

## Barbican Film

# Cine Cuba: 50 Years of Revolution in Film

### Friday 3 - Thursday 9 July

This summer Barbican Film is delighted to welcome the return of **Cine Cuba** for its second year from **Friday 3 - Thursday 9 July**. Fifty years on from the revolution in 1959, the festival explores how Cuban cinema has emerged as a unique phenomenon, with directors creating films which reflect their revolutionary ideals and innovative ideas. **Cine Cuba** presents contemporary cinematic perspectives on Cuban life alongside classics from the foremost filmmakers of the post-revolutionary era, with highlights including films from Cuba's leading contemporary filmmaker **Fernando Pérez**; the 'enfant terrible' of post-revolutionary cinema **Humberto Solás**; and the latest releases from Havana: Alejandro Brugués' *Personal Belongings*, Pavel Giroud's *Omertà* and Juan Carlos Tabío's *The Horn of Plenty*. **Cine Cuba** also features the re-release of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's groundbreaking introduction of gay themes into Cuban cinema, *Strawberry and Chocolate*, screening each night of the festival.

#### Friday 3 July

**7.30pm - Opening Gala: *Personal Belongings*** (Cuba 2008 Dir. Alejandro Brugués 95 min)

Sleeping in his car and estranged from his family following his mother's death, medical school drop-out Ernesto is living in limbo on the very fringe of life. Filling his days with interviews in the hope of gaining an exit visa from the Embassy, his main aim is to finesse his technique and finally get away. However, when a visa comes within his grasp, Ernesto begins to realise that there may be someone worth staying in Cuba for. An intimate take on contemporary Cuban dilemmas, *Personal Belongings* examines the price paid for forsaking homeland and personal relationships for a new life elsewhere.

#### Friday 3 to Thursday 9 July

**8.45pm daily - *Strawberry and Chocolate*** (18) (Cuba 1993 Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 110 min)

Winner of a Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 1994 and the first film with an openly gay character to come from Cuba, *Strawberry and Chocolate* is a delightfully provocative and heart-warming story. It follows naïve but committed communist David at Havana University who, after breaking up with his girlfriend, runs into cultured gay artist Diego. Master Cuban filmmaker Tomás Gutiérrez Alea turns his critical gaze onto the discriminatory Cuban society of the 70s, where despite his pro-revolutionary stance Diego's options in life are curtailed due to his sexual orientation.

#### Saturday 4 July

**2.00pm - *La Vida es Silbar (Life is to Whistle)*** (12\*)

(Cuba/Spain 1999 Dir. Fernando Pérez 110 min)

A portrait of contemporary Cuba that weaves together three comic stories of people looking for love in three very different ways. Elpidio steals the wallet of an alluring tourist who arrives in Cuba via hot air balloon and sets the wheels of romance in motion, Julia is a shy retirement home nurse and faints every time she hears the word 'sex', and ballerina Mariana meets another attractive dancer who threatens to dismantle her professional composure. With touches of magical realism this innovative film documents the search for happiness in Havana, where the absurd and the wonderful co-exist side by side.

#### Saturday 4 July

**4.30pm - *Suite Havana*** (PG\*) (Cuba 2003 Dir. Fernando Pérez 84 min)

This multi award-winning documentary describes with tenderness and humour a day in the life of ten ordinary Havana citizens whose stories are told through images rather than words. The compelling vignettes include a man who seeks solace at night by escaping to play the saxophone in a church, an elderly lady selling peanuts and a mutually dependent widower and his son who has downs syndrome. A documentary without interviews, this film presents the Cuba of today: complex, intimate and controversial.

### Saturday 4 July

**6.30pm - *The Horn of Plenty (El Cuerno de la Abundancia)*** (Cuba 2008 Dir. Juan Carlos Tabío 90 min)

From the writer of *Strawberry and Chocolate*, this screwball comedy is inspired by real events which saw some 25,000 Cubans maintain they were heirs to a multi-million pound fortune held in a British bank. Bernadito (**Jorge Perugorria**) is a member of the Castineiras family. Rumours hit the small town where he lives that those with his family name have the right to claim a slice of the money stowed away in the Bank of England by a group of Castineiras nuns in the 1700s. This enjoyable farce charts the uproar that ensues when two family lines of the Castineiras family from across Cuba, attempt to claim their inheritance.

