to famous performers or the existence of ‘star power’ rankings in trade journals – confirm that, generally speaking, the casting of recognisable acting talent increases the visibility of a film (Kerrigan 2010, 82–83). However, as Ginette Vincendeau remarks in the preface to her study on French stars, the common understanding of ‘stars’ refers to ‘Hollywood stars’ (2000, vii). In a similar way, in their analysis of the theoretical problem of world cinema, Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee Lim point out this tendency within academic studies of stardom and consider the extent to which theories of stardom developed from the Hollywood context can be applied to world cinema (2006, 11). While Hollywood’s well-established star system dominates the popular imaginary and a significant percentage of academic discourses of stardom, most writers recognise the existence of an international star system beyond the Hollywood context. Examples from this pantheon of stars include French actors Juliette Binoche and Gérard Depardieu, Spaniard Javier Bardem, Chinese Gong Li and Brazilian Sônia Braga (Dennison and S. H. Lim 2006, 11; Kerrigan 2010, 85–88; Vincendeau 2000, vii–viii).

According to Vincendeau, the definition of a star is closely related to audiences’ expectations and recognition. In her words,

By *stars* I mean celebrated film performers who develop a ‘persona’ or ‘myth’, composed of an amalgam of their screen image and private identities, which the audience recognizes and expects from film to film, and which in turn determines the parts they play. The star’s persona is a commodity, positioning the performer and his/her work in the market-place and attracting finance: the name in huge letters on the posters and the marquee (Vincendeau 2000, viii).

In this way, the ‘star’ status of a performer is highly dependent on audiences who celebrate, are familiar with and expect a specific persona both on and off the screen. Moreover, stars’ marketability depends on the ability of specific audiences to identify their name – and image – in the paratexts surrounding the release of a new film.

In the same way in which certain aspects of a foreign film can appear unfamiliar to a certain group of viewers in international markets, the star appeal of a particular performer in a specific context cannot be simply transferred to an international context. A case in point is that of the Mexican comedian Cantinflas during the 1940s and 1950s – discussed in Chapter 5 – who

made audiences flock to theatres across Latin America but was generally disregarded in France and especially during the first Cannes film festival after the Second World War (Pilcher 2001, 132–134). Foreign actors are thus subjected to a phenomenon similar to that of cultural discount, because audiences in international markets are not familiar with their previous performances and their off-screen persona.

As a consequence of the difficulties in exporting stars, only a few non-US actors become recognisable beyond the domestic sphere (Kerrigan 2010, 85). In effect, only a small number of performers from the Latin American context are recognised as stars by international audiences. Contemporary examples include the Mexicans Salma Hayek – known for films such as *Desperado* (US dir. Robert Rodríguez 1995) and *Wild Wild West* (US dir. Barry Sonnenfeld 1999) – and Gael García Bernal – recognised for films such as *Amores Perros* (MX dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu 2000), *Y tu mamá también* (MX dir. Alfonso Cuarón 2001), *The Motorcycle Diaries* (AR/US/CL/PE/BR/UK/DE/FR dir. Walter Salles 2004) and *The Bad Education/ La mala educación* (ES dir. Pedro Almodóvar 2004). While the Hayek case can be viewed as the continuation of a long tradition of Latino actors working in Hollywood (see for instance López 1993; Ramírez Berg 2002; Rodríguez 2008), the case of García Bernal is rather atypical, since he has built a career linked to films generally labelled as ‘independent’ or ‘world cinema’. As a reporter commented in the prologue to García Bernal’s English-language biography, ‘he enjoys declaring that the closest he has come to making a movie in Hollywood was with the *Babel* shoot in Tijuana, on the opposite side of the US-Mexican border to Tinseltown and California’ (Soutar 2008). However, it is significant that, rather than climbing from local to global recognition, García Bernal’s film acting career was built from the start in close connection with prestigious international film festivals. From his breakthrough in *Amores Perros* – premiered during the Critics’ Week at Cannes in 2000 – and *Y tu mamá también* – launched at Venice’s main competition in 2001 – García Bernal has been a regular at key European events. His presence has been particularly notable at Cannes, where several of his films have premiered in the main competition, including *The Motorcycle Diaries* and *The Bad Education* – both screened in 2004 – as well as *Babel* (dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu) in 2006 and *Blindness* (BR/CA dir. Fernando Meirelles) in 2008. Furthermore, the Critics’ Week screened García Bernal’s directorial debut *Déficit* (MX) in 2007. Through both his work in high-profile international films by renowned directors and careful management of his off-screen persona, he has become one of the cultural references that international audiences may recognise/may use when evaluating a film. In spite of not having launched a career in association with the international marketing muscle of Hollywood studios, García Bernal has relied on the more prestigious, but equally foreign, power of the film festival circuit in order to craft his reputation as an international star.

In addition to these few exceptional cases of Latin American stars, there is a certain tendency, in internationally-renowned Latin American cinema, to cast from only a small pool of actors that become recognised in both the domestic sphere and specialised international circles. That is the case with actors such as Argentines Ricardo Darín and Inés Efrón, Peruvian Magaly Solier, Uruguayan Daniel Hendler and Brazilians Wagner Moura and Fernanda Torres. While their names and off-screen personas might not be widely perceived by international audiences in general as those of 'stars', their frequent casting in films intended for foreign markets suggests that their previous performances are at least recognised in international film industry and festival circles. However, these are isolated cases that confirm the general difficulties for non-US (or native English-speakers) in becoming international stars.

Taking this into account, the well-established practice of including non-professional actors in Latin American films intended for international markets can be understood as a choice based not only on aesthetic grounds but also the dynamics of international film commerce and the assumptions of international viewers. If casting professional performers does not add much to the marketing potential of a film in international territories, a good – and usually cheaper – alternative is to work with non-professional actors. This can boost other aspects of the film, particularly those expected by international audiences in Latin America films, such as 'authenticity' and 'realism' as some scholars have highlighted (Nagib 2006a, 97; Stock 1997, xxiii–xxviii). Moreover, as the use of non-professional actors has been historically associated with the social, documentary and political filmmaking practices of the new Latin American cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, maintaining this practice becomes a very powerful strategy to establish a kinship with this internationally renowned cinematic tradition. Thus paratexts regarding Latin American films with mixed castings frequently tend to overlook the work of professional actors, while emphasising the use of non-professional actors as proof of the film's realism and 'authenticity'.

A case in point is the Brazilian film *City of God* which had a large cast of young non-professional actors from the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro. Nonetheless, it also included several trained actors (Meirelles 2005, 15). Significantly, two of these actors were from São Paulo: Matheus Nachtergaele and Alice Braga who played the gang leader 'Carrot' – 'Cenoura' – and Angelica, the love interest of the main character 'Rocket' – 'Buscapé' in Portuguese. An experienced performer, Nachtergaele had worked in several TV series in Brazil as well as films with an international profile such as *Four Days in September/ O que é isso, companheiro?* (BR/US dir. Bruno Barreto 1997), *Central Station* (1998), *Midnight/ O primeiro dia* (FR/BR dir. Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas 1998) and *A Dog's Will/ A auto da compadecida* (BR dir. Guel Arraes 2001). Meanwhile, Alice Braga had already been working on TV commercials and had

started pursuing a career on Brazilian television. She came from a family of actors and is the niece of Sônia Braga, who became the internationally famous Brazilian ‘bombshell’ of the 1970s and 1980s and is one of the best known Brazilian performers abroad (Dennison 2006, 135–143; Ramos and Miranda 1997, 64–65). Despite Nachtergaele’s significant role in the film and Alice Braga’s prominent appearance in the poster and marketing material of *City of God*, they were both unknown in foreign territories and their performances went completely ignored by commentators from international media such as *Variety* (Rooney 2002a, 25–26), *Screen Daily* (Johnston 2002a), *Sight & Sound* (Said 2002, 14) and *Film Comment* (Leite 2002, 10–11). However, none of these reporters failed to mention *City of God*’s use of non-professional actors. For the most part they gave the impression that the characters were ‘all played by non-professionals from the Brazilian *favelas* where the film was shot’ (Said 2002, 14).

The example of *City of God* demonstrates the difficulties for non-US performers in building up a reputation in international territories. While the rising career of Alice Braga in films such as *I Am Legend* (US dir. Francis Lawrence 2007) and *Predators* (US dir. Nimród Antal 2010) suggests that US studios’ casting practices are opening up to foreign actors, it also confirms the barriers for performers trying to establish an international career outside Hollywood and its powerful marketing strategies. Moreover, the case of *City of God* indicates that international audiences expect – and prefer – the use of non-professional actors in Latin American cinema. Therefore films that are promoted internationally on the basis of their ‘authenticity’ or their realist, social and political engagement can, in fact, benefit from the lack of well-known performers as this tends to reaffirm foreign audiences’ established knowledge and expectations about this type of film. In other words, the casting of non-professional actors instead of recognised stars can become an asset and a selling point for Latin American films wanting to emphasise their ‘authentic’ and ‘local’ credentials.

b. Auteurs and Other Non-Actor Stars

In addition to the use of well-known acting talent as a way of attracting audiences, Kerrigan’s film marketing mix expands the concept of ‘star’ to encompass other members of the creative team such as the director, cinematographer, scriptwriter, composer or producer who may become the main attraction of a film (2010, 88–90). Thus films can be marketed on the basis of other celebrated crew members recognised by audiences, whose names can help to raise a film’s profile. In this sense, ‘non-actor stars’ are particularly important for ‘more artistic films, for films without recognisable actor stars or for films differentiating themselves from the norm within a particular genre’ (Kerrigan 2010, 90). Concepts of authorship have historically been linked with the promotion of cinema as an ‘art’. Therefore, drawing on the credentials of a

film's creative personnel is a very effective way of emphasising its artistic and unique aesthetic qualities and appealing to those cinephile audiences that identify themselves as 'more sophisticated' than those who respond to actor stars (Kerrigan 2010, 90). For foreign films frequently intended for these niche audiences, associating such films with recognisable non-actor stars such as the director or scriptwriter becomes a necessity. Whilst there are few Latin American performers with an international star status, almost all Latin American films aimed at the international market use members of their creative crew – especially the director – as part of their promotional campaign.

Although there are some cases in which the contribution of the cinematographer, scriptwriter, composer or producer becomes part of a film's marketing strategy, the most common strategy is the positioning of the director as the main creative mind or the 'auteur' of a film. In this way, the director becomes a non-actor star as his or her name can successfully draw attention to a film in a similar way that star performers can attract audiences. Just as some potential viewers might feel attracted – or discouraged – from a film because of the screen appearances of Ricardo Darín, Fernanda Montenegro or Gael García Bernal, others will select – or avoid – a film because the director's name attached to it is Pablo Trapero, Alejandro González Iñárritu or Fabián Bielinsky. However, as in the cases of star actors, this strategy depends on audiences' expectations and recognition of these non-actor stars.

In this way, notions of authorship are not only a tool for film critics and academics, but also for film promotion and, as explored in Chapter 9, for the positioning of Latin American films in international arenas in particular. In fact, this marketing practice draws precisely upon the generalised understanding of the director as an 'auteur' who establishes a consistent style that is inscribed in the film texts which can be recognised by audiences (Kerrigan 2010, 88). As several scholars working on authorship have pointed out, the notion of directors imprinting their personal vision on films and therefore becoming the film's 'auteur' has become ingrained in academic and critical circles as well as in public culture (Corrigan 2003, 96; C. Grant 2000, 101; Sellors 2010, 2; Wexman 2003, 1). Although most approaches to authorship have emphasised its role as a form of expression detached from marketing and economic concerns, the theories and practices of authorship have been historically associated with 'changes in industrial desires, technological opportunities, and marketing strategies' (Corrigan 2003, 96). Moreover, the increasing currency of theories of authorship since the 1960s have addressed the industry's concern of raising the profile of cinema as an 'art', vis-à-vis other less-prestigious mass media such as television (Corrigan 2003, 97). As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, this rhetoric obeys a logic in which the reputations of artists and work reinforce one another (Becker 2008, 18–22) and is based on the presupposed art/commerce divide underlying well-established

definitions of art (Bourdieu 1980, 268). As Gray argues, emphasising a director's auteurist status is an effective way of creating an artistic aura around a film which then tends to be received as a 'work of art' rather than a 'commercial' product (2010, 81–82). At the same time, a higher artistic status guarantees a film a distinct framework of reference and generally better treatment from different agents in the film supply chain. In other words, drawing attention to the romantic figure of the director as an 'artist' helps to elevate a film's status to the level of more established cultural forms, such as literature or painting, and can increase its potential in the marketplace.

In line with current film marketing practices, Corrigan notes the rising importance of the 'auteur' as a 'star' from the 1980s and 1990s in 'a commercial performance of *the business of being an auteur*' (2003, 98). In addition to being a tool for the analysis and categorisation of film texts, 'auteurs' have been increasingly associated with the public personas of the relatively few film directors who have gained broad recognition. In this sense, the critical concept is closely connected to marketing strategies that manage audience reception by identifying the potential cult status of a director. While Corrigan criticises the celebrity status of the 'auteur' as almost turning the text into an accessory (2003, 100), from Kerrigan's film marketing perspective, the director star is meaningful for a potential audience precisely because it effectively conveys a certain style and film quality (2010, 88). In the same way that actor stars tend to be linked to certain genres and types of films, directors establish a certain style and reputation that create a set of expectations among audiences and can help to build up a following. Because of the assumed status of a director as a film 'auteur' in cinephile circles and the emphasis that marketers put into this association, they become what Nuria Triana-Toribio calls 'auteur labels' or 'directores mediáticos' in the Spanish context (2008, 262). Thus the director's name and image becomes a recognisable brand embodied in his or her public persona. As a result, the director becomes the main PR representative of the film, giving interviews, attending Q&A sessions, commenting on film for a DVD's extras and keeping online-audiences informed about *his or her* creative process.

In this way, the international reception of a film regarded as 'art-house' or 'world cinema' becomes inextricably linked with the reputation of its director, who is invariably seen as the main creative force behind the film. At the same time, this auteur label becomes a synonym for a type of film, one that both critics and audiences come to expect from films by a specific director. However, as Kerrigan observes, a potential problem is that, once a director's name has been associated with a certain style, it creates expectations of continuity (2010, 89). Therefore deviations from this aesthetic or thematic pattern can disappoint the director's followers without attracting new viewers. As further discussed in Chapter 9, this was arguably the case of

Fabián Bielinsky's second film which was highly criticised for, among other reasons, being so different to his successful first work. Moreover, as argued in Chapter 1, film festivals' reputation as places for cinematic discovery and artistic recognition make the most prestigious events powerful machines that can consecrate directors as 'auteurs' and films as 'masterpieces'. However, the potential pitfall is that rejection from those events can also mean that both film and director come to be considered of a lesser artistic status. Regardless of these risks, the cult of the director and the necessity to promote films by establishing an 'auteur' reputation seems more standardised than ever and has become the rule, rather than the exception, in Latin American cinema.

c. Generic Categories: National/ Regional Cinema

Another crucial element for audiences' and marketers' consideration is the film's genre. Rather than a fixed category, the genre a film is associated with should be understood in connection to the script and as a flexible entity that changes in accordance with the context (Kerrigan 2010, 92–96). In fact, as recent scholarship in the field has highlighted, genre classification is an on-going process contingent upon frameworks of production, circulation and consumption (Chapman, Glancy, and Harper 2009, 117; Jancovich et al. 2003; Stringer 2005). However, from a marketing perspective, it is essential to identify a film's genre in order to position it in the market and target a specific audience (Kerrigan 2010, 92).

Although definitions of genre are contested within film studies, promoters need to classify films for viewers and give them an indication of the type of experience that a specific film entails (Kerrigan 2010, 95). Whilst for audiences the genre is generally a very clear indicator of the type of film they can expect, failure to associate a film with a genre that attracts the right viewers – i.e. those who will be satisfied with it – can be a serious marketing problem which affects box office results. As Jonathan Gray explains, genres function as very powerful paratexts because they tend to have a widespread or dominant definition which are shared by different agents of films' cycle of production-consumption, including industry professionals, critics, policy-makers and audiences (2010, 51). Thus marketers draw upon established genres and other films known by audiences which can serve as reference points. As a film becomes associated with certain groups of films, it becomes part of an intertextual network of films that are broadly understood to possess similar characteristics. These associations imply that the film possesses certain characteristics which bring with them a set of expectations and analytical frameworks.

In her study on Iranian cinema at international film festivals, Azadeh Farahmand argues that other categories such as 'national cinema', 'film movements' and 'auteurs' could be

understood in a similar way to genre as they perform 'a generic function by evoking a unified range of qualities that typify the films that form the category' (2010, 264–265). Because these concepts cluster films around certain common characteristics, they function as generic categories, which are not only useful as critical strategies for interpretation, but as effective film marketing labels that affect expectations, meanings and interpretative frameworks applied by viewers to films. In the case of national cinemas in particular, as Farahmand explains, festivals promote films using a mechanism similar to that of studios by which they simultaneously emphasise the novel and traditional status of the films (2006, 2). Thus, in the discourse shared by festivals, critics and scholars, the frequent referencing to new national cinemas – such as in 'new Argentine cinema' or 'new Brazilian cinema' – emphasises films' originality by labelling them 'new' whilst reinforcing their adherence to an established national cinematic practice.

As generic categories, national cinemas draw on audiences' prior knowledge of a specific territory and other films widely understood to be part of a cinematic tradition. Although this involves a series of characteristics that somehow typify each national cinema, like genres 'national cinemas', are not fixed categories but are in a constant and complex process of re-definition. Significantly, the different parties that struggle for and negotiate films' incorporation into narratives of national cinema are not limited to local boundaries but also involve international agents. In this sense, Farahmand expands on Benedict Anderson's argument of the nation as an 'imagined community' to one that is also constituted and processed from abroad (2006, 16). From a similar perspective, Julian Stringer's analysis of Korean cinema demonstrates the way in which a film presented in generic terms for a local audience 'is then "de-genred" and indigenised in overseas markets' (2005, 100). Thus, as a contingent process, genre classification often entails discrepancies between local and foreign reception.

As will be discussed in the following chapters, the development of the idea of Latin American cinema reveals that these categories are not limited to the cinemas of nation-states, but work similarly for other geo-cultural associations. While there are certain characteristics that have become ingrained in the 'Latin American cinema' brand, it is clear that this definition is neither fixed nor limited to local or regional cultural agents. In line with both Farahmand and Stringer, the Latin American case highlights the crucial role of the Euro-American-dominated festival and critical world in defining national or regional cinemas from peripheral or non-Western countries. At the same time that the idea of Latin American cinema has been developed with the participation of international festivals and critics, as a generic category it serves as an umbrella-label for regional films in international markets precisely because it is an effective convention to communicate with foreign viewers.

However, this mechanism is a double-edged sword. On one hand it facilitates the international circulation of Latin American films which can be understood through a national/regional framework. On the other hand, it tends to exclude the films that do not comply with the ideas and expectations of international festivals, critics and audiences about that generic category. In this sense, one of the overarching assumptions about national cinemas is that in most cases they are (or should be) limited to art cinema, ignoring popular, commercial or other forms of filmmaking within the same national boundaries. This tendency is not only visible in the case of Iranian cinema, as Farahmand argues (2006, 12), but also in most narratives dealing with national Brazilian or Mexican cinema, in which these countries' lengthy commercial filmmaking traditions have been ignored. This is underlined by the fact that scholars who do work on this type of cinema remark on their unusual interest in addressing the 'popular' as in the case of *Popular Cinema in Brazil* (Dennison and L. Shaw 2004) or including 'commercial cinema' as part of *Mexican Cinema's* comprehensive historical review (Mora 1989, xii).

While narratives of national cinema require criteria of inclusion/exclusion, these are very often based on the art/commerce divide that presupposes the quality of 'art' cinema and the lack of cultural value of 'commercial' films. As explained in Chapter 2, this opposition is ingrained both in film criticism theories and marketing practices that aim to raise films' artistic status by concealing their commercial and industrial operations. As the case of *Central Station* showed, at the same time that paratexts neglected its multi-national connections, especially those with the negatively-perceived US film industry, they emphasised the film's Brazilian credentials, its associations with the highly-regarded Cinema Novo movement and its meaningful reflections about Brazilian national identity.

An interesting and comparable case is the international co-production *The Motorcycle Diaries/ Diarios de motocicleta* (AR/US/CL/PE/BR/UK/DE/FR dir. Walter Salles 2004) which was successfully promoted as the archetypical Latin American film, despite its minimal links with a unique national cinema. A truly multinational production, the Spanish-language film presented the Mexican heartthrob Gael García Bernal as the charismatic Argentine-born left-wing leader Ernesto Che Guevara in his travels across the continent during the early 1950s before he became involved in the Cuban Revolution. Filming took place in several Latin American countries and involved a mixture of professional and non-professional actors, including the Argentine Rodrigo de la Serna as Guevara's travel companion, Alberto Granados. It was directed by the Brazilian director Walter Salles from a script written by US-based Puerto Rican-born José

Rivera, with cinematography by Frenchman Eric Gautier and music by Argentine Gustavo Santaolalla and Uruguayan Jorge Drexler. Heavily pre-sold,²³ it relied on a complex combination of international producers and funding sources – including Robert Redford’s production company South Fork Pictures and UK’s Film Four.

In accordance with Cannes’ auteurist-based policies, the film was deemed Brazilian like its director and thus its ‘domestic’ commercial release in May 2004 was not an impediment for its screening at the festival a few days later. However, in Brazil the Spanish-language film – which was not even set in Brazil – was generally regarded as a ‘hispanic’ success (‘Diários de motocicleta lidera ranking hispânico no Brasil’ 2004, 1) nominated as Best Foreign film by the Brazilian Film Academy (IMDb 2012c). Tipped to be an almost guaranteed winner, *The Motorcycle Diaries* was announced as a US production that would be competing in the Latin American festival in Havana (Agence France Press 2004b). However, a few days before the event began, the film was withdrawn from the competition apparently to avoid the controversy of an US production about the revolutionary icon collecting the top award at the socialist festival (Agence France Press 2004a). From the perspective of some Argentine critics and journalists, *The Motorcycle Diaries* was considered a national achievement, given the nationality of the main characters, the use of some of the locations and significant number of the cast and crew members (‘La avanzada argentina’ 2004; Oliveiros 2005; Scholz 2004). Similarly, it was accepted as a domestic film by the Argentine Film Critics Association and the Clarín Awards (IMDb 2012c). However, for other local scholars and critics the film was an international co-production with minor Argentine participation (Monteagudo 2004; RECAM 2005).

The difficulties in associating *The Motorcycle Diaries* with a single national cinema is shown by the refusal of the US Academy Awards to accept the film as the official submission of any of its co-production countries for the Foreign Language category (Kay 2004). However, because of US participation in the film, it was permitted nominations for its screenplay and awarded an Oscar for its original song (IMDb 2012c). For most critics, its hybrid cultural background and unclear nationality was not a relevant issue in their discussions and assessment of the film (see for instance Bradshaw 2004; C. Brown 2004; Macnab 2004, 72; Tobin 2004, 86). As *The New York Times’* A. O. Scott suggested, the film was generally seen as a celebration of ‘a pan-Latin

²³ Before shooting the project was taken to the Cannes market in May 2002, where Film Four International reported sales to several international territories including Germany (Senator), Japan (Nippon Herald), Italy (BIM) and Portugal (Lusomundo) (Minns 2002a). By December 2003 the film had obtained additional distribution deals for the UK (Pathé UK), the US (Miramax), Greece (Rosebud) as well as the Netherlands and Benelux (Cinelibre/ Cineart) (‘Film Four’s Motorcycle Diaries shoots across Latin America’ 2002; Goodridge 2003; Minns 2002c).

American identity that transcends the arbitrary boundaries of nation and race' (2004). Thus the combination of Brazilian, Mexican and Argentine talent was seen as a metaphor for and a tribute to Guevara's political ideals for the region. Paradoxically, a film that could not be embraced in any specific Latin American country as 'local' became a big success in other international territories as a result of its well-crafted representation of a pan-Latin American identity.

d. Age Classification

An important, but often overlooked, aspect of international film trade is the process of censorship and age classification that films frequently undergo in foreign territories (Kerrigan 2010, 96). Rating systems are country-specific and, in fact, strongly linked to the particular socio-cultural context and film industry dynamics of each territory in which a film is released. Therefore, rather than being analysed from the broad perspective of the film festival world, they need to be understood in relation to local frameworks. In this sense, they are beyond the scope of this thesis and would require a more detailed study of how the rating systems affect the circulation of Latin American films in specific countries. However, it is possible to offer some general insights based on the research about Latin American films in the UK and the US undertaken for this project.

Firstly, the age classification depends on specific classificatory bodies that operate in each country and have different rating systems. For instance, in the UK the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) grades film using five main categories: universal (U), parental guidance suggested (PG), suitable for twelve years and over (12 and 12A), suitable for fifteen years and over (15), and suitable only for adults (18 and R18) (BBFC 2012). While classification by the BBFC is a compulsory prerequisite for a film to be released in the UK, in the US the rating system is voluntary and it is undertaken by the major studios alliance, the Motion Pictures Association of America (MPAA) – mostly as a suggestion for parents and theatre owners. Films can thus be distributed in the US as non-rated (NR) or un-rated (UR). The MPAA has five categories which are comparable to those of the BBFC: general audiences (G), parental guidance suggested (PG), parents strongly cautioned for material not suitable for children less than thirteen years (PG-13), restricted to seventeen year olds unless accompanied by an adult (R) and no-one under seventeen admitted (NC-17) (MPAA 2011).

In general terms, the rating of Latin American films in both the UK and the US markets does not change much as most films receive an over-15 or over-17 (R) classification respectively. From a sample of 75 feature films produced by at least one Latin American country and distributed in the US or the EU²⁴, there were 51 rated by the UK's BBFC. A clear majority of them (89%) was rated inappropriate for children, but suitable for 15-year olds (65%) and adults (24%). From the sample, 70 films were released in the US where 47% were rated R and 39% were distributed unrated. In other words, 88% of films were restricted to adults or distributors were simply not interested in younger markets in which films' ratings are a matter of concern for parents. According to censoring bodies in the UK and the US, Latin American films are not suitable for children and young teenagers.

In fact, it is tacitly understood that Latin American films in foreign territories – at least in the UK and the US – are geared towards adult audiences. Thus discussions about films' rating are generally absent from the paratextual discourses produced by both marketers and critics in international contexts. In contrast, films' age classification in domestic markets can vary considerably or be subjected to controversy and debate. An example of this is *Y tu mamá también* which received, without major objections, a rating of 18 in the UK and R in the US. However, there was a great deal of controversy when the film was given a similar grading for its domestic release in Mexico ('Cuaron causes stink over Mexican ratings system' 2001). Other cases that illustrate the different ratings in international and local markets are *Central Station* and *Nine Queens*, which both received a classification of 15 in the UK and R in the US, while in Brazil *Central Station* was classified as suitable for all ages (livre) and in Argentina *Nine Queens* was rated suitable for over 13 years-old (SAM-13). While a more detailed study of the systems of classifications in each country is required in order to draw more solid conclusions on this aspect, this brief comparison suggests a general demographic trend towards a niche adult consumption of Latin American films in foreign territories. Moreover, the expectation that Latin American films are intended for adults highlights the general resistance faced by regional producers of films for children, families and teenagers when trying to position their products in international markets.

²⁴ The sample was obtained by combining information from Box Office Mojo (1980-2010) for the US and the database Lumiere (1996-2010) from the European Audiovisual Observatory. See the full list of films in Appendix D.

e. Release Strategy

A decisive factor in a film's marketing campaign is the release strategy which should be tailored to the type of film and its potential audience in a specific territory (Kerrigan 2010, 99). Like age classification, this is a country-specific process and a topic that would benefit from comparative studies in order to have a full understanding of how Latin American films are actually distributed in specific countries. Although such a study falls beyond the scope of this project, it is possible to discuss some of the general issues that affect the release strategies of Latin American films in foreign territories – especially in Europe and North America – based on key academic sources, case studies and the information provided by insiders and trade journals. Moreover, as festival screenings have become a standardised pre-release marketing practice, knowledge of the logics and practices informing films' release patterns helps to further clarify the dynamics of the film festival tour.

Most frequently, distributors are responsible for the advertising, promotion and branding involved in a film's release (Hoskins, McFadyen, and Finn 1997, 57). Therefore, once a distributor has acquired a film's rights for one or more territories, it will decide on both festival and theatrical screenings. As several scholars explain, within traditional (i.e. non digital or online) distribution, films follow a windows system in which they are successively released in different formats or windows, starting in cinemas and continuing to DVD/Blu-Ray, pay-per-view channels and broadcast television (Finney 2010, 4; Hoskins, McFadyen, and Finn 1997, 124–125; Kerrigan 2010, 98). For Hoskins *et al.* the window system is a form of price discrimination that maximises the profits for each complementary format. Although most feature films earnings come from home viewing on DVD/Blue-Ray, a successful theatrical release serves as a promotional tool as it tends to boost viewings in the rest of the windows (Hoskins, McFadyen, and Finn 1997, 124–125). As Finney explains, there are also historical reasons for the development of the idea of 'cinema' for films going first to theatrical screenings (2010, 4). In fact, different media have traditionally been intertwined with specific exhibition modes: while cinema is associated with public performances and 35mm copies on the big screen, other less-prestigious formats such as television, video or DVD are linked to small screens and private viewings. Thus theatrical screenings are also an effective strategy for raising the profile of the media content to the higher status of 'cinema' rather than 'TV film' or 'direct-to-video'. Related to this is the different coverage that the media gives to films distributed theatrically as opposed to those released for home viewing. This means, for instance, that whilst prestigious specialist magazines give some coverage to the majority of cinema releases, they tend to ignore those films directly distributed in other formats.

In general terms, there is a direct correlation between the number of theatrical screens in which a film is offered and its box office earnings. However, as Kerrigan argues, this is an oversimplification because in order to make a profit, distributors need to balance the prints and advertising (P&A) investment against the potential audience of a film (2010, 98). In other words, a film with a smaller P&A budget can be more profitable if the screenings are well attended than a wider-released film with an insufficient audience. Therefore the release strategy has to match the type of film and companies tend to specialise in certain kind of operations. In fact, there is a recognised division in most international markets where major film studios handle high-profile films with huge P&A budgets, while specialised or independent companies focus on smaller films with strategic distribution campaigns which target niche audiences (Kerrigan 2010, 99). Acknowledging the market division between big distributors connected to US-based studios and the independent sector, Finney argues that the two have a 'symbiotic relationship' in which the studios assume greater investment risks while independents provide creative and commercial innovation (2010, 7). While major companies can afford wider – but financially riskier – theatrical releases, smaller distributors need to calculate their marketing approach and P&A budget very carefully. Despite the advantages of a large theatrical release, the high expenses involved in P&A – related to the limited screening space/time and the unpredictable behaviour of the audience's – specialised films tend to have smaller theatrical screenings or are sometimes released straight to other formats such as DVD, Blue-Ray and Video-On-Demand.

An important consideration in the market division between 'major' and 'independent' distribution companies is the different bargaining power of each company to ensure a better release date and exhibition deal with theatre owners (Durie, Pham, and N. Watson 2000, 108–109; Kerrigan 2010, 98–99). Because major companies handle a larger line-up of, generally, more popular films, they have not only higher budgets but more room for manoeuvre in planning the release strategy that best suits each of their films. It should be borne in mind that, despite the tendency to call some distributors 'independent', their level of independence or integration can change considerably. In fact, the size of companies involved in the market of specialised films varies greatly. Some have international operations and are part of big US-based media conglomerates – such as Miramax, Sony Pictures Classics and Focus Features. Others are strong local players that integrate distribution and exhibition – such as Artificial Eye/Curzon in the UK or MK2 in France – while others have a considerably smaller scope – such as the UK's Soda Pictures or Yume Pictures. Although these distribution companies frequently handle 'independent' or 'specialised' films, they do not have the same bargaining position with exhibitors. Moreover, as this thesis argues, their relational status is not limited to their dealings with theatre owners but extends to the whole film industry and the film festival world. Just as

powerful distributors can secure better exhibition deals, they also have a stronger bargaining position from which to coordinate more appropriate film festival tours – either at a national or an international level.

The most common distribution strategy for specialised films – including Latin American ones – is what is generally understood as a ‘platform’ release (Kerrigan 2010, 101). Instead of flooding the market with film copies and ubiquitous advertising – as is most typically done with Hollywood blockbusters – smaller films tend to open in a few theatres in major cities and widen the release in the following weeks, depending on the results. While this approach has become a standardised film industry practice, according to Alisa Perren, its origins lie in the changes that affected the US market during the 1980s and 1990s when the independent sector expanded and then contracted and its leading companies collapsed or were absorbed by major studios (2001). The strategy was championed by then independent company Miramax with films such as *Sex, Lies and Videotape* (US dir. Steven Soderbergh 1989), *My left foot* (IR/UK dir. Jim Sheridan 1989) and *Cinema Paradiso* (IT/FR dir. Giuseppe Tornatore 1988). Using the case study of *Sex, Lies and Videotape*, Perren demonstrates that whether a platform release is chosen depends on the kind of film handled and whether distributors have a lower P&A budget (2001, 35). As Miramax depended on inexpensive publicity, word-of-mouth and counter-programming strategies, they decided to release the film slowly, allowing it to build on positive reviews and reactions for several months (Perren 2001, 35). Most significantly, after acquiring the film during its world premiere at Sundance in January 1989, Miramax made use of the Cannes film festival in May to create a pre-release buzz before the distribution of the film in the US in August (Perren 2001, 33). During the French festival and the months that followed, the distributor employed an aggressive marketing campaign for the film that stirred controversy to get media attention. The strategy could not have worked better, as the Golden Palm awarded to *Sex, Lies and Videotape* in 1989 guaranteed further attention from the international media. Moreover, the prestigious award gave the distributor further grounds to market the film with a quality rhetoric linked to notions of ‘artistic films’ and auteurist codes (Perren 2001, 36). In this way, Miramax established a new blueprint in the distribution and marketing of films labelled as ‘quality’ and ‘independent’, based precisely on emphasising the presupposed artistic excellence of the films and using the legitimating function of film festivals to this end.

While Perren focuses on the development of the ‘quality indie blockbuster’ in the US market, her observations can be extended to the changes in the distribution and marketing patterns of foreign-language films in the US which are also led by Miramax. In fact, the film that marked a watershed in this sense is the Mexican production *Like Water for Chocolate*, which broke all-time box office records for foreign-language films in the US in 1993. As will be

analysed in Chapter 7, Miramax's campaign sold the film as a exquisite culinary experience with aphrodisiac magic properties. Using the homonymous book and food as marketing hooks, the distributor launched an effective campaign that helped the film to make the transition from the art-house niche market towards a wider audience. Despite resistance from the most serious core of the international – especially European – critical and festival establishment to embrace *Like Water for Chocolate* as an 'art-film', Miramax managed to get the support from their counterparts in the North American market. Although the company acquired the film at the Cannes' market in May 1992, it delayed its theatrical release until February 1993, while promoting it at several regional festivals in the meantime. Miramax then launched a cautious platform release starting with only two theatres in New York that increased to approximately 64 copies nationwide in the ninth week in April 1993 (Box Office Mojo 2011a). With the unprecedented success of *Like Water for Chocolate* in the US, Miramax established the ideal marketing and release strategy for foreign-language films in international territories. In fact, some of the most renowned cases in contemporary Latin American cinema – such as *Central Station*, *Amores Perros*, *Y tu mamá también* and *City of God* – follow a remarkably similar pattern, but on a larger global scale.

Conclusion

In their efforts to promote films, marketers tend to emphasise certain aspects and overlook others, depending on both the specific film and the intended audience. They contribute to the specific ways in which a film is understood and appreciated, through producing paratexts around features that become central to the viewers' film selection process. As discussed, such elements include casting, creative crew-members, generic categories, age classification and patterns of release. These aspects are far from universal and need to be studied on a case-by-case basis, which considers each film's unique characteristics and the specificities of each context of reception. However, because audience expectations draw on prior knowledge, there are common trends among Latin American films that have managed to achieve circulation and visibility in influential European and North American circles.

While it has generally been difficult for Latin American performers to achieve international star status, very commonly films from the region have relied on the use of non-professional actors, a feature which has historically been welcomed by international viewers as proof of the film's authenticity. More frequently, in Latin American cinema, the director's name has been used to communicate with potential audiences. Fuelled by fixed auteurist frameworks – and the limited international currency of the majority of actors from the region – this strategy capitalises on the romantic myth of the individual artist and the presupposed art/commerce

opposition. As film directors are converted into celebrities, their name and image become brands which effectively convey a certain style, carry a set of expectations and help to raise a film's status to 'art', rather than a commercial product. In this way, establishing an artistic reputation for a film director has become both a necessity and a standard practice in international film marketing. However, as demonstrated in Chapter 9 with the case of Fabián Bielinsky, this strategy poses a number of risks, especially when films promoted under the same auteur-brand do not maintain the same style in their films or when directors are not completely detached from commercial (i.e. non-artistic) associations. Therefore, whilst auteurist frameworks can help films to create a following, if viewers' expectations are not met, they can also diminish the film's international currency.

Other marketing elements such as age classification and the common release strategy used for Latin American films reveal some of the difficulties faced in the international trade of these films as well as the marginal position they occupy in the marketplace. Regarded as more difficult or specialised films mainly for adults, very often they are awarded higher classifications than in their domestic markets. In a similar way, the platform release pattern most commonly chosen by international distributors highlights the need for Latin American films to establish the reputation of having high-quality standards that match audiences' expectations in foreign markets. Therefore, by carefully selecting and slowly releasing the films, specialised distributors seek to allow enough time for each film to be positioned in viewers' minds, develop good word-of-mouth and receive coverage from film critics and the press in general. As analysed in Chapter 8, the film festival world provides an ideal environment for films to accumulate symbolic capital and raise their profiles as 'quality' films. In this way, festivals' strong cultural connotations, their function as meeting points of a wide variety of participants in the film supply chain and their strict hierarchical dynamics create a multilayered mechanism of selection that fixes films' and filmmakers' varying artistic (or non-artistic) reputations. In this sense, it is unsurprising that, very often, festival screenings – inasmuch as they can provide symbols of prestige and media visibility – have been incorporated into distributors' platform release patterns of foreign and Latin American films.

Generic categories are one of the most powerful paratexts mediating between marketers and viewers, because they draw on other known texts with which they share common characteristics. Although the categories with which a film is associated are not fixed, the classification of every film into a group that will appeal to potential viewers is essential for film marketers. Ingrained in the popular, critical and academic imaginary, the idea of national cinema has been one of the most important generic film categories that guide the conception of film itself and especially of world cinema. In other words, because cinema has been assessed

and understood as an important art form on the basis of its linkages with cultural identities, then nations have functioned as powerful 'imagined communities' that fuel concepts of national cinema. Moreover, as the case of *The Motorcycle Diaries* shows, the well-established imaginary among international audiences of a Latin American community enabled its circulation as an authentic representation of a pan-Latin American identity, regardless of the fact that the film could not be really linked with a single country. In this sense, the concept of a regional cinema presupposes the existence of 'Latin America', not only as a geographical entity but as a cultural identity. However, in the same way that generic categories are not fixed, identities and imagined communities are social constructs that appear and evolve over time. As Chapter 4 shows, the concept of 'Latin American cinema' is based on the idea of 'Latin America' itself, which emerged in the nineteenth century and whose reputation and associations have changed throughout the twentieth century. Therefore, before attempting to assess what 'Latin American cinema' is, the following chapter explores how the idea of 'Latin America' was made possible in the first place.

Part II.

What (Is) Latin American Cinema?

Chapter 4. The Idea of Latin America

The concept of 'Latin America' is so well-established that today it seems like a natural geographical denomination rather than a cultural and social concept generated by a lengthy and contested historical process. Despite an endless list of institutions, bibliographical sources and common references that point to the current existence of 'Latin America', there was no such a thing before the nineteenth century. Of course, the territories and its inhabitants existed long before, but they were not conceptualised as 'Latin America' or 'Latin Americans' respectively.

This chapter looks at 'Latin America' as an 'idea' instead of an 'entity' or an 'object', the material existence of which can be confirmed through scientific or empirical methods. It analyses key intellectual and diplomatic discourses circulating in Europe and America during the nineteenth century against a changing geo-political backdrop. The underlying premise is that the study of 'Latin American cinema' as a concept launched in the 1960s requires deeper analysis of the connotations and meanings of the idea of 'Latin America' itself. Therefore this thesis argues that a key prerequisite for the existence of 'Latin American cinema' is the development of a geographical and cultural entity acknowledged as 'Latin America', not only by those who inhabit that territory – or, using Benedict Anderson's term, consider themselves part of that 'imagined community' (2006) – but also by outsiders, especially those with the power to shape international diplomatic discourses. In this sense, the ideas of 'Latin America' and 'Latin American cinema' are neither a foreign imposition nor a pure product of the local intelligentsia. Rather than uncovering the foundational cultural objects or texts that demonstrate a Latin American 'essence', this chapter focuses on how this specific term gained universal recognition as both a geographical designation and a cultural identity. Moreover, this chapter highlights the historical roots of certain ideas associated with 'Latin America' that had a significant influence on international critics' and intellectuals' preconceptions and expectations about 'Latin American cinema'.

a. European Influences on the New World

The idea of 'Latin' countries was first developed in relation to European philological studies in the early nineteenth century that labelled languages derived from Latin – such as Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and French – as 'romance' or 'neo-Latin' languages. The concept of a 'Latin Europe' gained currency through the work of philologists such as the French François-Just-Marie Raynouard and intellectuals like the German Alexander von Humboldt (Ardao 1992, 107–110). Understood in opposition to the group of 'Germanic' or 'Anglo-Saxon' nations in Northern Europe, the term evoked both linguistic and cultural differences. As described by Humboldt, the

common perception was that this divide had been transferred to the American continent via its inhabitants of European descent. For Europeans, who ignored all other indigenous or African influences, America was simply divided into two main cultural and linguistic groups: one derived from British colonisation and another one from the Spanish and Portuguese (Humboldt 1826, 112).

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century this binary division of the world was further developed by intellectuals including the French Michel Chevalier and Alexis de Tocqueville. In the late 1830s Chevalier explained the key differences of each European group in religious and linguistic terms as they reappeared in the New World with a similar geographical distribution. Both in Europe and America, there were Protestant Anglo-Saxon 'Teutonic' in the North and Catholic Latin 'Romans' in the South (Chevalier 1839, 14–15). According to the social theories of the time, these differences were interpreted not only in cultural but in racial terms. Rather than a purely biological concept, speaking of 'races' and their relative superiority or inferiority was very common in the nineteenth century as a way to refer to 'cultures' or 'states' and their rivalries (Quijada 1998, 604). Therefore, within this binary narrative, the confrontation between the two 'races' seemed unavoidable not only as the US expanded continuously towards the West and the South of the continent, but because the Spanish-Americans were regarded as 'an impotent race' with 'exhausted veins' (Chevalier 1839, 428). Chevalier – who would later become a spokesman for Napoleon III's imperialistic ambitions – justified France's hegemonic role, based on its presupposed advantages and moral superiority: 'she [France] is the depositary of the destinies of all the Latin nations of both continents' (1839, 16). In America particularly, the idea of an endangered 'Roman Catholic and Latin' culture served to justify French 'protectionist' ambitions which would later materialise in ventures such as the French invasion of Mexico in the 1860s and their attempt to build an inter-oceanic canal in Panama in the 1880s, both openly endorsed by Chevalier's writings (1844, 1864).

A similar vision is also seen in Alexis de Tocqueville's celebrated *Democracy in America*, in which he divides the 'New World' into two races – the Spaniards and the Anglo-Americans – and attributes an economic and moral superiority to the Anglo Saxons (1838, 410). For De Tocqueville, this 'fact' was widely acknowledged across the continent where presumably all nations 'consider them [the Anglo-Saxons] as the most enlightened, the most powerful, and the most wealthy members of the great American family' (De Tocqueville 1838, 407). Taking this into account, De Tocqueville predicted the imminent expansion of the US into Mexican territory, regardless of the existing agreements and treaties, and envisioned the future US territory extending from the East Coast to the West Coast and from the North Pole to the Tropics (1838, 410–412). Unlike Chevalier, De Tocqueville's agenda was not to advocate France's self-

appointed mission of protecting Latinity. However, both described a binary division in America derived from English and Spanish colonisation, which tended to ignore the Portuguese influence in the enormous Brazil, let alone take into consideration the multiple indigenous and African peoples that made up the continent's mixed cultural, linguistic, religious and racial landscape. Moreover, both writers predicted US commercial and territorial expansion at the expense of its southern neighbours of Spanish descent who were increasingly understood as a single group with a 'Latin' heritage – rather than 'Spanish', 'Portuguese', 'Iberian' or 'Hispanic'.

The geopolitical context in which the idea of a 'Latin' civilization or race in America emerged was crucial for the development of the term 'Latin America'. By the 1820s most of the territories colonised by the Spanish Crown had successfully fought for and achieved independence from Spain, capitalising on the turmoil that the Napoleonic Wars had created in Europe in the early nineteenth century. Central to the independence struggles were both the weakening of the Spanish Empire as well as the coalition of different rebellious movements during the 1810s. Partly motivated by the lack of official European²⁵ or North American support (Elliott 2007, 393), it was crucial for the former Spanish colonies to expel the common coloniser completely, ensuring that there were no bastions of Spanish colonial power that could be used to launch a re-conquest. Therefore, the union among the ex-colonies remained strongly rooted as a condition necessary to guarantee independence in the future and protect them from the rivalling powers of the nineteenth century (i.e. the US, Britain and France). The exception to the regional independent movements was the giant Portuguese-speaking Brazil, which became the heart of the Portuguese empire overnight when Napoleon marched through the Iberian Peninsula in 1808. For more than a decade, the Portuguese court operated from Rio de Janeiro until the king returned to Portugal, leaving his son as regent in Brazil. In 1822, and with minimal bloodshed, Brazil declared its independence as an empire which would be ruled by descendants of the Portuguese Royal Family until the late nineteenth century (Bethell 1984, 186–187). Therefore, for most of the nineteenth century, notions of regional alliance emerging in former Spanish colonies excluded the Brazilian empire.

While ideas of unity amongst the Spanish colonies preceded the independence wars of the 1810s, the 'Latin' label would not appear until the mid-nineteenth century. The need for a regional coalition materialised more clearly with the appearance of prominent figure of Simón

²⁵ Although Britain welcomed the break in Spanish commercial monopoly and there were, unofficially, British soldiers fighting alongside the insurgents, the emerging British Empire remained officially neutral during the Independence Wars (Bethell 1989, p.4).

Bolívar and his military campaigns, writings and calls for diplomatic agreements (Rojas Mix 1991, 76). Bolívar and other key figures of the time often referred to these territories by their geographical position as 'Meridional' or 'South' America, as navigational charts and maps had done since the seventeenth century (Rojas Mix 1991, 74). Sometimes calling the region 'Spanish' America, Bolívar simultaneously advocated for an alliance of independent countries that shared a Spanish cultural heritage and the positioning of this region as an entity very different from Anglo-Saxon North America (Rojas Mix 1991, 74). Although Bolívar did not exactly propose a confederation of 'Latin' nations, the idea of unity between these countries was at the heart of his political project.

After three centuries of colonial rule and the upheaval of a decade of military conflicts, the period following the Independence Wars was a time of severe political and economic instability for the newborn nation-states. They were faced with immense challenges: strong internal power struggles, extreme differences between social and racial groups and fundamental decisions to be made regarding the political functioning and geographical limits of each country. While agreeing to fight against the Spanish Crown had been relatively straightforward, all sorts of disagreements appeared when the question turned to governability. Moreover, the decline of the Spanish Empire was accompanied – and partly caused by – the rise of other powers that represented a real threat to the autonomy of these territories. Thus the demise of Spanish rule was viewed as creating both a power vacuum and opportunities for the expansion of emergent foreign powers during the nineteenth century.

In the late 1840s, Mexico, in particular, was on the receiving end of US territorial expansion when half of its territory – most of what are now Texas, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, California and Western Colorado – changed hands following the Texas Annexation and the Mexican-American War (Stacy 2003, 382–383). While the US had tried to implement the Monroe Doctrine since 1823 in order to reduce European interventions in the American continent, both France and Britain intervened in regional conflicts during the nineteenth century. Two cases in point are the blockades of the Argentine port at Rio de la Plata in the 1840s – one by the French and the other a joint Anglo-French venture. Significantly, in 1861 the French seized the opportunity provided by the US Civil War to invade Mexico, with the justification of reclaiming some unpaid debts and preventing US expansion towards the south (Chevalier 1864, 177–184). However, after the US Civil War ended in 1865, the US government used military and diplomatic pressure to help the deposed President Benito Juárez in his fight against the French (Berkin et al. 2010, 399). Other territories also experienced aggression from North American filibusters such as William Walker, who took political control of Baja California in Mexico for a few months in 1853 and invaded Nicaragua between 1855 and 1857, declaring

himself president (Scheina 2003, 224–231). The need for united action from the former Spanish colonies was demonstrated when Walker's expedition was cut short by the military union between Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

Foreign threats to independence encouraged a growing choir of voices to call for a union among former Spanish colonies. Moreover, such episodes demonstrated the limited respect that European and North American powers had for local efforts to develop new independent nation-states in Latin America. As Miguel Rojas Mix explains, the label of 'new' or 'young' republics derived from the concept of 'New World' was a justification for those who felt like 'grown-ups' to control the 'immature' and 'inexperienced' countries (1991, 210–211). In this way – and in accordance with social Darwinist theories of the time – the difficulties that local authorities faced in establishing new functioning political, economic and social models were frequently interpreted by foreign powers as a sign of the intrinsic weakness of its mixed-raced inhabitants and of the decline of the 'Spanish' or 'Latin' race. The presupposed superiority of the 'Germanic' or 'Anglo Saxon' race vis-à-vis the 'Latin' or 'Spanish' race had been a widespread idea circulating since the early nineteenth century. This conflict of 'races' would be the cornerstone of the imperial foreign policies of both France and the US towards Latin America in the following decades: while France took on the mission of protecting the 'Latin races' from complete decay, the US positioned itself as the country of the superior white 'Anglo Saxon race'. Both ideologies coincided in their profound disrespect towards independent nation-states in Latin America as a justification for foreign intervention.

Defence from the aggressive behaviour of foreign forces experienced by the independent Latin American republics was at the core of the appearance of the term 'Latin America' in the late 1840s. However, the definition of *who* these 'foreign' aggressors were was a matter of contention. For the French, there was a group of 'Latin' nations that required France's leadership and defence from the attacks of 'Anglo-Saxons'. Thus, as Michel Chevalier had advocated since the 1830s, there was a 'Latin' America, based on the understanding that France was not only a member of the 'Latin' family, but the natural protector of the whole group (1864, 184). Underpinning this argument was the idea that the former Spanish colonies were unable to govern themselves and, in fact, would be considerably better off under the enlightening European tutelage. As Rojas Mix remarks, this image of some 'barbaric' ungovernable Latin American countries and some 'civilised' European (or North American) ones would remain present also throughout the twentieth century (1991, 19–20). As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, this assumed barbarism will be visible in the notion of 'violence' as an inherent category of Latin American cinema that has become crucial for its European reception since the 1950s. While European critics and festivals would tend to overlook non-violent films as 'unrealistic' – such as

comedies, musicals, melodramas, etc. – ‘violent’ films or those with social themes became the model of cinema that could gain international recognition and prestige at European cinematic circles. In this way, the perception of a ‘barbaric’, dangerous and socially-troubled Latin America in need of guidance from ‘civilised’, peaceful and socially-stable Europe has been reproduced by the understanding and expectations surrounding ‘Latin American cinema’.

During the 1960s some historians attributed the responsibility for creating and launching the term ‘Latin American’ to French intellectuals and diplomats of the late 1850s. Most noticeably, US historian John L. Phelan disregarded ‘the biological absurdity of Latin racialism’ as a purely French ideological invention (1968, 294). However, later research by Uruguayan Arturo Ardao (1980, 1986, 1992) and Chilean Miguel Rojas Mix (1991, 1992) demonstrated that there were also Spanish-speaking intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic who were promoting the idea of ‘Latinity’. Although Spanish and Latin American intellectuals used the term ‘Latin America’ before the French, for them this did not imply supporting French imperialistic ambitions in the name of ‘Latinity’. Supporting Ardao and Rojas Mix, Mexican researcher Mónica Quijada has recently argued that the term was used by Spanish-speaking intellectuals who were influenced by French discourses about ‘race’, but were mostly concerned with US expansionism (1998, 604–605). Therefore, apart from helping the French to justify their intervention in the region, the notion of a ‘Latin race’ was adopted first by intellectuals in former Spanish colonies in the 1850s as a defence mechanism against the imminent threat of the ‘Anglo-Saxon race’.

b. The Two Americas: A Fractured Continent

From the 1830s – and especially during the 1840s – the relationship between the US and the former Spanish colonies changed dramatically. In the 1820s the Monroe Doctrine had helped to defend the independence movements in America from the European colonial powers. However, the continuous US territorial and commercial expansion brought a conflict of interests between the rising power in the North and those in the South of the continent. The annexation of Texas (1837) – when Mexico still considered it a runaway state – and the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) – which ended with the US taking over more than half of Mexico’s territory – triggered alarm bells for other American countries, as well as Spain which still possessed some Caribbean islands. In fact, following its victory in the Mexican-American War, the US openly manifested its geopolitical interests in the Caribbean by trying to purchase Cuba from Spain (P. H. Smith 2000, 23). While the US considered its ‘manifest destiny’ to expand throughout the entire continent, this inevitably clashed with other nations’ projects. Thus, when faced with US

imperialistic attitudes, the people of the South were unsurprisingly concerned about their autonomy and territorial integrity.

The US expansion was accompanied by a rhetoric that assumed the racial superiority of the white 'Anglo-Saxons' and viewed racial miscegenation as a threat to their natural strength. With slavery legal in the US until 1865 and segregation laws in place for another century, racial prejudices became widespread in the US throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. In fact, they were used as an ideological justification for the Mexican-American War in the mid 1840s (Horsman 1981, 229–247). In both popular and official US accounts, Mexicans were portrayed as racially inferior and weaker. According to several journalists, the general public and US politicians, the underlying problem was Mexicans' mixed heritage, especially their indigenous and African origins. From the US perspective, these were considered to be inferior races (Horsman 1981, 279–280). Discourses from politicians frequently portrayed them as 'barbarians', the result of racial mixing that had produced 'a slothful, indolent ignorant race of beings' (Columbus Delano quoted in Horsman 1981, 240). These racial theories were even endorsed by US sectors that opposed the war itself, especially the anti-slavery Whig party (Horsman 1981, 239). Moreover, the 'racial problem' was a key argument evoked by those who opposed the annexation of the whole of Mexico to the US. Even though US troops seized full control of Mexico after the Mexican-American War, almost all congressmen agreed that the mixed-race Mexicans should not be accepted as equal citizens in the US and the enslavement of millions would simply be impossible (Horsman 1981, 240).

Because of the mixed-race composition of those in the South of the continent, these prejudices extended to the rest of the population of the former Spanish colonies, considered to be inferior by the US and thus unable to have democratic institutions of their own. Paradoxically, these ideas justified the US expansion and dominant role in the hemisphere, whilst simultaneously preventing the annexation of more territories that were already densely populated by non-whites on the basis that they posed a 'racial danger' to the Union (P. H. Smith 2000, 50). Meanwhile, the abundance of racist discourses that proclaimed the superiority of the white 'Anglo-Saxons' were unsurprisingly viewed as an insult and a threat by the mixed-race inhabitants of the South. For whiter dominant groups it endangered their authority and hegemonic role within each nation, while the darker-skin majorities faced the possibility of segregation laws and even slavery.

The attitude of superiority towards and contempt for Panamanian authorities that characterised US citizens brought considerable tensions to their travels south, which became more frequent with the discovery of gold mines in California in 1848. Until the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, the Panama Isthmus – then a province of New

Granada – became part of the fastest trading route connecting the East and the West Coast of the US and leading to a massive increase in US capital and travellers to the region. Accustomed to a segregated racial order, the white foreigners came into conflict with the racially-mixed Panamanian society where slavery had been officially abolished in 1852 and universal suffrage – for men – had been established in 1853 (McGuinness 2003, 93). White US travellers very often refused to treat locals as their equals and adopted disrespectful attitudes that ranged from mocking their ways to questioning local authorities on the basis of their racial background (McGuinness 2003, 94–96). While the tensions between the Anglo-Saxon foreigners and the mixed-raced locals provoked some outbursts of violence in Panama City in the mid-1950s, Panamanian intellectuals joined the chorus of Spanish-language intellectuals in using the term ‘Latin America’ as a response to US imperialist attitudes so tangibly manifested through these racial tensions.

A more extreme example of US citizens’ disregard for the rule of law in the southern part of the American continent is the action of several filibusters who undertook private attempts to seize power in the northern provinces of Mexico, Cuba, Honduras and Nicaragua during the 1850s (Scheina 2003, 221–233; Stacy 2003, 307). For example, the case of William Walker, as mentioned above, who proclaimed himself president of Nicaragua in 1856. Officially supporting Walker’s initiative, US president Franklin Pierce even sent a diplomatic representative to the capital Managua (Quijada 1998, 604–605). Likewise, US politicians openly declared their beliefs in their right to seize land as they wished regardless of the resistance of its inhabitants who could then ‘go somewhere else’ (Albert G. Brown quoted in Torres Caicedo 1865, 70).

Along with other US expansionist practices and discourses, these semi-official filibustering activities aroused not only strong indignation from Latin Americans but a clear dichotomy in the American continent: to resist the Anglo-Saxons from the North, those in the South needed to define themselves in other terms. The sense that ‘Latin’ America existed in opposition to another America was evident in the poem ‘The Two Americas’, written in 1856 by the Colombian intellectual José María Torres Caicedo who is generally recognised as the father of the name ‘Latin America’ and who actively promoted it during the second half of the nineteenth century (Rojas Mix 1991, 227). Calling for a union against the common Anglo-Saxon rival, the poem summarised the widespread rejection of US expansionism that was felt both in Spain and in its former colonies during the 1850s.

Predictably, the absorbent tendencies of the US were a general concern among international Spanish-speaking intellectuals who wrote in periodicals circulating in Europe and America throughout the 1850s (Ardao 1992, 27–36). Although many of these magazines were published in Madrid, they advocated a coalition of the former Spanish colonies in America in the

name of 'Latinity' rather than 'Hispanicity' (Ardao 1992, 37–49). While the union of the ex-colonies was seen as a protective measure against the US, the 'Latin' identity that several Spanish and Latin American writers vindicated revealed their desire to diminish the weight of Spain's imperial decline by associating themselves with the higher attributes of the 'Latin race'. Thus, through what Monica Quijada calls a 'discursive racialisation', Spanish-speaking intellectuals embraced the idea of a 'Latin race' that allowed them to think of themselves as part of a universal (i.e. Western) 'race struggle' and descendants of a glorious 'race' capable of competing with their Anglo-Saxon rivals (1998, 613).

This is not to say that Latin American societies were free of the racial prejudices that populated Western thought throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. Indeed, as Walter Mignolo points out, by crafting a national and regional identity around the European idea of 'Latinity', these societies also tended to disregard their overwhelming African and Indigenous components (2005, 58). In effect, the process of construction of 'Latin' American identity was an elitist affair involving the predominant participation of white male Creole intellectuals. However, by embracing a common 'Latin' identity and claiming an internationally respectable European heritage, those in the South could somehow resist the racialised 'Anglo American' discourse. They called for a union of ex-colonies and sought the commercial and political solidarity of European powers that could counterbalance the US expansion.

In the face of the unquestionable economic and military achievements of the US, Spanish-speaking intellectuals tended to avoid pragmatic comparisons, focusing instead on the moral potential of the two 'races'. In this way, they appealed to the elevated ideals of European Latinity shared by France, Italy, Portugal and Spain, although they generally did not endorse French imperialistic ventures during the mid-nineteenth century (Ardao 1992, 63). Anglo Saxons were described as 'individualist', lacking humanity and unable to work 'for an idea' but purely 'for commerce', whilst the 'Latin race' had a 'lively sympathy for other peoples and humanity' (Emilio Castelar quoted in Schmidt-Nowara 1999, 113–114). Moreover, Latins were portrayed as 'the race of heroes and artists, the race of free ones' (Emilio Castelar quoted in Ardao 1992, 63). Although the term 'Latin America' did not become dominant during the second half of the nineteenth century (Ardao 1986, 166), an oppositional stance against the Anglo Saxons of the North would become ingrained in the definition of Latin American identity. In 1900 the Uruguayan poet and intellectual José Enrique Rodó published his influential *Ariel* where he reaffirmed the opposition between a spiritual 'Latin race' and a materialistic 'Anglo-Saxon' one (Rojas Mix 1991, 359). Therefore, during the twentieth century the idea that a common spiritual, noble and idealist 'Latin' American culture should develop, in opposition to the

supposedly pragmatic, individualist and vulgar culture of the US, had a clear influence on several intellectuals.

Part of this presupposed antagonism between Latin and Anglo-Saxons is visible when we consider how Latin American filmmakers and critics, especially since the 1950s, have embraced the idea of a common 'Latin American cinema' on the basis that it should be 'new' and politically committed (i.e. idealistic and spiritual) rather than 'old', commercial and popular (i.e. materialistic and vulgar). Arguably, both foreign European and US cinemas strongly influenced each of these two tendencies. However, Hollywood has been accused historically of having a negative 'foreign' effect on local cultures whilst the European influence, rarely viewed out as 'foreign', is seen as a more benign artistic one. Significantly, the expectations of Latin American cinema from the European-dominated international critical and festival establishment have been defined in relation to the idea of a political cinema that should remain loyal to the higher ideals of criticising and transforming society, rather than providing engaging narratives for the Latin American masses. In this regard, the impact of Cold War politics with its capitalist/communist dichotomy and the traditional division between high art/popular culture cannot be ignored. However, the sense that a more spiritually committed 'Latin' American culture and identity existed in opposition to a rather materialistic and pragmatic 'Anglo' American one can be seen having its roots in the nineteenth century. In addition to the notion of Latin America as a 'barbaric' and 'violent' place, this political commitment was seen as part of the essence of what Latin American cinema was, or rather should be, according to international observers.

c. 'Pan-America', 'Ibero-America' and other Geopolitical Projections

As Arturo Ardao explains, the term 'Latin America' did not gain wider currency when it was launched in the mid 1850s (1986, 166). On the one hand, this is because there were some people in the region that felt attracted to the successful Anglo-Saxon model. Therefore they argued in favour of a closer relationship with the US, rather than the antagonistic one suggested by the 'Latin' label. On the other hand, a Latin union entailed problematic associations with both the French and the Brazilian empires. Supporting Latinity could be understood as a tacit endorsement of French imperialistic incursions in the region, although these threats diminished progressively as the US established its hegemonic role in the hemisphere. Significantly, the Latin American label suggested a difficult alliance between the nascent republics of Spanish origin and the Brazil which was ruled monarchs of Portuguese descent and where slavery would be legal until the late 1880s. In addition, both Brazil and Argentina had hegemonic aspirations in the Southern Cone which made a coalition involving these long-term rivals rather unlikely (P. H.

Smith 2000, 97–100). Therefore, until 1890, the term ‘Latin America’ co-existed – and was used interchangeably – with other labels such as ‘Spanish-’, ‘Hispanic-’ and ‘South-America’.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, as Brazil became a republic, the US revamped its aggressive foreign policy towards the region with the idea of an hemispheric alliance under the banner of ‘Pan-Americanism’ (Ardao 1986, 158–159). The term emerged in the US media at the time of the International American Conference in Washington in 1889-1890 which became known as the First ‘Pan-American’ Conference. As Ardao highlights, ‘Latin-Americanism’ was surpassed in official discourses by the ‘Pan-Americanism’ promoted by the US (1986, 163). However, this continental association was mostly motivated by the US’ need to expand its foreign markets and its desire to create a zone of commercial influence (P. H. Smith 2000, 29–30). In fact, from the first conference in Washington in 1889, intellectuals such as the celebrated Cuban José Martí, emphatically denounced the dangers posed by this shift in US attitudes and criticised the Pan-American union as a form of economic control (Rojas Mix 1991, 151).

At the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth century, the US launched several military and commercial ventures that confirmed the fears of those who were suspicious of their supposedly good intentions. These ventures included the Spanish-American War in 1898 in which the US established a protectorate in Cuba – instead of permitting its independence – and took over the remaining Spanish colonies: Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. Similarly, in 1903 the US intervened in Panamanian independence from Colombia, in order to commence the construction of the Panama Canal (1904-1914) which it controlled until 1999. In addition, the US used its economic strength to pressure countries to act according to its interests in a strategy known as ‘dollar diplomacy’ which was frequently accompanied by military interventions – especially in Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti and Dominican Republic (P. H. Smith 2000, 54–60; Stacy 2003, 265). Despite US-based institutions promoting a discourse of ‘Pan-American’ unity, the US attitude towards the rest of the continent was, unsurprisingly, denounced as abusive and imperialistic.

The sense of a divided continent remained very strong and is still felt today, portrayed almost as a natural division – rather than a culturally or socially constructed one – in the term ‘the Americas’. The unifying connotations of ‘Pan-America’ clashed with the mutual recognition and the oppositional identity that both rival groups have created throughout the nineteenth century. From the US perspective, the idea of ‘Latin’ America reaffirmed them as an ‘Anglo Saxon race’, even though, as a country of immigrants, the US displayed a very complex ethnic composition of minorities from African, Asian, Indigenous and even Latin descent – both from Europe and America. From the ‘Latin’ perspective, the concept of ‘Pan-America’ was generally condemned as a disguised strategy employed by the US in order to impose its will on the rest of

the continent. With the increasing military and economic interventions in the region, the 'Latin American' identity grew stronger in the first decades of the twentieth century and was further consolidated during the Cold War. While the US tried to promote the idea of 'Pan-America', the term came in conflict with the strong feeling across 'the Americas' that 'Latins' and 'Saxons' simply did not have anything in common.

As evidence that geographical and social naming is a contested terrain in which geopolitical and intellectual agendas are displayed, in the late 1910s the rising popularity of the term 'Latin America' caused significant controversy among Spanish intellectuals who denounced it as a 'neologism' and a 'false' term (Ardao 1992, 13–20). Turning the issue into a scientific and grammatical dilemma – rather than a question of cultural identity – they argued that the 'correct' designation was either 'Spanish' or 'Ibero' America. These terms reflected the linguistic and cultural origins of the region that were neither French or Italian as the 'Latin' name mistakenly implied (Espinosa 1918, 135–143). Their complaint not only ignored the fact that the term had been promoted by their own countrymen in the 1850s, but that such an 'inappropriate' designation was explicitly preferred by those who called themselves 'Latin Americans' (Ardao 1992, 18). Paradoxically, many Spanish intellectuals endorsed the actual neologism 'Ibero America'. Launched in the 1880s as a strategy to strengthen political union with Portugal and the ex-colonies, the term actually co-existed with 'Latin' and 'Spanish America' until the early twentieth century (Ardao 1992, 95).

However, a new conflict of interests emerged with the rebirth of 'Hispanicity' among Spanish intellectuals as a reaction to defeat in the Spanish-American War in 1898 (Rojas Mix 1991, 167). Instead of a 'Latin' or 'Iberian' character, at the turn of the century Spaniards vindicated a 'Hispanic' identity that they tried to project to their ex-colonies in order to maintain Spain's role as a 'mother' and spiritual guide. Thus the Second Spanish-American Congress of History and Geography held in Seville in 1921 officially repudiated the 'Latin' American label as an 'improper' one (Espinosa 1921, 194). Within this new Spanish intellectual and geopolitical mobilisation around a revitalised 'Hispanicity,' the term 'Latin' America was rejected as an intruder and an almost insolent pretention of the former colonies who dared to name themselves in unauthorised ways. Throughout the twentieth century, Spanish intellectuals have frequently preferred geographical terms that emphasise their historical influence in America but that also reflect their own internal divisions: while 'Spanish' or 'Hispanic' America – *Hispanoamérica* – has been preferred by the political right, the term 'Ibero' America has been generally used by the political left in Spain (Rojas Mix 1991, 197).

Spanish intellectuals' opposition to the term 'Latin America' gradually decreased throughout the Cold War during the second half of the twentieth century. However, it is

noticeable that the idea of 'Latin American cinema' would, in fact, find resistance almost exclusively among Spanish film critics when it was launched in the 1960s. As explored in Chapter 5, with the launching of the first festival specialising in Latin American cinema, Spaniards generally criticised the label for masking profound cultural differences and cinematic practices across the vast region and homogenising the region into one single category. On the contrary, French and Italian activists and film critics were very keen on the idea and they actively embraced and promoted it through festivals and specialised film magazines. In this sense, the geographical divisions of world cinema should be understood as a result of geo-political histories and discursive negotiations: while Spaniards objected to the idea of 'Latin America cinema' partly because it challenged (or forced them to share with other European nations) their historical influence over the region, French and Italians promoted it precisely because it boosted theirs.

A similar strategy of enhancing their historical influence over the American continent seems to be behind the frequent British practice – especially until the 1960s – of using the terms 'Latin America' and 'South America' almost interchangeably. Thus by using the more geographic term 'South' America or the longer version 'Central and South America' British writers tended to avoid granting rival 'Latin' European powers any moral (as well as political and economic) authority over those territories that Britain coveted in previous centuries. In any case, the result is similar to the Spanish, French and Italian cases: a reflection of their historical geopolitical aspirations in the configuration of the world order.

An additional geopolitical player, albeit a generally overlooked one, is the Rome-based Catholic Church which had gradually started to promote the idea of 'Latin America' in the Italian language and across the international Catholic community since the mid nineteenth century. For the Catholic Church – whose official language was and still is Latin – the label was a perfect banner for their plans of maintaining their influence in Latin America, threatened by some anticlerical groups and liberal thinkers within the new republics. Among the first measures taken, was the creation of the Colegio Americano in Rome in 1858 – aimed at attracting seminarians from Spanish and Portuguese America – and its strategic rebranding as Colegio Pío Latino Americano in 1867 (Vera Soto 2005, 749–750). Furthermore, from the 1860s onwards, the Church organised regular Provincial Councils in Latin American cities like Quito, Bogotá, Guadalajara and Michoacán (Saranyana 2008, 75). This marked both the beginning of the gradual establishment of Latin America as an administrative unit within the Catholic Church and of a Latin American community of clergyman that would meet at the Councils and the Roman school.

The consolidation of the Latin American label by the Catholic Church came with the first Latin American Plenary Council in Rome in 1899 (Gaudiano 1998, 157; Saranyana 2008, 77). The prompt publishing of the council's resolutions – first in Latin (1900) and later in Spanish (1906) – created an influential precedent in which the term 'Americae Latinae' was used. More importantly, the meeting decided on a common policy towards the region, marking its consecration as a single entity within the Catholic Church which would become ingrained in its organisational structure with the creation of the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM) in 1955. Institutionally endorsing the notion of 'Latin America', the Catholic Church certainly contributed to its recognition across the international Catholic community, especially in Italy and Latin America where Catholicism is widespread. Moreover, as explored in Chapter 5, this Catholic convention would be closely related to the launching of the first ever festival of 'Latin American cinema' by a Jesuit cultural organisation in Italy in 1960. While the film festival was perceived by most reporters as a purely cinematic event, the effects of the longstanding Catholic tradition of treating 'Latin America' as a unit should not be underestimated.

Perhaps unwittingly, but certainly as a result of history and not by coincidence, European and North American intellectuals and film critics in the twentieth century have tended to speak from their very specific geo-cultural position that is revealed in their prejudices, expectations and even geographical terminology applied to Latin America. In this sense, an understanding of the international popularisation of the category 'Latin American cinema' – as opposed to 'Hispanic-American', 'Ibero-American' or distinct linguistic and national cinematic associations not necessarily understood as a single group – needs to take into account the geo-political history and intellectual tradition in countries like Italy, France and the US where the idea of Latin America gained currency from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

d. 'Latin America' in the Twentieth Century

While the influence of international relationships cannot be denied, the naming of territory and its inhabitants is not a question that can be exclusively attributed to foreign forces. Thus one of the main reasons why the term 'Latin America' has succeeded, not only as a geographical designation but as a cultural identity, is because those who belong to that 'imagined community' have embraced and promoted it from within. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the 'Pan-American' rhetoric encouraged by the US excluded the term 'Latin America' from most diplomatic discourses (Ardao 1986, 166). However, as US imperialistic behaviour strengthened, the oppositional 'Latin' American identity grew stronger with an exponential number of bibliographical sources including *América Latina: Males de origem* (Bomfim 1903), *El porvenir de la América Latina* (Ugarte 1909), *La raza cósmica* (Vasconcelos

1925) and *¿Existe América Latina?* (Sánchez 1945) which responded affirmatively to its own question.

A common feature of processes of national identity construction across the region was the sense of a 'Latin' heritage that existed in opposition to the 'Anglo Saxon race' (Castro-Gómez 2009, 72). While most countries created a national identity by vindicating local culture, political figures and entrepreneurship, the wider reference to a common 'Latin' heritage across the region remained relevant for many intellectuals, artists and journalists during the first half of the twentieth century. Thus defending national culture meant simultaneously resisting US imperialism and strengthening solidarity among Latin American countries as perceived victims of a common enemy (P. H. Smith 2000, 104).

By the mid 1940s, the term was also widely used in the US and frequently favoured over competing designations such as 'Ibero', 'Spanish' or 'Hispanic' America. In 1947 the US journal *The Americas* published an article in an attempt to elucidate the question 'What is "Latin America"?' (Ryan 1947). It reported on the widespread use of the term although it revealed a high degree of confusion and pointed to a misguided perception of homogeneity across the region (Ryan 1947, 487). The article proposed avoiding the term altogether in favour of more precise geopolitical designations such as individual countries or cities (Ryan 1947, 491). However, regardless of its actual ambiguities and contradictions, the idea of Latin America, and especially the Latin American identity, was already well rooted throughout the continent.

Instead of falling into disuse, the term gathered strength and became incorporated into international diplomatic discourses after the Second World War. In 1948 two events marked its breakthrough (Ardao 1986, 166). First, the launching of the Organisation of American States (OAS) which signalled an official change in US foreign policy. The new 'Inter-American System' tacitly recognised the existence of two Americas that the 'Pan-American Union' had unsuccessfully tried to deny (Ardao 1986, 167). Moreover, the newly formed United Nations Organization launched the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)²⁶ after dividing the world into five regions each with its own commission. Founded by the Argentine Economist Raúl Prebisch, the ECLAC not only promoted the name of Latin America itself, but proposed regional economic and development policies based on a unified understanding of their situation. From an economic perspective, Prebisch 'created' Latin America (Pollock 2006, 15).

²⁶ The ECLAC is also known by its name and abbreviation in Spanish: Comisión Económica Para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL).

Indeed, beyond its linguistic and cultural components, the 1950s saw a shift in the understanding of 'Latin America' as being united by its fragile socio-economic conditions (Rojas Mix 1991, 371). This was most clearly reflected in the inclusion of Brazil by other Latin American countries as a full member of the group, regardless of the several historical, linguistic and cultural differences that had made this coalition unfeasible throughout the nineteenth century. While the multiple discrepancies across the vast region were hardly homogenised with the popularisation of the 'Latin' label, the understanding of Latin America as facing 'common' economic problems would become very influential in how cinema and especially film industries in the region would be conceptualised. Treated as a single unity, generalisations about the whole region based on a few films or national cinemas have been remarkably frequent. In fact, this is the discursive mechanism underlying the notion of 'Latin American cinema' itself, in which critics and scholars would select a few independently produced films scattered throughout the region to construct a common narrative of a cinema – frequently an economically and politically endangered one – that supposedly applied to all of Latin America without revealing its country-based specificities. However, as argued in Chapter 6, this would lead to a rather distorted picture of the cinematic production in the region – especially during the Cold War – resulting in, for instance, an over-representation of Bolivian or Cuban films, whilst Mexican cinema was under-represented and Venezuelan or Colombian cinema ignored altogether. Significantly, this vision of the whole region experiencing similar economic problems has strongly influenced understanding of film industries in Latin America which, all too often, has often attributed their presumably 'shared' difficulties to a common Hollywood enemy, without properly analysing country-to-country huge differences such as the size of the market, film institutions and companies, legislation, audience composition and cinema-going practices, to name just a few.

The creation of ECLAC and OAS at the end of the 1940s marked the beginning of an interminable list of 'Latin American' institutions.²⁷ As Arturo Ardao remarks, regardless of the success or failure of these organisations, all of them contributed to the establishment of the idea and the term 'Latin America' at different levels (1986, 169–170). Fuelled by the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the list of institutions would not only grow exponentially in the following decades, but the visibility and appeal of Latin America would be fixed in the

²⁷ Just to mention a few, there was the Union of Latin American Universities (UDUAL) in Guatemala in 1949, the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM) in Rio de Janeiro in 1955 and the Latin American Free Trade Zone (ALAC) signed in 1960 by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay and Uruguay (Garrido Torres 1960, p.421).

international imaginary associated with leftist revolutionary ideals (Rojas Mix 1991, 376). Against the increasingly tense Cold War backdrop, the charismatic figures of the Argentine Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and the Cuban Fidel Castro became international symbols of the struggle for justice and anti-imperialism. After overthrowing the US-supported dictator Fulgencio Batista, the revolutionaries reinvigorated the old Latins vs. Anglo Saxons antagonism, raising the 'Latin' flag to stimulate sympathy and solidarity across the region. Despite being heavily supported by the giant Soviet Union, the Cubans promoted themselves through the image of a heroic and independent 'Latin' David bravely defying an oppressive and imperialistic 'Anglo Saxon' Goliath. Through an upsurge of political propaganda, the idea of 'Latin America' – and its presupposed similarity and sisterhood of nations – became the cornerstone of Cuban foreign policy towards the region. Cuba presented itself as the cultural, political and economic role-model, encouraging armed struggle and several guerrilla groups in Latin America – and even in Asia and Africa during their decolonisation wars – aimed at spreading socialism and increasing its sphere of influence.

While the success of the lengthy socialist regime in Cuba still provokes agitated discussions today, during the 1960s it was seen as an inspiration and a model for millions of young people in Latin America and the world. Since this period, the idea of 'Latin America' has been frequently linked with a romanticisation of the revolution; the left-wing struggles to overcome class differences and the resistance against right-wing oppressive regimes. The Cuban influence has been visible not only in the prominent role of Cuban films within narratives of Latin American cinema – despite it has had a relatively low production output, small audience numbers and declining reputation since the mid-1970s – but most noticeably, in the frequent assumption that the State should act as producer, funding films directly like the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC) has done since the 1960s. As explored in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7, the consequences of such associations for the international reception and expectations of 'Latin American cinema' has played a crucial role up until the present day, as it is frequently assumed that the most representative cinema from the region should not contravene those left-wing ideals.

Conclusion

As has been discussed in this chapter, the process through which 'Latin America' became established as an idea and a widely used term was in fact a very lengthy and contested one. Evolving from a growing consensus regarding the existence of 'Latin' and 'Anglo Saxons' as the two major cultural and linguistic groups inhabiting Europe and America, after the mid-nineteenth century the label appeared at the intersection of diplomatic discourses from powerful international players including France, the US, and even the Catholic Church. Beyond a geographical designation among competing labels such as 'Spanish', 'Meridional', 'South',

'Ibero', 'Hispanic' or even 'Pan'-America, the idea of a Latin American union grew as a form of cultural identity in opposition to the racist discourses and imperialist behaviour of the 'Anglo Saxons' of the North throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Therefore, rather than a simple foreign imposition or a fully independent act of self-determination, the Latin American label and community has been imagined both from inside and outside the region.

By claiming a 'Latin' heritage of European roots, the ex-colonies problematically ignored their varying degrees of African and Indigenous influence. However, this strategy allowed them to claim a higher moral stance linked to ideals of freedom, humanism and disinterestedness that contrasted with the presupposed US commercialism and lack of artistry. These non-materialistic ideals would have a considerable influence on critics' and intellectuals' understanding and expectations of regional cinema during the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War, when an international – albeit European-dominated – cinematic culture was developed. While the widespread use of the term 'Latin America' and its presupposed unity would be the first requisite for the prompt acceptance of the 'Latin American cinema' category, international critics' expectations have been frequently associated with established ideas about the region. As this chapter has shown, many of them can be traced back to the nineteenth century and historical definitions of Latin America itself. For example, the production of a 'violent' cinema exposing troubled societies as a reflection of ungovernable and somewhat barbaric countries or the higher moral ideals of freedom and disinterestedness transferred into a model of politically-committed cinema 'free' from market constraints and 'disinterested' in making profits. Moreover, in its analysis of the process of invention of Latin America, this chapter suggests that 'Latin American cinema' is also the result of a complex negotiation involving international and local discourses, practices and institutions. Therefore, rather than a neutral label used to refer objectively to the films produced in that geographical region, 'Latin American cinema' is an invention of which the meanings and associations are movable and contingent.

Chapter 5. 'Old' Cinemas from Mexico, Argentina and Brazil

As explained in the previous chapter, by the mid-twentieth century, Latin America was well established both as a geographical designation and a cultural identity. However, until the late 1950s, cinemas from the region were broadly understood in connection with their national contexts. In Mexico, Argentina and Brazil particularly – the major producing countries and markets – cinema was a matter of national pride linked both to an internal process of national identity construction and their international prestige vis-à-vis other nation-states. In 1960 the concept of a regional cinema would be introduced via the 'Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano', a small festival organised by Catholic cinephile groups in Sestri Levante, Italy.

This chapter focuses on the international reception of Mexican, Argentine and Brazilian films at European festivals from the 1940s until the early 1960s when the concept of 'Latin American cinema' appeared on the international scene. The chapter demonstrates the strong historical influence of the festival circuit on the wider visibility – as well as the absence – of specific films and filmmakers among international audiences and academics. While Mexican, Argentine and Brazilian cinemas were 'discovered' by critics at European film festivals, the reputation that films and directors have achieved throughout history has tended to follow the judgements and expectations of European programmers and critics. This chapter also analyses the international standing of those films which have been generally rejected as part of an 'old' tradition, especially by advocates of a 'new' cinema in the 1960s and 1970. In this sense, it traces the development of the idea of 'Latin American cinema' through the international reception of 'old' Latin American cinemas. In doing so, the chapter highlights the role played by film festivals as privileged spaces where the European critical establishment establishes guidelines that Latin American cinemas should follow in order to improve their international reputation: from the discredited 'old' national cinemas to the celebrated 'new' Latin American one.

a. Mexican Screen-Art at Cannes

International film festivals, as explained in Chapter 1, were first developed in Europe during the 1930s with the dual intention of promoting tourism and providing high-profile showcases for the display of national cinematic achievements. Initially appearing in Fascist Venice and later on at a rival French event at Cannes, their organisation and awarding practices were highly politicised, reflecting the European pre-War tensions. In fact, the first Cannes festival in September 1939 had to be cancelled after it was already underway because of the

start of the Second World War. At its first proper edition, which took place after the war, in 1946, Cannes organisers extended invitations only to those countries with a developed film industry and that had joined the Allies during the war.

In accordance with such criteria, Mexico was the only representative from the Latin American region²⁸ invited to the first Cannes festival (Festival de Cannes 2010). Other potential guest nations such as Brazil and Argentina not only had considerably lower production numbers²⁹, but had also maintained neutrality for most of the war, with Brazil entering officially in 1942 and Argentina in 1945. In contrast, the Mexican film industry had flourished³⁰ during the Second World War, supported by the Mexican and the US governments (Oroz 1992, 122–123). The US cooperated with Mexican production and exportation of films for the Spanish-language market for both political and economic reasons. Unlike Argentina – the other strong competitor in the Spanish-language market – Mexico had openly supported the Allied Forces during the war, and the US provided access to raw film stock and technology in return. Moreover, the proximity between the US and Mexico facilitated the movement of creative and technical personnel and private US companies soon started investing in production facilities south of the border. Although US foreign policy and Hollywood's international strategy would shift dramatically after the war, in the interim Mexico was a political ally of the US and private US companies had financial stakes in the Mexican film industry (Fein 1999, 129–130). Therefore, by the time the war ended, Mexico had a considerable line-up of films of high technical quality that had never been seen in Europe.

Permitted to send two films to Cannes, Mexican officials selected not the most recent, but two of the most successful films already celebrated by audiences at home and abroad. In an attempt to minimise risk, they targeted the European festival with two films that were almost the exact opposite of one another in style and content: the comedy *The Three Musketeers/ Los tres mosqueteros* (MX dir. Miguel Delgado 1942) and the melodrama *María Candelaria* (MX dir.

²⁸ Other countries invited to Cannes in 1946 included Italy, the United States, Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Soviet Union, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Egypt, Romania and India (Festival de Cannes 2010).

²⁹ Argentine production numbers declined dramatically from 57 films in 1942 to 24 in 1944 because of the restriction on raw stock imports imposed for political reasons by the US (Del Castillo 1945, 80). Between 1942 and 1945 Brazil produced between 8 and 9 feature films per year (R. Johnson 1987, 201).

³⁰ The annual feature film production increased steadily from 29 films in 1940 up to 82 films in 1945 (De la Vega Alfaro 1995, 303). In addition, the Mexican government set up the Banco Cinematográfico in 1942 as a mixed private and public fund that would lend money to film producers. The State also launched the distribution companies Películas Nacionales for the local market, Películas Mexicanas (Pelmex) for the Latin American Market and Cinematográfica Mexicana Exportadora (Cimex) for the rest of the world (Mora 2005, 98).

Emilio Fernández 1943). *The Three Musketeers*, a humorous and witty parody loosely based on the homonymous novel by French writer Alexandre Dumas, starred the comedian Mario Moreno Cantinflas. Already very popular with Latin American audiences, the film had been Cantinflas' fifth feature since his international breakthrough with *Here is the point/ Ahí está en detalle* (MX dir. Juan Bustillo Oro 1940) and, by 1946, his filmography included more than ten feature films.³¹ In contrast, *María Candelaria* was a melodramatic tale about a couple of indigenous Mexicans unable to marry and afford basic medical care because of their economic hardships, who additionally experience social prejudices due to lack of education. With stunning photography by Gabriel Figueroa, the film starred Pedro Armendáriz and Dolores del Río who had been working in Hollywood since the late 1920s. Already an famous international star, del Río's appearance was useful in guaranteeing international attention for the film (Mora 2005, 63) and was certainly noticed by critics and reporters at the time (Oliver 1948; Powell 1947, 255-256; Sadoul 1954, 46; Wollenberg 1948, 27-28). Moreover, the film was distributed abroad by MGM International who had already shown it in the US and the UK where it had received a relatively positive reception.³²

The films provoked quite the opposite response amongst European critics at Cannes. While *The Three Musketeers* was criticised for not being funny,³³ (Pilcher 2001, 132) *María Candelaria* was promptly celebrated as a work of art (Tuñón 1995, 182). Not only did it receive awards,³⁴ but it was repeatedly praised for its aesthetic qualities in critical reviews of the event, whilst Cantinflas' film was not even mentioned. British critic Dilys Powell described *María Candelaria* as a 'superb piece of visual narrative' and admired its 'exquisite composition of the figures, settings and landscapes' (1947, 61). Similarly, French critic-historian Gorges Sadoul commended on its aesthetic beauty in his review for *Les Lettres Françaises* in which he described it as the most 'captivating' film of the Cannes film festival that year (reprinted in Sadoul 1954, 255–256). The film surprised European critics at Cannes with both its beautiful images and what some

³¹ These included films such as *Neither Blood nor Sand/ Ni sangre, ni arena* (MX dir. Alejandro Galindo 1941), *El gendarme desconocido* (MX dir. Miguel M. Delgado 1941) and *Soy un prófugo* (MX dir. Miguel M. Delgado 1946).

³² Before the screening at Cannes in September 1946, MGM distributed the original Spanish language version in the US in 1944 and a dubbed version entitled *Portrait of Maria* in the US and in the UK in March 1946 (Monthly Film Bulletin 1946, 36).

³³ Writing for *Hollywood Quarterly* a few months after the Cannes film festival, the Argentine critic Marie Rose Oliver offered an interesting analysis of the great popularity of Cantinflas' films across Latin America and attributed his rejection at Cannes to European critics' lack of knowledge about the region (1947, 252).

³⁴ *María Candelaria* received ex-aequo the Grand Prix and the Best Cinematography award. However, during that first film festival the Grand Prix was awarded jointly to other eleven films.

perceived as an 'authentic portrayal of Mexican rural life' (Sadoul 1954, 255–256). Although in Mexico *María Candelaria* had been accused of presenting an idealisation of Mexico for tourists (Mora 2005, 64–65), paradoxically, at Cannes it was celebrated because of its presupposed authenticity. Nevertheless, the positive reception which met *María Candelaria* helped to establish a market for Mexican cinema in Europe at a time when, as Sadoul acknowledged, Mexican films were unknown in Europe (1954, 255–256).

Demonstrating an early critical interest in the figure of the director as an artist, the films directed by Emilio Fernández aroused curiosity and admiration in Europe in the years that followed (Oliver 1948). In fact, Mexican cinema came to be seen as a 'one-man effort' whose genius and gifted personality had 'put on the map... the hitherto almost non-existent and certainly unknown Mexican Cinema' (Wollenberg 1948, 27). Such an enthusiastic reception in Europe was crucial for Fernández and his collaborators, who then continued to reproduce the successful melodramatic formula (Tuñón 1995, 182). While other films made by the duo of Fernández and Figueroa would be sent to Venice and Cannes in the following years,³⁵ the recurring formula started to wear thin with European critics, who began labelling the films 'repetitive and over-exquisite' (De la Roche 1949, 25).

Along with the attention span of European critics, Fernández' reputation declined so fast that by the mid-1950s reports about Mexican cinema would not even mention his name or discuss his latest films (Nicholson 1956, 148–252). Although Fernández continued directing films until the 1970s, his films stopped being premiered at prestigious festivals from the mid 1950s onwards.³⁶ He went from being considered 'the' key Mexican and Latin American director in the 1940s to being viewed as a 'nobody' (Tierney 2007, 160). With his films frequently disregarded as ideologically manipulative melodramas, Fernández – and in fact, the whole Mexican film industry – became the epitome of the 'old' cinema that the advocates of the 'new' Latin American cinema so vehemently rejected and aimed to replace.

b. *Los olvidados*: The Re-Discovery of Luis Buñuel

In stark contrast to Fernández' declining career, the Spanish émigré Luis Buñuel's *The Young and the Damned*/*Los olvidados* (MX 1950) received a warm welcome at the fourth film

³⁵ In Venice, Mexico presented films such as *Enamorada* (MX 1946), *La perla* (MX 1947) and *La malquerida* (MX 1949), while at Cannes it entered *Pueblerina* (MX 1949) and *La red* (MX 1953).

³⁶ The last film directed by Emilio Fernández that premiered at Cannes was *La red* in 1953 and at the Venice film festival *La tierra del fuego se apaga* (MX/AR) in 1955.

festival in Cannes³⁷ in May 1951. Made with cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa, it was the third of a long series of films that Buñuel would direct in Mexico. At Cannes the film received the International Critics' Award and Buñuel was awarded 'Best Director'. However, once again, local reception was at odds with international critics. While in Mexico the film's crude portrayal of young delinquents in Mexico City had generated resistance (Pérez Turrent 1995, 203); in Europe the 'realistic' treatment of the subject gained the attention of critics, who praised its 'remarkable sequences' and detached sociological observations (Tynan 1951, 4). Following the young offender El Jaibo (Roberto Cobo), after his escape from juvenile jail, the film presents rather unsympathetic characters with little moral concerns and for whom good behaviour does not pay off. Rejected by Mexican critics and audiences, the film was withdrawn from the theatres in November 1950 after only four days of screenings (Galiana and Crespo 2002, 7). Following this less than favourable reception and given the negative image of Mexican society that it presented, the film was not selected to represent the country at Cannes. However, through the effective lobbying of the writer Octavio Paz – who was then working at the Mexican embassy in Paris and assumed the role of Mexican delegate at Cannes – *The Young and the Damned* became part of the Mexican selection for the event (Galiana and Crespo 2002, 105; Herrera 2001, 50–557). Before the festival, Paz and other intellectuals sympathetic to Buñuel's work screened the film in cine-clubs in Paris and London³⁸ where film critics praised its critique of poverty and regarded it as a memorable film in spite of the difficult subject matter (Tynan 1951, 4).

After the success at Cannes, critics were very positive about both Buñuel and *The Young and the Damned*. The British *Monthly Film Bulletin* praised its objective treatment of the degrading effects of poverty and especially its 'poetic quality which lifts it far above the level of brilliantly realistic reportage' (LGA 1952, 76). Among the chorus of European critics celebrating Buñuel's return was the influential André Bazin, co-editor of *Cahiers du Cinéma* – along with Lo Duca and Jean Doniol-Valcroze – from its launch in 1951 until his premature death in 1958. In the literary magazine *Esprit*,³⁹ Bazin argued that the film represented the 'objective cruelty of

³⁷ The first three editions of the festival at Cannes took place in 1946, 1947 and 1949. In 1951 the festival became an annual event and moved from September to May (Festival de Cannes 2009).

³⁸ At the end of 1950 the film was screened in Paris and reviewed by the specialised magazines *L'Écran Français* (No. 284, 25 December 1950) and *Cinémonde* (No.853, 11 December 1950). In April 1951 *The Young and the Damned* was also shown at the New London Film Society (Tynan 1951, 4).

³⁹ Article originally published in *Esprit* in January 1952. It was translated and reprinted in *The Cinema of Cruelty* (André Bazin 1982a, 51–58).

the world' and that its 'greatness' laid in its rejection of Manichaeian moral categories (1982a, 53–54).

Also very positive in his comments, Duca drew on Bunuel's previous surrealist films (well known in France at the time) to praise his overwhelming and fascinating cruelty (1951, 14). In line with the growing consensus among European critics regarding Mexican cinema (and cinema in general), Duca celebrated of *The Young and the Damned* because of its harsh representation of reality:

Buñuel was helped by the images of Gabriel Figueroa, who finally gave up the prodigious postcards that came from his camera without a cloud to tarnish them. Mexico City, its suburbs, its squalid corners seem to have found a new life, intense as the purest sky⁴⁰ (Duca 1951, 14).

Therefore Buñuel's rising reputation was based on the rejection of previous Mexican cinema that had, until then, been so celebrated by foreign critics. As Bazin made explicit in *L'Observateur* in 1952⁴¹, there was a renewed interest in Mexican cinema at European film festivals, but only because of Buñuel, who was seen as 'the exact opposite of the famous Fernández-Figueroa team' (1982b, 59). In retrospective, the warm reception that greeted Mexican films in the post-war years was seen as a short-lived phenomenon, almost a mistake. In words of the critic:

With the exotic surprises gone and Figueroa's cinematographic feats ultimately reduced to fragments of technical bravura, Mexican cinema found itself crossed off the critics' map (André Bazin 1982b, 60).

While the films directed by Fernández were regarded as sugar-coated and false versions of reality, the notion of 'cruelty' – as a form of brutal honesty drawn from Antoine Artaud's theatre theories – positioned Buñuel at the avant-garde of international cinema. From then on, Buñuel's reputation grew dramatically leading him to become one of the best regarded 'auteurs' of world cinema.

The awards and critical acclaim received by *The Young and the Damned* contributed to a critical rediscovery of Buñuel in both Mexico and Europe, which increased the demand for his

⁴⁰ My translation, in the original: 'Buñuel a été aidé par les images de Gabriel Figueroa qui a renoncé enfin aux prodigieuses cartes postales qui sortaient de sa caméra sans que jamais un nuage ne les ternit. Mexico, sa banlieue, ses coins sordides semblent avoir trouvé une vie nouvelle, intense comme le ciel le plus pur' (Duca 1951, 14).

⁴¹ Article originally published in *L'Observateur* in August 1952. It was translated and reprinted in *The Cinema of Cruelty* (André Bazin 1982b, 59–63).

films among cinephile groups (Durnat 1977, 7; Pérez Turrent 1995, 203). In Mexico, where it had been generally rejected, the reception changed completely. As the director declared:

Everything changed after the Festival in Cannes (...) The film was really successful [and] received marvellous reviews (...) After the European success, I was absolved by the Mexican side. The insults stopped, and the film was re-released in a good cinema in Mexico [the Cine Prado] where it stayed for two months⁴² (Buñuel quoted in Galiana and Crespo 2002, 106).

In international arenas, the positive reception met at Cannes by *The Young and the Damned* opened the door for further recognition from the critical and festival establishment. Coinciding with the commercial release of *The Young and the Damned* in France in December 1951, *Cahiers du Cinéma* explicitly declared its intentions of improving the limited attention that Buñuel's work had previously received from the magazine (Kast 1951, 6). It thus devoted three lengthy articles to the director including: an analysis of his previous films in Europe⁴³ (Kast 1951, 6–16) an interview (Kast et al. 1951, 17–23) and a review of his latest film (Doniol-Valcroze 1951, 52–54). The magazine ignored the films that Buñuel directed within the Mexican film industry, tacitly disregarding them as unworthy commercial exercises.⁴⁴ After his first success at the festival, Buñuel became a regular at Cannes, presenting many of his films at the prestigious event.⁴⁵ Also welcomed at Venice, he not only presented several films⁴⁶ but was awarded the Golden Lion of the festival for *Belle de Jour* (FR 1967). Following recognition from the most prestigious events on the festival circuit⁴⁷ specialised publications such as *Sight & Sound*,

⁴² My translation, in the original: 'Todo cambió después del festival de Cannes... La película conoció un gran éxito [y] obtuvo críticas maravillosas (...) Tras el éxito europeo, me vi absuelto del lado mexicano. Cesaron los insultos, y la película se reestrenó en una buena sala de México [el cine Prado] donde permaneció dos meses' (Buñuel quoted in Galiana and Crespo 2002, 106).

⁴³ During his period in Europe when he was involved in the surrealist movement, Buñuel directed *An Andalucian Dog/ Un chien andalou* (FR 1929), *The Golden Age/ L'age d'or* (FR 1930) and *Land Without Bread/ Las hurdes* (ES 1933).

⁴⁴ Buñuel's first two films in Mexico were *Gran casino* (MX 1947) and *The Great Madcap/ El gran calavera* (MX 1949).

⁴⁵ Buñuel's films at Cannes included *Ascent to Heaven/ Subida al cielo* (MX 1952), *El* (MX 1953), *Nazarín* (MX 1959), *The Young One/ La joven* (MX 1960), *Viridiana* (MX/ES 1961), *The Exterminating Angel/ El angel exterminador* (MX 1962) and *Tristana* (ES 1970)

⁴⁶ In Venice Buñuel presented films such as *Robinson Crusoe/ Las aventuras de Robinson Crusoe* (MX 1954) and *The River and the Death/ El río y la muerte* (MX 1954), *Nazarín* (MX 1958) presented in 1959; *Simon of the Desert/ Simón del desierto* (MX 1965).

⁴⁷ At Cannes for instance, *Ascent to Heaven* received the International Critics Award in 1952, *Nazarín* obtained an International Prize in 1959, *The Young One* got a Jury Mention in 1960, *Viridiana* won ex-aequo the Golden Palm in 1961 and *The Exterminating Angel* the International Critics Award (FIPRESCI) in

Hollywood Quarterly, *Positif* and *Cahiers du Cinéma* gave Buñuel and his films further coverage and greater recognition.

Despite the fact that Buñuel's increasing international success was related to the films he directed in Mexico, the overall reputation of Mexican cinema sharply declined throughout the 1950s. Films well received in Mexico were sent to Cannes, where they were unsuccessful.⁴⁸ In fact, the perception of international critics was that Mexican producers were simply 'not paying sufficient attention to the needs of the foreign market'; apart from some 'occasional artistic successes', there were few Mexican films that would be well received in non-Spanish speaking countries (Nicholson 1956, 250). In fact, for most scholars, the 1950s marked the decline of the 'Golden Age' of classic Mexican cinema (Fein 1999; J. King 2000; Mora 2005). In addition to its declining international reputation, production modes that had been very successful faced a decrease in funds available for film production as a result of the nationalisation of the film industry and stronger competition from Hollywood for the Spanish-language markets (Fein 1999, 123–163). Mexican producers responded to the new market conditions by producing faster and more formulaic films which heavily relied on popular characters and genres. However, over time, this strategy further discredited Mexican cinema, not only in the eyes of European and North American cinematic circles, but amongst Latin American audiences who had become its main consumers abroad.

c. *O cangaceiro*: Brazil's True Flavour

During the early 1950s, films from Brazil would also start to become visible in the international scene via their successful reception at Cannes film festival. In May 1953 *O cangaceiro* (BR 1953) directed by Lima Barreto and produced by the Companhia Cinematográfica Vera Cruz, received a mention for its Musical Score and a special award: Best Adventure Film in Cannes. Against the backdrop of a period of economic growth in Brazil, the short-lived Vera Cruz studios (1949-1954) aimed to produce films of international quality for local and foreign consumption (L. Shaw and Dennison 2007, 73–75). *O cangaceiro* arrived at Cannes with the good credentials of being linked to Alberto Cavalcanti, a Brazilian producer who had been successfully working in Europe since the 1920s – most notably in the UK with John

1962. Additionally, in Venice Buñuel received awards for his career in 1969 and 1982 as well as awards for films such as *Simón of the Dessert* in 1965 and *Belle de Jour* in 1967.

⁴⁸ Cases in point include *The Devil is a Woman/ Doña Diabla* (MX dir. Tito Davison 1950), *El niño y la niebla* (MX dir. Roberto Gavaldón 1953), *Memorias de un mexicano* (MX dir. Carmen Toscano 1950) and *Talpa* (MX dir. Alfredo B. Crevenna 1956).

Grierson's GPO Film Unit and Ealing Studios. At the end of the 1940s, Cavalcanti had returned to Brazil to work for the Vera Cruz studios, but maintained good contacts in the UK and sent regular reports about the Brazilian film industry (Cavalcanti 1952, 1953). Despite not working directly on the film, Cavalcanti was instrumental in getting the British cinematographer Chick Fowle and Yugoslav-born editor Oswald Hafenrichter to work in *O cangaceiro*.

According to *Sight & Sound's* report from Cannes, *O cangaceiro* was 'much liked for its original and truly national flavour' (L. Anderson 1953, 18). While some Brazilian critics – especially those who would later be associated with the influential Cinema Novo movement – strongly criticised its mixture of styles and genres which they considered foreign and derivative, *O cangaceiro* was generally welcomed by international critics in Europe, the US and most of Latin America (López 1999, 176–177). Once again, local and international critics disagreed on their assessment of films from Latin American countries. However, in this case, audiences in Brazil and abroad welcomed the film, which became a domestic box office success and the first Brazilian film to break through into international markets.⁴⁹

As stated by the critic John Gillet, *O cangaceiro* was not only the first Brazilian film to be released in Britain, but clear evidence that the frontiers of cinema were expanding via the festival circuit (1954, 91). Demonstrating an early understanding of Latin American cinema as a unified category, he compared *O cangaceiro* with other regional films which had recently been screened and awarded prizes at Cannes and Venice: the Mexican *The Young and the Damned* and the Argentine *River of Blood/ Las aguas bajan turbias*⁵⁰ (AR dir. Hugo del Carril 1952). Gillet ignored other the Brazilian films recently screened at Cannes and Venice which had not won awards – such as *Caiçara* (BR dir. Adolfo Celi 1951), *Tico Tico no Fubá* (BR dir. Adolfo Celi 1952) and *The Landowner's Daughter/ Sinhá Moça* (BR dir. Tom Payne 1952) – and focused instead on a few films from across the vast region that shared a preoccupation with the theme of violence. In his words:

The film [*O cangaceiro*] contains elements usually associated with the [North] American Western, but there is an important difference in tone. The underlying

⁴⁹ Most sources refer to the film being distributed in 22 countries, only specifying the US where it was distributed by Columbia Pictures as *The Bandit* (Barnard and Rist 1998, 114; R. Johnson and Stam 1995, 28; López 1999, 174; Viejo 2003, 66). Noticeable, the distributor commissioned an alternative ending in which the death of one of the male lead characters is not explicit (López 1999, 174). According to the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, the film was also distributed in the UK by Gala-Cameo Poly (Lambert 1954, 115).

⁵⁰ It received a Special Mention in Venice film Festival in August 1952 and is considered to be the most socially-themed Argentine film of the period (Kriger 1999, 141).

cruelty of the theme (some of the more violent episodes have been cut for this country [Britain]) is paralleled in other Latin American productions – *Los olvidados* and the Argentinean *Las aguas bajan turbias* are two widely differing examples – and this gives *O cangaceiro* a distinctly raw flavour (Gillet 1954, 91).

While for otherwise unknown Latin American cinemas, screenings at these prestigious European festivals were a necessary pre-condition for getting critics' attention Gillet's preference for award-winning films highlights the legitimating effects of festival prizes and their ability to catch the media's attention. As explored in Chapter 8, criteria for selecting quality and allocating awards are – rather than universal and objective – a contingent and rather subjective matter. Thus these forms of recognition reflected European concerns and expectations regarding Latin American cinemas, particularly in relation to the notion of 'violence' which would become a recurrent theme in the encounter between Europeans and Latin American cinemas. In fact, the idea that violence was an essential characteristic of Latin American cinema would become very well-established during the 1960s and 1970s when the perception of a unified regional movement gained currency in international cinematic circles.

d. Argentina's Leopoldo Torre Nilsson and Fernando Ayala

Also symptomatic of the privileged role of European festivals and critics in granting or denying recognition and visibility is the case of Argentine films screened in Venice and Cannes between the late 1930s and mid-1950s. In 1938 Argentina, Brazil and Mexico were invited to participate in the Venice film festival for the first time.⁵¹ While the Mexican film *Out on the Big Ranch/ Allá en el rancho grande* (MX dir. Fernando de Fuentes 1936) received a Medal of Recommendation for Artistic Accomplishment; the Argentine *La Chismosa* (AR dir. Enrique T. Susini 1938) was generally ignored by critics and jury-members. For diplomatic rather than aesthetic reasons, Argentina became the almost exclusive Latin American representative in subsequent Venice festivals in 1939 and 1941.⁵² As *Sight & Sound* commented at the time, Argentina's 'flirting with the Axis nations' included the screening of propaganda films from Germany and Spain (Del Castillo 1943, 58–59). While the Italian festival invited the Axis-friendly

⁵¹ The films presented included the short *O ciel de Brasil* [sic] (BR [s.n.] 1938) and the features *La chismosa* (AR dir. Enrique T. Susini 1938), *¡Ora ponchano!* (MX dir. Gabriel Soria 1937) and *Allá en el rancho grande* (MX dir. Fernando de Fuentes 1936) (La Biennale di Venezia 2006b).

⁵² Argentine films screened at Venice in the 1930s included *Divorcio en Montevideo* (AR dir. Manuel Romero 1939), *El matrero* (AR dir. Orestes Caviglia 1939) and *Madreselva* (AR dir. Luis César Amadori 1938). Additionally, Uruguay presented *Vocación* (UY dir. Viktor Bánky 1939) (La Biennale di Venezia 2006c).

Argentina to participate on political grounds, European critics were rather dissatisfied with the films and tended to ignore them in their writings.⁵³ Their dislike was clearly manifested during the 1948 festival when an unidentified French critic complained out loud: 'Why does Argentina persist in sending us mediocrities?' (Del Castillo 1948, 25). For the reporter of the episode, the reaction of the critic was, in fact, justified as the Argentine films were 'fifth rate, with little dramatic and no artistic significance' (Del Castillo 1948, 25). The disregard for Argentine films of the period also left its mark on some of the first historical accounts of world cinema. Therefore, according to Paul Rotha's *Film Till Now*, despite experiencing an increase in production levels, 'the Argentine films, such as have been shown, do not call for comment' (1951, 618).

Until the late 1950s Argentine films were screened at festivals in Europe, although they failed to win any major prizes or provoke a great response from the critics. However, the situation would change dramatically with the film *The House of the Angel/ La casa del ángel* (AR 1957) and its director Leopoldo Torre Nilsson. Both were promptly welcomed as the new 'discoveries at Cannes' in 1957 (L. Anderson 1957, 26–27). Based on the homonymous book by Beatriz Guido – Torre Nilsson's wife and co-writer of the film script – *The House of the Angel* offers an overview of the period's social and political tensions from the narrative perspective of Ana (Elsa Daniel), a teenager girl who experiences her first sexual encounters. However, Torre Nilsson was no novice: the recently 'discovered' director already had five films under his belt and, as the son of the notorious producer and director Leopoldo Torre Ríos, he was well-connected within the Argentine film industry.

Following the screening of *The House of the Angel* at Cannes, Torre Nilsson was applauded for several minutes. The general question among critics was 'who had ever foreseen such high standards in an Argentine director?' (Trajtenberg 1961, 34). According to Eric Rohmer from *Cahiers du Cinéma*, it 'was the best film to have arrived from South America since the beginnings of cinema' (quoted in J. King 2000, 80). In October 1957 *The House of the Angel* was invited to participate in the first edition of the London film festival. Programmed by critics of *The Sunday Times* and the British Film Institute (BFI), the event aimed to be an exclusive selection of 'the most unusual and adventurous films seen at other European festivals throughout the year' (Prouse 1957, 60). Therefore, the film's selection immediately gave it a seal of approval from the core of the British critical establishment. Yet again, there were considerable differences between local and international reception. Although many Argentine

⁵³ See for instance the article on Argentine cinema published in *Sight & Sound* in Summer 1948 that does not mention any of the films screened at Venice in previous years (Norgate 1948, 65–67).

critics and audiences made their objections to the film known, *The House of the Angel* was ranked among the top ten films of the year by several critics of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, including the influential critic-historian Georges Sadoul (España 2003, 81).

The House of the Angel launched Torre Nilsson's international career. Moreover, as with the aforementioned cases, his discovery at European festivals brought further recognition and visibility to the director, who became a regular at Cannes and Venice.⁵⁴ As he himself acknowledged, he 'made a career through festivals' (quoted in Trajtenberg 1961, 40). However, the somewhat paradoxical 'discovery' of a director who was already very well-known in Argentina pointed to a certain parochialism and ethnocentrism from European critics, as well as highlighted the importance of European festivals – with Cannes at the centre – as privileged centres of discourse. While the notion of 'discovery' actually refers to the recognition of what was previously unknown in Europe, *The House of the Angel* has been widely regarded as Torre Nilsson's coming of age (España 2003, 81; J. King 2000, 80; Sadoul 1972, 251). In this sense, the power of the European festival and critical establishment to shed light on films and directors that they appreciated and recognised was – and still is – paramount. By virtue of such a welcoming response, the work of Torre Nilsson became well known in international cinematic circles at the time and, as historian John King confirms, he is still regarded one of the main two authors of Argentine cinema of the 1950s and 1960s (2000, 80).

The comparison between Torre Nilsson and Fernando Ayala, the other author mentioned by King (2000, 80), is actually very useful to highlight the negative effects of European festivals and critics on the international visibility of Latin American cinemas. Ayala arguably experienced significantly less international success than Torre Nilsson, although his career in Argentina, beginning in the 1950s, spanned almost 40 years. While some of Ayala's films were presented at international festivals,⁵⁵ foreign critics never identified him as a 'discovery'. Ayala's fortunes did not change with *The Boss/ El jefe* (AR 1958) – his fourth film – which was highly regarded by local critics and received several national awards (Martínez 1961, 25). After its opening in Argentina in October 1958, the film became a great box office success and it is still regarded as one of Ayala's best films and a 'classic' of Argentine cinema (Rapallo 1993, 12). However, *The Boss*

⁵⁴ Torre Nilsson's films at Cannes and Venice included *The Kidnapper/ El secuestrador* (AR 1958), *Summerskin/ Piel de verano* (AR 1961), *Four Women for One Hero/ Homenaje a la hora de siesta* (AR 1962), *The Hand in the Trap/ La mano en la trampa* (AR 1961) and *Seventy Times Seven/ Setenta veces siete* (AR 1962). Moreover, in 1961 *The Hand in the Trap* was awarded the International Critics Prize at Cannes and Torre Nilsson was invited as a jury-member to the 22nd edition of the Venice film festival.

⁵⁵ *The Boss* was screened at the Mar del Plata film festival in 1959, *Paula cautiva* (AR 1963) at London in 1963, *Me First/ Primero yo* (AR 1964) at Cannes in 1964.

never attracted the attention of foreign critics. After its Argentine release, *Variety* offered a brief assessment of the film in which it discarded its international possibilities even though it had ‘such abundant local colour as to make it domestically acceptable entertainment’ (Nid 1958). According to the trade journal, the film had enough merits to guarantee an ‘okay outlook for Latin situations’ but ‘the story [was] weakly developed at points’ (Nid 1958). Moreover, the reviewer did not mention the director, but the scriptwriter David Viñas, thus cataloguing the film as a generic piece of entertainment for the local or Spanish-language market rather than an artistic one.

Regardless of its great local success, *The Boss* was not screened at prestigious European events, but in the Argentine city of Mar del Plata in March 1959 and in a small Latin American festival held in June 1960 in Santa Margherita Ligure in Italy (a festival that I will deal with in more detail at the end of this chapter). Although the film received awards at both events,⁵⁶ screenings at smaller festivals signified limited exposure to the media and international critics. Moreover, foreign critics who did see the film were not particularly impressed. Invited as a jury member to the Italian festival, *Sight & Sound*'s John Gillet preferred to devote most of his report to Torre Nilsson's work. Gillet offered a very brief description of *The Boss*, arguing that although the main actor's work added some interest to certain scenes, overall ‘the story development itself is over-predictable and the technique leans too heavily on close-up violence and shock tactics’ (Gillet 1960, 189). Other films directed by Fernando Ayala, were screened at European and North American film festivals including *Paula Cautiva* (AR 1963) in London and San Francisco in 1963 and in Genoa in 1965 and *Me First/ Yo primero* (AR 1964) which appeared in Cannes' main competition in 1964. However, his work remained better known and appreciated in Argentina than abroad. In contrast with the case of Leopoldo Torre Nilsson – who built up an international reputation based on the positive reception at European film festivals – the case of Fernando Ayala reveals a filmmaker who is mostly unknown abroad because of the poor reception of his work at European film festivals.

Throughout the 1950s, other feature films from Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Venezuela were screened at Cannes and Venice, but they did not really attract the attention of European cinematic circles. Awards for Latin American films at Cannes and Venice were almost

⁵⁶ In Mar del Plata *The Boss* received the award for Best Film in the Spanish-Language in 1959 and in Santa Margherita it was awarded the Llano de Oro along with the Argentine selection in 1960 (Rapallo 1993, 61).

exclusively⁵⁷ given to the films of already recognised directors such as Luis Buñuel, Emilio Fernández in the early 1950s and Leopoldo Torre Nilsson at the end of the same decade. Significantly, European critics tended to ignore films from the region or refer to them with contempt in their festival reports. A case in point is Gavin Lambert's report from Cannes in 1951 in which he openly praised *The Young and the Damned* whilst ignoring most Latin American films, except for the Brazilian Cavalcanti-produced *Caiçara* which he described as 'a film of minor interest, certainly superior to the other South American entries' (Lambert 1951, 40). Even more clearly, Penelope Houston's report from Venice in 1952, disregarded the entire selection as an 'inevitable crop of curiosities [with] some disagreeable exercises in violence' but without even mentioning any specific film (1952, 55).

As European critics highlighted with the few films that they considered exceptional, they tended to draw comparisons and connections that tacitly implied that Latin American cinema was a unified category. In 1956 *Sight & Sound* argued that – mostly in relation to the work of Cavalcanti and the triumph of *O cangaceiro* – Brazilian cinema showed some 'progress' and 'a refreshing desire toward real creation', although it was argued that this was clearly not the case with Argentina (Fenin 1956, 256). A year later, Jean Doniol-Valcroze expressed his doubts about the value of *O cangaceiro* based on its comparison with the recently 'discovered' Leopoldo Torre Nilsson. He reflected on the value of regional cinema as a whole:

If there is a Mexican cinema (shining, above all, due to the contributions of the non-native Buñuel), can we say that there is such a thing as South American cinema? Brazil, which has also benefited from the presence of a foreigner, Cavalcanti, was able to make an impression with *O cangaceiro*. But we realise now, with hindsight, that a good chorus and musical picturesque riders are not enough to bring Lima Barreto into the history of cinema, and we ask to see more of his work before we decide. Rather unexpectedly, the light comes from Argentina – where a long absence of freedom of expression has not helped

⁵⁷ With the exception of a few minor awards given to films such as *The balandra Isabel llegó esta tarde* (VE/AR dir. Victor Hugo Christiansen 1949) which received an award for Best Cinematography at Cannes in 1951 and the semi-documentary *Torero* (MX dir. Carlos Velo 1956) that received a Special Mention from the Jury in Venice in 1956. In the case of *The balandra Isabel* it is noteworthy that the cinematography of the film was undertaken by Spanish-born but Argentine-based José María Beltrán. In spite of being a Venezuelan entry at Cannes, it was in fact a Latin American international coproduction set in Venezuela but with an Argentine director, a Mexican lead actor Arturo de Córdova, an Argentine lead actress Virginia Luque and a mixed Argentine and Venezuelan crew.

young talent to develop – Nilsson seems to me a much more serious revelation⁵⁸
(Doniol-Valcroze 1957, 59).

The words of Doniol-Valcroze summarise, on the one hand, the sceptical attitude of European critics toward the value of cinemas from Latin American countries and their tendency to attribute 'success' to a beneficial foreign (i.e. European) influence. On the other hand, the critic's thoughts leave no doubts regarding the privileged position of those who, like him, regulate the access to cinematic history. Thus the implicit community that Doniol-Valcroze refers to are the European and North American critics, jury-members and programmers with the power to perform the roles of cultural experts who judge and vote on the worth of the world's cinematic production.

e. The Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano in Italy

Until 1960 the encounters between European critics and Latin American cinema appeared to be full of misunderstandings, lack of knowledge of cultural specificities and unfulfilled artistic expectations. The poor reception of Latin American films as a whole is evident in the work of John Gillet, who reported for *Sight & Sound*:

Buñuel and Torre Nilsson excepted, films from a whole continent tend to blur together into a composite image of whippings, slashing, rape and religious hysteria (...) A violent cinema in fact, and a troubled one; but it has always been difficult to discover what it is that makes these films so bad (Gillet 1960, 188).

Although European critics disregarded Latin American cinemas for what they perceived as excessive violence and lack of quality, they tended to consider them as a single entity. This understanding of an integrated 'Latin American cinema' was emphasised by the event from which Gillet was reporting: the first Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano in Santa Margherita

⁵⁸ My translation, in the original: 'S'il y a un cinéma mexicain (et encore brille-t-il surtout par l'apport allogène de Buñuel), peut-on dire qu'il existe un cinéma d'Amérique du Sud? Le Brésil, qui, lui aussi, a bénéficié de la présence d'un étranger, Cavalcanti, a pu faire illusion avec *O cangaceiro*, mais on se rend compte aujourd'hui, avec quelque recul, qu'un bon refrain musical et de pittoresques cavaliers ne suffisent pas pour faire entrer Lima Barreto dans l'histoire du cinéma, et nous demandons à voir autre chose de lui avant de nous prononcer. En tout à fait inattendu que la leur vienne de l'Argentine ou une longue absence de liberté d'expression n'a pas du aider beaucoup les jeunes talents à se développer, Nilsson me paraît une révélation beaucoup plus sérieuse' (Doniol-Valcroze 1957, 59).

Ligure, Italy in June 1960. Gillet was invited as a jury-member along with a group of prestigious European filmmakers, critics and intellectuals.⁵⁹

Cahiers du Cinéma also reported on the event and recognised the limited knowledge that ‘they’ (i.e. European critics, audiences and filmmakers) possessed on Latin American cinema. Less sensitive about the quality of the films, the French magazine pointed out the importance of the sociological work exposed during the Symposium of Film Sociology by prominent (European) researchers⁶⁰ regarding ‘the cultural reality of the Argentine masses’ and ‘the essential characteristics of the sacred Aztecs’ so persistent in Mexico (Tourmel 1960, 52). However, the French Olivier de Tourmel tacitly agreed with the decision of the jury to award the whole Argentine selection – rather than a particular film – because there was not any individual film deemed worthy of such an honour. For him the social, racial and economic issues studied were good enough because ‘these works undoubtedly contributed to deepen *our* understanding of cinema (my emphasis)⁶¹’ (1960, 52). While the general consensus among European critics and intellectuals was of Latin American films having little or no aesthetic value, some commentators saw their sociological potential. In fact, the idea of cinema as a ‘social’ tool to analyse, understand or change reality would be closely attached to the concept of ‘Latin American cinema’, although cinema with more commercial, entertaining or purely aesthetic purposes would continue to be made throughout the region during the following decades.

The Italian Rassegna was organised by the Genoa-based cultural institution Colombianum and headed by the Jesuit Father Angelo Arpa and the left-wing critic-filmmaker Gianni Amico who enthusiastically promoted Latin American cinema in Italy and Europe. In fact, the event openly aimed to strengthen the relations between Italy and Latin American countries, deepening the knowledge of Latin American culture in Europe and highlighting the films of most significant artistic level as a way of improving Latin American cinema (Fernández Cuenca 1960, 70). These objectives were in line with those of the Colombianum itself which had emerged in 1958 from the cinephile group Cineforum in Genoa (Pereira 2007, 128–130). Led by the literary critic and editor Amos Segala and Father Arpa, the Colombianum launched publications,

⁵⁹ In addition to Gillet, the jury included Roberto Rosellini as honorary president, Roger Bastide, G.B. Cavallero, Carlos Fernández Cuenca, Edgar Morin, Andrzej Munk and Agnès Varda.

⁶⁰ Among the invited intellectuals were Edgar Morin, Amédée Ayfre, Alfred Métraux and Nadège Perken.

⁶¹ My translation, in the original: ‘Nul doute que de tels travaux approfondissent notre connaissance du cinéma’ (Tourmel 1960, 52).

exhibitions and seminars to promote cultural exchange between Europe and Latin America.⁶² Although the festival presented itself as a secular cinematic event, it formed part of a wider effort of the Catholic Church to get directly involved in cinema through organisations like the Office Catholic International du Cinéma (OCIC). Launched in 1928, the OCIC promoted films in line with Catholic humanistic values and gave awards at several European festivals including Venice, Cannes and Berlin⁶³ (Ortiz 2003, 182–184).

The festival and discussions were programmed in line with the understanding of cinema as an instrument for learning about other cultures. This idea had been gaining currency among European critics and intellectuals during the 1950s as reflected by the growth or appearance of institutions such as UNESCO's Department of Cultural Activities (functioning between 1948 and 1964), the International Confederation of Experimental and Art House Cinemas (CICAIE) established in Europe in 1954 and conferences such as 'Cinema, Art and Industry in International Collaboration' held in Varese in 1955 and 'Cinema and Civilization' in Venice in 1959. The bottom line, as Polish film historian and activist Jerzi Toeplitz highlighted in his presentation 'Cinema and the Understanding of Other Cultures' in Venice, was to avoid a purely 'evasive' cinema of entertainment and deception whilst encouraging a 'realist' cinema that could promote deeper understanding and reciprocity among nations (Cebollada 1959, 53). Like the Rassegna, there were other festivals created with similar purposes such as the first International Contest of Ibero American and Filipino Documentary Films held in Bilbao in October 1959. These festivals demonstrated European critics' and intellectuals' preference for social-themed and aesthetically realistic films from non-European countries.

Significantly, these events held in Bilbao and Santa Margherita drew from two overlapping geopolitical associations which reflected the historical roots and political agendas behind these cultural-bridging initiatives. Although the festivals had a shared approach towards cinema as a tool for mutual cultural understanding, the terminology they employed was hardly a coincidence. While the Bilbao festival emphasised Spain's ties with its ex-colonies under the label 'Ibero-America', the Italian event accentuated the links among 'Latin' cultures. The discomfort provoked by the 'Latin' label was clearly expressed by Spanish critic Carlos

⁶² Parallel to the Rassegna, there were seminars and symposiums frequently supported by UNESCO that brought together prominent Latin American intellectuals such as the Mexican Leopoldo Zea, the Colombian Germán Arciniegas and the 1967 Nobel Prize in Literature winner Guatemalan Miguel Angel Asturias.

⁶³ Since November 2001 the OCIC was merged with the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television (Unda) to form the current World Catholic Association for Communication (SIGNIS) which also grants awards in over thirty film festivals around the world (SIGNIS 2011, viii).

Fernández Cuenca, who was a jury-member in Santa Margherita. He explained to his readership in a footnote:

The term 'Latin American' which is frequently repeated in the text above, corresponds to the Italian formula found in the title of the event as is usual in that country. However, it is not the most precise term; this is actually "Ibero-American" in accordance with the endearing Spanish concept⁶⁴ (Fernández Cuenca 1960, 69).

Not surprisingly, for the Spanish critic, the most appropriate term was the one that strengthened the Iberian (i.e. Spanish) influences on America. However, as shown in Chapter 4, the term 'Latin America' was the result of a lengthy discursive negotiation involving both local and international players. Supported by the UNESCO and the Catholic Church, the Italian festival naturally endorsed the 'Latin' label that was already ingrained in their logics and organisational structures. While the only complaints about the term came from the Spanish critics, other participants, such as the French and the Italian, did not even question the 'Latin' label that was already part of their intellectual and diplomatic tradition. Without rejecting the concept, *Sight & Sound's* report 'South of the Border' implicitly maintained its main point of reference to the British ex-colonies at the North of the continent (1960, 188–191), whilst for Latin American themselves, a regional 'Latin' identity was already part of their background. Thus, even if the label suggested a misleading homogeneity, Latin Americans generally welcomed the opportunity to gain greater understanding and recognition from their European counterparts.

Moreover, the Italian festival appeared against the backdrop of an escalating Cold War conflict in which the concept of 'Latin America' would gain further international currency as both the capitalist United States and communist Cuba would try to align the region in accordance with their respective ideological projects. From the 1960s, the idea of 'Latin America' as a cultural, economic and political bloc of countries would become not only the cornerstone of Cuban foreign politics, but also the symbol of a real sentiment across the region of discomfort and resistance against an unequal world system. Upholding a Latin American identity implied both distance from their long-standing Anglo Saxon rivals and opposition to the oppressive regimes throughout the region that functioned with the backing of the US. Within the binary logic of the Cold War, Latin America – defined by its historical confrontation against

⁶⁴ My translation, in the original: 'La expresión "latino-americano", que tanto se repite en el texto anterior, corresponde a la fórmula italiana que están en el título de la manifestación como usual en el país, aunque el término más justo no sea ese, sino "iberoamericano", según el entrañable concepto español' (Fernández Cuenca 1960, 69).

the (capitalist) US – became the banner of all sorts of left-wing organisations that helped to establish an enduring association of the term with the search for social justice, Cuban-style revolutions and left-wing politics. These assumptions were also – and increasingly so – behind the programme and reception dynamics of the Italian *Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano* in the early 1960s.

Although its importance has been frequently overlooked, the *Rassegna* would be, in fact, the first event to propose – in terms of programming – the interconnection of cinemas from Latin American countries. With three different locations and only five editions between 1960 and 1965 – Santa Margherita (1960-1961), Sestri Levante (1962-1963) and Genoa (1965) – perhaps its short life and changing locations have been key factors in determining the little importance that historians have given to this event. However, it would play a key role in raising the international profile of Latin American films and filmmakers which, until then, had been widely overlooked by European critics, filmmakers and cinephiles. The *Rassegna* not only brought in influential critics and provided them with a programme made up entirely of films from Latin American countries, but, most importantly, it invited both Europeans and Latin Americans to reflect on the films as an assemblage and as cultural expressions of Latin America as a whole. The aim was to find the common links in ‘Latin American Cinema’ rather than pointing out the differences and trying to define specific national cinemas.

The successful *Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano* grew very quickly. While the first festival screened only Mexican, Brazilian and Argentine films, the second edition included the participation of eleven countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (*Colombianum* 1961). It also featured Brazilian and Argentine retrospectives, roundtables about Brazilian cinema and, most significantly, the announcement of the first films from revolutionary Cuba. However, demonstrating the increasingly tense political environment of the 1960s, the Cuban films were withdrawn from the programme without explanations (Gómez Mesa 1961, 51). While the Italian press promptly denounced the omission as an act of censorship, the Italian authorities later argued that it had been because of a problem with customs (Guevara 1962, 4). However, the incident attracted international attention for the small Italian festival that enhanced its left-wing reputation by showcasing Cuban films in the following years.

Following its relocation to Sestri Levante, the third edition of the *Rassegna*, held in June 1962, was declared by *Sight & Sound*'s Richard Roud as ‘an undeniable success’ that marked the

festival's 'coming of age' (1962, 179). On this occasion the event included strong award-winning Argentine participation, a large Mexican retrospective and some of the first works from revolutionary Cuba.⁶⁵ Significantly, the Rassegna screened two films that had been the talk of Cannes a few weeks before: *The Given Word/ O pagador de promesas* (BR dir. Anselmo Duarte 1962) and Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*. As examined in Chapter 6, *The Given Word* had just won the prestigious Golden Palm, provoking controversy among European critics who rebuffed the film as an undeserving award-winner. Thus when *The Exterminating Angel* took the main award at Sestri Levante, critics generally accepted this as fair (Baker 1962, 17–18). While the cinematic controversy helped to raise the Rassegna's profile – and reputation for more consistent awarding practices than Cannes – the festival also organised cutting-edge roundtables with notable guests. These included French critic Louis Marcorelles, Dutch filmmaker Joris Evens and scholar Edgar Morin (*Colombianum* 1962), who later became great promoters of Latin American cinema in European circles. Fuelled by the success of Rassegna, the notion of a unified regional cinema was becoming accepted among European and Latin American critics, filmmakers and intellectuals. Moreover, against the Cold War context, Latin American cinema started to be clearly associated with left-wing politics, films as social commentary, realistic aesthetics and independent low budget productions.

Held for the fourth time in Sestri Levante in May 1963, the festival demonstrated a clear preference for social-themed works from young independent filmmakers. As the Spanish critic Manuel Fernández noted, this affected the quality of the programme, which privileged films according to these selecting criteria rather than technical or artistic ones (1963, 67). Like his countrymen in previous years, the Spanish critic was one of a small number of voices questioning whether it was accurate to refer to *one* Latin American cinema. Warning about the dangers of this generalising category, Fernández advocated the establishment of 'cultural zones when studying its particularities and problems'⁶⁶ and the renaming of the event 'Exhibition of Cinema *from* Latin America (my emphasis)' (1963, 66). While the Spanish-speaking critic was probably better equipped to recognise linguistic and cultural differences within the region, his criticism echoed Spanish intellectuals' historical rejection of the idea of 'Latin America' itself. However, not many critics shared these concerns regarding the all-encompassing label,

⁶⁵ The programme included *Histories of the Revolution/ Historias de la revolución* (CU dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 1960), *The Young Rebel/ El joven rebelde* (CU dir. Julio García Espinosa 1962) and *Realengo 18* (CU dir. Eduardo Manet 1961).

⁶⁶ My translation, in the original: 'habría que delimitar, por lo menos, zonas culturales a la hora de estudiar sus particularidades y sus problemas. En el caso concreto de la rassegna, no sería mejor llamarla Rassegna del Cinema *de* Latinoamérica?' (Fernández 1963, 66).

particularly the organisers of the Italian festival, the title of which supported the idea of a unified region and programmed roundtables to discuss the common 'Problems and Perspectives of Latin American Cinema' (Colombianum 1963). On the contrary, the festival helped to put the notion of 'one' Latin American cinema on the map and stimulated the publication of reports and articles such as Louis Marcorelles 'L'Autre Amérique' in *Cahiers du Cinéma* (1963b, 10–13) and Alex Vianny's 'Brazil: In Step with a Latin Beat' in *Films & Filming* (1963, 51–54). Although these articles were more specifically about the early Brazilian Cinema Novo, their titles suggested that the movement was associated with 'Latin' or 'another' America (i.e. in opposition to North or Anglo America).

The Rassegna organised by the Colombianum was held again – on what would be the last time – in Genoa in January 1965. According to Brazilian scholar Miguel Pereira, the scale of the event and its decidedly left-wing orientation made Father Arpa and the Colombianum targets of the US State Department (2007, 137–138). Soon after the festival, Father Arpa was imprisoned for several months and expelled from the Jesuit Order, accused of mismanaging Colombianum's finances (Pereira 2007, 139). Corroborating Pereira's suspicion of the real reasons for his arrest, Mexican intellectual Leopoldo Zea – personal friend of Arpa and frequent collaborator of Colombianum – has also described the accusations as a 'trap' linked to the discomfort of some Italian conservative groups with Arpa's left-wing activities (2003). In fact, the last edition of the Rassegna faced considerable opposition and it was openly denounced for being 'a communist meeting, organised by communists that would be attended only by communists'⁶⁷ (Zea 2003). Although the details of the incident remain still unclear, the imprisonment of Father Arpa marked the end of the Rassegna and the decline of Colombianum, which would be finally dissolved in 1972.

The event in Genoa was a key watershed in the international reception of Latin American – especially Brazilian – cinema. Significantly, it offered a Cinema Novo retrospective as well as some newer films that became the highlight of the event. Whilst the Brazilian political landscape grew increasingly tense with the onset of the military dictatorship in Brazil in March 1964, the 20-minute documentary *Maioria Absoluta* (BR dir. Leon Hirzman 1964) was thrust into the limelight because of the censoring attempts of the Brazilian Embassy. Moreover, the competition included two films recently screened at Cannes: *Black God, White Devil/ Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (BR dir. Glauber Rocha 1964) and *Vidas Secas/ Barren Lives* (BR dir. Nelson

⁶⁷ My translation, in the original: 'Era una reunión comunista, organizada por comunistas, a la que asistirían sólo comunistas' (Zea 2003).

Pereira dos Santos 1964). Although both films had been modestly received at Cannes in May 1964 the 1965 Genoa festival gave them a starring role and provided Cinema Novo with a 'resonance box' (Pereira 2007, 132). *Barren Lives* was not only crowned Best Film at Genoa, but FIPRESCI jury-members openly praised Cinema Novo's great qualities. Critics and filmmakers associated with the movement promptly acknowledged its importance for the positioning of Brazilian films in Europe. As Carlos Diegues explained, the festival not only contributed to a greater promotion of Brazilian cinema in Europe, but it also shaped the way in which it was viewed: 'Brazilian cinema stopped being an object of scandal to become an object of study [and] analysis'⁶⁸ (Dahl et al. 1965, 229). With the benefit of hindsight, scholars have also pointed out the key role of the fifth Rassegna del Cinema Latinoamericano for Cinema Novo's growing reputation among European cinematic circles (Figueirôa 2004, 43–44; Pereira 2007, 137).

The festival was a resounding success for Brazilian cinema, which became widely perceived as leading the region's filmmaking. Reports from Genoa emphasised that, while Argentine films were 'pedantic intellectual' exercises and Mexican cinema had become 'deeply conformist and reactionary', the Brazilian Cinema Novo confirmed its importance and pre-eminence as 'the best cinema from Latin America and one of the most exciting ones worldwide' (Pérez Turrent 1965, 36–39). Other critics, such as the Italian Sandro Scandolara, decidedly focused their reports on Brazilian cinema because they considered it the most representative of the region. In the words of the critic:

We will limit our discourse to the Brazilian 'cinema novo', the most significant in terms of creative fertility, concrete results and sufficiently large production, remembering that the same holds true for Argentina, Cuba, Colombia, Bolivia, which have submitted works rooted in the reality of their country, truly conscious of the civil role of the media in underdeveloped regions⁶⁹ (Scandolara 1965, 327).

Thus, for the critic, the Brazilian films were simply the best outputs from a group of underdeveloped countries, of which the overall film production could be understood by analysing a representative sample.

⁶⁸ My translation, in the original: 'A partir de Genova, na Europa, o cinema brasileiro deixou de ser um objeto de escândalo para ser um objeto de estudo, de análise' (Dahl et al. 1965, 229).

⁶⁹ My translation, in the original: 'Limitaremo il nostro discorso al 'Cinema novo' brasiliano, il più significativo per fertilità creativa, concretezza di risultati e produzione sufficientemente numerosa, ricordando però che analogo discorso vale anche per Argentina, Cuba, Columbian Bolivia, che hanno presentato opere radicate nella realtà del loro paese, veramente consapevoli della funzione civile che compete ai mass-media in aree di arretrato sviluppo' (Scandolara 1965, 327).

Scandolarà's perspective does not contradict the assumption of the festival which presented an overview of Latin American Cinema against the background of the even wider 'third world' concept. In line with the politically tense background of the 1960s, the event included a large congress around the subject of 'Third World and World Community'. Coordinated by Italian critic Amos Segala and Guatemalan intellectual Miguel Angel Asturias – who would be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1967 – this congress, provided the framework for Rocha's first presentation of his influential paper 'Aesthetics of Hunger'. As explored in more depth in Chapter 6, the ideas of the rising filmmaker clearly resonated with European critics who started speaking of Latin America as part of 'a geography of hunger' (Scandolarà 1965, 326). Thus Rocha's text not only spoke from a Brazilian perspective, but from a Latin American one. In his words:

The problem facing Latin America in international terms is still that of merely exchanging colonisers... It is for this reason that hunger in Latin America is not simply an alarming symptom; it is the essence of *our* society. Herein lays the tragic originality of Cinema Novo in relation to world cinema. *Our* originality is *our* hunger and *our* greatest misery is that this hunger is felt but not intellectually understood (my emphasis) (Rocha 1983, 13).

Referring to Latin America as 'our society', for Rocha there was a common problem in the region. In this sense, he saw the Rio de Janeiro-based Cinema Novo movement as a response not only to the Brazilian reality, but to that of the whole of region. In this way, the radical and politicised Cinema Novo was generally understood as the model for Latin American cinema that would later be joined by a number of left-wing films from other countries, especially Cuba, Argentina, Chile and Bolivia. From its first modest edition in Santa Margherita in 1960 to its last in Genoa in 1965, the Rassegna del Cinema Latinoamericano was instrumental in promoting both the category of Latin American cinema itself and the strong political connotations that would shape its international reception even until today.

Conclusion

From the beginning of the film festival phenomenon in Europe in the 1930s and following the Second World War, Argentina and Mexico were invited to participate in the main European events at Venice and Cannes. Very soon Brazil also began to screen films in these and other emerging festivals during the 1950s. As the film festival circuit expanded, a few European events further consolidated themselves as key meeting points of international film culture where mostly European delegates, critics, jury-members and cinephiles judged the world's cinematic output and helped to establish supposedly 'international' standards of quality. Films from Latin

American countries were sent to European festivals in order to raise the international profile of their respective nations, although very few succeeded in attracting the attention of European cinematic circles. Sometimes in stark contrast with the preferences of local critics and audiences, the general perception among European critics was that films from Latin America were not of groundbreaking quality. While festival screenings became the privileged contexts in which the – then unknown – Latin American films were met by international viewers, more often than not they were disregarded as a whole as marked by violence and lack of artistry.

During the 1940s and 1950s no clear sense of a unified regional cinema existed. Although for European critics at the time, the notion of 'Latin America' or 'South America' existed as a geographical and cultural entity, the screening and reception of films was designated in terms of individual countries. With the introduction of the Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano in Italy in 1960, the Jesuit organisation Colombianum launched the first programmatic proposal to consider 'Latin American cinema' as a coherent corpus of films and to raise their profile in Europe. Within five years, the festival helped to position regional cinema as being lead by the left-wing Cinema Novo group. In this sense, European film festivals and the Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano in particular had a pivotal role in terms of how those expectations and theories influenced Latin American filmmakers, critics and intellectuals.

Chapter 6. 'New' Cinemas from Latin America

This chapter discusses the effects of international reception on the development of what is generally understood as the 'new Latin American cinema' movement of the 1960s and 1970s. While most academic studies explain the emergence of this cinematic phenomenon in terms of its production, this thesis argues that the breakthrough of political cinema from Latin America should also be understood in relation to its international reception and consumption through the film festival world. During the 1960s, film festivals and specialised magazines became pivotal in putting 'new cinemas' – labelled 'Cinema Novo' and 'new Latin American cinema' – from Latin America in the limelight. If the 'old' Latin American cinemas had been disregarded for their presumed lack of quality and commercial sway, the 'new' Latin American cinemas were embraced for their political commitment and left-wing politics. Thus the international welcoming of 'Latin American cinema' was strongly associated with the 'new' politically committed films that responded to the counter-culture and leftist *zeitgeist* of European and North American intellectuals during the 1960s and 1970s. In this sense, 'new cinemas' were not so much 'discovered' but 'invented' – i.e. selected, supported and defined – by international cinematic circuits.

As explained in the previous chapter, the Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano, particularly its last edition in Genoa in 1965, was crucial for the European positioning of the concept of 'Latin American cinema' – with Brazilian Cinema Novo as its vanguard. However, it was arguably the Pesaro film festival in Italy in 1968 which marked the international breakthrough of 'new Latin American cinema' as a regional phenomenon featuring films not only from Brazil but also from Argentina, Cuba, Bolivia and Chile. In the years that followed, the militant films benefited considerably from the attention paid to them by European and North American left-wing critics, cinephiles and filmmakers who both created a demand and actively promoted this type of cinema through written texts and festival programming. As they embraced the 'new', the already discredited 'old' films entered into oblivion and the term 'Latin American cinema' acquired strong political and left-wing connotations.

a. 'New Cinema' and Cinema Novo

During the mid-twentieth century there were several important changes in the film world that affected the international circulation and reception of Latin American cinemas in the 1960s. Firstly, the regional exports of the studio-modelled film industries in Mexico and Argentina had declined considerably during the 1950s (Oroz 1992, 166). Brazilian productions had flourished in

the domestic market since the 1940s, but films were not frequently exported (R. Johnson 1987, 57–63). Moreover, after the Second World War both Spanish and Portuguese-language films faced aggressive competition from Hollywood companies in the local and regional markets. Therefore, several production houses – especially in Mexico – were encouraged to produce films for lower budgets and in a shorter time (Fein 1999, 123–163). While film production in most Latin American countries had never taken off, the film industries in major producing markets were in a general state of crisis.

Cinematic practices and concepts were changing rapidly. As explained in Chapter 1, alongside the expansion of film festivals worldwide, new ideas about cinema, lighter equipment and cheaper modes of production started to gain adherents among young viewers, filmmakers and critics, who in turn developed a strong cinephile culture through the creation of cine-clubs, amateur short-films and specialised magazines.⁷⁰ Many young Latin American filmmakers and critics would travel to Europe during the 1950s where they came into contact with new aesthetic and technological cinematic developments (Francese 2007, 431–432; R. B. Rich 1991, 6–7). These young filmmakers included, among others, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Fernando Birri, Aldo Francia and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea as well as critic-scholars like Paulo Emilio Sales Gomes and Julio García Espinosa. Inspired by the Post-War European neo-realist and documentary movements, several Latin American filmmakers developed similar ideas about a ‘new cinema’ that would be at once aesthetically and politically challenging (Pick 1993, 16).

Within the Cold War context, opposition was growing to the US as a hemispheric authority viewed instead as a neo-colonial power imposing and dominating cultural, economic and political models. As a consequence, several filmmakers rejected Hollywood cinema and its influence in favour of a European neo-realist model that they perceived to be more suited to their local contexts and conditions (R. B. Rich 1991, 8–9). They promoted an artisanal mode of production and discarded the ‘old’ cinema that continued to be made in Latin American studios. The popular genre films made in Argentina, Mexico and Brazil, especially from the 1940s, were seen to encapsulate the individualistic and US-modelled cinema of entertainment that did not benefit the viewers, but encouraged them to accept an unjust economic and political system without question it.

⁷⁰ Different authors refer to cinephile groups in several Latin American countries. See for instance in Argentina (Couselo 2010; Dimitriou 2007, 15–17; Triana-Toribio 2007, 33–34), Uruguay (Zapiola 1985a, 1985b), Peru (Bedoya 1992, 140–141; Middents 2009, 20–21), Mexico (J. King 2000, 131–132), Cuba (Chanan 2004, 106–109; Vincenot 2007), Colombia (Rojas Romero 2004, 6–10), Chile (Francia 1990, 45–53) and Brazil (Elena and Díaz López 2003, 71; Schild 1996, 67; L. Shaw and Dennison 2007, 5–9).

In Brazil in particular, the attempts to create a national film industry were frustrated after the collapse of the Companhia Cinematográfica Vera Cruz and other production companies in the mid-1950s (L. Shaw and Dennison 2007, 76). Moreover, theories about a new non-industrial cinema started to gain currency, especially after two film industry congresses in the early 1950s (R. Johnson 1984, 1). Thus some young cinephiles started to produce films following an artisanal and non-commercial approach. Among the earliest attempts were two films directed by Nelson Pereira dos Santos: *Rio 40 Degrees/ Rio, 40 graus* (BR 1955) and *Rio Northern Zone/ Rio zona norte* (BR 1957). Both films reflected the influence of Neo-realist methods of filmmaking and the growing interest in addressing social problems. Despite having limited success with audiences in Brazil, the films enjoyed a very positive reception among local and international cinephile circles that viewed the films as a symbol of the renovation of Brazilian cinema that gave birth to the Cinema Novo movement (San Miguel 2003, 74–75).

The strong and active cinephile culture of the late 1950s and early 1960s provided fertile ground for some young Brazilian filmmakers and critics to develop a movement that would later be known as ‘Cinema Novo’.⁷¹ Their objective was to break with previous film production modes and create a truly Brazilian cinema that simultaneously reflected and transformed the reality of the country (L. Shaw and Dennison 2007, 88). The urge to renew national film production and the low-budget neo-realist style films that Nelson Pereira do Santos had produced earlier proved to be a key inspirational source for new filmmakers and critics such as Paulo Cesar Saraceni, Glauber Rocha, Ruy Guerra, Joaquim Pedro de Andrade, Gustavo Dahl and Walter Lima Jr. (Johnson 1984, 1-2). The Rio de Janeiro-based group started to produce a number of films that slowly gained international recognition and enhanced the reputation of the Brazilian Cinema Novo (Figueirôa 2004, 22). Although modest, the international reception of the first films⁷² was rather positive and their directors started to become known in European cinematic circles. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Rassegna in Italy gave an international boost to Brazilian cinema, but there were also other festivals welcoming the Cinema Novo films. A case in point is Glauber Rocha’s directorial debut *The Turning Wind/ Barravento* (BR dir. Glauber Rocha 1961) which was screened and awarded⁷³ in Karlovy Vary and the Free Cinema Festival in Porretta Terme in Italy in 1962. In 1963 the film was further embraced by programmers from the

⁷¹ The expression was coined by the Brazilian critic Ely Azeredo in the early 1960s in reference to the cinema produced by the group of filmmakers Glauber Rocha, Ruy Guerra, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Leon Hirszman and Joaquim Pedro de Andrade among others (Ramos and Miranda 1997, 37).

⁷² Among them were *Arraial do Cabo* (BR dir. Paulo César Saraceni 1959), *Couro de Gato* (BR dir. Joaquim Pedro de Andrade 1961) and *The Turning Wind/ Barravento* (BR dir. Glauber Rocha 1961).

⁷³ In Karlovy Vary *The Turning Wind* won the award for Best First Film.

Rassegna of Cinéma Latino-Americano as well as the non-competitive New York and London festivals which based their prestige on the practice of selecting the best entries from other festivals.

As production increased, the films from the Brazilian movement would appear at European festivals. At the same time, the political situation in Brazil and the world became much more tense, encouraging the demand for these left-wing films. In 1964, the same year that marked the onset of two decades of military rule in Brazil, Cannes screened *Barren Lives* (BR dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1963) and *Black God, White Devil* (BR dir. Glauber Rocha 1964) whilst Berlin included *The Guns/ Os fuzis* (BR dir. Ruy Guerra 1964) in its programme. As some early observers noted, the films were not immediately praised by European critics and some were rather sceptical about it⁷⁴ (Ciment 1970, 110). However, these films started to give coherence to the movement and attracted the attention of some influential critics, especially those with left-wing sympathies. *Film Quarterly* described *Black God, White Devil* as 'a remarkable film' discovered at Cannes (Shatnoff 1964, 34) and *The Guns* as one of the 'rewards' of the Berlin festival: 'violent, impressionistic, confusing and thoroughly fascinating' (Polt 1964, 38). Likewise, *Films & Filming's* Peter Baker reported from Cannes that, while the big names had been disappointing, 'the major impact came from the Brazilians', specifically Rocha's film which the magazine editor labelled as 'a revolution' (1964, 36). Somewhat more uncertainly, *Sight & Sound* argued that the international prestige of Brazilian cinema remained uncertain and in 'desperate' need of some 'festival successes to help its film industry' in foreign territories (Playfair 1964, 169).

Two films related to Brazil had recently won Cannes' Golden Palm, but for different reasons neither of them had brought visibility for the Cinema Novo group or Brazilian cinema as a whole. First, there was the international co-production *Black Orpheus* (FR/IT/BR dir. Marcel Camus 1959). The film had been shot in Rio de Janeiro with a predominantly Brazilian cast and based on a script by Brazilian poet Vinicius de Moraes. However, the leading actress was African-American, the director was French and most of the film's funding came from France and Italy. Further diminishing its Brazilian credentials, the film was presented as a French entry in the Cannes film festival in 1959. Thus, it was generally received without controversy as a French achievement (Callenbach 1960, 57; Sadoul 1959, 111–112). Regardless of some confusion

⁷⁴ See for instance the reviews of *Sight & Sound* from festivals London 1963 (Milne 1963) Cannes 1964 (Roud 1964b) and Berlin 1964 (Roud 1964a) in which no specific mention was made of the Brazilian films. In the reports from Cannes in 1964 by French magazines *Cahiers du Cinéma* (Legrand 1964, 109, 116) and *Positif* (Moulet 1964, 11) the Brazilian films are briefly mentioned but not singled out for praise.

among foreigners, the film has been unequivocally categorised as French even by Brazilian sources (Farias 1995, 95).

In contrast, the indisputably Brazilian *The Given Word* (BR dir. Anselmo Duarte 1962) snatched the Palm d'Or Cannes in 1962. This was particularly surprising given that the film was not considered a strong competitor. Thus the film could not count on the support of the critics and the media who tended to ignore it. This was partly because they had not seen it during the festival and, mostly, because they did not consider worthy of a prize. As *Sight & Sound* disclosed after the event, the film was never a favourite to win the award and took the critics by surprise with many of them wondering who had made it or if it was any good (Gillet 1962, 130). Moreover, *The Given Word* was seen as 'the kind of film that a critic can fairly describe without much enthusiasm as "honourable", [but] it certainly does not strike one as an obvious prize-winner' (Baker 1962, 18). In other words, the film was not perceived to be up to the standards of the competition compared with other films by well-established directors such as Michelangelo Antonioni's *The Eclipse/ L'Eclisse* (IT/FR 1962), Luis Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel* (MX 1962) or Otto Preminger's *Advise and Consent* (US 1962), to name just a few. According to *Films & Filming*, the film simply responded to 'the popular idea of "artistic" cinema' but, in fact, was 'an insignificant film that will probably be forgotten within a few months' (Lane 1962, 18). In effect, the general consensus among critics was that *The Given Word* was undeserving of its Golden Palm and not worthy of their attention. As a result, the film and director were not heralded as a 'new discovery' as had been the case with other non-European films such as *Rashomon* (JP 1950) that won the Golden Lion in Venice in 1951, directed by the Japanese Akira Kurosawa, or *Aparajito* (IN 1956) directed by the Indian Satyajit Ray who received the same award in 1957.

An additional factor that arguably diminished *The Given Word's* artistic reputation was Duarte's detachment from the left-wing Cinema Novo group and his industry-friendly profile. Furthermore, as an actor, he had appeared in the underrated *chanchada* films produced by Atlántida in the 1940s (Schumann 1987, 88). The relationship between Duarte and the international critics became complicated when he openly declared his intentions had been to make a film with the appropriate ingredients to be a Golden Palm winner. According to the rather indignant Louis Marcorelles in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Duarte had told him:

I was sure of my chances. As I noted in a previous festival in which I participated as an actor, they love the picturesque at Cannes. So, I said to myself: 'In two

years you win the grand prize!' A well-built story, music, girls moving with rhythm and it's in the bag. And I actually won; I really like such straightforwardness⁷⁵ (quoted in Marcorelles 1963b, 10).

Rather than complying with the expected attitude of an artist that makes art for higher purposes, Duarte was cynically admitting his aim of crafting a tailor-made award-winning film. With such declarations the director not only described award allocation practices at Cannes as a matter of subjective taste, but he was highlighting a certain parochialism of European critics and jury-members that could be tricked with a formulaic folkloric film. By demystifying festival practices, Duarte was also presenting himself in non-auteurist terms, which, against the overwhelming spread of auteurist theories during the 1960s, could only work against the film and his own artistic reputation. Unsurprisingly, international critics rejected and blatantly ignored the only film from Brazil – and from the whole of Latin America – that has ever won the most coveted cinematic prize in the festival circuit.

The case of *The Given Word* demonstrates the ways that critics can reject and ignore films even when they have been granted prestigious festival awards. In contrast, the international rise of Cinema Novo presents the opposite case, in which a cinematic movement is promoted and nurtured by the critical and festival establishment. Both cases reveal the crucial link between the festivals and the media in terms of how cinemas are 'discovered' and put in the international spotlight or, alternatively, are discarded for their presupposed lack of quality. Factors that were critical in the internationalisation of Cinema Novo included access to prestigious European festivals and the support of powerful international critics (Figueirôa 2004, 42–43). First, the Cinema Novo filmmakers managed to gain strategic control of the commission in charge of selecting the films that the Brazilian Ministry of International Relations would send to the festivals abroad. Second, they received strong support from French critics, especially from the influential *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Positif*.

After the initial attention that Brazilian films had received from some critics in Cannes and Berlin in 1964, the turning point for Cinema Novo's international reputation was the year 1965 in which significant festivals were held in Genoa and Rio de Janeiro in January and September respectively. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Rassegna in Genoa put Brazilian cinema at the

⁷⁵ My translation, in the original: 'J'étais sur de mon coup. On aime beaucoup le pittoresque à Cannes, comme je l'avais remarqué lors d'un précédent festival auquel j'avais participé en tant qu'acteur. Je me suis dit: dans deux ans tu remportes le grand prix. Un sujet bien bâti, de la musique, des filles qui se dandinent en cadence. L'affaire est dans le sac. Et effectivement j'ai gagné' 'J'aime beaucoup pareille franchise' (Marcorelles 1963c, 10)

centre of its programme and against the wider discussions about 'Third world and world community'. Following the Rassegna, Brazilian cinema emerged as the key avant-garde movement from the region (Pérez Turrent 1965, 38). Moreover, after the festival in Genoa, Cinema Novo gained several supporters among French critics – such as Louis Marcorelles, Albert Cervoni, Robert Benayoun and Jean Rouch – who started to give greater visibility to the movement in specialised magazines like *Cahiers du Cinéma*, *Positif* and *Image et Son* (Figueirôa 2004, 43–44).

As examined in Chapter 5, it was during this festival that Glauber Rocha introduced his influential paper 'An aesthetics of hunger', which clearly resonated with the common desire for renewal amongst many left-wing Europeans. He advocated for a 'new cinema' in which filmmakers, regardless of their age or background, would be 'at the service of the great causes of this time' instead of searching for commercial profits (Rocha 1983, 13). Significantly, Rocha – an accomplished and knowledgeable critic himself – provided an articulated response to the historical disapproval of Latin American cinemas from European critics. In his words:

We know – since we made those ugly, sad films, those screaming, desperate films in which reason has not always prevailed – that this hunger will not be assuaged by moderate government reforms and that the cloak of Technicolor cannot hide, but rather only aggravates, its tumours... The most noble cultural manifestation of hunger is violence... Cinema Novo reveals that violence is normal behaviour for the starving... Cinema Novo teaches that the aesthetics of violence are revolutionary rather than primitive (Rocha 1997, 13).

From Rocha's perspective, the 'violence' that critics such as Penelope Huston (1952, 55) and John Gillet (1954, 91, 1960, 188) had noted as an 'essential' characteristic of 'Latin American cinema' had its roots in the inequality and poverty of the region that he summarised as 'hunger'. As a result, when the article was first published in French it was entitled 'The aesthetics of violence' (1966, 22–24) rather than 'An aesthetic of hunger' (Uma estética da fome) as it was originally published in Brazil (1965, 165–170). Moreover, Rocha reworked ideas already well-established amongst European critics – related to the nineteenth century notion of the ex-colonies as 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised' places – and provided a cultural theory through which Latin American cinema could be understood. However, the limitation of this framework was that it embraced the 'new cinemas' but ignored the 'old cinemas' – many of them non-violent musicals and comedies – that were still produced and widely-consumed in Latin America.

Furthermore, several months after the Rassegna in Genoa, the First International Film Festival took place in Rio de Janeiro in September 1965. Attended by a considerable number of international guests,⁷⁶ the festival enhanced the international prestige of Brazilian cinema in general and the Cinema Novo group in particular. Significantly, the event was reported in some of the most important international magazines such as *Cahiers du Cinéma* (Marcorelles 1965, 8), *Films & Filming* (Baker 1965, 17) and *Positif* (Benayoun 1966, 1). The event in Rio not only confirmed the rising status of the Brazilian movement, but allowed the critics to gather enough material to be published in the following months. Shortly after the festival, *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Positif* published special dossiers about Cinema Novo that further enhanced its international prestige (Figueirôa 2004, 44–45). In February 1966 *Positif* devoted its cover to *Black God, White Devil*, including articles, reviews and a reprint of Rocha's manifesto (Benayoun 1966, 1–21; Fofi 1966, 25–29; Rocha 1966, 22–24). By 1966 the Brazilian Cinema Novo was clearly well positioned within the radar of European, and more specifically French, film critics.

International recognition appeared on several fronts: festivals, specialised magazines and cultural institutions. In August 1966 the Berlin festival held a Cinema Novo retrospective. According to *Sight & Sound*, it came after 'thousands of words devoted to Cinema Novo in European magazines' (Gillet 1966, 174). The Brazilian section was organised by the German critic and programmer Peter B. Schumann, who would actively promote the circulation of both Brazilian and Latin American films in Germany in the late 1960s and 1970s (Nagib 2011, 263). The following year, Glauber Rocha's *Terra em Transe* (BR 1967) won the international Critics' Award at Cannes in May 1967 and Locarno's Grand Prix in August 1967. In January 1968 *Positif* devoted its cover to *Terra em Transe* and included a very positive review of the film (Martínez 1961, 59) and a lengthy interview with Rocha (Arlorio and Ciment 1968, 18–36). While several Cinema Novo films were distributed in France in the late 1960s, the context of political unrest and student protests guaranteed the popularity of the films – especially *Black God, White Devil* and *The Guns*, which were shortlisted among the best releases of 1968 and 1969 (Figueirôa 2004, 47). Joining the chorus of celebrations of Cinema Novo, the Museum of Modern Art in New York held a special cycle in 1968 in which they described the movement as exceptionally 'stirring, committed, controversial, and cohesive' (The Museum of Modern Art 1968, 6). Riding on Cinema Novo's popularity and as a strategy to overcome the political difficulties in Brazil at the time, European and Brazilian producers joined forces to co-produce films such as *Tropics/*

⁷⁶ These included, among others, Fritz Lang, Jean Rouch, Pierre Kast, Catherine Deneuve and Claudia Cardinale.

Tropici (BR/IT dir. Gianni Amico 1968), *Macunaíma* (BR/DE Joaquim Pedro de Andrade 1969) and *Antonio das Mortes/ O dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro* (BR/FR dir. Glauber Rocha 1969). The latter gained Rocha the title of Best Director in Cannes in 1969, adding not only to his personal prestige but to the standing of the whole movement.

At the turn of the decade, Cinema Novo films were welcomed in European cinematic circles which added to its worldwide reputation. As well as providing a market for Brazilian films, European intellectuals and activists promoted the production and circulation of the Cinema Novo films during an increasingly tumultuous time in Brazil brought about by the coup d'état in 1964 (Figueirôa 2004, pp.48–49). Certainly, the movement's rising reputation owed much to the genius of the Brazilian filmmakers behind the films. However, timing, particularly in relation to Cold War politics, was equally crucial. In this sense, Cinema Novo's momentum should be also understood in the context of some wider transformations of the international film world and its escalating politicisation embodied in the concept of 'new cinema'. In fact, Cinema Novo became one of the first 'new cinemas' from the non-Western world acknowledged through the film festival circuit. As it became understood as the leading regional movement, Cinema Novo attracted international attention for other 'new cinemas' from Latin America with a similar left-wing profile.

b. The Cuban Film Project

Alongside the rising international status of Cinema Novo during the 1960s, the Latin American political landscape underwent radical changes with the onset of the Cold War in the region. Right-wing military dictatorships spread to countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Peru – as well as Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay – in the 1970s. Rather than accepting governments sympathetic to socialism, the US cooperated with authoritarian regimes as long as they behaved according to its interests (P. H. Smith 2000, 155–163). Although the US presented itself as the leader of the 'free' and democratic world, the realities of authoritarian regimes encouraged the opposition of many young Latin Americans against abuses of power and economic inequalities. Moreover, the triumph of Fidel Castro's guerrilla group in overthrowing a military dictatorship in 1959 and the establishment of a communist regime supported by the Soviet Union had excited many left-wing supporters in Latin America. In the name of solidarity and economic justice, the Cuban government aimed to expand the communist system in the region which many Latin Americans regarded as a promising solution to their local social, economical and political problems. Although Cuba proudly presented itself as a 'free territory', the dangers of the Soviet Union's influence and the abuses of undemocratic left-wing

dictatorships seemed invisible at the time. A new generation started to dream of a revolution across Latin America.

The new revolutionary government in Cuba was quick to set up a network of cultural institutions that both democratised access to culture and raised Cuba's international profile. Within months of seizing power in January 1959, Castro's regime established cultural agencies such as the National Ballet, the National Folkloric Ensemble, the National Chorus, the Casa de las Américas and the Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC). Noticeably, the cultural centre Casa de las Américas – through its homonymous literary magazine, prizes and international distribution networks – would be instrumental in the development of the regional literature 'boom' of the 1960s and 1970s (Aldama 2004, 111). In this way, the Cuban revolution not only provided ideological coherence, but also an institutional framework of State controlled agencies, publishers, prizes and unions, that encouraged the flourishing of a Latin American literary movement (Barnhisel and Turner 2010, 234). Likewise, the ICAIC became the heart of all cinematic activities in Cuba which officials regarded as 'the art *par excellence*' because of its ability to communicate ideas to both local and international viewers (Craven 2006, 81). With its openly communist implications, the Cuban film project – centrally controlled in all aspects by the ICAIC – would become a crucial component of the Cuban discursive strategy towards the region and promotion of Latin American cinema as a category glued by its left-wing ideals.

The ICAIC was mostly made up of young filmmakers, critics and cinephiles who participated in the magazine *Nuestro Tiempo* and the Cine-Club Visión (Chanan 2004, 109). Although, at that time, production was relatively modest, in 1960 the film institute launched its own specialised publication *Cine Cubano* to promote 'revolutionary' ideas and films at home and abroad. The magazine was well received by left-wing intellectuals. By 1963 *Film Quarterly* already included it in the 'Checklist of World Film Periodicals' and described it as 'a fitfully intelligent, remarkably European journal' (Callenbach and Hamilton 1963, 49). *Cine Cubano* was edited by the first ICAIC director, Alfredo Guevara, who remained the highest ranking Cuban film official for decades. Personal friends with Fidel Castro, he has probably been the most influential bureaucrat in the whole history of Cuban cinema. Guevara not only held diplomatic and administrative power, but his continuous role in providing 'ideological direction and theoretical orientation' in Cuba and Latin America has been widely acknowledged (Burton 1997, 131). Unsurprisingly, *Cine Cubano* was highly committed, first, to the task of defining 'revolutionary' cinema in aesthetic and ideological terms. Secondly, the magazine actively promoted the idea of a pan-Latin American cinematic culture in which Cuban films served as a model for the 'new cinema' developed across the region. As Jeffrey Middents argues, the magazine was 'an official

cultural arm of the Cuban government' (2009, 119), that is, an instrument of Cuban propaganda that promoted a perspective of Cuban and Latin American cinema in line with the State's interests.

The Cuban revolution and its cinema project immediately aroused the curiosity of left-wing international observers. The revolutionary government would not waste opportunities 'to bring student, labour, and other groups to show off the socialist paradise in the tropics' (Wright 2001, 37). The new film venture attracted the attention of filmmakers such as Cesare Zavattini, Joris Ivens, Agnès Varda and Otello Martelli who accepted ICAIC's invitation to give workshops and participate in collaborative projects. Guest filmmakers would support Cuba by making films⁷⁷, whilst visiting critics and writers reported positively on the advances of its cinematic project. In contrast with almost all other Latin American films, which were only seen abroad (and generally ignored) via the festival circuit, the socialist credentials attracted visiting critics and filmmakers who generally welcomed the Cuban film project and highlighted its development in specialised magazines. *Sight & Sound's* special correspondent Peter Brook praised its vitality, the cosmopolitanism of its filmmakers and the supposed freedom brought by State subsidies (1961, 78). Likewise, *Film Quarterly's* chief editor Ernest Callenbach applauded the completion of the first feature films and the publication of the 'remarkably international-minded' magazine *Cine Cubano* despite the 'machinations of the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency of the US]' ('Editor's notebook: Cuban films' 1961, 3). In the following issue, *Film Quarterly* published a lengthy article covering different aspects of the Cuban cinema project, qualifying it as 'one of the most exciting developments on the international film scene' (Sutherland 1961, 49).

Within a couple of years the ICAIC implemented the State's monopoly of vertically integrated film production, distribution and exhibition. With financial and technical support from other communist countries,⁷⁸ the Cuban film enterprise soon began to yield its first products (Chanan 2004, 88). In the early 1960s, Cuban films⁷⁹ were sent to festivals such as those in Moscow, Locarno and, in particular, the Italian Rassegna discussed in Chapter 5. At the

⁷⁷ Notable examples include *!Cuba Si!* (FR dir. Chris Marker 1961), *Salut les cubains* (FR/CU dir. Agnès Varda 1963) and *I am Cuba/ Soy Cuba* (URSS/CU dir. Mikhail Kalatozov 1964).

⁷⁸ Cuba maintained trade agreements with the communist-bloc countries that provided up to 40% of new films for local exhibition and film stock from East Germany to print copies of Cuban films. Moreover, ICAIC's budget was allocated by the central Cuban government who in turn received subsidies from the Soviet Union (Chanan 2004, 88).

⁷⁹ These included films such as *Stories of the Revolution, Cuba Dances/ Cuba Baila* (CU dir. Julio García Espinosa 1963), *The Young Rebel/ El joven Rebelde* (CU dir. Julio García Espinosa 1962) and *Realengo 18*. (CU dir. Eduardo Manet 1961).

Rassegna held in Sestri Levante in 1962 and 1963, the Cuban delegation – headed by Alfredo Guevara – actively participated in the roundtables⁸⁰ and the issuing of official communiqués on behalf of all Latin American filmmakers. In a typical communist fashion, these fervent calls for regional cinematic solidarity were promptly published in *Cine Cubano* under pompous titles such as ‘Declaration of independent Latin American cinema’ (‘Declaración del cine latinoamericano independiente’ 1962, 7) and ‘Final decision about the round table about the problems and perspectives of Latin American cinema’ (‘IV Reseña del Cinema Latinoamericano’ 1963, 60–61). For some observers, however, the roundtables produced rather insubstantial results, and were the scenes of significant ‘demagogical excesses’ particularly from those at the extreme of the political spectrum (Fernández 1963, 66). Thus, while not everyone was convinced by the rhetoric of unity, it was clear that these events had become the target of Cuban propaganda.

In contrast to the rising reputation of Cinema Novo, for most of the 1960s the international reception of Cuban cinema was rather modest. Regardless of their diplomatic efforts and the initial curiosity from left-wing intellectuals, the films themselves did not fulfil the expectations of international critics. For *Cahiers du Cinéma*, in 1963 Cuban cinema was still ‘the great unknown in Latin America’ (Marcorelles 1963a, 36). A few years later, the situation remained very similar. As reported by *Film Quarterly*, Cuba had produced ‘several respectable films, but none that has been widely acclaimed without reservations or without political sympathy’ (W. Johnson 1966, 36).

Things were rather different in international politics, as Cuba took centre stage in the Cold War conflict because of its oppositional stance towards the US. By December 1964 all of the countries in the Organisation of American States (OAS), except Mexico, had severed relations with Cuba. However, the Cubans tried to export their armed revolution model and use diplomacy in order to escape their hemispheric isolation (W. S. Smith 1985, 338–339). Their rhetorical strategy was based on a notion of ‘solidarity’ that promoted political and cultural unity around the Cuban agenda. Therefore, in January 1966 Cuba hosted the First Tricontinental Conference of Asian, African and Latin American Revolutionary Solidarity which not only aimed to integrate Latin America into the Asian-African alliance that had been forged in the preceding decade, but to position Cuba as a leader of this international movement (Barcia 2009, 210–211).

⁸⁰ The roundtable held during the Sestri Levante film festival in 1962 was called ‘Cinema as an Expression of Latin American Reality’ and chaired by Edgar Morin and Tulio Spelli (Colombianum 1962; Guevara 1962, 2) and in 1963 there was a series running for five days entitled ‘Problems and perspectives of Latin American Cinema’ (Colombianum 1963)

After the Tricontinental Conference, Cuban foreign policy launched two international organisations under the banner of solidarity: the Organisation of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL) and the Organisation of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS). Launched in May 1966, the OSPAAAL had the objective of ‘unifying, coordinating and promoting’ the ‘tricontinental’ struggle against what they saw as US ‘imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism’ (Castro 1966, 67). Among its various initiatives, OSPAAAL published the multilingual magazine *Tricontinental* as the ‘theoretical organ’ of its Havana-based Executive Secretariat and distributed internationally with the help of strategic European supporters (OSPAAAL 1969, 3). Significantly, this publication would be the first to give a voice to Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino’s celebrated and militant essay about political cinema: ‘Towards a third cinema’ (1969). With its first meeting in August 1967, OLAS was as a body designed to foster armed revolutions and guerrilla warfare across the region (Henderson, et al. 2000, 225). Although less successful than its inter-continental equivalent, OLAS demonstrated the Cuban strategy of expanding its regional zone of influence by drawing on the historical imaginary of a Latin union that would presumably join Cuba in its David vs. Goliath confrontation to resist US ‘neo-colonialism’ and ‘cultural imperialism’ through guerrilla warfare. Both organisations heavily relied on the idea of ‘Latin America’ as an imagined community that defined itself in opposition to ‘Anglo America’ and was a key part of the ‘Third World’.

In line with general Cuban foreign policy, cultural institutions also strengthened their endeavours to promote solidarity with the Cuban cause. As the cultural front in the Cold War, Casa de las Américas campaigned harder for a unified literary movement in the region (Barnhisel and Turner 2010, 238). Likewise, the ICAIC promoted cinematic collaborations and the notion of a Latin American filmmaking community. As discussed above, although Cubans had already been targeting international festivals, in particular the Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano in Italy, their films had not been very successful with international critics and the end of the Rassegna after 1965 eliminated the festival as a forum in which to publicise their cause.

Yet again, a new prospect opened up with the fifth film festival in Viña del Mar in Chile in March 1967. The festival had evolved from a local cine-club initiative – which screened amateur films – to a regional event which programmed short and medium length films: the Meeting of Latin American Filmmakers and a Congress of Latin American Cinematheques (Francia 1990, 63–116). Following a similar format to that of the Rassegna a few years before, national

representatives presented reports of the state of cinema in each country.⁸¹ Despite having officially broken diplomatic relations with Cuba, Chilean authorities allowed the presence of a small Cuban delegation headed by ICAIC's main official Alfredo Guevara who was also welcomed as a jury-member⁸² (Francia 1990, 118). The modest Cuban participation – two medium-length and one short film – received several prizes, including the jury's top award for *Manuela* (CU dir. Humberto Solás 1966), a special award for the documentary short *Now* (CU dir. Santiago Alvarez 1966) and a jury mention for the 'high collective level' of the Cuban films that 'certified the vigorous and original development of the cinema that produced them'⁸³ (Francia 1990, 136). The event was a rather minor and unknown affair in the wider festival context, but for the first time Cuban cinema was recognised outside its own territory.

The opportunity was not wasted by Cuban officials who promptly issued a thick volume of *Cine Cubano* (No. 42-43-44) in April-June 1967. Dedicated to the 'New Latin American Cinema' (with capital letters), the magazine presented Cuban cinema as a leading protagonist of this cinematic renewal in which Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Chile also participated. It reproduced the reports presented by each country in Viña del Mar, plus articles, film reviews and interviews with filmmakers regardless of whether they had been present at the Chilean festival. With special emphasis on the internationally successful Cinema Novo, *Cine Cubano's* rhetoric strategy was to appropriate the Brazilian triumphs and present them as part of a wider regional movement led by Cuba and Brazil. Disregarding the role of previous European festivals, it declared Viña del Mar the birthplace of the 'New Latin American Cinema' and published the resolutions approved by the 'First Meeting of Latin American Filmmakers' as if they had never met before (reprinted in Guevara and Garcés 2007, 65–70). However, the initiatives approved in this 'first' meeting were remarkably similar to the ones approved in Sestri Levante in 1963 and that had been already published – perhaps only – in *Cine Cubano* ('IV Reseña del Cinema Latinoamericano' 1963, 60–61). Rather than a realistic plan of action, the resolutions of Viña del Mar were a declaration of intentions, advocating a full network of pan-Latin American film institutions and exchanges. Most notably, the intentions were clearly aligned with the Cuban foreign policy of emphasising cultural and political solidarity across the region.

⁸¹ In this edition there were representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba and Uruguay.

⁸² Other jury-members included the Brazilian Alex Viany, the Argentine Agustín Mahieu, the Uruguayan José Waimer and the Chileans Hans Ehrmann, Patricio Kaulen and Aldo Francia, the latter as president of the jury (Francia 1990, pp.135–136).

⁸³ My translation, in the original: 'el alto nivel de conjunto acreditado por la selección de películas cubanas presentadas en este Festival, películas que certifican el desarrollo pujante y original de la cinematografía que las ha producido' (Francia 1990, 136).

The similarity between the two declarations from Sestri Levante in 1963 and Viña del Mar in 1967 not only suggests the common hand of Cuban diplomacy, but it raises questions about the historical weight given to Viña del Mar as *the* ‘birthplace’ of the ‘new Latin American cinema’. This assumption is evident in Michael Chanan’s commemorative publication called *Twenty-Five Years of the New Latin American Cinema*⁸⁴ in 1983 as well as Zuzana Pick’s description of the event as ‘marking the official emergence of a continental project’ (1993, 19). Similarly, John King describes the festival as ‘the first step towards the elusive goal of Pan-American solidarity’ (2000, 71). For Pick, this was a the ‘inception moment’ of a ‘self-defining community’ of filmmakers that,

remained committed to this self-imposed mandate: to engage in the changing conditions of cinematographic production both in their own countries and elsewhere in Latin America (Pick 1993, 27).

According to the narrative promoted by *Cine Cubano* and legitimated by several scholars – generally sympathetic to the Cuban-model – the ‘new Latin American cinema’ had been independently born on Latin American soil, out of the distinct nations’ common difficulties and struggle against US cultural colonialism as well as an inherent desire across the region to join forces to encourage a ‘new cinema’ (i.e. politically committed and opposed to Hollywood).

However, as discussed throughout this chapter, the local transformations of filmmaking practices and theories had plenty of international connections and influences. Indeed, they were closely related to post-war European movements, travelling Latin American filmmakers that would study in Rome, the development of new lighter and cheaper filmmaking technologies and the decline of studio-model modes of production. Moreover, the idea of a ‘Latin American cinema’ had already been implicitly suggested by European critics during the 1950s and then more clearly developed during the *Rassegna del Cinema Latino-Americano* in the early 1960s. In this regard, Cuban-American scholar Ana M. López has argued that, although the Cuban cinematic influence in the region cannot be ignored ‘the New Latin American Cinema is far from being simply a Cuban “construct”’ (1997, 151). However, the role of Cuba in coining

⁸⁴ The publication included an introductory text by Michael Chanan and the reprint of some of the best-known manifestos of the movement published in the late 1960s and early 1970s such as ‘The Aesthetics of Hunger’ by Glauber Rocha, ‘Towards a third cinema’ by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino and ‘For an Imperfect Cinema’ by Julio García Espinoza. It was also accompanied by a two part documentary series directed by Michael Chanan called *New Cinema of Latin America: I Cinema of the Humble* and *II The Long Road*. The project also included two seasons of Latin American films, one at the National Film Theatre in London and another one broadcasted on Channel Four Television (Chanan 1983, ii–iv).

and promoting the idea of a 'New Latin American Cinema' (with capital letters and as a single entity) as a 'self-defining community' originating in Latin America and led by Brazilian and Cuban cinema seems to be much stronger than is generally acknowledged. This is perhaps surprising, given the fact fact Cinema Novo's international reputation had been rising for years and Cuban films had not gained much critical support by this stage. Moreover, the traditional understanding of Latin American political cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s has been notoriously influenced by this view of the phenomenon that minimises its interconnections with the wider Cold War context and its influences on the developing international film culture.

c. Pesaro 1968: The Breakthrough of the New Latin American Cinema

Although the narrative of a Brazilian and Cuban led regional movement born out of Viña del Mar film festival seems to have been heavily influenced by Cuban propaganda, very soon the notion of a unified regional phenomenon would gain international currency through the festival circuit. In fact, Latin American cinema would have its international breakthrough as a 'new cinema' during the Festival of New Cinema at Pesaro, Italy in June 1968. By its fourth edition, the festival had already established a reputation as a hub for left-wing filmmakers and supporters of political cinema. Only a few weeks after the French protests disrupted the Cannes festival in May 1968, the event at Pesaro had a particularly militant and agitated audience willing to engage in political debates. As one Czech critic put it, 'they were not really very interested in films [but in] having a tribune from which to spread their ideas' (Svoboda 1968, 14). Despite having a decidedly left-wing orientation, the festival also faced angry protesters who disturbed the programme and forced organisational changes including the cancellation of awards and the end of the open-door policy for all events. As a result debate 'Latin American Cinema: Culture as Action' was changed to the broader and more politicised subject of 'Films at the Service of the Revolution'. The debate was accompanied by a line-up of Latin American films such as *São Paulo, Sociedade Anônima* (BR dir. Luís Sérgio Person 1965), *Capitu* (BR dir. Paulo César Saraceni 1968), *Hunger for Love/ Fome de amor* (BR dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1968) *Tropics/ Tropici* (BR/IT dir. Gianni Amico 1968), *Lucía* (CU dir. Humberto Solas 1968), *Memories of Underdevelopment/ Memorias del subdesarrollo* (CU dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 1968) and *The Hour of the Furnaces/ La hora de los hornos* (AR dir. Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino 1968).

Regardless of the chaos that ensued during the event, European critics and audiences were especially drawn to two films that became landmarks in the international reception of militant Latin American cinema: *Memories of Underdevelopment* and *The Hour of the Furnaces*. The first, *Memories of Underdevelopment*, impressed European critics who described it as 'a brilliant

piece of filmmaking' (Roud 1968, 180) and as evidence of the 'birth of a genuinely free cinema' (Spila 1968, 52). Based on the homonymous novel by the Cuban writer Edmundo Desnoes, the film studied, from a subjective point of view, the alienation and daily conflicts experienced by a bourgeois writer who decides to stay in Cuba after the revolution. Reflecting the interest it aroused among European critics and programmers, in 1970 *Memories of Underdevelopment* would be invited to participate in prestigious festivals in London and Karlovy Vary.⁸⁵ Similarly, the National Society of Film Critics in New York declared it the best film of the year 1973 ('Memories of Underdevelopment' 1974, 41). Together with *Lucía* – which gained greater international visibility when it won the top prize of the Moscow festival in 1969 – *Memories of Underdevelopment* marked a different stage in the international reception of Cuban cinema in so far as it was perceived as finally coming of age a decade after the revolution.

Similarly, the agitprop essay film *The Hour of the Furnaces* also got a remarkable response from the audience at Pesaro. The four-hour film offered a fervent critique of what its collective filmmakers, the Grupo Cine Liberación, regarded as US 'neo-colonialism'. Immersed in Cold War radicalised discourses, they called for a 'tricontinental' revolution and presented some provocative images of the world-famous Argentine revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara after his recent death in Bolivia in October 1967. In the context of Argentine politics, the film strongly supported the exiled ex-president Juan Perón who had been deposed by a coalition of conservative groups and the military in 1955 and who would eventually return to the presidency between 1973 and 1974 (Mestman 2010, 36–38). The backdrop of the political agitation of May 1968 guaranteed an extraordinary reception for the militant film, and the filmmakers received a standing ovation lasting several minutes (Ferreira 1995, 298). As some of those present at the event later recalled, the exalted crowd carried the director Fernando Solanas out of the venue on their shoulders and formed a spontaneous protest that ended up with an aggressive police intervention and some of the filmmakers being imprisoned (Achugar 1986, 228).

These enthusiastic responses fuelled numerous festival and alternative-venue screenings of *The Hour of the Furnaces* and an intense discussion about the links between politics and cinema in specialised European and North American magazines (Celentano 2006, 138). As a dossier compiled by the French group *CinémAction* recalled a decade later, the film had the 'effect of a bomb' at Pesaro and it was promptly embraced by European critics and festival organisers (1979, 615–645). In June 1968 it was presented by the 'Friends of the German

⁸⁵ In Karlovy Vary *Memories of Underdevelopment* received the International Critic's Association (FIPRESCI) award and the Don Quixote award sponsored by the International Federation of Film Societies.

Cinematheque' during the Berlin film festival and three months later at Mannheim's main competition where it received the Interfilm Award and was effusively received by the militant audience (Schumann 1979, 631). Despite having already been screened at several festivals, *The Hour of the Furnaces* was presented a year later during the Critics' Week at Cannes in May 1969. Moreover, the film became part of the catalogue of several alternative international distributors operating in countries such as the UK, Canada, the US, France, Italy and Spain⁸⁶ (Mestman 2008, 127).

The Hour of the Furnaces and its first-time co-directors – particularly Fernando Solanas as discussed in Chapter 9 – received prompt coverage in influential international magazines. In its report from Pesaro in July 1968, *Positif* introduced the film as 'the masterpiece from Argentina that deserved the palm of the festival'⁸⁷ (Arlorio 1968, 19–22). In October 1968 it was the first Latin American film included in *Cahiers du Cinéma's* list of 'must see' films in the history of cinema ('A voir absolument (si possible)' 1968, 7). In December 1968 *Positif* published a detailed presentation of the film and the responses of the filmmakers to a questionnaire designed by the magazine (Solanas and Getino 1968, 72–78). A few months later, in March 1969, *Cahiers* included Fernando Solanas' name on the cover and published a ten-page interview (Marcorelles 1969, 36–45). In the US, specialised magazines also published interviews with Solanas: *Cineaste* in the autumn of 1969 (Volpi et al. 1969) and *Film Quarterly* when *The Hour of the Furnaces* was distributed by the Tricontinental Film Center a year later (MacBean 1970, 37–43).

Such international coverage for a Latin American film debut was unprecedented. As it coincided with the rising status of the Brazilian Cinema Novo and the first Cuban critical successes, *The Hour of the Furnaces* gave further grounds to claims of a cinematic revolution across Latin America. The left-wing European and North American critics and programmers of the politically explosive late-1960s were fascinated with the new 'discovery'. Their attention legitimated and helped to establish the international reputation and general perception of these films as a unified movement to which more militant films from Cuba, Bolivia and Chile were quickly added. In this sense, the common 'Latin American' label provided a generic category that served as a frame of reference for international viewers. Ignoring all other forms

⁸⁶ *The Hour of the Furnaces* was included in the catalogues of distributors such as The Other Cinema in the UK; Third World Cinema Group/ Tricontinental Film Center and Newsreel in the US; MK2 in France; Cinéma d'Information Politique-Champ Libre in Montreal, Canada; El Volti in Spain; and Collettivo Cinema Militante, San Diego Cinematográfica and Centro Documentazione Cinema e Lotta di Classe in Italy (Mestman 2008, 128).

⁸⁷ My translation, in the original: 'Le chef-d'œuvre, venu d'Argentine, méritait bien la palme du festival' (Arlorio 1968, 19).

of 'old' commercial cinema still produced in the region – which had never been highly regarded by international critics – 'Latin American cinema' was a 'new cinema' associated with marginal films, realist aesthetics and left-wing ideals.

After the Pesaro film festival in 1968, the idea of a 'new Latin American cinema' truly gained momentum on the international scene. For the first time, some of the most influential specialised magazines and festivals started not only to pay considerable attention to cinemas from the region but also to treat them as a unified entity. Among the first was the French *Image et Son* which in June 1968 (No. 218) dedicated its cover to Rocha's *Black God, White Devil* in a special issue about the 'new' militant Cinemas of Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Mexico. In the following year, after the disruptions and protests of 1968, European festivals followed a similar pattern with special cycles and great visibility given to the 'new Latin American cinema'. As noted by the Peruvian magazine *Hablemos de Cine* at the time, '1969 has marked the official consecration of the new Latin American cinema in Europe' (1969, 24). Cannes not only featured Latin American militant films in the competition and the Critics' Week, but also in the first edition of the Directors' Fortnight in 1969.⁸⁸ In the Moscow festival *Lucía* took the top award and some critics highlighted Cuban films in general as Pesaro's 'major revelation' (Dawson 1969, 18). Also welcomed at Venice's first edition as a non-competitive event were several Latin American films, including some already screened at other festivals.⁸⁹ Likewise, the London film festival in the autumn 1969 invited *Sweet Hunters/ Ternos caçadores* (PA/BR/FR dir. Ruy Guerra 1969), even though it had actually received rather mixed critical reception at Venice a few months earlier (Milne 1969, 180).

With the approval of and promotion by the most prestigious events in the festival world, the rising status of the militant Latin American cinemas further continued in the specialised press. After the awards in Cannes – where Rocha was granted the Best Director title – *Antonio das Mortes* was honoured on the first colour cover of *Cahiers du Cinéma* in July 1969. Together with *The Hour of the Furnaces*, the film was included in the all-time 'must see' list of the magazine ('A voir absolument (si possible)' 1969, 4). In addition, Rocha was the subject of a

⁸⁸ There were a dozen Latin American films, out of a total of 62 feature films, including: *The Turning Wind, Brazil Year 2000/ Brasil ano 2000* (BR dir. Walter Lima Jr. 1968) and *The Brave Warrior/ O bravo guerreiro* (BR dir. Gustavo Dahl 1969) as well as the Cubans *Lucía* and *The First Charge of the Machete/ La primera carga al machete* (CU dir. Manuel O. Gómez 1969), the latter being randomly selected for the opening night (French Directors Guild 2010b).

⁸⁹ Among them there were the Cuban *The First Charge of the Machete* and the Bolivian *Blood of the Condor/ Yawar Mallku* (BO dir. Jorge Sanjinés 1969) – already screened at Viña del Mar in March 1969 – as well as the Brazilians *The Heirs/ Os herdeiros* (BR dir. Carlos Diegues 1969), *Macunaíma* (BR dir. Joaquim Pedro de Andrade 1969) and *Sweet Hunters/ Ternos caçadores* (PA/BR/FR Ruy Guerra 1969).

detailed dossier based mostly on a lengthy interview with prominent *Cahiers* critics (Delahaye, Kast, and Narboni 1969, 22–41). *Film Quarterly* provided an analysis of Rocha's films in the winter of 1969 (Callenbach 1969, 42–47; Francovich 1969, 59–62) as well as interviews with the director some months later (Hitchens 1970, 27–30). The recognition from British cinematic circles included a Cuban season at the National Film Theatre (NFT) in July 1969 accompanied by an article in *Sight & Sound* entitled 'Solidarity & Violence' that analysed the work of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Humberto Solás and Santiago Álvarez (Engel 1969, 196–200). Likewise, the Brazilians Glauber Rocha and Ruy Guerra were included in a special dossier about the *Second Wave* of newest cinemas published in London in 1970 as part of the popular series 'Movie Paperbacks' (Cameron 1970).

The 'new cinemas' from Latin America were clearly enjoying an upsurge of popularity among international critics and cinephiles. Not only did this result in the enhanced reception of Latin American films in Europe, but also the unexpected attendance at the Viña del Mar Chile film festival in 1969 (Francia 1990, 156) of a small crowd of Europeans and North Americans. Among them there were the French critic Louis Marcorelles, the Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, the Italians Nino Crisenti and Roberto Savio from RAI, the US journalist and filmmaker Saul Landau, the German documentary filmmakers Karl Gass and Wolfgang Harkenthal as well as Berlin's programmer and critic Peter B. Schumann. Due to economic problems, disagreements between the organisers, and the increasingly tense political situation in Chile in the 1970s, the event in Viña del Mar could not be held in the following years and thus lost momentum (Francia 1990, 171–173). However, the sudden international attention given to this small Chilean festival was a clear indicator of the rising international status of Latin American cinema after 1968.

International specialised magazines also enabled the circulation of manifestos that were translated and reprinted on numerous occasions. Probably the most notorious case is Fernando Solanas' and Octavio Getino's influential paper 'Towards a third cinema', first printed in the OSPAAAL-sponsored *Tricontinental* (No. 13) in July-August 1969. In line with the militant magazine, the text was strongly influenced by the ideas of the French-Caribbean intellectual Frantz Fanon, who played a key role in the Algerian wars of decolonisation against French colonialism. In the manifesto, Solanas and Getino vehemently advocated a 'decolonisation' of culture in the form of a 'third cinema' that would subvert the capitalist system – embodied in Hollywood cinema and local studio productions – by showing the national reality, and that would free colonised people by vindicating their culture. After its reprint in several international

film magazines, such as *Cineaste*, *Afterimage* and *Cinéma Politique*,⁹⁰ the incendiary article was incorporated into the more formal field of film studies, included in publications such as Guy Hennebelle's *Quinze ans de cinéma mondial: 1960-1975* (1975) and Bill Nichols' anthology on film theory (1976). As argued below, this paper was to become the cornerstone of the concept of the 'third cinema' that many film scholars would advance from the late 1970s onwards.

In a similar way, other articles – such as the aforementioned 'Aesthetics of hunger'⁹¹ by Glauber Rocha (1965) and 'An imperfect cinema'⁹² by the Cuban Julio García Espinosa (1970) – also became well-known as complementary texts accompanying the Latin American political films. For many of these filmmakers, cinema was just one part of a wider political movement that would change society. Therefore, they were actively engaged in the production of manifestos and theories about political films as tools to bring about the socialist revolution. Theories, films and filmmakers received extraordinary attention in specialised magazines such as the French *Cahiers du Cinéma*, *Positif* and *Cinéma* as well as *Film Quarterly* and *Cineaste* in the US, which contributed to on-going intellectual exchange. Moreover, this exposure tended to raise the artistic and cultural value of Latin American political cinema and its portrayal as a single category. An example of such extensive coverage was *Cineaste*'s first winter issue in 1970/1971 (No. 1) which included the manifesto 'Toward a third cinema', articles on Jorge Sanjinés and Walter Achugar, reviews of *Blood of the Condor/ Yawar Mallku* (BO dir. Jorge Sanjinés 1969), *Jackal of Nahueltoro/ El chacal de Nahueltoro* (CL/MX dir. Miguel Littin 1970) and *Mexico: The Frozen Revolution/ México, la revolución congelada* (AR dir. Raymundo Glayzer 1973) as well as a report about the Cinemateca del Tercer Mundo founded by Walter Achugar and Eduard Terra in Montevideo in 1969.

⁹⁰ 'Towards a third cinema' was also reprinted in magazines such as *Hablemos de Cine* (No. 53 and No. 54) in 1970, *Cineaste* (No. 3) Winter 1970, *Afterimage* (No. 3) in July 1971, *Cinéma Politique* (No. 3) in October 1975, *Écran* (No. 78) in March 1979, *Image et Son* (No. 340) June 1979 and *Cine Cubano* (No. 120) in 1987.

⁹¹ The article was presented in Genoa in January 1965 and later printed in *Revista Civilização Brasileira* (No. 3) in July 1965, *Positif* (No. 73) in February 1966, *Cinéma 67* (No. 113) in February 1967, *Afterimage* (No. 1) in April 1970, *Image et Son* (No. 340) in June 1979, *Cine Cubano* (No. 120) in 1987.

⁹² 'An imperfect cinema' was first printed in *Cine Cubano* (No. 66-67) and later reprinted in magazines such as *Hablemos de Cine* (No. 55-56) in November 1970, *Afterimage* (No. 3) in July 1971, in *Jump Cut* (No. 20) in May 1979, in *Image et Son* (No. 340) in June 1979 and *Cine Cubano* (No. 120) in 1987. It has also been included in edited publications about 'new Latin American cinema' (Chanan 1983; Fundación Mexicana de Cineastas 1988; M. T. Martin 1997).

These special dossiers continued throughout the 1970s⁹³ with new specialised journals joining the discussions about cinema and politics, such as the British *Afterimage* and *Framework* as well as *Jump Cut* in the US.⁹⁴ The magazines featured a combination of texts written by and about the filmmakers, interviews, film reviews and background articles that overall helped to raise new Latin American cinemas' international profile, gave coherence and consistency to the movement and increased the demand for such films across their readership. While the Pesaro film festival in 1968 heralded the international breakthrough of Latin American cinema, the increased visibility given by the most prestigious European and North American festivals and magazines confirmed both the rising reputation of this 'new cinema' and an approach that regarded the cinematic output of various Latin American countries as a single phenomenon. The international critical and festival establishment embraced the unified 'new' regional cinema as if the distinct 'old' cinemas from Mexico, Argentina and Brazil had no cultural value or had ever existed. By drawing associations and establishing comparisons between the militant films they further cemented the idea of 'Latin American cinema' as a generic category unified by left-wing political ideals.

d. The 1970s: Consolidation of an Endangered Cinema

The international success of militant cinemas from Latin America continued throughout the 1970s and further cemented their reputation as part of an integrated movement. The implicit, yet rather misleading, logic was that this cinema sprung from a supposedly consistent cultural, social, economic and political Latin American context. The geographical and cultural distance of international observers facilitated a homogeneous understanding of the region and its cinema. However, this tendency was immersed in the overwhelming Cold War rhetoric endorsed by many left-wing Latin Americans themselves. The idea of Latin America became a key concept for Cuban diplomacy, which claimed leadership over an assumed 'solidary' socialist-friendly region.

⁹³ Further examples include *Afterimage* (No. 3) which published a special issue about 'Third World Cinema' in July 1971; *Jeune Cinéma's* (No. 79) dossier on Latin America in June 1974; *Positif's* (No.164) special issue on Latin America: Brazil, Chile and Bolivia in December 1974; *Framework's* (No. 10) spring issue in 1979 with several articles about Chile, Cuba, Bolivia and Argentina; *Image et Son* (No. 340) in June 1979 with the special dossier 'Latin America: Theories for Cinemas of Liberation' and *CinémAction* special issue Political Cinema: The Furnaces of Latin America' (1980).

⁹⁴ *Afterimage* was launched in 1970 by Peter Sainsbury and Simón Field, who also created the distribution company The Other Cinema in London. *Framework* was linked to the University of Warwick, UK and it was created by Donald Ranvaud, Robin Wood and Sheila Whitaker in 1974. *Jump Cut* was established by critic Gary Crowds in 1974.

Many sympathisers of the Cuban model accepted and reproduced a vision of Latin America that emphasised similarities and overlooked differences. According to this, the region was – or should be – united because of its common ‘neo-colonial’ situation vis-à-vis the US that could be challenged following the Cuban example. Moreover, the concept of Latin America was implicit both in the ‘tricontinental’ union promoted from Havana, and in the widespread idea of ‘third world’ that glued together Asian, African and Latin American countries into the same category. Very well-established by the 1970s, this label had gained currency since the mid-1950s as an umbrella-term for those regions which were neither ‘first world’ – North America and Western Europe – nor ‘second world’ – the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Their common characteristic was their disadvantageous position in global geopolitics that was frequently denounced as a situation of political, economic, and/or cultural colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. If within the totalising Cold War logic there was room for the all-encompassing category of ‘third world’ that reunited so many disparate countries, then the idea of a more or less homogeneous ‘Latin America’ was readily and widely embraced.

When reporting about Latin American cinema, most international publications would warn about the dangers of ignoring internal differences within the vast multi-lingual and multi-national territory. However, more often than not, they would continue to use generalising labels that emphasised the similarities implied in the very idea of ‘Latin American cinema’. *Sight & Sound*'s article ‘Venceremos!’ – which accompanied the season of ‘Latin American Political Cinema’ in London’s National Film Theatre during the spring of 1972 – encapsulates this tendency. Focusing on *The Hour of Furnaces*, *Blood of the Condor* and *Jackal of Nahueltoro*, critic and programmer David Wilson praised the films as ‘a radical re-evaluation of political cinema’ that put ‘Godard’s dictum about making films politically’ into active practice (1972, 128). Although he acknowledged noticeable divergences among films and national contexts, he underlined common trends by using terms such as ‘most’ and ‘several’ Latin American countries or by drawing conclusions for the whole region based on individual cases. For instance, in the case of *The Hour of the Furnaces*, Wilson argued that its aim was,

to provide a Latin American audience with the facts which will form, or corroborate, their own awareness of their political, economic and cultural dependence (Wilson 1972, 130).

Betraying its own non-generalising intentions, the article assumed the existence of a single ‘Latin American audience’ that could presumably recognise a common reality. Moreover, according to Wilson, this reality triggered the same violent reactions across the region. In connection with a well-established European perspective that associated the former Spanish colonies with aggressive and uncivilised behaviour Wilson presupposed a promptly violent

response across the continent. Thus, he stated that 'in most Latin American countries political awareness is the detonator of political action' and that action 'in Latin America usually means violence' (1972, 130). In this way, the article legitimated the militant films as the most valuable cinematic expression of Latin America and the manifestation of a common cultural and political identity – as opposed to a fragmented national or local one.

Latin America's 'new cinema' gained a considerable number of supporters among the left-wing European and North American intellectuals of the 1970s. Many of them started writing journalistic articles and would come to pioneer international academic research after the mid-1970s (López 1991, 240–242). A case in point is the US-based Julianne Burton who regularly wrote for *Cineaste*, *Film Quarterly* and *Jump Cut* in the 1970s and continued to write from an academic perspective in the 1980s and 1990s (Burton, Torres, and Miquel 1998; Burton 1985, 1986, 1990). Another case is the critic Guy Hennebelle, who served as the French correspondent of *Cineaste*, contributed to *Cinéma*, *Téléciné*, *Ecran* and *Jeune Cinéma* and founded the magazine *CinémAction* in 1978. Further examples include Peter B. Schumann in Germany, Zuzana Pick in Canada, Donald Ranvaud, John King and Michael Chanan in the UK as well as John Hess, Gary Crowdus and Randal Johnson in the US. Attracted by the left-wing connotations of Latin American political cinema, these preferences were often transmitted into their academic work, which contributed to Latin American cinema being launched as a field of international research.

The interest and commitment of sympathisers of the communist revolutionary struggles in Latin America both created and stirred an international demand for the films that circulated in festivals and alternative forums. Several of them launched alternative distribution companies that promoted politically committed cinema in their home countries. That was the case of the New York-based Third World Cinema Group founded in 1970 and renamed Tricontinental Film Center between 1972 and 1980⁹⁵ (Crowdus 2007, 42). Supported by critic Gary Crowdus – editor in chief and creator of *Cineaste* – the Third World Cinema Group/ Tricontinental Film Center was involved in the distribution of several militant films including *The Hour of the Furnaces*, *Memories of Underdevelopment*, *Blood of the Condor* and *The Promised Land/ La Tierra Prometida* (CL/CU dir. Miguel Littin 1973).

A similar case was that of the London-based The Other Cinema launched in 1969 by Nick Hart-Williams and Peter Sainsbury with a view to creating 'a sort of third circuit or anything

⁹⁵ In the 1980s it continued as The Cinema Guild until 2004 and since then as First Run/ Icarus (Crowdus 2007, 42).

which would increase the showings of films blandly labelled “un-commercial” by the trade’ (Gillet 1971, 133). With a catalogue comparable to that of the US-based Tricontinental, the non-profit The Other Cinema was involved in distribution and exhibition in the UK.⁹⁶ It catered to an audience largely made up of what Hart-Williams called ‘active socialists’ (1976, 208), that is, left-wing activist groups mostly linked to university and college unions, teachers, and film and political societies that used the material on and off-campus to promote social causes. From the early 1970s, there was a high demand for political Latin American films which the company used to its advantage (Harvey 1985, 48). Within a few years The Other Cinema built up a strong Latin American catalogue that ‘was partly a result of this *zeitgeist* among the young intellectuals’ (Peter Marris interviewed in Harvey 1986, 90). There was reportedly a similar situation in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France and Canada (CinémAction 1979). The consumption of Latin American political cinema was a generalised phenomenon among left-wing European and North American intellectuals during the 1970s.

In international arenas the concept of ‘Latin American cinema’ was developed in relation to the ‘new’ politically committed films attuned to the counter-culture and leftist *zeitgeist* of young intellectuals in Europe and North America. As a result, it largely ignored studio productions and popular genre films that were still produced and circulated mostly in the domestic Brazilian, Argentine and Mexican markets. By editing one of the first bibliographies on the subject, Julianne Burton became a key figure in the establishment of the term ‘new Latin American cinema’ and its conceptualisation as a ‘movement’ (1976b). The bibliography was sponsored by *Cineaste* and, according to Burton, was intended as a research guide to the recent ‘politically committed and culturally autonomous filmmaking in Latin America’ that responded to the increasing interest aroused by ‘this remarkable film movement’ (1976b, 1). Faced with the necessity of delimiting and defining her object of study (Latin America), Burton explained the selection criteria,

the terms of this definition necessarily exclude such renowned filmmakers such as Luis Buñuel, Alejandro Jodorowski and Leopoldo Torre-Nilsson in favour of directors and films that demonstrate a critical commitment to exploring pressing issues of national and continental reality (Burton 1976b, 1).

⁹⁶ As *Sight & Sound* reported in 1976, there was a growing network of independent distribution and exhibition initiatives in the UK, such as Derek Hill’s Essential Cinema, Charles and Kitty Cooper’s Contemporary Films and David and Barbara Stone with Cinegate and Gate Cinema (‘Other and essential: A survey of independent distributors/ exhibitors’ 1976, 207).

By consciously deciding to exclude certain filmmakers who had not shown enough political commitment, Burton ignored a considerable proportion of the films produced in the region as a whole. In this sense, the 'newness' of the 'new Latin American cinema' was defined in political, rather than chronological terms. These were not simply the most recent Latin American productions, but those that complied with the left-wing militant ideals encapsulated in the term 'new cinema'. In international arenas 'political cinema' was not just part of Latin American filmmaking practices, it *was* Latin American cinema itself.

Although Burton was among the first scholars to express this view on paper, she was by no means a solitary voice among international cinephiles, critics and scholars.⁹⁷ In fact, Burton's position was indicative of the expectations of Latin American cinema held by international cinematic circles, where militant political films were promoted and supported whilst the more commercial ones were limited to the domestic sphere or simply overlooked by academics and critics abroad. Despite these omissions, the 'new Latin American cinema' continued to attract international followers who praised filmmakers' political commitment and were sympathetic to their struggles against truly violent and repressive dictatorships.

During the 1970s the political context in Latin America was very tense; not only were filmmaking possibilities in danger, but lives were also under threat. Dictatorial regimes in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Ecuador replaced those that had been established in the 1950s and 1960s in the cases of Paraguay, Bolivia, Brazil, Panama and Peru. The regimes were extremely repressive, forcing many filmmakers to live in exile while others were imprisoned or even killed. Well-known filmmakers such as the Brazilian Glauber Rocha, the Chileans Miguel Littin and Raul Ruiz and the Argentines Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas left their countries from the late 1960s onwards. There were cases of tortured and 'disappeared' filmmakers like Jorge Müller and Carmen Bueno in Chile and Raymundo Glayzer and Rodolfo Walsh in Argentina (Pick 1993, 25–26). As a consequence, many of the films were shot in exile or under very difficult conditions and attempted to denounce the violent political repression being experienced in these countries.

The unfortunate situation in which many Latin American filmmakers found themselves encouraged international supporters to create the Emergency Committee to Defend Latin American Filmmakers in 1975 (Cineaste 1975, 46). Reflective of the international status of the

⁹⁷ A compilation using a similar criterion was published in the same year under the title 'A bibliography of Latin American cinema' (Appelman 1976) and two years later as part of the material for the Film Studies Programme of Carleton University in Canada (Pick 1978).

'new Latin American cinema', this New York-based organisation was supported by distinguished North American and European filmmakers such as Francis Ford Coppola, Arthur Penn, Elia Kazan, Jack Nicholson, Werner Herzog, Jean Marie Straub and Volker Schlöndorff (Biskind 1976, 176). The excessive repression suffered by Latin American filmmakers had also pushed them into creating support networks of solidarity such as the Latin American Filmmakers Committee that gathered in Mérida, Venezuela in 1974 and in Havana in 1978. After their meeting in June 1978, the committee issued a declaration that was translated and published in *Cineaste* in the autumn of that year (Cook 1978, 54). While the communiqué emphasised the existence of the 'New Latin American Cinema' itself as testimony to resistance and solidarity across the continent, the prompt translation and publication in a leading US journal demonstrated the existence of an international audience who cared about these struggles.

By the mid-1970s, the general perception was that Latin American Cinema was, like the lives of the filmmakers, in danger. However, its existence was already well-established in international cinematic circles. Peter Biskind summarised this homogenising perspective in an article published in *Sight & Sound* in 1976 which was suggestively entitled 'In Latin America They Shoot Filmmakers'. According to the reporter,

with the exception of Cuba, the Latin American film scene has become a wasteland. National cinemas come and go, for a whole variety of complex reasons, but in the case of Latin America the cause seems fairly clear. Many of the most promising filmmakers are in prison or in exile or dead (Biskind 1976, 160).

Biskind implicitly assumed the existence of a common cinema for the whole region, mentioning specific cases from Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina, Colombia and Brazil and concluding that 'country by country' the situation was equally dangerous.

In this way, the article not only oversimplified the reasons for the absence of a national cinema in countries such as Venezuela, Peru, and Costa Rica, but it blatantly overlooked the situation in Mexico and Brazil where, in fact, there were growing models of State-supported production and distribution. The article ignored the several Mexican films produced during the administration of President Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) that rather unsuccessfully aimed to regain the international prestige of Mexico's national cinema by supporting film production.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Cases in point include *Castle of Purity/ El Castillo de la Pureza* (MX dir. Arturo Ripstein 1972), *National Mechanics/ Mecánica Nacional* (MX dir. Luis Alcoriza 1972), *The Passion of Berenice/ La pasión*

Meanwhile, Biskind blatantly disregarded those filmmakers who remained in Brazil during the dictatorship as they simply '[made] what they called *chanchadas*, "pig-films"' (1976, 161). The article failed to mention that the national agency Embrafilme – supported by the military regime – had been behind the financing of more than a hundred films between 1970 and 1975 (Ramos and Miranda 1997, 213), including several Cinema Novo titles.⁹⁹ Moreover, Biskind disregarded the shift towards more popular films among Brazilian audiences that, in retrospective, made the decade of the 1970s particularly important in the history of Brazilian cinema, with huge box office successes¹⁰⁰ (Dennison and L. Shaw 2004, 149). By excluding the countries that did not fit the model of a militant Latin American cinema from the report, Biskind reproduced and maintained the idea of a unified and endangered regional cinematic landscape.

