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## Brazil Movies Are Having a Rebirth. You Can Check at a Theater Near You

Contributed by Heredy Bono  
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Film production in Brazil has jumped to over 70 feature films a year and Brazilian directors are once again receiving acclaim on the international film festival circuit. Moreover, recent productions such as *Elite Squad* (*Tropa de Elite*, directed by José Padilha) have become huge box office sensations in Brazil.

They are also making an enormous impact in the local mainstream. The Weinstein Co. will release *Elite Squad* in the U.S. in the first quarter of 2008.

One of the key players in the revitalization of Brazilian cinema is filmmaker Fernando Meirelles (*City of God*, *The Constant Gardener*) who acted as co-producer on two of the three upcoming films along with Walter Salles (*Central Station*, *Motorcycle Diaries*), who is also known for supporting local production, particularly the work of young filmmakers.

Salles, also a producer of *City of God*, was one of the producers of noted director Karim Aïnouz's film *Love for Sale* that had a theatrical release in the United States in late 2007, along with Tata Amaral's *Antônia*, produced by Meirelles.

Late 2008/2009 promises to continue this Brazilian wave with new films by Salles (*Linha de Passe*), Meirelles (*Blindness*) and *174*, by acclaimed director Bruno Barreto (*Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands*, *Four Days in September*), based on the story behind the infamous incident during a bus hijack in Rio, also a subject of the documentary *Bus 174*, directed by José Padilha.

In an unprecedented celebration of Brazil's internationally nascent cinema scene, the New York based Cinema Tropical - the organization dedicated to the distribution, programming and promotion of Latin American films in the U.S.-will present *Janeiro in New York*, a mini-festival proceeding the theatrical releases of three highly acclaimed pictures in New York.

*Janeiro in New York* is the first celebration of a new wave of Brazilian films opening on US screens and aims to maximize awareness of this renaissance.

Carlos A. Gutiérrez, co-director of Cinema Tropical, says, "In recent years, we have been very encouraged by Mexican and Argentinean film getting their share of the spotlight in the U.S. Now it's Brazil's turn."

Among the films comprising *Janeiro in New York* are *Alice's House* (directed by Chico Teixeira), *The Year My Parents Went on Vacation* (directed by Cao Hamburger) and *City of Men* (directed by Paulo Morelli), the companion piece to the immensely acclaimed *City of God* as well as the screening of the documentary feature film *Santiago* (João Moreira Salles) at MoMA's annual "Documentary Fortnight" series, in co-presentation with Cinema Tropical.

The Year My Parents Went on Vacation is Brazil's official selection for the 2008 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Set in the turbulent year of 1970, this poignant and humorous coming of age story thrusts twelve year-old Mauro into a maelstrom of political and personal upheaval.

When his left-wing militant parents are forced to go underground, Mauro is left in the care of his Jewish grandfather's neighbor in São Paulo. Suddenly finding himself an exile in his own country, he is forced to create an ersatz family from the religiously diverse and colorful population of his new neighborhood.

The Year My Parents Went on Vacation was a selection of the 2007 Berlin Film Festival competition and was the Audience Award winner at the 2006 Rio International Film Festival. The film will open in New York and Los Angeles on February 8th, followed by a national release by City Lights Pictures.

In City of Men, producer Meirelles and director Paulo Morelli return to the Brazilian favelas of his Academy Award-nominated film, City of God. Growing up in a culture dictated by violence and run by street gangs, teenagers Acerola (Douglas Silva) and Laranjinha (Darlan Cunha) have become close as brothers.

With their eighteenth birthdays fast approaching, Laranjinha sets out to find the father he never met, while Acerola struggles to raise his own young son. But when they suddenly find themselves on opposite sides of a gang war, the lifelong friends are forced to confront a shocking secret from their shared past.

City of Men ends the cycle started by Morelli and Meirelles hugely successful mini series, shown at the Sundance Channel. The feature opens wide February 29th by Miramax Films.

Santiago is an extraordinary documentary feature film by João Moreira Salles (brother of Walter Salles). The filmmaker interviews his family's remarkable Argentine butler, a complex, cultured man adept in diplomatic missions and scholarly research.

Ultimately, Santiago becomes a profound meditation on memory, social class and the very nature of documentary filmmaking. The film was recently acquired for the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection and it will be screening on Sunday, February 24, 5 pm at MoMA as part of their annual 'Documentary Fortnight' series.

Alice's House is one of three (and counting) Brazilian films to be released in the US in the first quarter of 2008. Looks like the Brazilian Film Industry is one to watch this year. Alice's House has won 18 (and counting) film festival awards and Carla Ribas has been getting much acclaim for her naturalistic portrayal of a mid-40's manicurist trying to feed her own soul in the midst of taking care of her philandering husband, three grown boys and an aging mother.

For those of you on a gay beat, one of Alice's sons is gay and her character has definite gay icon potential (she already won acclaim at the Lisbon Gay & Lesbian Festival).