

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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## NUYORICAN CINEMA, THE CINEMA OF THE PUERTO RICAN DIASPORA, TO BE FOCUS OF DISCUSSION ON IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, AND AESTHETICS

**Friday, March 4, 2016 at Museum of the Moving Image**

Astoria, Queens, New York, February 22, 2016—Museum of the Moving Image will present **Nuyorican Cinema: Framing Identities**, a forum for exploring the cinema of the Puerto Rican diaspora, as part of the ongoing series *Changing the Picture*, sponsored by Time Warner Inc. The event, on Friday, March 4, 2016, at 7:30 p.m., will feature a panel discussion with filmmakers, content creators, and curators including **Vagabond Alexander Beaumont**, **Sonia González-Martínez**, **Cynthia López** (former commissioner of NYC Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment), **Frances Negrón-Muntaner**, and **Luis Antonio Ramos**, and moderated by **Edwin Pagán**, who organized the program. Interspersed with video clips from films such as *Hangin’ with the Homeboys*, *Short Eyes*, *Empire*, *Los Sures*, and *Bricando El Charco (Jumping the Pond)*, the panel will address the contributions of New York-born Puerto Ricans to the film and entertainment industry, from past to present. **Admission is free**; reservations are being taken on the program’s webpage ([movingimage.us/NuyoricanCinema](http://movingimage.us/NuyoricanCinema)).

The scope of the discussion will cover the historical landscape of filmmakers, writers, and actors from the Lower East Side, the South Bronx, Spanish Harlem (a.k.a. “El Barrio”), and from the south side of Williamsburg, Brooklyn (“Los Sures”) who have tackled sociological and political challenges in their work, and how these struggles have helped to create a distinct Nuyorican aesthetic. The discussion will also address the inherent lack of representation and negative portrayals of Puerto Ricans in entertainment, as well as the duality of identity and political ramifications that Nuyorican mediamakers encounter given the tumultuous history between the United States and Puerto Rico, and how a new generation of New York “Boricuas” is changing the face of the industry.

Following the mass migration that took place during the 1950s from the island of Puerto Rico to the U.S. mainland, there was an explosion of creative activity in literature, theater, and visual arts in the diaspora community in the 1960s and 70s. The term “Nuyorican” was born out of the 1970s poetry and spoken word phenomena, as New York-born Puerto Rican writers and performers proudly claimed the heritage of their parents while at the same time embracing their distinct identity as mainland-born

Americans of Puerto Rican descent.

The pioneering filmmakers that emerged from this scene were focused primarily on the social and political realities of their neighborhoods. Nuyorican cinema proper came into its own in the 1990s when first and second generations of mainland-born Puerto Ricans began to ground the context and narrative of their stories in urban settings and situations. Today, that framework continues to expand and inform the work of Nuyorican medi makers, and is visible in such TV programs as *Shades of Blue*, which is produced by Jennifer López through her production company Nuyorican Productions.

#### About the panelists:

**Vagabond Alexander Beaumont** is a writer, artist, and filmmaker. His first feature film was *Machetero* (2008), about the ongoing struggle for Puerto Rican independence, which starred Isaach De Bankolé. His short story *Kafka's Last Laugh* was included in the science fiction anthology *Octavia's Brood*, honoring the work of science fiction writer Octavia Butler. He is currently producing and directing two documentaries, *Harlem's Last Poet*, on the life of poet Abiodun Oyewole, and *Six Shooters*, about six Puerto Rican photographers from the South Bronx who picked up cameras as their weapons of choice and documented the birth of hip-hop and salsa as the South Bronx burned in the 70's and 80's.

**Sonia González-Martínez** is a writer, director, and editor from New York City. Her directing credits include the short comedies *Urban Lullaby* and *The Trilogy of Lyric Les*, as well as the feature-length documentary *Bragging Rights: Stickball Stories*, about the history and players of the New York City game of stickball. Gonzalez-Martinez, together with actress Tammi Cubilette and comedian Angelo Lozada, formed T&A Flicks, which produces a comedy web series *Get Some!*, currently being developed for television. In 2015, Sonia was chosen from hundreds of candidates to participate in the Sony Diverse Directors Program.

**Cynthia López** is the former Commissioner of the New York City Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment where she implemented strategies to support production of film and TV production throughout the five boroughs, and oversaw NYC Media, the City's official TV, radio, and online network. Previously, she served as executive vice president and co-executive producer of American Documentary | POV, the award-winning PBS documentary series. López is the founding chairperson of the board of directors of the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP). She is the recipient of eleven National News & Documentary Emmy Awards among many other prestigious awards.

**Frances Negrón-Muntaner** is a filmmaker, writer, curator, and scholar. Among her books and publications are: *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture* (CHOICE Award, 2004), *The Latino Media Gap* (2014) and *The Latino Disconnect: Latinos in the Age of Media Mergers* (2016). Her films include *AIDS in the Barrio* (1989), *Brincando el charco: Portrait of a Puerto Rican* (Whitney Biennial, 1995), *Small City, Big Change* (2014), *War for Guam* (2015), and *Life Outside* (2016). She is the director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, founder of the Media and Idea Lab, and curator of the Latino Arts and

Activism archive at Columbia University.

**Luis Antonio Ramos** was born in Puerto Rico and raised in the Bronx, New York. He is an actor and producer with a wide range of acting experience, with roles in television, film, and theater. He is known for Derek Velez Partridge's *A Miracle in Spanish Harlem* (2013) and Franc. Reyes' *The Ministers* (2009), and the Starz' hit TV drama series *Power*. He has appeared on the television series *The Unit*, *Burn Notice*, *Numb3rs*, *The Shield*, and many others and was a series regular on *The Brian Benben Show* and *Queens*, with recurring roles on *In the House*, *Ink*, and *Martin*. Ramos was nominated for an Alma Award for best supporting actor for his work in *The Huntress*. Luis also received the Helen Hayes Award for Best Actor for his performance in the play *Stand Up Tragedy*.

**Edwin Pagán** is a New York-based filmmaker, writer, curator, and cultural activist with over 25-years of hands-on experience in content creation and film production in both the documentary and narrative film sectors. He has served on the boards of the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP), and more recently, the Hispanic Organization of Latino Actors (HOLA). He has also served on numerous foundation selection juries and film festival curatorial committees, and has curated the NewLatino Filmmakers Screening Series at Anthology Film Archives for the past 14 years. In 2008, he created Latinhorror.com, an online portal specializing in Latin-influenced horror, its documentation, and promotion as a distinct genre. He is currently writing a book on the subject titled *Miedo—The History of Latin Horror*, while also working on a documentary about the rise, fall, and resurrection of the South Bronx, called *Bronx Burning*.

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### **MUSEUM INFORMATION**

Museum of the Moving Image ([movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In its stunning facilities—acclaimed for both its accessibility and bold design—the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings of significant works; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, craftspeople, and business leaders; and education programs which serve more than 50,000 students each year. The Museum also houses a significant collection of moving-image artifacts.

Hours: Wednesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday–Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: (Beginning March 1) \$15 adults; \$11 senior citizens (65+) and students (18+) with ID; \$7 youth (3–17). Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, tickets are \$12 adults / \$9 students and seniors / \$6 children 3–12 / free for Museum members at the Film Lover level and above. Advance purchase is available online. Ticket purchase may be applied toward same-day admission to the Museum's galleries.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.  
Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)  
Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and located on the campus of Kaufman Astoria Studios. Its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals.