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A Companion to Latin American Cinema

Edited by Maria M. Delgado, Stephen M. Hart,
and Randal Johnson

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A Companion to Latin American Cinema

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Contents

Notes on Contributors	viii
Acknowledgments	xiv
Introduction	1
<i>Maria M. Delgado, Stephen M. Hart, and Randal Johnson</i>	
Part I The Film Industry: Funding, Production, Distribution, Exhibition	19
1 Television and the Transformation of the Star System in Brazil	21
<i>Randal Johnson</i>	
2 Stardom in Spanish America	36
<i>Leah Kemp</i>	
3 Audiovisual Sector Incentives and Public Policy in Selected Latin American Countries	54
<i>Steve Solot</i>	
4 Film, the Audiovisual, and New Technology in Latin America: Public Policy in the Context of Digital Convergence	71
<i>Roque González</i> Translated by <i>Franny Brogan and Randal Johnson</i>	
5 Film Funding Opportunities for Latin American Filmmakers: A Case for Further North–South Collaboration in Training and Film Festival Initiatives	85
<i>Tamara L. Falicov</i>	
6 The Film Festival Circuit: Identity Transactions in a Translational Economy	99
<i>Mar Diestro-Dópidio</i>	
Part II Continental Currents: Documenting and Representing Identities	115
7 Latin American Documentary: A Political Trajectory	117
<i>Michael Chanan</i>	
8 The Politics of Landscape	133
<i>Jens Andermann</i>	
9 From Postmodernity to Post-Identity: Latin American Film after the Great Divide	150
<i>Geoffrey Kantaris</i>	

10	Indigenous Filmmaking in Latin America <i>Charlotte Gleghorn</i>	167
11	What Is the Child for Latin American Cinema? Spectatorship, Mobility, and Authenticity in Pedro González Rubio's <i>Alamar</i> (2009) <i>Deborah Martin</i>	187
12	Affect, Nostalgia, and Modernization: Popular Music in Twenty-First-Century Mexican and Chilean Cinema <i>Duncan Wheeler</i>	201
	Part III National Cinemas: Initiatives, Movements, and Challenges	217
13	Memories of Cuban Cinema, 1959–2015 <i>Joel del Río and Enrique Colina</i> Translated by <i>Stephen M. Hart</i>	219
14	Politics, Memory and Fiction(s) in Contemporary Argentine Cinema: The Kirchnerist Years <i>Maria M. Delgado and Cecilia Sosa</i>	238
15	Neoliberalism and the Politics of Affect and Self-Authorship in Contemporary Chilean Cinema <i>Joanna Page</i>	269
16	Popular Cinema/Quality Television: A New Paradigm for the Mexican Mediascape <i>Paul Julian Smith</i>	285
17	<i>Alumbramento</i> , Friendship, and Failure: New Filmmaking in Brazil in the Twenty-First Century <i>Denilson Lopes</i> Translated by <i>Stephen M. Hart</i>	294
18	The Reinvention of Colombian Cinema <i>Juana Suárez</i>	307
19	Rendering the Invisible Visible: Reflections on the Costa Rican Film Industry in the Twenty-First Century <i>Liz Harvey</i>	325
	Part IV New Configurations: Travel, Technology, Television	341
20	The Horizontal Spread of a Vertical Malady: Cosmopolitanism and History in Pernambuco's Recent Cinematic Sensation <i>Lúcia Nagib</i>	343
21	Artists' Cinema in Brazil <i>André Parente</i> Translated by <i>Randal Johnson</i>	357
22	Brazilian Film and Television in Times of Intermedia Diversification <i>Esther Hamburger</i>	375
23	A Mexican in Hollywood or Hollywood in Mexico? Globalized Culture and Alfonso Cuarón's Films <i>Germán Martínez Martínez</i>	392
24	Latin American Cinema's Trojan Horse <i>Stephen M. Hart and Owen Williams</i>	408

Part V The Interview Corner: Pragmatics and Praxis	431
25 “Finding the right balance”: An Interview with Martín Rejtman <i>Maria M. Delgado</i>	433
26 “Escaping from an ordinary world into a more epic one”: An Interview with Álvaro Brechner <i>Maria M. Delgado</i>	446
27 “The capacity to create mystery”: An Interview with Pablo Larraín <i>Maria M. Delgado</i>	459
28 “A story might be similar from different places, but the language of representation is not”: An Interview with Jeannette Paillán <i>Charlotte Gleghorn</i>	473
29 “Meeting points”: An Interview with Mariana Rondón and Marité Ugás <i>Maria M. Delgado</i>	487
30 “Film is about connecting”: An Interview with Diego Luna <i>Maria M. Delgado</i>	499
31 “The bridge between the others and us”: An Interview with Alejandro González Iñárritu <i>Damon Wise</i>	509
Index	519

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Interviewees

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Alejandro González Iñárritu is a multiple-award-winning Mexican director who now lives in Los Angeles. He is now recognized as a key figure (along with Alfonso Cuarón and Guillermo del Toro) generating an international visibility for twenty-first-century Mexican cinema. His films to date include *Amores perros/Love's a Bitch* (2000), *21 Grams* (2003), *Babel* (2006), *Biutiful* (2010), *Birdman* (2014), and *The Revenant* (2015).

Pablo Larraín is an award-winning Chilean filmmaker. His films as director include *Tony Manero* (2008), *Post mortem* (2010), *No* (2012), *El Club/The Club* (2015), *Neruda* and *Jackie* (both 2016). Fábula, the company he founded with his brother Juan de Dios, has also proved a key player in the wider landscape of Chilean cinema, producing work by Sebastián Lelio, Sebastián Sepúlvera, Sebastián Silva, Esteban Vidal, and Marialy Rivas (among others). Work outside film includes *Prófugos* (co-directed for television 2011 and 2013) and the opera *Katia Kabanová* (directed at Santiago's Teatro Municipal in 2014).

Diego Luna is a Mexican actor, writer, producer, and director. As an actor he has enjoyed key roles in *Y tu mamá también/And Your Mother Too* (2001), *Rudo & Cursi* (Carlos Cuarón, 2008) and *Casa de mi padre* (Matt Piedmont, 2012) – all alongside his childhood friend Gael García Bernal. His films as director include *J.C. Chávez* (2007), *Abel* (2010), *César Chávez* (2014), *Mr Pig* (2016), and a segment of the portmanteau feature *Revolución/Revolution* (2010).

