January 13
BAD HAIR (PELO MALO)
Mariana Rondón / Venezuela / 2013 / 93 min. Spanish with English subtitles

‘A nine-year-old boy’s preening obsession with straightening his hair elicits a tidal wave of homophobic panic in his hard-working mother, in this tender but clear-eyed coming-of-age tale […] Junior doesn’t even know yet what it means to be gay, but the very notion prompts Marta to set out to “correct” Junior’s condition before it fully takes hold. This is a story of people doing what they feel they have to, partly out of fear, but also out of love.’ – Diana Vargas, Toronto International Film Festival.

January 15
JAUSA
Lisandro Alonso / Argentina / 2014 / 109 min. Spanish and Danish with English subtitles

In Jausa (the name suggests a fabled city like El Dorado), Viggo Mortensen is a Danish engineer on a desperate search for his teenage daughter in 1880s remote Patagonia. With echoes of John Ford, 2001 and Lewis Carroll, Jausa is an astonishingly beautiful and gripping tale.

Discussion follows with director Lisandro Alonso

January 20
THE LIBERATOR (EL LIBERTADOR)
Alberto Arvelo / Venezuela, Spain / 2014 / 119 min. Spanish with English subtitles

Rising Venezuelan actor Edgar Ramirez stars in this biopic of one of Latin America’s greatest figures. Simón Bolívar fought over 100 battles against the Spanish Empire in South America. He rode over 70,000 miles on horseback. His military campaigns covered twice the territory of those of Alexander the Great. But his army never conquered—it liberated. The Liberator is a riveting portrayal of the man who led Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Peru, and Ecuador toward independence.

January 22
THE SECOND MOTHER (QUE HORAS ELA VOLTA?)
Anna Muylaert / Brazil / 2015 / 112 min. Portuguese with English subtitles

Brazil’s entry for the 2016 Academy Awards offers an excitingly fresh take on some typical themes about class. This “savvy, socially-conscientious crowd pleaser” (Variety) centers around Val, a hard-working live-in housekeeper in modern-day São Paulo. Val has been perfectly content to cater to every one of her wealthy employers’ needs, but the unexpected arrival of her confident, ambitious daughter shakes the upstairs/downstairs dynamic to its core.

February 3
COWS WEARING GLASSES (LAS VACAS CON GAFAS)
Alex Santiago Pérez / Puerto Rico / 2014 / 90 min. Spanish with English subtitles

Directed by one of the most talented emerging filmmakers coming out of the new wave of Puerto Rican cinema, Cows Wearing Glasses uses a subtle sense of humor to touch upon issues of aging. Marso, a lonely, eccentric painter and art professor, is losing his sight. As the world as he knows it comes to an end, he is now forced to re-examine an existence filled with professional successes but unsatisfying personal relationships. He tries to reestablish a relationship with his only daughter while his thoughts are filled with longing for simpler times.

February 10
I THOUGHT IT WAS A PARTY (PENSE QUE IRA A HABER FIESTA)
Victoria Galardi / Argentina, Spain / 2014 / 84 min. Spanish with English subtitles

An honest and poignant commentary on friendship, I Thought it was a Party is also a film about the search for love, loneliness, fear, guilt, and the world of women.

February 17
ETERNAL AMAZON (AMAZÔNIA ETERNA)
Belisario Franca / Brazil / 2013 / 88 min. Portuguese with English subtitles

With an astonishing soundtrack and cinematography, Eternal Amazon presents a critical analysis of how the world’s largest tropical rainforest is understood and utilized. Exploring the Amazon’s five million square kilometers—home to 20% of the world’s freshwater reserves—the film asks whether it is possible for humans to make sustainable use of the rainforest by featuring nine successful projects for sustainable forest use that directly benefit the local population and foster good economic partnerships. Experts like economist Sergio Besserman, ecologists Bertha Becker and Virgilio Viana, and Amazonians themselves explain activities such as agriculture, fisheries, and animal husbandry.