



SPOTLIGHT: COLOMBIA

FILM FUND, FAM TOURS BOOST BIZ

New law will provide \$12 million more

By Anna Marie de la Fuente

Film production in Colombia has been on the uptick thanks to the country's 2003 film law — and may be about to get yet another boost. Colombia's pic-friendly government is now turning its attention to luring international projects with a bill that may be ratified in the summer.

Bill sets up a film fund of some \$12 million to allow a 40% cash rebate on production-related expenses and a 20% cash rebate on expenses in catering, transport and lodgings for film and TV-movie location shoots in the country.

Still, the current lack of incentives for foreign shoots hasn't deterred some large projects from shooting on location in Colombia. It was Mike Newell's \$50 million "Love in the time of Cholera," shot in Cartagena in 2006, that spurred

the creation of a film commission. The head of that org, Silvia Echeverri, has been conducting a series of familiarity — or "fam" — tours with the help of former studio exec Jason Resnick.

Resnick believes that the tours have been effective in dispelling people's preconceptions about the country's culture and even its location. "Some people think Colombia is as far away as Brazil and that the time difference is as bad as with Europe," he says. In fact, Colombia is only two hours ahead of the U.S. West Coast. Recent foreign shoots there include Spanish-French co production "Operation E" and USA Network TV movie "Burn Notice: The Fall of Sam Axe."

But international players have also been venturing in to co produce local pics, most recently Fox Intl. Productions (FIP), which partnered with Colombian shingle Dynamo for Andi Baiz's slick



"La Playa"

psychological thriller "The Hidden Face," a box office hit last year. "It was a very positive experience and we look forward to making more movies in Colombia," says FIP prexy Sanford Panitch.

Participant Media ("The Help") co-developed and holds worldwide rights to supernatural thriller "Out of the Dark," an upcoming English-language co-prod with Dynamo, Spain's Apaches and U.S. based XYZ Films. "Although it will be a Latin American film, being in English will give it as much exposure and traction as a U.S. film," says XYZ's Nick Spicer, who executive-produced the Edgar Ramirez-topped "Greetings to the Devil."

XYZ is also co-producing "The Scribe of Uraba" with Jhonny Hendrix's Antorcha Films; brothers Michael and Jeff Zimbalist ("The Two Escobars") are helming.

"If the new bill passes, the future influx of international productions will help us mature as an industry and make us more competitive on the world

stage," says Hendrix, whose popular "Choco" opened the 52nd Cartagena Intl. Film Fest in February and was the first local pic to feature Colombia's indigenous people. "I just hope that we don't lose sight of our personal, Colombian stories."

"There seems to be an upsurge in films dealing with indigenous themes and shot in ever more remote locations," says Claudia Triana of nonprofit org Proimagenes, which handles the state film fund, the film commis-

sion and pic promotion. Cannes Directors' Fortnight selection "La Sirga" was shot in La Laguna de la Cocha, a stunning but little-known area near Ecuador. Un Certain Regard entry "La Playa" centers on an Afro-Colombian lead. "Colombian filmmakers are beginning to find their own cinematic language," says Diana Bustamante, a co producer of both "Sirga" and "Playa."

TV support remains the backbone of

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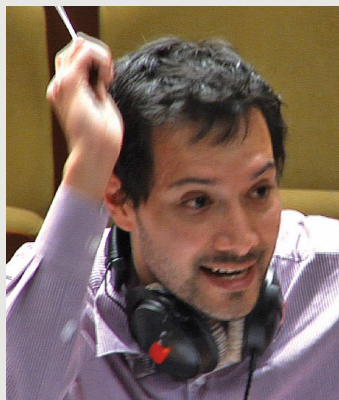


Panitch



"La Sirga"

New faces in the biz



ALEJANDRO RAMIREZ ROJAS

Composer

In 2008, Ramirez, was selected as one of the top 25 Colombian leaders in the arts by leading mag Cambio and named Colombia's young musical entrepreneur of the year by the Colombian Ministry of Culture in association with the British Council — not an insignificant accomplishment for a 31-year-old. Now 35, He has scored music for notable filmmakers, TV productions and live events in Latin America, Europe and the U.S., including Colombian pics "Poker," "Yo soy otro" and "Los actores del conflicto."