Jeannette Paillán is a Mapuche film producer, director and Indigenous film advocate and activist. Since 2008 she has acted as the general coordinator of the continental film organization the Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Cine y Comunicación de los Pueblos Indígenas (CLACPI; Latin American Coordinating Council for Indigenous Film and Media). Before assuming this demanding role, Paillán directed four films: the documentaries *Punalka: el alto Bio Bio/Punalka: The Upper Biobio* (1995), *Wirariün/The Cry* (1998), *Wallmapu* (2002), and the experimental short fiction film, *Perimontún/Premonition* (2008). Based in Santiago, Chile, she also works with the Indigenous media and research association, Lulul Mawidha.

Martín Rejtman is a Buenos Aires-based filmmaker and writer. He has completed seven films to date: *Doli vuelve a casa/Doli Returns Home* (1986), *Silvia Prieto* (1999), *Los guantes mágicos/The Magic Gloves* (2003), *Copacabana* (2006), *Entrenamiento elemental para actores/Elementary Training for Actors* (co-directed with Federico León, 2009), and *Dos disparos/Two Shots Fired* (2014).

Mariana Rondón is an award-winning Venezuelan screenwriter, director, producer, and visual artist who trained at Cuba's Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión in San Antonio de los Baños (EICTV). Her films include *A la media noche y media/At Midnight and a Half* (co-directed with Marité Ugás, 1999), *Postales de Leningrado/Postcards from Leningrad* (2007), and *Pelo Malo* (2013) – the first film by a Latin American woman to win the Golden Shell at the San Sebastián Film Festival.

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Introduction

Maria M. Delgado, Stephen M. Hart,
and Randal Johnson

This volume is designed to respond to a need for a book on the contemporary Latin American moving image which not only gives a sense of where it is and the many factors that have shaped its development, but also where it is going. Previous studies have looked at the ways in which Latin American cinema emerged and has evolved – periods, genres, movements, aesthetic and political positioning, the relationship between film and other fields of artistic production, often tense relations with Hollywood, women’s filmmaking, the growing internationalization of the region’s production, and so forth.¹ The twenty-first century, however, has produced a whole new set of questions: the dominance of English across global capital and culture; the politics of legibility and cultural translation in the international marketplace; the shifts produced by the new economic prominence of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa); the importance of “soft power” to the circulation and reception of films as national emblems (Nye 2004); the technical advances that have both nurtured new movements in prominent filmmaking cultures (the New Argentine Cinema, Brazil’s garage cinema); the surfacing of new movements and developments in film production (new documentary, slow cinema, short-form cinema, *cine piquetero*); and the technological advances that have allowed smaller nations to nurture a film industry without state funding, as is the case with Guatemala and Costa Rica (Pickard 2015b). This volume attempts to engage these issues through a focus on film production, exhibition, and reception in ways that point both to new directions and to the challenges faced in the making and historicizing of Latin American cinema in the twenty-first century.

It attempts to intervene both on the micro level of analysing particular tendencies, strategies, and initiatives that have emerged from the nation states of Latin America but also wider currents and movements that have a pan-continental application. This is not an attempt to impose a homogeneous understanding of Latin American cinema, but rather to examine some of the discourses that have shaped the construction of contemporary understandings of Latin American film. Indeed, by engaging these categories and conceits we hope to offer an assessment of the state of the continent’s film cultures 15 years into a new century.

Globalized Aesthetics and the Hollywood Connection

Latin American cinema has participated – and in some respects has been an important actor – in the global repositioning of the moving image in the twenty-first century. First, the advent of new digital technologies has revolutionized the ways in which film is now produced and distributed. As Patricia R. Zimmermann observes:

Digital interfaces, platforms, technologies, and programs both continue older entertainment industry economic models, with its [sic] focus on distribution-exhibition, and also open up new formations such as online festivals, Flash, and streaming that reconfigure the relationship between short and the feature-film industry. In a multiplatformed media landscape that spans film, video, broadcasting, video on demand, satellite, CD ROM games, and the internet, the division[s] between technologies are blurred as works migrate between different platforms, with different interfaces. (2005, 225)

Second, this technological paradigm-shift has been accompanied by a growth of competitiveness in film markets across the world. Allen J. Scott has noted that the enduring appeal of Hollywood around the world suggests that it will maintain its international dominance while at the same time drawing attention to film producers in other parts of the world who are “beginning to contest and recontest global markets.” One of the metropolises he points to is Mexico City (2009, 181). Indeed, John Hecht signals the increase in production volume, the enhanced levels of funding, and the heightened presence of Mexican “talent” (especially actors and directors), at market-led film festivals and the consequent exporting of artists as indications of Mexico’s heightened visibility in the global cinema market (cited in de los Reyes 2012). Tellingly, Mexican president Felipe Calderón’s 2011 visit to the USA involved face-to-face conversations with actors as well as politicians, generating heightened levels of media coverage that work towards the promotion of the largest creative industry in Latin America (de los Reyes 2012).²

Alongside, and clearly related to, these two developments, have been the significant successes of a number of Latin American film directors in Hollywood in the twenty-first century. The year 2007 was a crucial milestone in that trajectory, the *annus mirabilis* when three Mexican film directors – who soon became known as the Three Amigos – were nominated between them for no fewer than 16 Oscars.³ The critics began to ask not only “How did these directors get here?” but also “Where did they come from?” A number of opinions were floated at the time as to the secret of their success. Was it to do with outsiders offering a different perspective on national traditions or canonical narratives – what Cuarón sees as “your own vision of life and your own politics” leaking in (cited in Richardson 2006)? Or could it be attributed to slick production values, attractive stars, or what Deborah Shaw terms “an internationally recognized film language” (2013a, 54), where pacy narration intersects with artful editing to create dramatic tone? Critic and academic Emanuel Levy threw his hat into the ring: “It’s not just technical skill, but they also have a fresh approach to storytelling, they have a fresh angle on cinema. [...] They take the best of Hollywood without paying the price. The best way to describe them is one foot in, one foot out” (cited in Brosnan 2007). The Hollywood studio system has always welcomed foreign directors to make films in the U.S., ranging from F.W. Murnau in the 1920s to Paul Verhoeven and Jan de Bont in the 1980s and Bruno Barreto in the 1990s, as Michael Allen has suggested (2003, 69–70), but – particularly in the twenty-first century – the custom took on a new complexion and led to the growth of a globalized, transnational filmic idiom, as argued below.⁴ The power and prominence of the agents “who scour festivals around the world the way a baseball scout combs Dominican Republic ball fields” (Zeitchik 2002), combined with what Steven

Zeitchik identifies as a deepening talent level and the increase in domestic film cultures and funds, has resulted in enhanced numbers of directors whose work has created waves on the international festival circuit being invited to work in Hollywood.

