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## **RICE CINEMA AND THE HISPANIC STUDIES DEPARTMENT AT RICE KICK OFF FESTIVAL OF NEW SPANISH CINEMA WITH A PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF SEPTEMBERS' ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATED CARLES BOSCH**

**HOUSTON, January 05, 2008** – Continuing its tradition of bringing the best of world cinema to Houston, **Rice Cinema** and **Pragda**, will present an eclectic collection of Spanish films during a week-end festival at the Rice Cinema, **beginning Thursday, Jan. 22 through Sunday, Jan. 25**. The ***Festival of New Spanish Cinema*** visit this month will be last stop in a five-city tour that started in Miami in November 2008. The festival is organized by Pragda and being sponsored by the Consulate General of Spain in Houston and Dirección General de Política e Industrias Culturales and Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales (ICAA) of the Spanish Ministry of Culture, Tourist Office of Spain, Embassy of Spain, Washington, DC, Rice University Cinema and the Department of Hispanic Studies at Rice, Institut Ramon Llull ,Dirección General de Relaciones Culturales y Científicas, Filmoteca, AECI, of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. The January 22nd event will kick-off with a cocktail reception and screening of “SEVEN BILLIARD TABLES,” directed by Gracia Querejeta, with the attendance of filmmaker Carles Bosch.

On Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 PM, Carles Bosch will present the festival's centerpiece **SEPTEMBERS**, his last work. Mr. Bosch has been nominated for the Academy Awards for his work in **BALSEROS**. **SEPTEMBERS** obtained the Best Film award at the Cine Las Americas Film Festival in Austin. Carles Bosch will give a **lecture** on his work as a documentary filmmaker on **Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>. at 5:00 pm** at the Hispanic Studies Department at Rice (**Room RH106 Razor Hall, Rice University**)

The success of Spain at last year's Oscar awards serves as confirmation of the complexity and uniqueness of the Spanish artistic scene. Though characterized as being enthralling, daring, and unprecedented, Spanish cinema has taken many different directions. Exploring the riskiest visions, Spanish filmmakers have taken their place internationally, not only with renowned actors such as this year's Oscar award-winning Javier Bardem, but with professionals behind the camera working on successful features like ***Pan's Labyrinth*** and ***The Orphanage***.

The selections include Jaime Rosales' **SOLITARY FRAGMENTS**, winner of Goya Awards for Best Film and Best Director; this year's Spanish Oscar submission, Gracia Querejeta's **SEVEN BILLIARD TABLES**; Rafa Cortés' **ME**, winner of the Critic's prize at the Rotterdam Film Festival; Iciar (Take My Eyes) Bollain's **MATAHARIS**, winner of numerous international screenplay awards; Albert Serra's Cannes Film Festival celebrated Nativity extravaganza **BIRDSONG**; José Luis Guerín's (En Construcción) Venice Film Festival hit **IN SYLVIA'S CITY**; Félix Viscarret's **UNDER THE STARS**, Goya winner for Best Screenplay; Carles (Balseros) Bosch's moving documentary **SEPTEMBERS**; and **SHORTMETRAJE**— a collection of award-winning short

as best film of 2008 by 20 critics, including Village Voice's J. Hoberman and Variety 's Robert Koehler; BIRDSONG was mentioned as best undistributed film by 13 critics including Variety, Newsday, Washington Post's John Anderson, Time Out's Ben Kenigsberg and Cineaste's Richard Porton.

More information about all the films in the festival is included at the end of this release.

All films throughout the festival will be screened at the Rice Cinema and tickets to each screening will be on sale at the theater's box office up to a half-hour before show time.

**Ticket Prices:**

**General public \$ 6.**

**Rice Faculty/Staff, Seniors, Students \$ 5.00**

**Rice University students:Free**

**What:** *Festival of New Spanish Cinema*

**When:** **Thursday, Jan. 22 through Sunday, Jan. 25**  
**7 p.m. – 9 p.m.**

**Where:** **RICE CINEMA 6100 Main St. MS 549 Houston, TX 77005**

DVD screeners are available upon request: [delavegahurtado@gmail.com](mailto:delavegahurtado@gmail.com)

**The Festival of New Spanish Cinema Films brings to Houston eight renowned Spanish films and a collection of shorts that include:**

**IN THE CITY OF SYLVIA (En la ciudad de Silvia) - 2007, 90 min**

Thursday January 22 7:00

**Director: José Luis Guerin**

**Cast: Xavier Lafitte and Pilar Lopez de Ayala**

Described as "A film that audiences would want to see more than once" by Ray Bennet (The Hollywood Reporter), auteur Jose Luis Guerin (Under Construction) bring us a romantic yet intensely expressive dialogue-free story anchored by real substance and full of desire. It's summer and a young foreigner saunters through the streets of a city of streetcars and canals. As he walks through the city – observing, writing and drawing, with voyeuristic undertones – the nature of his mysterious intentions slowly becomes clear. Trying to glean an insight into a woman he met years ago and for whom he now has only a memory and a first name: Charlotte.

