

Puerto Rican filmmaker brings his "Aroma de Azucenas" to the Tampa Bay International Latin Film Festival

The film is a homage to the figure and legacy of Saúl Dávila a legendary street flower vendor in San Juan who has stood the test of time for more than 50 years.

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO, UNITED STATES, September 12, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Azucena

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Over half a century, Saul has become an emblematic symbol of our Puerto Rican folklore as a street flower vendor everyone loves and I wanted to feature his unique story and legacy.”

Julián Garnik, Filmmaker

Lilies are emblematic and traditional flowers of Puerto Rican culture with a rich and diverse symbolism that spans across generations on the Island. On September 16th, the Tampa Bay International Latin Film Festival 2023 will screen Puerto Rican filmmaker Julián Garnik's short film "Aroma de Azucenas". This short story is centered on the figure and legacy of Saúl Dávila, a legendary street flower vendor in Puerto Rico who has stood the test of time and sold a unique and distinctive flower called "azucena" almost every day for the past 50 years, resisting

widespread automatization and work displacement, such as his, to become an iconic symbol of Puerto Rico's cultural tradition.

Julián Garnik is a Puerto Rican filmmaker, born and raised on the island and his films have been awarded and screened at several international festivals, including the Oregon Short Film Festival, the Rincon International Film Festival, and the Puerto Rican Heritage International Film Festival. As a videographer and commercial editor, he has worked with a range of brands and clients, including Adidas, Zeiss, the non-profit Hispanic Federation, Acacia Network, and the Loaisida Cultural Center in New York City.

According to Garnik, "when the idea arose to tell the story of Saúl Dávila, someone I have seen selling flowers in the streets since I was growing up in Puerto Rico, I welcomed it with a lot of emotion and curiosity. I distinctly remember the sweet aroma that enveloped our home every time my mother bought these flowers from him. Over the years, Saul has become an emblematic symbol of our folklore and I wanted to bring him to the screen given his story and legacy".

Dávila has been the central theme in urban murals, one of the “cabezudos” in the renowned Fiestas de San Sebastián in Old San Juan, as well as paintings and pop songs. This iconic Boricua has been part of ballet concerts, and cultural festivals, and even the New York Times featured his story.

The Tampa Bay International Latino Film Festival will be held on September 16 from 4:00 p.m. at the Creative Pinellas Center located at 12211 Walsingham Road, Largo, Florida. Tickets are free of charge.

"At times when many people gravitate toward increasing social isolation and seek to be superficially happy, Saul reminds us, with his infectious smile and mantra to treat everyone with kindness, that it is always preferable to stop, smell and enjoy the scent of flowers, to find bliss in the essential, pure and beautiful parts of our daily lives," Garnik concluded.

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Aroma de Azucenas Film Poster