It is perhaps not surprising then that a prominent number of Latin American filmmakers made the decision (and exploited the opportunities) to film in English. The Brazilian film director Fernando Meirelles, for example, released the Portuguese-language film *Cidade de Deus* / *City of God* to considerable acclaim (both in Brazil and beyond)⁵ in 2002, but since then he has filmed in English: *The Constant Gardener* (2005), *Blindness* (2008), and *360* (2011). Alejandro González Iñárritu made his name with *Amores perros* / *Love's a Bitch* (2000), but subsequently gravitated towards works such as the English-language film *21 Grams* (2003), and the defiantly polylingual *Babel* (2006). Mexican Michel Franco followed his 2012 Cannes "Un Certain Regard" prize-winning study of bullying, *Después de Lucía* / *After Lucía*, with *Chronicle* (2015), an intense portrait of a hospice nurse whose role caring for the terminally ill asks probing questions about care, community, and mortality. Guillermo del Toro established his career with the Spanish-language *Cronos* in 1993, and he then went on to make English-language films such as the *Hellboy* sequels and – more recently – *Pacific Rim* (2013) and *Crimson Peak* (2015). For his part Mexican Alfonso Cuarón made his name with *Y tu mamá también* / *And Your Mother Too* (2001), but he then released a film in English, *Children of Men* (2005); his 2013 feature, *Gravity*, a 3-D sci-fi English-language thriller, indeed epitomizes this new globalizing trend. It is worth observing that only three of the 20 films featured in competition in Cannes in 2015 were by native English-speaking directors and yet over half were partly or entirely made in English (Rose 2015). Latin American cinema is thus part and parcel of the globalizing aesthetics of film production in the twenty-first century. There is, however, as Steven Zeitchik observes, an interesting dichotomy at work here in the "low profile" resulting from an ever-decreasing market for non-English-language features in the English-language exhibition market and the "high demand" for foreign-language directors.⁶ For Alfonso Cuarón, however, the issue is more often one of opportunities and a broader shared filmic heritage that Argentine director Martín Rejtman also refers to in the interview with him in this volume (Chapter 25): "The language of cinema is cinema itself: it doesn't matter whether it is filmed in Spanish or English or French or Japanese. The same goes for the people who make it. Yes, I'm a film-maker from Mexico. But I also belong to the world" (Cuarón, cited in Shaw 2013b, 227).

This move to English-language features has proved a prominent trend in the trajectories of a number of Latin American filmmakers and has allowed for a productive interaction between the English- and Spanish-language work – as with del Toro's move from *Hellboy* (2004) to *El laberinto del fauno* / *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) – rather than a simple move from Spanish or Portuguese to English (Hutchings 2014, 84). There are some who view this as a shrewd marketing strategy designed to corner the globalized English-language film market.⁷ Others have recognized the expanded resources and technical possibilities that the larger budgets that long-established and globally powerful U.S. studios permit.⁸ *Amores perros* was made for US\$2 million. González Iñárritu's *The Revenant* (2015) was estimated to cost c.US\$135 million (Wexman and Donnelly 2015).

The move to fund larger-budget English-language features made with significant levels of Latin American creative talent is evidenced by Argentina's Nomad VFX's investment in two US\$20 million fantasy features *Underland*, *the Last Surfer* and *Remora* (Hopewell 2013b). Argentine writer-director Ramiro García Bogliano acknowledges that it is "easier to find interest abroad when producing genre films than here in Argentina" (cited in Hopewell 2013b), a trend that might be addressed both by the new funds established for the promotion of genre features (as with Chile's Eagle Eye Pictures established by producers Igal Weitzman and Barnard Steele) and the partnerships between U.S. and Latin American producers (as with Colombia's 64A Films and U.S.-based Green Dog Films committing to a five-picture "Madremonte" horror project)

(Hopewell 2013b). The global power of the English language renders English-language films a safer commodity in the market; but the problematic comments that circulate around the Latin American filmmakers' visibility in "the North" – as with Sean Penn's racist joke when introducing González Iñárritu at the 2015 Academy Awards: "Who gave this son of a bitch his Green Card?" – indicate that the global economy operates around deeply held cultural paradigms where the Latin American remains the dangerous "other." Nevertheless, clearly, one of the factors behind the success of contemporary Latin American directors in Hollywood has been their willingness to experiment with the language of film itself. From the creation of a butterfly-effect in *Babel* (2006) probing the subtle and tenuous links between individuals on far-flung continents, from Mexico to Japan, Morocco to the United States, to the depiction of weightlessness via the innovative exploration of the very long digital shot in *Gravity* (2013), Latin American directors have been rewriting the grammar and syntax of contemporary film language (Hart 2015b).

Distribution, Exhibition, and New Players on the Block

Some commentators have seen the transition from the overtly left-wing paradigm underlying *cinema novo* and *nuevo cine latinoamericano* in the 1960s to the ideologically elusive films of the twenty-first century as one of the draining of politics out of the frame. At first flush this makes sense given that the geopolitical Third World – which underpinned the Third Cinema that emerged in the 1960s – in effect disappeared along with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. Though not as obvious as Jorge Sanjinés' *Yawar Mallku/Blood of the Condor* (1969), where the lines separating Bolivian Indians from the U.S. Peace Corps are very clearly delineated, twenty-first-century Latin American film still *does* have some political grit. However, even if it is articulated elliptically, as, for example, when we hear in a seemingly random way from the narrator in Alfonso Cuarón's *Y tu mamá también* about the construction worker who died while trying to cross the road to work because the only way to get across safely was via a bridge that was miles away (see Martínez Martínez's essay, Chapter 23 in this volume). First/Third World boundaries of an earlier era have in effect been reconfigured within North–South paradigms in the twenty-first century. A paradigmatic example of this transition is the *cine piquetero* that emerged in Argentina mainly as a result of the financial collapse which occurred there in 2001. Bringing together the standard ingredients of TV reporting – hand-held camera, direct sound, street interviews – with a variety of other devices drawn from music videos, and the use of an ironic *décalage* between the visual and the voiceover, the *cine piquetero* pointed to the birth of a new, dryly critical voice within twenty-first-century Latin American film (see Chanan's essay, Chapter 7 in this volume).

With hindsight it is now clear that 2007 was a turning point for Latin American cinema. In the 1980s and 1990s a Latin American film would often use the main character as a symbol of nationhood; films such as *Camila* (María Luisa Bemberg, 1984), *La historia oficial/The Official Version* (Luis Puenzo, 1984), *Fresa y chocolate/Strawberry and Chocolate* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío, 1993), *La frontera/The Frontier* (Ricardo Larraín, 1992), *El viaje/The Journey* (Fernando Solanas, 1992) and *Central do Brasil/Central Station* (Walter Salles, 1998) spring to mind. The main character functioned in these films as a synecdoche of his or her country's problems; Alicia is Argentina's troubled conscience in the "Dirty War" in *La historia oficial* just as Ramiro is the dispossessed subject of the country owned by Chile's Pinochet in *La frontera*. But New Argentine Cinema brought about a revolution in filmmaking culture, offering a model of lithe, economical filmmaking that challenged assumptions of what constituted Argentine cinema.

Taking its lead from Brazilian *cinema novo*, the studio productions went out of the window in favour of a cinema that engaged in a direct and visceral way with the changes that the country was undergoing. In Mexico filmmakers began reinventing a relationship with Hollywood film in the new millennium and, as they did so, they deconstructed the national allegory that had dominated filmmaking in the previous decade. González Iñárritu's *Babel*, for example, is filmed in Spanish, English, Japanese, and Arabic, and is set in Morocco, Japan, Mexico, and the United States, and attempts to create a "world cinema" which departs radically from essentialist nationalist categories (Shaw 2013b, 135). The relationship to Hollywood film has also been refashioned both through the remaking of Latin American films for an English-language market – as with Fabián Bielinsky's *Nueve reinas/Nine Queens* (2000) as *Criminal* (Gregory Jacobs, 2004) and Juan José Campanella's *El secreto de sus ojos/The Secret in Their Eyes* (2009) as *Secret in Their Eyes* (Billy Ray, 2015) – and the deployment of particular popular genres to provide clear indictments of political corruption and social injustices (see Delgado and Sosa's Chapter 14). Jonás Cuarón's *Desierto* (2015), filmed in English and Spanish, narrates the harrowing experience of migrants crossing the border into the U.S. through a cat-and-mouse chase thriller. The film's Toronto Film Festival premiere on September 13, 2015 was set against the televised images of thousands of migrants who arrived in Munich on the previous day – a telling reminder of the displaced whose predicament and stories has seen record numbers – leaving their homeland for a safer if not better life in the global North.⁹

The cinematic developments delineated in the previous paragraph have been facilitated by the new conditions for the distribution and exhibition of films. These include: digital projection systems that allow films to be screened, in principle, across multiple screens; the easy access to screen content through hand-held games consoles, mobile phones, and computers; and the broad circulation of DVDs (both legitimate and illegitimate) as well as the increase of video on demand. The prominence of television investment in an era where, as Roque González observes in Chapter 4, the average citizen in Latin America watches three to four hours of television a day, has created new content for film with key production companies (Globo Filmes in Brazil; ZFilms in Mexico) especially seeking to tap into these audiences with popular romantic comedies that have proved particularly successful at the domestic box office (Smith 2014).

The conditions of production, distribution, and exhibition of Latin American cinema, however, are bound up not merely with the influence of U.S. cinematic and television products circulated by the multinationals but also wider issues around the retraction of exhibition quotas for domestic product linked to broader neoliberal policies reducing state intervention in economic infrastructure. The advertising industry in Latin America has tellingly served as a fertile training ground for some of its most commercially successful filmmakers (González Iñárritu, Meirelles). The growth of advertising as a mode of shaping public taste has had an impact on the film industry in a range of ways (see Sánchez Prado 2014), and continues to do so. The rise of film festivals and other means of exhibiting and showcasing national products both within and beyond the nation state, can be linked to the expansion and internationalization of the advertising industry in Latin America, as the potential of its cultural markets, especially lower income demographics, is explored (see Torres-Baumgarten 2012; Media Buying 2014). As Nataly Kelly (2015) observes:

Latin America is a modern marketer's dream, and not just because of its size. By 2020, nearly one out of every 10 dollars in the world economy will come from Latin America. The region will soon represent 10% of the global population and 9% of global GDP, with 640 million customers. It also has the fourth-largest mobile market in the world, with social media adoption even surpassing that of the United States.

This volume appears at a time of shifting relations within Latin American cinema that echo those occurring on the global stage. Long-held assumptions about the power dynamics of the dominant audiovisual nations (habitually Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina) have also been unsettled by new players on the block. In 2014 Colombia overtook Argentina (battered by high inflation and a weakened currency) as Latin America's third-largest economy (Ammannchchi 2014), a position reflected in the shift of its film market – three Colombian films were released in 1996, 23 were released in 2012 (see Proimágenes 2013). Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama) has also begun to see shifts in its film economies as fiscal growth is reflected in an analogous expansion of its cinema market. This is evidenced in the modernization of existing cinemas, an increase from 489 screens in 2012 to 507 in 2014, an increase in local film production, and the establishment of new festivals to promote domestic products (Pickard 2015a). The screening of Miguel Gómez's modest US\$200,000 Costa Rican comedy *Maikol Yordan de viaje perdido*/*Maikol Yordan* (2014), at the International Film Festival in Panama in April 2015 served as a means of "launching" it across the Central American market following a record-breaking performance at the domestic box office, with gross of over US\$3.5 million in the period between December 18, 2014 and April 11, 2015 (Pickard 2015a). Nine films were produced in Costa Rica through the twentieth century; the first 15 years of the twenty-first century have seen over 30 (Murillo 2015), with *Maikol Yordan de viaje perdido* and *Viaje* (Paz Fábrega, 2015) conspicuous commercial and critical successes across different exhibition circuits.

These developments are matched by others across the region. In 2010 when presenting *Las marimbas del infierno*/*Marimbas from Hell* at the San Sebastián Film Festival, Guatemalan director Julio González Córdón defined himself as an "outsider," positioning his home country as a place where making films is anything but "lógico" (logical) because of the absence of a film institute, proactive legislation or public funding for cinema (Cinefagia). The creation of a Unidad de Cine by the country's Ministry of Culture and Sport in 2014 to promote the nation's cinema led to the selection of Jayro Bustamente's *Ixcánul*/*Ixcánul Volcano* (2015) as the country's first-ever entry for the Foreign Language category of the Academy Awards. Indeed, Bustamente and González Córdón are part of a new generation that includes Sergio Ramírez and Enrique Pérez Him, whose visibility and press across the international festival circuit has helped persuade the Guatemalan government of the value of cinema's "soft power."

This cultural intervention to help shape an environment that will encourage investment in the wider industrial infrastructure needs to be positioned within the country's broader ambitions to aid investment and job creation, with a foreign direct investment (FDI) increase of 93% from 2009 to 2013 and a series of initiatives introduced to facilitate the opening of businesses, tax payments, and the attainment of construction permits (O'Boyle 2014). Guatemala has recognized the possibilities offered by promoting the distinctive "selling point" of its cinemas within the global film market.

