

## Film Festival to Feature Latin American "Poetry Without Borders"

*HOUSTON - January 16, 2020* - A upcoming screening of Latin American poetry film aims to show that, where poetry is concerned, open borders are the rule.

"Poesía Sin Fronteras / Poetry Without Borders" will be shown on Friday, January 24 as part of the film festival REELpoetry/Houston 2020. Presented by this year's featured guest, MovingPoems.com publisher Dave Bonta, the program will include more than a dozen short poetry films, many produced as part of an online collaborative translation project led by Bonta in 2015-16. Directors from as far afield as New Zealand and Australia have interpreted the work of Latin American poets from the 17th century to the present, including César Vallejo, Nicanor Parra, Alejandra Pizarnik, and more.

"The aim is to showcase one of the main strengths of cinepoetry, or *videopoesía* as it's known in Spanish: the way it can help overcome linguistic and cultural divides," Bonta said. "Cinpoetry makers already practice a form of translation when they adapt a poem from the page to the screen, so incorporating multiple languages is just a logical extension of that," he added.

Spanish director Eduardo Yagüe, one of the original participants in the project, said he saw culture as global. "We are part of the same culture, English and Spanish are not so far apart, and the mixing of cultures is a very productive thing," Yagüe said. The essence of cinepoetry, he said, entails "a mixing of genres, artistic languages and sensibilities."

Belgian film-maker and musician Marc Neys concurred, but added a qualifier. "For me, poetry is music — and music has no 'language' even when used as text on screen," he said.

"If North American poetry fans aren't familiar with Spanish American and Brazilian poetry, they're really missing out," Bonta said. "It goes way beyond Pablo Neruda and Octavio Paz. Even some of the smallest countries in Latin America have had an outsized influence on world poetry, such as Nicaragua, home of the pioneering Spanish-language modernist poet Ruben Darío, and Uruguay, where great poets are as thick on the ground as great soccer players," he said.

U.S. film-maker Miah Artola, whose father fled the brutal Somoza regime in Nicaragua, agreed. In Nicaragua, she said, "The most remote village will be filled with poetry books, and old and young alike have an impressive knowledge of the country's literary figures and traditions, as well as of international poets and writers."

"I imagine that as our Hispanic population in the U.S. continues to grow, appreciation of poetry will grow too," Bonta said. "I look forward to the day when poetry and poets are held in as high esteem here as they are south of the border."

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