

# FICValdivia and its role in Contemporary Chilean

*FICValdivia y su posición en el cine chileno contemporáneo*

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## Abstract

This article is a historical review of the role that the Valdivia International Film Festival has played in the development and promotion of contemporary Chilean cinema. By analyzing its programming and films since its creation in 1994 until 2019, it is possible to establish how the festival has positioned itself as the crucial "site of passage" for a new generation of Chilean filmmakers and producers before and during its consolidation within the global circuit of film festivals. In over 25 years, FICValdivia has experienced significant changes in terms of its editorial line, from an ecological perspective, through an industrial frame, and, recently, under the direction of Raúl Camargo, to a deeply film-oriented curatorial line. Thus, FICValdivia has positioned itself as a meeting point for the cinephilia and the Chilean film community.

**Keywords:** Film Festivals, Cinephilia, Film Programming, Curatorial Practice, FICValdivia.

## Resumen

Este artículo es una revisión histórica del rol que el Festival Internacional de Cine de Valdivia ha desempeñado en el desarrollo y promoción del cine chileno contemporáneo. Analizando su programación y películas participantes desde su creación en 1994 hasta el año 2019 es posible establecer cómo el certamen se ha posicionado como el "sitio de paso" fundamental para una camada de cineastas y productores chilenos previo y durante su consolidación dentro del circuito global de festivales de cine. En más de 25 años, el FICValdivia ha experimentado cambios importantes en su línea editorial, desde una mirada ligada a la ecología, pasando por la industria y en los últimos años, bajo la dirección de Raúl Camargo, a una línea curatorial profundamente cinéfila. Desde esta posición es que el FICValdivia se ha posicionado como un punto de encuentro para la cinefilia y la comunidad del cine chileno.

**Palabras clave:** Festivales de Cine, Cinefilia, Programación curatorial, FICValdivia.

## 1. Introducción

In the past two decades, Chile has experienced a large increase in film festivals as an opportunity for promoting Chilean and international film. Although a rather incipient circuit, there is a group of festivals that are known not only for their development over time, but also for their positioning on an international level, featuring various international premieres of Chilean films including the participation of important films for the international circuit. The Valdivia International Film Festival, widely known as FICValdivia, can be considered the country's most important and one of the most prominent in Latin America. Every year, the Chilean film community and important international critics and guests gather in a sort of cinephile peregrination around cinema.

Around ten Chilean films premiere in Chile every year during FICValdivia. These films will be the protagonists of the Chilean and Latin American film festival circuit, having a massive presence in the competitions and special projections in minor festivals. Likewise, many of the filmmakers will be considered part of the history of Chilean cinema, their films will be exhibited in film clubs and studied by critics and academics. In 2017, film critic Robert Koehler, in a special issue of the *Sight and Sound* Magazine on Latin American film, claimed FICValdivia to be a daring festival important enough to have new laws and regulations regarding national cinema announced at its opening ceremony (Koehler, 2017)<sup>1</sup>. The festival has played a fundamental role in the development and promotion of Chilean cinema, transforming into an icon on a pragmatic level and has a clear identity in its curatorial line.

The present article analyzes how FICValdivia has become a fundamental space of exhibition for contemporary Chilean cinema, acquiring national and international relevance as part of the festival's official selection. The beginning of this article discusses some of the main theories on film festival studies that allow for analysis in order to understand the development and consolidation of the FICValdivia as a space for cinephilia and the Chilean cinema industry. The second part of this article describes the methodology for this case study. The third part dialogues with these theories, but

from a perspective based on history and festival development since its founding in 1994 to its 2019 annual event, analyzing the role of its different directors and its relationship with the city where it is held. The fourth part of this article focuses on FICValdivia's relationship with Chilean cinema over the years, as both exhibitor and promotor of the recent internationalization of Chilean films.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Marijke de Valck sustains that festivals are "an essential part of cinematographic culture worldwide" (2016, p.9), in which the study of film festivals can be considered a tool for understanding the development of the country's theaters, their business models and the audience's perception of the films that circulate in these spaces. In the Chilean context, the study of film festivals is necessary to understand the explosion of Chilean film starting circa 2005 from a perspective that includes cinematographic curating, distribution and exhibition. Since that date, Chilean cinema has consolidated into what Pierre Bourdieu defined as a field of cultural production, which is to say, a cultural area that not only creates cultural objects, but rather also develops hierarchies and institutions that act as mediators in the various areas that this field creates (Bourdieu, 1993, p.20-22).

