

Interview: 'Silvia' at the 34th Chicago Latino Film Festival on April 11, 2018

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CHICAGO – Discovering new filmmaking talent often starts with the short film, and the 34th Chicago Latino Film Festival is showcasing shorts before many of their feature films during the fest. Local Chicago director Diego Bolivar has submitted “Silvia,” a dreamy thesis on the decisions that many immigrants have to make while residing in America. The film will be shown with the feature film Translucid/Translúcido on April 11th, 2018. [Click here](#) [17] for more details.



The Title Character (Silvia Barreneche) Makes a Decision in 'Silvia'
Photo credit: [ChicagoLatinoFilmFestival.org](#)

Silvia (Silvia Barreneche) is living in Chicago, but has made the decision to return to her native country Columbia. She is packed and ready to go, constantly in touch with her mother via phone. While taking the myriad public transportation connections to get to the airport, the pulse of the urban center seems to be beating in her direction. Despite all the factors she has thought of, is she making the right decision?

HollywoodChicago.com spoke with director Diego Bolivar regarding “Silvia,” and the background to creating the film.

HollywoodChicago.com: What is your background, your history as a director and why is this film a personal statement from you?

Diego Bolivar: I was born in Bogotá, Colombia, and studied cinema in Buenos Aires, and for the last couple years I've been based in Chicago. I'm a freelancer, directing corporate videos, commercials and video clips, as well as doing camera operation and editing. This year, I also directed the commercial for the Chicago Latino Film Festival.

'Silvia' is a story that shows the immigrants that come to this country, especially the younger people who have to make transcendental decisions in their lives. These are people who have not yet found their place in the world, and who are in that search. I identify with the story

because it reflects, in some way, what I felt when making these types of decisions, which was also the experience of many of my friends.

HollywoodChicago.com: There are many reasons why people immigrate to the United States, and your film focuses on the pressure to come home. How difficult is it to be torn between the hope that the United States offers and the homesickness when leaving a home country?

Bolivar: Being divided between these two roads is very difficult for every immigrant and there are things that you leave in your country of origin – friends, family, memories, customs and traditions – that will always clash with starting a new life in another country.

The hope offered by the United States is linked to an economic incentive and a lifestyle, which is often what you don't have in your origin country. So being in the middle of that dichotomy is something that always happens to people when deciding what to do with their lives. It is a very difficult decision, because starting over is not easy for anyone, and more so if you are alone.

HollywoodChicago.com: Your film has a dream-like quality to it... what was behind the decision to counterpoint Silvia's decision with scenes of daily life in the downtown area of Chicago?

Bolivar: The idea of including images in black and white, as if they were part of another movie, is linked to the idea of showing the reflection of specific loneliness for Silvia in a big city in this country. In that part of the film, there are only lonely people in the midst of the immensity that is Chicago. I observe this almost every day, all the people who have come to this country, feeling alone in the middle of a big city.

As you can see in the film, there is an adult woman, there is an African-American girl, there is a white guy grabbing a smoke and there is a Latino who is taking out the trash... the idea was to show the diversity of the people in Chicago. It's possible that Silvia is going to look like them in the future.



In Chicago: Diego Bolivar, Director of 'Silvia'

Photo credit: DBO Films

HollywoodChicago.com: Besides the constant and complex difficulties in maintaining life status in the United States and the possibility of deportation, what in your observation is the greatest fear of immigrants in the United States currently?

Bolivar: The greatest fear of immigrants remains their illegality, naturally, because living in that state of mind is not tranquil for anyone. The fear of being deported deprives immigrants of the dream that originally brought them there in the first place. On the other hand, if you do form a family here, and you are deported, it also becomes a problem for those who remain behind. It is very difficult from any angle.

HollywoodChicago.com: In your shot selection and editing decisions, which filmmakers do you admire that has a similar eye and style, and why?

Bolivar: I admire many directors... among them Aki Kaurismäki, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Andrei Tarkosky and Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu. I think that from each of them I have unconsciously acquired ideas and styles, but I do not seek to imitate any filmmaker. I am in search of my own 'something,' and in that search my idea is to experiment. I think that 'Silvia' has that something, because it was such a personal journey.

The 34th Latino Film Festival takes place through April 19th, 2018, at the AMC River East 21 Theatres, 322 East Illinois Street, Chicago. For film schedules and ticket information [click here](#). [18]

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