WILLIAM VEGA

Helmer, "La sirga"

Vega's debut feature "La sirga" (The Towrope) swept Toulouse's 21st Films in Progress in March, paving the way for a coveted entry into Cannes' Directors' Fortnight. Vega, 30, was an assistant director in Oscar Ruiz Navia's "Crab Trap," a Fipresci critics winner at Berlin 2010. His studies in journalism and screenwriting coupled with a clutch of award-winning shorts prepped him for a stunning debut. "La sirga" showcases his poetic sense of framing and location as well as a subtle depiction of violence.



JUAN CARLOS GIL

Director of photography

Gil's career in fashion photography, advertising, shorts and music videos trained him for the rigors of extreme location shoots. Known for his meticulous work, his film credits include Sundance hit "Perro come perro" and Ruben Mendoza's "Stoplight Society" and "Tierra en la lengua." His work in "Perro" won him a best d.p. award in the 2007-2008 Colombian Film Awards and best cinematography prize at the 2008 Gramado Film Festival in Brazil.



JUAN ANDRES ARANGO

Helmer-scribe, "La playa"

Arango's realistic urban drama "La playa" was nurtured along the way to its Un Certain Regard berth through its participation in various development programs, including the 2010 Buenos Aires Lab, Mannheim Meetings, and the San Sebastian Film Festival's Cine en Construcción. A Canadian resident, Arango, 32, studied film in his native Colombia and cinematography in Barcelona. His previous credits include award-winning docus and shorts.

ANDRES PARRA

Actor

Considered one of the most versatile thespians in Colombia, Parra's theater training in the U.K., France, Mexico and the U.S. has steered him to a wide range of roles in notable pics. Parra, 34, who is bilingual, has been hailed for his ability

to morph into his characters. His star turn as a conflicted priest in "La pasion de Gabriel" won him multiple kudos. Also starred in "Perro come perro," "Satanas" and, most recently, wry thriller "Sanandresito."

— Anna Marie de la Fuente

IN THE PIPELINE: *New projects from Colombia's creative leaders*

Anina

Director: Alfredo Soderguit

Production: Antorcha, Palermo Animation
Animated pic about a 10-year-old girl who receives a mysterious black envelope that changes her life. Backed by Ibermedia, Vision Sud Est, Fona Uruguay development funds.

Choco

Director: Jhonny Hendrix

Production: Antorcha

Sales: Memento

Producer Jhonny Hendrix's helming debut. Audience winner at the 52nd Cartagena Film Festival, which it opened after its world preem in Berlin's Panorama. Pioneering pic spotlights Colombia's indigenous people.

The Crack

Director: Alfonso Acosta

Production: Cabecitanegra Prods.

Horror pic nurtured at the Rotterdam Lab. Argentina's Lucrecia Martel ("The Headless Woman") serves as script consultant.

Default

Director: Simon Brand

Production: Amazonas, Ennovva

English-language, found-footage skyjacking drama from the helmer of acclaimed box office hit "Paraiso Travel." Starring David Oyelowo, Katherine Moennig.

Eso que llaman amor

Director: Carlos Cesar Arbelaez

Production: El Bus, RCN Cine, Ennovva

Pic is Arbelaez's follow-up to his award-winning "The Colors of the Mountain," in which the city of Medellin becomes the focal point of four intersecting stories. In pre-production.

The Hook

Director: Sandra Higuera Marin

Production: Ennovva, Independencia

Realizadores, Never Land (Spain)
Debut pic by the assistant director of Victor Gaviria's "The Rose Seller" tells the story of two young men from the Medellin slums who set out to reach the sea on bicycles by hooking on to passing trucks.

La escribana de uraba

Directors: Michael and Jeff Zimbalist

Production: Antorcha, XYZ Films (U.S.)

In pre-production, bilingual pic will star a U.S. and Colombian cast. A company rep is forced to choose between loyalties when she's sent to probe a murder in her multinational employer's Colombian outpost.

Los hongos

Director: Oscar Ruiz Navia

Production: Contravia Films, Burning Blue, Mantarraya (Mexico), Arizona (France)

Developed at Cannes' Residence program, Ruiz Navia's second pic centers on two disenchanted graffiti artists in the city of Cali. Ruiz Navia's debut feature, "Crab Trap," repped Colombia in the 2010 Foreign Oscars race. Shoot starts in November.

Operation Checkmate

Production: Ennovva Films, Greg Shapiro, Amazonas

English-language drama based on the actual rescue of ex-presidential candidate Ingrid



"Anina"

Betancourt and other fellow-hostages in Colombia. Screen Gems to distribute in the U.S.

legacy. In development.

Out of the Dark

Director: Lluís Quilez

Production: Dynamo, Apaches (Spain), XYZ (U.S.)

Sales: Participant Media (worldwide rights)
An American executive and his family relocate to Colombia only to find that their new town carries a terrifying supernatural

ROA

Director: Andres Baiz

Production: Dynamo, Patagonik Film Group (Argentina)

Helmer-scribe Baiz's third pic after "Satanas" and Fox Intl.'s "The Hidden Face." Period thriller in prep is based on real events concerning Juan Roa, the alleged assassin

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of Colombian presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948.

Sanandresito

Director: Alessandro Angulo

Production: Laberinto

Now in post, comic thriller stars Colombian character actor Andres Parra as a slacker cop falsely accused of murder. Script is by Jorg Hiller, who wrote blockbuster “Sonar no cuesta nada.”

Secreto de confesion

Director: Henry Rivero

Production: Drive (Venezuela), RCN Cine, Ennovva
“En coma” helmer Rivero’s pic, now in post, weaves three interlocking stories about a priest, a senator and a policeman. Project is co-produced by Rivero and Edgar Ramirez’s (“Carlos”) Drive

Sheltering Grounds

Director: Carlos Montaner

Production: Ennovva Films, Aluna Films
English-language, Cuba-set thriller based on events in the ’80s when a young Peruvian diplomat faced off with the Cuban military after he took in 10,000 Cubans seeking refuge in the embassy. Pre-production.

Sofia y el terco

Director: Andres Burgos

“Sanandresito”



Production: Faldita Films

Starring former Pedro Almodovar muse Carmen Maura, Burgos’ debut feature snagged the grand jury prize at the 52nd Cartagena Film Festival.

The Vanishing Elephant

Director: Javier Fuentes-Leon

Production: Dynamo, El Calvo (Peru), Cactus Flower (Spain)

Writer-director Fuentes-Leon’s follow-up to his Sundance audience award winner, “Contracorriente” (Undertow). A crime novelist

finds himself caught up in a dangerous game when he unearths a mysterious photograph that will lead him to his missing fiancée.

Tierra en la lengua

Director: Ruben Mendoza

Production: Dia Fragma Fabrica

Mendoza’s follow-up to “The Stoplight Society.” A man’s grandchildren refuse to help him commit suicide to avenge their mistreatment at his hands. In post.

— Anna Marie de la Fuente

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many local pics, with duopoly RCN and Caracol providing coin and promotional support. RCN Cine’s Julian Giraldo is spearheading a push into English-language pics starting with Simon Brand’s found-footage thriller, “Default,” now in post. Other such projects in the pipeline include Cuba-set “Sheltering Grounds” and “Operation Checkmate,” based on the rescue of former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt from Colombia’s FARC guerillas, with Greg Shapiro. “We back four to five films a year, contributing between 20% to 50% of a film’s budget,” says Caracol Cine topper Alejandro Bernal.

“El Paseo,” the latest comedy from Caracol production VP Dago Garcia, whose pics are released on Dec. 25 every year, lured 1.2 million out of 3 million admissions to Colombian pic last year.

Foreign and local admissions combined have jumped 40% in recent years, “from 27 million in 2009 to 38 million last year,” says Munir Falah of exhib/distrib Cine Colombia. More screens are going up in this underscreened territory — 627 screens for a population of 46 million — with more than 50% expected to be converted to digital by year’s end. Mexican exhib Cinepolis has erected an initial 43 screens in Colombia.