Despite the growing amount and ever-diversified literature on film festivals, it is still rather difficult to find a definition of what a festival is even though the abundant literature that has been produced in the past decade has made the search for a definition one of its main objectives (Vallejo, 2014a, p.20). For the purposes of this article, we will use the concept of festival defined by the website [www.festivalesdecine.cl](http://www.festivalesdecine.cl), that understands these events to be:

All cinema and/or audiovisual showing events that last two or more days, are held on a regular and cyclical basis (annually or biannually), and, in addition to exhibiting films publicly, include activities that enhance the experience of the collective vision (for example, via lectures, panel discussions and other complementary activities). (Peirano & González, 2018, p. 2).

De Valck proposes understanding film festivals "as nodal points of a successful cinema network" (2007, p.15). To explain this relationship, de Valck uses the idea developed by Thomas Elsaesser of a binary Europe-Hollywood scheme "not in the sense of opposition, but rather as a relationship in the context of globalization processes" (de Valck 2007, p. 15). Elsaesser sustains that festivals are a network that compete amongst each other for recognition, while at the same time being capable of collaboration when they find common ground (2005, pp.86-87). It is via this relationship that de Valck sees film festivals as a network where each one of these events acts as a node that connects to a network comprising the international film festival circuit which includes all these events. These nodes are indispensable in supporting this network:

Film festivals can be considered obligatory points of passage because they are events -actors- that have become so important for the production, distribution and consumption of many films that, without them, an entire network of practices, places, people, etc. would fall apart (De Valck, 2007, p.36).

It is important to understand festivals as nodes that comprise this network, because festivals have created a circuit of alternative distribution that allows for the preservation of art and auteur film, as well as the promotion of films from smaller countries. The films, actors and industry agents need for festivals to sustain this distribution network for their work, giving the network durability and stability. However, this network also features certain hierarchizations within the circuit. As a result of globalization, festivals compete with one another both domestically and internationally, based on the logic of the "creative industries", becoming part of the cinema production lines<sup>2</sup> and competing for financing and premieres (Loist, 2016, pp.58-59). This network develops different circuits within the global circuit, where some festivals are more relevant than others.

In the Chilean context, one can see that within the national circuit there are festivals that are more relevant internationally for the Chilean film community as well as the press and local cinephilia. This group of festivals is comprised of FICValdivia, Santiago International Documentary Festival (FI-DOCS), Santiago International Film Festival (SAN-

FIC) and the Viña del Mar International Film Festival. Together these festivals have been named as "international events with a well-known history", featuring the largest number of Chilean and international film premieres, organizing the country's main industry events and gaining the most attention of national and international press, the four events being key in the Chilean circuit (Peirano & González, 2018, pp. 4-5; Peirano, 2016, pp.114-115). However, the event that has gained major relevance internationally is FICValdivia, both for its curatorial line as well as its relationship and identification with the host city. Cindy Wong sustains that relationships between film festivals and cities, in general, serve to both improve the consolidation of the festivals and cultural spaces, as well as position cities within a circuit of cultural cities. In her words:

In the majority of the festivals, representatives from local government attend the ceremonies, giving legitimacy to festivals and the city's seal of approval, often with financial support. The majority of the festivals are too small to substantially benefit or compromise the city with its absence or presence, but together with other cultural events, of other art festivals of some kind, concerts, theaters and museums, film festivals contribute to the cultural mosaic that cities of the world want to represent (Wong, 2011, p. 57).

In terms of curating and programming, film festivals serve a legitimizing role for directors, producers and films. Film festivals, by creating competition, allow for films to win awards and the award is "the most tangible form of symbolic capital" (De Valck, 2016, p.106). Along the same lines, James English argues as to how awards give value and quality to artistic work. English proposes that awards and competitions make new and established players compete with each other in order to achieve more prestige, all the while having to "defend or improve their positions in the field of cultural production" (English, 2008, pp.53-54). Both arguments are based on the concept of cultural and symbolic capital, that form part of the different types of capital defined by Bourdieu. De Valck (2016) cites Bourdieu in order to explain both concepts, in his words:

Cultural capital determines the social status of a person in society (class) and is comprised of

knowledge, skills, education, attitudes and taste. Ultimately, symbolic capital points to the resources available to someone based on prestige, honor, and recognition. All the manifestations of capital work as "the energy of social physics" (p.105).

The festivals are "where filmmakers can acquire symbolic capital", being part of these "economies" of the film industry, like Hollywood, but "the main capital in these niches is symbolic: prestige, honor and recognition" (De Valck, 2016, p.105). Likewise, film festivals have developed an institutional power, similar to that of museums, where, on one hand, promote auteur film, but on the other hand, try to demonstrate their power as "devices of representation" (Nichols, 2013, p.38). For a film to have been selected to participate in any section of a film festival would imply a cultural recognition and prestige for the film.

### 3. Methodology

The article addresses, from a historical perspective, the development of FICValdivia as a fundamental platform for contemporary Chilean cinema. One of the primary tools is an exhaustive analysis of its guides from 1994 to 2019, which are the main source of bibliographic information on the festival. Together with this, a press review was done that shows the history and films that have been part of the festival, such as Cinechile, Festivalesdecine.cl, El Agente Cine and general press. This historical review was complemented by the participant observation experience performed during FICValdivia 2017, as special guest at academic lectures, and 2019 as specialized press.

This paper uses interviews conducted online of filmmaker Enrique Farías in 2018, of FICValdivia programmer Isabel Orellana in 2018, and an email conversation with founder and former director of FICValdivia, Lucy Berkhoff, in 2018. These three conversations took place in order to learn about Chilean film festivals and gather information not printed about the festival, discover more about its curatorial practices, and explore the backstage experience at the festival.

### 4. The origins of a gathering with the cinephilia

The first record of FICValdivia dates back to 1963, when, during the first summer school semester of the local university, a film season was organized that was the beginning of the university film club (Rivera-Mayorga, 2006). The Film Club of Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH) was a link between the university and Valdivian society. According to Lucy Berkhoff, director of the film club from 1987 to 2006 and founder and director of the Valdivia International Film Festival from 1994 to 2006, the importance and legacy of the film club lies in that for many years in Valdivia there was a scarcity of TV programming in which people compensated by going to the cinema<sup>3</sup>. The members of the film club were mainly people linked to the university, but there were also members from outside the institution. Under the direction of Berkhoff, in 1993, the UACH Film Club organized an international film showing to commemorate its thirty years of existence. Precisely due to a celebration of this anniversary, the idea came about of creating a film festival in Valdivia:

I always had the feeling that a small, lovely city like Valdivia deserved a film festival in order to justify the years of uninterrupted work in the film club (...). In addition, the presence of the university gave it a special status. My idea was that Valdivia would have something like Cannes, recognized worldwide, and that the city would condition itself for important cultural events, building theaters, hotels and developing its tourism industry (Interview with L. Berkhoff, 2018).

In October 1994, the first Valdivia International Film Week was held. From the very beginning, the festival was supported by the Illustrious Municipality of Valdivia, Universidad Austral and the Ministry of Education via the Art and Cultural Development Fund (FONDART), together with the private sector. The festival featured two categories: on one hand there was a showing of international feature films, that included eight films from the USA, France, Chile, Peru, Denmark and Argentina. On the other hand, the competitive category was divided into video, short films, and TV shows. The competition put a strong emphasis on

ecology and the environment. Regarding the festival, Berkhoff defined the event as a place to think about environmental damage and search for a balance between Earth and the human race (Valdivia Cine&Video, 1994, p.3). The festival chose to give the main prize the form of a *pudú*<sup>4</sup>, that is given to winners every year to this day. The first award-winner was the video *Wichan* (1994) by Magaly Menezes.

The festival's first significant changes started in 1998. The festival is renamed as the Valdivia International Film and Video Festival, distancing itself from its initial ecological focus, given that such themes made it difficult to find sponsors (Interview with L. Berkhoff, 2018). Such difficulty for financing can be understood given that the Audiovisual Fund would not be created until 2004, and therefore the festival relied on public funding via FONDART and private contributions from sponsors. The festival grew in prestige and relevance, which brought about sponsorship of local businesses, such as real estate development companies, hotels, and the logging industry.

Considering some of the reasons that cities have to organize a film festival, Argentine film critic Eduardo Antín (Quintín) states that they do not necessarily have to do with cinema, but rather with the idea of gathering, into one city at a certain time, glamorous people, films, audiences and funding and sponsorship for cultural agents (Quintín, 2009, p.59). The festival began to be thought of as an alternative to the Viña del Mar International Film Festival. According to Berkhoff, they observed "everything that Viña del Mar didn't have and later, Valdivia did it", for example, including film schools in the festival (Interview with L. Berkhoff, 2018). The festival included a section called First Festival for Children and Youth that focused on films for schools and children's homes. The identity that the event created for the city implied a more active participation from local authorities. The governor of the Region of Los Lagos, the mayor of Valdivia, and the Rector of the Universidad Austral were included in the official guide with brief written texts as a sign that the relationship between the festival and the city has strengthened over time.

In 2002, to consolidate the festival's growth, Lucy Berkhoff, together with CORFO and local businesses, created the Center for Cinematographic

Promotion of Valdivia (CPCV), a non-profit organization whose purpose is to develop and promote Valdivia's film industry (CPCV, 2018). The CPCV began to work with the Universidad Austral and the UACH Film Club in the organization of the festival, which gave the festival the chance to be international (Peirano, 2016, p.119). This form of organization, via non-profit institutions, is one of the most common in film festivals worldwide. According to Rhyne, generally festivals "are managed and financed mainly through public/private associations", creating non-profit organizations, commonly known as the "Third Sector", the State being the "First Sector" and the marketplace, the "Second" (Rhyne 2009, p.10). For Rhyne, this type of organization allows involvement in the cultural field, participating "in the type of provision of services and cultural management that historically has been the exclusive domain of governments" (Rhyne, 2009, p.10). A year later, in 2003, the festival organized the first industry activities, broadening its network beyond audiences and filmmakers, to include the entire cinematographic industry (Castillo, 2013). Likewise, the festival also consolidated as a space of debate on cinema, with book releases and signings, lectures, and workshops open to the general public.

In 2004, the festival increased industry activities, organizing a *Work in Progress*, together with the first business roundtable for film and TV in Valdivia, sponsored by Pro-Chile and the Association of Film and TV Producers (APCT) giving participants access to distributors from Europe and USA (FICValdivia, 2004, p.109). The creation of spaces for the cinematographic industry is key for the consolidation of film festivals. Since the 1980's, film festivals have changed their relationship with the cinematographic industry. Film festivals "went from being passive platforms and facilitators of the cinematographic industry to becoming intermediaries and actors increasingly more active in all the aspects of the cinematographic industry itself" (Rüling en Loist, 2016, p.59). In the case of Valdivia Film Festival, these activities made it an indispensable space for Chile's cinematographic industry. The audiovisual industry activities have become crucial sources of financing and coproduction for films, mainly via workshops for filmmakers (Vallejo, 2014b, p.72). However, according to Vallejo, cinematographic markets allow film festivals to compete on an international level:

Film markets are fundamental for the international impact of festivals for the simple fact that they are one of the main reasons why industry professionals attend festivals in the first place. These markets are built around the selected films at the festival and other festivals (p.73).

For Berkhoff, despite the 2006 festival being "one of the best ever" (2018), a rupture with authorities from the university caused the festival's organizing team to resign and decline from a new board of directors. The festival's organization, that used to fall on the film club, was passed on to the CPCV which designated the academic Guido Mutis as new director. In 2007, key people were brought aboard for the festival: Raúl Camargo joined the programming team, while Bruno Bettati took charge of general production. Mutis proposed a festival with more cinephile intentions and activities to build audiences. One of the changes introduced was the creation of the *New Roads* section, focused on experimental film and new languages, together with the invitation of film theorists and critics to be part of the jury panel.

After Mutis's death in 2008, the CPVC named Bruno Bettati as new director in 2010 who, at the same time, would also continue to fill the position of executive producer. The festival began a phase of internationalization and consolidation of its industry activities. Together with the CPCV, they created the slogan *Valdivia, Cinema City (Valdivia, Ciudad Cine)* to construct the image that Chilean film is celebrated in Valdivia. In addition, in 2011, AUSTRALAB is created, a main industry event that would be in the festival until 2017. This interest to create an image of the festival and the city can be addressed from different perspectives. Rhyne sustains that film festivals, to form part of a worldwide distribution network of films, must be linked to the geographic areas where they are held:

The film festival is also deeply rooted in cities, regions and countries, marked by their local tourism bureaus, promoted via their national cultural commissions and financed by way of supranational initiatives and private foundations, with the objective of establishing international film distribution and exhibition networks and, whose efforts finance a multinational commercial entertainment industry that often seeks a way to exploit local markets without exploiting them (Rhyne, 2009, p.13).

In concordance with Rhyne, Wong argues that festivals do not only celebrate cinema, but rather also the place where they are celebrated. For her, "festivals define the cultural capital that cities and countries use as trademark events for cities of creative class" (Wong, 2011, p.2). Therefore, the changes proposed had the objective of positioning the festival and the city as the "place to be" for the Chilean cinematographic community, but rather also for an international community interested in Chilean cinema. In 2014, Raúl Camargo was named director. FICValdivia decides to return to some of its roots by including sections focused on indigenous film and with a new motto: Place of gathering and integration (*Lugar de encuentro e integración*) (FICValdivia 2014). Based on an interview with Raúl Camargo, Peirano (2016) explains the programmatic line of the festival as small, daring and experimental (p.119).

FICValdivia is known in Chile as a cinephile event where it is possible to see films made by directors that are dedicated to auteur film and that participate in the international film festival circuit. In recent years, the festival has created competitions and sections centered on narratives and genres not often found in other film festivals in Chile. *New Roads* focuses on vanguard and experimental film, *Dissidents* attracts new points of view on political and social resistance and *Primeras Naciones* focuses on films about the indigenous peoples of Latin America. According to Di Chiara and Re (2011), film festivals can present new points of view on contemporary art film, changing the traditional perspective of film historians (p.135). With Raúl Camargo at the lead, FICValdivia has emphasized its role as discoverer of new films and filmmakers.

Starting in 2016, the festival adopts the slogan *Future Classics (Clásicos del future)*, which has become the leitmotiv of the festival, developing its image around this concept. On its website, the festival highlights that its programming "is a vanguard programming that is ahead of its time and offers a panorama of films to come, as well as film's association to other experiences and disciplines" (FICValdivia, 2019). In addition, the festival is positioned as starting point for many Chilean filmmakers that later begin to circulate in international festivals<sup>5</sup>.

## 5. FICValdivia and its relationship with Chilean cinema

Having described the history of the festival's organization, we will discuss the evolving of programming in Chilean cinema in this context. The festival, in its first event in 1994, was focused on ecology: all three of its competitions (video, short films, TV shows) promoted this topic. The first winner of the grand prize was *Wichan* (1994), directed by Magaly Meneses. Mainly filmed in Mapudungun, the Mapuche Indian language, it depicted a Mapuche trial for animal theft. Between 1994 and 2000, the competitions continued to be focused on short films. However, between 1997 and 2000, the prize for Best International Film was awarded to the audience's favorite decided by vote. In 2003, the festival's 10th anniversary, the Chilean feature film competition was created, the winner being *Cesante* (2003), an animated film directed by Ricardo Amunátegui. However, this competition disappeared in later years. Between 2006 and 2009, the prize for best Chilean feature film is awarded to the Chilean film receiving the most votes.

Since the appearance of the *novísimo cine chileno* or new Chilean cinema<sup>6</sup>, in the 2005 version of FICValdivia, the festival has consolidated itself as the venue for the world and national premieres of Chilean cinema. However, not until its 2010 event did the festival feature the Chilean cinema competition again, increasing the number of premieres, allowing for only two films to participate in the international competition. In 2006, Raúl Ruíz participated in the international competition with *Días de Campo* (2005), together with *Fuga* (2006), opera prima of Pablo Larraín. During this year, five of the fourteen films in the different competitions were Chilean. Something similar occurred in 2007 when only two of the eleven films in the competition were Chilean. That year, Matías Bize's third film, *Lo Bueno de Llorar* (2006), and the debut of Sebastián Silva, *La Vida me Mata* (2007), were in the official selection. Both films received the Jury's Special Mention, while Matías Bize's film also won the Critics Award. The festival gradually began to include more Chilean films in its programming. According to Peirano, since the 2000's, FICValdivia began to take on the position that the Viña del Mar Festival had in the 1970s as a place of gathering for cinephiles and a place

where you could see the films of a new emerging Chilean cinema. In his words:

The festival brings together some of the most prominent figures in Chilean cinema, and reveals the values and aptitudes of the local industry in terms of cultural narratives of 'art cinema'. It has an impact on the layout of the local film production industry, working as the guardian of the country's art cinema (Peirano, 2016, p.120).

In 2008, *Alicia en el país* (2008), the first documentary feature film by Esteban Larraín was the only film in the competition. In 2009, FICValdivia feature and documentary film competitions were combined into one. Out of twelve films in the official competition, only two were Chilean: *Turistas* (Scherson, 2009) and *Noticias* (Perut & Osnovikoff, 2009). The work recognized as Best Chilean Film was shown in the context of Chilean cinema outside the competition and was given to Sebastián Silva's second film, *La Nana* (2009), about a maid working in a private home who sees her job threatened upon the arrival of a new maid to the house. The film was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film, being the first Chilean film to be nominated for these awards.

The films that compete and win awards at FICValdivia began to circulate both nationally and internationally and there are cases in which there were even selected in accredited festivals<sup>7</sup> after having been shown in Valdivia. According to Peirano, FICValdivia is recognized by the artistic quality of its programming and for being a "node" within the worldwide festival network:

[FICValdivia] has won the prestige of the international community of film critics and festival programmers, and its organizers have direct connections with the most recognized international festivals that possibly program the contemporary film world's "most important" art cinema works (Peirano, 2015, pp. 209-210).

For many filmmakers, FICValdivia is an essential platform for visibility and internationalization of films, being an entrance to the international circuit of film festivals. Filmmaker Enrique Farías participated in FICValdivia in 2014 with his film *La madre del cordero* (2014). In a conversation with him<sup>8</sup>, he describes the importance of the festival in his career:

I always wanted to go to FICValdivia. At first, the film was going to make its world premiere there, but after being accepted to San Sebastián, we had the Latin American premiere in Valdivia. What was important was not only the exhibition but rather also the contact with other important international filmmakers, programmers and critics, including the parties. We received a lot of feedback about the film from people in cinema which went towards its projection, beyond the mere act of competing. (Interview with Enrique Farías, 2018).

Film festivals can be understood as sites of passage. De Valck (2007) states that they are "sites" because they are held in a specific place and "of passage" because they have a temporary duration (pp.38-39). According to de Valck, passage through certain festivals allows filmmakers to "mature" within the international circuit (De Valck, 2007, p.39). FICValdivia is the main site of passage for a litter of Chilean filmmakers since the mid-2000s to today, placing emphasis on the search for new talent, prioritizing premieres and the search for new aesthetics and narratives.

Festival programming implies the work of a team that decides what type of films will be shown at the event (Frodon, 2010, p.207). Raúl Camargo and Guillermo Olivares directed the programming team, until 2018, comprised of Isabel Orellana<sup>9</sup> (Chile), Gonzalo de Pedro (España) and John Campos Gómez (Perú), in charge of selecting the competitions, galas, and some of the festival's main sections. Isabel Orellana mentioned that the team's main difficulty was the distance. None of the programmers work on the festival exclusively and they all live in different cities. In addition, she said that each open call receives different proposals and that the main challenge is maintaining a curatorial identity in the festival:

Sometimes there are really valuable films, cinematographically-speaking, for the Chilean film industry but they are not necessarily such formally risk-taking films, or, I don't know, at times they can be a little more conventional, and that also represent the films that are being made, so I cannot invent the Chilean films out there (Interview with Isabel Orellana, 2018).

Part of the FICValdivia competition selection includes films that have comprised part of the festival in their industry activities or directors that have participated in the festival with short films and films in other sections and competitions. One of the best examples was the film *De Jueves a Domingo* (2012), Dominga Sotomayor's debut, that was met with expectation due to previous recognition of her short films. Her first short film was *Cessna* (2006), which received honorable mention at FICValdivia that same year. Her second short film, *Debajo* (2007) won the National Talent competition at SANFIC in 2007, the "Special Jury Award" in FICValdivia 2007 and received prizes at the other five festivals in Chile, Brazil, and Spain. In 2009, Sotomayor presented the short film *Videojuego* (2009) at FICValdivia that year, which, despite not winning any awards, was the first of her films to be shown at the 2010 International Film Festival Rotterdam.

*De Jueves a Domingo* premiered worldwide at the 2012 IFF Rotterdam, after having receiving financing from the Audiovisual Fund, Hubert Bals Fund for Script and Project Development, and the Hubert Bals Fund for Production. In addition to having won awards at AUSTRALAB, Biarritz Film Festival (France), Buenos Aires LAB, Ibermedia and having been part of the Cinéfondation Résidence at Cannes. The film participated in the competition at the Tiger Awards, winning the Hivos Tiger Award. The same year, the film won the Golden Pudú in the international competition at FICValdivia 2012, the second film to win that competition since *Machuca* (Wood, 2004). In addition, the film received a special prize in the Cinema of the Future competition at BAFICI in 2012. All these festivals have also given awards to the film in its project phase. De Valck sustains that a film's participation in these coproduction and market events give it the chance to be accepted in the global market of art cinema (2014, p.81). De Valck also explains how festivals have transformed into film producers: they decide which films do and which do not enter the worldwide film festival circuit (2014, p.84). In this case, the circulation of *De Jueves a Domingo* allowed it to ensure its presence at the major film festivals. The film won awards in film festivals in Chile, Rumania, Russia, Portugal, United States, Belgium, Canada, Spain, Poland, Netherlands and Argentina. In Chile, the film participated, in addition to FICValdivia, in the Iquique International Film Festival (FICIQQ)



in 2013, winning the Chilean film competition. Afterwards, the film premiered in commercial theaters in April 2013.

After FICValdivia, a film's future is defined by the contacts and relationships established by directors and producers during the festival. This is part of what several authors have defined as the cultural legitimization of film festivals. These competitions, to present new talents, create spaces for exhibition that promote "the discussion, reflection, and commitment with the content and aesthetic of the films" (De Valck, 2016, p.106). At FICValdivia, competitors of Chilean films and some international films in competition are at the festival, presenting each one of their films, attending the question and answer sessions after each showing and participating in various activities during the festival. The way in which each of the directors interacts with the rest of the festival attendees will depend on the network of contacts and friendships made in the Chilean film community.