According to their political objectives, many of these films were not conceived to be circulated as commodities through mainstream commercial exhibition circuits. Thus festivals provided crucial points of contact between the 'new' Latin American films and international critics and audiences that gave visibility to the films and legitimacy to the movement. The more 'cultural'/'non-commercial' approach of film festivals resulted in more appropriate screening-venues, whilst simultaneously, the militant films increased festivals' 'cultural'/'non-commercial' credentials. For festivals – operating in a very competitive environment and with the pressure of balancing conflicting cultural, diplomatic and economic agendas – screening these films was an effective way of boosting their reputation within the festival hierarchy and affirming themselves as key hubs for the renewal of cinematic art.

Therefore some Latin American films were screened in the major competitions of top European festivals.¹⁰¹ However, in most cases, they were programmed in parallel sections aimed at promoting the 'new cinemas' such as the Directors' Fortnight and the Critics' Week at Cannes as well as Berlin's Forum. At Venice – which became a non-competitive festival between 1969 and 1979 – Latin American militant films received special attention during the mid-1970s. Due

según Berenice (MX dir. Jaime Humerto Hermsillo 1972) and *Canoa* (MX dir. Felipe Cazals 1976), just to mention a few.

⁹⁹ Among them are films such as *São Bernardo* (BR dir. León Hirszman 1972) and *The Amulet of Ogum/ O Amuleto de Ogum* (BR dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1974).

¹⁰⁰ Among the greatest box office hits of the period were *Xica da Silva* (BR dir. Carlos Diegues 1976), *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands/ Dona Flor e seus dois maridos* (BR dir. Bruno Barreto 1976) and *Lady on the Bus/ A dama do lotação* (BR dir. Neveille D'Almeida 1978).

¹⁰¹ Examples include Chilean-exile Miguel Littin's *Letters from Marusia/ Actas de Marusia* (MX 1976) at Cannes. Also at Berlin were *The Rebel Patagonia/ La Patagonia rebelde* (AR dir. Héctor Olivera 1975), *The Fall/ A queda* (BR dir. Ruy Guerra and Nelson Xavier 1978) and *The Teacher/ El brigadista* (CU dir. Octavio Cortázar 1978).

to the protests and severe criticism in previous years, the festival was not held in 1973, but returned in 1974 with a 'Proposal for a New Cinema' (Codelli 1974, 43). Significantly, there was a strong Latin American presence in series such as 'Film Consciousness and Debate', 'Cinematographic Testimony about Chile' and a full retrospective of Buñuel's Mexican films (La Biennale di Venezia 2006d). 'Film Consciousness and Debate' included several Latin American political films already regarded as classics.¹⁰² In response to the recent coup d'état which overthrew the Chilean president Salvador Allende in 1973, Venice programmed a large cycle of more than 50 films, including features, documentaries and shorts dealing with the political situation in Chile. While the festival was fighting for its own survival, its 'Proposal for a New Cinema' demonstrated the status of political Latin American films as the embodiment of the militant 'new cinema'.

Riding on the popularity of the political Latin American cinemas, smaller events also paid particular attention to these films during the mid-1970s. Cases in point are the 3rd Tehran Film Festival with a special section on 'Filmmaking in Latin America' (American Cinematographer 1976, 162), Oberhausen, with whole evenings dedicated to short films about the coup d'état in Chile (McCormick 1976, 31) and Carthage, which created a special prize exclusively for 'third world' filmmakers (Paquet 1979, 39). Similarly, several Latin American specialist events appeared at this time in cities like Huelva and Chicago both in 1975, San Antonio in 1978 and the Nantes Three Continents in 1979, which focused on films from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Needless to say, left-wing critics generally welcomed these initiatives which were interpreted as a progressive movement towards a more inclusive cinematic culture freer from market constraints.

In a similar vein, festivals such as those in Pesaro, Montreal and Edinburgh became important meeting points for left-wing filmmakers, intellectuals and activists concerned with cinema and politics. 'New cinema' was the *raison d'être* of these committed events and this cinema depended on the festivals' support. Reporting from Pesaro in 1975, Julianne Burton noticed that Latin American filmmakers had been 'the greatest beneficiaries' of that particular festival in previous years (1975, 33). Thus, while other festivals would refrain from showing those films for political reasons, Pesaro put them at the centre of its programme. It hosted a special focus each year, including a retrospective of Brazilian Cinema Novo in 1975 (Burton

¹⁰² Films in this section included *The Guns* (1964), *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968), *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968), *Hanoi, Tuesday 13th* / *Hanoi, martes 13* (CU dir. Santiago Alvarez 1968) and *The Courage of the People/ El coraje del pueblo* (BO/IT dir. Jorge Sanjinés 1971).

1975), a cycle of Mexican cinema in 1976 (Ranvaud 1976) as well as a retrospective of Fernando Birri and a focus on Latin American Cinema in 1981 (Honeyford 1981). Moreover, it organised roundtable discussions, publications and special cycles, providing broader international exposure that contributed to the survival and promotion of 'new cinema' movements from around the world.¹⁰³

A comparable example is the Montreal festival which organised the eighth Rencontres Internationales pour un Nouveau Cinéma (International Meetings for a New Cinema) in 1974, which brought together around one hundred militant filmmakers, critics and activists from all continents. The event included the presence of active Latin American representatives like the Cuban Julio García Espinosa, the Argentine Fernando Solanas and the Uruguayan Walter Achugar who presented papers and were generally regarded as leaders of the political cinema movement¹⁰⁴ (Crowdus 1974, 27). Further legitimating their cultural value, the 'new cinemas' from Latin America were screened in prestigious cultural institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Lincoln Film Society in New York City, the National Museum of American History in Washington D.C. and the National Film Theatre in London.

An indicator of the prestigious status of Latin American 'new cinemas' was the reappraisal and long-lasting influence of the concept of 'third cinema' launched by Solanas and Getino in their 'Towards a third cinema' (1969). Within the Cold War tensions and the decolonisation process of many African countries, several left-wing filmmakers, film critics and political activists saw the advantages of adapting the militant proposals of the Argentine filmmakers. Therefore, throughout the 1970s, the concept gained momentum not only in relation to filmmakers' national or regional situations, but as the cornerstone of an international theory for cinema as a whole. Loosely defined as a cinema in opposition to Hollywood's 'first' commercial cinema and to Europe's 'second' *auteurist* cinema, the concept stimulated a polemical debate among scholars. As previously discussed, the original manifesto was frequently reprinted in specialised magazines and started to gain currency in the film studies discipline (MacBean 1975; Nichols 1976; Pick 1978). In the US it was notoriously re-examined by Gabriel Teshome (1982) and

¹⁰³ The festival has published the Pesaro Papers since 1970, a series of booklets with technical data, articles and analysis about the films screened, inspiring other festivals such as Venice, Edinburgh and Sorrento to issue similar publications in the mid-1970s (Ranvaud 1976, 38). The first books about Latin American cinema were published by festival organisers such as Peter B. Schuman (1971), linked to Oberhausen and later to Berlin film festival, and Lino Micciché (1972), founder and director of the event in Pesaro.

¹⁰⁴ As a reporter of the event commented, *The Hour of the Furnaces* had already acquired 'a reputation as the Potemkin of the Latin American cinema' and Fernando Solanas was regarded as one of the movement's 'heavies' in Montreal (Crowdus 1974, 27).

explored in academic meetings such as the 'Third World Cinema Conference' in New York in April 1983 (Linfield 1983). In the UK, the term was developed through the work of Paul Willemen and Jim Pines who organised an academic conference – framed against the Edinburgh film festival in June 1986 – and edited a publication afterwards (1989). In recent years, the concept has not only been included in film theory readers (Hayward 2006; Stam 2000) but it has also been revisited and preserved in several works (see for instance Ekotto and Koh 2009; Guneratne and Dissanayake 2003; Wayne 2001).

By the end of the 1970s, the international reputation of Latin American cinemas was intrinsically linked to left-wing political ideals and labels of 'third' and 'new' cinema. Well-positioned on the map of international film specialists, the militant 'new Latin American cinema' became a serious object of study, with an increasing number of academic books on the subject (Chanan 1983; Hennebelle and Gumucio-Dagron 1981; Pick 1978; Schumann 1982). In contrast with the generalised disregard towards commercial or genre Latin American films, these publications both reflected and strengthened political cinema's international reputation as *the* only Latin American cinema available or, at least, the only one worthy of critical and academic attention.

Conclusion

The desires for aesthetic and social rupture as embodied in the concept of 'new cinema' encouraged both a militant left-wing film production in Latin America and engaged European and North American viewers. Not limited to creating a demand for these films, groups of committed left-wing cinephiles created a growing network of institutions, including festivals, distribution companies, specialised magazines and, later on, academic departments. Firstly, the Brazilian Cinema Novo was welcomed and promoted by French critics in the early and mid-1960s and later embraced by Anglo-American critics and scholars. After the protests of 1968, militant films from Argentina, Cuba, Bolivia and Chile also started to gain appreciation in international cinematic circles. Fuelled by Cuban diplomacy and the binary logic of the Cold War, the idea of a united Latin America that defined itself in opposition to the US revitalised the historical confrontation between Anglo Saxons and Latins. Cuban officials aimed to reposition the communist island as a leading cultural and political force through a rhetoric of Latin 'solidarity'. In this way, Cubans and left-wing sympathisers promoted a narrative of a common 'new' political cinema that embraced regional similarities, whilst simultaneously rejecting the non-political nationally-fragmented cinemas as 'old'.

Through the Pesaro film festival of 1968, the concept of a 'new Latin American cinema' was launched on the international scene. More than simply the sum of the films produced in

individual countries within the region, the underlying idea was that cinema in Latin America was *one* and it was – or should be – a ‘new cinema’, that is, not in a chronological sense, but a political one, that rejected commercially-orientated films as ‘old’, even when they were actually new releases. In this way, Latin American cinema gained an international reputation as a militant left-wing cinema, produced on a low budget and with neo-realist strategies that, rather than entertaining audiences, aimed to represent the reality of the disenfranchised masses across the region. It was conceived as a marginal non-commercial cinema frequently shot in difficult conditions, on location and using non-professional actors. Despite having strong European influences, this cinema was frequently pointed out as a ‘true’ local or national development because it avoided the supposedly malevolent influence of Hollywood. As will be examined in the following chapters, these associations were strongly rooted in ideas about and expectations of Latin American cinema that would condition its international reception in the following decades.

Chapter 7. Beyond the 'New Latin American Cinema'

This chapter provides a general overview of the development of the idea of 'Latin American cinema' in international circuits from the 1980s to the present. Whilst during the 1970s the concept was established in connection with the militant films of the period, by the end of the decade the general perception was that the movement was endangered both by a strong repression and an aesthetic decline. However, capitalising on the international popularity of the 'new Latin American cinema' brand – and the successes of other countries such as Brazil and Argentina – the Cubans launched a network of institutions during the 1980s that both promoted the notion of a pan-regional cinematic project and strengthened their supposedly leading role in Latin American cinema. This chapter analyses the connections and joint initiatives of these Cuban-based institutions with other festivals in the continent, especially Sundance and Toronto, which strengthened the narrative of a unified Cuban-led Latin American cinema.

The end of the Cold War left this movement without the cinematic North that, according to international observers, had defined all the cinemas within the region. As the chapter demonstrates, the general perception of Latin American cinema during the 1990s was that it was lumbered with old political ideals and economic problems and that a new definition of regional cinema was required. Paradoxically, the renewal of international interest in regional cinema would only be possible once the films of the 1990s began to be interpreted as marking the 'return' of a common pan-Latin American movement that reworked the established ideals of a 'new cinema'. This chapter explores the crucial role of festivals' and critics' reception in shaping, inventing and defining – rather than 'discovering' – the phenomenon frequently labelled as Latin American 'new wave', 're-emergence', 'boom', 'buena onda', 'renaissance' or 'revitalisation' (Alvaray 2007, 63). It analyses the important shift that took place in the international reputation of contemporary Latin American cinema during 1998 when Latin American productions such as *Pizza, Beer and Cigarettes* and particularly *Central Station* were the focus of an incredible international attention. While the Latin American 'wave' received Cannes' stamp of approval in 2002, its reached its climax in 2004 with the incredible popularity of *The Motorcycle Diaries* as the 'ideal' Latin American film that could not be linked to a single country, but the whole region. In this way, the chapter argues that international reception can be an even more determining factor in the crafting of cinematic 'waves' than the production of the films themselves. In other words, the fact that a 'Latin American' wave of films has become an international phenomenon should not be understood by looking just at the films production modes but also at their international reception especially within in the film festival world.

a. Between Havana and the Cinematic Rebirths of the 1980s

In December 1979 the Cuban government launched the 1st Festival del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (Festival of New Latin American Cinema) in Havana. Dedicated to 'new' cinemas, the festival capitalised on the international currency that the militant films of the region had gained in the preceding two decades. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, important precedents were established during that time with the Rassegna de Cinema Latino-Americano (1960-1965), two Latin American editions of Viña del Mar (1967 and 1969) and the Pesaro film festival – particularly after 1968.

The Havana festival was a rather late arrival to the festival scene, at a time when the general perception was that of a 'new' Latin American cinema in decline and falling off the radar of international critics. This perspective was clearly expressed by Canadian scholar Seth Feldman in his book review of *Latin American Film Makers and the Third Cinema* (Pick 1978). In his words:

In the decade since the publication of their seminal essay, 'Towards a third cinema', the kind of revolutionary film culture described by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino has gone into a steady if not terminal decline. In Latin America in particular, radical cinema has suffered fatal blows from overt political repression and barely less subtle economic pressures. At the same time those English language film periodicals that regularly brought us news of third cinema productions have turned to other matters as the films themselves appear with a declining frequency (Feldman 1979, 47).

Feldman's article echoed previous reports that alluded to endangered cinema in the region (see for instance Biskind 1976, 160–161; Burton 1975, 33, 1976a, 33–34; Cineaste 1975, 49). However, he welcomed the publication, noting that, despite the declining attention to 'third cinema', some films were still handled by a few 'innovative distributors' and others were screened at the Canadian National Film Board Theatre. Moreover, he noticed that discussion of the concept of 'third cinema' had grown at university level where, increasingly, teachers contributed to the term becoming 'accessible and meaningful to students' (Feldman 1979, 47). Therefore, rather than a contemporary cinematic practice, the political Latin American cinema was fast becoming an academic field and the venerated origin of the concept of 'third cinema' which would be revitalised during the 1980s – especially at the instigation of US and UK scholars.

The Havana festival seized the opportunity to re-launch the idea of a 'new Latin American cinema' with an event that would bring left-wing intellectuals, filmmakers, critics and activists to

the island. The first time the festival was held, it attracted dozens of North American, Canadian and European guests as well as the attention of publications such as *Cineaste* (Burton 1980), *Framework* (Chanan 1980), *Film Comment* (Johnson 1980) and *Sight & Sound* (Overbey 1980). Scholars like Julianne Burton and Michael Chanan became regular guests, gathering firsthand information from their annual visits to the event (Burton 1986; Chanan 1985, 7).

Within a couple of years, the Havana festival has become the darling of many left-wing intellectuals and renowned personalities from inside and outside the region. Although the new Latin American cinema had already been receiving international recognition for more than a decade, sympathetic scholars such as Zuzana Pick have argued that the festival played a pivotal role in the movement's 'process of consolidation' (1993, 30). The event included retrospectives, meetings, conferences, a film market and the 'Coral' awards that aimed to reflect the films' artistic quality and their simultaneous political commitment. An ideal example of cultural diplomacy, the festival attracted influential personalities who, after several days of fun, excellent treatment from the Cubans and attendance at parties sometimes hosted by Fidel Castro himself, could only speak positively about the Cuban regime. At the same time, the festival became a forum for intense debates among left-wing filmmakers, critics, scholars and activists as well as ICAIC's most efficient strategy of internationalisation. In this way, it not only raised the international prestige of both Cuban and Latin American cinema, but helped to keep the idea of a pan-Latin American cinema project, led by the Cubans, alive.

Frequently reported in left-wing magazines like *Jump Cut* and *Cineaste*, the successful festival grew exponentially from a one-week event with 420 participants in 1984 to a two-week length with 1500 international guests in December 1985 (Kleinhans and Lesage 1986, 70). As sympathetic critics celebrated: 'Suddenly, after years of neglect, Latin American films [were] in' (Crowdus 1986c, 36). The sudden popularity of the Havana film festival emerged alongside – and in relation to – the recent 'reappearance' of Latin American cinema on the map of international audiences and critics in the mid 1980s. The increasing visibility of this festival coincided with a downturn in Cuba-US relations during the Reagan administration (Crowdus 1986a, 2). However, the renewed interest of international observers was not directly linked to Cuban cinema. In fact, many critics argued that it had already lost its edge and avant-garde position by the early 1980s (J. King 2000, 147). Indeed, during the mid-1980s, few Cuban films were accepted at Cannes, Berlin or Venice. And still those films that were screened at those festivals were generally disregarded by critics and jury-members. Cases in point are *Cecilia* (CU dir. Humberto Solás 1982) – screened in Cannes' main competition in 1982 – and *Up to a Certain Point/ Hasta cierto punto* (CU 1983) by Cuba's most acclaimed director Tomás Gutiérrez Alea – shown in Berlin's Forum in February 1984.

The example of *Up to a Certain Point* is particularly illustrative of the lack of international attention received by Cuban films throughout the 1980s. Combining real interviews with fictional characters, the film explores the relationship between Oscar (Oscar Álvarez), a director making a film about sexism among workers at Havana's port, and Lina (Mirta Ibarra), an unconventional woman who challenges most of his assumptions. Although the film had recently won Best Film and Best Actress awards in Havana in December 1983, Berlin's programming choice, including the film at the Forum instead of the more prestigious competition or Panorama sections, reflected international critics and festivals' limited enthusiasm for Cuban cinema. Thus *Up to a Certain Point* tended to go unmentioned in the festival reports published by *Film Comment* (H. Kennedy 1984, 64, 69–71), *Sight & Sound* (Jenkins 1984, 164), *Cahiers du Cinéma* (Lardeau 1984, 30–34) and *Films & Filming* (Taylor 1984, 33). The film was briefly mentioned in *Positif* which labelled it as a 'Forum "militant" fiction'. For the magazine the film was an unsuccessful attempt to question sexism 'but which in fact remained faithful to the monogamous conception of sexual desire'¹⁰⁵ (Amengual 1984, 46). In a similar vein, *Variety* discarded it as 'barely more than a trifle' for a filmmaker of Gutiérrez Alea's stature and a film that was generally only of interest to Cuban cinema scholars (Edna 1984). *Up to a Certain Point* was welcomed by Latin American cinema specialists and left-wing publications like *Jeune Cinéma* (Tournès 1984a, 13) and *Cineaste* (Crowdus 1985, 24–29), but not by the main critical and festival establishment. Thus neither the film's screening at Berlin nor the Havana festival – where it received its main prize – were regarded as suitable occasions to declare Gutiérrez Alea or Cuban cinema's triumphant 'return'. This would only happen a decade later when *Strawberry and Chocolate/ Fresa y chocolate* (CU/MX dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío 1993) – having won top awards at Havana in December 1993 – was screened at the Berlin competition and awarded a Special Jury Prize in February 1994.

In contrast to Cuban cinema's low popularity in the mid-1980s, the Latin American festival in Havana was thriving. However, this was mainly because of its links to Brazilian and Argentine political and film events where the Cubans had little influence. Firstly, the much desired return to democracy in the region began in Argentina with democratic elections held in October 1983, soon followed by others like Uruguay and Brazil, where military rule ended in March 1985. On the one hand, the political changes demanded by the local and worldwide film community

¹⁰⁵ My translation, in the original: 'Parmi les fictions « militantes » du Forum, lesquelles retenir ? (...) Jusqu'à certain point (Hasta cierto punto, de Gutiérrez Alea, Cuba, 1983) qui se veut une interrogation sur le machisme et ses pièges mais butte en fait sur la conception monogamique du désir amoureux' (Amengual, 1984, p. 46).

made international headlines that put the new democratic countries in the map. On the other hand, the political changes raised expectations of a filmmaking revival, which was generally understood as having been repressed for years. As mentioned in Chapter 5, this view was not completely accurate, as countries like Brazil and Mexico continued to produce films during periods of dictatorial rule and/or political repression, while others such as Venezuela (Kovács 1978, 91–93) and Colombia (Stein 1987, 6) were looking for ways to support their local film industry. At the same time, this misrepresentation of an endangered cinema across the region was generally accepted by international observers of the 1980s.

Somewhat paradoxically, the Havana film festival capitalised on the success of a branch of Latin American film production that did not comply with the ideas for a ‘new Latin American cinema’ held by regional militants and international critics. Firstly, the State-sponsored Brazilian film industry had produced some remarkably popular films during the mid and late 1970s that contributed to this sense of international revival in the following years. Secondly, Argentine film production was reactivated after 1983 when a capitalist democracy, not a communist revolution, put an end to the repressive military regime and its widespread human and civil rights abuses, executed from 1976.

The case of Brazil was rather controversial because its film production flourished with the support of the military dictatorship via the State agency Embrafilme which gain more room for manoeuvre in the mid-1970s (R. Johnson and Stam 1995, 43–46; R. Johnson 1987, 151–158). Thus, when members of the left-wing Cinema Novo group assumed Embrafilme’s directorship, at the same time they were charged of cooperating with the regime through the State-sponsored institution. Censorship continued to a certain extent, but effective management led to increasing production levels and huge box-office successes at home and abroad. Therefore, for several filmmakers – including figures like Carlos Diegues, Glauber Rocha and Arnaldo Jabor – the role of Embrafilme was in fact a very positive one (R. Johnson and Stam 1995, 98–100; J. King 2000, 115–116). However, this revival was very problematic for those still committed to left-wing ideals, who expected a militant, revolutionary, non-commercial cinema from Latin America. Not only were the films very popular, profitable and entertaining, but they posed a political problem: they were supported by a right-wing military dictatorship. The connections between the Cinema Novo group and the Brazilian government provoked an outcry especially from sectors not supported by Embrafilme in Brazil, who accused the group of ‘selling out to the government and of having lost faith in the initial propositions of the movement’ (R. Johnson 1978, 42). However; a number of international observers actually celebrated the idea of a more accessible cinema, viewing it as a necessary step to reconnect with local audiences instead of offering them highly intellectualised – and often unpopular – films (R. Johnson 1978, 44).

Regardless of disagreements over Embrafilme's role, a number of Brazilian films were so successful at both local and international box offices in the late 1970s, that they paved the way for a revival in the following years. Among the cases most worthy of note was *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands/ Dona Flor e seus dois maridos* (BR dir. Bruno Barreto 1976) which broke admission records in Brazil. Selling more than 10 million tickets, it famously outsold *Jaws* (US dir. Steven Spielberg 1975) during their contemporaneous release in Brazil (Mosk 1977, 17; Ranvaud 1977, 40). The film is based on Jorge Amado's popular novel about Dona Flor (Sônia Braga), a young widow in the 1940s haunted by her deceased husband Vadinho (José Wilker) who returns naked from the afterlife to satisfy her sexual fantasies. Initially torn between her new righteous husband Teodoro (Mauro Mendonça) and the sexually-arousing ghost of Vadinho, Dona Flor decides to share her life with both. The humorous and sexy comedy launched the international career of both Sônia Braga and the young writer-director Bruno Barreto. Despite being only 22-years old, this was Barreto's third feature film as he had grown up in the film business. His parents veteran Cinema Novo producers Lucy and Luiz Carlos Barreto who had worked with directors such as Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Glauber Rocha, Carlos Diegues and Paulo Cesar Saraceni from the 1960s. As the producers of *Dona Flor*, the Barretos were certainly instrumental in attracting top-rate collaborators such as the popular musician Chico Buarque, documentary filmmaker Eduardo Coutinho – who co-wrote the script – and actress Sônia Braga who, at time of filming, was already a rising television and film star in Brazil.

For a film that became such a success with international audiences, it is rather surprising that *Dona Flor* was not officially endorsed by the Cannes, Berlin or Venice festivals.¹⁰⁶ This is truly atypical because – as further demonstrated in Chapters 8 and 9 – in the same way that top-tier festivals give prestige and visibility to films, absence from these events implies both a presupposed lower artistic quality and less media coverage. However, after its spectacular box-office performance in Brazil and the enthusiastic international response at the Taormina festival in the summer of 1977 ('En Taormina triunfó el interés' 1977, 32; Lane 1977, 31), *Dona Flor* was acquired by some foreign distributors such as New Yorker Films (US), Gaumont (FR) and ITC Entertainment (UK).

Dona Flor divided the critics and was generally ignored by the most prestigious specialised magazines. Despite its success with Brazilian audiences, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, *Sight & Sound* and

¹⁰⁶ *Dona Flor's* festival premiere was in the competition of the Gramado Film Festival in January 1977, where it won awards for Best Director, Best Music and received a special mention for its production design (IMDb 2012d).

Film Comment gave it barely any coverage. In *Positif* Brazilian critics Paulo Antonio Paranaguá and Maria Regina Pillar strongly rejected it because of its lack of criticism of the political and gender status quo (1977, 66). Moreover, they condemned other critics who had been condescending towards the film and most noticeably, they disapprove of Barreto's non-militant declarations about Brazilians' positive approach to life and his portrayal of the 1940s as a golden age in Brazil (Paranaguá and Pilla 1977, 66). Likewise, *The New York Times* pointed out severe directorial failures, particularly its 'dangerously uncertain tone' regarding gender politics (Maslin 1978). In a more favourable – although from celebratory – review, *Variety* acknowledged that *Dona Flor* had a 'certain raw charm', but criticised it for not achieving 'the needed cohesion and directional finesse it calls for' (Mosk 1977, 17). The *British Monthly Film Review* did not appreciate the light humour of the film and snubbed it because it was neither an auteurist work nor a third world film. In the words of the magazine's reviewer:

Trailing its *Emmanuelle*-like success with middle-class American audiences, and highlighting the poverty of Brazilian film in the decade or so since the appearance of Cinema Novo, *Dona Flor* is a doubly depressing fig-leaf farce that fails even to exploit the single tenuous joke on which it is based. In the hands of directors as diverse as Fellini and Oshima, the comic potential of the heroine sharing her bed with her undersexed husband and a highly sexed ghost might have been wittily and erotically realised. But nudging direction and fatuous playing only serve here to underline the alacrity with which Barreto has transferred out of Third World Cinema into first-division soft-core sexploitation (Auty 1979, 120–121).

Unable to classify the film as auteurist or third world cinema, the critic suggested that neither comedy nor explicit sexuality should be dealt by 'third world cinema', but instead should be handled only by recognised auteurs such as Fellini and Oshima. However, regardless of the lack of approval from the critical and festival establishment, *Dona Flor* was well-received by North American audiences, as the *British Monthly Film Review* condescendingly remarked (Auty 1979, 120–121). Moreover, its success stimulated the international distribution of other Brazilian films such as *Xica da Silva* (BR dir. Carlos Diegues 1976), *Pixote/ Pixote: A lei do mais fraco* (BR dir. Hector Babenco 1981) and *Bye Bye Brazil/ Bye bye Brasil* (BR dir. Carlos Diegues 1980).

While riding the wave of success in the early-1980s, Brazilian cinema promptly caught the attention of the festival scene, that capitalised on and reinforced its rising international visibility with retrospectives in Toronto (Pariser 1983, 21) and Nantes (Paranaguá 1983, 53). As *Film Comment* pointed out, the Brazilian film industry experienced growing production numbers, local commercial hits and international acclaim (Yakir 1984, 56). This success also attracted

foreign investors that co-produced films such as *Gabriela/ Gabriela, cravo e canela* (BR dir. Bruno Barreto 1983), *Quilombo* (BR dir. Carlos Diegues 1986) and, most significantly, the English-language *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (BR/US dir. Hector Babenco 1985) starring William Hurt, Raul Julia and Sônia Braga. Following its successful premiere and the awards it received at Cannes in May 1985, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* became an independent box-office hit in the US (Walker and Klady 1986, 62) and received several nominations and awards towards the end of the year, including Golden Globes, New York Film Critics Circle and Academy Awards (IMDb 2012b). A further symptom of Brazilian cinema's rise was the re-launching of the film festival in Rio de Janeiro in November 1984. Despite some visitors reporting a severe lack of organisation, the festival proudly described itself as 'part of the newly democratic Brazil' (Taylor 1985, 27). In this way, in holding the first event in 1969, the festival was clearly aimed at raising Brazil's international profile after the return to democracy.

Meanwhile, following the end of the most repressive dictatorships in the continent, Argentina held its first free elections in 1983. Cinematic production was promptly reactivated, bringing international attention (J. King 2000, 91–92), particularly to films dealing with the crimes of the military dictatorship, such as Fernando Solanas' well publicised return *Tangos: The Exile of Gardel/ Tangos: El exilio de Gardel* (AR 1985), the documentary *The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo/ Las madres de la Plaza de Mayo* (AR dir. Susana B. Muñoz and Lourdes Portillo 1985) and *The Official Story/ La historia oficial* (AR dir. Luis Puenzo 1985). Selected for Cannes competition in 1985, and awarded the prize for Best Actress (Norma Leandro), *The Official Story* became the first Latin American film to win a Best Foreign Language Academy Award in early 1986. As *Cineaste* reported, there was in Hollywood 'widespread euphoria over Argentina's "democratization"' (Fusco 1986, 22).

Through screenings and awards, festivals also celebrated the political and cinematic improvements witnessed in the region. Berlin's Forum held a special cycle of Latin American films in 1984 (Tournès 1984b, 6). In 1985 *Oriana* (VE/FR dir. Fina Torres 1985) received Cannes' Golden Camera, *Memories of Prison/ Memórias do cárcere* (BR dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1985) the FIPRESCI award at the Directors' Fortnight and *Tangos: The exile of Gardel* won the Grand Jury Prize at Venice's competition. Similarly, Nelson Pereira dos Santos's work was the subject of a retrospective at Rotterdam (Rosenbaum 1985, 80), Havana (Crowdus 1986c, 36) and Venice. Furthermore, the director was invited to attend Venice as a jury-member in 1986 (La Biennale di Venezia 2006a). Further prizes awarded during 1986 confirmed and reinforced the sense of a revival. Awards included Berlin's Best Actress award to Marcélia Cartaxo for *The Hour of the Star/ A hora da estrela* (BR dir. Suzana Amaral 1986), the title of Best Actress to Fernanda Torres for *Love Me Forever or Never/ Eu sei que vou te amar* (BR dir. Arnaldo Jabor

1986) at Cannes and Best First Work at Venice to *A King and His Movie/ La película del rey* (AR Carlos Sorín 1986). As explained below, the Toronto film festival provided a timely opportunity for a significant retrospective devoted to the new Latin American cinema. Thus there were a number of signs that Latin American cinema was experiencing a ‘renaissance’ that, in turn, brought foreign attention to the cinemas of the region in the mid-1980s – especially those of Argentina and Brazil.

b. Winds of Change: Toronto and Sundance Film Festivals

The growing presence of Latin American cinemas on the critics’ radar meant that the number of international participants at the Havana festival December 1985 increased three-fold. Among the guests in attendance this year, were renowned Hollywood personalities who unofficially acted as US cultural ambassadors (Crowdus 1986c, 37). Significantly, for the first time the event received representatives from the Cannes and Toronto film festivals (Crittenden 1985). Without wasting the opportunity, the Cubans announced a new Havana-based organisation aimed at promoting the integration of cinema in the region. The New Latin American Cinema Foundation would be chaired by the renowned Nobel Prize winner, and personal friend of Fidel Castro, the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez, who would also oversee the creation of a film school in the outskirts of Havana.

The Havana film festival’s reputation – promoted by Cuban officials – as ‘one of the most important cinematographic expositions on the continent’ (Siqueira 1984, 22), started to gain legitimacy with members of the international film community. Among them was the newly appointed Toronto programmer Helga Stephenson, who was planning a retrospective on Latin American cinema and travelled to the Rio festival in 1984 in order to make the necessary connections (B. Johnson 2000, 162). Disappointed by the films at the Brazilian festival, she was advised to go to the Havana festival instead. The following year she attended both events. As she later recalled,

[Havana] was the apex of Latin American cinema (...) and it was hopping. They had these huge parties and all the best bands in Cuba playing there. You just partied and drank yourself to death’ (Stephenson quoted in B. Johnson 2000, 162).

Whilst Stephenson celebrated the parties and meetings with left-wing intellectuals, some less sympathetic observers remarked that the objective of the rather ‘unglamorous and badly-organised’ festival was ‘to be the Communist answer to Hollywood’ with plenty of ‘political rallies, Third World conferences, gatherings of the comrades, perhaps, but hardly any movie aficionados’ (Crittenden 1985).

Festival organisers in Havana were very pleased with the idea of a major retrospective and promoted it to dozens of well-established Latin American directors who got together during the Havana festival in 1985 (B. Johnson 2000, 162). In September 1986 the 11th Toronto Film Festival presented 'Winds of Change,' the largest retrospective of 'new Latin American cinema' to date, encompassing almost a hundred films from the 1950s onwards, conferences, roundtables and the public announcement of the opening of the film school in Havana a few months later in January 1987 (Toronto Festival of Festivals 1986). The retrospective was perfectly timed to coincide with cinematographic and political changes in several Latin American countries. The gradual return to democracy in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Bolivia was accompanied with flourishing cinema industries. As discussed, international co-productions, Academy Awards and the recognition from European festivals and critics seemed to confirm cinema was improving in the region, following the onset of democratic rule.

'Winds of Change' was a great success. Some reporters considered it 'perhaps the most distinguished accomplishment' of the Toronto festival that year (Crowdus 1986b, 29). Welcoming the retrospective, *Film Comment's* Patricia Aufderheide explained that, as the ICAIC had been making movies since 1959, therefore Cuba was 'central' to the retrospective (1986, 47). As highlighted in *The New York Times*, the exhibition had a strong Cuban flavour with around a quarter of the titles coming from Cuba and a large delegation of around twenty people (D. Martin 1986). Featuring more films than any other country in the retrospective,¹⁰⁷ the emphasis on Cuban cinema diminished the relative importance of countries like Mexico, Brazil and Argentina which, arguably, had a stronger filmmaking tradition. Therefore, in addition to increasing the visibility and distribution opportunities of the films exhibited – as most observers remarked –, 'Winds of Change' offered a somewhat distorted narrative of Latin American cinema that legitimated Cuban cinema's leadership and suggested that the Havana-based institutions were at the centre of the region's cinema.

Underscored by 'Winds of Change', this narrative enabled the Cubans to capitalise on the awards and recognition gained – mostly by Brazilian and Argentine filmmakers – bringing the successes together as part of a pan-Latin American cinematic project. Not surprisingly, the Havana film festival of December 1987 was attended by an important delegation of Canadian filmmakers and representatives of Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board, provincial film

¹⁰⁷ Cuba was represented by 23 films, of a total of 96 films featured in the retrospective, 23 films were Cuban. Other countries included Argentina (17), Bolivia (4), Brazil (14), Chile (7), Colombia (4), El Salvador (1), Mexico (11), Nicaragua (3), Peru (3), Puerto Rico (2), Uruguay (3), Venezuela (4) (Toronto Festival of Festivals 1986).

agencies and the Toronto Festival (Aufderheide 1987). In a further gesture of solidarity with the cinemas of the region, the Toronto festival established a permanent showcase called 'Latin American Panorama' between 1991 and 1995 (B. Johnson 2000, 165; TIFF 1996). Moreover, when the Cuban film school was officially inaugurated in December 1986, it received several messages of support from well-known international directors such as Francesco Rossi, Ingmar Bergman, Peter Brook and Akira Kurosawa (Martin 1987). Celebrating the Cuban initiative, *Cineaste* stated the need to follow their example and establish more of this type of school in the 'third world' (West 1987, 57). Therefore, while the general perception was that the Latin American film industry as a whole was experiencing a 'worldwide resurgence' (Windhausen 1987, 23), the Cubans skilfully positioned themselves as leaders of this movement, in spite of the actual limited international attention paid to Cuban films in previous years.

The Cuban network of film institutions caught the attention of Robert Redford, founder of the Sundance Institute in the early 1980s. Hosting a film school and festival, Sundance and the Cuban-based institutions collaborated closely in the late 1980s, through workshops, conferences, film projects' collaborations, special festival screenings, and teaching exchanges. Interestingly, these teachers included Hollywood personalities like Francis Ford Coppola, Georges Lucas, Harry Belafonte and Redford himself, as well as the renowned García Márquez, for whom Redford managed to obtain a US visa through his high-level connections (Wolin 1990, 17). The continuing Cold War hostilities and the tense nature of US-Cuba relations brought logistical difficulties for these cinematic exchanges which were of considerable political significance. Redford's visits to the Havana film school and festival were not only widely reported in the press, but also noticed by the US Treasury Department who started investigating the exchanges as a violation of the trade embargo against Cuba ('Redford's trip to Cuba reportedly under investigation' 1988). Although Redford faced personal accusations from the US government, Sundance continued with its 'Latin American programme'. It included a series on 'new Argentine cinema' and further workshops in Havana and Park City in 1988 (Sundance Institute 2010a) as well as panel discussions during the festival and the joint development of the six-film series 'Dangerous Loves' each by a different Latin American director and all scripted by García Márquez¹⁰⁸ (Sundance Institute 2010b). The films were rather unsuccessful and screened

¹⁰⁸ The six films were financed in co-production with the Spanish broadcaster TVE: *Fable of the Beautiful Pigeon Fancier/ Fábula de la bella palomera* (BR dir. Ruy Guerra 1988), *A Happy Sunday/ Un domingo feliz* (VE dir. Olegario Barrera 1988), *I'm The One You're Looking For/ Yo soy el que tú buscas* (ES dir. Jaime Chavarri), *Letters From The Park/ Cartas del parque* (CU dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 1988), *Miracle in Rome/ Milagro en Roma* (CO dir. Lisandro Duque Naranjo 1988), *The Summer of Mrs. Forbes/ El*

mostly on television.¹⁰⁹ However, the Sundance festival continued to hold special cycles of Latin American cinema each year¹¹⁰ until 1995 when it introduced the wider 'world cinema' section in tandem with a special jury award for Latin American films – which continued until 2002. Furthermore, the Sundance Institute continued to support film production in Latin America during the early and mid-1990s through the co-sponsorship of several workshops for directors and screenwriters and conferences for producers in Cuba, Mexico and Chile (Moore 1996b, 78).

By the early 1990s, the global political situation had changed radically with the end of the Cold War. After the abrupt collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba, and its film project, was plunged into a deep economic crisis. By the mid-1990s, the Havana festival – once considered the apex of Latin American film culture – was described as 'certainly honourable, but not exactly sparkling' while the film school was reportedly under-resourced (Stuart 1994). However, the Cuban film institutions – especially the festival that had boosted the island's reputation as a regional cinematic hub – had played an important role throughout the 1980s in legitimising the politically committed Latin American cinema as a unified movement, jointly headed by Cuba, Brazil and Argentina. While some scholars, such as Ana M. López, have explicitly argued against the 'New Latin American Cinema' being far from a simply a Cuban 'construct', it is undeniable that 'the Cubans have been instrumental in promoting the idea and – throughout extensive collaborative projects – the very existence of the New Latin American Cinema project' (1988, 110). With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the rhetoric surrounding the supposedly unified movement was undoubtedly influenced by the Cold War context and Cuban diplomatic efforts in cultural 'solidarity' across the region.

c. The End of the Cold War

In the aftermath of the Cold War, Latin American cinema was generally absent from prestigious festivals. As the Argentine *El Amante Cine* reported from Berlin, whilst festivals were fascinated with Chinese cinemas, there was a clear 'European apathy towards cultural products

verano de la Señora Forbes (MX dir. Jaime Humberto Hermosillo 1988) and *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings / Un señor muy viejo con unas alas enormes* (AR dir. Fernando Birri 1988).

¹⁰⁹ The only exception at major international festivals – specifically at Venice and Toronto in 1988 – was *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings*. However, it was generally ignored by specialised critics. It went unmentioned in *Sight & Sound* (Combs and Pym 1988) and *Positif* (Gili 1988). *Film Comment* described it as a Cuban comedy that 'rejoiced in images of crazy poetry' (H. Kennedy 1988).

¹¹⁰ In 1990 the festival focused on Colombian cinema, in a 1991 series entitled 'Images of Mexico and Latin America' and between 1992 and 1995 programmed the section 'Pan-American Highway'.

from Latin America'¹¹¹ (Link 1993, 42). Similarly, a few years later, Cannes veteran and US critic Mary Corliss noted the tendency of the French festival to focus on certain national cinemas while ignoring others. In contrast with Chinese or Iranian cinemas, Latin Americans were not on critics' radar at the time:

There are fashions in national cinemas. The Chinas are hot now, and Iran. But as critics discover one region, and gentrify it with their interest, they abandon another. South America is a big continent; someone must be making interesting movies there. Yet the only major festival film made south of the border was the Wong Kar-wai!¹¹² (Corliss 1997, 9).

Throughout the 1990s the general international perception was that Latin American cinema had entered a period of stagnation from which it only recovered with the appearance of a new generation of directors and films such as *Central Station* (BR/FR/JP dir. Walter Salles 1998), *Crane World/ Mundo grúa* (AR dir. Pablo Trapero 1999) and *Amores Perros* (MX dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu 2000).

The phenomenon is more clearly grasped in retrospective by Richard Peña, an expert in Latin American cinema and main programmer of the Film Society of the Lincoln Centre in New York, who noted at Cannes 2000 that 'Latin America seemed to be making a kind of quiet comeback on the Croisette' (2000, 72). Peña saw indications of this rebirth in the better attended screenings and more discussions about the films. However, only a year earlier, he reported the opposite trend with a 'diminishing presence of Latin American cinema at this and other editions of Cannes' (1999, 13). According to Peña, the situation could be partly attributed to production problems, but was mostly linked to 'the lack of a sense of direction, of a vision of the place of Latin America within the new cinematic world order' (Peña 1999, 13). While he argued that the underlying problem lay in Latin American cinema itself, a closer analysis of the situation suggests that it was also a matter of reception and visibility: Latin American cinemas were unfashionable mostly because the festival and critical establishment did not know where to place Latin American cinema in the post-Cold War world.

¹¹¹ My translation, in the original: 'La apatía europea hacia productos culturales provenientes de América Latina' (Link 1993, 42).

¹¹² This is a production set in Buenos Aires *Happy Together/ Chun gwong cha sit* (HK/JP/KR dir. Wong Kar-wai 1997). Its main characters are two Hongkongese men who arrive in Buenos Aires and speak mostly in Mandarin and Cantonese (IMDb 2011c). Significantly, Corliss refers to South America as everything that is 'South of the border' of the US, that is, including Mexico and Central America.

Despite the general perception that Latin American cinemas were experiencing a recession during the 1990s, there were several films from the region that gained unprecedented international recognition in this period. This was the case with *Like Water for Chocolate/ Como agua para chocolate* (MX dir. Alfonso Arau 1993) and *Strawberry and Chocolate/ Fresa y chocolate* (CU/MX dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío 1994). Other cases included *Danzón* (MX dir. María Novaro 1991), *A Place in the World/ Un lugar en el mundo* (AR/UY/ES dir. Adolfo Aristarain 1992), *Chronos/ Cronos* (MX dir. Guillermo del Toro 1993), *The Strategy of the Snail/ La estrategia del caracol* (CO/IT/FR dir. Sergio Cabrera 1993), *Midaq Alley/ El callejón de los milagros* (MX dir. Jorge Fons 1995) and *Deep Crimson/ Profundo carmesí* (MX dir. Arturo Ripstein 1996), to mention only a few. The fact that these films were overlooked by critics at the end of the decade points out the difficult dilemma faced by Latin American cinemas during the 1990s: while the old 'new Latin America cinema' no longer represented anything 'new' or original, its principles continued to be the main criteria applied to cinema from the region in international cinematic circuits.

A case in point is *Like Water for Chocolate*, a film which – distributed by savvy Miramax marketers – broke US attendance records for foreign language films and became the first Mexican and Latin American film in decades that international audiences would recognise. Focusing on the life of protagonist Tita (Lumi Cavazos), the film recreates trials and tribulations of a traditional family in the North of Mexico during the first decades of the twentieth century. Faced with the opposition of her old-fashioned mother Mamá Elena (Regina Torné), Tita is prohibited from marrying her beloved Pedro (Marco Leonardi) and thus develops supernatural cooking skills that transmit her feelings to those who taste her food. *Like Water for Chocolate* was based on the homonymous book written by Alfonso Arau's wife and scriptwriter Laura Esquivel, who became central to the US marketing campaign, which emphasised a collaborative and organic husband-and-wife creative process. Furthermore, the film was promoted on the basis of its 'magic' and mouth-watering properties, banking on its associations with exotic food, sexuality and its connections with literary magical realism as a symbol of Pan-Latin American identity (H. H. Wu 1997, 10). Rather than experienced visually, the film was to be eaten and savoured. Cleverly exploiting these hooks, Miramax launched a marketing campaign in the US that included cooking contests, tasting sessions and background articles in non-cinephile newspaper sections – especially literary and gastronomic ones – that helped the film to reach a wider audience (Fabricant 1993, C7; Fraser 1993; Peden 1993, 10; Yockelson 1993, E3). In this way, the culinary analogies and references to magical realism managed to seduce millions of viewers, first in the US and later on in other international markets (Hopewell 1996b, 1).

The film was welcomed by some critics, especially North American ones, who seemed to have fallen under its spell (see for instance Maslin 1993, C13; Menell 1993; J. Scott 1993). However, at the same time, for the more serious core of the critical establishment, *Like Water for Chocolate* relied too much on its links with magical realism – consecrated by Latin American literature – and on the generic melodramatic conventions, remote from the political critique that characterised the ‘new Latin American cinema’. *Cahiers du Cinéma* discarded it as a ‘commonplace blockbuster’ unfaithful to its tasty and sensual promises (Vatrcan 1993, 79). *Positif* acknowledged it had some admirable qualities, stating that ‘the theme was magnificent, the story was easy to follow, the actors were impeccable: in fact, it was not bad at all’. At the same time, however, the magazine criticised the film for ‘dangerously focusing on the anecdotic, rather than on the cinematographic emotion’¹¹³ (Tobin 1993, 45). According to *The Guardian*’s Derek Malcolm, the film was a perfect candidate for the Foreign Language Academy Awards: ‘attractive to look at without being properly cinematic or “difficult”’ and dully devoid of substantial commentaries on Mexican history (1993, 4). *The Independent* generally condemned its political and gender representations (Mars-Jones 1993, 18). Moreover, it argued that despite being in the same food-related ‘category’ as films like *Tampopo* (JP dir. Jûzô Itami 1985) and *Babette’s Feast/ Babettes gæstebud* (DK dir. Gabriel Axel 1987), it was not in the same ‘class’ as ‘it [was] not an art film’ (Mars-Jones 1993, 18).

More clearly stated in *Sight & Sound*, the film’s artistic or political qualities did not seem pronounced enough for critics to classify it as belonging to either category. As John Kraniauskas stated disappointedly:

Like Water for chocolate is not an example of Latin American ‘third’ or ‘imperfect’ cinema. Rather, it forms part of that international series of films about fetishism associated most recently with *Babette’s Feast*, *Tampopo* and *La Grande Bouffe*. Even here, however, it lacks the dangerous obsessiveness of these: instead of bringing politics and sex together via food, so as to subject them to visual analysis, Arau’s images religiously separate them out and purify each of these activities from mutual contamination (Kraniauskas 1993, 43).

With a striking resemblance to the criticisms of *Dona Flor and her Two Husbands*, discussed above, the problem with *Like Water for Chocolate* seemed to be its deviation from the political

¹¹³ My translation, in the original: ‘Le thème était magnifique, le récit se suit sans ennui, les acteurs sont irréprochables : ce n’est déjà pas si mal (...) le film finit par privilégier dangereusement l’anecdote sur l’émotion cinématographique’ (Tobin 1993, 45).

edge and formal experimentation that characterised the 'new Latin American cinema', without entering into the category of 'art-film'.

Moreover, like its Brazilian predecessor a decade earlier, *Like Water for Chocolate's* lack of artistic aura coincided with its limited auteurist and festival credentials. The director Alfonso Arau had enjoyed a lengthy acting career in Mexico and the US since the mid-1950s and, since the 1970s, had already directed five films. However, as the films mostly dealt with Chicano culture and Mexican immigrants in the US from a humorous perspective, Arau's work had never caught the attention of the international critical and festival establishment. Hardly a young filmmaker who could be declared a festival 'discovery', Arau had not developed an auteur-brand name capable of raising the film's artistic profile. As examined in more detail in Chapter 9, the auteurist credentials of a director tend to be directly related to a film's perceived artistic value, thus a film's artistic aura diminishes when its director does not seem to fit the individualistic auteur-model. Moreover, *Like Water for Chocolate* not only lacked auteurist credentials because of Arau's background in genre and commercial filmmaking, but also because of his widely publicised collaborative process with Esquivel.

Also affecting its artistic credentials was the fact that *Like Water for Chocolate's* non-prestigious festival tour did not include any major European events, not even San Sebastian, Locarno, Karlovy Vary or Rotterdam, let alone Cannes, Berlin and Venice (see table below). In fact, the film's world premiere was held at the rather modest Guadalajara festival in March 1992 in tandem with its Mexican commercial release. *Like Water* received a great number of local awards and a warm reception by local audiences (Lenti 1992, 14). However, the film was not welcomed at Cannes, and was screened in the market rather than in the festival, where most critics and buyers were unimpressed (A. Thompson 1993, 25). Nevertheless, convinced of its potential, Miramax acquired the North American rights to the film, re-edited it – cutting almost 40 minutes – and invested some US\$ 2.5 million on its marketing campaign ('Two "small" movies out shine Hollywood's best' 1993, B12). After the limited stir it caused at Cannes, most international festivals neglected the film throughout 1992. However, Miramax managed to screen the film as a Gala presentation at Toronto in September ('Glittering galas' 1992). With a February 1993 release planned (Box Office Mojo 2010c), after Toronto the film was screened at many North American festivals including cities like Sudbury, Vancouver, Mill Valley, Chicago, Sarasota, Palm Springs, San Diego, Miami and even Park City, Utah at the increasingly important Sundance Film Festival.

Table 5. *Like Water for Chocolate* (MX dir. Alfonso Arau 1993)

Date	Festival/ Commercial Release	Section/ Distributor
Apr, 1992	Muestra de Cine Mexicano de Guadalajara (MX)	[World Premiere]
Apr 16, 1992	Commercial Release in Mexico	Distrib: Videocine
Sep 10-19, 1992	Toronto Festival of Festivals (CA)	Gala Presentation
Sep, 1992	Cinéfest Sudbury (CA)	
Sep 25- Oct 4, 1992	Tokyo International Film Festival (JP)	
Oct 2-18, 1992	Vancouver International Film Festival (CA)	
Oct 1-11, 1992	Mill Valley Film Festival (US)	
Oct 6-22 1992	London Film Festival (UK)	
Oct 9-25, 1992	Chicago International Film Festival (US)	Competition
Nov 6-12, 1992	Sarasota Cine-World Film Festival (US)	
Jan 7-17, 1993	Palm Springs International Film Festival (US)	
Jan 19-, 1993	San Diego Film Festival (US)	
Jan 21-31, 1993	Sundance Film Festival (US)	The Pan-American Highway Revisited
Feb 5-14, 1993	Miami International Film Festival (US)	[Closing Film]
Feb 17, 1993	Commercial Release in US	Distrib: Miramax
Mar 3-11, 1993	Dublin Film Festival (IE)	
April 16-25, 1993	WorldFest/ Houston International Film Festival (US)	[Opening Film]
June 11-26, 1993	Sydney Film Festival (AU)	
Aug 8-15, 1993	Festival de Gramado (BR)	Latin American Competition
Oct, 1993	Cork International Film Festival (IE)	
Oct, 1993	Commercial Release in France	
Oct 1, 1993	Commercial Release in UK	Distrib: Electric Pictures
Dec, 1993	Commercial Release in Scotland and Ireland	Distrib: Electric Pictures

Amongst the international medium-size autumn events that took place in 1992, only Tokyo and London screened the film; whilst in 1993 it was mostly programmed at audience festivals like Dublin, Sydney, Gramado and Cork. Although its remarkable North American festival tour was a crucial component of the film's effective marketing campaign and huge box-office success, *Like Water for Chocolate* lacked legitimacy from the European critical and festival establishment that could have raised its artistic profile. Thus, while audiences worldwide embraced the film's charming and mouth-watering qualities, the critical consensus was that *Like Water for Chocolate* was not 'art' and certainly not a political critique with any relationship to 'third' or 'new' Latin American cinema.

The conundrum posed by Latin American cinema in international territories in the 1990s was further demonstrated by Argentine critic Eduardo Antín (Quintín), who reported from the

Toulouse film festival in March 1996. Both the critic and the festival were symptomatic of the changing situation of regional cinemas in the post-Cold War era. On the one hand, Quintín who co-funded the film magazine *El Amante Cine* in the early 1990s was representative of a new generation of critics and cinephile forums such as the Argentine magazines *Film* and *Haciendo Cine*, the Colombian *Kinetoscopio* and the Brazilian cine-club Grupo Estação. After establishing both a reputation as a critic and an international network of contacts in the film world, Quintín spent four years as the director of the Buenos Aires Independent Film Festival (BAFICI) in 2001. During this time, the festival – created in 1999 – expanded not only in size but it managed to craft an international reputation as an innovative event committed to ‘independent’ world and Argentine cinema (Rosenbaum 2004, 48).

On the other hand, the Toulouse film festival – launched in 1989 – could be viewed as one of an increasing number of specialised festivals during the 1990s taking place in cities like Biarritz, London, San Diego, Lleida, Los Angeles, Austin, San Francisco, Manchester and Vancouver (see Appendix E). Born as a merger of several Latin American solidarity movements, the Toulouse festival saw in the promotion of the regional cinema as a way to continue with their political activism¹¹⁴ (*‘De la solidaridad política a la intervención cultural’* 1996, 13). Not particularly unique in its interest in promoting Latin American cinemas, Toulouse and other specialised festivals promoted the label of ‘Latin American cinema’ itself as a category that justified the festivals’ very existence. However, along with the new generation of critics, cinephiles and filmmakers, the festivals inevitably raised questions regarding definitions of Latin American cinema in the 1990s. What constituted Latin American cinema in a post-Cold War world, when the militant left-wing ideals had dwindled and many filmmakers did not endorse clear-cut antagonistic relations with US cinemas and their market-friendly production modes? Was it actually a monolithic cinema or should the common banner of Latin solidarity be dropped in favour of a multiplicity of nationally – or even locally – fragmented cinemas?

For Quintín, the Toulouse film festival started well, by implicitly tackling the question in plural through its own title – *Rencontres Cinémas d’Amérique Latine* – rather than referring to a singular regional cinema. However, as the Argentine critic remarked, the category entailed several inconveniences related to its historical development, its linkages to melodramatic conventions and, in particular, to the limited circulation of many of these films across the

¹¹⁴ The Toulouse film festival has been particularly successful, mostly owing to its strategic shift to a competitive event in 1997 and the launching of ‘Cine en Construcción’ in 2002, a joint venture with the San Sebastian film festival to support the completion of Latin American films.

region. According to Quintín, there was an additional tension between sustaining an industrial national production and exerting his role as an honest reviewer of films' cinematic qualities without making concessions (Quintín 1996, 16). More importantly, Quintín enquired about the motivation behind European specialists' interest in Latin American cinema. In his own words:

Among these good people, it is assumed that the cinema of the peripheral countries in general and Latin American ones, in particular, consist of realities and visions of the world that eschew, not just the Hollywood model, but also European cultural traditions. As a consequence, the more clueless people keep asking for more doses of magical realism. Luckily I did not hear anyone defending *Like Water for Chocolate*. However, just as we used to be asked for 'revolutionary cinema', what it is now popular is the sort of picturesque film that requires irrationality and even tremendismo¹¹⁵ (Quintín 1996, 17).

Thus, as Quintín noted, regardless of the good intentions behind it, there was an 'alarming' tendency among European observers to regard some films as more Latin American than others in accordance with stereotypical notions of Latin America as a magical realist, revolutionary or picturesque place. However, after analysing the international reception of several Latin American films at different points in history in this thesis, such expectations and the label's associations with a somewhat picturesque, left-wing, uncivilised and violent cinema are hardly surprising.

As the end of the Cold War marked the conclusion of the communist project and of Cuba as a cinematic centre in the region, new definitions of Latin American cinema were needed. During the 1990s films continued to be made across the region and screened at international festivals. However, for most international film critics, these films were either too closely associated with outdated revolutionary ideals or too distant, entering into the realms of magical realism, costumbrismo and old-fashioned melodrama. The interest in the 'new Latin American cinema' had been declining in international cinematic circuits since the late 1970s. However, changes in the international political landscape enabled new possibilities of production and worldwide reception of films from the region. In fact, the late 1990s would bring a widely

¹¹⁵ My translation, in the original: 'Entre esta buena gente, se supone que el cine de los países periféricos en general y el latinoamericano en particular está hecho de realidades y visiones del mundo que escapan, no sólo al modelo de Hollywood, sino también a las tradiciones culturales europeas. Esto trae como consecuencia que los más despistados sigan pidiendo nuevas dosis de realismo mágico. Por suerte no escuché a nadie reivindicar Como agua para chocolate. Pero así como en alguna época se nos pedía "cine revolucionario", lo que ahora gusta es cierto pintoresquismo que demanda irracionalidad y hasta tremendismo' (Quintín 1996, 17).

accepted 'rebirth' of Latin American cinema and the almost unprecedented acceptance of some filmmakers in the pantheon of international art cinema and even as transnational 'auteurs' who could comfortably cross boundaries, not only from local to global but also from commercial to more personal films.

d. 1998: (Another) Renaissance in Latin American Cinema

In a recent article published in *Sight & Sound*, Argentine critic and current BAFICI programmer Sergio Wolf, identified 1998 as the year in which Latin American cinema 'went through an extraordinary transformation' (2010, 14). Although Wolf voiced his doubts over the term 'Latin American cinema' and explained that this transformation was rather uneven and had not happened overnight, from his perspective, the date that marked this 'drastic change' was clearly 1998. Similarly, London-based journalist Demetrios Matheou established the decade between 1998 and 2008 as the timeframe of his *The New Faber Book of South American Cinema* (2010, 15). Matheou clarified that his analysis included one exception to this timeframe: the case of *Foreign Land/ Terra estrangeira* (BR/PO dir. Walter Salles and Daniella Thomas 1995). While he did not feel the need to explain why he had chosen the year 1998 as the starting point of the timeframe covered by his book, he tacitly acknowledged the importance of this year for regional cinemas.

However, as most commentators of the phenomenon have observed, changes in the modes of production and reception were an ongoing process throughout the 1990s. Thus there are different landmarks in each country – especially in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil where this renaissance has been most commonly highlighted – that precede, follow or simply do not coincide with the year 1998. Dates for the recovery of Mexican cinema could be linked to key films such as *Red Dawn/ Rojo amanecer* (MX dir. Jorge Fons 1990), *Like Water for Chocolate* (1993), *Sex, Shame and Tears/ Sexo, pudor y lágrimas* (MX dir. Antonio Serrano 1998) and *Amores Perros* (2000) (González Vargas 2006, 27–28). However, the upsurge in film production is also linked to several changes in legislation throughout the 1990s, in particular the tax breaks introduced in 2003 (Alvaray 2007, 50–51).

The revitalisation of Argentine cinema has generally been viewed as closely related to the appearance of film schools in the early 1990s and the growing number of film students in the country who led the filmmaking renewal (Falicov 2003, 51–52). However, researchers tend to disagree on the specific dates that mark this phenomenon. For US-based Tamara Falicov the year that launched the 'new Argentine cinema' was 1995 with the delayed release of *Skinhead/ Rapado* (AR dir. Martin Rejtman 1991) which became a cult film and a crucial reference point among Buenos Aires cinephile circles (2003, 49–51). However, according to Argentine critic-

scholar Gonzalo Aguilar, the beginning of the phenomenon was the film *Pizza, Beer and Cigarettes/ Pizza, birra, faso* (AR dir. Adrián Caetano and Bruno Stagnaro 1997) which won the FIPRESCI award during the Mar del Plata festival in November 1997 (2006, 7–8). In fact, the re-launching of the Mar del Plata International Film Festival in 1996 – after a hiatus of approximately 25 years — or the establishment of the BAFICI in 1999 could also be viewed as alternative dates for the beginning of the phenomenon. As in the case of Mexico, there is not enough evidence for considering 1998 the beginning of an Argentine film renaissance.

In the Brazilian case, as UK-based scholar Lúcia Nagib explains, the ‘cinema da retomada’ was closely linked to changes in the legislation in 1993 that came to fruition in 1995 with the release films like *Carlota Joaquina* (BR dir. Carla Murati 1995) and *O quatrilho* (BR dir. Fabio Barreto 1995) surpassing one million spectators in their local market (2002, 13–14). Another date frequently suggested for the birth of ‘new Brazilian cinema’ is 1997, when *Four Days in September/ O que é isso, companheiro?* (BR dir. Bruno Barreto 1997) was screened in Berlin’s main competition in and – handled by Miramax in North America – received an Oscar nomination in early 1998 (Moisés 2003, 3). Finally – and perhaps the reason for the crystallisation of the year 1998 as a watershed in Brazilian and Latin American cinema as a whole – is the international success of *Central Station*.

When taking into account all of those dates as possible starting points for the ‘renaissance’ of Latin American cinemas in the mid-1990s, it becomes apparent that the shift noted by Wolf and implied by Matheou is not so much related to a transformation of Latin American cinemas in terms of production or local reception but to their recognition in international cinematic circles. Even though some of the films exhibited renewed aesthetics – arguably the case with *Skinhead* (1991/1995) or *Foreign Land* (1995) – the phenomenon remained almost invisible to the international critical and festival establishment. Paraphrasing the previously quoted US critic Mary Corliss, in fact ‘someone [was] making interesting movies there’ [in Latin America] (1997, 9), but as they were not ‘discovered’ and legitimated by prestigious international festivals and critics, the films were not generally perceived to be heralding a Latin American renaissance. During 1998, however, there were two films that triggered international curiosity and rumours of a regional rebirth within festival and critical circuits: *Central Station* and *Pizza, Beer and Cigarettes*.

Central Station and its PR-savvy director Walter Salles marked a shift in the reception of contemporary Latin American cinemas that, in turn, paved the way for their revival in international cinematic circuits. As discussed in Chapter 8, *Central Station’s* production process had a strong foothold in international arenas and was supported by powerful sponsors who undoubtedly contributed to its remarkable international circulation both at festivals and

commercial screenings.¹¹⁶ Significantly, *Central Station's* international connections included development support from the Sundance Film Institute, high-profile European producers and worldwide distribution agreements with Sony Pictures Classics and Miramax International. Despite being a truly international co-production, handled by some of the most qualified professionals in the field, the film was effectively promoted as a small low-budget Brazilian film made by a young director with an inexperienced crew. In this way, *Central Station* was understood and embraced through established frameworks related not only to notions of authorship and national cinema, but as will be analysed below, to the idea of 'Latin American cinema' and a regional cinematic rebirth – rather than an exclusively Brazilian one.

Central Station focuses on the friendship between Dora (Fernanda Montenegro), a middle-aged jaded woman who works as a letter writer in Rio de Janeiro's main train station, and the eleven-year old Josué (Vinicious de Oliveira) whose mother has suddenly died and finds himself lost at the station. With accomplished photography and a melancholic, yet hopeful, tone, the film follows their journey to the Northern Brazilian backlands – the *sertão* – in search of Josué's father. As their mutual trust grows stronger, Dora and Josué discover the beautiful landscapes and the warmth of rural community life. Following its world premiere at Sundance in January 1998, *Central Station* enjoyed a very warm critical reception. Peter Howell from the Canadian *The Toronto Star* praised it as 'one the biggest hits' and 'the first five-star movie' of the festival (1998a, D5). Likewise, the British *The Observer* declared it as 'a near masterpiece on view' (Fuller 1998, 13). The film, already lined-up for Berlin's main competition, was welcomed at the prestigious German event with a standing ovation (Dunkley and Hansen 1998). As *The New York Times* reported, it quickly became one of the forerunners for the Golden Bear (Riding 1998, E1). For *The Guardian*, it was not only 'the most convincing film to reach us from Brazil for some years', but 'the best surprise' that would surely be noticed by the jury headed by Ben Kingsley (Malcolm 1998b, 8).

Central Station won the Golden Bear and a Silver Bear was awarded to Fernanda Montenegro as Best Actress, creating a surge of newswires and headlines in the international press reporting from Berlin in February 1998. The only precedent of a Brazilian or Latin American film being awarded the major prize at a major European competition was *The Given Word* which won at Cannes in 1962. However, as analysed in Chapter 6, along with the low artistic credentials of its director, the *The Given Word* crafted the reputation of being an

¹¹⁶ In the European Union *Central Station* took 2,207,347 admissions and US \$ 5,596,708 in the US. For more details about the film's festival tour see Chapter 8.

undeserving winner of the prestigious Golden Palm. Whilst running a similar risk, *Central Station's* situation was rather different, firstly because of Walter Salles' profile and the international professionals behind the film. Moreover, in this case the film had the benefit of a strong group of influential supporters, especially English-language critics. They welcomed it as an honest film that, regardless of its low-budget, had beaten several high-profile US films – such as *Jackie Brown* (US dir. Quentin Tarantino 1998) and *Good Will Hunting* (US dir. Gus Van Sant 1998) – also competing at Berlin (see for instance G. Brown 1998b; Macnab 1998, 10; Malcolm 1998a, 5).

However, the bad reputation and general lack of interest in cinemas from Latin America in previous years created a certain resistance to *Central Station* among specialised critics at Berlin. Moreover, the festival had been experiencing difficulties in redefining its post-Cold War role and striking the balance between a glamorous star-studded event and a respectable programme. After the festival ended in February 1998 there were voices of intense disapproval of the whole event and its award winner. *Variety* diplomatically commented that the overall climate at Berlin had been 'mild, not wild' (Elley et al. 1998, 15). Unforgivingly, *Screen International's* headline declared a 'Funeral in Berlin'. It strongly criticised both the festival for its failure to attract enough Hollywood stars and *Central Station* for being 'a popular choice' that avoided controversy (Blaney 1998, 1). *Le Monde's* Jacques Mandelbaum argued that the awards had not only been disappointing to many observers, but *Central Station* was among the films that would not go down in the annals of history (1998a). Asian cinemas expert Tony Rayns reported in *Sight & Sound* that the Golden Bear winner was widely liked but, as he had not even seen the film, he could not comment on it (1998, 5). Likewise, *Film Comment's* Harlan Kennedy mentioned the festival champion only briefly – no pictures – and sceptically stated that 'the Golden Bear thought long and hard about embracing this movie, then did so' (1998, 13). *Positif* barely mentioned *Central Station* and clearly preferred *The Battle of Canudos/ Guerra de canudos* (BR dir. Sergio Rezende 1997) another Brazilian film presented in the non-competitive sidebar Panorama (Bourget 1998, 75–76). For *Cahiers du Cinéma's* Stéphane Bouquet, awarding the Golden Bear to *Central Station* was 'a slightly disproportionate, but not scandalous reward' (1998, 16). However, *Cahiers'* did not give a prominent role to the Golden Bear winner, mentioning it only in a small frame at the bottom of the page. In conclusion, although the Brazilian film had won top-awards at Berlin and received the support from some critics, an influential fraction of critics remained unconvinced of its value and cultural significance. The film was thus in danger of getting a reputation as an 'undeserving' award-winner, potentially leading other international festivals and critics to ignore it.

A key factor that contributed to a wider acceptance of *Central Station* was the international profile of its director. Fluent in both French and English, Salles displayed a solid knowledge of world cinema history and offered an elaborated discourse about *Central Station's* meaning within the narrative of Brazilian national cinema. Thus, as *Sight & Sound* editor Nick James admitted, although he was initially suspicious when he interviewed Salles at the London film festival in November 1998, he was 'disarmed' by the director himself (1999, 12). In James' words:

He somehow makes cynicism impossible. He very soon persuaded me that his multilayered road movie... is more important than I'd guessed. It's become a touchstone movie for Brazil, and its marvels (some of which passed me by on first viewing) are extraordinarily vivid in memory (James 1999, 12).

As the film went on a lengthy festival tour during 1998, the eloquent director managed to convince several critics of the importance and honesty of the film. Also impressed by Salles' 'impeccable French' and very positive approach to the film was the regional newspaper *Sud Ouest* reporting from Biarritz (Castera 1998). The article presented Salles as follows:

This is a young man, certainly brilliant, who has a first¹¹⁷ [*sic*] feature film under his belt. Made in 1995 and entitled "Foreign Land", it won seven international prizes, was selected for over thirty festivals and awarded "Best Film of the Year" in Brazil. In parallel, the filmmaker concocts some award-winning documentaries too. The kind of character who manages to succeed in everything he does¹¹⁸ (Castera 1998).

While the French *Sud Ouest* described him and his previously co-directed *Foreign Land* in a very positive light, the Swiss daily *Les Temps* noted that it seemed to be 'Walter Salles' year' as *Central Station's* success was accompanied by the premiere of *Midnight/ O primeiro dia* (BR/FR dir. Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas 1999) at the Locarno festival in August 1998 (T. J. 1998). Well received among some critics who found it even 'more convincing' than the Golden Bear-

¹¹⁷ *Foreign Land* was in fact Salles' second feature film, as he had previously made *Exposure/ A Grande Arte* (BR/US 1991) starring North American actor Peter Coyote and shot in Brazil and Bolivia.

¹¹⁸ In the original, my translation : 'Voilà un jeune homme, certes brillant, avec à son actif, un premier long-métrage réalisé en 1995 "Terre lointaine", qui remportera sept prix internationaux, sera sélectionné dans plus de trente festivals, et consacré "meilleur film de l'année" au Brésil. En parallèle, le cinéaste concocte quelques documentaires qui eux aussi, recevront des distinctions internationales. Le genre de personnage qui réussit tout ce qu'il entreprend' (Castera 1998).

winner (Ciment 1999, 50), *Midnight* was part of the film series '2000 Seen By...'.¹¹⁹ Salles, as head of his company Videofilmes was also identified as a key figure of the Brazilian cinematic renewal by the influential critic and scholar Jean-Michel Frodon, who actively promoted *Central Station* in *Le Monde* (1998a, 1998b, 1998c).

Regardless of the initial suspicions from some influential critics of the film being an undeserving Golden Bear-winner, throughout 1998 *Central Station* managed to achieve the reputation of possessing high cultural and artistic qualities as well as leading a Brazilian and Latin American cinematic renaissance. In fact, this remarkable improvement in its reputation was closely linked with the growing idea that both Salles and *Central Station* were the tip of the iceberg of a much bigger movement. In this way, the director and the film were welcomed by international critics and audiences based on well-established notions of authorship, national cinema and Latin American cinema itself. First, in terms of Salles' career as a rising director who had already made two award-winning films – *Foreign Land* and *Central Station* – as well as the accomplished TV commission *Midnight*. Second, in the Brazilian context, *Central Station's* top awards came at the same time as an Oscar nomination for best foreign film for the Miramax-distributed *Four Days in September* as well as the astonishing recovery of the Brazilian film industry that started in 1993-1995 and was known as the 'cinema da retomada' (Nagib 2002, 13). Third, the awarding of a Golden Bear to a Brazilian film started to draw attention to other countries in Latin America, mainly Argentina and Brazil, who were seen as leaders of the continental recovery of cinema in the late 1990s.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the articulation of Salles and *Central Station* into a narrative of world cinema, nourished by notions of authorship, national cinema and the idea of Latin American cinema as a 'continental project' was the result of strategic handling of information and publicity. This included presenting Salles as a young/inexperienced director, overlooking the importance of *Central Station's* international commercial operations and making associations between the film and other disparate Argentine and Mexican films. Regardless of its many contradictions, this reading enabled not only better international reception of *Central Station* and of Walter Salles as a rising filmmaker, but it established a framework into which other films from the region could be also incorporated. In this way, the scene was set for an international

¹¹⁹ The series was a joint venture between the French broadcaster Sept-Arte and the production company Haut et court. It included films by other internationally-rising directors such as Tsai-Ming Liang and Laurent Cantet.

‘rediscovery’ of Latin American cinema which, unsurprisingly, followed a similar path to the old ‘new’ cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s.

At the same time as *Central Station*’s growing acceptance throughout 1998, the Argentine film *Pizza, Beer and Cigarettes* was very well received by international critics and festivals. Premiered at the Mar del Plata festival in November 1997, the film won the international critics’ (FIPRESCI) award and was subsequently invited to be screened at key European events, including Rotterdam, Fribourg, Karlovy Vary, San Sebastian and Turin (see table below). Co-directed by the debutants Adrián Caetano and Bruno Stagnaro, the film follows the wanderings lives of a group of five young squatters in Buenos Aires, including El Cordobés (Héctor Anglada) and his pregnant girlfriend Sandra (Pamela Jordan) who then starts thinking about her life and the future of their baby.

Table 6. *Pizza, Beer and Cigarettes*
(AR dir. Adrián Caetano and Bruno Stagnaro 1997)

Date	Festival/ Commercial Release	Section/ Distributor
Nov 13-22, 1997	Mar del Plata International Film Festival (AR)	Competition [World Premiere]
Jan 15, 1998	Commercial Release Argentina	
Jan 28-Feb 8, 1998	Rotterdam International Film Festival (NL)	
Mar 1-8, 1998	Fribourg International Film Festival (CH)	Competition
Mar 16-24, 1998	Rencontres Cinémas d’Amérique Latine de Toulouse (FR)	Competition
Jul 3-11, 1998	Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (CZ)	Horizontes
Aug 8-15, 1998	Festival de Gramado (BR)	Latin American Competition
Sep 17-26, 1998	San Sebastian International Film Festival (ES)	Made in Spanish
Nov 20-29, 1998	Torino International Festival of Young Cinema (IT)	Competition
Nov 11, 1998	Commercial Release Netherlands	Distrib: Filmmuseum Distributie
Jun 22, 2001	Commercial Release Spain	Distrib: Alta Films
Nov 9-18, 2001	Thessaloniki International Film Festival (GR)	

Despite its relatively marginal commercial circulation,¹²⁰ the film was very well received by international critics who generally praised its realistic representations and compared it to the highly-regarded classic *The Young and the Damned* (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1951). From the critics’ perspective, the film was a leading example of a ‘young’ Argentine cinema that broke with the

¹²⁰ In the European Union the film was licensed for Spain and the Netherlands, collecting a total of 7,973 admissions (European Audiovisual Observatory 2012c)

academicism of well-established 'old' filmmakers (Mandelbaum 1998b; Naranjo Sotomayor 1998, 48–49). Critics at Rotterdam were reportedly very keen on giving coverage to the renewal of Argentine cinema led by *Pizza, Beer and Cigarettes* (Quintín and F. De la Fuente 1998b, 35). In France the film not only won top awards at Toulouse and Fribourg festivals but, as *Jeune Cinéma* reported, 'was considered as "the revelation" of Argentine cinema'¹²¹ (Romano 1999, 29). According to *Le Monde*, the Toulouse festival in 1998 'demonstrated the undeniable dominance of these two cinemas [the Argentine and the Brazilian] on a continent where economic and political conditions hindered the creation of a real film industry'¹²² (Mandelbaum 1998b). In this way, although there were few connections between the two films, *Central Station* and *Pizza, Beer and Cigarettes* began to be viewed in European cinematic circles as the leaders of a regional cinematic renewal.

A crucial landmark in this process was *Cahiers du Cinéma's* declaration of a continental film revival in a seven-page article entitled 'Cinema Novo, the return: Travel through the rebirth of a continent of cinema'¹²³ in July/August 1998 (Naranjo Sotomayor 1998, 48–56). The article, written by Chilean critic-scholar René Naranjo Sotomayor, not only included information about Argentina and Brazil but also Mexico, Chile and Colombia, selecting two or three films per country that had been made in the previous decade. In this way, *Cahiers* emphasised the idea of a continental movement united around the old ideals of the 1960s and 1970s: a 'young' cinema with a 'political motivation' that defied Hollywood's market dominance by trying to win back their local audiences (Naranjo Sotomayor 1998, 48). Also included in the dossier was a lengthy interview with Walter Salles, in which he eloquently explained the underlying subtext of *Central Station* as a metaphor of Brazil in search of its national identity (Desboir 1998, 55–57). Salles displayed a remarkable knowledge of world cinema history and current details of his local film industry which contributed to his positioning as the head of this national/regional revival. With such extensive coverage, the influential *Cahiers* gave its seal of approval to both Walter Salles as a rising director and *Central Station* as a deserving award-winner that framed both within a Brazilian and a Latin American movement.

¹²¹ My translation, in the original: '[Pizza birra faso] est considéré comme "la relève" du cinéma argentin' (Romano 1999, 29).

¹²² My translation, in the original: 'Ce choix témoigne de l'incontestable domination de ces deux cinématographies au sein d'un continent où conditions économiques et politiques entravent partout ailleurs la création d'une véritable industrie du cinéma' (Mandelbaum 1998b).

¹²³ My translation, in the original: 'Cinema Novo, le retour : Voyage à travers la renaissance d'un continent de cinéma' (Naranjo Sotomayor 1998, 48–56).

As *Central Station* and *Pizza, Beer and Cigarettes* continued their successful festival tours throughout 1998, the rumours of a regional rebirth gained strength. The case of *Central Station* was particularly influential because its international visibility and recognition were truly unprecedented for a Latin American film, as it received awards such as the BAFTA (UK) and Golden Globe (US) as well as nominations for a César (FR) and an Oscar (US) (IMDb 2011b). The high status achieved by *Central Station* is encapsulated in the decision of the prestigious *Sight & Sound* – for the first time after its creation in 1932 – to devote its front cover to a Latin American film when *Central Station* was released in the UK in March 1999. At the same time, *Central Station* put Brazil and the whole of Latin America back on the map of the critical and festival establishment.

e. Riding the Latin ‘Wave’

After 1998 other films from the region started to be noticed and celebrated in more prestigious cinematic circles and at festivals including Venice and Cannes. In particular, these were *Crane World* (AR dir. Pablo Trapero 1999) and *Amores Perros* (MX dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu 2000), two films by debutant directors which seemed to confirm the cinematic renewal as a region-wide phenomenon. *Crane World* premiered in the competition of the first edition of the Buenos Aires Independent Film Festival (BAFICI) in April 1999. Despite world premiering at an Argentine event, the film was already well connected to international cinematic circuits through the support it received from the Hubert Bals Fund in early 1998 (Rooney 1998, 14). Moreover, it was produced by the veteran Lita Stantic, who had worked with Maria Luisa Bemberg in the 1980s on several internationally profiled films. With a neo-realist tone and grainy black and white photography, *Crane World* focuses on the daily life of el Rulo (Luis Margani), a middle-aged man who once had a successful career as a musician and now struggles to keep his job as a crane operator on a construction site.

Crane World was a sensation at BAFICI, winning several awards – including Best Director – and was generally celebrated as an impressive debut by the 27-year old Pablo Trapero (Hudson 1999b, 20; De Lerma 1999, 44). Warmly welcomed by the festival and critical establishment, the film was subsequently screened and awarded at several prestigious festivals in 1999 and 2000, including the Critics’ Week in Venice, Toronto, Thessaloniki, Sundance and Rotterdam (see table below). *Crane World* also impressed veteran *Cahiers du Cinéma* critic Serge Toubiana. His report from the Havana film festival in December 1999 – demonstrating the increasing interest of specialised critics in Latin American cinemas – was entitled ‘Cuba: Argentine Renewal’ (Toubiana 2000, 47). It praised the neo-realism of the young Trapero’s first film and identified Argentine cinema as setting a trend for the whole region: ‘Away from any kind of exotic or picturesque

vision, the young Argentine cinema currently leads the way in Latin America¹²⁴ (Toubiana 2000, 49). Underlying this potential change across the continent was the assumption that Latin American cinema was a unified entity that would naturally move in the same direction.

Table 7. *Crane World* (AR dir. Pablo Trapero 1999)

Date	Festival/ Commercial Release	Section/ Distributor
Apr 1-11, 1999	Buenos Aires Festival de Cine Independiente (AR)	Competition [World Premiere]
Jun 17, 1999	Commercial Release in Argentina	
Sep 1-11, 1999	Venice International Film Festival (IT)	Critics' Week
Sep 9-18, 1999	Toronto International Film Festival (CA)	
Oct 22-30, 1999	Seminci Valladolid (ES)	Competition
Nov 6-13, 1999	Festival de Cine Internacional de Ourense (ES)	Competition
Nov 12-21, 1999	Thessaloniki International Film Festival (GR)	
Dec 1-10, 1999	Festival de Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (CU)	
Jan 20-30, 2000	Sundance Film Festival (US)	World Cinema
Jan 26-Feb 6, 2000	International Film Festival Rotterdam (NL)	Tiger Competition
Feb 12, 2000	UCLA Film and Television Archive (US)	Series: Contemporary Latin American Films
Mar 12-19, 2000	Fribourg International Film Festival (CH)	
Mar 20-28, 2000	Rencontres Cinémas d'Amérique Latine de Toulouse (FR)	Competition
Mar 16-26, 2000	Cleveland International Film Festival (US)	
Mar 29-Apr 9, 2000	New Directors/New Films (New York, US)	
Apr 20- May 4, 2000	San Francisco International Film Festival (US)	Competition
June 9-23, 2000	Sydney Film Festival (AU)	
Aug 18, 2000	Commercial Release in Switzerland	Distrib: Xenix Filmdistribution
Aug -27, 2000	Edinburgh International Film Festival (UK)	Rosebud
2000	Commercial Release in France	Distrib: Les Films du Paradoxe
2000	Commercial Release in US	Distrib: Cowboy Booking International
Jan 24-Feb, 2001	International Film Festival Rotterdam (NL)	Programme: 'On the Waterfront'

The success of *Crane World* at international festivals brought some visibility for the BAFICI which in April 2000 received a handful of international programmers and critics eager to

¹²⁴ My translation, in the original: 'Loin de toute vision exotique ou pittoresque, le jeune cinéma argentin montre aujourd'hui la voie en Amérique latine' (Toubiana 2000, 49).

discover the most recent productions of Argentina and Latin America (Quintín 2000b, 38). Significantly, this fervour was comparable to the increase of international visitors to Viña del Mar in Chile in 1969 after the success of Latin American films in Europe in 1968, especially during the Pesaro film festival, as analysed in Chapter 6. While the Chilean festival discontinued after 1969 because of economic problems and the unfortunate onset of Augusto Pinochet's regime in 1973, BAFICI has managed to survive as an annual event despite the huge financial problems it faced in the early 2000s – together with the whole Argentine economy as a result of the financial meltdown of 2001/2002. However, both cases highlight a constant pattern of herd-like behaviour from international critics and programmers who simultaneously follow and give consistency to rumours over new trends within the festival circuit.

Whilst *Crane World's* international success remained mostly a festival and critical one,¹²⁵ the Mexican *Amores Perros* became both a critical and commercial hit¹²⁶ following its appearance in Cannes Critics' Week in May 2000. The film was the first of a series of three collaborations between director Alejandro González Iñárritu and scriptwriter Guillermo Arriaga in which several separate narrative threads converge as the result of a tragic accident. With a realistic and rather bleak tone, *Amores Perros* focuses on three stories connected by a tragic car crash: One of forbidden love between Octavio (Gael García Bernal) and his sister-in-law Susana (Vanessa Bauche). Another story centres on the new couple of Daniel (Alvaro Guerrero) and the supermodel Valeria (Goya Toledo), who loses a leg after the car accident. And the third focuses on El Chivo (Emilio Echevarría), an ex-guerrilla who has become a homeless hitman, but regrets having lost contact with his daughter Maru (Lourdes Echevarría) when she was a two-year-old girl.

As in the case of *Crane World*, *Amores Perros* was generally perceived as marking both a generational change and a new trend for the whole region (Quintín and F. De la Fuente 2000, 33). Winner of the Critics' Week main prize, the film was warmly welcomed by the critic-programmer Richard Peña in his *Film Comment* report. He described it as 'a knockout, the great revelation of Cannes 2000' and noted that, in contrast, other films at Cannes from previously consecrated directors related to the 'new Latin American cinema' were rather disappointing (Peña 2000, 72). These included *Turbulence/ Estorvo* (BR/CU/PO dir. Ruy Guerra 2000) – screened in the main competition – and *Tierra del Fuego* (CL/ES/IT dir. Miguel Littín 2000) –

¹²⁵ *Crane World* was distributed in four territories in the European Union collecting a modest 24,787 admissions (European Audiovisual Observatory 2012b).

¹²⁶ *Amores Perros* collected 975,151 admissions in 18 European territories and 1,003,426 admissions in the US and Canada (European Audiovisual Observatory 2012a). See more details in Appendix D.

presented in the Un Certain Regard section. While the films from the old generation of directors were generally ignored by critics and other festivals, *Amores Perros* enjoyed a very successful festival tour. Skilfully promoted by its sales agent Lions Gate International and its various international distributors, *Amores Perros* was widely celebrated and awarded at festivals like Edinburgh, Toronto, San Sebastian, Montreal, New York, Chicago, Tokyo, Los Angeles and Havana (see table below). In this way, the film became a symbol of a cinematic renewal not only in Mexico but – along with other acclaimed films from Argentina and Brazil – across the whole Latin American region.

Table 8. *Amores Perros* (MX dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu 2000)

Date	Festival/ Commercial Release	Section/ Distributor
May 10-21, 2000	Cannes International Film Festival (FR)	Critics' Week [World Premiere]
Jun 20, 2000	Commercial Release in Mexico	Distrib: Nuvisión/20th Century Fox
Aug 13-27, 2000	Edinburgh International Film Festival (UK)	Rosebud
Sep 7-16, 2000	Toronto International Film Festival (CA)	Contemporary World Cinema
Sep 2000	San Sebastian International Film Festival (ES)	Zabaltegi
Sep 22-Oct 9, 2000	New York Film Festival (US)	
Sep 25- Oct 1, 2000	Festival de Cinema e Cultura da América Latina de Biarritz (FR)	Competition
Oct, 2000	Festival de Cine de Valdivia (CL)	Competition [Opening Night]
Oct 5-19, 2000	Chicago International Film Festival (US)	Competition
Oct 11-16, 2000	Festival de Cine de Bogotá (CO)	Competition [Opening Night]
Oct 12-22, 2000	Montreal International Festival of New Cinema and New Media (CA)	
Oct 19, 2000	Commercial Release in Argentina	
Oct 19-26, 2000	AFI/Los Angeles International Film Festival (US)	Latin Cinema Series
Oct 28-Nov 5, 2000	Tokyo International Film Festival (JP)	Competition
Nov 1, 2000	Commercial Release in France	Distrib: Pyramide
Nov 10-, 2000	Festival de Cine Ibero Americano de Huelva (ES)	Rábida
Nov 16, 2000	Muestra de Cine Radical (ES)	
Dec 5-15, 2000	Festival de Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano de la Habana (CU)	
Jan 24-Feb, 2001	Rotterdam International Film Festival (NL)	Main Programme Features
Feb 23-Mar 3, 2001	Fantporto/Oporto International Film Festival (PT)	
Mar 1-11, 2001	Santa Barbara International Film Festival (US)	
Mar 2, 2001	Commercial Release in Italy	Distrib: Institute Luce
Mar 14, 2001	Commercial Release in Spain	Distrib: Filmax Sogedasa
Mar 29, 2001	Commercial Release in the Netherlands	Distrib: Eye Film Institute
Mar 30, 2001	Commercial Release in the US	Distrib: Lions Gate

May 18, 2001	Commercial Release in UK	Distrib: Optimum
Nov 1, 2001	Commercial Release in Germany	Distrib: Senator
Feb 2, 2002	Commercial Release in Japan	Distrib: Tokyo Theaters Company
2002	Commercial Release in Brazil	Distrib: Art Films

These first films celebrated in international circuits created the sense of a ‘wave’ and were closely followed by others that gave substance to claims of ‘renaissance’ of Latin American cinemas. During 2001 the trend continued with several films successfully premiered in European festivals such as *25 Watts* (UY/AR dir. Juan Pablo Rebella and Pablo Stoll 2001) in Rotterdam, *The Swamp/ La Ciénaga* (AR/ES/FR dir. Lucrecia Martel 2001) in Berlin’s main competition, *La libertad* (AR dir. Lisandro Alonso 2001) in Un Certain Regard in Cannes and *Y tu mamá también* (MX dir. Alfonso Cuarón 2001) in the main competition at Venice, to name but a few of the most renowned cases. In fact, the general phenomenon reported by surprised correspondents of the Argentine *El Amante Cine* at Rotterdam 2001, was that Argentine national cinema was increasingly ‘fashionable’ across the festival circuit (F. De la Fuente 2001, 19). Meanwhile, specialised magazines continued to inform audiences – and build up hype – about the new films and the revival of Argentine and Brazilian cinemas. Such publications included *Film Comment* (España 2000, 12–13), *Positif* (Valens 2001, 109–110) and especially *Cahiers du Cinéma* (Bentes 2001, 37–39; Charcossey 2001, 25; Hervieu-Léger 2002, 30–31; Sékaly 2001, 109–110)

Moreover, some of the films proved to be very successful with international audiences, which attracted attention not only from the critics but from the whole film industry. Thus relatively low-budget films such as *Central Station* (1998), *Amores Perros* (2000), *The Crime of Father Amaro/ El crimen del padre Amaro* (MX dir. Carlos Carrera 2002) made with budgets of around US \$3million collected almost twice as much in the US. Others like *Y tu mamá también* (2001) and later on *City of God* (BR/FR dir. Fernando Meirelles 2002) would collect up to US\$13.9 million and US\$7.5 million respectively in their theatrical releases in North America (Box Office Mojo 2010b). Also very successful in the European markets, *Central Station* and *City of God* reached 1.9 million and 1.6 million admissions respectively while others such as *Amores Perros*, *Y tu mamá también* and *Nine Queens/Nueve reinas* (AR dir. Fabián Bielinsky 2000) took between 800.000 and 1 million admissions each¹²⁷ (European Audiovisual Observatory 2009c).

¹²⁷ See more details about admissions and box office results of these films in Appendix D.

In 2002 the 'wave' received the stamp of approval from the higher echelons of the festival hierarchy. The Cannes film festival not only invited Walter Salles to act as a jury-member, but also programmed a considerable number of Latin American films: *City of God* in a prominent out-of-competition slot, *Madame Sata/ Madame Satã* (BR/FR dir. Karim Ainouz 2002) and *El bonaerense* (AR/CL/FR/NL dir. Pablo Trapero 2002) in Un Certain Regard as well as *Red Bear/ Un oso rojo* (AR/ES/FR dir. Adrián Caetano 2002) and *Japón* (MX/ES/NL/DE dir. Carlos Reygadas 2002) in the Directors' Fortnight. As will be examined in Chapter 9, *Japón*, in particular, would be welcomed by international critics as a film that revealed new directions for art cinema in the twenty-first century.

The renewed presence of Latin American films at Cannes contrasted greatly with its low status at previous festivals. Echoing what other critics had recently pointed out (Corliss 1997, 9; Link 1993, 42; Peña 1999, 13), *El Amante* reported in 1999 that 'the cinema from the region was not really considered hot property'¹²⁸ (Quintín and F. De la Fuente 1999, 47). However, only three years later – during a Cannes edition that was widely recognised for its good quality – specialised magazines such as *Film Comment* (Taubin 2002, 54), *Cahiers du Cinéma* (Joyard and Lalane 2002, 13) and *Positif* (Ciment 2002, 66) generally welcomed Cannes' more inclusive attitude towards Latin American cinemas. Among the 'discoveries' highlighted by *Screen International* were *Japón*, *El Bonaerense* and especially *City of God* for the 'epic sweep and technical brilliance' of its portrayal of one the most dangerous ghettos in Rio de Janeiro (Hunter 2002). Acquired for worldwide distribution by Miramax *before* the Cannes festival, *City of God* became the new gold standard for Latin American cinema's international success (A. M. De la Fuente 2004, 12). As this trend continued throughout the year, festivals like Karlovy Vary (Panozzo 2002, 36) and Locarno (Quintín and F. De la Fuente 2002, 52) gave visibility to Argentine cinema in particular. From the Rio film festival, *Screen International* reported that 'Latin America [had] a fair claim to being this week's hot new cinema' (Minns 2002b). In April 2003 *Positif* analysed the revival of Argentine cinema represented by *El bonaerense* and *Minimal Stories/ Historias mínimas* (AR dir. Carlos Sorín 2002), arguing in the editorial that its international visibility helped to put not only Argentine cinema but the whole region back on the critics' map (Ciment 2003, 1).

Continuing with this spectacular rise, 2004 was a vintage year for Latin American films in prestigious cinematic circles. In January Sundance held the world premiere of *Maria Full of*

¹²⁸ My translation, in the original: 'El cine de la región no es un artículo codiciado en Cannes' (Quintín et al., 1999, p. 47).

Grace/ María llena eres de gracia (US/CO dir. Joshua Marston 2004) and the quintessential Latin American film *The Motorcycle Diaries* (AR/US/CL/PE/BR/UK/DE/FR dir. Walter Salles 2004). Enjoying multiple international pre-sales ('Film Four's *Motorcycle Diaries* shoots across Latin America' 2002; Goodridge 2003; Minns 2002c) and thus tipped as a guaranteed success, the film demonstrated both the rivalry among top-tier film festivals as well as the great momentum of Latin American cinema. Although it was publicly welcomed at the Venice festival in September 2003 in the hope that *The Motorcycle Diaries* would be 'ready in time' for the Italian event (Rodier 2003), rather unsurprisingly, the world premiere of Redford's production was in fact held a few months later at his own festival Sundance in January 2004 (Goodridge 2003).

Also expected at Berlin's competition in February 2004, instead *The Motorcycle Diaries* was snared for Cannes' main competition in May that year (Frater 2004). As Dieter Kosslick – Berlin's director since 2002 – explained, losing out to Cannes was all 'part of the game' and yet he especially regretted missing out on *The Motorcycle Diaries* because the film 'would have fitted nicely into the Latin American theme that runs through our festival' (quoted in Elley 2004, B18). Berlin's competition not only included *Maria Full of Grace, The Lost Embrace/ El abrazo partido* (AR/FR/ES dir. Daniel Burman 2004) and a special screening of *Social Genocide/ Memoria del saqueo* (AR/CH/FR dir. Fernando Solanas 2004), but festival organisers also considered it an opportune moment to honour the Argentine filmmaker Fernando Solanas with an Honorary Golden Bear for lifetime achievement. Other parallel sections at Berlin included films such as *Up Against Them All/ Contra todos* (BR dir. Roberto Moreira 2002), *Digna... Worthy To Her Final Breath/ Digna hasta el último aliento* (MX dir. Felipe Cazals 2003) *The Other Side of the Street/ A otro lado da rua* (BR/FR dir. Marcos Bernstein 2004), *B-Happy* (CL/VE/ES dir. Gonzalo Justiniano 2003) and the documentary *Travelling With Che Guevara/ In viaggio con Che Guevara* (IT dir. Gianni Minà 2004). Jury-members rewarded the films with several prizes: Grand Jury Prize and Best Actor to Uruguayan Daniel Hendler for *The Lost Embrace*, Best Actress (ex-aequo) to Colombian Catalina Sandino for *Maria Full of Grace* as well as other independent prizes to *Maria Full of Grace* (Alfred Bauer Prize), *The Other Side Of The Street* (CICAE Panorama Prize) and *B-Happy* (CICAE Forum Prize and Don Quixote Special Mention) (Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin 2012c).

As will be explored in more detail, in relation to the case of Carlos Reygadas in Chapter 9, Cannes' bending of its unwritten rules of only screening world premieres brought an extraordinary stamp of approval for *The Motorcycle Diaries*, its director Walter Salles, and the whole Latin American wave that they represented. In fact, in 2004 Cannes gave unprecedented visibility to Latin American cinemas in its different sections. Moreover, the main section included the world premiere of *The Holy Girl/ La niña santa* (AR/IT/NL/ES dir. Lucrecia Martel

2004) as well as the out-of-competition documentaries *Salvador Allende* (CL/BE/FR/DE/ES/MX dir. Patricio Guzmán 2004) and *Labyrinth Glauber, the Brazilian Movie/ Glauber o filme, labirinto do Brasil* (BR dir. Silvio Tendler 2003). The festival opened with Pedro Almodovar's *Bad Education* (ES 2004) starring *The Motorcycle Diaries'* Gael García Bernal, the Mexican actor who seemed omnipresent at Cannes 2004. Other sections included *Chronicles/ Crónicas* (EC/MX dir. Sebastián Cordero 2004) and *Whisky* (UY/AR/DE/ES dir. Juan Pablo Rebella and Pablo Stoll 2004) in Un Certain Regard, *Los muertos* (AR/FR/NL/CH dir. Lisandro Alonso 2004) and *Machuca* (CL/ES/UK/FR dir. Andrés Wood 2004) in the Directors' Fortnight – the latter appearing as opening film of the section – and *Duck Season/ Temporada de patos* (MX dir. Fernando Eimbcke 2004) in the Critics' Week. In addition, Argentine director and producer Pablo Trapero was invited as a jury-member for the short film competition and there was a retrospective of Brazilian Cinema, a special screening of *Terra en Transe* as part of the cycle 'Cinema Rediscovered' as well as a master class in film scoring by Argentine composer Lalo Schifrin.

Although the films received a mixed reception and almost no prizes, critics welcomed a 'return' of regional cinema to Cannes. For *Positif*, it was evident that 'the Latin American cinema, which had permeated the political awareness in the 1960s, made a comeback this year'¹²⁹ (Ciment 2004, 71). Clearly stated by the Canadian magazine *Take One*,

If Cannes 2004 can be said to have revealed anything in a consistent way – U.S. dominance aside – it's the remarkable cinematic renaissance underway in Latin America. From the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego, Latin American filmmakers offered up ferocious, tough-minded, tender and aesthetically freewheeling films (McSorley 2004, 48)

Recognised by specialised critics and the core of the film festival world, the prestige of Latin American cinema had grown spectacularly in a couple of years, going from being relatively unknown to become a crucial component on world cinema's map.

In contrast with critics' readings of a regional cinematic heir of the militant projects of the 1960s, many of these films were high-profile international co-productions and well-connected to the global film industry even from their development stage. Therefore, not only would they be accepted and acclaimed by the festival and critical establishment, but they would become

¹²⁹ My translation, in the original: 'Le cinéma latino-américain, qui avait incarné dans les années 60 la conscience du politique, faisait un retour en force cette année pour notre satisfaction' (Ciment, 2004, p. 71).

huge box-office hits worldwide.¹³⁰ *The Motorcycle Diaries* is a key example, not only because of its numerous pre-sales and outstanding results – it collected 3.4 million admissions during its theatrical release in Europe (European Audiovisual Observatory 2009a) and US \$16.7 million in the US (Box Office Mojo 2011b) – but because of its successful marketing as a ‘Latin American film’ despite not being clearly linked to any one national cinema within the region, as discussed in Chapter 3. Moreover, *The Motorcycle Diaries*, together with the rising reputation of its Brazilian director Walter Salles and the Mexican star Gael García Bernal, became widely regarded as evidence of a continent-wide cinematic revival, from the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego (‘2004, un año excelente en Francia para el cine latinoamericano’ 2004; Alvaray 2007, 48–49; Álvarez 2005; Climent Mascarell 2004).

Strengthening the picture of a Latin American renaissance were several successful international productions made by Brazilian and Mexican directors such as Walter Salles, Fernando Meirelles, Alfonso Cuarón, Alejandro González Iñárritu and Guillermo del Toro. These included *21 Grams* (US dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu 2003), *Hellboy* (US dir. Guillermo del Toro 2003), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (US/UK dir. Alfonso Cuarón 2004), *Dark Water* (US dir. Walter Salles 2005), *The Constant Gardener* (UK/DE dir. Fernando Meirelles 2005), *The Children of Men* (UK/US dir. Alfonso Cuarón 2006), *Babel* (US/MX dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu 2006). Despite having a less ‘Latin American’ flavour, these high-profile English-language productions contributed to the burgeoning international attention paid to Latin American directors.

A steady stream of films and international symbols of recognition continued to confirm and contribute to the hype surrounding the Latin American renaissance of the first decade of the twenty-first century. The most visible prizes included the Golden Bear awarded to the controversial *Elite Squad/ Tropa de elite* (BR dir. José Padilha 2007) and given two years later to *The Milk of Sorrows/ La teta asustada* (PE/DE dir. Claudia Llosa 2009). Similarly, Cannes has not only crowned both González Iñárritu and Reygadas with the title of Best Director – in 2006 and 2012 respectively – but regular selections include films directed by Pablo Trapero, Lucrecia Martel, Amat Escalante, Gerardo Naranjo and Lisandro Alonso. Significantly, in March 2010, two of five nominees for the Oscar in the Foreign Language category were related to this Latin American wave: the Golden Bear-winner *The Milk of Sorrow* and the film that would win the coveted award *The Secret in Their Eyes/ El secreto de sus ojos* (AR/ES dir. Juan José Campanella 2009).

¹³⁰ See more details about US and EU box office results for Latin American films in Appendix D.

Conclusion

In past three decades, as this chapter has examined, the international reputation of Latin American cinemas have faced several crises and renewals that tend to be associated with the ideals of a common left-wing regional cinema. Although international observers regarded the excessive militancy as a rather out-dated cinematic North for the region, more often than not they valued films precisely because of their connections with the paradigms established in the 1960s. Thus critics tended to view their triumphs as part of a successful 'return' to the pan-Latin American project and as indicative of cinematic trends that would supposedly be followed by the whole region.

Neither permanently fixed to nor devoid of specific meanings and expectations, the Latin American cinema brand has expanded to include, very often, rather disparate films. Meanwhile, the concept has limited the circulation of other films that cannot be easily accommodated within a certain ideal type. In this sense, this umbrella-term has become a generic category that permits the international reception of films from the region in accordance with an ideal notion of 'Latin American-ness'. While establishing a connection with a specific cultural identity as a national or regional cinema has been one of the underlying principles of world cinema, as explained in Chapters 1 and 2 the international visibility and circulation of Latin American films has also depended on the 'artistic' status of both their films and their directors. Therefore, as discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, a crucial element which guarantees the incorporation of an international film festival tour into the marketing strategy is the films' association with the rhetoric of 'quality' and 'artistic' excellence on which the film festival world is based. In this way, Chapter 8 analyses the way in which a film's tour through the festival circuit is closely related to their reputation as 'quality' films and the media coverage they receive in international arenas.

Part III.

Artistic Quality and Auteurs

Chapter 8. Quality Certification and the 'Film Festival Tour'

One of the key functions of the festival circuit is the classification of global cinematic production through the allocation of symbols of prestige. Through the mechanisms of classification within each event and the overall hierarchical division of the circuit, festivals create a complex system that 'certifies' the quality of the films while they travel from one event to the other. Although the lack of a precise festival ranking is rather confusing for outsiders, this is implicitly understood by different types of film industry professionals and cultural workers who travel and work across the circuit. In fact, regular festival participants and guests need to keep a fairly accurate map of the festival hierarchy which informs their decision-making at all levels and the management they give to each event. A clear example of this is the treatment given to different festivals from sales agents and distributors: while the most prestigious events are under pressure to premiere certain films in their programme, small festivals need to lobby hard and pay expensive fees to get these films as second-runs (Peranson 2008, 40).

As discussed in this chapter, although film festivals' institutional image gives this system an appearance of objectivity, the classification and assessment of films throughout the festival circuit is mediated by the subjective tastes and preferences of those with a greater position of prestige within the festival circuit. Furthermore, this value-adding process is strongly influenced by the marketing necessities of the film industry. As a result, rather than an objective mechanism of quality certification, the film festival tour can be better understood as a form of reception that reflects the value of a film as it is perceived by the festival world as a whole. By tracing two films – *Central Station* and *Foreign Land* – in their film festival tour, this chapter analyses the ways in which different patterns of festival screenings affect films' reputation and the international circulation that follows. Moreover, it shows how a film's festival tour reflects both the bias of the film festival world and the commercial interests of the film industry.

a. Quality Markers: The Accumulation of Symbolic Capital

Several scholars working on film festivals have identified the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu – especially his seminal *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984) – as a crucial reference for explaining the process of value-adding, in which the prestige and recognition that films accrue by touring the festival circuit contribute to their subsequent commercial circulation in both global and local markets (Czach 2004, 84–85; Elsaesser 2005b, 96–97; English 2011, 64–65; Stringer 2003b; De Valck 2007, 126–127; Wong 2011, 19). Following the logic and dynamics of the economy of cultural goods, films and filmmakers accrue symbolic capital – i.e. awards, prizes, prestigious selections, critical reviews, etc. – through their

successive festival screenings. Recognised within the international film industry field, sufficient accumulation of symbolic capital can be later traded for economic capital, by selling the films' rights and securing contracts for filmmakers. The general understanding of this phenomenon, as explained by Thomas Elsaesser, is that the rivalry between events and their positions within the calendar year help to raise standards and add value to the films as they become the 'cream of the crop' in the selection and awarding process of several international institutions (2005b, 86–87).

While mechanisms of valuation and judgment are embedded in the dynamics of any event based on its principles of selection, each festival imposes a further classification system via the different competitive and non-competitive sections within the programme, which are regarded as being more or less important than others (Elsaesser 2005b, 96; English 2011, 63–64). In this way, as the symbolic capital that can be acquired in any given festival and throughout the circuit is scarce – i.e. there are a limited number of awards, positions of prestige and media attention – films are in constant competition with one another in trying to accumulate different forms of recognition that will raise their profiles for global and local audiences.

According to Marijke de Valck, the value-adding process which takes place during a film festival can be understood as a three-step mechanism involving not only festival staff, but other participants such as jury-members and the media (2007, 127–128). Firstly, festivals organisers put a programme together by selecting films and classifying them into sections. Secondly, awards are allocated, sometimes by audiences and external institutions but, most frequently, by a jury-committee selected by the festival and acting on its behalf. Therefore, while jury-members work more or less autonomously, they are still bound to the criteria established by festival organisers and are under a certain pressure to comply with these expectations in order to maintain a good relationship with the event's organisers. Thirdly, mediators and cultural experts critique and comment on the films, offering their opinions in different formats (oral, written, video, etc.) in which they celebrate, ignore or contest the decisions of both the jury and the selection committees. At the end of each festival, there are winners, losers and surprises as well as films that go completely ignored by the different participants of this multi-layered process of valuation.

Despite the relative independence of critics and journalists from major newspapers, De Valck notices a striking consensus among these actors in terms of their perception of the winners and losers of each festival (2007, 157). In this vein, Azadeh Farahmand explains that information within a festival event and across the festival circuit is disseminated 'through concentric and conjoined circles of power' in which influential people with greater access to information 'pass down select news, interpretation or insights' to other critics and festival

participants, who, in turn, transmit this to others (2010, 267). In particular, critics and journalists interact and influence each other, creating a relatively closed community that travels to and populates several festivals throughout the year. It is thus not particularly surprising that, as a social group, representatives of international media – whose backgrounds and ideas about cinema might not be so radically different to each other – frequently agree on the meaning and value of the films (and filmmakers) that are also touring the events.

The outcome of each event has specific consequences which depend on the festival's importance within the film festival world. While this is partly the result of media concentration in bigger events, it is also related to the dynamics of film festivals and the mechanisms that reproduce their hierarchical structure. As Elsaesser claims, festivals influence each other in accordance with the tautology of 'famous for being famous' (2005b, 98). As a result, the recognition emerging from prestigious events will tend to be echoed by smaller 'audience' festivals for which the main source of programming are the bigger 'business' ones (see more about these categories in Chapter 1). As a consequence, the festival circuit as a whole imposes another level of classification because each film's reputation is attached to the institutional importance and prestige of each festival in which it plays. This works in a similar way in which the educational system analysed by Bourdieu creates a cultural elite through its mechanisms of classification and the relative prestige of both the institutions and the academic qualifications they confer (1984, 24–26). In the same way that academic qualifications 'formally' guarantee a specific competence, films (and filmmakers) accumulate awards, selections and other 'formal' symbols of recognition – with different levels of prestige – that are interpreted as 'real' evidence of their quality (or talent).

In this way, the pattern of movement of films from one event to the other – in which each event has a relative status – becomes a classification mechanism by which the value and quality of a film is determined. In this regard, Marijke de Valck remarks that,

the cultural value added by festival selection and programming reaches beyond the level of personal preference and becomes more or less – according to the festival's prestige in the international film festival circuit – globally acknowledged as evidence of quality (De Valck 2007, 186–187).

Therefore, by successfully touring the festival circuit, a film can establish a reputation of high artistic/cultural value which is confirmed by its multiple awards, prizes and prestigious festival selections. By the same token, films ignored or openly rejected by the festivals acquire the reputation of low artistic/cultural value. In these cases, the lack of symbols of prestige and recognition (or the lower status associated with them) is perceived as an indication of poor

quality. Unsurprisingly, films (and filmmakers) wear and are associated with these badges of prestige in a wide range of contexts: from marketing material to preamble that justifies them as worthy academic subjects.

Although it is fairly easy to understand and agree on festivals' value-adding function, there are two key questions that make this a far from simple and objective classificatory system of quality certification. The first issue is related to the difficulties in defining 'quality' or what makes a 'good' film. The second is associated with a crucial element which is relatively absent from the process described above: the role of film industry professionals and the commercial operations behind the whole supply chain of films which circulate under artistic or cultural labels such as 'world', 'national' or 'auteur' cinema.

Firstly, there is the problem of 'quality' or, in festival jargon, the question of 'artistic excellence' and 'talent' which evades a conclusive definition. However, the terms are still widely used by festivals, the media and viewers in general. The general assumption is that these characteristics can be simply recognised by cultural experts and knowledgeable people. However, just as the concept of 'art' itself or distinctions between 'high' and 'low' culture have proved exceptionally difficult to pin down, there is no universal characterisation of 'quality' in cinematic terms. As Elsaesser remarks, in contrast to sports competitions, film festivals do not have 'agreed and measurable standards of achievement' with which to select the 'best' films and decide on the 'pre-eminence of talent' (2005b, 98–99). Thus certain standards are upheld and applied by festivals, but never clearly explained. Drawing on Tony Bennett's *Formalism and Marxism*, John Gray reminds us that 'value is not something which the text has or possesses. It is not an attribute of the text; it is rather something that is produced for the text' (2010, 81). As Gray asserts, paratexts – created not only by marketers, but also by festivals, jury-members, critics, journalists and audiences – are a crucial source of value production (2010, 81). Moreover, the innovative marketing practices of Miramax in the 1990s illustrate the process by which quality markers are actually attached to films (Perren 2001). Rather than to the object themselves, labels of quality such as 'artistic excellence' or 'talent' are contingent upon the contexts and the subjective position from which they are applied. In this way, notions of quality undergo a constant process of redefinition that makes them particularly contradictory categories and contested subjects.

Against a backdrop of production and regulation of quality television in the UK in the early 1990s, John Melpham provides insightful analysis of the question of quality – which deserves much more attention than can be afforded by this thesis. For Melpham,

Quality, whether we are talking about the quality of TV programming, of books, of football matches or of people, can only ever be given meaning by being connected with the purposes that give these things a place in people's lives, the values which they serve. But these are not matters of arbitrary, individual taste. The tests of good television are justified not by individual whim, but in terms of some conception of what television is for, what its social and cultural purposes should be at any given time, what values it should therefore be obliged to serve and be measure against (Melpham 1990, 56).

In other words, concepts of quality are inextricably linked to the agendas and dominant values of specific groups in determined contexts. The difficulties in defining quality and the tendency to assume that it is derived from universally accepted cultural traditions reveal that notions of quality are actually closely connected with one's ethical standards and vision of the world. Thus when festivals organisers speak of 'artistic excellence' or 'talented' directors, these labels are informed not by universally shared and established notions of quality but, to paraphrase Melpham, by contingent ideas about how 'art' cinema and 'talented' directors should be, what their social and cultural purposes are and what values should be applied to them. Ultimately, as Julian Stringer claims, festivals circulate *ideas* about cinema itself (2003b, 23). He adds that those events that defend 'quality' or 'artistic' values are, in fact, proposing working definitions that separate 'art' from 'non-art' cinema. The question is: from whose perspective is cinematic 'quality' being evaluated? Who gets to define what 'artistic excellence' or 'talent' means? What are the agendas and dominant values that inform such concepts of quality?

When examining the hierarchical structure of film festivals, it becomes quite obvious that the biggest and most prestigious events – Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Toronto and Sundance – are all located in Europe and North America. With few exceptions, second tiers festivals – such as Rotterdam, Locarno, London, San Sebastian, Tokyo, Vancouver, Montreal, New York, Pusan and Edinburgh – follow a similar pattern. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, the classification of film festivals is a contested terrain, involving external organisations such as the Paris-based FIAPF and literally thousands of festivals that successfully operate outside their regulation. While all festivals try to boost their own prestige and significance, notably absent are clear criteria to establish their relative status within the circuit. In fact, their varying reputations are linked to their tradition, location, programming, adequate facilities and organisation, levels of media and industry attendance and even the personal prestige and contacts of their main organisers. However, it is clear that, as Stringer notes, the geography of the film festival circuit tends to reproduce the same uneven development of international film culture and of the world

at large (2001, 137–138). Simply put, the most prestigious festivals are intertwined with economic, cultural and political centres of power in Europe and North America.

With a background in the sociology of literature, James English analyses the relationship between film festivals in Africa and ‘African’ cinema. English observes that, with noticeable exceptions such as Festival Panafricain du Cinéma de Ouagadougou (FESPACO) in Burkina Faso, there are not many events in the region devoted to ‘African’ cinema (2011, 68–69). While major festivals in places like Carthage, Cairo and Durban tend to focus on international productions, most frequently films labelled ‘African’ are co-produced by and premiered in Europe and North America (2011, 69–70). In other words, films given an ‘African’ tag are not those produced and consumed within the African region, but those made and circulated with the support of international, especially European, production companies and film festivals. Within this geographical hierarchy of the festival circuit, English remarks, the status and recognition of ‘African’ cinema as such ‘have less to do with anything going on in Africa than with the whole work of selection, classification and promotion done by the festival circuit as a whole’ (English 2011, 70).

Despite its good intentions of developing African cinema, this system of funding and promotion tends to over-select cinematic manifestations according to the political agendas and aesthetic values of the most powerful Euro-American festivals and the critical establishment. In particular, this is related to the lengthy tradition within the festival circuit of defining and promoting world cinema in terms of individual authors and discrete national cinemas that ‘obscure the medium’s profoundly collaborative and transnational nature’ (English 2011, 71). While European and North American festivals generally give preference to international co-productions with narratives that merge personal quests for dignity or redemption with the ‘postcolonial struggle towards true nationhood’, they tend to overlook domestic productions in each African country – targeted to local audiences and generally deemed more commercial and of a lower quality (English 2011, 71).

Although the conditions of production and the overall development of local film industries are rather different, the incorporation of ‘Latin American’ cinema into narratives of world cinema bears a strong resemblance with the African case. As a result, the best internationally-known ‘Latin American’ films do not tend to be those which have been locally produced and welcomed by domestic audiences and critics, but those made in collaboration with international partners and supported and celebrated, mostly by European festivals. As in the African case, despite possessing strong inter-national links and commercial interests, more often than not, Latin American films are promoted, assessed and understood through the established auteurist/national cinema paradigm. On the one hand, this interpretative framework values

films whose directors best comply with the 'auteur' model, ignoring the multiple collaborations, green-lighting stages and commercial interests involved. On the other hand, it privileges films concerned with national identity and domestic social problems in an 'authentic' way, regardless of their international support, financial commitments and global target-audiences. As with the idea of 'African cinema', the category of 'Latin American cinema' tends to mask many internal differences across the region behind a simplifying label which becomes more useful outside the region than within it, where linguistic, cultural, political, economic and even geographical diversity becomes more apparent.

In contrast with the African case, there are several film festivals in Latin America with a regional focus. For example, the Festival of New Latin American Cinema in Havana, funded in 1979, the Cartagena Film Festival in 1960s and the Latin American Film Festival in Lima, launched in 1997. Moreover, since the 1990s, some festivals have focused their attention on regional cinema, such as the Gramado Film Festival in Brazil and the Guadalajara Film Festival in Mexico. However, the relatively low prestige and importance of these events within the overall festival circuit makes them unsuitable places for premiering films with international ambitions. Therefore, as evidenced in Chapter 1, there is a striking correlation between the prestige of the festival where films premiere and their international box office results. Although the reputation of films and filmmakers is a variable which is more difficult to quantify, arguably the careers of the most respected Latin American auteurs – names such as Lucrecia Martel, Pablo Trapero, Alejandro González Iñárritu, Walter Salles and Carlos Reygadas – have been strongly linked to their recognition at Berlin, Venice and, most significantly, Cannes film festival. As Elsaesser claims, rather than providing 'a disinterested cartography of the world's cinema production and the different nations' film culture' top-tier festivals become taste-makers that move according to their own agendas (2005b, 100). While festivals in Latin America have historically struggled to attract better films for their programmes, top-tier Euro-American festivals have had a privileged position from which to apply and maintain their criteria of selection, specific notions of 'quality' and contingent ideas about what the social and cultural purposes of Latin American cinema is. The result is that, rather than offer an accurate mapping of world cinema as some events proudly claim, film festivals offer a subjective snapshot which is strongly influenced by the preferences of dominant North American and European events.

b. Speculating on the Production of Cultural Capital

An understanding of the film festival circuit as an objective classificatory mechanism that rewards 'quality' through the accumulation of symbolic capital is further complicated by commercial interests which use their leverage to pump their films into the festival circuit. Thus,

as touring festivals has become a standardised practice for the promotion of art-house or specialised films, festival screenings very often are the result of a negotiation between programmers and distributors launching a pre-release campaign. In this way, the film industry is not simply the fortunate beneficiary of an independent process by which films and filmmakers acquire prestige and recognition throughout the festival tour. As they put time and money into promoting their films through the festival circuit, film rights holders invest in the production of symbolic capital in order to later exchange this in the monetary economy. However, as analysed in Chapter 2, both festivals and film companies try to conceal these financial operations because it helps them to maintain the aura of artistry that defines the film products that they promote. Therefore, at the same time that festivals preserve their image as an 'alternative' circuit supporting art over commerce, the industry benefits by being able to associate their films with the quality markers that depend on festivals' cultural flair.

This does not mean subscribing to the view that the pre-eminent cultural nature of cinema and festivals is spoiled by external economic interests, but serves as evidence that although festivals boost their cultural and artistic credentials, their programming practices and classificatory system is not disconnected from the film industry. As Dina Iordanova has argued, festivals depend on the film industry for their film supply as much as films depend on festivals for their promotion and in many cases their main exhibition venues (2009, 24–25). In this sense, the festival circuit becomes, as former Berlin film festival director Moritz de Hadeln has suggested, a constitutive part of the 'conveyor belt' of the international film industry (Iordanova 2009, 33). This means that festivals operate under pressure from – sometimes very powerful – film companies that, unsurprisingly, tend to protect their own financial investments. As a result, they generally position their films as well as they can within each event's programme and across the festival calendar in order to increase the symbolic capital of the films and filmmakers they represent. Although, ultimately, it is impossible to know what kind of negotiations take place between festivals and film rights holders, when looking at festivals' programming practices it is clear that they do not only respond to criteria of 'artistic excellence' – however it might be defined – but also to the demands of the film industry.

Two examples illustrate these negotiations very well. Firstly, the tendency of privileged spots – such as gala nights, special screenings, out-of-competition as well as the opening and closing films of different sections – to go to films that have already secured important distribution deals are typical examples of festivals' acknowledgement of the need for powerful industry players in order to raise the symbolic capital of their films. Festivals also benefit from these gala screenings due to the presence of famous performers, directors and other crew members that the media, audiences and other participants expect to encounter during a

festival. However, these prime spots serve more as pre-release screenings rather than the 'alternative' network function that most festivals claim to have. Secondly – and perhaps one of the clearest indicators of the festivals' need to negotiate with the film industry – is the propensity of Cannes film festival to programme films linked to French producers, sales agents and/or distributors. As reported by *Variety*, not only did 92% of the films which entered the main competition between 1999 and 2003 have at least one French partner, but films that had been initially rejected by the festival were later accepted once a powerful French company became involved (Gaydos 2003, 1, 46). This means that the odds of getting into the most important international film competition without the support of the local French film industry are rather slim – only 8% – whilst showing that ultimately no festival programme is free from film-industry pressures, not even Cannes, the king of the festival circuit which has claimed to defend 'artistic excellence' and the 'pre-eminence of talent'. For other smaller and even medium-size festivals negotiating with the industry generally means, as programmer Mark Peranson argues, that their line-up depends more on the films they are 'given' than on the ones they 'get' (2008, 43). Again, this is not to denounce the intrusive or corrupt interference of commerce in cultural matters, but it helps to show that, inevitably, festivals dealing with feature films aimed at mainstream distribution and exhibition channels need to take into account the necessities of film companies because they are the rights holders and decision-makers as regards the festivals' film supply.

From this perspective, film festivals' increasing number of competitions and awards can be best understood as a response to pressure from the film industry's, which is related to the industry's need to establish the quality of their film products in an ever more competitive marketplace. As James English argues in his book *The Economy of Prestige*, there is a 'prize frenzy' in all the field of cultural production – not only in film festivals – the primary function of which is to enable the production of cultural capital. Thus the main role of prizes is,

facilitating cultural 'market transactions' enabling the various individual and institutional agents of culture, with their different assets and interests and dispositions, to engage one another in a collective project of value production (English 2005, 26).

In other words, prizes and other forms of prestige accumulation are so widespread because they are a form of currency that facilitates the transactions between different forms of cultural, social, political and economic capital. Prizes are a constitutive element of the process in which contemporary culture is produced, circulated and consumed. For the international film industry, investing in the production of cultural value that can later be exchanged for economic capital has become a rather standard practice. In effect, all those engaged in film promotion – i.e.

producers, distributors, sales agents, national institutes, etc. – try to use the festival circuit's capacity to produce symbolic capital in order to raise the profile of their films and increase their potential audiences in international markets. In doing so, the international film industry has become dependent on film festivals; for most industry practitioners it is almost unthinkable to launch a Latin American film in Europe and North American markets without it having undergone the festivals' value-adding process. At the same time, it has pushed film festivals into functioning according to commercial dynamics and economic interests, rather than simply applying criteria of quality according to their independent definitions of 'talent' and 'artistic excellence'.

A crucial paradox of the festival circuit is that while films are understood through an author/national cinema framework, the system tends to over-select films specifically oriented towards international markets. These films tend to have very complex processes of funding and production, which are deeply collaborative and inter-national. However, festivals love 'new' cinemas and 'young' directors that they can claim to have 'discovered'. Although most of these 'discoveries' have an international background and orientation – and are frequently developed with the support and supervision of Euro-American festivals and film professionals – they are frequently presented as uncharted territories of the world cinema map that 'emerge' independently to gain international attention. However, this ignores both the power and interest of certain festivals and cultural agents within the festival world to enable the 'discoveries' and the agency and interest of those being discovered of promoting their films in international markets.

The dynamics of the value-adding process and how it affects films' international circulation are illustrated by a comparison of the festival tour of two films, *Central Station* and *Foreign Land*. Both films were directed by Walter Salles – the latter in collaboration with Daniela Thomas – and shared several key crew members¹³¹ (IMDb 2010). Although the two films are generally well-regarded by critics, the signs of 'quality' as established by their pattern of movement throughout the festival circuit were rather different. In contrast with *Central Station's* successful festival tour, *Foreign Land* could not accumulate as much cultural capital and, in general, received far less attention on the international circuit. Therefore, although some critics and scholars have argued that *Foreign Land* is actually 'better', the higher levels of

¹³¹ As previously mentioned, these included scriptwriter Marcos Bernstein, cinematographer Walter Carvalho and editor Felipe Lacerda as well as line producer Afonso Coaracy, costume designer Cristina Camargo, production designer Cassio Amarante, production secretary/coordinator Claudia Bejarano and music composer/conductor Jacques Morelenbaum (IMDb 2010).

recognition and status conferred to *Central Station* by the festival circuit facilitated its broader visibility and circulation.

c. *Central Station's* Festival Tour and the Media

As explained in previous chapters, *Central Station's* journey through the festival circuit was instrumental in building a reputation for both the film and Walter Salles as deserving winners of the prestigious Golden Bear award. Although the film was generally praised during its world premiere in Sundance in January 1998 and granted top awards a month later in Berlin, an important group of international critics remained unconvinced by *Central Station's* artistic and cultural value. However, with the support of other influential critics and through a strategic handling of information, the experienced Salles was successfully introduced as a 'young' rising filmmaker, while the multi-national co-production legitimated its Brazilian and Latin American credentials. Paratexts produced throughout the film festival tour helped the film's incorporation into established auteurist/national cinema frameworks, therefore ensuring it was on the 'artistic' side of the presupposed art/commerce divide. After the film festival tour at the end of 1998, *Central Station* was effectively positioned as a critics' favourite and a strong contender during the awards season.

However, in order for this enhancement of reputation to be possible, *Central Station* had to circulate according to the hierarchical dynamics of the festival circuit. In order to raise its profile and gain media presence, the screenings had to be associated with prestigious selections and awards in each of the events and in specific festivals across the calendar year (see table below). In other words, being screened at the most prestigious ones first before travelling to the smaller events afterwards. Regardless of the film's well-established Brazilian cultural identity, its strong local flavour, its reputation as a small 'foreign movie' and the air of spontaneity commonly cited in relation to the shooting process¹³², there were prestigious and powerful European and North American cultural agents behind the orchestration of *Central Station's* festival tour.

¹³² Reporters would frequently tend to minimise the role of Sundance as only providing cash or part of the initial budget, while focusing on Salles' 'spontaneous' approach to filmmaking and the accidental casting of the boy that plays Josué, one of the leading characters (see for instance Allen 1999; O'Sullivan 1999, 9). Similarly, the chronological shooting, as the filmmakers travelled large distances within Brazil, was highlighted by some scholars as resembling neo-realist aesthetics and objectives (Dias 2008, 53). Moreover, this romanticisation of the shooting process – while overlooking pre-production, postproduction and marketing – is a powerful evocation of Glauber Rocha's famous statement on the requirements of filmmaking being only 'a camera in the hand and an idea in the head' (Rocha quoted in Stam 2000, 95).

Table 9. *Central Station* (BR/FR/JP dir. Walter Salles 1998)

Date	Festival/ Commercial Release	Section/ Distributor
Jan 15-25, 1998	Sundance Film Festival (Park City, US)	Premieres [World Premiere]
Feb 11-22, 1998	Berlin International Film Festival (DE)	Competition
Apr 3, 1998	Commercial Release in Brazil	Distributor : Riofilme
Jul 3-11, 1998	Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (CZ)	
Jul 7-12, 1998	Galway Film Fleadh (IE)	Walter Salles International Tribute
Aug 16-30, 1998	Edinburgh International Film Festival (UK)	Rosebud
Sep 3-7, 1998	Telluride International Film Festival (US)	
Sep 10-19, 1998	Toronto International Film Festival (CA)	Gala
Sep 10-20, 1998	Boston International Film Festival (US)	
Sep 17-26, 1998	San Sebastian International Film Festival (ES)	Zabaltegi (Opening Film)
Sep 23-27, 1998	Brothers Manaki International Film Festival (MK)	
Sep 23-Oct 1, 1998	Pusan International Film Festival (KR)	Open Cinema
Sep 25-Oct 11, 1998	Vancouver International Film Festival (CA)	Anniversary Gala
Sep 28-Oct 4, 1998	Festival Biarritz Amérique Latine (FR)	Out of competition (Opening Film)
Oct 12, 1998	Commercial Release in Spain	Distributor: Warner Sogepag S.A.
Oct 8-18, 1998	Chicago International Film Festival (US)	Out of Competition (Closing Film)
Oct 11-18, 1998	Murphy's Cork Film Festival (IE)	International Programme
Oct 16-28, 1998	Viennale International Film Festival (AT)	
Oct 28-Nov 15, 1998	Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival (US)	
Oct 29-Nov 8, 1998	St. Louis Film Festival (US)	
Nov 5-19, 1998	London Film Festival (UK)	Film on the Square
Nov 6-15, 1998	Cine-World Film Festival (Sarasota, US)	
Nov 6-15, 1998	Amiens International Film Festival (FR)	
Nov 12-29, 1998	Belfast Film Festival (UK)	New International Cinema
Nov 20, 1998	Commercial Release in the US (limited New York and Los Angeles)	Distributor: Sony Pictures Classics
Nov 20-29, 1998	Birmingham Film and Television Festival (UK)	
Nov 21-27, 1998	London Film Festival on Tour (Newcastle, Liverpool and Bristol, UK)	
Nov 28-Dec 5, 1998	Camerimage (Torun, PL)	Competition
Dec 1-11, 1998	Festival de Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (Havana, CU)	Competition
Dec 2, 1998	Commercial Release in France	Distributor: Mars Distribution
Dec 11, 1998	Commercial Release in Italy	Distributor: Mikado Film
Dec 20, 1998-Jan 2, 1999	Aspen Film Festival (US)	
Dec 24, 1998	Commercial Release in Germany	Distributor: Buena Vista International
Dec 25, 1998	Commercial Release in the US (expanded)	Distributor: Sony Pictures Classics
Jan 7-18, 1999	Nortel Palm Springs International Film Festival (US)	

Jan 15, 1999	Commercial Release in Canada (English-speaking)	Distributor: Sony Pictures Classics
Jan 16-24, 1999	Mostra de Cinema Llatinoamerica de Lleida (ES)	Closing film
Jan 29, 1999	Commercial Release in Canada (French-speaking)	Distributor: Les Films Séville
Feb 5, 1999	Commercial Re-release in Brazil	Distributor: Riofilme
Feb 12-28, 1999	Portland International Film Festival	Closing film
Feb 17-Apr 21, 1999	Muestra de Cine Iberoamericano en Teruel (ES)	Opening film
Feb 21-28, 1999	Festival de Cine del Mercosur (Punta del Este, UY)	Closing film
Feb 26, 1999	Commercial Release in Japón	Distributor: [NHK]
Mar 4, 1999	Commercial Release in Argentina	Distributor: Buena Vista International
Mar 4- , 1999	XXXIII Muestra Internacional de Cine de la Cineteca Nacional (Mexico City, MX)	
Mar 12, 1999	Commercial Release in Ireland and UK (expanded)	Distributor: Buena Vista International
Mar 15-22, 1999	Festival Internacional de Cine de Cartagena (CO)	Competition
Mar 19, 1999	Commercial Release in Mexico	Distributor: Columbia TriStar Films
Mar 31-Apr 15, 1999	Hong Kong International Film Festival (HK)	Director in Focus
Apr 16-22, 1999	Semana del Cine Español en Bulgaria (Sofia, BG)	
May 13, 1999	Commercial Release in Czech Republic	Distributor: Sunfilm
Jul 3-10, 1999	Cinemanila (Manila, PH)	Opening film
Nov 8-25, 1999	Miradas sobre el Cine de América Latina (Geneva, CH)	Series 'Juventud en América Latina'

Although it is impossible to know with absolute certainty what kind of negotiations took place behind the festival scene or how the decision regarding *Central Station's* world premiere was made, it is noteworthy that the film was unspooled at Sundance (January) rather than at the more prestigious festivals in Berlin (February) or Cannes (May) which reportedly also coveted its premiere (McDonald 1999, A19). While in previous years Berlin had actually poached some films from Sundance's programme, during the 1990s the increasing international importance of the US festival reversed the situation (Ulmer 1998). In fact, Sundance's expansion from a local US event to a world cinema event caused some discomfort within the festival circuit, in particular with the case of *Central Station* (McDonald 1999, A19). Therefore, despite FIAPF regulation for competitive events – such as Berlin, Cannes and Venice – that demanded a strong focus on world premieres, *Central Station* was screened and awarded in Berlin *after* Sundance. Bearing in mind the micro-dynamics of the festival world, this represented a triumph for Sundance and confirmed its growing importance for world cinema as well as the US independent cinema scene.

Moreover, after Sundance's close involvement in *Central Station's* development, the film was a strategic piece with which to promote its international initiatives. Significantly, these included the launching of the Sundance/NHK International Filmmakers Award in 1998, an

annual contest modelled on the same award given to the *Central Station* script in 1996.¹³³ Therefore, when the film had its debut in Park City, the festival made sure that it received a substantial amount of press coverage by programming it in one of its most prestigious spots. *Central Station* was screened in a non-competitive section called 'Premieres', rather than 'World Cinema' or 'Frontier' sections where other Latin American films were presented and were eligible for a special prize for Latin American cinema.¹³⁴ Arguably all the other Latin American films had been screened at other festivals and thus would not be permitted in the 'Premieres' category. However, the criteria for classification were far from consistent with the section presenting films already seen at other festivals and world premieres actually scattered throughout different sections (Means 1997, E1). Thus, as Sundance film festival director Geoffrey Gilmore explained in an interview, the criteria for allocating films into sections were related to the level of 'hype' or 'sense of discovery' they required (Ulmer 1998) – rather than their actual status as world premieres.

Sundance's programming choices had a direct effect on the films' media coverage. A case in point is the bulletin released by the *BPI Entertainment News Wire* where Sundance announced its programme in December 1997 and in which none of the other Latin American films was mentioned, but *Central Station* was identified and introduced as 'a Brazilian film directed by Walter Salles and financed in part by the Sundance/NHK Award of \$300,000 two years ago' (Byrge 1997). In fact, *Central Station* was almost the only Latin American film mentioned by major newspapers covering the festival such as *The New York Times* (Maslin 1998b, E1; Weinraub 1998, E1), *The Toronto Star* (Howell 1998a, D5), *The Globe and Mail* (Jacobson 1998a, C4), *The Washington Post* (Jacobson 1998b, C7) and *The Observer* (Fuller 1998, 13). The only exception was the award-winning *Who the Hell is Juliette?* which was simply mentioned as such in festival reports without any critical comments or endorsement (Howell 1998c, E4; Maslin 1998c, E3).

¹³³ In 1996 the Cinema 100/Sundance International Award was proposed as a one-off project to commemorate cinema's 100th anniversary (Klady 1996, 1). Two years later Sundance announced the launching of the annual Sundance/NHK International Filmmakers Award given to four filmmakers from the U.S., Europe, Latin America and Japan. It comprised US \$10,000 in cash for the filmmakers and a pre-sales agreement for US \$150,000 with the Japanese broadcaster NHK (Olson 1998, 16).

¹³⁴ These included *A Chrysanthemum Bursts in Cincoesquinas/ Un crisantemo estalla en Cinco Esquinas* (AR/FR/BR/ES dir. Daniel Burman 1998) in the sidebar 'Frontier' as well as *Martin (Hache)* (ES/AR dir. Adolfo Aristarain 1997) and, the winner of the regional prize, *Who the Hell is Juliette?/ Quién Diablos es Juliette?* (MX dir. Carlos Marcovitch 1997) in 'World Cinema'. The latter section also included *Chile, the Obstinate Memory/ Chile la memoria obstinada* (CA/ FR dir. Patricio Guzmán 1997), *Bocage: The Triumph of Love/ Bocage: O triunfo do amor* (BR/ PO dir. Djalma Limongi Batista 1997) and *Life according to Muriel/ La vida según Muriel* (AR/FR dir. Eduardo Milewicz 1997).

While the limited media attention given to *Who the Hell is Juliette?* demonstrates critics' ability to embrace or ignore films that have passed through a programmers' and jury-members' filtering process, the visibility of *Central Station* shows the role of festivals in highlighting certain films through their programming choices. In this way, distinct sections represent different levels of prestige and grades of accessibility depending on the venue's size and location, screening schedule and each festival-goer's accreditation. *Central Station's* prestigious status was clearly marked by its world premiere being held in the Eccles Theatre at 7pm January 19th 1998 (Sundance Film Festival 1998, 133). Strategically located near the festival headquarters, the 1,300-seat theatre – at least three times as big as other screening sites – was the festival's main venue, to which access was restricted and where most festival-goers gathered in the evenings (Craig 2004, 72–75). Accordingly, *Central Station's* US \$10 tickets were considerably more expensive than tickets for other Latin American films – priced at US\$ 6-7 – which were screened at smaller and less prestigious venues (Sundance Film Festival 1998). Although *Central Station* was premiered in a non-competitive section the media exposure it received constituted an even bigger prize. Opening in Sundance's Premieres section enhanced the film's international profile ensuring that praise spread both through printed reviews and by word of mouth among international critics. The positive media response at the festival was great news for everyone with stakes in *Central Station*, particularly Sundance who had given the film in-house treatment, Sony Pictures Classics as the North American distributor and Miramax International as its global rights owner.

The next step in the festival tour was a coveted slot in Berlin's main competition, ranked second only to Cannes and which, along with Venice, has been historically considered one of the three big events in the festival calendar since the 1950s. Until February 1998 the only top festival award given to a Brazilian or Latin American film had been Cannes' Golden Palm for *The Given Word* in 1962 which was generally regarded as a mistake. Neither Berlin's Golden Bear – nor Venice's Golden Lion – had been ever granted to a film labelled 'Latin American'.¹³⁵ However, with such high-ranking international backers, *Central Station* arrived at the German competition tipped as a favourite. In its pre-festival coverage, *Variety* was already referring to it as a 'touted' Brazilian film (Elley 1998, 49) and the issue included a perfectly timed review by

¹³⁵ At time of writing, no film co-produced by or representing a Latin American country has been awarded Venice's Golden Lion (La Biennale di Venezia 2012) and the only Palm d'Or winner remains the Brazilian *The Given Word* (Festival de Cannes 2012). However, Berlin's Golden Bear was recently also granted to *Elite Squad/ Tropa de Elite* (BR/NL/US/AR dir. José Padilha 2007) and *The Milk of Sorrow/ La teta asustada* (PE/ES dir. Claudia Llosa 2009) (Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin 2012a, 2012b).

chief critic Todd McCarthy (1998, 6). He described it as ‘a sensitive art film’ which would ‘be a solid specialized attraction for discerning audiences internationally’, although he admitted not being fully convinced by its ‘emotional catharsis’ (T. McCarthy 1998, 6).

Like the screening in Sundance’s ‘Premieres’ section, competing in Berlin not only gave *Central Station* the chance to win the major award of the festival, but also a greater degree of prestige and visibility. As a result, other Latin American films¹³⁶ presented in the secondary ‘Panorama’ section were generally ignored by international newspapers covering the event. *Central Station*, however, was in the limelight, frequently mentioned and discussed during the festival by critics from *The Times* (G. Brown 1998a), *The Guardian* (Malcolm 1998b, 8), *The New York Times* (Riding 1998, E1), *Le Figaro* (Tranchant 1998), *Le Monde* (Mandelbaum 1998c) among others. As previously discussed, the film went on to win the Golden Bear without the unanimous support of the critical establishment amidst a widely disapproved edition of the Berlinale (Blaney 1998, 1–2; Elley et al. 1998, 15). The lack of consensus regarding *Central Station*’s worth – and whether the film deserved the award or not – was acutely reflected in the festival reports featured in leading specialised film magazines.

The award granted to *Central Station* would have provided the perfect occasion for leading specialised magazines to declare a flamboyant ‘discovery’. However, the unanimous indifference that they displayed towards *Central Station* and Walter Salles was a sign of disapproval and a challenge to the Berlinale’s awarding choice. This initial rejection, however, did not discourage the film’s promoters who had both the know-how and the will to capitalise on the prestigious award. Simultaneously, its powerful distributors facilitated numerous festival screenings as part of the marketing and release strategy in certain territories – noticeably North America (Sony Pictures Classics) and the UK/Ireland (Buena Vista UK) –, whilst the persuasive Salles committed himself to travel over a period of months in order to accompany and promote the film.

Having already been screened at Sundance in January and Berlin in February, *Central Station* was undoubtedly ineligible for the Cannes film festival and its parallel sidebars – the Critics’ Film Week and the Directors’ Fortnight. While including it in their programme would have provoked strong criticism capable of damaging the reputation of these events, the opportunity to promote the film during Cannes came from the simultaneous Marché

¹³⁶ These include *Ever Changing Waters/ Escrito en el agua* (AR dir. Marcos Loayza 1997), *The Battle of Canudos/ Guerra de Canudos* (BR dir. Sergio Rezende 1996) and *A Chrysanthemum Bursts in Cincoquinas*.

International du Film. Generally going unreported in the wider media, the 1000 screenings at the Cannes film market are regarded as a closed industrial event where hundreds of companies hire state-of-the-art facilities to present their products to other film professionals, especially potential buyers, festival programmers, exhibitors and critics (Harris 1998a). As described by the critics from *El Amante Cine* – who were rather unimpressed by the film – *Central Station* was successfully screened in the Cannes market where it ‘was unanimously praised by [their] Brazilian friends and other respected critics’¹³⁷ (Quintín and F. De la Fuente 1998a, 37).

Although it would appear that there was a significant ‘gap’ between *Central Station’s* screening in Berlin in February and the screenings that followed at Karlovy Vary and the Galway Film Fleadh in early July, the film was being promoted at the Cannes market in May as well as being theatrically released in April in Brazil.¹³⁸ This ‘gap’, however, is not due to a lack of options regarding where to present the film, but to a calculated strategy to raise its profile by screening it only in the most prestigious events on the circuit. Between March and July 1998 the film could have potentially been screened at festivals held in Mexico City and Cartagena both in March, the Hong Kong International Film Festival in April or Cinemanila in Philippines in early July. While *Central Station* was, in fact, screened in all of these festivals in the following year, during 1998 the film avoided these, along with many other smaller events, thus giving preference to other more prestigious festivals in the second half of the year such as Edinburgh, Toronto, San Sebastian, Pusan, London and Havana. In this way, instead of screening – or completely rejecting – a film that had already been widely seen at many minor events worldwide, each medium-size festival could pose as a discoverer and present it as a national or regional premiere and a programme highlight. In turn, this would imply a generally higher status of the film during the event: greater media presence, better attended screenings and opportunities to collect prestigious and/or profitable prizes.

Starting with Karlovy Vary festival in July 1998, *Central Station* was included with other award-winning films in the non-competitive ‘Horizons’ section of the well-established Czech

¹³⁷ My translation, in the original: ‘[Central do Brasil] era elogiada unánimemente por nuestros amigos brasileños y otros críticos respetables’ (Quintín and F. De la Fuente 1998a, 37).

¹³⁸ *Central Station* had its commercial release in Brazil in April 1998 where the local distributor Riofilme did not promote it in local festivals first – for instance in Ceará in May or in Rio Cine in June. Instead, it opened with a relatively modest number of 36 copies (‘Brazil top 10’ 1998a, 31), increasing gradually to 79 copies in the sixth week when the film was still fourth in the Brazilian box office ranking (‘Brazil top 10’ 1998b).

event.¹³⁹ Part of the festival programme, but without any accompanying guests and not particularly emphasised as a festival highlight, *Central Station's* treatment did not reveal excessive excitement from festival organisers at Karlovy Vary. Similarly, media representatives covering the event for journals like *Variety* (Gaydos 1998, 48; Meils 1998, 71), *Le Monde* (Pierre 1998) and *The Guardian* (Malcolm 1998c, 5) as well as specialised magazines like *Cineaste* (Holloway 1998, 86–87) and *Sight & Sound* (Hames 1998, 7) did not even mention the film's screening at Karlovy Vary. The omission could be justified by the fact that film had been already referred to – albeit briefly – in previous issues. However, when critics are impressed with a film, it is not uncommon for them to mention it briefly in subsequent festival reviews, or even champion it through interviews or a feature article. However, in this case, the only acknowledgements of *Central Station's* screening at Karlovy Vary came from *The Prague Post* which shortlisted it as one 'hot tips for the festival' and recommended it, mostly because of its status as a Golden Bear-winner (Lagace 1998). Although it is difficult to make a conclusive claim in this sense, there is a noticeable correlation between the limited visibility given to the film during Karlovy Vary and the lack of a powerful backer in the Czech Republic, where the film was distributed by the Association of Czech Film Clubs (ACFK) in May 1999.

In contrast to the reticent interest shown by Czech programmers and international festival-goers, during the Galway Film Fleadth – also held in July – *Central Station* was presented as part of a tribute dedicated to Walter Salles which included *Foreign Land* and the short documentary *Life Somewhere Else/ Socorro Nobre* (BR 1996). Therefore, in Ireland, where distribution rights were the property of Miramax International, Salles was invited as a distinguished guest to present his films and give a director's master class (Galway Film Fleadh 1998). With such a prominent slot in the programme, the different media representatives covering the event did not neglect to mention either the filmmaker or the Golden Bear-winning film. Amidst generally positive attitudes towards the festival, these included newspapers such as *The Irish Times* (Dwyer 1998b, 13), *The Sunday Times* (G. McCarthy 1998) and *The Scotsman* (Flynn 1998b, 11), specialised magazines like *Film Comment* (Murphy 1998, 6) and *Cineaste* (Mulligan 1998, 88) and even *Variety*, which declared the Irish festival as having received both 'critical and popular

¹³⁹ As for most festivals in ex-socialist countries, the 1990s were a period of readjustments in which their purposes, structures and sources of funding had to adapt to the new capitalist context. According to some critics, in 1998 Karlovy Vary benefited from the absence of the Moscow film festival and the increased international visibility of Czech cinema after the Academy Award given to *Kolya/ Kolja* (CZ/UK/FR dir. Jan Sverák 1996) in March 1997 (Hames 1998, 7; Holloway 1998, 86). Moreover, Karlovy Vary established its position after prevailing over the short-lived Prague film festival which threatened its leadership in the Czech Republic during the mid-1990s (Iordanova 2006).

thumbs-up for its adventurous programming' (Power 1998, 14). By having *Central Station* and Salles take centre stage at the festival, the Galway programmers could guarantee a minimum media coverage. However, the strategy could have failed if critics and festivals participants rejected the film and director. Fortunately for the film, the director, the festival and the distributor, their appearance was welcomed by local critics who described Salles as being 'particularly impressive in talking about his superb *Central Station*' (Linehan 1998, 13). Likewise, other reviewers celebrated the 'wise' festival decision of paying tribute to Salles with a retrospective, and they declared the film 'the triumph of the festival' (Flynn 1998b, 11).

After Galway, Buena Vista enabled the film to go on a festival tour of the most prestigious events in the UK, notably Edinburgh in August and London in November. At the Scottish event¹⁴⁰ *Central Station* was screened in 'Rosebud', a section devoted to 'bold, daring, shocking and imaginative new films from first and second-time filmmakers' (Edinburgh International Film Festival 1998, 87). In London the film was underscored as a 'Film on the Square' with a high-profile gala screening at the Odeon in Leicester Square. In contrast, other Latin American films in the programme¹⁴¹ were merged together in the general category of 'world cinema' with standard screenings held at the National Film Theatre.

In contrast to the positive media response previously received at Galway, at these bigger events the UK press did not generally embrace the Golden Bear-winner. Apart from a few isolated cases, *Central Station* was generally absent from the shortlists and festival tips of publications such as the *London Film Festival Guide 98* (Radio Times 1998), *The Guide* (The Guardian 1998), *Time Out* (Andrew 1998, 81), *Marie Claire* (Swillingham 1998) and *The Observer* (French 1998, 6). Nevertheless, the screenings and the PR activities of Salles in these prestigious festivals raised the film's profile and ensured that it was publicised by local media and word-of-mouth among local critics and audiences (James 1999, 12). Moreover, the buzz around *Central Station* was strengthened through other festival screenings in Cork, Belfast, Birmingham and the London Film Festival on Tour at Newcastle, Liverpool and Bristol. Although these smaller events did not have much effect on the film's international prestige, they helped to spread praise by word of mouth and increase the film's visibility in local publications such as *The Irish Times*

¹⁴⁰ The only other Latin American film at Edinburgh was the low-profile documentary *Blood Ink/ Tinta roja* (AR dir. Marcelo Cespedes and Carmen Guarini 1998).

¹⁴¹ In 1997, the London film festival also screened *Ashes from Paradise/ Cenizas del paraíso* (AR dir. Marcelo Pyñeyro 1997), *Little Miracles/ Pequeños milagros* (AR dir. Eliseo Subiela 1997), *The Rose Seller/ La vendedora de rosas* (CO dir. Víctor Gaviria 1998) and *South Dock/ Dársena sur* (AR dir. Pablo Reyero 1997).

(Dwyer 1998a, 81, 1998b, 13, 1998c, 13), *The Evening Chronicle* ('Brazil nuts!' 1998, 7), *Belfast Newsletter* (Mcalpin 1998, 20), *The Herald & Post* (1998, 3) and *The Leicester Mercury* (1998, 13).

Because of its massive size – which implied considerable box office potential and hundreds of film festivals – the North American territory (i.e. Canada and the US) provides one of the clearest examples of the film festival tour as a marketing strategy. Like Buena Vista UK, North American distributor Sony Pictures Classics enabled festival screenings starting with the most prestigious events and followed by several smaller ones. After its successful premiere in January, *Central Station* was not screened in North America until early September with almost simultaneous screenings at Telluride and Toronto. In both events it occupied visible slots in the programme. The exclusive non-competitive festival at Telluride programmed only 40 films in five days with costly entrance fees ranging from US\$500 per film up to US\$2,500 for all-access accreditation (Cox 1998, 1). *Central Station* was the only Latin American film selected for Telluride and, as *The Hollywood Reporter* noticed, an atypical case in that the festival included a non-US premiere (Honeycutt 1998a). After Telluride *Central Station* was promptly highlighted as the event's 'discovery' in *The Hollywood Reporter* (Honeycutt 1998b), 'the festival's popular favorite' by the influential *Chicago-Sun Times*' critic Rogert Ebert (1998b, 44) and 'one of the rare Latin American movies to have a real shot at box-office glory' by the weekly *Christian Science Monitor* (Sterritt 1998, B3).

In contrast, the enormous Toronto film festival screened more than 300 feature films over ten days and – with its traditional star, industry and audience attendance records – was already regarded the most important festival in North America (Klady and Tillson 1998, 1). In Toronto, the film received a Gala screening which, as described by *Variety*, was the festival's 'highest-profile series' generally focused on 'major Hollywood pics and hot foreign fare' (Kelly and Roman 1998, 8). With a prominent red-carpet Sunday-evening screening at the Roy Thomson Hall, the gala event helped to increase the film's media presence and expectations in advance of its Canadian premiere. Local critics like *Toronto Star*'s Peter Howell (1998, B1; 1998b), *The Globe and Mail*'s Rick Groen (1998, C2) and *Maclean's* Brian D. Johnson (1998, 60) promoted it as a sure-fire festival hit. Likewise, the daily *Hamilton Spectator* reported that *Central Station* was creating a buzz during the event (Hershenson 1998, F3). After Toronto the film made it into the news again when it was ranked third for the People's Choice Award – a prize traditionally regarded by film professionals as a good indicator of a film's box office potential – and a runner-up for the Metro Media Award decided by the festival press (McKay 1998). Hence *Central Station* was positively mentioned by a substantial amount of North American publications ranging from major newspapers such as *The Globe and Mail* (Lacey 1998, D3), *Chicago Sun-*

Times (Ebert 1998a, 27) and *USA Today* (Puig 1998, 4D) to local ones like Ohio's *Dayton Daily News* (Larsen 1998, 4C) and *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (Holleman 1998, C4). While the film's positive reception among festival-goers at Telluride and Toronto contributed to good word-of-mouth, the considerable media coverage of these two high-profile festivals – and the coveted spots where the film was screened – guaranteed that its success was echoed in the press.

Following its touted appearances at selected North American festivals in 1998 – Sundance in January, Telluride and Toronto in September – *Central Station* was ready to go on an accelerated tour of pre-release screenings at medium size and smaller events in major cities covered almost exclusively by local press. Thus between September 1998 and February 1999, it was screened in cities like Boston, Vancouver, Chicago, St. Louis, Ft. Lauderdale, Sarasota, Aspen, Palm Springs and Portland. As in other festivals, the prestigious spots that the film occupied in the programme of each event increased its media presence and audience expectation.¹⁴²

A further element contributing to *Central Station's* visibility and general understanding as the tip of a national cinematic movement was the major retrospective of Brazilian cinema organised by the Brazilian Ministry of Culture and distributor Riofilmes in association with the Museum of Modern Art in New York. As *The New York Times* observed when it opened in November 1998 in the MoMA, the retrospective 'Cinema Novo and Beyond' came 'with impeccable timing' regarding the Brazilian cinematic renaissance (R. Rich 1998, 17). Although it did not include *Central Station*, the exhibition did present Walter Salles' previously co-directed film *Foreign Land* and made frequent references to the Golden Bear-winner in its catalogue as the result and successor of the lengthy national cinematic tradition on display (J. L. Vieira 1998). With screenings in highly prestigious institutions – including UCLA Film and Television Archive in Los Angeles, the Cinematheque Ontario in Toronto, the Museum of Fine Art in Boston, the Pacific Film Archive in San Francisco, the Pacific Cinematheque in Vancouver and the National Gallery of Art in Washington – the retrospective contributed to raise the profile of both the director and Brazilian national cinema. As the Brazilian contender for the awards annually

¹⁴² Among other North American festivals, *Central Station* was programmed with a director's Q&A in Boston (September), as the Anniversary Gala in Vancouver (September), the closing night film of Chicago International Festival (October), at the St. Louis Film Festival (October-November), the Ft. Lauderdale Film Festival (October-November), the Cine-World Festival in Sarasota (November), the Aspen Film Fest (December 1998-January 1999), the Nortel Palm Springs Film Festival (January 1999) and closing film gala at the Portland International Film Festival (February 1999).

allocated by different institutions in the US between December and March¹⁴³, *Central Station* could capitalise on this high-profile exposure. At the same time that the film received international awards and nominations, North American newspapers such as *The New York Times* (R. Rich 1998, 17), *The Globe and Mail* (Irvine 1999, C4) and *Toronto Star* (Goddard 1999) reported on 'Cinema Novo and Beyond' highlighting the linkages between *Central Station* and the Brazilian cinematic tradition exhibited.

In the wake of the award season, and with simultaneous appearances at small festivals, Sony Pictures Classics launched a typical platform release with limited screenings in Los Angeles and New York on November 1998. After its successful one-year long festival campaign, *Central Station* was welcomed by an enthusiastic audience and critical response (Clark 1998, 10E; Maslin 1998a, 10). By mid-December the film started to collect several awards and selections – including two Academy Award nominations – that further cemented its reputation as a 'good' film. Shortlisted in the media as one of the best films of the year, and encouraged by the positive audience response, the distributor expanded the screenings to include major cities by January 1999.¹⁴⁴ In this way, the film benefited simultaneously from the media hype and the good word-of-mouth generated by the festivals, the awards and a controlled platform release. Moreover, *Central Station* was the recipient of a lengthy value adding-process which incorporated not only US festivals, but the whole sequence of international events where it accrued greater symbolic capital and media visibility. In turn, its growing reputation as an award-winning film and a festival success served as a powerful paratext that emphasised its reception and box office results.

d. *Foreign Land: The Undiscovered Gem*

In contrast to the well-documented case of *Central Station*, information about *Foreign Land's* production process and festival screenings is not so widely available. Virtually inexistent

¹⁴³ With impressive US and international media coverage, the Academy Awards, with nominations announced in early January and awards given in late March, are considered the major awards of the whole season. However, there are other awarding institutions which help to draw media and Academy Award-voters' attention. Among them there are the New York-based National Board of Review and Los Angeles Film Critics Association (both allocating awards in mid-December), the Los Angeles-based Hollywood Film Critics Association which makes nominations in mid-December and grants the coveted Golden Globe Awards in late January, as well as the Independent Spirit Awards announced in early February and awarded in mid-March.

¹⁴⁴ In late December the distributor expanded the screenings to include major cities such as San Francisco, Miami, Boston and Chicago. A few weeks later the film went also to cities like Washington, Denver, Dallas, Detroit and Pittsburgh.

in trade journals and the media in general, the production history of *Foreign Land* is more difficult to reconstruct in detail through archival research. While the shortage of public information presents an obstacle for scholars, it is also symptomatic of the project's lesser international profile and its lack of a clear marketing strategy vis-à-vis foreign territories. This is not to say that the film lacked appeal among international viewers; *Foreign Land* was very well received by critics and audiences in its festival screenings. As acknowledged by scholars and Salles himself, it is rather common to find people in Brazil and abroad preferring *Foreign Land* to *Central Station* (Elena 2003, 212; Salles quoted in Nagib 2002, 420). However, its pattern of circulation through the film festival circuit did not enable the film and its directors to be widely proclaimed as 'discoveries' after its world premiere in San Sebastian film festival in September 1995. *Foreign Land* is an example of a film whose 'good' quality – recognised by critics as well as jury and audience awards – was contradicted by an unsystematic film festival tour. In this way, it is a film which, despite its international potential, does not reach foreign commercial screens because the hierarchical dynamics of the festival world prevent it from accumulating substantial symbolic capital to certify its 'good' quality. Luckily in this exceptional case, the success of *Central Station* brought attention for *Foreign Land* which became a 're-discovery' – or a somewhat late 'discovery' – and was screened in several countries throughout 1998 and 1999 as an appetizer for the Golden Bear-winner.

Like *Central Station*, *Foreign Land* was an international co-production which benefited from the expertise of a veteran European producer. In this case, the film was an official Brazilian and Portuguese venture of Salles' production company Videofilmes and Animátografo-Produção de Filmes, a company formed by the Portuguese producer and director António da Cunha Telles in the 1960s. In contrast to the high-profile and industry-savvy Arthur Cohn and Clermont-Tonnerre, the Portuguese Cunha Telles had a reputation mostly linked with the Portuguese cinematic renewal of the 1960s (Mingalon 1990; Mira 2005, 4) and a series of films he produced in the early 1990s which were not remarkable critical or commercial successes.¹⁴⁵ Despite being an active and experienced international producer, Cunha Telles did not have an 'Oscar-winning' tag able to draw trade journals' attention to his productions nor did he possess the level of connections and expertise in international marketing held by *Central Station's* producers and advisers. Neither of the directors had an established international reputation to draw upon: Daniela Thomas previously had a career in theatre and opera production and, although she had

¹⁴⁵ Among them were *L'oeil qui ment*¹⁴⁵ (FR/PO dir. Raoul Ruiz 1992), *Passage to Lisbon/ Passagem por Lisboa* (PO dir. Eduardo Geda 1994) and *Celestial Clockwork/ Mécaniques célestes* (FR/BE/ES dir. Fina Torres 1995).

studied cinema and had made some short films, she was unknown in the international film industry. Salles, on the other hand, had considerable experience in making documentaries and TV commercials, but his feature filmmaking debut, *Exposure* (1991) had been rather disappointing. Without the support of the French and US film industries, two of the strongest in the world, *Foreign Land* was developed within the structures of the Portuguese and Brazilian film industries, which were rather frail at the time.

There are further differences between the films in terms of their narrative and aesthetic choices. While *Central Station* has a rather optimistic tone and addresses the question of Brazilian national identity and the possibility of reconnecting with it through rural communities and traditional family values, *Foreign Land* speaks of the general disenchantment of a generation that faced economic crisis and was forced to leave Brazil in search of better opportunities. Using stylish black and white photography, *Foreign Land* follows the journey of Paco (played by Fernando Alves Pinto) and his partner Alex (played by Fernanda Torres), who works as a waitress and faces the difficulties of immigrant life in Lisbon. Through the lives of the young Brazilian couple and their encounters with other immigrant communities, *Foreign Land* explores the themes of cultural disparities, exile and displacement. In a thrilling plot twist which involves a network of diamond smugglers, Paco and Alex try to escape to San Sebastian, but get caught on the way, reflecting their lack of agency against the circumstances. As Lúcia Nagib has suggested, the choice of San Sebastian for the narrative's setting has connotations linked with Portuguese and Brazilian historical myths. However, it could well have been associated with the city hosting Spain's biggest and well-known film festival since 1954 (Nagib 2010, 200). Perhaps foreseeing its potential screening at the festival, although the Spanish city never appears on screen, *Foreign Land* pays homage to San Sebastian as a utopian place where the characters expect to go 'home'. The film was actually shot on location in São Paulo, Lisbon and Cape Verde in just over four weeks. With light and cheap 16 mm equipment, blown up later to 35 mm, it was a rather modest production with actors and crew members contributing to a highly collaborative process inspired by both the urgency and the pleasure of making fiction films with documentary quality (Salles in Nagib, 2002, pp. 417–419).

As a consequence of *Foreign Land's* lower international profile, its development process went unreported in trade journals and therefore unnoticed by the majority of film professionals who use the reports to keep track of developments in international film industry based. Therefore, when the film had its world premiere at the non-competitive Zabaltegi section at the San Sebastian International Film Festival in September 1995, its media presence was rather limited. Before the event it went unmentioned in publications commenting on San Sebastian's line-up, such as *Variety* (Hopewell 1995a, 24; Rooney 1995a, 14) and *Screen International*

(Carver 1995, 26), as well as international newspapers which generally do not give much coverage to the festival. In this sense, the lack of media visibility was also due to the festival itself and the non-competitive sidebar in which *Foreign Land* was screened. A contrasting example discussed in Chapter 9 is *Japón* (MX/ES/NL/DE 2002), the debut feature film of Mexican director Carlos Reygadas. Despite its rather difficult subject matter and slow-paced narrative, *Japón* was not only screened in more prestigious events such as at Rotterdam and Cannes, but it was also handled by an experienced sales agent and PR company during its decisive screening at the French festival in May 2002. *Foreign Land*, however, arrived without any major backers or publicists and was screened in a sidebar of the somewhat discredited festival.

Although San Sebastian is arguably Spain's main international festival, throughout the years it has acquired the reputation of suffering from bad-timing in the festival calendar and thus usually having a mediocre programme (James 2000, 8; Pérez 1995, 50; see for instance Segura 1986, 43; Viviani 1995, 78). As explained by most festival reports, despite being included in FIAPF's top category – or more precisely, because this requires a substantial number of world or international premieres in the competition – historically San Sebastian has been forced to programme the leftovers from Cannes (May), Berlin (February) and the almost overlapping Venice film festival (also in September). At the same time, San Sebastian has faced competition from both long established European events – such as Karlovy Vary (June) and Locarno (August) – as well as newcomers – like Toronto (September), Rotterdam (January) and Sundance (January) (see Table 3 in Chapter 1). Until the mid-1990s particularly,¹⁴⁶ before it introduced a more industry-friendly approach and the successful production initiative Cine en Construcción in 2002, San Sebastian was known for assembling collections of films unwanted by more prestigious events. As a consequence, premiering at San Sebastian carried of the risk that a film might be perceived as unable to position itself better within the festival hierarchy because of its 'poor' quality. In a circular dynamic, its second-tier position in the festival circuit has meant that San Sebastian has generally received attention from both specialised and general media. The result is that, if given the choice, producers and sales agents would rather premiere films at more prestigious festivals with better media coverage and a higher concentration of potential buyers, festival programmers and other influential members of the film industry – especially

¹⁴⁶ Noticeably, the San Sebastian festival experienced a period of instability in its organisational structure with frequent directorship changes in the early 1990s: Rudi Barnett (1991-1992), Manuel Perez Estremera (1993-1994) and Diego Galán (1995-2000) (Carver 1995, 26). Galán brought a generally more industry-friendly approach to the event since his first event in 1995 which was welcomed as a successful negotiation between the different agendas within the festival (Hopewell 1995b, 20).

Venice and Toronto in early September. Thus if *Foreign Land's* world premiere went unnoticed by international media, this was partly because San Sebastian itself received rather modest coverage in general.

Additionally, the Zabaltegi section, where *Foreign Land* premiered, was San Sebastian's 'open zone' offering a mixed bag of high-profile films already screened at other festivals with first and second features by debutant directors. Moreover, Zabaltegi had the added appeal of granting one of the most lucrative prizes of the whole festival circuit. Between 1993 and 1995, the Euskal Media¹⁴⁷ Award gave 25 million pesetas (approx. US\$ 350,000) to first and second feature films aimed to facilitate the production of a subsequent film by the same director and producer (Rooney 1995c, 28). By offering such a generous award, the festival could increase interest in the Zabaltegi section as a place for discovering new talents. There was a lot to be gained, but at the same time, for the majority of the non-winning newcomers, premiering at a sidebar in San Sebastian meant only a very slim chance of becoming a 'discovery'. Predictably, the media focused on the main competition and the Zabaltegi films that had already been celebrated in other festivals, whilst tending to ignore the newcomers. Premiering at Zabaltegi thus implied the risk of the film not being seen at all unless it won the Euskal Media award. As it happens, the prize was given to the French film *Bad boy/ Sale gosse* (FR dir. Claude Mouréras 1995) which received mentions and generally positive commentaries in the reports and press releases following the festival. In contrast, *Foreign Land* went unnoticed in the festival reports of publications such as *Positif* (Viviani 1995, 78–79) and *Cahiers du Cinéma* (Toulza 1995, 8–9) whilst other specialised magazines such as *Film Comment* and *Sight & Sound* did not even report on the San Sebastian festival. Having premiered in a secondary section at a second-tier festival known for its programming problems, and having not receive any awards, the film was on the verge of being forgotten as just another 'festival film'.

Nevertheless, *Foreign Land* managed to impress a few critics and festival programmers who spoke rather positively about it. In particular, *Variety's* celebratory review was promptly published in early October. It described the film as being,

Superbly shot in seductive black-and-white and distinguished by a remarkable feel for the architecture and landscape of both countries, this well-played,

¹⁴⁷ In 1996 the festival announced that the Euskal Media prize was going to be substantially reduced to \$200,000, but that it would be awarded in cash as soon as the winner was announced (Hopewell 1996a, 66). In 1997 it was renamed the New Directors award and further reduced to \$170,000 (Rooney 1997, 29).

noirish intercontinental road movie should turn up far and wide along the fest trail (Rooney 1995b, 42).

Clearly pleased by *Foreign Land's* 'sensuousness', 'mood' and 'free-flowing structure', David Rooney argued that these were a fair trade off for 'some occasional lapses in narrative clarity'. Moreover, he praised its 'striking and highly polished' visuals and its 'rich' music (Rooney 1995b, 42). Regardless of *Variety's* rave review, not many media commentators discussed *Foreign Land* – or any other films by newcomers in Zabaltegi. Barely mentioned by the media, the film was certainly not declared a discovery at the time. However, its advocates were influential enough for *Foreign Land* to be invited to an extensive number of small and medium-size festivals in the following months – notably London in November 1995 as well as Sundance and Rotterdam in January 1996 (see table below).

Table 10. *Foreign Land* (BR/PO dir. Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas 1995)

Date	Festival/ Commercial Release	Section/ Distributor
Sept 14-23, 1995	San Sebastian International Film Festival (ES)	Zabaltegi (World Premiere)
25 Sep-1 Oct, 1995	Festival Biarritz Amérique Latine (FR)	Competition
Oct 3-10, 1995	Rencontres internationales du cinéma (Paris, FR)	
Nov 2-19 1995	London Film Festival (UK)	World Cinema/ Latin American Beats
Nov 21-28, 1995	Festival des Trois Continents (Nantes, FR)	
Nov 24, 1995	Commercial Release in Brazil	Distributor : Riofilme
Jan 18-28, 1996	Sundance Film Festival (Park City, US)	World Cinema
Jan 24- Feb 4, 1996	Rotterdam International Film Festival (NL)	Tiger Award Competition
Mar 16-23, 1996	Bergamo Film Meetings (IT)	Competition
Apr 18-May 5, 1996	San Francisco International Film Festival (US)	
May 16-Jun 9, 1996	Seattle International Film Festival (US)	
May 2-4, 1996	Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema (US)	
Jul 10-Aug 11, 1996	Festival Ciné Plein Air (Paris, FR)	
Oct 4-20, 1996	Vancouver International Film Festival (CA)	Cinema of our time
Nov 23-Dec 1, 1996	Entrevues Film Festival (Belfort, FR)	
Jan 9, 1997	Commercial Release in the Netherlands	Distributor: Contact Film Cinematheek
29 May- 8 Jun, 1997	Brazilian Film Festival (Miami, US)	
Jun 6-19, 1997	Springfest'97 (New York, US)	
Jul 12- Aug 16, 1997	Brooklyn Museum of Art (New York, US)	Series 'New Films from Brazil'
Sep 24, 1997	Commercial Release in France	Distributor: Diaphana
Oct 24, 1997	Anthology Film Archives (New York, US)	
Jan 9, 1998	Cleveland Cinémathèque (US)	

Mar 13, 1998	Facets Multimedia (Chicago, US)	
2-23 Apr 16, 1998	Brazilian Film Festival at Yale University (US)	
May 25-Jul 7, 1998	Filmoteca de Catalunya (ES)	Series 'Renaixement del cinema brasiler'
Nov 13 1998- Jan 21, 1999	Museum of Modern Art (New York, US)	Series 'Cinema Novo and Beyond: A Retrospective of Brazilian Films'
Feb 18, 1999	Commercial Release in UK (limited London)	Institute of Contemporary Arts
Feb, 1999	Cinémathèque Ontario (Toronto, CA)	Series 'Cinema Novo and Beyond'
Feb 11-Mar 21, 1999	UCLA Film and Television Archive (Los Angeles, US)	Series 'Cinema Novo and Beyond'
Feb-Apr, 1999	Coolidge Corner and the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, US)	Series 'Cinema Novo and Beyond'
Apr, 1999	Pacific Cinémathèque (Vancouver, CA)	Series 'Cinema Novo and Beyond'
Mar 10-16, 1999	Festival International de Biarritz in Paris (FR)	
Mar 31-Apr 6, 1999	Montreurs d'image (Toulouse, FR)	
Jun, 1999	National Gallery of Art (Washington, US)	Series 'Cinema Novo and Beyond'
Jun 18- Jul 1, 1999	Plan B Cinémathèque (Santa Fe, US)	Series 'Cinema Novo and Beyond'
Oct 1-30, 1999	Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, US)	Series 'Cinema Novo and Beyond'
Jul 1-30, 2000	National Film Theatre (London, UK)	Series 'Walter Salles'
Nov 8-26, 2000	Filmar en América Latina (Geneva, CH)	

After San Sebastian in September 1995, *Foreign Land* was screened in several small French festivals to generally positive receptions from audiences and the few critics covering the events. As a result, in late September, the film was programmed in the Biarritz International Festival of Latin American Cinema – established in 1992 and also known as La Cita. Although it did not win any awards, it received attention from the local daily *Sud Ouest* (Berthomeau 1995a, 1995b). In early October, *Foreign Land* was presented at the first International Film Forum (Rencontres internationales du cinéma) in Paris' Vidéothèque where it won the audience's Best Feature Film Award. However, being the first edition of a rather local Parisian event, the award did not enjoy much media coverage apart from a brief mention in the French daily *Le Monde* ('Palmares des Rencontres internationales du cinéma' 1995) and some overhyped headlines in Brazilian newspapers which declared '*Foreign Land* triumphs at French festival'¹⁴⁸ (Torres Freire 1995, 7). Furthermore, the film was screened at the Nantes Three Continents Film Festival in mid-November, an event launched in 1979 and dedicated to films from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Traditionally the festival has received some modest attention from French film critics and has been associated with the introduction of names like Chen Kaige, Hou Hsiao-hsien,

¹⁴⁸ My translation, in the original: "Terra Estrangeira" vence festival francês' (Torres Freire 1995, 7).

Abbas Kiarostami and Wong Kar-wai to Europe (Braudeau 1995). At Nantes, *Foreign Land* was spotted by the influential Michel Frodon – who later became editor-in chief of *Cahiers du Cinéma* (2003-2009) – and Pascal Merigeau who were both covering the event for *Le Monde*. While the critics disregarded Latin American cinema for being out-dated and losing out to Asian films, they highlighted *Foreign Land* as the only notable exception from the region (Frodon and Merigeau 1995).

Symptomatic of *Foreign Land's* appeal among various programmers at international festivals, the film continued to travel to several medium-size events worldwide. However, in contrast to *Central Station*, it was not programmed in particularly prestigious and visible sections. Thus it received very little media attention and no major symbols of distinction. Unlike *Central Station*, which was shown at 'Film on the Square' in London in November 1995, *Foreign Land* was part of the 'Latin American Beats' group – within the wider 'World Cinema' category. Similarly, at Sundance in January 1996, the film was screened in the 'World Cinema' sidebar rather than in 'Premieres' one.¹⁴⁹ However, during this edition of Sundance, Walter Salles was publicly announced as the Latin American recipient of the Cinema 100/Sundance International Award which, arguably, helped to raise the director's and, as a result, *Foreign Land's* profile. While *Foreign Land* was touring the festival circuit in 1996, *Variety* started to publish interviews and notes highlighting the director's previous work (Hoineff 1996, 56; Moore 1996a, 78, 1996b, 59). Cunningly, *Variety* described *Foreign Land* as 'one of the 10 best films of 1995 by the Association of Rio Film Critics' (Hoineff 1996, 56), although the article failed to mention that only fourteen Brazilian films were distributed that year (J. L. Vieira 1998, 173).

Foreign Land continued to tour the festival circuit, and was presented at Rotterdam's Tiger Award Competition in late January 1996. In spite of not winning any awards, the film got was welcomed at the Dutch festival known for its commitment to experimental and avant-garde cinema. *Foreign Land* was ranked as the third favourite by cinephiles visiting Rotterdam (Van Bueren 1996, 11), whilst Dutch reviewers described it as the most interesting of the Brazilian contingent shown at Rotterdam (Holtwick 1996, 28). Furthermore, some specialised magazines such as the US *Filmmaker* started to suggest that the 'lyrical black-and-white thriller' was one of the 'important discoveries' of the festival (Cowan 1996, 10). However, the film remained 'undiscovered' from the perspective of most specialised magazines. Some magazines like *Sight*

¹⁴⁹ This was the case with *Central Station* two years later and of *Guantanamera* (ES/CU dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío 1995) in 1996, despite already having premiered at Venice in September 1995.

& *Sound* (Rayns 1996, 5) and *Cinemaya* (Dönmez-Colin 1996, 56–58) did not mention *Foreign Land* in their festival reports, while others like *Film Comment*, *Positif* and *Cahiers du Cinéma* did not cover the Dutch festival that year.

In other words, despite the fact that *Foreign Land* was generally liked by a number of critics, festival programmers and audiences, the pattern of movement throughout the festival circuit was considerably different to that of *Central Station*. Lacking major international distribution deals beforehand – as well as the involvement of savvy sales agents– *Foreign Land* experienced scattered screenings at small festivals worldwide for more than two years after its world premiere in September 1995. In other words, instead of a large concentration of presentations at big and medium-sized festivals to give it considerable symbolic capital or create a media buzz before its commercial release, *Foreign Land* appeared at smaller events spread out over a longer period of time. According to the modest profile and audience orientation of these smaller festivals, reports of the screenings throughout 1996 generally only appeared in the local press. However, despite the good reception and awarding of top prizes enjoyed by the film at some festivals – such as Bergamo (IT) and Belfort (FR) – the prestige associated with those prizes and the overall media presence of the film were rather scarce.

During 1997 *Foreign Land* enjoyed modest international distribution in the Netherlands in January and in France in September. In both territories local critics were very positive about the film. However, its overall visibility in the media and its audience turnover were rather modest. Dutch critics had high praise for the film's mixture of genres, its seductive black and white photography and its reflections on displacement and exile (Duursma 1997, 19; Van de Sande 1997, 37; Steinz 1997, 11). Launched by specialist distributor Contact Film with a modest five-copy campaign for the Dutch territory, the film had a fairly small turnover of 2,900 admissions (European Audiovisual Observatory 2010c).

Likewise, in France critics gave a warm reception to the film, although its box office results were limited. In *Le Monde*, Jean-Michelle Frodon labelled it a 'transatlantic noir puzzle' and positively described it as 'an amazing wandering in the land of film noir' invented by the two Brazilian filmmakers¹⁵⁰ (1997). *Le Figaro's* Claude Baigneres pointed out that there was 'something magical about this little film in black and white' (1997) whilst others celebrated its score (Coppermann 1997, 55), solid performances (C.G. 1997) and its successful genre transitions (Nicklaus 1997, 21). In a short, but positive, review *Positif* described the film as

¹⁵⁰ My translation, in the original: 'Un noir puzzle transatlantique; Terre lointaine. Un couple de cinéastes brésiliens invente une étonnante errance au pays du film noir' (Frodon 1997).

'young and poor' and suggested that it was a lonely, yet 'beautiful', harbinger of a Brazilian cinema renaissance (Jeancolas 1997, 55). Most notably, *Cahiers du Cinéma* dedicated a full page to a very positive review that praised both the film's lyricism and its relation to the thriller genre (Bouquet 1997, 75). French distributor Diaphana released it with twelve copies attracting 5,200 viewers to the theatres (European Audiovisual Observatory 2010c). Compared to *Central Station's* admissions for the same countries – 54,200 in the Netherlands and 868,400 in France (European Audiovisual Observatory 2010a) – these were rather modest numbers. Moreover, with such rave reviews – especially from French critics – one wonders what the film's commercial potential could have been had it been 'discovered' at Cannes, Venice or Berlin.

During 1997 and early 1998, *Foreign Land* had a few further festival and isolated art-house screenings in the US. In New York, the main art-house and foreign language-films bastion of the US, they were accompanied by very good commentaries in influential publications such as *The New York Times* (Van Gelder 1997, E1) and *The Village Voice* (R. B. Rich 1997, 68; Taubin 1997a, 79, 1997b, 69). However, the film still lacked a North American distributor that could capitalise on this critical support and encourage further visibility of the film. Therefore, regardless of the cultural prestige associated with these art-house presentations, they were not generally characteristic by a significant media response. *Foreign Land* continued to be screened across the US during 1998 and 1999, but exclusively within the framework of the major retrospective 'Cinema Novo and Beyond'.¹⁵¹

Despite its overall positive reception with international critics and festival audiences, *Foreign Land* remained undistributed in most foreign territories. Partly as a result of the lower profile of its festival screenings, the symbolic capital and media visibility given to the film were not sufficient for it to be declared a 'discovery' or to encourage international distributors to acquire the film. Although on the basis of *Foreign Land's* textual properties it is very likely that the film could have gained wider international distribution, paratexts surrounding its festival appearances did not enable it to establish a solid reputation as a film marketable to foreign audiences.

¹⁵¹ As previously mentioned, during 1999 'Cinema and Beyond' toured several North American cultural institutions such as the UCLA Film and Television Archive in Los Angeles (February), the Cinémathèque Ontario in Toronto (February), the Museum of Fine Art in Boston (February), the Pacific Cinémathèque in Vancouver (April) and the National Gallery of Art in Washington (June). Furthermore, a selection from 'Cinema Novo and Beyond' was taken to the National Film Theatre in London in July 2000. The Brazilian season included a special focus on Walter Salles with a Q&A session and screenings of *Foreign Land*, *Socorro Nobre*, *Central Station* and *Midnight/ O primeiro dia* (FR/BR dirs. Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas 1998).

Further highlighting the 'failure' of the system to recognise its international potential was UK's delayed distribution; the 1995 film was not distributed until February 1999. This was a year after *Central Station* had already won the Golden Bear in Berlin, when it was being promoted for the Academy Awards in the US and a month before Buena Vista International released *Central Station* in the UK. Sparsely distributed by the Institute of Contemporary Arts, *Foreign Land* was, in fact, clearly portrayed as an accompanying piece to its Oscar-nominated counterpart in UK newspapers such as *The Times* (Allen 1999; Christopher 1999), *The Guardian* (Romney 1999, 9) and *The Independent* (Quirke 1999, 5). In the UK *Foreign Land* received mixed reviews. Some critics described it as 'a miracle of content over budget' (Christopher 1999) and praised its social-themes and highly-contrasted black and white photography which preserved it from being 'a conventional thriller' (Preston 1999, 6). Others, however, argued that 'the drama [ended] up being less substantial than it [promised]' (Romney 1999, 9) and criticised that its undeniable aesthetic accomplishments actually had 'the uninvolved glamour of a Calvin Klein commercial' (Porter 1999). What was clear is that the 1995 film was briefly released in the UK 'thanks to the success of his [Salles'] latest film, the Oscar-nominated *Central Station*' (Quirke 1999, 5). In other words, the four-year delayed interest in *Foreign Land* in the UK was mostly due to its relation to the award-winning and Oscar-nominee *Central Station*.

A consequence of the rediscovery precipitated by *Central Station*, was the tendency to overlook Daniela Thomas' contribution to *Foreign Land*, which she co-wrote and co-directed. In this way, paratexts frequently offered contradictory information by providing technical specifications with Thomas as co-director, while indicating that Salles was the film's only auteur. A case in point is a short review in the French magazine *Première*, published when the film was distributed in France in September 1997. The note concluded that, showing 'a great professional capacity on various levels, Walter Salles establishes himself as a complete filmmaker'¹⁵² (Delorme 1997, 42). Whilst Thomas' name was only referenced in the small print with other technical data, Salles' picture was featured next to a description of his interest in the themes of drifting, exile and otherness. Significantly, *Foreign Land's* review mentioned the Sundance script award winner – yet still un-premiered – *Central Station*. Furthermore, the catalogue accompanying the retrospective 'Cinema Novo and Beyond' cited Thomas as co-director of the film (J. L. Vieira 1998, 156) but, somewhat inconsistently, included articles presenting Salles as the single author of *Foreign Land* (Canosa 1998, 138; De Mattos 1998, 94; Stam 1998, 68).

¹⁵² My translation, in the original: 'Avec une aisance égale dans des registres varies, Walter Salles s'affirme comme in cineaste complet' (Delorme 1997, 42).

Similarly, there were many other notes mentioning the film which mistakenly omitted Thomas' co-directorship. These included publications such as *The Village Voice* (Taubin 1997b, 69, 1998, 62), *Daily News* (Kehr 1997, 60), *Agence France Presse* ('Carlos Diegues va faire un "remake" d'"Orfeu Negro"' 1997), *Le Figaro* (Tranchant 1998), *Sud Ouest* (Castera 1998), *Business Wire* (1999), *Daily Variety* ('UCLA accents Brazilian films' 1999, 12), *The Times* (Allen 1999; Christopher 1999) and *The Independent* (Quirke 1999, 5). As the broad understanding of authorship theories suggests that artistically valuable films are the product of a single 'auteur' – rather than the result of a collaborative venture –, there was a tendency to refer to *Foreign Land* as *his* – rather than *their* – previous film. In other words, as *Central Station* was understood as a successful film 'authored' by Salles, it became increasingly common to ignore Thomas' contribution to *Foreign Land* and consider him the main creative mind behind both films.

Conclusion

By comparing two case studies, this chapter has analysed the dynamics of the festival tour as a mechanism of 'quality' certification aimed at selecting the 'best' films for international markets which simultaneously imposes its own hierarchical division and tends to reflect the commercial concerns of media players. On the one hand, the unequal structure of the festival circuit guarantees the dominant position of a few Euro-American centres of power as taste-makers and agenda-setters for most world and art-house cinema. As a result, the assessment and interpretations applied to these films tend to be aligned with the paradigm of national cinemas and authorship that have historically been at the core of Euro-American film criticism and theory. On the other hand, festivals' dependence on the industry for their film supply, forces the value-adding dynamics of the whole festival circuit to operate in line with economic imperatives and not purely according to the 'pre-eminence of talent' or 'artistic excellence'. In other words, film companies are not passively waiting for the results at the end of an autonomous value-adding process, but they invest from the outset in the creation of cultural capital by pumping films into a festival tour. According to their bargaining and economic power, companies negotiate more prestigious positions within the programmes and launch marketing campaigns aimed at festival participants, especially those with greater influence such as critics, jury-members, potential buyers and other festival programmers. Although the strategy does not always work as film marketers intend, the cultural capital and quality markers that films accumulate via the festival world are closely associated to the economic capital invested by its promoters.

If this chapter analysed how films can gain an artistic profile through the festival circuit, Chapter 9 explores a similar phenomenon for film directors, whose artistic reputation is closely linked to the events of the film festival world. As argued in Chapter 1 and 2, one of the key principles surrounding the assessment and understanding of cinema as an art form is the assumption of the director as an individual artist behind each film. In this way, the reputations of film and filmmaker are necessarily interlinked. Ingrained in the popular and academic imaginary for decades, auteurist frameworks are also embedded in international audiences' expectations about world cinemas, and, as the next chapter shows, Latin American films are no exception.

Chapter 9. Reputation Building: Authorship and Art Cinema

As mentioned in Chapter 3, a crucial marketing strategy for Latin American films in foreign territories is the clear positioning of the director as the film's almost exclusive creative source. By drawing on well-established ideas of authorship, marketers use the director's name – based on the assumption that he or she imprints his or her personal vision on the film's style or themes – as a brand-label to attract audiences. Thus the assumed inter-textuality of films under the signature of the same 'auteur' has not only been central to academic strategies that cluster films around specific directors, but also to the marketing of films by association, under the logic of 'if you liked film *x*, you might also like film *y*' because they are by the same director. At the same time, invoking the romantic notion of an auteur is a very effective strategy for raising a film's artistic profile and appealing to more sophisticated audiences who tend to be the main consumers of 'specialised' or foreign films. As scholars such as Timothy Corrigan (2003) and Nuria Triana-Toribio (2008) show, ideas of authorship have been used as marketing hooks in order to highlight the director's public persona as irrefutable evidence of his or her auteur status. Therefore, while film scholars have long debated the definitions, functions and usefulness of the 'auteur' concept, film marketers have increasingly relied on the promotion of the director as a celebrity who makes physical, written and online appearances in order to promote *his* or *her* film. Through two contrasting cases of Latin American directors – Mexican Carlos Reygadas and Argentine Fabián Bielinsky – this chapter aims to analyse the role of film festivals in the making of contemporary Latin American auteurs. In the case of Reygadas the objective is to explore how film festivals contribute to the creation of an 'auteur'. With Bielinsky's contrasting case, the objective is to analyse how the festival world tends to limit the visibility of films and filmmakers who do not comply with festivals' auteurist framework. Both cases highlight the way in which the film festival world as a whole draws distinctions between 'auteurs' and 'non-auteurs' creating powerful paratexts related to films' level of artistic quality.

a. Authorship and Latin American Cinemas

The concept of authorship has been one of the cornerstones of film criticism and academic studies. As Richard Dyer explains in his 'Introduction to Film Studies', the notion of the 'auteur' was crucial in raising films to the same level as other art forms as long as they could be understood as the work of individual artists (1998, 5). Following a model well established in the arts, authorship draws upon ideas of artistic worth, discriminating between different films and attributing a greater value to those which can be identified with an auteur (Dyer 1998, 5). As

several scholars have pointed out, the origins of authorship theories have been frequently related to the idea of a 'caméra-stylo', proposed by French critic Alexandre Astruc in 1948. However, its development is more commonly associated with the critics from *Cahiers du Cinéma* in the 1950s. Led by the then young critic François Truffaut – who later became a filmmaker of the French New Wave – *Cahiers'* critics advocated films which reflected, as much as possible, the creative personality of their directors. As a method of criticism, the 'politique des auteurs' considered there to be a direct correlation between directors to whom an 'artistic personality' could be attributed and the 'artistic quality' of the films that they directed (Wexman 2009, 193). For the French critics, this approach entailed discerning between directors who were 'auteurs' and those who were simply 'metteurs en scène' or technicians interpreting scriptwriters' and producers' ideas. As directors' artistic personalities could be 'imprinted' on their films, this method of discriminating between 'auteurs' and 'metteurs en scène' could be used as criteria for assessing films' artistic worth. While authorship theories assumed that films with higher artistic value were those made by 'auteurs', this also implied dismissing all the films by those directors who were regarded as technicians.

As Barry Keith Grant recounts, the ideas proposed by the French critics provoked an intense debate among English-language critics who either disagreed with the simplistic approach in general or with its partial application that placed some Hollywood directors in the pantheon already established by 'European art cinema' (2008, 1–2). Nevertheless, notions of authorship were embraced and developed during the 1960s, particularly by *Movie* magazine in the UK and through the work of the influential critic Andrew Sarris in the US. In the 1970s, many scholars, influenced by structuralism and semiotics, replaced the romantic figure of the lone 'auteur' with an approach that enquired how the concept of an author functioned within and among texts beyond their supposed individual creators. The linguistic approach even declared the 'death of the author', reaffirming instead the reader's decoding capacities (B. K. Grant 2008, 4). However, the notion of the director as the default 'auteur' of a film had already become widespread among film critics, academics, publishers, audiences and film professionals (P. Watson 2007, 93). Despite the many variants and paradoxes of authorship highlighted by critics and academics, the approach has remained one of the key frameworks through which films' meanings are understood and their 'artistic' worth is assessed.

From early on, the notion of a cinematic 'auteur' promoted by the influential *Cahiers du Cinéma* not only put directors in the spotlight but imposed the need to have an identifiable individual creator on films in order for them to be considered by international critics and audiences. Developed from the core of the dominant international critical and festival establishment, these ideas about cinema had a very clear impact on the international

recognition of films outside Hollywood and Europe. This meant that if a film from a Latin American country was to be exported or included in critical or academic surveys of world cinema, raising the profile of its director to that of an 'auteur' was absolutely essential. As demonstrated in previous chapters, building such a reputation has never been easy for filmmakers from the region. Cases in point are that of Argentine Fernando Ayala – who never attracted international attention, although local critics and audiences generally welcomed his films – and the Brazilian director Anselmo Duarte who won the Golden Palm with *The Given Word* in Cannes 1962. Despite receiving the most prestigious award in the festival world, Duarte acquired the reputation of being a formulaic director linked to the commercial Brazilian film industry and never managed to establish a notable career as a director. By the same token, the individual prestige of the few filmmakers – including Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, Glauber Rocha and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea – who did manage to get international attention in the 1950s and 1960s, shed some light on other films bearing their signature. Noticeably, the recognition of these celebrated Latin American 'auteurs' was closely linked to their 'discovery' and further screening of their films in European film festivals, especially at Cannes, as demonstrated in the case of Leopoldo Torre Nilsson and Glauber Rocha.

Both the failures and the successes of Latin American directors in gaining international recognition throughout history highlight the persistence of authorship not only as an interpretative framework but also as a criterion of valuation. It is difficult – almost impossible – to find examples of Latin American films highly regarded by international critics and audiences which have not been received through strategies linked to both European film festivals and auteurist approaches. Paradoxically, authorship was employed in relation to the political or 'third' cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s, which tried to detach themselves from what they called the 'first' (i.e. Hollywood) and the 'second' (i.e. European artistic) cinemas. Although films such as Ukamau's *Blood of the Condor* (BO 1969) and *The Courage of the People* (BO/IT 1971) as well as Cine Liberación's *The Hour of Furnaces* (AR 1968) were signed by collective groups, throughout their reception process they were most frequently identified with a single leading director – Jorge Sanjinés for the first two films¹⁵³ and Fernando Solanas in the third one.

The case of *The Hour of Furnaces* is reflective of these auteurist predispositions. Premiered at the Pesaro film festival in 1968 and later shown during Cannes Critics' Week in 1969, the film

¹⁵³ Notably both Grupo Ukamau's films gained international visibility through European festivals: *Blood of the Condor* (BO 1969) premiered in Venice in 1969 while *The Courage of the People* (BO/IT 1971) premiered at the Pesaro film festival in 1971 and was later screened at Berlin 1972 (Nascetti 1972, p.20; Sanjinés 1998, pp.62–63).

was signed as a collective work by the Grupo Cine Liberación under the co-direction of Argentines Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino. Moreover, the film was accompanied by Solanas and Getino's manifesto 'Towards a third cinema', in which they specifically argued against auteur cinema, explaining the advantages of filmmaking in guerrilla units – with interchangeable roles among members – and emphasised the importance of spectators as active participants (Solanas and Getino 1969, 107–132). Nevertheless, international specialised magazines covered the film by drawing on an auteurist framework, presenting Solanas as the main creative mind behind it. An advocate of this approach was *Cahiers du Cinéma* who published a lengthy interview with the co-director. Significantly, the magazine referred to the film as being Solanas' individual work of only Solanas, despite the co-director consistently used the plural pronoun (i.e. we) when he described the film's production and direction process (Marcorelles 1969, 36–45). Similarly, *Positif* featured a questionnaire, the headline of which suggested that the film was Solanas' creative effort, but which included answers from both directors (Solanas and Getino 1968, 72–79). Interviews with Solanas published by *Cineaste* (Volpi et al. 1969, 18–29) and *Film Quarterly* (MacBean 1970, 37–43) contributed to the establishment of Solanas as the main 'auteur' of the film. In contrast, there were no interviews published with only Getino or jointly with both co-directors.

As the cases mentioned highlight ideas of authorship have affected the international reception of Latin American films throughout history, both as a theoretical framework and a criterion of valuation. In this way, the film festival world as a whole has employed notions of authorship which simultaneously give visibility to those films whose directors embody the 'auteur' ideal and exclude those films directed by personalities more difficult to accommodate within the 'artistic' category. Moreover, even when filmmakers themselves have resisted auteurist frameworks, such as in the case of the collectively signed films of the 1960s, scholars and critics have designated individual creators that are then understood as films' individual creator, or 'auteur'.

The use of auteurist frameworks is not a solely historical phenomenon; enduring auteurist ideas remain crucial to the contemporary reception and marketing of Latin American films. As a result, paratexts surrounding films' release tend to assume and emphasise the film director as the main creative source who is in charge of all creative decisions. While critics are frequently concerned with identifying a director's personality type – and whether he or she can be regarded as an 'auteur' or not – promoters need to present the director as an 'artist' in order to raise a film's profile. The example of Walter Salles is illustrative in demonstrating how, in dealing with specific films, marketers and reviewers promote discourses of authorship according to established 'auteur' models. Furthermore, the case of the film shows how scripts of value are

attached to films in accordance with the authorial status of their director – with both films’ failures and their successes commonly being attributed to the director’s character. In the case of Salles, his directorial career, level of expertise and personality were all presented depending on the film in question.

During *Central Station’s* promotional campaign, a considerable proportion of marketing material and related discussion emphasised Salles’ creative role and how the film reflected his personality. Most of these paratexts tended to stress that Salles’ was a ‘young’ director transmitted his humanistic values into the film. This was clear in an article published in *Film Comment*, which described the charming and linguistically skilled director as ‘a supremely sophisticated product of diplomatic culture’ and whose films tended to match this profile. Thus,

Brazilian director Walter Salles makes films that are intelligent and accessible, marked by powerful cinematography, a deep knowledge of film history, compassion, and a yearning for connection (Aufderheide 1998, 77).

Central Station was generally presented in the media as the outcome of Salles’ character and vision rather than, for example, the result of his collaborative efforts with the Swiss producer Arthur Cohn or with the same crew that had collaborated on Salles’ previously co-directed film *Foreign Land* (PO/BR 1995). As argued in the previous chapter, *Foreign Land* was somehow ‘rediscovered’ in light of *Central Station* and Salles was presented as the main creative mind behind both films. As discussed, many of the paratexts tended to ignore Thomas’ contribution, while presenting Salles as *Foreign Land’s* main auteur. Paradoxically, Salles himself described *Foreign Land’s* development process as being ‘truly participative’, not only because of Thomas’ role in rewriting the entire script, but because of the collaboration of his long established documentary-making group in discussing one another’s ideas over a period of more than two years (Nagib, 2002, p. 418).

When Salles’ directorial career was discussed during *Central Station’s* promotional campaign, decidedly less emphasis was placed on the rather unsuccessful *Exposure/ A grande arte* (US/BR 1991). Set in Brazil, but mostly spoken in English, the film had a multi-national cast – including actors of Brazilian, US, British and Turkish-French descent – and was co-produced and distributed by Miramax in the North American market. Based on the homonymous novel and script by Brazilian Rubem Fonseca, the film explores Rio de Janeiro’s underworld through the eyes of a North American photographer (played by Peter Coyote) who decides to master the art of knife-fighting after a prostitute, who had become his friend, is murdered. Reflecting its low, yet commercial, profile, the relatively low-budget film – US\$6 million (Brownstein 1991, B7) – was not promoted through a tour of the festival circuit, but was released directly to North

American theatres. When it hit US commercial screens, *Exposure* was frequently labelled as having an 'Euro-thriller' or 'Euro-slick' feeling and it was generally rejected by critics mostly because of its international background, its explicit violence and for its 'foreign' gaze on 'exotic' Brazilian scenarios (Maslin 1991, C12; Sheehan 1991; Stack 1991, C8). Following a logic underpinned by authorship theories, the failures of the film were directly blamed on the 'Brazilian-born', but foreign-educated, Salles who was personally accused of 'showing off a highly developed sense of the exotic' and too often intermingling sex and violence in 'ghoulish' episodes (Maslin 1991, C12). Demonstrating a reliance of omnipotent 'auteur' assumptions, *The Washington Times* strongly criticised the film in a review entitled '*Exposure* bares all defects of Brazilian director' which literally blamed Salles for a typo in the film subtitles (Staggs 1992, D4).

These criticisms of both *Exposure* and Salles provided a staggering contrast with the image of the director as a charming, knowledgeable and honest Brazilian filmmaker, as he was generally presented during the promotion of *Central Station*. By focusing on *Foreign Land* – the recipient of awards and praise on the festival circuit – while ignoring the criticised and rather unsuccessful *Exposure*, Salles was effectively positioned as a rising star who had directed two award-winning films rather than the director of three feature films which had received rather mixed reviews. As argued by Kerrigan, and discussed in Chapter 3, the assumptions of stylistic and thematic continuity between films under the same directorial signature frequently pose marketing problems for films which do not comply with the director's established style (2010, 89). Thus the commercially-oriented and rather discredited *Exposure* presented a problem for the portrayal of Salles' directorial career, because the film both undermined his artistic reputation and broke the presupposed thematic or stylistic continuity of *his* films – especially in terms of their insertion into a narrative of Brazilian national cinema. In this sense, it was important for marketers of *Central Station* to distance the director from his failed debut and focus on his role in the more successful *Foreign Land* in which the road movie strategy and themes like the search for national identity could be more clearly emphasised.

Another effect of the strategy of overlooking *Exposure* while promoting *Central Station* was that it helped to boost the image of Salles as a 'young' filmmaker. However, in fact that the director was over 40 years old by the end of the 1990s, had enjoyed a long career in documentary filmmaking since the early 1980s and, importantly, that *Central Station* was already the third feature film (co)-directed by him. Paradoxically, when *Exposure* was being marketed in 1991, Salles was generally presented as a veteran filmmaker 'making his feature debut *after* many documentaries and commercials (my emphasis)' (Sheehan 1991). Specific details were made available for reporters who frequently commented on his experience and cultural background on the basis of his 'more than 40 documentaries for Brazilian and French

TV' dealing with 'cultural heavyweights' such as writers Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez, filmmakers John Huston, Akira Kurosawa and Federico Fellini, and painter Marc Chagall (Brownstein 1991, B7). In contrast, the information released about Salles' career during the promotion of *Central Station* in 1998 was rather vague, simply mentioning 'several documentaries' without giving too many details or names (Dwyer 1998b, 13). While his expertise and familiarity with filmmaking practice generally went unmentioned in the media, this lack of information contributed to the portrayal of Salles as a 'new', 'young' and somehow inexperienced director. In other words, by establishing a stronger connection with *Foreign Land* while distancing himself from *Exposure* and his lengthy career in documentaries and TV commercials, Salles emphasised his credentials as a 'young' 'award-winning' Brazilian director. In this way, his experience as a filmmaker making documentaries in Brazil and Europe since the early 1980s as well as international English-language features in co-production with US labels such as Miramax was given minimal attention.

The careful handling of information about Walter Salles' career – most clearly embodied in the shift from veteran to inexperienced filmmaker depending on the film in question – reveals the necessity of promoting films in accordance with auteurist codes. Furthermore, it alludes to the expectations of critics, and festival programmers who tend to assume that aesthetic renewal and artistic value come from 'young' and 'new' directors. Combining the auteurist logic with a presupposed objectivity, both festivals and critics constantly speak of 'discoveries' and the 'emergence' of new directors as if their career development were natural phenomena uninfluenced by those speaking and their presupposed discoverers. According to this framework, directors are promoted both as films' single creators and at the same time, as the avant-garde representatives of their respective national cinemas.

While marketers try to accommodate directors within the expected auteurist model – i.e. a young and inexperienced filmmaker whose individual personality is inscribed on the film –, festivals devote considerable attention and resources to attracting and rewarding 'new' directorial talents. The almost exclusive visibility given to film directors in festivals' catalogues, programmes and other publications is particularly notable. Meanwhile, many festivals have special sections and awards exclusively for films by first and second-time directors without taking into account the other crew or cast members. Cases in point are the prestigious Camera

d'Or award¹⁵⁴, San Sebastian's New Directors' Award¹⁵⁵ within the Zabaltegi Section, Edinburgh's section Rosebud – which preselects films competing for the externally sponsored¹⁵⁶ New Director's Award – Rotterdam's VPRO Tiger Competition, Thessaloniki's Competition Section and the whole New Directors/New Films event organised by the Film Society of the Lincoln Center in New York. In this way, festivals promote an auteurist perspective both through their discursive production and their practices of programming and awarding which help to reinforce the visibility and recognition given to directors in comparison with other crew members.

b. Where Auteurs Are Born

Despite the active role of critics, festivals and marketers in shaping directors' careers and reputations, a common feature of most academic studies on film authorship is the limited attention given to the process by which 'auteurs' are recognised and the different cultural and commercial agents that participate in this process. In other words, while scholars have frequently attempted to define the concept of 'auteur' and considered whether it makes sense to think of films as 'authored' texts, they have tended to ignore how, where and by whom 'auteurs' are created.

In the pioneering collection *Theories of Authorship*, editor John Caughie noticed that one of the gaps in his compilation was a focus on the institutional aspects of authorship and especially the way in which 'auteurs' are 'constructed by and for commerce' (1981, 2). The underlying reason, he explained, was his general dissatisfaction with studies on this topic because they tended to preserve the romantic concept of a 'true' artist working within industrial constraints and who needs to be identified between all of the creative personnel working on a film's production (Caughie 1981, 2). Indicating the importance given to the production process – rather than the marketing or reception of films – within academic concepts of authorship,

¹⁵⁴ Introduced in 1978 and allocated by an independent jury, the award is limited to first-time directors' films in any section at Cannes Critics' Week, Directors' Fortnight, Un Certain Regard and Competition.

¹⁵⁵ The forerunner of the New Directors Award at San Sebastian was the previously mentioned Euskal Media Award installed since 1993, but it changed its name in 1997 and has maintained this ever since (Rooney 1997, 29).

¹⁵⁶ In 1989, following a change in directorial management, the Edinburgh film festival introduced a New Directors Series and a special Charles Chaplin New Directors Award for first and second-time directors (Johnston 1989, 26). Between 1999 and 2005 the award was sponsored by *The Guardian* and allocated by the newspaper's critics. In 2006 the Creative Industries Council Skillset took charge renaming it as 'Skillset New Director's Award' and offering a cash prize of £5000 (Skillset 2009).

Chapman *et al.* argue that the main limitations of traditional authorship theories were that they ignored the industrial and collective nature of film production (2009, 69). Thus their proposal for what they called 'New Film History' was to study the industrial contexts of production and revise the presupposed autonomy of the director, taking into account the creative input of the many collaborators who participate in any filmmaking process (Chapman, Glancy, and Harper 2009, 70). In this sense, the 'New Film History' has tried to redefine the notion of the 'auteur' by focusing on film production. However, it still ignores the effects of distribution, marketing and consumption on the very process in which directors are identified and eventually understood as auteurs.

In line with Caughie's remark, Timothy Corrigan points out that, just as academic approaches generally understand the 'auteur' as a 'structuring principle of enunciation' or an 'organising expression of one sort or another', they frequently omit the marketing and commercial implications which underlie the lengthy survival and increasing importance of the auteurist approach (2003, 97–98). Addressing this gap, Corrigan uses the case study of Francis Ford Coppola to analyse how the myth of the 'auteur' as a lonely genius was embodied and acted out by the director for the purposes of film marketing (2003, 102–108). As Corrigan suggests, one part of the process in which directors are turned into 'auteurs' or 'stars' is associated with the performance of 'being an auteur'. Simultaneously, this performance is shaped by commercial needs, which, in turn, respond to the expectations of critics and audiences. However, still not addressed is the necessity of a process of recognition that legitimates his or her labelling under the codes of auteurism and artistry. Clearly not all directors performing the 'auteur' role are acknowledged as such or enjoy the same level of prestige. The central question is thus: under what circumstances – and involving which actors – does such recognition enable a director to become an auteur or, alternatively, to be dismissed as a 'commercial director' whose films have little or no artistic value?

Studies in historical film reception demonstrate that cinematic reputations change over time according to the specific historical circumstances of those responding to them. Far from being universal and stable, films' meanings and scripts considered to be of value are closely related to specific audiences that might reinterpret and reassess – either in order to dismiss or to rescue – what other social groups have thought about specific films and filmmakers. In her influential *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema*, Janet Staiger starts from the basis that 'cultural artefacts are not containers with immanent meaning' to challenge the associated assumption of ahistorical viewers (1992, xi). In other words, by analysing historical changes in films' reception, Staiger moves away from the production process as the place where meaning is created, concentrating instead on the interaction

between films and viewers. From this perspective, the process by which viewers attribute meanings and aesthetic values to cinema is closely associated to both their socio-historical context and of their set of ideas about cinema (i.e. critical positions, theoretical assumptions, categories of classification, expectations, etc.). In this sense, Staiger explains that canons and aesthetic criteria attempt to preserve the limits between social groups and, in particular, the privileged position of the evaluative authorities that presumably inhibit barbarism and a lowering of standards (1992, 14–15). As with the interpretation of films, the attribution of aesthetic worth to films and – following the dominant auteurist approach to cinema – ‘artistic personalities’ or ‘talent’ to filmmakers is equally dependent on the specific historical circumstances of those applying contingent aesthetic criteria.

Using this theoretical framework, Staiger explores how ideas of ‘art cinema’ and ‘auteurs’ were embraced among US critics after the Second World War until the mid 1970s. Simultaneously, US reviewers moved towards an auteurist reading of films and began clustering foreign imports around the generic category of ‘art cinema’. For Staiger, the underlying rationale for the acceptance of ‘auteurs’ was that films classified as ‘art movies’ were thought of as being more ‘serious’ and having a ‘message’, which presupposed the existence of a source, i.e. an ‘author’ (1992, 181). While Hollywood films performed poorly in the film festival circuit, European imports were frequently regarded as being ‘better’ and both audiences and reviewers reportedly preferred ‘realistic’ and socially conscious cinema (Staiger 1992, 186). Thus auteurist readings were not applied to films regarded as mere entertainment, but only for those considered to be ‘serious’ and therefore ‘art’.