Other nations have prioritized initiatives to secure broader economic influence through cinema. Panama's International Film Festival, established in 2012, has functioned as an exhibition and investment platform for domestic features as well as films from other Central American countries. Thirteen features were produced in Panama between 2012 and 2015, in comparison with just five in the 12 years before that (Pickard 2015a). Festivals serve as shop windows for national products – a lesson learned from Buenos Aires' International Film Festival's highly effective showcasing of the New Argentine cinema (see Diestro-Dópidio's Chapter 6). The decision to close the 2015 edition of Panama's International Film Festival with Damien Chazelle's Oscar-winning *Whiplash* (2014) also points to its position as a "launch platform" for prominent North American fare into Central America (Pickard 2015c), signalling the wider anxieties and fissures between cultural transmission and the economic imperatives that drive distribution.

The inclusion of a chapter on developments in Costa Rican filmmaking contributes to a broader engagement with these “emerging” (in film terms) nations. It is also one of the ways in which the volume seeks to question (and perhaps unsettle) assumptions about what constitutes the counter-hegemonic within the different models of filmmaking in operation in Latin America.

Our Approach

While focusing on the recent successes of Latin American film in the twenty-first century we have also traced some of its characteristic leitmotifs back to the foundational movements of *cinema nuovo* and *nuevo cine latinoamericano*. This functions as a way of positioning and contextualizing more recent developments, ensuring that current developments are historicized. This is the case with the relationship of Indigenous filmmakers’ Fourth Cinema to Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino’s concept of Third Cinema (see Gleghorn’s Chapter 10), or the line that could be seen to link Patricio Guzmán’s documentaries to the *nuevo cine latinoamericano* movement (see Chanan’s Chapter 7). Jens Andermann’s consideration of landscape moves from silent and early sound film through to the cinema of the 1960s and 1970s and into the twenty-first century, placing rural locations as a screen onto which narratives of origin are projected but also a mode of resisting such narratives by laying an emphasis on the particularities of the local (see Chapter 8).

The expansive range of the remit of our study includes films made within the continent and those made with significant input from Latin American artists and technicians outside of Latin America, habitually with a Latin American director at the helm, with examples ranging from *Diarios de motocicleta/Motorcycle Diaries* (2004) to *Gravity* (2013). The volume incorporates the wider industries within Latin America through which the films are produced and the distribution structures (both domestic and foreign-funded) that shape exhibition. Crucially, however it also involves a wider discussion of how films circulate and are consumed in ways that allow for an understanding of what happens to the vernacular when films are taken out of their domestic context and screened elsewhere.

Our emphasis also covers a consideration of the industrial layers of Latin American cinema, i.e. how it has been funded over time, and the ways in which it has been produced, distributed, and commercialized. From president of the Rio Film Commission Steve Solot’s examination of public policy objectives for the audiovisual sector in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico to Tamara Falicov’s overview of the funding models that Latin American filmmakers have generated in order to finalize and distribute their projects in both the domestic and international markets, to the ways in which film festivals and film schools create and disseminate new talent, the focus is on mapping the concrete modes in which films are made. The interviews with actors, producers, and directors point to the complex interplay of inputs that come together in the creation of a film.

We see our book as particularly sensitive to a number of the developments which have occurred in Latin American film in the twenty-first century. Thus we have focused on genres such as comedy (Enrique Colina and Joel del Río’s essay on Cuban film), romantic drama (Germán Martínez Martínez’s essay on Alfonso Cuarón’s work), and science fiction (Stephen Hart and Owen Williams’ essay on *Gravity*), as well as the use of genre to comment on particular social and ethical issues (as in Maria M. Delgado and Cecilia Sosa’s treatment of Campanella’s *El secreto de sus ojos*). While we recognize the importance of auteurist cinema, with figures such as Cuarón, del Toro, González Iñárritu, Martel, and Salles featuring across a number of essays, populist genres that have secured significant box-office success are also given due attention (as in Paul Julian

Smith's essay). Furthermore, the essays on stardom (by Leah Kemp and Randal Johnson) provide a way of understanding both the appeal of certain Latin American films and the ways in which the marketing of well-known actors contributes to that appeal. Stars have proved a potent means of selling products, commodities that work in association with the tools of the trade (publicity photographs, carefully monitored press interviews) to cultivate public personas that intersect with their screen identities.

While our book includes essays on significant national cinematic traditions (Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica), we have also focused on transcultural movements such as the documentary filmmaking tradition (as in Michael Chanan's essay). We have resisted the temptation to see films as discrete entities but instead have analysed the connections between film and documentary (in Enrique Colina and Joel del Río's essay), film and television (as in the essays by Paul Julian Smith, Esther Hamburger, Denilson Lopes, and Randal Johnson), film and art (as in André Parente's essay), film and literature (in Geoffrey Kantaris' essay), film and theatre (in Leah Kemp's consideration of stardom and Delgado and Sosa's contribution on Argentine cinema), and film and music (in Duncan Wheeler's essay). It is an understanding of film that both accommodates and highlights its interdisciplinary modalities as well as its varied exhibition contexts (cinemas, art galleries, theatres, personal computers, tablets, smartphones, etc.).

Cinema is always to a lesser or greater extent about the emotions, experiences, and expectations generated when a film is seen, and our decision to bring together filmmakers, industry professionals, academics, and journalists from Latin America as well as the U.S. and U.K. into the discussion is in part a mode of engaging with the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual legacies of Latin American cinema. We have also ensured that we assemble contributors at different stages of their careers, from early-career researchers to established scholars; thus we include the views of filmmakers working within a transnational commercialized studio context (Alejandro González Iñárritu) with those who work firmly within an alternative circuit (André Parente). Issues of gender prevail for Chilean filmmaker Jeannette Paillán, Peruvian Marité Ugás, and Venezuelan Mariana Rondón. Rondón also functions within a different understanding of what a Latin American film sensibility might be to Uruguayan Álvaro Brechner, who divides his time between Madrid and Montevideo. We have juxtaposed those who write about cinema with those who work in the industry (particularly in Part V, which includes interviews with eight practitioners), encouraging participation in the discussion of how their work is written about and disseminated. While we have followed the *Chicago Manual of Style*, we have also respected cultural difference, allowing for different spellings (e.g. theatre/theater, programme/program) and respecting the idioms of those writing in English as a second language – these, after all, are the realities of a global culture of exchange where difference should be recognized and accommodated.

We have encouraged different critical approaches to the phenomenon of the Latin American film, ranging from qualitative (Enrique Colina and Joel del Río) to quantitative (Stephen Hart and Owen Williams). We have provided English translations for films as well as their release dates. In the chapters where a range of films from different countries are discussed, nations are also mentioned as a way of appropriately contextualizing the discussion. We have explored the tensions and problems experienced by those who work in the film industry in Latin America (particularly in Part V), and we have allowed their priorities to guide the discussion and the analysis of contemporary Latin American film. Rather than seeing our book as featuring outsiders looking in, we wanted to allow those working in the industry to have their say. In this sense our book involves practitioners writing the history of their craft. Germán Martínez

Martínez has worked closely with Alfonso Cuarón in writing his essay about the portrayal of global culture in the latter's films. Joel del Río has written his history of Cuban cinema jointly with the documentary filmmaker, Enrique Colina. Denilson Lopes' engagement with garage cinema is experienced from the ground up. One of the principles guiding our composition of this book has been that it should be as useful to those working in the industries as those writing about it.