**SEVEN BILLIARDS TABLES (Siete mesas de billar francés) - 2007, 113 min**

Thursday January 22 9:00

**Director: Gracia Querejeta**

**Cast: Maribel Verdú, Blanca Portillo, Victor Valdivia, Jesús Castejón**

Upon receiving the news that her father is ill, Angela (Maribel Verdú), and her son Guille, travel to the capital. She arrives too late, and her father's longtime girlfriend, Charo (Blanca Portillo), explains that the business is far from good. The business in question is a billiard hall with seven tables. Over the years, it has lost it all: style, clients and money.

An idea occurs to Angela: Why not take over the business and try to turn it around? The film displays a superb narrative that leads us to a simple and perfect ending. Nominated for 10 Goyas (Spanish Cinema Awards) & 9 Spanish Critics Circle Awards, the film is not just a showcase of magnificent performances by Maribel Verdú (Pan's Labyrinth) and Blanca Portillo (Volver). It is also a proof of Gracia Querejeta's rich talent, crowning her as one of the most interesting yet solid filmmakers working today.

**Carles Bosch Lecture**

Friday January 23, 5:00 PM Room **RH106 Razor Hall, Rice University.**

**SEPTEMBERS (Septiembre) - 2007, 90 min**

Friday January 23 7:00

**Director: Carles Bosch**

For the incarcerated participants of the 2005 Festival of Song, singing love songs is not merely entertainment. It is also a poignant reminder of the people they left behind. Carles Bosch, director of the Oscar®-nominated **Balseros**, follows four men and four women in prison. Spanning a year—from September to September, between one festival and the next—the film portrays their love stories. Despite the hostile environment, this film displays extraordinary emotion and it is an inspiration to all who watch it. Bosch's sympathetic and at times humorous vision delights us with a question to answer: Can a documentary capture the true essence of Love? The film has earned numerous accolades, short-listed for the Best Feature Documentary for the IDA (International Documentary Association) Awards and nominated as Best Documentary in the Joris Ivens Competition at IDFA. Amsterdam.

**ME (Yo) - 2007, 100 min**

Friday January 23 9:00

**Director: Rafa Cortés**

**Cast: Alex Brendemühl, Margalida Grimalt, Rafel Ramis, Aina de Cos.**

Named "Revelation of the Year" by FIPRESCI, the international association of film critics at Cannes 2007, *ME* is the story of a man who, suspecting himself accused of something he hasn't done, sets out to prove an innocence that nobody questions.

Every attempt to correct this mistake leads him closer to the real problem: himself. Set in Majorca Island, the atmosphere is supported by strange characters, suspicious looks, and a light surrealistic nightmare climate that begins to build in this unsettling and meticulously crafted drama. Rafa Cortés' burgeoning talent is undeniable, creating a palpable atmosphere with the help of Alex Brendemühl's (who co-wrote the film) brilliant performance.

**MATAHARIS - 2007, 95 min**

Saturday January 24 7:00

**Director: Icíar Bollaín**

**Cast: With Najwa Nimri, Nuria González, María Vázquez, Tristán Ulloa, Diego Martín**

No other Spanish filmmaker bravely portrays the untouchable issues concerning Spanish contemporary society better than Icíar Bollaín. Her previous powerful feature *Take My Eyes* won every major Goya award. This time, *Mataharis* has been nominated in six categories, including Best Director, Screenplay, Actor and Actress. Bollaín dives into the lives of three private investigators. Ines (Maria Vazquez) is working undercover at a corporation, ostensibly to weed out corruption but actually to report on workers' efforts to unionize. Eva (Najwa Nimri), recently back at work after maternity leave, struggles to juggle her caseload with family life, when she accidentally discovers a secret her partner has long kept from her. Carmen (Nuria González), investigating a case of adultery, starts reflecting on her own loveless marriage. "Bollaín, a pure storyteller, has made a very complete and alive film. (The film) is an unusual magic trick": (Jordi Costa: *Diario El País*)

**SOLITARY FRAGMENTS (La Soledad) - 2007, 128 min**

Saturday January 24 9:00

**Director: Jaime Rosales**

**Cast: Sonia Almercha, Petra Martínez, Miriam Cortes, Nuria Moncayo**

The beautifully nuanced performances of both Sonia Almarcha as Adela and Petra Martínez as Antonia, as well as Rosales' keen ability to portray isolation and beauty in the apparently mundane world, makes *Solitary Fragments* a supreme delicacy not to be missed. Having premiered at the Cannes Film Festival Un Certain Regard section, the film swept 3 Goyas (Spanish Cinema Awards), including Best Picture and Best Director. Adela lives a quiet life in rural Spain with her son Miguelito. Hoping for more from life, she moves with her son to Madrid, where they share an apartment with a couple, Ines and Carlos. Elder Antonia watches her family tear itself apart in a dispute over money. Stylish yet thoughtful and far from melodrama, the film takes you by the hand towards a shocking ending in a film difficult to forget.

**BIRDSONG (El Cant dels ocells) - 2008, 98 min**

Sunday January 25 7:00

**Director: Albert Serra**

**Cast: With Mark Peranson, Lluís Carbo, Montse Tripla**

As BFI London Film Festival says "Waiting for Godot meets *The Passion According to St. Matthew* in Catalan"

Have you ever thought of the Three Kings' relationship to one another while they traversed the world's deserts in search of Christ? Albert Serra, whose previous film *Honor de Cavalleria* was named "one of the best 10 films of 2008" by *Cahiers du Cinéma*, is back with a film even more beautiful and crazy than his debut piece. Displaying freely his own vision about the classic myth of the Nativity, the film is beautifully crafted and contemplative, with impressive views and photograph-like cinematography to satisfy the most demanding eye. This exercise about the essence of cinema holds rank with the films of major importance at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival Directors' fortnight. Even so, the Three Kings are so human that will make you smile.

**UNDER THE STARS (Bajo las estrellas) - 2007, 107 min**

Sunday January 25 9:00

**Director: Félix Viscarret**

**Cast: Alberto San Juan, Emma Suárez, Julián Villagrán, Violeta Rodríguez**

After its successful critic and box office success in Spain, *Under the Stars* is a remarkable debut film, in which Félix Viscarret, well known by his short films, evokes the claustrophobia and paranoia of small-town life, with everyone getting into everyone else's business and secrets. When Benito Lacunza, a shiftless waiter cum aspiring jazz musician, has to return to his hometown Estella for a few days, he is surprised to learn that his brother Lalo -who makes sculptures out of scrap metal- is about to marry. Benito remembers the bride all too well from his turbulent adolescence: she is Nines, a single mom who's seen her share of hard times. Benito decides to save his brother from such a fate, but unexpectedly finds himself up against a formidable foe in the person of Nine's daughter, Ainara, an introverted, rebellious, precocious smoker who ends up forging a one-of-a-kind friendship with Benito. San Juan's excellent performance as Benito won him a 2008 Goya for Best Lead Actor. The film has gathered the most important awards in Spain, including those as best director, screenplay at the San Sebastián and Malaga Film Festivals.

**SHORTMETRAJE**

This is a year of unparalleled creativity for Spanish short filmmakers. In a cloud of turmoil and hallucinatory imagination, these directors present their wildest hopes and dreams in different forms, from experimental plays to shouts of happiness. Free from any convention, this year's artists have undressed their souls and minds. Come enjoy the journey.

**LIBRA (4 min) by Carlota Coronado**

Carlota reports strongly about everyday's issues creating a high impact in this very short film. This is a very short film with a great impact. Two weeks. That's what *Libra's* main character asks

**SAID'S JOURNEY El Viaje de Said (12 min.) by Coke Riobóo**

Said, a Moroccan boy crosses The Straights. On the other side, in the land of opportunity, he discovers the world. This film was nominated to the Goya© Awards as Best Short Animation.

**SUMMER OR THE FLAWS OF ANDRÉS Verano o los defectos de Andrés (22 min.) by Jorge Torregrosa**

It is hot summer. Andres and Sara have known each other for a short time. Felix and Silvia have been together for five years. The two couples spend a summer day around a swimming pool. As always in Torregrosa's astonishing work, human nature is one more character and his unique look makes us wonder about our own condition.

**THE HAPPY MAN El Hombre Feliz (14 min.) by Lucina Gil**

Gil's keen eye responds to this daring and good humorous question: Does the Happy Man Exist?

**MACHINE Maquina (16 min.) by Gabe Ibañez**

Through pain and confusion a girl discovers his new nature, finding the way to achieve the lost harmony.

**TRAUMATOLOGY Traumatología (22 min.) by Daniel Sánchez Arévalo**

Helmer Daniel Sánchez Arévalo gives us once again an assured and captivating tragicomedy. Today is a great day. Antonio is getting married. But an unexpected event forces all the family to spend the wedding night at the hospital.

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**Pragda** is an independent cultural initiative based in Barcelona and New York created with the mission of promoting Spanish films in diverse environments. Screenings are host by reputable institutions such as New York' The Museum of Modern Art and The Film Society of Lincoln Cente, London's BFI Southbank, Washington's National Galleryand many more. For more information on our upcoming events, visit [www.pragda.com](http://www.pragda.com).

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Movie trailers are available at [www.pragda.com/media.php](http://www.pragda.com/media.php)

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