A crucial aspect, pointed out by Staiger, is the role of institutions in the development of the ‘auteur’/‘art’ approach. Thus, as early as the 1920s, directors’ names served as programming criteria for film series in art-house theatres (Staiger 1992, 188). By the 1940s and 1950s, the practice was very common across a growing network of film societies and cultural institutions that promoted ‘art cinema’, like the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the San Francisco Museum of Art (Staiger 1992, 189). Although Staiger does not specifically address festivals’ privileged position to attach markers of value and artistry, almost all the case studies of ‘art’ films she sampled for reception analysis had already been recognised by European film festivals before their release in the US and their critical reviewing in US media¹⁵⁷ (1992, 190). Despite

¹⁵⁷ Staiger’s methodology was based on the analysis of several critical reviews from a sample of thirty ‘art’ films which included those already mentioned by other scholars and several other films (1992, 190). In the text itself she focuses on several films, but provides a complete list in a footnote which

going unmentioned by Staiger, the simultaneous growth of the international film festival circuit since the Second World War, with European events at the centre, needs to be taken into account as a key institutional factor in this process. As scholars such as Elsaesser (2005a, 90–92) and De Valck (2007, 15) have frequently pointed out, it is clear that film festivals, with their capacity to shape critical attention and to manage symbols of prestige, have a powerful influence on the way in which specific films and directors become understood as ‘art’ and ‘auteurs’ by critics, audiences and academics.

In this sense, Bourdieu’s analysis of the logics of cultural commerce provides interesting insight into the process of ‘consecration’ of an ‘artist’ which requires the ‘authorisation’ of several agents within the field (1980, 263). Bourdieu’s analysis draws some striking parallels with the film festival world. Indeed, he explains that the ‘cultural businessman’ simultaneously benefits and has the ability to ‘consecrate a product which he has “discovered” and which would otherwise remain a mere natural resource’ (Bourdieu 1980, 263). In this way, intermediaries like film festivals and other cultural agents invest their own prestige in the backing of their new ‘discoveries’ and ‘emerging’ talents. If successfully recognised by others in the field – such as artists, dealers, critics, clients and customers – the consecration of the artist will positively reflect on the reputation and authority of its discoverer (Bourdieu 1980, 265). While it is clear that the leverage of different agents plays a key role in the process of the consecration of an ‘auteur’, what ‘makes reputations’ is not the authoritative word of single agents, but the whole interlocking system of cultural production in which the value of works of arts – and the artistic status of certain individuals – are negotiated.

This chapter draws on the concerns of scholars like Caughie and Corrigan regarding institutional aspects that affect the usage of auteurist approaches, as well as Staiger’s change of focus towards the moment of reception. The following case studies dealing with Carlos Reygadas and Fabián Bielinsky explore the role of the film festival world in the classificatory process through which films can be labelled ‘art’ and their directors consecrated as ‘auteurs’ or, alternatively, discarded for their ‘commercial’ and non-artistic connotations. The status of films

demonstrates a strong correlation between those films considered ‘art’ and those awarded at European film festivals (1992, 252–253). Significantly, the sample included *Rome, Open City/ Roma, città aperta* (IT dir. Roberto Rossellini 1945) awarded the Grand Prix at Cannes in 1946, *La Strada* (IT dir. Federico Fellini) awarded a Silver Lion at Venice 1954, *Breathless/ À bout de souffle* (FR) which earned the Best Director award for Jean-Luc Godard at Berlin in 1954, *Wild Strawberries/ Smultronstället* (DE dir. Ingmar Bergman) winner of the Golden Bear at Berlin in 1958, *The 400 Blows/ Les quatre cents coups* (FR) winner of the Best Director award to François Truffaut in Cannes in 1959. Notably, the only non-European film included in the sample was *Rashomon* (JP dir. Akira Kurosawa 1950) which was also the first non-European film to win Venice’s Golden Lion in 1951.

and filmmakers may frequently change over time and in relation to different cultural contexts. However, the initial reputation that films and directors acquire is not only crucial for their circulation as economic products in the short term, but also for their perceived cultural value and their longer-term articulation within narratives that cluster films around filmmakers' careers, ideas of national cinemas or genres. Once created, a reputation tends to be rather difficult to dissociate oneself from, becoming a tag or label that can may to open (or close) doors for both films and filmmakers. Film festivals, with their individual standing, all their classificatory mechanisms and the ability to congregate a wide-range of influential media and film professionals, are the most important place where the films and filmmakers of contemporary world cinema can establish an 'artistic' reputation with inevitable effects on their international visibility and circulation.

c. Carlos Reygadas and the Directors' Fortnight

As is the case with many other contemporary directors regarded in auteurist terms, the career of Mexican Carlos Reygadas has been closely linked with prestigious festivals. In fact, Reygadas is a prime example of a director 'discovered' and nurtured by the film festival world. Since the world premiere of his first feature film *Japón* (MX/ES/NL/DE 2002) at Rotterdam in 2002 and up to his recent award for Best Director at Cannes in 2012 for *Post Tenebras Lux* (MX/FR/NL/DE 2012), Reygadas has been the darling of international film festival programmers and critics. His filmography – four feature films between 2002 and 2012 – also includes *Battle in Heaven/ Batalla en el cielo* (MX/BE/FR/DE/NL 2005) and *Silent Light/ Stellet Licht* (MX/FR/NL/DE 2007) which both premiered in competition at Cannes in 2005 and 2007. After *Japón's* atypical double debut at Rotterdam and the Cannes Directors' Fortnight in 2002, all of Reygadas' subsequent films have premiered in Cannes' main competition, undoubtedly the most prestigious screening slot of the whole circuit.

The linkages between the films' themes and styles, as well as Reygadas' personality and directorial filmmaking practices, arguably fall into line with general definitions of the term 'auteur'. If an 'auteur' can be broadly understood as a director who functions as a film's main creative source and uses cinema as a means of expression, thus imprinting his personal vision on the themes and styles of the films under his directorship, Reygadas can certainly be regarded as an 'auteur'. He not only writes, produces and directs most of his films, but he also storyboards every shot and casts almost exclusively non-professional actors to whom he gives very precise instructions for each shot (Marlow 2006; Matheou 2003, 10–12). Frequently mentioned in relation to well-established 'auteur' labels, his films show a deep influence from celebrated directors such as Carl Dreyer, Robert Bresson, Roberto Rosellini, Andrei Tarkovsky

and Abbas Kiarostami (De Luca 2011, 38–42; Peranson 2002b, 65; Stephens 2002a, 68; Wood 2006, 188). According to most critics and scholars, Reygadas is considered to be a respected auteur. Moreover, he was ranked fifth in a recent critic poll by *Film Comment* of the '20 Best New Directors' ('A decade in the dark: 2000-2009' 2010, 37) and *Battle in Heaven* was included among *Sight & Sound's* 30 key films of the first decade of the twenty-first century (James 2010, 36–37). As Tiago M. de Luca – whose detailed study on the director's representational and stylistic strategies is indicative of Reygadas' solid artistic reputation – introduced him: 'With only three films in his oeuvre [up to 2011], Carlos Reygadas has arguably become one of the most prominent directors in contemporary world cinema' (2011, 36).

While an auteuristic approach can be arguably justified in Reygadas' case, his rising career cannot be properly understood without analysing how the films and the director himself were recognised and celebrated in the most powerful centres of the international critical establishment. In this sense, the central question here is not whether Reygadas' auteurist status is an undeserved one, but how the mechanisms of selection – of those films and directors who best embody the 'art'/'auteur' model – actually function. Reygadas' case illustrates how the film festival circuit as a whole is essential to the process through which contemporary 'auteurs' are born.

The close and long-standing relationship between Carlos Reygadas and the International Film Festival Rotterdam began with his first feature film *Japón*, which received post-production support from the Hubert Bals Fund (HBF) in January 2001 (IFFR 2012). The backing provided by the HBF not only facilitated completion of the film, but was instrumental in opening doors in the European market through its screening at the prestigious festival the following year in January 2002. In this way, *Japón* was presented as part of the non-competitive HBF Harvest Section of the Rotterdam festival, which already had a solid reputation as a supporter of political and experimental cinema. As *Variety* reported, the 2002 edition in particular was generally regarded as a vintage year, because of both the strong titles participating in the relatively new Tiger VPRO Competition – introduced in 1995 and only for first and second-features – and the 'unprecedented interest' of international sales agents in films premiering at Rotterdam (Rooney 2002c, 24). Coinciding with the trade press, critics also highlighted the programme's good quality and regarded the entire festival an important bastion for discussion over the future of cinema. Writing for *The Village Voice*, critic and festival programmer Mark Peranson described Rotterdam as 'surely the most unpredictable festival in the world' adding that 'Rotterdam normally provides copious material for a critic, but the 31st edition outdid itself' (2002c, 134). With sections exploring the politics and changing formats in contemporary cinema, as well as a daily panel devoted to the debate 'What (is) Cinema?', in that particular year the festival

became a true conclave of the most prestigious critics and influential cinephiles who promptly embraced *Japón* as a practical answer to what cinema (should) be.

Described by *Le Monde's* Jacques Mandelbaum in his report from Rotterdam as 'the most beautiful film of the new century'¹⁵⁸ (2002b), *Japón* follows the existential journey of an unnamed suicidal man from the city who arrives at a majestic and remote canyon, where he is taken in and sheltered by elderly widow from a small village. With long shots and spectacular Super-16mm Cinemascope photography, *Japón* calmly presents the interaction between the two characters through daily activities, particularly the unlikely sexual encounter that develops as the old woman complies with the suddenly awoken sexual desires of the man. The film was described by Reygadas himself as 'not for everyone' (quoted in Peranson 2002b, 65) and by *Variety* as an 'accomplished but difficult film' which could perhaps move to the 'extreme art-house fringes' as a result of its critical success (Rooney 2002b, 45). As Peranson recalled, a group of 'cynical critics collaboratively quipped' at the Rotterdam festival that *Japón* was 'the first film of the 21st century' because of the new directions it opened up for cinema (2002b, 65). Clearly excited by the film, Peranson introduced the 'hugely ambitious' *Japón* as 'perhaps the most super Super-16 Cinemascope film ever' and labelled it 'A Taste of Tarkovsky', drawing comparisons both with the celebrated Russian filmmaker and the 1997 Palm d'Or winner *A Taste of Cherry/ Ta'm e guilass* (IR/FR dir. Abbas Kiarostami 1997) (2002b, 65, 2002c, 134). Similarly, in *Film Comment's* festival report, Chuck Stephens admitted to having 'surrendered to the buzz surrounding a film entitled *Japón*' which was 'at once monumental and minimalist' (2002a, 68). Writing for another magazine, Stephens noted that *Japón* 'seemed not only a natural contender for the award, but an odds-on favourite to win' at Rotterdam. He added that, according to a number of festival goers, excluding the 'audacious' film from the main competition was effectively a programming mistake (Stephens 2002b, 66). However, in hindsight Stephens acknowledged that while other competitors 'might have seemed hopelessly out-flanked' by *Japón*, the film could not have gone unnoticed because of its subsequent festival screening at the Directors' Fortnight (Quinzaine des Réalisateurs) at Cannes (2002b, 66).

Moreover, *Japón* was not only embraced by several critics present at Rotterdam, but noticeably by the artistic director of the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes, Marie-Pierre Macia, who was invited as a jury-member in the Tiger VPRO competition. By the last day of the festival, rumours that Macia wanted to programme *Japón* in the prestigious parallel section at Cannes the following May were boosted by Rotterdam organisers in their declarations to the trade

¹⁵⁸ My translation, in the original: 'le plus beau film du siècle qui s'ouvre' (Mandelbaum 2002b).

press as evidence that their festival was ‘a place of discovery’ (Frater 2002). Echoed in the first *Variety* edition to follow the Rotterdam film festival, *Japón* was many critics’ ‘standout discovery of the fest’ and a confirmed selection for the next Directors’ Fortnight (Rooney 2002c, 24). Also mentioned by Mandelbaum in *Le Monde*, such a programming choice was not part of a standard procedure, but a rare exception to Cannes’ rule of only screening films not already presented at other festivals (2002a). In mid-April the film was officially confirmed in the line-up of the Directors’ Fortnight (‘Selection field narrows for Cannes contenders’ 2002) where it was heralded as a new revelation among specialised film critics. While this atypical programming choice was frequently mentioned by critics at Cannes (Ciment 2002, 66; Van de Graaf 2002, 17; Nord 2002, 14; Peranson 2002a, 154), *Japón*’s immunity to Cannes’ rule of exclusivity clearly raised its profile and created a buzz surrounding the film.

Besides enabling *Japón* to be viewed by the Directors’ Fortnight’s main programmer, its screening at Rotterdam allowed the film to be acquired by The Co-production Office, a French-German sales agent and production company, headed by Philippe Bobber. As *Screen International* reported, the distribution agreement allowed Reygadas to edit and post-produce a new version for presentation at Cannes (‘Japan returns from Cannes with kudos and contracts’ 2002). Demonstrating festivals’ tendency to promote themselves as places of ‘discovery’, the Directors’ Fortnight proudly announced the ‘world premiere of the new version’ which competed for the *Caméra d’Or*, a prestigious award reserved for first and second-time directors’ work (Société des Réalisateurs 2002, 33). Thus, from Rotterdam, the debutant Reygadas and his film were not only catapulted into one of the most coveted screening slots of the entire film festival circuit, but they got picked up by an established agent with considerable expertise in using high-profile festivals for art-house film marketing. In fact, *Japón* was The Coproduction Office’s fourth film to appear at Cannes festival in three years and its international press at Cannes was handled by the London-based Premier Public Relations, one of the biggest PR agencies in the market.¹⁵⁹ As the German press noted, at the same time that *Japón* was promoted as ‘a minor sensation’ capable of making the leap from Rotterdam to Cannes,

¹⁵⁹ Premier PR’s skilled and experienced team of publicists, as the company explains in its website, bring their expertise and professional contacts to film launches at major film festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Edinburgh, Venice, Toronto, San Sebastian and London. In addition, the company also handles the international press for the London and the San Sebastian film festivals (Premier PR 2010). At the last Cannes festival in 2012, the company handled, among others, the main competition’s opening film *Moonrise Kingdom* (US dir. Wes Anderson), the *Un Certain Regard* winner *Después de Lucía* (MX dir. Michel Franco) and Directors’ Fortnight selection *No* (CL dir. Pablo Larraín) (Premier PR 2012).

Reygadas seemed rather 'comfortable in his role as a child prodigy'¹⁶⁰ (Nord 2002, 14). While Reygadas was kept busy with interviews and, using Corrigan's term, with 'the business of being an auteur'(2003, 98), the experienced Bobber successfully promoted the film, leading to what the *Financial Times* called a 'distributors' bidding war' outside the competition (Andrews 2002, 16). As a result, and regardless of its extremely slow pace, its difficult subject and its previously unknown and first-time director, *Japón* was sold to a dozen international territories at Cannes, including major European markets such as the UK, Germany and France¹⁶¹ ('Japon returns from Cannes with kudos and contracts' 2002).

The touted film was embraced by jury-members and specialised critics at Cannes. In addition to winning a Special Mention from the Camera d'Or jury, *Japón* was described by *The Village Voice* as 'the talk of Cannes' (Peranson 2002a, 154) and listed by *The Independent* as one of the 'most talked-up debutantes' (Morrow 2002, 15). The film was given a five-star rating by *The Guardian's* Derek Malcom, who declared that it had 'a lyrical and poetic power that puts it in a different class from most debuts' (2002, 16). While *Japón* also received welcoming reviews in magazines like *Positif* (O'Neill 2002, 82) and *Jeune Cinéma* (Romano 2002, 23–24), Reygadas was promptly highlighted by *Cahiers du Cinéma* as a festival 'discovery' and featured in a full-page article in the magazine's Cannes special report (Blouin 2002, 30).

With film and director inextricably linked to one another, the success of the director meant the success of *his* film whilst the 'discovery' of the film was the revelation of a new directorial 'talent'. Clearly exposed by *Screen International's* rave review after Cannes, Sheila Johnston introduced the film following this auteurist logic. In her words:

Carlos Reygadas's visionary and impressive feature debut announces the director as an exciting new talent. It is also highly uncompromising: Reygadas states that he's interested in film as a way of creating sensations rather than of making a statement or telling a story, and *Japón's* stately pace and wilfully enigmatic story

¹⁶⁰ My translation, in the original: 'Der Film wird mittlerweile als eine kleine Sensation gehandelt - schon weil sich das Auswahlgremium der Quinzaine des Réalisateurs gegen ihr eigenes Reglement wandte, nur Filme zu zeigen, die zuvor noch nicht auf einem anderen Festival zu sehen ware. "Japón" lief - wenn auch in einer anderen Fassung - im Januar in Rotterdam. Wenn man mit Carlos Reygadas spricht, merkt man, dass er sich wohl fühlt in seiner Rolle als Wunderkind' (Nord 2002, 14).

¹⁶¹ According to *Screen International*, in May 2002 The Coproduction Office licensed *Japón* for the UK (Artificial Eye), Germany and Austria (Arsenal Filmverleih), France (Bodega Films), Benelux (Contact Film), Canada (Les Films Seville Pictures), Switzerland (Look Now! Distribution), Denmark (Øst for Paradis), Russia (Intercinema Art Agency), Hungary (Budapest Film), Greece (Audio Visual) and Portugal (Atalanta Filmes) at the Cannes market ('Japon returns from Cannes with kudos and contracts' 2002).

(even the title is unexplained) will divide critics and limit its audience (Johnston 2002b).

For Johnston, as well as many other critics, the 'artistic' qualities of the film were directly connected to the 'talent' of its director, whose personal interests and intentions were transferred to *Japón's* slow pace and narrative ambiguity. In contrast to the case of Walter Salles, Reygadas' 'artistic' personality was never questioned by the critics; instead he was confidently embraced as the main source of all thematic and stylistic elements of the film.

According to this auteurist framework, most paratexts tended to ignore both *Japón's* practical aspects and the contribution of key crew members. Thus, while reviewers and interviewers consistently acknowledged the majestic landscape on screen, they generally ignored the extreme difficulties of shooting in such remote locations. However, as Reygadas himself pointed out in one of the few interviews dealing with *Japón's* logistics, all the cast and crew members – including the director himself – worked under very difficult conditions. In his words,

It was very hot and we had to walk two kilometres up that steep mountain twice a day for six weeks, carrying equipment. Magdalena and Alejandro had to go by donkey and after some stones fell on me and I had stitches in my leg I had to go by horse. Then for two weeks I was running around the mountain on crutches. To make the rain we had to form a human chain and with ten-litre containers bring water up from the river then take a hose and pour it. Some people got stung by scorpions, there was always diarrhoea. It wasn't easy (Reygadas quoted in Matheou 2003, 12).

Therefore, although the complex shooting operation could have been highlighted as an essential contribution to the film's epic and breathtaking results, most paratexts emphasised the use of landscape in relation to the director's intentionality, his strategies for addressing transcendental matters and his personal search for beauty. By avoiding the discussion about the demanding shooting of *Japón's*, the overall impression given by the paratexts was that the film was not marked by practical or logistical matters involving the whole cast and crew, but the direct result of Reygadas' intentions and personal biography.

Similarly, the contribution of the film's crew members received scant attention. Indeed, their names rarely appeared in the film's paratexts, and they were hardly ever interviewed about their role in the film. This was even the case with key collaborators such as Argentine cinematographer Diego Martínez Vignatti and Mexican producer Jaime Romandía. Although most reviewers at Rotterdam and Cannes praised *Japón's* splendid visual qualities and

specifically remarked on the Super-16 Cinemascope format used, few actually mentioned the debutant cinematographer with whom Reygadas had already made several short films and with whom he would also work in the celebrated *Battle in Heaven* (2005). A notable exception was *Variety's* review in which it was explicitly stated that the film was 'a strong calling card' for Martínez Vignatti who was, at the time, preparing his first feature as a director (Rooney 2002b, 45). However, in most reviews Reygadas was attributed sole credit for *Japón's* remarkable images and camera movement (Johnston 2002b; Mandelbaum 2002b; Peranson 2002c, 134; Stephens 2002a, 69). First-time feature producer Jaime Romandía – who has been Reygadas' business partner also in his subsequent three films – was the subject of even less attention than Martínez Vignatti. Also a 'talent to watch' and shortlisted by *Variety* as 'a producer to watch' a few years later, (Bensinger 2005, 16) Romandía, with his production company Mantarraya Films, has been also behind other internationally successful films. These include as *Sangre* (MX/FR dir. Amat Escalante 2005), *La influencia* (MX/ES dir. Pedro Aguilera 2007), *The Bastards/ Los bastardos* (MX/FR/US dir. Amat Escalante 2008) and *To the Sea/ Alamar* (MX dir. Pedro González-Rubio 2009).

At the same time that collaboration 'behind the scenes' was generally absent from *Japón's* paratexts, media coverage frequently focused on Reygadas' biographical details – especially his previous career as a lawyer for the European Union – and his intended meaning of the film, whose ambiguity was clearly represented in the enigmatic title. With no direct connection to the narrative, the word 'Japón' unavoidably implied a film 'auteur', whose message went beyond the materiality of the diegetic world of the film. Unsurprisingly, most reviewers and interviewers turned to the director for further explanations, who confidently reasserted his own chain of thoughts as the main reason for the title: from 'resurrection', 'dawn', 'sun' and 'the East' to their conventional association with Japan as 'this place where the sun comes out again every day' (Reygadas interviewed in Stephens 2002b, 67–68).

Although many critics pointed out the difficulties in understanding not only the metaphoric title, but also *Japón's* obscure plot and meaning, they were still very positive about the film. As Sheila Johnston noticed, some 'cryptic moments' were 'extremely sudden and disconcerting', especially when more than half way through the film the main characters engage in a sexual encounter that, in her opinion, was 'filmed with modesty and gentleness, but some will find it exploitative' (2002b). Moreover, Johnston acknowledged that both the 'unselfconscious humour' of the non-professional cast and the 'the vagueness of his [the unnamed main character's] emotional journey will be, for many audiences, the film's main frustration and makes it seem at times like a brilliant but hollow stylistic exercise' (2002b). However, regardless of *Japón's* rather disconcerting narrative and obscure meaning, Johnson argued that Reygadas'

lack of interest in ‘making a statement or telling a story’ positioned him as a ‘highly uncompromising’ new talent who proudly cited Tarkovsky as a key inspiration and visual influence (Johnston 2002b).

In a similar way, Mark Peranson addressed *Japón’s* eccentricity by citing the director’s declaration of intentions. In Reygadas’ words:

The surroundings inspired everything. I was looking for beauty all the time. People don't understand that beauty itself is the most powerful discourse of all. Someone asked Picasso, 'Yours is a beautiful painting, but what is it about?' He said, 'When you see a beautiful flower, do you want to ask God what it's all about?' I feel so much power in some things I see and hear that I feel destroyed (Reygadas quoted in Peranson 2002a, 154).

While the critic did not attempt to work out *Japón’s* confusing meaning, he explained that Reygadas intended ‘to elicit similar sensations in his viewers’ (Peranson 2002a, 154). Likewise, German critic Doris Blum declared *Japón* ‘as unusual as its title’ and turned to the director in search of explanations for its lack of narrative momentum. As in many other declarations, Reygadas comfortably spoke of his personal intentions and provided plenty of comparisons with painters and musicians (i.e. other ‘artists’) which contributed to his positioning as an almost perfect embodiment of the ‘auteur’ model:

I don’t see myself as a storyteller... If there is still a small story in *Japón*, it is rather a necessary evil. I am probably not good enough to give it up entirely... Take Beethoven, for example. His personality flows totally into his music, but he doesn’t need a story for this. I see cinema quite like that. My films are intended to evoke something, to arouse feelings, to make the incomprehensible tangible, full of mystery and altogether my personal expression¹⁶² (Blum 2002, 39).

As the critic added, Reygadas’ full commitment to ‘auteur’ cinema made *Japón* a bad choice for those in search of mere entertainment. However, for Blum, ‘his [Reygadas’] startlingly beautiful two-hour epic’ offered an invitation to dream with its ‘powerfully visionary imagery, fascinating

¹⁶² My translation, in the original: ‘Nein, als Geschichtenerzähler sehe ich mich nicht’, sagt der Regisseur. ‘Wenn es dennoch eine kleine Geschichte gibt in “Japón”, so ist das eher ein notwendiges Übel. Wahrscheinlich bin ich noch nicht gut genug, um ganz darauf zu verzichten. Sehen Sie Beethoven zum Beispiel. Seine Persönlichkeit fließt total in seine Musik ein, doch dafür braucht er keine Geschichte. Das sehe ich fürs Kino ganz genau so. Meine Filme sollen etwas evozieren, Gefühle wecken, das Unbegreifliche spürbar machen, voller Geheimnisse und ganz und gar mein persönlicher Ausdruck sein’ (Blum 2002, 39).

panoramic landscapes and close-ups of faces'¹⁶³ (2002, 39). In this way, while critics saw in *Japón's* director a source that could help to decode and justify the film's narrative ambiguities, Reygadas' confident performance as such an auteur provided plenty of explanations that generally referred to his personal experiences, intentions and creative process. Widely declared as an emerging 'artistic talent' and with the director also comfortably embodying the role, Reygadas the 'auteur' was born.

While recognition from the most serious core of the critical and festival establishment was instrumental in shaping Reygadas' reputation as an 'uncompromising' and 'visionary' filmmaker (i.e. an 'auteur'), *Japón's* marketers clearly profited from and boosted Reygadas' auteurist status. Therefore, in the months that followed Cannes, the film was successfully promoted through the film festival circuit, appearing at the most prestigious international events, where Reygadas was both introduced and confirmed as a talented director. As in other examples analysed, the companies that acquired *Japón* early on used festivals in their respective territories to promote the film and enhance its profile. For instance, UK distributor Artificial Eye – which acquired *Japón* at Cannes in May 2002 – enabled its screening at the Edinburgh festival in August where Reygadas won the New Director's Award. However, the company only released the film in the UK in February 2003. Similarly, Greek distributor Audio Visual also acquired the film at Cannes and promoted it at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival in September. Also winner of Best Director at this event, *Japón* was commercially released in Greece only in February 2003. Fully embraced by the film festival circuit, *Japón* was screened at other festivals during 2002 and 2003 (see table below).

Table 11. *Japón* (MX/ES/NL/DE dir. Carlos Reygadas 2002)

Date	Festival/ Commercial Release	Section/ Distributor
Jan 23- Feb 3, 2002	Rotterdam International Film Festival (NL)	HBF Harvest [World Premiere]
May 5-26, 2002	Directors' Fortnight (Cannes, FR)	[World Premiere of the New Version]
July 4, 2002	Cinedecouvertes Age D'or Film Festival Brussels (BE)	
July 8, 2002	Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (CZ)	
Aug 14-15, 2002	Edinburgh International Film Festival (UK)	Rosebud
Sep 6-12, 2002	Films From The South Festival (DK)	

¹⁶³ My translation, in the original: 'Dabei lädt sein bestürzend schönes, zweistündiges Epos mit den kraftvollen visionären Bildern, faszinierenden Landschaftspanoramen und Großaufnahmen von Gesichtern, die oft mit der Landschaft zu verschmelzen scheinen, durchaus zum Träumen ein' (Blum 2002, 39).

Sep 23-29, 2002	Hamburg Film Festival (DE)	
Sep 5-14, 2002	Toronto International Film Festival (CA)	Visions
Sep 26- Oct 10, 2002	Festival do Rio (BR)	Premiere Latina
Oct 12, 2002	Cork International Film Festival (IE)	
Oct 18-31, 2002	Mostra Internacional de Cinema (São Paulo, BR)	
Nov 9-12, 2002	Festival de Cine Iberoamericano de Huelva (ES)	Sección Oficial a Concurso
Nov 14-24, 2002	Stockholm International Film Festival (SE)	Competition
Nov 8-17, 2002	Thessaloniki International Film Festival (GR)	Competition
Nov 29- Dec 7, 2002	Bratislava International Film Festival (SK)	Competition
Dec 3-13, 2002	Festival del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (Havana, CU)	Competencia
Jan 14-19, 2003	Tromsø internasjonale filmfestival (NO)	
Jan 1, 2003	Commercial Release in Portugal	Distributor: Atalante Films
Jan 15, 2003	Commercial Release in France	Distributor: Bodega Films
Jan 29, 2003	Commercial Release in Switzerland	Distributor: Look Now
Feb 21, 2003	Commercial Release in UK	Distributor: Artificial Eye
Feb 28- Mar 7, 2003	Festival Internacional de Cine de Cartagena (CO)	Competencia Oficial Ficción
Feb 7, 2003	Commercial Distribution in Groenland	Distribution: Playtime Releasing
Mar 4, 2003	Adelaide International Film Festival (AU)	
Mar 21-27, 2003	Festival Internacional de Cine en Guadalajara (MX)	Sección Oficial
Mar 19, 2003	Commercial Distribution in the US	Distribution: Vitagraph
April 12, 2003	Hong Kong International Film Festival	
April 13, 2003	Philadelphia International Film Festival	
Apr 16-26, 2003	Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente/BAFICI (AR)	Competencia
May 2, 2003	Commercial Distribution in the Netherlands	Distributor: Contact Film Cinematheek
May 2- 26, 2003	Museum of Modern Art New York (US)	Series: 'From distant shores: 15 years of the Hubert Bals Fund'
June 5, 2003	Commercial Distribution in Germany	Distributor: Arsenal Filmserveigh
June 12, 2003	Commercial Distribution in Spain	Distributor: Golem
June 26, 2003	Commercial Distribution in Austria	Distributor: Filmladen
Aug 8, 2003	Cinemanila Film Festival	
Aug 15-26, 2003	Festival Cinematográfico de Invierno (Montevideo, UY)	
Dec 3, 2003	Commercial Distribution in Denmark	Distributor: Øst for Paradis

Both *Japón's* and *Reygadas'* reputations were consolidated by several awards and critical praise received throughout this film festival tour. In January 2003, *Reygadas* was highlighted by *Variety* as 'a director to watch' and introduced as 'a new kind of transcontinental filmmaker'

committed to 'artistic freedom' (Koehler 2003, 6). Implicitly acknowledging Reygadas as an artist, in his review for *Le Monde* the influential Jean-Michel Frodon declared *Japón* 'a great work of art' (2003). For The Coproduction Office, *Japón* promptly became commonly cited as evidence of the company's 'long history of success with edgy, not obviously commercial movies' (Roddick and Frater 2003). Furthermore, *Japón* soon became a prime example of the Rotterdam festival's own success and especially its production initiative, the Hubert Bals Fund. In May 2003, the film was among the only two Latin American features included in the 26-film exhibition 'From distant shores: 15 years of the Hubert Bals Fund' at the Museum of Modern of Art in New York¹⁶⁴ (D. Lim 2003, 130). Thus while the HBF capitalised on *Japón*'s success, it also helped to consolidate the artistic status of both the film and the director by enabling its screening at the prestigious MoMA.

With only one feature film under his belt, the 30-year old Carlos Reygadas was rapidly elevated to an almost unquestionable auteurist status in a way that can be matched by very few filmmakers in world cinema. While part of the explanation of this extraordinary achievement can be found in *Japón*'s characteristics and the way in which it adheres to the ideals of 'art' cinema, the phenomenon is also related to Reygadas' embodiment of the 'auteur' model which he assuredly performed in his public appearances. Moreover, this success should also be understood in relation to both the process of recognition by the most influential members of the critical and festival establishment and the film's skilful handling by the international sales agent. In this sense, it is crucial that film and filmmaker were in the right place at the right time – world premiering at Rotterdam in 2002 – where there was a critical conclave and a concentration of sales agents with expertise in promoting specialised films. Moreover, if critics at Rotterdam declared *Japón* the incarnation of what they looked for in twenty-first century cinema, then the Directors' Fortnight was decisive in providing an opportunity for the film to be screened at Cannes, which enhanced its reputation as a prodigy capable of bending the unwritten rules of the festival circuit. In addition, The Coproduction Office was instrumental in enabling the film to have an edition and post-production up to international standards as well as in orchestrating the successful promotion and selling of the film and director at Cannes.

Although it is not possible here to discuss in detail the case of *Battle in Heaven* – the second feature film directed by Reygadas – it is clear that the auteurist reputation achieved by the director with his first film functioned as a powerful paratext for his second. As evidence of

¹⁶⁴ The 26 films were selected from around 400 features from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe supported since the creation of the fund (D. Lim 2003, 130).

its international commercial ambitions, the project was first announced for pre-sales at the Cannes market in May 2003 based on its European producers¹⁶⁵ and Reygadas as producer and director. With no cast attached yet and a very minimal description¹⁶⁶ (Swanson 2003, 55), the selling point of the project was Reygadas' artistic reputation framed within the boundaries of Mexican national cinema. Long before it was completed – and before its actual premiere in Cannes' competition in May 2005 – *Battle in Heaven* started to receive official invitations to premiere from the upper echelons of the festival world. As early as April 2004 Cannes' Critics Week manifested its interest in the film (Cabrera 2004a, 7). However, both the director and the festival publicly declared that the film was not yet ready (Cabrera 2004c, 4; Delgado 2004, 13). Also invited to Venice in September 2004, the film's producers rejected this invitation citing the same reason. In fact, Venice's artistic director openly regretted the film's absence from the festival and stated that they 'had really tried to bring Carlos Reygadas' latest film'¹⁶⁷ to the festival (Müller quoted in Israel 2004b, 8). Meanwhile, in Mexico there was significant controversy because Reygadas and other high-profile filmmakers blamed the fact that the film was not finished in time for the festival on the Mexican Film Institute (IMCINE) (Cabrera 2004b, 2, 2004d, 3; Israel 2004a, 4; Reforma 2004, 15). The recipient of a post-production grant from the HBF in January 2005 (Edmunds 2005, 11), by April 2005 *Battle in Heaven* was reportedly tipped as a strong competitor for Cannes' official selection (Halligan 2005a). Finally, the film was confirmed for Cannes' Competition in a year which Thierry Fremaux, the festival's artistic director, described as being marked by auteur cinema ('Artistic director Fremaux explains Cannes selection' 2005).

Like *Japón*, *Battle in Heaven* was handled by the experienced producer and sales agent The Coproduction Office. The film was effectively promoted at Cannes based on the controversy of its subject matter. Set in Mexico City and containing frequent references to national and religious imagery, *Battle in Heaven* focuses on the relationship between Ana (Anapola Mushkadiz), a young upper-class white girl who decides to work as a prostitute, and her driver Marcos (Marcos Hernández), a middle-aged overweight mestizo man who, along with his wife (Bertha Ruiz), kidnaps and involuntarily kills a baby. Like *Japón*, the film is slow-paced, with prolonged shots and using stony-faced non-professional actors who recite their recently learnt lines. Its opening scene makes a bold statement: a close up fellatio between Ana and Marcos.

¹⁶⁵ Philippe Bober and Susanne Marian from The Coproduction Office.

¹⁶⁶ 'Three characters try to survive Mexico's corruption. Drama; pre-production' (Swanson 2003, 55)

¹⁶⁷ My translation, in the original: 'Insistimos mucho para poder traer la última película de Carlos Reygadas' (Müller quoted in Israel 2004b, 8).

This scene was generally interpreted as a trademark of the director and compared with *Japón's* unlikely sex scene between an old indigenous woman and a middle-aged man from the city.

As *Variety* and other publications reported, days before its premiere the film had been 'creating buzz among hardcore film buffs who are talking up its audacity' (A. M. De la Fuente and Hopewell 2005, 4). Moreover, *Battle in Heaven* was reportedly sold before its world premiere to several territories including North America (Tartan USA), the UK (Tartan), France (BAC Films), Benelux (Lumiere), the Netherlands (Film Museum) and Mexico (Gussi) (Green 2005c). Provoking a considerable scandal for its widely advertised real sex scenes, *Battle in Heaven* received a mixed reception at the Cannes film festival with half of the audience booing and the other half cheering the film ('Aplausos y silbidos para "Batalla en el cielo", del mexicano Reygadas' 2005). Despite most critics – both those in favour and those against the film – agreeing that it lacked the power of *Japón*, within two days of its world premiere, *Battle in Heaven* was reviewed and discussed in leading international publications. These included *Variety* (T. McCarthy 2005, 16; Young 2005, 16), *Screen International* (Brunette 2005), *The New York Times* (A. O. Scott 2005, E6), *The Guardian* (Higgins 2005, 5), *The Evening Standard* (Malcolm 2005, 74), *Le Monde* (Mandelbaum 2005), *L'Humanité* (M.M. 2005, 21) and *El País* (Galán 2005, 46). The controversy and extensive media coverage led to further sales¹⁶⁸ after the film's world premiere, increasing the constituency of film professionals and companies behind the film and guaranteeing its subsequent worldwide distribution.

As in other cases discussed, *Battle in Heaven* continued to be promoted through a film festival tour and appeared at the most prestigious events across the circuit, particularly in territories where the film had already been licensed for distribution. Whilst the festival tour served to strengthen Reygadas' auteurist reputation, the controversy surrounding *Battle in Heaven* increased both the film's media presence and festivals' reputation as places for the screening of risky and artistic films. This was particularly the case in the UK, where the distributor Tartan had already been promoting other films on the basis of their risky subjects, sexual content and potential for controversy (Matthew Ross 2005, 32). Before Cannes kicked off, Tartan had acquired the film's UK rights, but only distributed it until October 2005 (Macnab

¹⁶⁸ In addition to those already mentioned, by May 19 *Variety* reported that the film was sold also to Italy (Lucky Red), South Korea (World Cinema), Greece (Ama) and Switzerland (Look Now) (Hopewell 2005a, 8). Immediately after the end of the festival, Spanish distributor Golem also announced that it had acquired rights for the film (Hopewell 2005b, 10).

2005). With a UK premiere at the Rosebud section¹⁶⁹ of the Edinburgh festival in August 2005, the film became one of the highlights of the Scottish programme described by the media as ‘the best in years’ (Ide 2005, 16). As *The Observer* critic Jason Solomons celebrated, ‘Edinburgh enhances its reputation for edgy titles plucked from world cinema. Carlos Reygadas’ *Battle in Heaven* was one of Cannes’ major talking points... I can’t wait to see it again’ (2005, 6). Clearly read through an auteurist framework that linked the film’s difficult subject with Reygadas’ auteur status, critic Hannah McGill argued that *Battle in Heaven* was ‘not an easy watch by any means but further evidence of Reygadas’ unique and uncompromising directorial vision’ (2005, 16). Likewise, *The Daily Telegraph*’s S.F. Said explained that, despite a mixed reception at Cannes ‘there’s something exceptionally precise and restrained about the way Reygadas looks at the world’ (2005, 19). In this way, Reygadas’ auteurist reputation was cemented, while the festival’s artistic credentials were emphasised by the daring film’s screening. Before its October release, *Battle in Heaven* was also screened at Raindance and Cork which helped to raise its profile as a festival success and promote it among *Japón*’s viewers who were particularly willing to follow Reygadas’ work.

The case of Reygadas illustrates how the film festival world enables certain directors – especially those who best fit the ‘auteur’ model – to develop a career and gain the recognition necessary for their films to circulate internationally regardless of their difficult subject matter, confusing narrative and even poor acting. Moreover, it demonstrates how strong auteurist associations can help films to overcome potential criticism and negative comparisons with other films made by the same director, by tacitly pursuing a logic that prefers ‘bad’ films from ‘good’ directors over ‘good’ films from ‘bad’ directors. As considered in more detail below, the contrasting case of Fabián Bielinsky shows how, without approval from the most serious festival and critical establishment, a film director is not fully recognised in auteurist terms despite his films being acclaimed by both audiences and critics.

d. Fabián Bielinsky: The Auteur that Never Was

The case of Fabián Bielinsky may not seem an obvious choice through which to analyse authorship and film festivals. Both *Nine Queens/ Nueve reinas* (AR 2000) and *The Aura/ El aura* (AR/ES 2005), the two films Bielinsky directed before his premature death in June 2006, have

¹⁶⁹ Described in the festival catalogue following a visible auteurist logic, the section was proposed as an introduction ‘to new bold and innovative voices from all over the world’ which encouraged audiences ‘to share the rush of discovery. These are your favourite films by your best-loved directors, you just don’t know them yet’ (Edinburgh International Film Festival 2005, 6).

been most frequently viewed as 'genre' rather than 'auteur' films. However, it is precisely because of these non-auteurist associations, that this case study is selected: in order to show how the film festival world creates distinctions between 'auteurs' and 'commercial' filmmakers. If the case of Reygadas highlighted how an auteur is discovered and nurtured by the festival circuit, the case of Bielinsky shows what happens when a director and his films are not understood through the 'auteur'/'art' framework. For most independent world cinema directors failing to establish an auteurist reputation means that films are associated with 'poor' quality production and they therefore tend to enjoy little or no international circulation. In the exceptional case of *Nine Queens*, critics and audiences – in Argentina and abroad – generally agreed on the film's excellent qualities despite the fact that it appeared to have more in common with a thriller than an auteur-film. The film has become one of the most successful Argentine and Latin American films ever to have gained worldwide distribution and visibility¹⁷⁰ and among the few films in the region remade in the US as *Criminal* (US dir. Gregory Jacobs 2004). In contrast, Bielinsky's second film, *The Aura*, did not enjoy the same international success, although it was more clearly geared towards foreign markets and was very well received by Argentine critics and audiences. While the case of *El Aura* demonstrates how the hierarchies and bias of the festival world can pose barriers to a film's international circulation, *Nine Queens* shows that the assumption that 'genre' or 'non-auteur' Latin American films are of a low cultural value and quality is not always accurate.

As commentators frequently point out, *Nine Queens* is an atypical case that does not follow the pattern of other Latin American films. Labelled 'an Argentine miracle' by *El Amante Cine*, its uniqueness was related both to its excellent narrative qualities and its production process within the Argentine film industry (Castagna 2000, 4). Its main producer was Patagonik Film Group, a pioneering joint venture between Grupo Clarín – Argentina's largest media conglomerate –, the US-based multinational The Walt Disney Company and the Spanish broadband and telecommunications provider Telefónica S. A. After the box office success of its first films¹⁷¹ following its launch in 1996, Patagonik made plans to expand its production slate

¹⁷⁰ According to the European Audiovisual Observatory, *Nine Queens* was distributed in at least ten territories of the European Union collecting a total of 816,267 admissions (2010b). In the US, the film recouped US \$ 1.2 million (Box Office Mojo 2012a) with 210,842 admissions (European Audiovisual Observatory 2010b). Within the list of Latin American films distributed in the EU and the US sampled for this thesis, *Nine Queens* is positioned as thirteenth both in the US and the EU box office/ admissions ranking (See Chapter 3 and Appendix D).

¹⁷¹ Patagonik was behind films such as *Ashes from Paradise/ Cenizas del Paraíso* (AR dir. Marcelo Piñeyro 1997), *Dibu: La película* (AR dir. Carlos Olivieri and Alejandro Stoessel 1997) and *Cohen vs. Rosi* (AR dir. Daniel Barone 1998) (A. M. De la Fuente 1997; Goyoaga 1998, 22).

from two to four or five films per year (Goyoaga 1998, 22). However, the question, as *Variety* put it, was whether ‘such successes on the home front [could] follow the lead of Argentine *telenovelas* and translate into hot exports?’ (Di Nubila and Paxman 1998, 48). Until then, *Variety* explained, ‘the top hits have tended to be unexportable crowd-pleasers, funded by cash-rich TV companies’ which provoked criticism from local intellectual groups (Paxman 1998, 24). Patagonik’s plans then, as declared by president Pablo Bossi, were shifting towards a risk spreading strategy that included a varied production line-up with ‘some commercial film that brings mass audiences to the theatres, one or two with prestigious directors – that is, films that can be sold abroad – and one animated film per year’¹⁷² (Bossi quoted in García 1999). Acknowledging the differences between local and foreign audiences, Bossi saw a need to target international markets with ‘appropriate products’, i.e. auteur films, while Argentine audiences were more likely to be attracted to TV spinoffs and genre films with local stars.

It is in this context that Patagonik launched a contest in 1998 that led to the production of *Nine Queens* based on a script that veteran assistant director Bielinsky had been trying to get produced for years. In this way, the project was an unusual combination of an independently-written script by a debutant director – yet experienced filmmaker – and studio-like production with integrated distribution and broadcasting agreements for the Argentine market through Patagonik’s co-owners: Disney’s Buena Vista International, Clarín’s Artear and Telefónica’s Telefe. Included in Patagonik’s line-up, the crime thriller by the then unknown industry-veteran Bielinsky was prepared for local consumption rather than as a prestige film for international audiences. As Bossi explained, the film – initially called *Farsantes*¹⁷³ – was to be comparable to *The Sting* (US dir. George Roy Hill 1973) with a similar plot about professional con artists who get together for a huge scam (García 1999). Following the example of the star-driven commercial US hit, *Nine Queens*’ initial leading actors were the well-established TV actor Jorge Marrale and the heartthrob Leo Sbaraglia (García 1999). However, soon before shooting began in April 2000 they were replaced with actors with a similar profile to the initial cast: TV and theatre actor Ricardo Darín and the emerging TV actor Gastón Pauls (*‘La hora de los más jóvenes’* 2000).

¹⁷² My translation, in the original: ‘alguna comercial que lleve masivamente público a las salas, una o dos con directores de prestigio – es decir que puedan tener reventa internacional – y una de animación por año’ (Bossi quoted in García 1999).

¹⁷³ ‘Farsantes’ in Spanish could be translated as ‘fraudsters’ or ‘swindlers’, referring to the people who pretend to be what they are not to obtain something.

Nine Queens' twisted plot follows two professional swindlers, the experienced and unscrupulous Marcos (Ricardo Darín) and the more morally-concerned novice Juan (Gastón Pauls), who meet apparently by coincidence and agree to work together for the day. While the business partners become acquainted with one another by partaking in a number of small swindles on the street, the film uses a naturalistic style and location shooting that, as several commentators have noticed, seem to be almost a documentary of Buenos Aires' low lives and petty criminals. However, things get more complex when the opportunity to strike a bigger deal arises in the expensive hotel where Marcos' sister Valeria (Leticia Brédice) works. The pair's objective is to con a Spanish stamp collector into buying a fake set of rare stamps called the 'Nine Queens'. However, with a very fast-paced narrative, a game of tricks and deceptions is played both with the main characters and the audience, who cannot be sure until the very end if there will be another plot twist reversing the whole story once again. Remarkably, the closing scenes of the film that show the closure of a bank surrounded by a crowd of furious customers trying to break in seemed to foretell the chaos that would ensue in Buenos Aires as a result of the economic and social crisis of December 2001. Thus, while *Nine Queens'* world of deceit has been generally seen as a critique of Argentina's climate of moral corruption (Falicov 2007b, 143; Rohter 2002; D. Shaw 2007b, 75–78), its documentary-style techniques and its resonance with actual events have been read as a genuine portrayal and acute diagnosis of the country's social reality (Andermann 2012, xi, 153; Macnab 2002, 46; Rioult 2002, 44).

In accordance with *Nine Queens'* local profile – confirmed by its domestically renowned cast – the film was released in Argentina as soon as it was completed in August 2000, but no festival screenings were arranged for its international promotion. In fact, as the expectations for a Patagonik genre film from a new director were rather low, the film took Argentine critics completely by surprise. For Quintín, co-editor of *El Amante*, *Nine Queens* had truly remarkable qualities that were 'unexpected', particularly given its commercially-oriented production mode (2000a, 7). Likewise, *Clarín's* Diego Lerer praised the film as 'almost a miracle' that would become an 'essential title of local cinema'¹⁷⁴ (2000b). Also very positive, *La Nación's* Pedro B. Rey emphasised its importance for Argentine cinema and celebrated its 'superb' performances. Moreover, Rey celebrated *Nine Queens'* avoidance of genre clichés and hailed the script as of 'a clinical precision' (2000). In this way, regardless of their initial surprise, local critics promptly embraced the film, defending its significance for Argentine cinema and its outstanding narrative

¹⁷⁴ My translation, in the original: 'es una gran historia, maravillosamente bien contada y con muy buenos personajes' (Lerer 2000b).

virtues. Also welcomed by local audiences, *Nine Queens* became a tremendous box office hit that surprised even Bielinsky himself, who modestly acknowledged his astonishment and attributed part of the splendid success to word-of-mouth recommendations (Scherer 2000; Wolf, Castagna, and Quintín 2000, 36).

In contrast with internationally oriented films – such as *Central Station*, *Battle in Heaven* and Bielinsky's follow up *The Aura* – *Nine Queens'* production process went relatively unreported in international trade journals and the project was not promoted in international markets and festivals during pre-production. As the assumption for such a commercial genre film – additionally by an unknown director – was that it would be unappealing to foreign markets, it actually took quite some time for the international media and critical establishment to discover the film. The first reports in *Screen International* in November 2000 did not pay much attention to the film itself, but to its outstanding box office results within the expanding Argentine film industry ('Argentine film ups admissions on home turf' 2000). Quite surprisingly, *Nine Queens'*s first international screening was at one of the least prestigious screening events: a week of Argentine cinema organised by diplomats to accompany the official visit of President Fernando de la Rúa to Madrid in October 2000 (Moreno Pachón 2000; 'Muestra en Madrid' 2000). Demonstrating producers' lack of concern about the film's premiere status and its submission to international festivals, a month later *Nine Queens* first participated in an international event in the rather modest Festival Cinémas d'Espagne et d'Amérique Latine in Brussels¹⁷⁵ ('Cine argentino, el más representado en festival latinoamericano de Bruselas' 2000; Festival Cinémas d'Espagne et d'Amérique Latine 2000, 18). In hindsight, it seems slightly nonsensical that a film that had gained so much visibility abroad had such a low-profile international premiere. However, the lengthy process by which *Nine Queens'* was 'discovered' reflects the general tendency of international festivals and markets to overlook Latin American genre films that do not adhere to the auteurist model.

These low-profile screenings in Madrid and Brussels were indicative of the producers' unfamiliarity with the explicit and tacit rules of the film festival world – specifically in relation to

¹⁷⁵ Interestingly, the film seems to have been screened at this festival in two consecutive years: 2000 and 2001. Thus it appears in both festival catalogues (Festival Cinémas d'Espagne et d'Amérique Latine 2000, 18, 2001, [s.n.]) and newswires announcing the events ('Cine argentino, el más representado en festival latinoamericano de Bruselas' 2000, "'Nueve reinas" y "Calle 54" en festival de cine de Bruselas' 2001). Significantly, during the festival in November 8-19, 2000 the film was not highlighted in the programme, while in November 6-18, 2001 *Nine Queens* was chosen as the closing film and was awarded best film by the local which generated some brief mentions in the local papers (Betancourt 2001, 7; "El cielo abierto" y "Kalibre 35", vencedoras del Festival de Cine' 2001, 31).

Nine Queens' premiere status. Moreover, they revealed their clear intentions not to promote the film through an 'auteur'/'art' framework. This approach was even taken by Bielinsky himself, who, instead of assuming an auteurist position, explicitly boasted his links to the Argentine film industry by declaring he was 'part of it' (quoted in Wolf, Castagna, and Quintín 2000, 34). Clearly demonstrated in an interview with critics from *El Amante* in October 2000, Bielinsky explained *Nine Queens'* reflection of reality as a process beyond his control and reflective of his intention to tell a simply story, rather than as direct outcome of his individual expressive needs. In his words,

The film ends up talking about more than the story. I discovered that later, but once I discovered it, I accepted it. That there was a kind of metaphor, although I do not feel comfortable talking in those terms. It's like a scent that comes from the film... The script was not written to describe the present. What can be perceived is the unavoidable scent of the material I worked with. It's like if you were to build an incomplete – but coherent – object, there would be elements emerging to fill the gaps¹⁷⁶ (Bielinsky quoted in Wolf, Castagna, and Quintín 2000, 35).

Openly acknowledging both his and the film's industrial background and collaborative process, the experienced assistant director referred to his interactions with the heads of the different production departments and credited specific moments in which key ideas came from other crew members. Moreover, Bielinsky was willing to discuss the film's 'mistakes' with the critics, instead of assuming a genius position during the interview (Wolf, Castagna, and Quintín 2000, 36). Therefore, although there was an overwhelming consensus about the film's exceptional qualities and the writer-director's talents, neither the producers nor the writer-director aimed to position the film as a work of 'art' or Bielinsky as an emerging 'auteur'.

Bearing this in mind, it is perhaps understandable that *Nine Queens'* promoters did not aim for top-tier festivals which tend to maintain an auteurist discourse of 'non-commercial' cinema and 'artistic excellence'. However, in December 2000, for the first time in many years, programmers from Berlin and Cannes arrived in Buenos Aires as a result of recent Latin

¹⁷⁶ My translation, in the original: 'La película termina hablando más que de la historia. Descubrí eso después, pero una vez que lo descubrí lo acepté. Que había una especie de metáfora, aunque no me siento cómodo hablando en esos términos. Es como un olor que sale de la película (...) El guión no fue escrito para describir la actualidad. Lo que se percibe es un olor inevitable del material con el que trabajé. Es como si uno construyera un objeto incompleto, pero que si es coherente, surgen elementos para llenar los espacios vacíos' (Bielinsky quoted in Wolf, Castagna, and Quintín 2000, 35).

American successes on the festival circuit, especially *Crane World* in Venice in 1999 and *Amores Perros* in Cannes in 2000 (Batlle 2000; Lerer 2000a). In line with festivals' objective to discover new auteurs, the delegates focused on films by first-time directors.¹⁷⁷ As the local box office champion and best film of the year – according to the Argentine branch of FIPRESCI (“Nueve reinas”, mejor film nacional del año’ 2012) – festival delegates certainly had Bielinsky’s debut in mind. Rumours suggested that it was likely to be out-of-competition in Cannes’ main section in May 2001 (Lerer 2000a). However, the film was not screened at the French event and, as is standard procedure, festival officials did not give their reasons.¹⁷⁸ The film’s omission may well have been related to its previous international screenings, prejudices about the film itself as a generic commercial product, the limited auteurist profile of its director or a combination of all of these factors. The fact was, as acknowledged by Bielinsky in March 2001, that *Nine Queens* had not been selected for Cannes. Furthermore, it was unlikely that the film would get into big autumn festivals like San Sebastian – in September – because by then it would have been more than a year since its first public appearance in August 2000 (Lerer 2001). The strategy then, Bielinsky explained, was to screen it in smaller events because ‘its international market potential was blocked until it was seen [in festivals] abroad’¹⁷⁹ (quoted in Lerer 2001). He did not comment on why the film was not submitted for the festival season during autumn 2000 or why it was not promoted in international markets during pre-production. In fact, the poor timing constituted a crucial marketing mistake that the exceptional case of *Nine Queens* was only able to override because of its outstanding qualities. However, in most cases this poses a huge obstacle for international circulation.

For such an international hit, *Nine Queens* had a rather atypical festival tour, especially because it did not start from a top-tier festival (see table below). Instead of following the hierarchical structure of the circuit – that is, going from more prestigious to less coveted events

¹⁷⁷ The programmers were reportedly very keen on Lucrecia Martel’s directorial debut *The Swamp/La Ciénaga* (AR/FR/ES 2001) which was informally invited to both Cannes’ Un Certain Regard and Berlin’s main competition (Batlle 2000) – where its world premiere provoked a very positive response in February 2001. As well as Bielinsky’s debut, the local press confirmed its interest in other films by first-time directors such as *Just for Today/ Sólo por hoy* (AR dir. Ariel Rotter 2001), *Los Porfiados* (AR/PT dir. Mariano Torres Manzur 2002) (Batlle 2000).

¹⁷⁸ Regarding this particular aspect of Cannes’ programming practices, artistic director Thierry Frémaux exposed the festival’s policy when he refused to make any comment on the case of *Battle in Heaven* not being selected for the festival in 2004: ‘at Cannes we do not discuss the films that we do not select’/ [my translation, in the original: ‘en Cannes no hablamos de las películas que no seleccionamos’] (Delgado 2004, 13).

¹⁷⁹ My translation, in the original: ‘Hasta que no se vea, está parada la posibilidad de estrenarla afuera’ (Bielinsky quoted in Lerer 2001).

or moving horizontally within a certain level – it tended to travel up and down in a somewhat erratic manner, simultaneously attending small and medium-size events worldwide over a long period of time (approximately two years). Furthermore, rather than engaging in a consistent festival tour first and then a series of international commercial releases, the film combined both festivals and theatrical screenings depending on distributors’ promotional treatment of this unusual genre film in their own territories. The Spanish and US cases discussed below illustrate two opposing tendencies. Despite both countries sealing a distribution deal in April 2001 (Goodridge 2001b; Montesoro 2001), in the Spanish case, Alta Films promptly sent the film to theatres with a few copies in August 2001, whilst in the US, Sony Pictures Classics promoted it on the North American festival circuit first, delaying the theatrical release until April 2002. In these and many other cases, the warm welcome from critics and audiences at small and medium-sized festivals worldwide was instrumental in encouraging distributors to take on the film. Although these events have a limited media impact – especially in comparison with top-tier festivals – they also have greater programming flexibility to screen films regardless of their premiere status or lack of prestigious credentials.

Table 12. *Nine Queens* (AR dir. Fabián Bielinsky 2000)

Date	Festival/ Commercial Release	Section/ Distributor
Aug 31, 2000	Commercial Release in Argentina	Distributor: Buena Vista Intl.
Oct 25-29, 2000	Semana del Cine Argentino (Madrid, ES)	[International Premiere]
Nov 8-19, 2000	Festival Cinémas d’Espagne et d’Amérique Latine (Brussels, BE)	
Mar 9-15, 2000	Muestra Internacional de Cine Mexicano de Guadalajara (MX)	Muestra Iberoamericana
Mar 16-24, 2000	Muestra de Cine Latinoamericano de Lérida (ES)	Competition
Mar 23 - Apr 8, 2001	New Directors/New Films (New York, US)	
Mar 24 - Apr 8, 2001	Muestra de Cine Argentino, Casa de América (Madrid, ES)	
Apr 27 - May 17, 2000	Recent Argentine Cinema in Lincoln Center (New York, US)	Series: Passionate Stories, A Passion for Storytelling
May 22-27, 2001	Semana del Cine Argentino (Paris, ES)	
Jul 27, 2001	Commercial Release in Brazil	Distributor: Buena Vista Intl.
Aug 3-12, 2001	Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cine (Lima, PE)	Competition
Aug 24, 2001	Commercial Release in Spain	Distributor: Alta Films
Aug 30 - Sep 2, 2001	Telluride International Film Festival (US)	
Sep 6-15, 2001	Toronto International Film Festival (CA)	Contemporary World Cinema
Oct 1-8 2001	Festival Biarritz Amérique Latine (FR)	Competition
Oct 4-18, 2001	Chicago International Film Festival (US)	

Oct 8-14, 2001	Festival de Cine de Viña del Mar (CL)	
Oct 9-17, 2001	Festival de Cine de Bogotá (CO)	Competition
Oct 12-21, 2001	Oslo Films from the South Festival (NO)	
Oct 18-23, 2001	Canberra International Film Festival (AU)	
Nov 1- 11, 2001	AFI Fest (Los Angeles, US)	Competition
Nov 6-18, 2001	Festival Cinémas d'Espagne et d'Amérique Latine (Brussels, BE)	Competition
Nov 7-22, 2001	London Film Festival (UK)	World Cinema
Nov 9-18, 2001	Thessaloniki International Film Festival (GR)	
Nov 15-19, 2001	Festival Internacional de Cinema Negre de Manresa	Sección Oficial
Dec 3-13, 2001	Festival del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (Havana, CU)	
Jan 10-21, 2002	Nortel Networks Palm Springs International Film Festival (US)	
Jan 24- Feb 3, 2002	Miami International Film Festival (US)	
Feb 8-23, 2002	Portland International Film Festival (US)	
Feb 22-Mar 3, 2002	Oporto International Film Festival/Fantasporto (PO)	Competition
Mar 15-24, 2002	Rencontres Cinémas d'Amérique Latine de Toulouse (FR)	
Apr 12-20, 2002	Festival de Cine Argentino (Miami, US)	
Apr 12, 2002	Commercial Release in US (limited)	Distributor: Sony Pictures Classics
Apr 11-14 2002	Cognac Festival du Film Policier (FR)	Competition
Apr 26-May 4, 2002	Festival de Cine de Málaga (ES)	[Latin American Films awarded at Biarritz Film Festival]
Jun 4- Jul 24, 2002	Forum des Images (Paris, FR)	Series: Retratos de Buenos Aires
Jul 12, 2002	Commercial Release in UK	Distributor: Optimum Releasing
Sep 4, 2002	Commercial Release in France	Distributor: Metropolitan Filmexport
Nov 9-16, 2002	Festival de Cine Iberoamericano de Huelva (ES)	Sección Rábida
Jan 22, 2003	Commercial Distribution in Switzerland	Distributor: Xenix Filmdistribution
Mar 6, 2003	Commercial Distribution in Czech Republic	Distributor: Intersonic
June, 2003	National Film Theatre	

In March 2001 *Nine Queens* was screened at two specialist Latin American events in Guadalajara, Mexico and Lérida, Spain. The film went unnoticed in the Ibero-American sidebar of the Mexican event, However, it enjoyed a very warm reception at Lérida's Latin American festival, winning the jury's Best Director award and the audience's Best Film title (Correa Urquiza 2001). As the Argentine press reported, Spanish distributors already interested in the film (Lerer 2001) confirmed distribution deals shortly after the festival (Montesoro 2001). Distributors were probably encouraged by the film's reception at Lérida, although, given the modest profile of the event, the media coverage brought by its top awards was rather scarce.

Nine Queens' international breakthrough was arguably linked to its screening at New York's New Directors/New Films festival in late March 2001. Organised by the Lincoln Center and held at the prestigious Museum of Modern Art, the event assumed an auteurist approach – most clearly demonstrated by its title – which made it a powerful auteur-naming machine and helped *Nine Queens* distance itself from commercial connotations. Moreover, because of its strategic location, the festival allowed the film to gain the backing of influential critics and high-profile distributors which sparked attention from international markets and further festival screenings. Warmly welcomed by New York cinephile audiences, *Nine Queens* was the subject of a rave review by *The New York Times'* critic Stephen Holden. In contrast with his Argentine counterparts, Holden did not comment on *Nine Queens'* industrial background nor was he surprised by the contradiction between its quality and generic commercial profile. As far as Holden was concerned, it was a good film by a talented first-time writer-director who deserved comparisons with highly-respected directors like Alfred Hitchcock and David Mamet (2001, B11). Immediately after New York's welcoming reception, there were rumours of US distributors being interested in the film and plans a Hollywood remake (Montesoro 2001; Spanish Newswire Services 2001). As Sony Pictures Classics' executives confirmed before Cannes in May 2001, the New Directors/New Films festival had been instrumental to the discovery of the film which they had recently acquired for North American distribution (Goodridge 2001b).

In contrast with the Spanish market – where the film succeeded as of the result of word-of-mouth, as will be considered in more detail below –, in the US *Nine Queens* carried a higher cultural discount based on the viewers not sharing the language nor many of the cultural codes and social problems presented in the film. Moreover, other than Holden's rave review, the critical responses had been rather mixed after the film's spring screenings in New York. In a short note in *The Village Voice*, Dennis Lim labelled it a 'show-offy calling card' for Bielinsky that did not bring anything new to the already exhausted genre (2001, 120). Less critical, yet far from celebratory, Amy Taubin described it as a sort of 'indie pop job' whose greatest value was in the 'atmosphere of betrayal' – especially in the street-life sequence which supposedly reflected the unsolved crimes of the military dictatorship – that saved the film from being a 'lightweight farce' (2001, 136).

While the lack of interest from some of the most serious New York critics could have been linked to *Nine Queens'* limited festival pedigree, the experienced distributor was willing to reverse this situation by touring the North American festival circuit. With the film's release

scheduled for January 2002 – although it would actually be released in April 2002 – Sony Pictures Classics held the film back until it could start its regional festival tour with an almost simultaneous screening at the exclusive event in Telluride¹⁸⁰ in late August and the huge Toronto festival in early September 2001. A few days before Toronto, *Variety's* chief critic Todd McCarthy reported from Telluride that *Nine Queens* had been a festival highlight and declared its box office hit potential (2001b, 7). This very positive review was published in *Variety* during the Toronto film festival where the film was screened in the Contemporary World Cinema section. While the critic praised the script, he did not attempt to deny Bielinsky's industrial background or his filmmaking talents. For McCarthy it was clear that 'in every respect Bielinsky reveals the instincts of a filmmaker keen to please through clever dramatic manipulation that respects, rather than insults, the audience's intelligence' (2001a, 12). In addition to the perfectly timed *Variety* review, the screenings at Telluride and Toronto provided a subtext of success and good quality which, together with the New Directors/New Films event, were proudly displayed in the US trailer (*Nine Queens Trailer* 2002).

As part of its North American festival tour, *Nine Queens* competed at the Los Angeles' AFI Fest in November 2001. Demonstrating how festival screenings are very powerful mechanisms which raise films' profiles, the local press simultaneously assumed an auteurist and national cinema framework that erased, with a single stroke, the film's industrial background that had attracted so much attention in Argentina. In this way, Los Angeles' *The Daily News* announced that the event would feature 'the latest works from such hot international directors' such as 'Argentina's Fabián Bielinsky (*Nine Queens*)' (Strauss 2001, L5). Before its theatrical release in April 2002, the film was screened at other North American events. In April 2002 Sony Pictures Classics cautiously launched a limited five-copy release, which later expanded to 36 screens in major cities and recouped US\$1.2 million (Box Office Mojo 2012b), a considerable sum for a foreign-language crime thriller by an unknown Argentine director.

Pursuing a contrasting strategy, only four months after acquiring the film, Spanish distributor Alta Films sent half a dozen copies to the theatres in late August 2001. *Nine Queens* had an impressive response, not only from the critics, but also from audiences who made the film grow through a word-of-mouth phenomenon. However, given its unknown director and its

¹⁸⁰ As previously explained in the case of *Central Station*, Telluride has been a rather small non-competitive event, which has built up prestige based on exclusivity, reflected in its programme – no more than 40 films in a four-day weekend – as well as its well-off attendees, including celebrities and high-profile studio executives, who are charged considerable sums ranging between US\$500 per screening and US\$2,500 for a full-festival pass (Cox 1998, 1).

then short festival tour, the film lacked an auteurist profile. During *Nine Queens'* first week or release, the literary critic Juan Manuel de Prada started his *ABC* weekly column recommending the film 'with ferocity and vehemence'¹⁸¹ regardless of its unknown writer-director (2001). In his words,

The film is called *Nine Queens*, and it is directed by an almost debutant Argentine, called Fabián Belinsky [sic], whom I know nothing about. Belinsky [sic] also wrote the script, which has such a beautiful rhythm, naturalness without futile intricacy, a joyful plot, climatic build-up, gracious wisdom in the description of characters... and it also surprises the viewer with an unpredictable outcome that is not tricky or gimmicky'¹⁸² (De Prada 2001).

Despite its limited auteurist credentials, for him *Nine Queens* was a 'cinematic lesson' comparable to successes like *Amores Perros* and *The Sting* (De Prada 2001). As evidence of *Nine Queens'* outstanding reception spread by word of mouth, a few days later, the journalist M. Martín Ferrand, in his own political column in *ABC*, started by thanking De Prada for having recommended 'the first and magnificent film of Fabián Bielinsky'. For him the film was 'so good that without any special effects it penetrates, via amusing anecdotes, the depth of the problem of a society like Argentina – or Spain'¹⁸³ (Ferrand 2001).

Spanish specialised film critics also celebrated the film although they had no consensus regarding the appropriateness of using an auteurist framework in this case. *El País'* Casimiro Torreiro had high praise *Nine Queens'* narrative qualities and its 'magnificent' performances which would keep viewers 'glued to their seats' (2001). He explained Bielinsky's success through an auteurist framework that associated *Nine Queens* with other Argentine films by debutant directors such as *Pizza, Beer and Cigarretes* and *Crane World*. Moreover, based on a presupposed 'art'/'commerce' opposition he celebrated Argentina's cinema opening to newcomers instead of strengthening a safe and expensive industrial cinema (Torreiro 2001). In this way, the critic assumed that the two categories were mutually exclusive and that Bielinsky

¹⁸¹ My translation, in the original: 'quisiera recomendarles una película con encarnizamiento y vehemencia' (De Prada 2001).

¹⁸² My translation, in the original: 'Se titula «Nueve reinas», y la dirige un argentino casi debutante, sobre el que nada sé, llamado Fabián Belinsky [sic]. También Belinsky [sic] firma el guión, que es un primor de ritmo, de naturalidad sin alambicamiento, de gozoso enredo, de gradación climática, de graciosa sabiduría en la descripción de personajes... y que, además, descoloca al espectador con un desenlace imprevisible que no es tramposo ni efectista' (De Prada 2001).

¹⁸³ My translation, in the original: 'Es tan buena que no tiene efectos especiales y cala, desde la anécdota divertida, en la hondura del problema de una sociedad, como la argentina – o la nuestra' (Ferrand 2001).

belong to the first rather than the 'industrial cinema' category. In contrast, *Fotogramas'* Marcos Ordoñez did not even mention Bielinsky's name in his review, however he described *Nine Queens* as 'a gem only a step away from being a masterpiece'. Although Ordoñez did not employ an auteurist framework, he instructed his readers to 'run and see this film' and celebrated its 'splendid story, superb performances and guiding hand that grabs you by the nose and takes advantage of all its narrative possibilities'¹⁸⁴ (2001, 20).

In any case, such encouraging comments demonstrated the response from both Spanish critics and audiences, who recommended the film despite its low auteurist credentials. As later acknowledged by Enrique Gonzalez Kuhn from *Alta Films*: the film 'succeeded on its own merits. It opened modestly, and then built on great word-of-mouth' (quoted in Sutter and Hopewell 2002, 12). Thus *Nine Queens* took US \$1.45 million in Spain – which put it at the level of films like *Amores Perros* and *Y tu mamá también* which grossed US \$ 1.2 and \$ 1 million respectively.

While in other foreign territories *Nine Queens* was screened at small festivals in October 2001 – probably in direct agreement with the Argentine producers – the film's festival tour continued to medium-sized European events with the acquisition of international rights by the US-sales agent Lions Gate International in October 2001 (Goodridge 2001a). Despite the disruption to international film commerce after the terrorist attacks on September 2001, Lions Gate took the film to the London Screenings and the Milan Film Market (MIFED) – both now defunct – and reported sales to several European countries¹⁸⁵ (Gardner 2001; Kemp and Vivarelli 2001). Before its commercial release, *Nine Queens* was screened at European festivals in these territories – including Brussels' Festival Cinémas d'Espagne et d'Amérique Latine in Belgium, Oporto's Fantasporto in Portugal and the French Rencontres Cinémas d'Amérique Latine de Toulouse, Cognac Festival du Film Policier and Paris' Forum des Images.

After this somewhat successful, yet atypical, festival tour *Nine Queens* certainly gained considerable international visibility and managed to raise its profile, although not entirely, to the 'art' status. As *Cahiers du Cinéma* explained when the film was released in France in September 2002 – more than two years after its domestic release – Bielinsky's directorial debut was an exceptional case, as it was 'neither an independent film nor a commercial product, but a

¹⁸⁴ My translation, in the original: '[it is] una joya que está a un paso de la obra maestra... Historia espléndida, interpretaciones soberbias, y una mano rectora que te lleva de la nariz y agota todas las posibilidades de su material... Corran a verla' (Ordoñez 2001, 20).

¹⁸⁵ In November 2001 *The Hollywood Reporter* announced Lions Gate's sales to France (Metropolitan FilmExport), Italy (Filmauro), Benelux (Belga), Portugal (LNK) and Iceland (Mydform) at MIFED (Kemp and Vivarelli 2001).

combination of the two which juxtaposed social analysis and pure entertainment'¹⁸⁶ (Azalbert 2002, 88). In this way, *Nine Queens* acquired a reputation as a rather good film – or at least a film worth watching – but Bielinsky was not declared the latest ‘discovery’ within the most serious core of the critical and festival establishment. While the lack of strong auteurist connotations did not inhibit *Nine Queens*’ international visibility, arguably, it made it somewhat difficult to successfully market the second film he directed under the ‘Bielinsky’ brand.

Also produced by Patagonik and starring Ricardo Darín, *The Aura* was made with a view to competing in international markets. The project was on the trade press radar from 2003 (Newberry 2003, 24) – and throughout its promotion in major film markets – until 2005.¹⁸⁷ Hence the trade press reported *The Aura*’s major developments and international connections: in particular, the incorporation of Spanish and French co-producers Tornasol Films and David Films (‘AMF briefs: “Aura” surrounding Hadida’ 2004, 8; Green 2004), Paris-based sales agent Celluloid Dreams and pre-sales for key markets like the UK (UCG), Latin America (Buena Vista International), Spain (Alta Films) and France (Metropolitan Filmexport) (Frater 2005; Halligan 2004; Sutter 2005, 22). From pre-production there were expectations that the film would premiere at Cannes in May 2005 (Halligan 2004). However, despite *The Aura* being tipped as a strong contender for the French competition (Halligan 2005a), it was not included in any section of the festival. As Cannes’ standard practice, organisers do not openly discuss unselected films. However, being neglected by Cannes provides an obstacle for films precisely because it triggers speculation and implies that the films’ artistic quality is substandard.

In contrast to *Nine Queens*, when faced with Cannes’ rejection, the film’s promoters did not react by sending *The Aura* to small or Latin American specialist events, but decided to wait until September 2005 for a premiere at San Sebastian’s main competition (Halligan 2005b) simultaneous with commercial release in Argentina (Batlle 2005). Screening at San Sebastian – where *The Aura* would also compete for the generous €90,000 New Directors Award (Green 2005b) – would help the film in the Spanish market. Nevertheless, having its world premiere at the Spanish festival not only brought connotations of lesser quality – partly because of the film’s absence from the more prestigious and almost simultaneous Venice festival – but, as previously discussed in the case of *Foreign Land*, it also implied a less significant presence in the

¹⁸⁶ My translation, in the original: ‘Ni film indépendant, ni produit commercial, il réalise un mixte des deux en juxtaposant analyse sociale et pur divertissement’ (Azalbert 2002, 88).

¹⁸⁷ *The Aura* was reportedly promoted at Cannes in May 2004, the American Film Market (AMF) in November 2004 and the European Film Market (EFM) in February 2005 (‘AMF briefs: “Aura” surrounding Hadida’ 2004, 8; Frater 2005; Green 2004; Halligan 2004)

international media. Neglected by Cannes and Venice – and with February’s Berlinale months away – San Sebastian was probably *The Aura*’s best choice. Moreover, the situation highlights the gate-keeping power of top-tier festivals in giving visibility and artistic connotations to certain films while suggesting the exact opposite in relation to those it discards.

Opening first in Argentina then in San Sebastian, news of *The Aura*’s successful first weekend were promptly boosted by trade press during the festival (Green 2005a) as a strategy to associate the film with box office success. In Argentina critics unanimously praised Darín’s performance and the film for keeping up with, and even surpassing, the high standards set by *Nine Queens*. For Marcelo Zapata from *Ámbito Financiero*, Bielinsky ‘perfected in this impeccable film what he had started in the previous one’¹⁸⁸ (2005). *La Nación*’s Diego Batlle described it as ‘excellent’ and saw it as confirmation of Bielinsky’s ability to combine ‘extremely personal films and with an immaculate industrial appearance’¹⁸⁹ (2005). More clearly, *El Clarín*’s Pablo O. Scholz argued that,

Bielinsky took almost five years to release *El Aura* after *Nine Queens*. And he got everything right. The film has its own timing, intrinsic to itself, and it’s not as simple as the game of deception hidden in *Nine Queens*’¹⁹⁰ (Scholz 2005).

However, as the critics highlighted, *The Aura* was very different to Bielinsky’s debut. Focusing on an unnamed epileptic and introvert taxidermist played by Darín, the film offers a grimmer and more obscure experience than its predecessor. Skilfully playing with the audience’s knowledge, this time the plot twists are linked to the main character’s mental state and his perception of reality while he plans a perfect armed robbery. Despite Darín superbly carrying the film and its strong supporting cast, *The Aura*’s characters are rather unsympathetic who behave in awkward ways that serve the thrilling narrative, but tend to inhibit viewers’ identification with them as well as their acceptance of the film as a realistic portrayal of Argentine society. Unlike *Nine Queens*’ location shooting in the more colourful centre of Buenos Aires, *The Aura* is set in a southern and isolated Patagonian forest. This setting is not easily identifiable as ‘Argentine’ and,

¹⁸⁸ My translation, in the original: ‘[Bielinsky] perfecciona en este film impecable lo que ya había desplegado en el anterior’ (Zapata 2005).

¹⁸⁹ My translation, in the original: ‘[Bielinsky ratifica su capacidad] para hacer películas extremadamente personales y con un impecable acabado industrial’ (Batlle 2005).

¹⁹⁰ My translation, in the original: ‘Bielinsky se tomó casi cinco años para estrenar *El aura*, luego de *Nueve reinas*. E hizo todo bien. La película tiene sus propios tiempos, internos, y no es tan sencilla dentro del juego de mentiras que se escondían en *Nueve reinas*’ (Scholz 2005).

along with characters detached from their social context, this de-politicised rural backdrop was certainly a key contributor to international viewers' disappointment.

Unsurprisingly, international critics were not particularly enthusiastic about the film which was comparable to a psychological thriller, but very different to the accurate social analysis and fast-paced card trick game that had garnered so much praise for *Nine Queens*. Reviewed in *Screen International* shortly after its screening at San Sebastian, Lee Marshall argued that the 'original, atmospheric exercise in existential film noir' was not devoid of merit, but clearly stated that 'audiences looking for *Nine-And-A-Half Queens* will go away disappointed' (2005). *Variety's* Jonathan Holland saw this distancing from *Nine Queens* in a more positive light, describing the film as 'a quieter, richer and better-looking piece that handles its multiple manipulations with the maturity the earlier pic sometimes lacked', although he also remarked that the film was far from being '9Q2' (2005, 51). As critics highlighted the contrasts between the flashy urban-set *Nine Queens* and the slow-paced rural *The Aura*, they not only explained the difficulties in promoting the second film on the basis of the successful first one, but also suggested a certain lack of continuity in Bielinsky's style and themes. As well as its shift away from a portrayal of local social realities – which, as discussed in Chapters 5 to 7, has been an underlying expectation of regional cinema among international critics – the profound differences with Bielinsky's first film made it difficult to read *The Aura* through an auteurist framework and thus promote it to the same audiences who had enjoyed *Nine Queens*.

Despite *The Aura's* excellent reception among Argentine critics and audiences, international markets were not so enthusiastic about the film. Therefore, after San Sebastian media and festival attention promptly diminished. Skipping subsequent prestigious European and North American autumn festivals in 2005, the film was screened mostly at Latin American events such as Rio de Janeiro (September), Sao Paulo (October) and Havana (December). Likewise, during 2006 the film was screened only at rather modest events in other international territories (see table below).

Table 13. *The Aura* (AR/ES/FR dir. Fabián Bielinsky 2005)

Date	Festival/ Commercial Release	Section/ Distributor
Sep 19, 2005	Commercial Release in Argentina	Distributor: Buena Vista Intl.
Sep 15-24, 2005	Festival Internacional de Cine de Donostia-San Sebastián (ES)	Competition [International Premiere]
Sep 22- Oct 5, 2005	Festival do Rio (BR)	
Oct 21-Nov 3, 2005	Mostra Internacional de Cinema de São Paulo (BR)	
Oct 21, 2005	Commercial Release in Spain	Distributor: Alta Films

Dec 6-16, 2005	Festival del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (Havana, CU)	
Jan 19-29, 2006	Sundance Film Festival (Park City, US)	World Cinema Dramatic Competition
Jan 27-Feb 2, 2006	Göteborg International Film Festival (SE)	
Mar 3-10, 2006	Festival Internacional de Cine de Cartagena (CO)	Competition
Mar 17-26, 2006	Rencontres Cinémas d'Amérique Latine de Toulouse (FR)	
Mar 29, 2006	Commercial Release in France	Distributor: Metropolitan Filmexport
Mar 29, 2006	Commercial Release in Switzerland	Distributor: Xenix Filmdistribution
May 29- Jun 4, 2006	Alba Regia International Film Festival (Székesfehérvár, HU)	
Jun 2-11, 2006	Transilvania International Film Festival (Cluj-Napoca, RO)	Competition
Sep 15-24, 2006	Film by the Sea International Film Festival (Vlissingen, NL)	
Sep 2006	Helsinki International Film Festival (Finland)	
Sep 28, 2006	Commercial Distribution in Hungary	Distributor: Budapestfilm
Oct 5-19, 2006	Chicago International Film Festival (US)	
Nov 2-12, 2006	AFI Fest (Los Angeles, US)	
Nov 17, 2006	Commercial Release in US (limited)	Distributor: IFC Films
Nov 24-Dec 11, 2006	Black Night Film Festival (Tallinn, EE)	
Feb 23, 2007	Commercial Release in Norway	Distributor: Artahaus

Significantly, the North American premiere of *The Aura* was held at Sundance in January 2006. However, its reputation as substandard to *Nine Queens* and the lack of a US distributor to profit from and help raise *The Aura's* profile contributed to its almost non-existent media presence and festival screenings. After the independent distributor IFC Films' acquired the film in June 2006 (Kay 2006), *The Aura* was screened at Chicago (October) and Los Angeles AFI (November) despite having missed these events the previous year. Opening with a minimal one-copy theatrical release in New York in November 2006, *The Aura's* box office results were rather modest, totalling US \$58,804 in the US (Box Office Mojo 2012c). In the EU the film hit 144,000 admissions with most of these coming from the co-producing countries: Spain (79,000 admissions) and France (44,500 admissions) (European Audiovisual Observatory 2009b). When Bielinsky tragically died of a heart attack in June 2006, the opportunity to reappraise his work was not taken by the film festival circuit, further confirmation of the non-auteurist connotations of the director and his work.

Conclusion

As was the case with Reygadas' second feature, Bielinsky's follow up was more explicitly promoted than his first film in international markets during pre-production. Moreover, both *Battle in Heaven* and *The Aura* were not so highly regarded by critics in the international festival circuit in comparison with the directors' highly praised debuts. However, in contrast to *Battle in Heaven*, the world premiere of *The Aura* was not at the prestigious Cannes or Venice competitions but at San Sebastian, which arguably contributed to the non-auteurist reputation of its director as well as accusations of the film's 'poor' quality. While Reygadas' artistic reputation facilitated the international marketing of *Battle in Heaven* – a film that actually received rather mixed reviews after its premiere at Cannes – the fact that Bielinsky did not have an 'auteur' reputation, meant that *The Aura* was vulnerable to criticism of not being a worthy follow up to his debut.

As argued throughout this chapter, film festivals have a very strong grip on film directors' reputations and their consecration as 'auteurs'. Just as Reygadas was an auteur discovered and nurtured via the film festival circuit, Bielinsky's reputation as a more commercial director was also established in connection to the limited interest that his films aroused in top-tier festivals, especially Cannes. In this way, both Chapters 8 and 9 have analysed how the varying degrees of artistry associated with films and filmmakers reinforce one another, in accordance with a logic inherited from the wider artistic field. Therefore, at the same time that established ideas about quality and authorship are put into practice through festivals' mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion, a welcoming response from festivals and their participants tends to increase both films' and filmmakers' symbolic capital and media exposure. However, by the same token, rejection from the festival world lowers their international currency and their chances of attaining global visibility and circulation.

Conclusion

Conclusion

This thesis has analysed the way in which the 'Latin American cinema' brand has been defined in close connection with the contingent ideas and practices of the film festival world, as well as the way in which this label – with its specific associations and interpretive frameworks – has enabled the international circulation and recognition of cinemas from the region. Considering the changing dynamics and hierarchical structure of the film festival world, the thesis investigated the international festival reception of Latin American cinemas as part of a cultural and industrial process of selection of the 'best' films from the region. First, it examined the film festival phenomenon in terms of its interaction with the global film industry and the marketing of film products for foreign audiences. Second, through an historical approach, it explored the changes in the reputation of Latin American cinemas in international cinematic circles from the expansion of the film festival circuit following the Second World War. Finally, it studied how contemporary films from the region continue to be assessed and interpreted in these cinematic events in accordance with contingent notions of quality and well-established auteurist models.

Responding to its initial enquiry about world cinema traffic, this research demonstrates the powerful grip that the film festival world, with its wide variety of participants and hierarchical dynamics, has over the process that allows (or prevents) films to reach foreign screens. Using a theoretical framework drawn from the discipline of sociology of art, the thesis offers the concept of 'film festival world' as a way of referring to and understanding film festivals as a complex phenomenon. It argues that by creating a multilayered filtering system, the film festival world is at the core of the process of selection of films for international consumption. However, this mechanism of quality control is far from objective. Indeed, the Euro-American dominated festival system reflects the tastes and preferences of programmers, critics and audiences in specific territories. In this sense, this research concludes that the patterns of international circulation of Latin American films cannot be understood without taking into account the role of cultural and economic international agents in the process.

This thesis demonstrates that, beyond a purely economic process affecting the circulation of film products, the complex mechanisms of selection of the film festival world affect the visibility and understanding of Latin American cinemas as cultural and artistic artefacts. In this way, while most studies on national and regional cinemas have tended to ignore the effects of international agents on their objects of study, this thesis asserts that, in fact, the processes in which world cinema's films and filmmakers are assessed and recognised for their artistic qualities and talents responds to an international film culture – albeit a Euro-American

dominated one – beyond national or regional limits. In other words, if cinema is to be studied in connection with the cultural identity of an ‘imagined community’, it is necessary to consider how the community and its cinema have been imagined not only from within but also from outside.

Moreover, the fact that Europe and North America have such a hegemonic role within the film festival world highlights the huge power differences that affect the locus where Latin American cinema has been defined as a discursive field. While this research confirms the powerful grip of major film festivals – Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Toronto and Sundance – in establishing what the widely acknowledged ‘best’ Latin American films are, the role of major regional festivals – such as Guadalajara, Morelia, Rio de Janeiro, Mar del Plata and BAFICI – within the whole film festival world is an area which requires further analysis. There is, in fact, a huge gap in the history of Latin American film festivals which certainly merits academic attention.

As this thesis remarks, the overarching tendency within the film studies discipline to ignore cinema’s commercial aspects in favour of its cultural elements, has resulted in a romanticisation, not only of the operations of the international film industry, but of the object of study of the discipline. This research’s proposal is to study cinema beyond the text themselves and those who produce them. That is, incorporating film commerce dynamics and economic agents involved in film circulation which hugely affect how the films themselves are made, whether they become available to specific viewers or not, and the interpretive frameworks through which they are assessed and understood. By analysing the intersection between art and commerce, this thesis demonstrates the need to expand on this area of research within film studies, by exploring how the ways in which films are circulated and consumed affect the whole cinematic field.

In this sense, my main argument is that film scholarship should go beyond the paradigm of cinema as an art form – based on a presupposed art/commerce opposition and on films as the result of individual auteurs. That means studying cinema as a collective activity that depends on a multiplicity of cultural and economic agents involved in its long supply chain – rather than on the pure genius of an individual director, the cultures in which films are produced or their shooting stage. This modified theoretical framework opens several avenues for further research into the specific role of the agents that affect films’ lives: from audiences in specific contexts – who ultimately stimulate production by creating a demand for film products with certain characteristics – to international initiatives supporting film production and mediators such as sales agents and critics. An interesting subject in this regard is the increasing importance of sales agents as intermediaries who operate between film producers and distributors. Although

festival programmers frequently criticise them – basically for profiting from film trade and not allowing festivals to access whatever films they wish to programme – the fact that sales agents are simultaneously companies which operate according to financial principles and which select films according to criteria of quality and artistic excellence puts them precisely at the intersection between art and commerce. In this way, in the past two decades sales agents have become powerful players in the artistic and economic filtering system of the film festival world. However, the most basic questions regarding the functioning of these cultural/economic intermediaries are still unanswered by scholars: how do these companies operate and how do they select the films they trade? Do they establish hierarchical structures comparable to those of the film festival circuit? How do they interact with festival organisers and why are most of them based in France? In short, the question which merits consideration is how sales agents' operations affect the international traffic patterns of world cinema both as economic products and cultural artefacts.

Furthermore, this research suggests that understanding the inner workings of the global film industry requires consideration of the cultural processes through which films' and filmmakers' are classified in accordance with elusive and contingent notions of artistry. In other words, world cinema commerce does not function in spite of films' cultural and artistic nature, but precisely because of it. In this way, analysis of the ways in which films and filmmakers build artistic (or non-artistic) reputations which prepare (or deter) viewers from consuming films can help not only academics, but film industry practitioners, to gain valuable insight into how films are actually positioned in foreign markets. A very interesting question in this sense is how festivals' ability to allocate symbolic capital works in tandem to their production and support funds. Although this is a subject which could not be explored in this thesis because of time and space constraints, it is my assertion that festivals' major contribution in this regard is that they provide a seal of approval and international exposure to film projects, rather than actual economic assistance. In other words, festivals funds have been so effective in helping films from developing countries, not so much because of the financial support, but because they give prestige and the opportunity to start marketing and selling film projects from the pre-production stage. There are interesting comparisons to make in this regard between supporting initiatives linked to festivals – such as Rotterdam's Hubert Bals Fund and Berlin's World Cinema Fund – and those which do not depend on a particular festival – such as the US-based Global Film Initiative and most significantly the Spanish-based Ibermedia. Do they carry different levels of prestige and if so, how do they maintain it and increase it? In comparison to one another, how successful are they in providing opportunities for international circulation?

Finally, regarding the overall film festival phenomenon, this research confirms that, although each festival event needs to respond to its local conditions and own organisational structure, there is a global flow of world cinema's films and people that connects the film festival world as a whole. In this sense, this thesis demonstrates that films' migratory patterns in their subsequent festival screenings simultaneously reflect and reproduce the hierarchical configuration of the film festival circuit. Therefore, whilst those engaged in international film promotion seek to position their films in the most prestigious festivals they can, festivals at the top of the hierarchy maintain their status as places where 'artistic excellence' and the 'best' world cinema is 'discovered'. By the same token, failing to be accepted and celebrated at these highly prestigious events, not only diminishes the artistic profile of films and directors, but prevents second tier events from obtaining high-profile premieres. In this way, this thesis argues that what keeps the festival circuit together as a system is the rivalry among events which unavoidably compete to attract a huge or a small portion of world cinema traffic.

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Appendixes

A. Filmography

!Cuba Si! (FR dir. Chris Marker 1961)
¡Ora ponchano! (MX dir. Gabriel Soria 1937)
21 Grams (US dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu 2003)
25 Watts (UY/AR dir. Juan Pablo Rebella and Pablo Stoll 2001)
A Chrysanthemum Burst in Cincoesquinas/ Un crisantemo estalla en Cinco Esquinas (AR/FR/BR/ES dir. Daniel Burman 1998)
A Dog's Will/ A auto da compadecida (BR dir. Guel Arraes 2001)
A Happy Sunday/ Un domingo feliz (VE dir. Olegario Barrera 1988)
A King and His Movie/ La película del rey (AR Carlos Sorín 1986)
A Place in the World/ Un lugar en el mundo (AR/UY/ES dir. Adolfo Aristarain 1992)
A Taste of Cherry/ Ta'm e guilass (IR/FR dir. Abbas Kiarostami 1997)
A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings / Un señor muy viejo con unas alas enormes (AR dir. Fernando Birri 1988)
Advise and Consent (US dir. Otto Preminger 1962)
After Lucia/ Después de Lucía (MX dir. Michel Franco 2012)
Allá en el rancho grande (MX dir. Fernando de Fuentes 1936)
*Amores perros*¹⁹¹ (MX dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu 2000)
An Andalusian Dog/ Un chien andalou (FR dir. Luis Buñuel 1929)
Antonio das Mortes/ O dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro (BR/FR dir. Glauber Rocha 1969)
Aparajito (IN dir. Satyajit Ray 1956)
Arraial do cabo (BR dir. Paulo César Saraceni 1959)
Ascent to Heaven/ Subida al cielo (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1952)
Ashes from Paradise/ Cenizas del paraíso (AR dir. Marcelo Piñeyro 1997)
Babel (US/FR/MX dir. Alejandro González I. 2006)
Babette's Feast/ Babettes gæstebud (DK dir. Gabriel Axel 1987)
Bad boy/ Sale gosse (FR dir. Claude Mouréras 1995)
Barren Lives/ Vidas secas (BR dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1963)
Battle in Heaven/ Batalla en el cielo (MX/BE/FR/DE/NL dir. Carlos Reygadas 2005)
Belle de Jour (FR dir. Luis Buñuel 1967)
B-Happy (CL/VE/ES dir. Gonzalo Justiniano 2003)
Black God, White Devil/ Deus e o Diabo na terra do sol (BR dir. Glauber Rocha 1964)
Black Orpheus/ Orfeu negro (FR/IT/BR dir. Marcel Camus 1959)
Blindness (BR/CA dir. Fernando Meirelles)
Blood Ink/ Tinta roja (AR dir. Marcelo Cespedes and Carmen Guarini 1998)
Blood of the Condor/ Yawar mallku (BO dir. Jorge Sanjinés 1969)
Bocage: The Triumph of Love/ Bocage: O triunfo do amor (BR/ PO dir. Djalma Limongi Batista 1997)
Brazil Year 2000/ Brasil ano 2000 (BR dir. Walter Lima Jr. 1968)

¹⁹¹ *Amores perros* was initially translated as *Love's a Bitch* for its premiere at Cannes Critics Week in May 2000 (Peña 2000, 72). However, for commercial release in both the UK and the US, the film retained its original title for which is still generally known (IMDb 2011a).

Breathless/ À bout de souffle (FR dir. Jean-Luc Godard 1960)
Bye Bye Brazil/ Bye bye Brasil (BR dir. Carlos Diegues 1980)
Caiçara (BR dir. Adolfo Celi 1951)
Canoa (MX dir. Felipe Cazals 1976)
Capitu (BR dir. Paulo César Saraceni 1968)
Carlota Joaquina (BR dir. Carla Murati 1995)
Castle of Purity/ El castillo de la pureza (MX dir. Arturo Ripstein 1972)
Cecilia (CU dir. Humberto Solás 1982)
Celestial Clockwork/ Mécaniques célestes (FR/BE/ES dir. Fina Torres 1995)
Central Station/ Central do Brasil (BR/FR/JP dir. Walter Salles 1998)
Chile, the Obstinate Memory/ Chile, la memoria obstinada (CA/ FR dir. Patricio Guzmán 1997)
Chronicles/ Crónicas (EC/MX dir. Sebastián Cordero 2004)
Chronos/ Cronos (MX dir. Guillermo del Toro 1993)
Cinema Paradiso (FR/IT dir. Giuseppe Tornatore 1988)
City of God/ Cidade de Deus (BR/FR/DE dir. Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund 2002)
City of Men/ Cidade dos homens (BR dir. Paulo Morelli 2007)
Cohen vs. Rosi (AR dir. Daniel Barone 1998)
Couro de gato (BR dir. Joaquim Pedro de Andrade 1961)
Crane World/ Mundo grúa (AR dir. Pablo Trapero 1999)
Criminal (US dir. Gregory Jacobs 2004)
Cuba Dances/ Cuba baila (CU dir. Julio García Espinosa 1963)
Danzón (MX dir. María Novaro 1991)
Dark Water (US dir. Walter Salles 2005)
Dark Water/ Honogurai mizu no soko kara (JP dir. Hideo Nakata 2002)
Deep Crimson/ Profundo carmesí (MX dir. Arturo Ripstein 1996)
Déficit (MX dir. Gael García Bernal 2007)
Desperado (US dir. Robert Rodríguez 1995)
Devil's Backbone/ El espinazo del diablo (ES/MX dir. Guillermo Del Toro 2006)
Dibu: La película (AR dir. Carlos Olivieri and Alejandro Stoessel 1997)
Digna... Worthy To Her Final Breath/ Digna hasta el último aliento (MX dir. Felipe Cazals 2003)
Divorcio en Montevideo (AR dir. Manuel Romero 1939)
Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands/ Dona Flor e seus dois maridos (BR dir. Bruno Barreto 1976)
Duck Season/ Temporada de patos (MX dir. Fernando Eimbcke 2004)
El (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1953)
*El bonaerense*¹⁹² (AR/CL/FR/NL dir. Pablo Trapero 2002)
El gendarme desconocido (MX dir. Miguel M. Delgado 1941)
El Matrero (AR dir. Orestes Caviglia 1939)
El niño y la niebla (MX dir. Roberto Gavaldón 1953)
Elite Squad/ Tropa de elite (BR dir. José Padilha 2007)
Enamorada (MX dir. Emilio Fernández 1946)
Exposure/ A grande arte (US/BR dir. Walter Salles 1991)
Fable of the Beautiful Pigeon Fancier/ Fábula de la bella palomera (BR dir. Ruy Guerra 1988)

¹⁹² The film title maintained its original title in Spanish as *El bonaerense* in its UK release by Soda Pictures (theatrical) and Optimum Releasing (video) (BBFC 2004).

Foreign Land/ Terra estrangeira (BR/PT dir. Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas 1995)
*Four Days in September/ O que é isso, companheiro*¹⁹³ (BR/US dir. Bruno Barreto 1997)
Gabriela/ Gabriela, cravo e canela (BR dir. Bruno Barreto 1983)
Good Will Hunting (US dir. Gus Van Sant 1998)
Gran casino (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1947)
Hanoi, Tuesday 13th/ Hanoi, martes 13 (CU dir. Santiago Alvarez 1968)
Happy Together/ Chun gwong cha sit (HK/JP/KR dir. Wong Kar-wai 1997)
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (US/UK dir. Alfonso Cuarón 2004)
Hellboy (US dir. Guillermo del Toro 2003)
Here is the point/ Ahí está en detalle (MX dir. Juan Bustillo Oro 1940)
*Homenaje a la hora de siesta*¹⁹³ (AR dir. Leopoldo Torre Nilsson 1962)
Hunger for Love/ Fome de amor (BR dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1968)
I Am Cuba/ Soy Cuba (URSS/CU dir. Mikhail Kalatozov 1964)
I Am Legend (US dir. Francis Lawrence 2007)
I'm The One You're Looking For/ Yo soy el que tú buscas (ES dir. Jaime Chavarrí)
Jackal of Nahueltoro/ El chacal de Nahueltoro (CL/MX dir. Miguel Littin 1970)
Jackie Brown (US dir. Quentin Tarantino 1998)
*Japón*¹⁹⁴ (MX/ES/NL/DE dir. Carlos Reygadas 2002)
Jaws (US dir. Steven Spielberg 1975)
Just for Today/ Sólo por hoy (AR dir. Ariel Rotter 2001)
Kiss of the Spider Woman (BR/US dir. Hector Babenco 1985)
Kolya/ Kolja (CZ/UK/FR dir. Jan Sverák 1996)
L'oeil qui ment (FR/PO dir. Raoul Ruiz 1992)
La chismosa (AR dir. Enrique T. Susini 1938)
La influencia (MX/ES dir. Pedro Aguilera 2007)
La malquerida (MX dir. Emilio Fernández 1949)
La mano en la trampa (AR dir. Leopoldo Torre Nilsson 1961)
La perla (MX dir. Emilio Fernández 1947)
La red (MX dir. Emilio Fernández 1953)
La tierra del fuego se apaga (MX/AR dir. Emilio Fernández 1955)
Labyrinth Glauber, the Brazilian Movie/ Glauber o filme, labirinto do Brasil (BR dir. Silvio Tendler 2003)
Lady on the Bus/ A dama do lotação (BR dir. Neveille D'Almeida 1978)
Land without Bread/ Las hurdes (ES dir. Luis Buñuel 1933)
Letters from Marusia/ Actas de Marusia (MX dir. Miguel Littin 1976)
Letters from the Park/ Cartas del parque (CU dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 1988)
Life according to Muriel/ La vida según Muriel (AR/FR dir. Eduardo Milewicz 1997)
Life Somewhere Else/ Socorro noble (BR dir. Walter Salles 1996) (short film)
Like Water for Chocolate/ Como agua para chocolate (MX dir. Alfonso Arau 1992)
Little Miracles/ Pequeños milagros (AR dir. Eliseo Subiela 1997)
Los muertos (AR/FR/NL/CH dir. Lisandro Alonso 2004)

¹⁹³ It was translated internationally as *Homage at Siesta Time* and as *Four Women for One Hero* in the UK (IMDb 2010a).

¹⁹⁴ Translated in some occasions as *Japan*, the film generally conserved the Spanish title *Japón* as in the UK release by Artificial Eye, although frequently is spelled without the accent (BBFC 2003).

Los porfiados (AR/PT dir. Mariano Torres Manzur 2002)
Love Me Forever or Never/ Eu sei que vou te amar (BR dir. Arnaldo Jabor 1986)
Lucía (CU dir. Humberto Solas 1968)
Machuca (CL/ES/UK/FR dir. Andrés Wood 2004)
Macunaíma (BR/DE Joaquim Pedro de Andrade)
Madame Sata/ Madame Satã (BR/FR dir. Karim Ainouz 2002)
Madreselva (AR dir. Luis César Amadori 1938)
Maioria absoluta (BR dir. Leon Hirzman 1964)
Manuela (CU dir. Humberto Solás 1966)
*María Candelaria*¹⁹⁵ (MX dir. Emilio Fernández 1943)
Maria Full of Grace/ María llena eres de gracia (CO/EC/US dir. Joshua Marston 2004)
Martin (Hache) (ES/AR dir. Adolfo Aristarain 1997)
Me First/ Primero yo (AR dir. Fernando Ayala 1964)
Memorias de un mexicano (MX dir. Carmen Toscano 1950)
Memories of Prison/ Memórias do cárcere (BR dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1985)
Memories of Underdevelopment/ Memorias del subdesarrollo (CU dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 1968)
Mexico: The Frozen Revolution/ México, la revolución congelada (AR dir. Raymundo Glayzer 1973)
Midaq Alley/ El callejón de los milagros (MX dir. Jorge Fons 1995)
Midnight/ O primeiro dia (FR/BR dir. Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas 1998)
Minimal Stories/ Historias mínimas (AR dir. Carlos Sorín 2002)
Miracle in Rome/ Milagro en Roma (CO dir. Lisandro Duque Naranjo 1988)
Moonrise Kingdom (US dir. Wes Anderson 2012)
My left foot (IR/UK dir. Jim Sheridan 1989)
National Mechanics/ Mecánica nacional (MX dir. Luis Alcoriza 1972)
Nazarín (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1959)
Neither Blood nor Sand/ Ni sangre, ni arena (MX dir. Alejandro Galindo 1941)
Nine Queens/ Nueve reinas (AR dir. Fabián Bielinski 2000)
No (CL dir. Pablo Larraín 2012)
Now (CU dir. Santiago Alvarez 1966) (short film)
*O cangaceiro*¹⁹⁶ (BR dir. Lima Barreto 1953)
O ciel de Brasil (BR [s.n.] 1938) (Short film)
O quatrilha (BR dir. Fabio Barreto 1995)
Oriana (VE/FR dir. Fina Torres 1985)
Pan'sLabyrinth/ El laberinto del fauno (ES/MX dir. Guillermo Del Toro 2006)
Passage to Lisbon/ Passagem por Lisboa (PO dir. Eduardo Geda 1994)
Paula cautiva (AR dir. Fernando Ayala 1963)
Pixote/ Pixote: A lei do mais fraco (BR dir. Hector Babenco 1981)
Pizza, Beer and Cigarretes/ Pizza, birra, faso (AR dir. Adrián Caetano and Bruno Stagnaro 1997)
Post Tenebras Lux (MX/FR/NL/DE dir. Carlos Reygadas 2012)
Predators (US dir. Nimród Antal 2010)
Pueblerina (MX dir. Emilio Fernández 1949)

¹⁹⁵ It was translated sometimes as *Portrait of Maria* or *Xochimilco*, but is most commonly known by its original title.

¹⁹⁶ Translated sometimes as *The Bandit*, but generally referred to by the original title.

Quilombo (BR dir. Carlos Diegues 1986)
Rashomon (JP dir. Akira Kurosawa 1950)
Realengo 18 (CU dir. Eduardo Manet 1961)
Red Bear/ Un oso rojo (AR/ES/FR dir. Adrián Caetano 2002)
Red Dawn/ Rojo amanecer (MX dir. Jorge Fons 1990)
Rio 40 Degrees/ Rio, 40 graus (BR dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1955)
Rio Northern Zone/ Rio zona norte (BR dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1957)
*River of Blood/ Las aguas bajan turbias*¹⁹⁷ (AR dir. Hugo del Carril 1952)
Robison Crusoe/ Las aventuras de Robinson Crusoe (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1954)
Rome, Open City/ Roma, città aperta (IT dir. Roberto Rosellini 1945)
Salut les cubains (FR/CU dir. Agnes Varda 1963)
Salvador Allende (CL/BE/FR/DE/ES/MX dir. Patricio Guzmán 2004)
Sangre (MX/FR dir. Amat Escalante 2005)
São Bernardo (BR dir. León Hirszman 1972)
São Paulo, sociedade anônima (BR dir. Luís Sergio Person 1965)
Setenta veces siete (AR dir. Leopoldo Torre Nilsson 1962)
Sex, Lies and Videotape (US dir. Steven Soderbergh 1989)
Sex, Shame and Tears/ Sexo, pudor y lágrimas (MX dir. Antonio Serrano 1998)
Silent Light/ Stellet licht (MX/FR/NL/DE dir. Carlos Reygadas 2007)
Simon of the Desert/ Simón del desierto (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1965)
Skinhead/ Rapado (AR dir. Martin Rejtman 1991)
Social Genocide/ Memoria del saqueo (AR/CH/FR dir. Fernando Solanas 2004)
Son of the Bride/ El hijo de la novia (AR/ES dir. Juan José Campanella 2001)
South Dock/ Dársena sur (AR dir. Pablo Reyero 1997)
Soy un prófugo (MX dir. Miguel M. Delgado 1946)
Stories of the Revolution/ Historias de la revolución (CU dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 1960)
Strawberry and Chocolate/ Fresa y chocolate (CU/MX dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío 1993)
Summer Skin/ Piel de verano (AR dir. Leopoldo Torre Nilsson 1961)
Sweet Hunters/ Ternos caçadores (PA/BR/FR Ruy Guerra 1969)
Talpa (MX dir. Alfredo B. Crevenna 1956)
Tampopo (JP dir. Jûzô Itami 1985)
Tangos: The Exile of Gardel/ Tangos: el exilio de Gardel (AR dir. Fernando Solanas 1985)
*Terra em transe*¹⁹⁸ (BR dir. Glauber Rocha's 1967)
The 400 Blows/ Les quatre cents coups (FR dir. François Truffaut 1959)
The Amulet of Ogum/ O amuleto de Ogum (BR dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos 1974)
The Aura/ El aura (AR/ES dir. Fabián Bielinski 2005)
The Bad Education/ La mala educación (ES dir. Pedro Almodóvar 2004)
The balandra Isabel llegó esta tarde (VE/AR dir. Victor Hugo Christiansen 1949)
The Bastards/ Los bastardos (MX/FR/US dir. Amat Escalante 2008)
The Battle of Canudos/ Guerra de canudos (BR dir. Sergio Rezende 1997)

¹⁹⁷ It was also known as *Dark Water*.

¹⁹⁸ The film has undergone several different translations – *Earth Entranced*, *Entranced Earth*, *Anguished Land*, *Land in Anguish* and *Land Entranced* – thus I opted for using the original one.

The Big Lebowski (US dir. Joel and Ethan Cohen 1998)
The Boss/ El jefe (AR dir. Fernando Ayala 1958)
The Brave Warrior/ O bravo guerreiro (BR dir. Gustavo Dahl 1969)
The Children of Men (UK/US dir. Alfonso Cuarón 2006)
The Constant Gardener (UK/DE dir. Fernando Meirelles 2005)
The Courage of the People/ El coraje del pueblo (BO/IT dir. Jorge Sanjinés 1971)
The Crime of Father Amaro/ El crimen del padre Amaro (MX dir. Carlos Carrera 2002)
The Devil is a Woman/ Doña Diabla (MX dir. Tito Davison 1950)
The Eclipse/ L'eclisse (IT/FR dir. Michelangelo Antonioni 1962)
The Exterminating Angel/ El ángel exterminador (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1962)
The Fall/ A queda (BR dir. Ruy Guerra and Nelson Xavier 1978)
The First Charge of the Machete/ La primera carga al machete (CU dir. Manuel O. Gómez 1969)
*The Given Word/ O pagador de promesas*¹⁹⁹ (BR dir. Anselmo Duarte 1962)
The Golden Age/ L'age d'or (FR dir. Luis Buñuel 1930)
The Great Madcap/ El gran calavera (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1949)
The Guns/ Os fuzis (BR dir. Ruy Guerra 1964)
The Holy Girl/ La niña santa (AR/IT/NL/ES dir. Lucrecia Martel 2004)
The Hour of the Furnaces/ La hora de los hornos (AR dir. Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino 1968)
The Hour of the Star/ A hora da estrela (BR dir. Suzana Amaral 1986)
*The House of the Angel / La casa del ángel*²⁰⁰ (AR dir. Leopoldo Torre Nilsson 1957)
The Kidnapper/ El secuestrador (AR dir. Leopoldo Torre Nilsson 1958)
The Landowner's Daughter/ Sinhá moça (BR dir. Tom Payne 1952)
The Lost Embrace/ El abrazo partido (AR/FR/ES dir. Daniel Burman 2004)
The Milk of Sorrows/ La teta asustada (PE/DE dir. Claudia Llosa 2009)
The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo / Las madres de la Plaza de Mayo (AR dir. Susana B. Muñoz and Lourdes Portillo 1985)
The Motorcycle Diaries/ Diarios de motocicleta (US/DE/GB/AR/CL/PE/FR dir. Walter Salles 2004)
The Official Story/ La historia oficial (AR dir. Luis Puenzo 1985)
The Other Side of the Street/ A otro lado da rua (BR/FR dir. Marcos Bernstein 2004)
The Passion of Berenice/ La pasión según Berenice (MX dir. Jaime Humberto Hermosillo 1972)
The Promised Land/ La tierra prometida (CL/CU dir. Miguel Littin 1973)
The Rebel Patagonia/ La Patagonia rebelde (AR dir. Héctor Olivera 1975)
The Return of Martin Guerre/ Le retour de Martin Guerre (FR dir. Daniel Vigne 1982)
The River and the Death/ El río y la muerte (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1954)
The Rose Seller/ La vendedora de rosas (CO dir. Víctor Gaviria 1998)
The Secret in Their Eyes/ El secreto de sus ojos (AR/ES dir. Juan José Campanella 2009)
The Sting (US dir. George Roy Hill 1973)
The Strategy of the Snail/ La estrategia del caracol (CO/IT/FR dir. Sergio Cabrera 1993)
The Summer of Mrs. Forbes/ El verano de la señora Forbes (MX dir. Jaime Humberto Hermosillo 1988)
The Swamp/ La ciénaga (AR/ES/FR dir. Lucrecia Martel 2001)
The Teacher/ El brigadista (CU dir. Octavio Cortázar 1978)
The Three Musketeers/ Los tres mosqueteros (MX dir. Miguel Delgado 1942)

¹⁹⁹ It has been translated alternatively as *The Promise, Keeper of Promises* and *Payer of Promises*.

²⁰⁰ It was translated also as *The End of the Innocence*.

The Turning Wind/ Barravento (BR dir. Glauber Rocha 1961)
The Violin/El violín (MX dir. Francisco Vargas 2005)
The Year My Parents Went on Vacation/ O ano em que meus pais saíram de férias (BR dir. Cao Hamburger 2006)
The Young and the Damned/ Los olvidados (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1950)
The Young One/ La joven (MX dir. Luis Buñuel 1960)
The Young Rebel/ El joven rebelde (CU dir. Julio García Espinosa 1962)
Tico Tico no Fubá (BR dir. Adolfo Celi 1952)
To the Sea/ Alamar (MX dir. Pedro González-Rubio 2009)
Torero (MX dir. Carlos Velo 1956)
Travelling With Che Guevara/ In viaggio con Che Guevara (IT dir. Gianni Minà 2004)
Tristana (ES dir. Luis Buñuel 1970)
Tropics/ Tropici (BR/IT dir. Gianni Amico 1968)
Up Against Them All/ Contra todos (BR dir. Roberto Moreira 2002)
Up to a Certain Point/ Hasta cierto punto (CU 1983)
Viridiana (MX/ES dir. Luis Buñuel 1961)
Vocación (UY dir. Viktor Bánky 1939)
Wag the Dog (US dir. Barry Levinson 1998)
Whisky (UY/AR/DE/ES dir. Juan Pablo Rebella and Pablo Stoll 2004)
Who the Hell is Juliette?/ Quién diablos es Juliette? (MX dir. Carlos Marcovitch 1997)
Wild Strawberries/ Smultronstället (DE dir. Ingmar Bergman 1958)
Wild Wild West (US dir. Barry Sonnenfeld 1999)
Xica da Silva (BR dir. Carlos Diegues 1976)
Y tu mamá también (MX/US dir. Alfonso Cuarón 2001)

B. Country Codes (ISO 2012)

A		BURKINA FASO	BF	ESTONIA	EE	INDIA	IN
AFGHANISTAN	AF	BURUNDI	BI	ETHIOPIA	ET	INDONESIA	ID
ALAND ISLANDS	AX	C		F		IRAN, ISL. REP.	IR
ALBANIA	AL	CAMBODIA	KH	FALKL. ISL. (MALV.)	FK	IRAQ	IQ
ALGERIA	DZ	CAMEROON	CM	FAROE ISLANDS	FO	IRELAND	IE
AMER. SAMOA	AS	CANADA	CA	FIJI	FJ	ISLE OF MAN	IM
ANDORRA	AD	CAPE VERDE	CV	FINLAND	FI	ISRAEL	IL
ANGOLA	AO	CAYMAN ISLANDS	KY	FRANCE	FR	ITALY	IT
ANGUILLA	AI	CENT. AFRIC. REP.	CF	FRENCH GUIANA	GF	J	
ANTARCTICA	AQ	CHAD	TD	FR. POLYNESIA	PF	JAMAICA	JM
ANT. AND BARB.	AG	CHILE	CL	FR. SOUTH TER.	TF	JAPAN	JP
ARGENTINA	AR	CHINA	CN	G		JERSEY	JE
ARMENIA	AM	CHRISTMAS ISL.	CX	GABON	GA	JORDAN	JO
ARUBA	AW	COCOS (KEEL.) ISL.	CC	GAMBIA	GM	K	
AUSTRALIA	AU	COLOMBIA	CO	GEORGIA	GE	KAZAKHSTAN	KZ
AUSTRIA	AT	COMOROS	KM	GERMANY	DE	KENYA	KE
AZERBAIJAN	AZ	CONGO	CG	GHANA	GH	KIRIBATI	KI
B		CONGO, DEM. REP.	CD	GIBRALTAR	GI	KOREA, PEOP. REP.	KP
BAHAMAS	BS	COOK ISLANDS	CK	GREECE	GR	KOREA, REP. OF	KR
BAHRAIN	BH	COSTA RICA	CR	GREENLAND	GL	KUWAIT	KW
BANGLADESH	BD	COTE D'IVOIRE	CI	GRENADA	GD	KYRGYZSTAN	KG
BARBADOS	BB	CROATIA	HR	GUADELOUPE	GP	L	
BELARUS	BY	CUBA	CU	GUAM	GU	LAOS PEOP. D. R.	LA
BELGIUM	BE	CURAÇAO	CW	GUATEMALA	GT	LATVIA	LV
BELIZE	BZ	CYPRUS	CY	GUERNSEY	GG	LEBANON	LB
BENIN	BJ	CZECH REPUBLIC	CZ	GUINEA	GN	LESOTHO	LS
BERMUDA	BM	D		GUINEA-BISSAU	GW	LIBERIA	LR
BHUTAN	BT	DENMARK	DK	GUYANA	GY	LIBYAN ARAB JAM.	LY
BOLIVIA	BO	DJIBOUTI	DJ	H		LIECHTENSTEIN	LI
BONAIRE, ST EUST.	BQ	DOMINICA	DM	HAITI	HT	LITHUANIA	LT
BOSN. HERZEG.	BA	DOMINICAN REP.	DO	HEARD MCD. ISL.	HM	LUXEMBOURG	LU
BOTSWANA	BW	E		HOLY SEE (VAT.)	VA	M	
BOUVET ISLAND	BV	ECUADOR	EC	HONDURAS	HN	MACAO	MO
BRAZIL	BR	EGYPT	EG	HONG KONG	HK	MACEDONIA, F. Y.	MK
BRIT. INDIAN OC. T. IO		EL SALVADOR	SV	HUNGARY	HU	MADAGASCAR	MG
BRUNEI DARUSS.	BN	EQUAT. GUINEA	GQ	I		MALAWI	MW
BULGARIA	BG	ERITREA	ER	ICELAND	IS	MALAYSIA	MY

MALDIVES	MV	O		SAN MARINO	SM	TONGA	TO
MALI	ML	OMAN	OM	SAO TOME PR.	ST	TRINIDAD TOB.	TT
MALTA	MT	P		SAUDI ARABIA	SA	TUNISIA	TN
MARSHALL ISL.	MH	PAKISTAN	PK	SENEGAL	SN	TURKEY	TR
MARTINIQUE	MQ	PALAU	PW	SERBIA	RS	TURKMENISTAN	TM
MAURITANIA	MR	PALESTINIAN T. O.	PS	SEYCHELLES	SC	TURKS CAICOS ISL.	TC
MAURITIUS	MU	PANAMA	PA	SIERRA LEONE	SL	TUVALU	TV
MAYOTTE	YT	PAPUA NEW GUIN.	PG	SINGAPORE	SG	U	
MEXICO	MX	PARAGUAY	PY	ST. MAARTEN (D)	SX	UGANDA	UG
MICRONESIA, F. S.	FM	PERU	PE	SLOVAKIA	SK	UKRAINE	UA
MOLDOVA, REP. OF	MD	PHILIPPINES	PH	SLOVENIA	SI	UNITED ARAB EM.	AE
MONACO	MC	PITCAIRN	PN	SOLOMON ISL.	SB	UNITED KINGDOM	GB
MONGOLIA	MN	POLAND	PL	SOMALIA	SO	UNITED STATES	US
MONTENEGRO	ME	PORTUGAL	PT	SOUTH AFRICA	ZA	UNIT. ST. MIN. ISL.	UM
MONTserrat	MS	PUERTO RICO	PR	SOUTH GEOR. ISL.	GS	URUGUAY	UY
MOROCCO	MA	Q		SPAIN	ES	UZBEKISTAN	UZ
MOZAMBIQUE	MZ	QATAR	QA	SRI LANKA	LK	V	
MYANMAR	MM	R		SUDAN	SD	VANUATU	VU
N		REUNION	RE	SURINAME	SR	VATICAN CITY ST.	VA
NAMIBIA	NA	ROMANIA	RO	SVALBARD JAN M.	SJ	VENEZUELA, B. R.	VE
NAURU	NR	RUSSIAN FED.	RU	SWAZILAND	SZ	VIET NAM	VN
NEPAL	NP	RWANDA	RW	SWEDEN	SE	VIRGIN ISL. BRIT.	VG
NETHERLANDS	NL	S		SWITZERLAND	CH	VIRGIN ISL., U.S.	VI
NEW CALEDONIA	NC	ST. BARTHELEMY	BL	SYRIAN ARAB REP.	SY	W	
NEW ZEALAND	NZ	ST. HELENA, ASC.	SH	T		WALLIS FUTUNA	WF
NICARAGUA	NI	ST. KITTS NEVIS	KN	TAIWAN, P. CHINA	TW	WESTERN SAHARA	EH
NIGER	NE	SAINT LUCIA	LC	TAJIKISTAN	TJ	Y	
NIGERIA	NG	ST. MARTIN (FR. P.)	MF	TANZANIA, UN REP.	TZ	YEMEN	YE
NIUE	NU	ST. PIERRE MIQ.	PM	THAILAND	TH	Z	
NORFOLK ISLAND	NF	ST VINCENT GREN.	VC	TIMOR-LESTE	TL	ZAMBIA	ZM
NORTH MAR. ISL.	MP	SAMOA	WS	TOGO	TG	ZIMBABWE	ZW
NORWAY	NO			TOKELAU	TK		

C. Abbreviations

ALAC	Latin American Free Trade Zone
AMF	American Film Market
BAFICI	Buenos Aires Festival Internacional del Cine Independiente
BBFC	British Board of Film Classification
CELAM	Conferencia Episcopal Latino Americana
CEPAL	Comisión Económica Para América Latina y el Caribe (translated in English as ECLAC)
CIMEX	Cinematográfica Mexicana Exportadora
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (most commonly known as CEPAL)
EFM	European Film Market
FESPACO	Festival Panafricain du Cinéma de Ouagadougou
FIAPF	Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films
FIPRESCI	Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique
HBF	Hubert Bals Fund
ICAIC	Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos
IFFR	International Film Festival Rotterdam
IMCINE	Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía
IMDb	Internet Movie Database
INCAA	Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales
MIFED	Mercato Internazionale Filme E Documentario
MOMA	Museum of Modern Art (New York)
MPAA	Motion Picture Association of America
NFT	National Film Theatre (London)
OAS	Organization of American States
OCIC	Office Catholique International du Cinéma
OLAS	Organization of Latin American Solidarity
OSPAAAL	Organización de Solidaridad Para los Pueblos de Africa, Asia y América Latina
PELMEX	Películas Mexicanas
SODRE	Servicio Oficial de Radiotelevisión y Espectáculos
SRF	Société des Réalisateurs de Films
UDUAL	Union of Latin American Universities
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCF	World Cinema Fund

D. Latin American Films Distributed in US and EU 1996-2009²⁰¹

English Language/ Original Title	Producing Countries	Prod. Year	Director	EU 36 Admissions	Number Countries Distrib. in EU	US Box Office (In dollars)
Babel	US/FR/MX	2006	Alejandro González Iñárritu	5,987,150	25	\$ 34,302,837
Pan's Labyrinth/ El laberinto del fauno	ES/MX	2006	Guillermo del Toro	3,876,873	29	\$ 37,634,615
The Motorcycle Diaries/ Diarios de motocicleta	US/DE/GB/AR/ CL/PE/FR	2004	Walter Salles	3,658,054	22	\$ 16,781,387
Central Station/ Central do Brasil	BR/FR/JP	1998	Walter Salles	2,207,347	18	\$ 5,596,708
Son of the Bride/ El hijo de la novia	AR/ES	2001	Juan José Campanella	1,849,001	12	\$ 624,757
City of God/ Cidade de Deus	BR/FR/US	2002	Fernando Meirelles	1,788,562	21	\$ 7,564,459
Y tu mamá también	MX/US	2001	Alfonso Cuarón	1,060,433	19	\$ 13,839,658
Amores Perros	MX	2000	Alejandro González Iñárritu	975,094	18	\$ 5,408,467
Devil's Backbone/ El espinazo del diablo	MX/ES	2001	Guillermo del Toro	870,126	10	\$ 755,249
The Secret in their Eyes/ El secreto de sus ojos²⁰²	AR/ES	2009	Juan José Campanella	851,133	1	\$ 6,330,411
Nine Queens/ Nueve reinas	AR	2000	Fabián Bielinsky	815,879	10	\$ 1,222,889
Maria Full of Grace/ María, llena eres de gracia	US/CO	2004	Joshua Marton	787,743	15	\$ 6,529,624
Tango	AR/ES	1998	Carlos Saura	590,442	16	\$ 1,897,948
The Method/ El método	ES/AR/IT	2005	Marcelo Piñeyro	527,630	6	\$ 7,017
Guantanamo	ES/CU/DE	1995	Tomás Gutiérrez A./ Juan C. Tabío	480,488	11	\$ 903,840
Bombón: El Perro/ El perro	AR/ES	2004	Carlos Sorín	468,161	13	\$ 19,791
The Crime of Father Amaro/ El crimen del Padre Amaro	MX/ES	2002	Carlos Carrera	429,102	13	\$ 5,717,044

²⁰¹ Table compiled with information from different databases (listed by admissions in the EU): For the US (Box Office Mojo 2010b; The Numbers 2010) and the EU (European Audiovisual Observatory 2009c). Total films distributed in the US and the EU: 75.

²⁰² Currently in release in the US and several territories of the EU (BE, LU, DK, FI, FR, GR, IT, NL, PO, UK). Data of admissions (EU) and box office (US) remains partial.

English Language/ Original Title	Producing Countries	Prod. Year	Director		EU 36 Admissions	Number Countries Distrib. in EU	US Box Office (In dollars)
Whisky	UY/ES	2004	Juan Rebella/ Stoll	Pablo Pablo	334,376	14	[no info in BO Mojo]
Lost Embrace/ El abrazo partido	AR/ES	2004	Daniel Burman		309,318	11	\$ 190,860
Elsa & Fred	AR/ES	2005	Marcos Carnevale		300,697	7	\$ 189,024
Machuca	CL/ES	2004	Andrés Wood		289,452	10	\$ 26,676
Elite Squad/ Tropa de Elite	BR	2007	José Padilha		275,416	14	\$ 8,744
XXY	AR/ES	2007	Lucía Puenzo		247,018	12	\$ 48,334
Sin nombre	MX/US	2009	Cary Fukunaga		210,635	10	\$ 2,536,665
Our Lady of the Assassins/ La virgen de los sicarios	FR/CO/ES	2000	Barbet Shroeder		191,370	7	\$ 525,330
The Pope's Toilet/ El baño del papa	UY/BR/FR	2007	Cesar Enrique Fernández	Charlone/	145,731	7	[no info in BO Mojo]
The Aura/ El aura	AR/ES	2005	Fabián Bielinsky		144,226	5	\$ 58,804
Battle in Heaven/ Batalla en el cielo	MX/BE/FR/DE	2004	Carlos Reygadas		140,668	13	\$ 70,899
You Me Them/ Eu, Tu, Eles	BR/US	2000	Andrucha Waddington		139,945	7	\$ 323,923
Capitan Pantoja and the Special Services/ Pantaleón y las visitadoras	PE/ES	2000	Francisco Lombardi	J.	124,628	3	\$ 43,214
Burnt Money/ Plata quemada	AR/ES	2000	Marcelo Piñeyro		123,938	3	\$ 183,132
The Milk of Sorrow/ La teta asustada	ES/PE	2009	Claudia Llosa		121,158	8	\$ 1,914
Behind the Sun/ Abril Despedaçado	BR/FR/CH	2001	Walter Salles		117,146	11	\$ 64,210
The Swamp/ La ciénaga	AR/ES/FR	2001	Lucrecia Martel		97,141	7	\$ 103,215
City of Men/ Cidade dos Homens	BR	2007	Paulo Morelli		96,940	5	\$ 325,131
The Year My Parents Went on Vacation/ O Ano em Que Meus Pais Saíram de Férias	BR	2006	Cao Hamburger		96,270	7	\$ 807,117
The Violin/ El violín	MX	2005	Francisco Vargas		91,793	6	\$ 65,298
Silent Light/ Luz silenciosa	MX/FR	2007	Carlos Reygadas		87,473	9	\$ 60,200
Carandiru	BR/AR	2003	Hector Babenco		75,073	11	\$ 213,954
El Bonaerense	AR/CL	2002	Pablo Trapero		70,915	4	\$ 9,470

English Language/ Original Title	Producing Countries	Prod. Year	Director	EU 36 Admissions	Number Countries Distrib. in EU	US Box Office (In dollars)
Strawberry and Chocolate/ Fresa y chocolate^{203*}	CU/MX/ES	1993	Tomás Gutiérrez A./ Juan C. Tabío	66,120	9	\$ 2,080,805
Family Law/ Derecho de familia	AR/IT/ES/FR	2006	Daniel Burman	62,269	6	\$ 38,605
Leonera	AR/KR	2008	Pablo Trapero	61,377	5	\$ 14,739
Rolling Family/ Familia rodante	AR/BR/FR/DE/ ES/GB	2004	Pablo Trapero	58,481	5	\$ 9,291
Live-in Maid/ Cama adentro	AR/ES	2004	Jorge Gaggero	55,490	1	\$ 200,433
Duck Season/ Temporada de patos	MX	2004	Fernando Eimbcke	52,148	10	\$ 147,551
Tony Manero	CL/BR	2008	Pablo Larraín	49,954	3	\$ 20,677
The Maid/ La nana	CL/MX	2009	Sebastián Silva	46,269	2	\$ 576,608
Madame Satã	BR/FR	2002	Karim Ainouz	41,356	6	\$ 198,181
Rudo y Cursi	MX/US	2008	Carlos Cuarón	39,194	4	\$ 1,827,660
Buenos Aires, 1977/ Cronica de una fuga	AR	2006	Adrián Caetano	36,309	8	\$ 2,370
Lower City/ Cidade Baixa	BR	2005	Sergio Machado	30,731	5	\$ 130,794
The Headless Woman/ La mujer sin cabeza	AR/FR	2008	Lucrecia Martel	25,763	3	\$ 100,177
Four Days in September/ O Que é Isso, Companheiro?	BR/US	1997	Bruno Barreto	25,495	8	\$ 397,517
Bolivia	AR	2001	Adrián Caetano	20,922	2	\$ 26,272
Inocent Voices/ Voces inocentes	MX	2004	Luis Mandoki	20,605	7	\$ 837,878
Los Muertos	AR/FR/NL/CH	2004	Lisandro Alonso	16,941	6	\$ 3,027
Bitter Sugar/ Azúcar amarga	DO/CU	1996	León Ichaso	15,892	2	\$ 450,060
Secuestro Express	VE/US	2005	Jonathan Jakubowickz	12,700	1	\$ 302,256
Chronicles/ Crónicas	MX/EC	2004	Sebastián Cordero	12,260	4	\$ 299,261
A Year Without Love/ Un año sin amor	AR	2005	Anahi Berneri	10,827	3	\$ 24,381
Bus 174/ Ônibus 174	BR	2002	José Padilha/ Felipe Lacerda	9,120	1	\$ 216,158

²⁰³ * These films were distributed in the European Union before 1996. Although they were included in the data base Lumiere, their number of admissions corresponds only from 1996 onwards.

English Language/ Original Title	Producing Countries	Prod. Year	Director	EU 36 Admissions	Number Countries Distrib. in EU	US Box Office (In dollars)
La Leon	AR/FR	2007	Santiago Otheguy	8,204	4	\$ 1,708
The Other Side of the Street/ O Outro Lado da Rua	BR/FR	2004	Marcos Bernstein	4,479	2	\$ 55,459
Captive/ Cautiva	AR	2003	Gastón Biraben	3,613	1	\$ 16,259
Love for Sale/ O Céu de Sueley	BR/PL/FR/DE	2006	Karim Ainouz	3,257	2	\$ 13,703
Sleep Dealer	MX/US	2008	Alex Rivera	3,251	1	\$ 80,136
A Place in the World/ Un lugar en el mundo*	AR	1992	Adolfo Aristarain	3,045	2	\$ 99,707
In the Pit/ En el hoyo	MX	2006	Juan Carlos Rulfo	2,595	1	\$ 10,433
Like Water for Chocolate/ Como agua para chocolate*	MX	1992	Alfonso Arau	1,864	5	\$ 21,665,468
Drama/Mex	MX	2006	Gerardo Naranjo	1,432	1	\$ 8,628
House of Sand/ Casa de Areia	BR	2005	Andrucha Waddington	1,404	2	\$ 539,285
A Casa de Alice	BR	2007	Chico Texeira	1,321	3	\$ 61,822
Guadalupe	ES/MX	2006	Santiago Parra	983	1	\$ 848,139
The Official Story/ La historia oficial*	AR	1985	Luis Puenzo	81	1	\$ 29,426

E. Film Festival History (1932-2009)

	Major Film Festivals Rest of the World	Film Festivals focus Latin America / world	Film Festivals Latin America
1932	Venice 1st ed (IT)		
1933			
1934	Venice 2nd ed (IT)		
1935	Moscow 1st ed (URSS)		
1936			
1937			
1938			
1939	Cannes 1st ed (FR)		
1940	[WWII]		
1941	[WWII]		
1942	[WWII]		
1943	[WWII]		
1944	[WWII]		
1945	[WWII]		
1946	Cannes 2nd ed (FR)/ Karlovy Vary (CZ)		
1947	Edinburgh (UK)		
1948	Locarno (CH)		
1949	Venice 6th ed (IT)		
1950			
1951	Berlin (DE)		Punta del Este (two editions until 1952)
1952	Mannheim-Heidelberg (DE)		
1953	San Sebastián (SP)		
1954	Oberhausen Short (DE)/ Sidney (AU)		Mar del Plata (AR) until 1970/ Rio de Janeiro / SODRE (irregularly until 1971)
1955			
1956			
1957	London (UK)/ San Francisco (US)		
1958	Valladolid (ES)		
1959	Moscow 2st ed (URSS) (biennial until 1999)		

	Major Film Festivals Rest of the World	Film Festivals focus Latin America / world	Film Festivals Latin America
1960	Week of Greek Cinema (until 1992 then Thessaloniki Intl. FF)/ Festival Intl. of Montreal	Rassegna in Santa Margherita (until 1965)	Cartagena (CO)
1961			
1962	[Cannes Critic's Week]	[Rassegna moves to Sestri Levante (1962-1963)]	
1963	New York (US)/ Gijon (ES)		
1964	Chicago (US)	[no Rassegna]	
1965	Pesaro (IT)	[Rassegna moves to Genoa (last festival)]	Brasilia (BR)
1966	Toronto (CA)/ Carthage (TN)		
1967			Viña del Mar 1st ed (CL)
1968	Sitges Cinema Fantastic (ES)		Merida Film Festival (only one edition) (VE)
1969	FESPACO (Burk. Faso)/ Montreal Student (CA)/ Nashville (US)/ [Cannes Director's Fortnight]		Viña del Mar 2nd ed (CL)
1970			
1971	Montreal Nouveau (CA)/ [Berlin's Forum]		
1972	Rotterdam (NL)		
1973			Gramado (BR)
1974	Telluride (US)/ Brussels Independent (BE)		
1975	Paris (FR)	Huelva Muestra Iberoam. (ES)/ Chicago Latino (US)	
1976	Cairo (EY)		
1977	Montreal World Cinema (CA)		São Paulo Mostra (BR)
1978	Utah/US (Sundance since 1984)/ Hong Kong International (HK-CN)/ [Cannes Un Certain Regard]	Chicano and Latino Film Festival (San Antonio, Texas)	
1979		Nantes Three Continents (FR)/ Paris Cinéma du Tiers Monde (FR/ [Huelva's 'Muestra' becomes 'Festival' (ES)]	Havana (CU)
1980			

	Major Film Festivals Rest of the World	Film Festivals focus Latin America / world	Film Festivals Latin America
1981			Uruguay Intl(Montevideo, UY)/ 1st Riocine (Cinamateca do MAM)
1982	Vancouver (CA)/ Istanbul International (TR)		
1983	Los Angeles (US)/ Brussels Fantastic (BE)	Brugges Third World FF (Cinema Novo since 1991) (BE)	
1984	Sundance (previously Utah US)/ Miami International (US)		Bogotá (CO)/ Rio Cine Festival (BR) until 1999
1985	Tokyo International (JP)/ Warsaw International (PO)	Chicago Latino (US)	
1986		Trieste (IT)	Guadalajara Muestra (MX)
1987			
1988			Rio de Janeiro Mostra Banco Nacional de Cinema (BR) until 1999
1989		Toulouse Reencontres (FR)	
1990			Asunción (PY) until 1998
1991		Milan African Cinema (extended to Afro-Brazilian in 1999 and Afro-Cuban in 2000) (IT)	
1992		Biarritz (1992)/ London Latin America (UK)/ Philadelphia F. of World Cin. (US)	
1993	Shangai (CN) (biennial until 2001)		
1994	Austin SXSW (US)	San Diego Latino (US)	Valdivia Cine & Video (CL)/ Rio de Janeiro Cinesul (US)
1995	Sarajevo (BA)/ Slamdance (Utah, US)/ Paris Forum des Images (FR)	Mostra Llatinoamericà (Lleida, ES)	
1996	Pusan (KO)		Mar del Plata relaunched (AR)/ E tudo Verdade (Sao P-Rio de J, BR)
1997	Hollywood (US)/ Sofia (BU)	Los Angeles Latino (US)	Lima (PE)/ Santiago FIDOC (CL)/ Recife Cine Pe (BR)
1998	Malaga Cine Español (ES)/ Shangai International (CN)	Austin Cine Las Americas (US)	Punta del Este (UY)
1999		San Francisco Latino (US)	Buenos Aires BAFICI (AR)/ Festival do Rio (BR) [merger of Rio Cine Festival and Mostra Banco Nacional de Cinema]

	Major Film Festivals Rest of the World	Film Festivals focus Latin America / world	Film Festivals Latin America
2000	Jeonju International (KR)	New York Havana (US)/ Manchester Viva 7th ed - included Latin American films (UK)	
2001	Wroclaw Era New Horizons (PO)	New York Latino (US)	Paraguay Arte & Cultura (Asunción, PY)
2002	Tribeca New York (US)	[Málaga's Section 'Territorio Latinoamericano' (ES)	
2003	Dubai (AE)	Vancouver Latino (CA)/ London Discovery (UK)	Morelia (MX)/ Viña del Mar Cine Digital (CL)
2004	Hong Kong Asian (HK)		FICCO (MX) until 2009/ [Guadajara turned International]/ Pantalla Pinamar (AR)/ Porto Alegre Esquema Novo (BR)
2005		Montreal Latino (CA)/ Utrecht Latino (NL)	Monterrey International (MX)/ Ambulante Docs (MX)
2006		Sydney Latino (AU)	Cancún (MX)
2007			Dominican Republic Global FF (DR)
2008		Moscu Latinofiesta (RU)	Monterrey Latinoamericano (MX)
2009		Flandes Latino (BE)	Cali Festival Internacional de Cine (CO)
2010		Lakino Berlin (DE)	