The Five Parts

Our book has not attempted to provide a chronological survey of Latin American cinema based on national criteria, but instead has focused on five separate but complementary parts on the mechanics of the film industry, continental currents, the representation of Latin American identities, and new configurations, rounded off with a set of interviews with some industry practitioners that work to show "insider" perspectives on the filmmaking process in the continent. Combining the gaze of the theorist with that of the practitioner has drawn attention to the enduring significance of a number of key issues. A number of the essays in Part I, for example, which focus on funding, production, distribution, and exhibition in the film industry, resonate strongly with the insights which emerge in Part V; our interviewees are, on the one hand, exercised by the seemingly intractable disparity between production and exhibition in the film industry, and they are excited, on the other, by the opportunities offered by new digital technologies. Part II, which analyses the emergence of the new documentary genre, Indigenist filmmaking, and the new political role played by landscape and the image of the child in Latin American film, offers a clear contrast with the representation of more "traditional" national identities as discussed in Part III. We see more clearly how Latin American cinema transitioned away from the type of cinema in which the protagonist of the film acts as a synecdoche of the trajectory of his/her nation. Part IV, which addresses the emergence of the far-reaching cross-fertilization between film, television, advertising, and music videos, chimes with a number of points raised by the interviewees in Part V, for whom Latin American film is a resolutely osmotic reality that merges and reconfigures itself in unexpected new ways with other media. The parts do not function as homogeneous entities but rather offer modes of reading and reflecting on the key developments in Latin American cinema in the twenty-first century. This includes both wider initiatives in policy, the ascendancy of particular genres, and detailed readings of selected films that have marked a shift or development in national, trans-regional, and transnational cinema, as with *Alamar* (Pedro González-Rubio, 2009), *Estrada para Ythaca/Road to Ythaca* (Pedro Diogenes, Guto Parente, Luiz Pretti, Ricardo Pretti, 2010), *Abel* (Diego Luna, 2010), and *O Som ao Redor/Neighbouring Sounds* (Kleber Mendonça, 2012).

Furthermore, working closely with the contributors to this volume we have seen a number of motifs emerge across the book's five parts. A number of these have already been commented on in this introduction – politics; the relationship between representation, agency, and cultural formation; the changing practices of filmmaking in the digital age; the cross-fertilization of television and cinema. The disparity between production and exhibition – analysed by Roque González – is also commented on in very practical terms by Martín Rejtman.¹⁰ Jens Andermann's argument that cinema has served to map Latin America for viewers both national and foreign, is illustrated across Debbie Martin, Lúcia Nagib, and Joanna Page's treatment of select films that have engaged with the local impact of global capitalism.

I The Film Industry: Funding, Production, Distribution, Exhibition

In recent years in Latin America the economic infrastructure for film has changed radically. Film policy has been reoriented away from direct subsidies to schemes based on fiscal incentives (tax deductions). In Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, for example, which have traditionally been the most productive in terms of cinematic culture, these schemes have included MPA member companies, which are provided with tax incentives to invest in national film production. The global has, therefore, become an integral and essential part of the local. At the same time, production companies have become more sophisticated on a global scale and have devised new forms of international co-productions (with Ibermedia, for example) that allow for a more effective international circulation of their products. The visibility of online viewing platforms like Festival Scope and MUBI has also assisted with the circulation of films to cultural agents (programmers and industry professionals).

All these factors have increased market pressure on filmmakers, and this has manifested itself as a pressure to make films that appeal to a significant public rather than a like-minded audience or to create work that can find a niche market within the festival circuit. This, in turn, has had aesthetic consequences (one might refer to a neoliberal imposition), resulting both in films that are more mainstream and less experimental or that follow particular aesthetic lines that respond to a cult festival success – here the critical success of Lisandro Alonso’s *La libertad / Freedom* (2001) appears particularly pertinent: a film whose ending was revised prior to its Cannes screening at the request of the festival’s programmers.¹¹ The pervasive role played by sales agents and programmers at the major A-list festivals has been mentioned earlier in this introduction; it is part of the more expansive international circulation of talent that globalization has brought with it. This part addresses this development in a range of ways: through the role of film festivals in Latin America as market showpieces for regional films; through a discussion of stars as mediated commodities and constructions, commercial assets embodying and promoting particular conceits that add “value” to a film; and through a delineation of the different ways in which film policy and film production have created a new landscape for Latin American film in the contemporary era.

The latter has evidently had implications on the production and circulation of work. During the 1980s and 1990s almost half of Latin America’s cinemas closed (Getino 2005, 85); the high price of cinema tickets and the limited income of a significant proportion of the population led to a rise in piracy. In his chapter, Randal Johnson discusses the emergence and evolution of a star system in Brazil at key moments of the development of the country’s audiovisual industry, exemplifying Brazilian stardom with the trajectories of Regina Casé, who is featured in Ana Muylaert’s award-winning *Que Horas Ela Volta? / The Second Mother* (2015), and Wagner Moura, star of the Netflix series *Narcos*. In “Stardom in Spanish America,” Leah Kemp explores the different trajectories of three major actors, Alfredo Castro, Ricardo Darín, and Gael García Bernal, considering their intersecting roles as local heroes and champions of their national cinemas, as well as their status as “icons of global modernity” (Meeuf and Raphael 2013, 4). This is particularly evident in the work they have released in 2015: Ricardo Darín as the “everyman” actor now based in Madrid – a comment perhaps on his own transnational work in Spain – trying to “author” his own final act on receiving a terminal diagnosis in Cesc Gay’s Spanish–Argentine co-production *Truman*; Gael García Bernal as the migrant trying to cross into the USA to rejoin his family in *Desierto*, building on his track record of “heroic” (on- and off-screen) roles as a “leader” trying to mobilize a community; while Alfredo Castro’s dual roles – as the jittery, calculating Chilean priest in Pablo Larraín *El club / The Club* and the repressed dental prosthetist in Lorenzo Vigas *Desde allá /*

From Afar – consolidate his position as an actor able to embody the institutional corruption sanctioned by the structures and legacy of a dictatorship. His role in *Desde allá* further illustrates his growing cultural worth as outside Chile – illustrating the trans-regional reach illustrated by Kemp in her essay. Steve Solot, in “Audiovisual Sector Incentives and Public Policy in Selected Latin American Countries,” and Roque González, in “Film, the Audiovisual, and New Technology in Latin America: Public Policy in the Context of Digital Convergence,” examine the conditions that have shaped the production and exhibition of work. Tamara Falicov, in her essay “Film Funding Opportunities for Latin American Filmmakers: A Case for Further North–South Collaboration in Training and Film Festival Initiatives,” documents the different funding models that Latin American filmmakers have worked with in order to make and exhibit work both at home and further afield. Her acknowledgement of the growing importance of major international film festival as an investor in Latin American film is further elaborated by Mar Diestro-Dópidio in her treatment of “The Film Festival Circuit: Identity Transactions in a Translational Economy.” Diestro-Dópidio analyses the role that the festivals in the region have played in both promoting the “new waves” of films and in cultures of nation-building that further question essentialist notions of a unified Latin American cinema.

