

Gil, Brazilian Composer and Minister, Gets Creation Prize in Spain

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Brazil's Minister of Culture, Gilberto Gil - as both singer and composer - is being awarded the "2005 Extremadura Prize for Creation, today, for the best artistic career of an Ibero-American author.

The awards ceremony is being held at the Pedrilla House Museum of History and Culture, in Cáceres, Spain. This is the sixth edition of the prize, which is intended to stimulate creativity and closer cultural ties among Ibero-American countries.

The Brazilian government, on the other hand, wants to use cultural products, such as TV programs and movies from Brazil, to project the country's image abroad.

An agreement signed a few months ago between the Ministry of Culture, the Brazilian Export Promotion Agency (Apex-Brazil), the Brazilian Association of Independent TV Producers, and the Brazilian Cinema Promotion organization, which is in charge of exporting Brazilian films, will pave the way for a US\$ 4.6 million (13 million reais) investment to promote Brazilian audiovisual products in other countries.

"Brazil is in fashion," the Minister of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade, Fernando Furlan, remarked at the signing ceremony. A proof of this was the international success of Fernando Meirelles's film "City of God."

This production, which recounts the history of one of Rio de Janeiro's largest slums, was exhibited at more than 32 international film festivals, as well as winning five Oscar nominations, including best foreign film of 2004.

The Minister of Culture, Gilberto Gil, observed, in turn, that the prospect of exporting Brazilian cultural products will contribute not only to the development of foreign trade but will also strengthen Brazil's positive image abroad.

"It will lead to the strengthening of tourism by publicizing new tourist spots, as well as bringing in dollars and euros," Gil pointed out.

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