### Sunday 5 July

**2.30pm - *Cecilia*** (18) (Cuba 1982 Dir. Humberto Solás)

Nominated for the Palme D'Or at Cannes on its release in 1982, this sumptuous adaptation of the popular 19th century Cuban novel by Cirillo Villaverde tells the story of a mixed heritage Cuban woman, set against the backdrop racial unrest. Cecilia is the unusually light skinned daughter of a tailor, brought up to be a courtesan within prosperous, white society. When the son of a large slave-owning estate falls for her, Cecilia uses the situation to the advantage of the revolutionary movement. This film's liberal adaptation of the original novel caused scandal with audiences and critics alike, making it the most controversial release in Cuban film history.

### Sunday 5 July

**5.00pm - *Titón de la Habana a Guantanamera*** (PG\*) (Cuba 2008 Dir. Mirta Ibarra 76 min)

*Titón de la Habana a Guantanamera* is an affectionate look at the life and work of the definitive voice of post-revolutionary Cuban cinema; Tomás Gutiérrez Alea. Known as 'Titón' by his friends and colleagues, the acclaimed director of *Memories of Underdevelopment* and *Strawberry and Chocolate* is remembered by his wife and star of his films, Mirta Ibarra.

### Sunday 5 July

**6.30pm - *Guantanamera*** (15) (Cuba 1995 Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 101 min)

Tomás Gutiérrez Alea revisited satire in his last film *Guantanamera*, a romantic comedy with a biting edge that highlights not only the absurdities of life under the communist bureaucracy, but also the indefatigable spirit of the Cuban people. When singer Yoyita returns after 50 years to her hometown of Guantanamera, her joy at meeting her old flame Candido is so great that she dies in his arms. The film then follows the slow progress of her coffin as it travels from Guantanamera to Havana, under the charge of her niece's husband; undertaker and Communist bureaucrat Adolfo (Carlos Cruz). A cast of colourful characters emerges on the journey, as it ultimately descends into confusion.

### Monday 6 July

**6.30pm - Documentary Showcase**

The programme presents documentaries exploring contemporary Cuba, evaluating the achievements of the revolution as well as pressing for a sense of renewed purpose to tackle the social inequalities that still exist in Cuba. Films include *Raza*, a look at the racial inequalities facing Cuba's today and *Zona de Silencio*. This showcase will be introduced by Holly Aylett, award-winning documentary filmmaker, writer and founding editor of Vertigo magazine.

### Tuesday 7 July

**6.30pm - *Lucía*** (18\*) (Cuba 2006 Dir. Humberto Solás 110 min)

By turns a tragedy, a melodrama and a comedy, this witty film follows the lives and loves of three women called Lucía living at different points in time during the crucial periods of Cuban history. Known as Cuba's *Gone with the Wind* for its sheer scale, this sumptuous epic from Cuban master director Humberto Solás is an incisive comment on the inequalities that women suffer and have suffered through the ages. Starring Raquel Revuelta, Isabel Moreno, and Eslinda Nunez.

**Wednesday 8 July****6.30pm - *Up to a Certain Point (Hasta Cierta Punto)*** (Cuba 1984 Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea 68 min)

Documentary filmmaker Oscar (Oscar Alvarez) is researching machismo in Cuba. He learns that the nation's chauvinistic men have problems with strong and autonomous females and expectations that fidelity is essential for women, but not for men. However as the project progresses he begins to fall for his spirited colleague (Mirtha Ibarra), presenting a dilemma. Should he be honest about his feelings and leave his wife for this new love, and can he make an objective documentary when he is himself entwined in the issues he is studying?

**Thursday 9 July****6.30pm - *Omertà*** (12\*) (Cuba 2008 Dir. Pavel Giroud 82 min)

It's 1960s Cuba and an ageing gangster, now a relic of the Batista years, tries to devise a dignified way of bowing out of the game in a new society that opposes everything he stands for. Following the success of his first feature *La Edad de la Peseta*, Pavel Giroud returns with this noirish tale of difficult transitions in a changing society.

[www.barbican.org.uk/film](http://www.barbican.org.uk/film) Cinema Hotline: 0845 120 7527

**Tickets:**

## Standard Prices

£7.50 online/£9.50 full price

Barbican Members £6.50 online/ £7.50 full price

Concessions £7.50

Under 15s £4.50

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