II Continental Currents: Documenting and Representing Identities

Latin American film is often associated with the left-wing film of the 1960s and 1970s, typified by the *nuevo cine latinoamericano* of film directors such as Fernando Birri and Jorge Sanjinés, and the *cinema novo* epitomized by the Brazilian film director Glauber Rocha. The 1960s and 1970s were also associated in Latin America with the development of the notion of Third Cinema, along with manifestos – such as Julio García Espinosa’s “Por un cine imperfecto” (“For an Imperfect Cinema”) – which called for an end to the hegemony of Hollywood cinema. This part seeks to challenge the traditional equation drawn between Latin American cinema and politics that is rooted in the 1960s and 1970s and to redraw the map of the role played by politics in contemporary Latin American cinema. In this part there is thus some focus on the shift from the highly political cinematic production of the 1960s and 1970s to a much more dispersed and accessible film in the contemporary era where the role of political ideology is arguably more nuanced. Michael Chanan, in his essay on “Latin American Documentary: A Political Trajectory,” provides an overview of the role played by documentary cinema in Latin America’s recent history, tracing its evolution from the politically committed cinema of the 1960s created by the Grupo Cine Liberación, through the ethnographic turn of the 1970s, to the *teleanálisis*, Indigenous video, and *cine piquetero* of more recent times. Films like Patricio Guzmán’s *Nostalgia de la luz/Nostalgia for the Light* (2012) – where astronomy is used as a way into the legacy of the Pinochet regime in the Atacama desert – and Gastón Solnicki’s *Papirosen* (2012), where the filmmaker’s search into his own family’s past serves as a wider commentary on displacement, disappearance, and the wider genealogy of the Jewish diaspora in Buenos Aires – indicate the ways in which the political and the personal intersect to provide new modes of narrating, and indeed historicizing, the military dictatorships of Chile and Argentina respectively.

Jens Andermann’s “The Politics of Landscape” illustrates the ways in which landscape has characterized the evolution of Latin American cinema from 1895 to the present day, offering a mode of reflecting on the politics of place and space that reinforces the singularity of the local. Geoffrey Kantaris, in his essay “From Postmodernity to Post-Identity: Latin American Film after the Great Divide,” asks provocative questions about how the postmodern might be read in modern Latin American cinema, and what the implications might be for a technological administration of affect

that has gone beyond the confines of cinema and television, and how this might be read as the new paradigm of a post-cinematic order.

For her part, Charlotte Gleghorn's essay on "Indigenous Filmmaking in Latin America" reveals the ways in which movies filmed in the Indigenous languages of Latin America have become an instrument for cultural renewal, linguistic revitalization, and self- and collective expression, while Debbie Martin's essay, entitled "What Is the Child for in Latin American Cinema? Spectatorship, Mobility, and Authenticity in Pedro González Rubio's *Alamar* (2009)," uses the test-case of *Alamar* to show how the child protagonist in film invites a degree of spectatorial mobility and allows the adult viewer a means of negotiating contradictory experiences. Duncan Wheeler, in "Affect, Nostalgia and Modernization: Popular Music in Twenty-First-Century Mexican and Chilean Cinema," focuses not on the modes in which ostensibly traditional national music has contributed to the successful branding of Latin American films within the global marketplace but rather on how North American and European popular music has been used to as a signifier of both mnemonic affect and modernization.

III National Cinemas: Initiatives, Movements, and Challenges

The secondary literature on Latin American cinema in the past has traditionally focused on the "representation" of the "Latin American nation" in a selection of canonical Latin American films, and in this part we seek to move the discussion to what in our view is a more fruitful site for analysis, namely, the study of the representations of social issues and the representations of identity. Themes covered in this part include the gradual transition away from a type of cinema in which the main character acts as a synecdoche of his or her country's problems (common in the 1980s and 1990s, and even earlier) to a more nuanced expression of national identity in films released in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Enrique Colina and Joel del Río, in their essay on "Memories of Cuban Cinema 1959–2015," provide a chronological survey of Cuban film from 1959 until the present day. Maria M. Delgado and Cecilia Sosa, in their essay "Politics, Memory and Fiction(s) in Contemporary Argentine Cinema: The Kirchnerist Years," explore how filmmakers responded to Kirchnerism's promotion of memory politics, demonstrating the promotion of a culture of mourning within the public sphere. Joanna Page, in "Neoliberalism and the Politics of Affect and Self-Authorship in Contemporary Chilean Cinema," picks up on a number of the issues that resonate through Delgado and Sosa's chapter, focusing on a range of post-2005 Chilean films that, despite the high critical acclaim they have achieved, have been criticized for passively reproducing the logic of neoliberalism in their retreat into the intimate spaces of private life. Paul Julian Smith, in "Popular Cinema/Quality Television: A New Paradigm for the Mexican Mediascape," analyses the reasons why the cinema industry in Mexico has in recent years produced a steady stream of blockbusters, most of which are romantic comedies, which points to the emergence of a new paradigm of popular cinema. Denilson Lopes uses the film *Estrada para Ythaca* as a vehicle with which to trace the evolution of twenty-first-century filmmaking in Brazil. In "The Reinvention of Colombian Cinema," Juana Suárez offers a new timeline of contemporary Colombian cinema and analyses the challenges and opportunities caused by recent changes in legislation and production within the Colombian film industry. Liz Harvey, in "Rendering the Invisible Visible: Reflections on the Costa Rican Film Industry in the Twenty-First Century," demonstrates how Costa Rican film has managed as a result of a new generation of filmmakers such as Paz Fábrega, Esteban Ramírez, Ishtar Yasin, and Hernán Jiménez, to establish a new presence within the contemporary Latin American film industry.