In 2015, as part of the international competition, the film *Las Plantas* made its worldwide premiere (Doveris, 2015). The feature film tells the story of Florencia (Violeta Castillo), an adolescent that has to take care of her brother who is in a vegetative state. The film did not receive awards at FICValdivia. However, the visibility it received as a result of competing at the festival led it to be selected for the Generation 14plus Competition at Berlinale in 2016, winning the Children's and Youth Jury Special Mention and the Grand Prix of the Generation 14plus International Jury. Therefore, the film acquired a prestige that gave it the chance to be part of other film festivals, such as BAFICI (Argentina), Sao Paulo (Brazil) and Jeonju (South Korea).

Other films start on the road towards a more local circulation. *Mala Junta* (2016) is Claudia Huaquimilla's first feature film, a Mapuche director that gained notoriety in film festivals in Chile with her short film *San Juan, La Noche más Larga* (2012), winning awards at SANFIC, Valdivia and eleven other festivals, including a Jury's Special at Clermont-Ferrand in 2013. *Mala Junta* premiered in the Chilean competition at FICValdivia in 2016, winning the Pudú for best film before beginning

broad circulation in the Chilean film festivals. The film received prizes in ten film festivals in Chile between 2017 and 2018. It premiered in multiplexes and independent film theaters on May 11, 2017, remaining in theaters for nineteen weeks, being seen by 7321 spectators (CAEM 2018). Its participation in FICValdivia allowed it to be seen by almost the entire country, being acclaimed by critics as one of the best films of 2017<sup>10</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

This article analyzed the role FICValdivia has played in the development of Chilean film, emphasizing its historical evolution and the way it exhibits Chilean cinema. FICValdivia has positioned itself for over twenty-five years as the most important film festival for Chilean cinema, allowing for its internationalization and creating an image of the festival that inserts it as a prominent event in the worldwide film festival circuit. Every year the festival selects new filmmakers and new narratives that emerge in Chilean cinema, spotlighting authors that are later promoted within the international and domestic film festival circuits. Using the phrase coined by Valck, FICValdivia in the main "site of passage" for Chilean filmmakers seeking to promote their films and careers on an international level, competing in the worldwide festival circuit.

In addition, the festival uses the city as a place of identification, thanks to its slogans "Valdivia, Ciudad de Cine" and "Clásicos del Futuro". The festival and the city position themselves as an important event for the Chilean and Latin American circuit, as well as receiving the most attention from the press of any film festival in Chile. The festival has consolidated as "the place" to see Chilean cinema, the participating films become the stars of the Chilean and Latin American film festival circuits, gaining massive presence in minor festival competitions. Therefore, many of the filmmakers will be considered part of the history of Chilean cinema, their films will be exhibited in film clubs and studied by critics and academics.

## Notes

1. All translations from English to Spanish are done by the author.
2. These actions are carried out via laboratories, *Work in Progress*, *Talent Campus*, industry activities, among others.
3. Personal conversation with the author via email (Edinburgh, UK and Viña del Mar, Chile; between 18/06/2018 and 06/08/2018).
4. The Andean pygmy deer (*Pudu Puda*) is the world's smallest deer species and native to southern Chile and Argentina. It is considered endangered (reduced population).
5. For more information on the internationalization of recent Chilean cinema, see Peirano, M. (2018). Festivales de cine y procesos de internacionalización del cine chileno reciente. Cuadernos.Info, (43), 57-69. <https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.43.1485>.
6. This term was coined by Gonzalo Maza and Ascanio Cavallo in their book "El Novísimo Cine Chileno", a selection of 21 essays on 23 Chilean filmmakers whose films shared certain general aspects, and that have different focus from that of Chilean cinema developed during the 1990s.
7. Accredited festivals are festivals that are accredited by the International Federation of Film Producers' Associations (FIAPF), commonly and mistakenly known as "A Class Festivals".
8. Personal conversation with the filmmaker on Skype (Edinburgh, UK and Santiago, Chile; 13/08/2018).
9. Personal conversation with the filmmaker on Skype (Edinburgh, UK and Santiago, Chile; 10/09/2018).
10. Se sugiere revisar los informes del festival y el resumen del año del sitio El Agente Cine ([www.el-agente-cine.cl](http://www.el-agente-cine.cl))

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