“Exhibition growth has not quite kept pace with local production,” says Elba McAllister of indie distrib Cineplex, “but the rise of new talent and keen support from the government, television and exhibitors will sustain Colombian cinema for a good long while.” ■

CINEPLEX congratulates Colombian Filmmakers for its presence in CANNES 2012

LA PLAYA D.C.
a film by Juan Andrés Arango

OFFICIAL SELECTION
UN CERTAIN REGARD
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

Screenings
Wed, May 23 11:00 DEBUSSY Official
Wed, May 23 17:00 DEBUSSY Official
Thu, May 24 11:00 André Bazin Press
THU May 24 15:30 Riviera 5 - Market

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DIRECCION DE FOTOGRAFIA: NICOLAS CANACICIONI DISEÑO DE PRODUCCION: ANGELICA PEREZ / SAY HELLO DIRECCION DE ARTE: JUAN DAVID BERNAL SONIDO: MARCIO CAMARA E ISABEL TORRES
DISEÑO SONORO: SOFIA ANDRÉS CORTES JEAN GUY VERANI MONTAJE: FELIPE GUERRERO Jefe de producción: PAOLA ANDREA PEREZ ASISTENTE DE DIRECCION: IVAN D. GARCIA
MUSICA: ERICK RODRIGUEZ, JACOB VÉLEZ, JUAN ESCOBAR, FELIX PLODY, MELANIE, CHACABOITOWN Y JIGGY DRAGON
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ANGELISA STEIN / MAURICIO ARISTIZABAL PRODUCCION POR JORGE ALONSO GOMEZ Y DIANA BUSTAMANTE ESCOBAR
ESCRITA Y DIRIGIDA POR JUAN ANDRES ARAIGO

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LA SIRGA
A FILM BY WILLIAM VEGA

quinzaine
DES RÉALISATEURS
CANNES 2012

Screenings
Sat, May 19 10:00 THEATRE CROISSETTE Official
Sat, May 19 16:00 THEATRE CROISSETTE Official
Mon, May 21 12:00 OLYMPIA 3 Market
Tue, May 22 18:00 PALAIS G Market

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CONTRAVIA FILMS / BURNING BLUE IN CO-PRODUCCION WITH CINE SUD PROMOTION / FILM TANK / PUNTO GUINER PUNTO IN ASSOCIATION WITH RCN CINE / E-ENOVVA / LABORATORIOS BLACK VELVET
WITH THE SUPPORT OF FONDO PARA EL DESARROLLO CINEMATOGRAFICO / FUNDOS SUD CINE / PROGRANA IBERREDIA / FUNDACION CAROLINA / CASA AMERICA / MOVIE CITY
PRESENTA LA SIRGA WITH: OSCAR RUIZ, ANA, JULIO OSCAR RUIZ, FLORENCIA, ACHILAND, DAVID DUARTE, HERNANDO RIVERA, CHAMBERLAIN, SOFIA TOCCHINI, NATY
DIRECTOR: MARCELA GOMEZ MONTAÑA ASISTENTE DIRECTOR: SANTIAGO LOZANO ANAVAREZ COSTUME DESIGNER: ANA MARIA ACOSTA OSPINA SONIDO: HERNANDEZ CESAR SALAZAR
SONIDO DISEÑO: MIGUEL HERNANDEZ MONTERO EDITING: MIGUEL SCHROEDINGER PRODUCTION MANAGERS: PAOLA ANDREA PEREZ NIETO, GERVILY POLANCO URIBE
CO-PRODUCERS: THIERRY LENOUEL, EDGAR SAN JUAN, ISSA GUERRA, SEBASTIAN SANCHEZ, JAYE GALICOT PRODUCED BY OSCAR RUIZ NAVIA AND DIANA BUSTAMANTE
WRITER AND DIRECTED BY WILLIAM VEGA

Logos: quinzaine, CINESUD, FILM TANK, PUNTO GUINER PUNTO, RCN CINE, E-ENOVVA, LABORATORIOS BLACK VELVET, etc.

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