IV New Configurations: Travel, Technology, Television

Rather than limiting its analysis to the role of new media – as has been the case in the secondary literature published on this theme until now – this section focuses on hybridity and cross-fertilization between media and other fields of production (i.e., art cinema, television, advertising, music videos) in Latin America. We survey changing trends in film production – as created especially by the digital turn – in a range of Latin American countries, and analyse the ability of the contemporary Latin American film to compete in national as well as international markets. We focus not only on the success stories but also provide analysis of some test-cases of the difficulties faced by some contemporary Latin American filmmakers in achieving adequate marketing support, distribution, and recognition for their work.

Lúcia Nagib, in “The Horizontal Spread of a Vertical Malady: Cosmopolitanism and History in Pernambuco’s Recent Cinematic Sensation,” argues that, despite the characters’ late postmodernist disconnect from local context and history, Kleber Mendonça’s *O Som ao Redor* provides a new, arresting vision of the interplay between regional and national history in contemporary Brazil. Ester Hamburger, in her essay entitled “Brazilian Film and Television in Times of Intermedia Diversification,” demonstrates that from the turn of the century onwards the relationship between television and the film industry has become more complex in Brazil; cinematic priorities have penetrated both free and pay television and TV stars have become increasingly present in blockbuster films, while independent film production companies have gained space both in theatrical and television markets. André Parente, in “Artists’ Cinema in Brazil,” looks at the ways in which movements such as *cinema marginal* have combined photography, audiovisuals, video, and cinema in new artistic forms that call for a new participation on the part of audiences and introduce new forms of temporality into artwork. Germán Martínez Martínez, for his part, in “A Mexican in Hollywood or Hollywood in Mexico? Globalized Culture and Alfonso Cuarón’s Films,” uses the media story which, in Mexico, greeted the award of an Oscar for Best Director to Alfonso Cuarón in 2014 as a point of departure for an analysis of the globalized filmic idiom that characterizes Cuarón’s work from *Sólo con tu pareja/Life in the Time of Hysteria* (1991) to *Gravity*, while Stephen Hart and Owen Williams, in “Latin American Cinema’s Trojan Horse,” use quantitative data to analyse the crucial role played by the digital turn in the evolution of Latin American film in the twenty-first century. The focus on Brazil and Mexico in this part is not accidental, but rather a recognition of the pervasive influence of both nations’ cinemas across the continent and beyond.

V The Interview Corner: Pragmatics and Praxis

In interviews with Álvaro Brechner, Alejandro González Iñárritu, Diego Luna, Pablo Larraín, Jeanette Paillán, Martín Rejtman, Mariana Rondón and Marité Ugás, a number of themes emerge. These include the difficulties involved in raising funding for films in Latin America, as well as working with distributors in the United States, Europe, and beyond. The focus is both on specific films, which are discussed in some detail, as well as the broader process of filmmaking. One issue which emerges across a number of interviews is that of representativity. Jeanette Paillán, for example, highlights how Brazil’s population of African descent are poorly represented in terms of agency; a significant proportion of films about race and postcolonialism which have a potential audience of 15,000,000 Afro-Brazilian viewers are made by white filmmakers. Martín Rejtman

discusses his training and working practices, his influences, and the wider context of filmmaking in Argentina. Pablo Larraín reflects on the ways in which he attempts to cultivate a particular look for *El club* / *The Club* (2015) at a time when digital cameras threaten to impose a homogeneity on the image. Álvaro Brechner shares information about the genesis of his films and his work with actors as well as the development of the Uruguayan film industry in the twenty-first century. Alejandro González Iñárritu discusses the filming of *The Revenant*; he explains how he moulded the story of the American bear-trapper Hugh Glass – which was originally a story about revenge – and turned it into a story about man's relationship with nature so that it would resonate with a twenty-first-century audience. The best way, he found, to express that story was to avoid extreme fragmentation or extreme artificiality, use digital long takes and create what he calls a “sonic painting” (see Chapter 31). Diego Luna reflects on the genesis of *Abel* (2010), his feature debut as a director; the film is autobiographical, focusing on the progression from childhood to fatherhood as viewed through the looking-glass of the story of Oedipus and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Mariana Rondón and Marité Ugás mention the importance of Cuba's International Film School in San Antonio de los Baños, where they were introduced to a model of filmmaking that they have promoted in all their subsequent work as directors, screenwriters, producers, and, in Ugás' case, editor. Diego Luna ruminates on the differences involved in directing documentary and fiction and the importance of the structure offered by Canana, the production company he co-founded with Gael García Bernal and Pablo Cruz. Larraín also reflects on the importance of the working relationship with his brother Juan de Dios and their company Fábula, to his filmmaking. (Interestingly both Canana and Fábula are partners with Colombia's Dynamo and Participant Media in Participant PanAmerica, an initiative launched in 2013 to finance socially important films emerging from Latin America.¹²) In all cases the interviews offer telling insights on what it means to make and exhibit work in Latin American in the twenty-first century.

This book is not comprehensive – it does not, for example, offer significant coverage of film clubs, dubbing, archives, film institutes, or newsreels, and coverage does not incorporate all the continent. We do hope, nevertheless, that the paradigms we explore and the methodologies we put forward will be of use to both industry professionals and scholars working in this area, and that future scholars will build on what we offer here in our historicizing of the complex intersection of competing narratives on Latin American cinema.

Notes

- 1 There are a number of important studies on the field. Among these the following should be mentioned: Johnson and Stam (1982), Chanan (1985), Johnson (1987), King (1990), Foster (1992), Pick (1993), King, López, and Alvarado (2003), Shaw (2003, 2013), Elena and Díaz Lopez (2003), Nagib (2003), Hart (2004, 2015a, 2015b), Vieira (2005), Wood (2006), Falicov (2007), Soutar (2008), Page (2009), Haddu and Page (2009), Schiwy (2009), Richards (2010), Tierney and Ruétalo (2010), Gutiérrez (2010), Matheou (2010), Amaya (2010), Russo (2010), Podalsky (2011), Aguilar (2011), Bermúdez Barrios (2011), Andermann (2012), Tomkins (2013), Queipo (2013), Smith (2014), Sánchez Prado (2014), Poblete and Suárez (2015), Kwon and Solot (2015), and Schroeder (2016).
- 2 For further details on the importance of the creative industries to Mexico, see Hartley, Wen, and Siling Li, 2015, 148–152. Mexico's strength in this area lies not simply in the “exporting” of talent to Hollywood, but also to its longstanding position as a location for highly visible Hollywood films, from *The Night of the Iguana* (1964) to *Titanic* (1997) and *Spectre* (2015).
- 3 Brosnan 2007. González Iñárritu received seven nominations for *Babel*, Guillermo del Toro's *El laberinto del fauno* received six, and Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men* received three nominations.