



# Miami Film Festival 2017 Reveals Its Lineup, Headlined by Richard Gere

BY JUAN BARQUIN

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*Norman: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer*

Sony Pictures Classics

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Miami is still on a film high from the spotlight that's been placed on *Moonlight* and the city's many festivals, from the Miami Jewish Film Festival to Borscht, taking place this time of year. But no film event is quite as big as the Magic City's staple, the Miami Film Festival. The 34th edition will kick off big, with the March 3 opening night featuring actor, producer, and humanitarian Richard Gere in attendance.

Gere, who stars in the opening-night feature *Norman: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer*, will attend the film screening and subsequent Champagne & Stars Opening Night Party with filmmaker Joseph Cedar. Festival director Jaie Laplante is thrilled to have them here.

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"Richard Gere began his career with brave choices that catapulted him into stardom, and after nearly 40 years of acclaimed performances, his most recent acting has demonstrated a new force – deeper, more personal, and even more profound," Laplante says.

"With Joseph Cedar's brilliant take on power and responsibility in today's political arena, Gere creates one of his most indelible characters with Norman Oppenheimer. It is an honor to have both Richard Gere and Joseph Cedar present *Norman*, which will be one of 2017's most talked-about films, to open the 34th Miami Film Festival."

#### RELATED STORIES

Blake Jenner's *Billy Boy* Will Screen at Miami Film Festival 2017

Billy Corben's Rakontur Studios to Release Docuseries *Cocaine Cowboys: Los Muchachos*

But this is only one of the 131 feature narratives, feature documentaries, and short films the festival will screen this year. Entries come from 40 countries and include 22 world and international premieres. Of them, more than a quarter – 36 to be exact – are directed or codirected by women.



> *Travelling Lady*

*Jessica Mitrani*

The Miami Film Festival will run until March 12, when it will close with an Awards Night Gala screening of Carlos Theron's *For Your Own Good* from Spain, which will be followed by the El Coto Rioja Awards Night Party. The CINEDWNTWN Gala events at the Olympia Theater also include some exciting guests, particularly Spanish actress and fashion icon Rossy de Palma, who will engage in an onstage conversation about her career with artist Jessica Mitrani. The two recently collaborated on the short film *Travelling Lady*, which will screen at the gala.

The city and its citizens will play a large role in the festival this year, with quite a few events focused on Miamians. Two of the world premieres include the Emilio Estefan-produced *A Change of Heart*, directed by Kenny Ortega, and **Miami-born Blake Jenner's feature screenwriting debut, *Billy Boy***. Former *Miami Herald* writer Jill Bauer and former staff photographer Ronna Gradus will return two years after their documentary *Hot Girls Wanted* with the followup series, *Hot Girls Wanted: Turned On*. They will also be joined by actress and filmmaker Rashida Jones for a screening and discussion of the "Woman on Top" episode of the series.



Oscar-winning director David Frankel and first-time director Xavier Manrique, both Miami residents, will head the panel discussion Learn From the Best: An Oscar-Winning Mentor, in which the two will discuss the process of developing, producing, and directing a debut feature. Alfred Spellman and Billy Corben of Rakontur will preview clips of their upcoming works – *A Sunny Place for Shady People* and the **new *Cocaine Cowboys* miniseries** – in an extended discussion with festival programmer Thom Powers, billed as Straight Out of Miami.

It doesn't end there, with Miami natives Yara Travieso and Jonathan David Kane presenting the Florida premiere of their "live film" project, *La Medea*, an interactive work filmed just recently in New York City. Miami-born-and-raised documentarian David Borenstein will present the North American premiere of his documentary *Dream Empire*, based on his personal experience of being a "white monkey" in the center of the Chongqing, China, real-estate boom.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Fundarte Presents: Chiflón By Chile's Sil...

Fri., Jan. 27, 8:30pm

TICKETS

JTF's Friday Night Live

Fri., Jan. 27, 9:00pm

TICKETS

The Spotlight

Fri., Jan. 27, 10:00pm

TICKETS

After Hours

Fri., Jan. 27, 11:00pm

TICKETS

Just the Funny Mainstage Show

Sat., Jan. 28, 9:00pm

TICKETS

Also in the lineup are interesting features such as Xavier Dolan's *It's Only the End of the World*, François Ozon's *Frantz*, Lone Scherfig's *Their Finest*, and Kôji Fukada's *Harmonium*. They will join events such as the previously announced Google Seminar Series on Gender & Racial Gaps in Film & Tech.

Tickets for the Richard Gere Opening Night Gala, For Your Own Good Awards Night Gala, Google Seminar Series, and the Big Easy Brunch + Ella Brennan Screening are on sale now. All remaining film and event tickets will go on sale February 3 to members of the Miami Film Society and February

10 to the general public.

Screening and seminar venues of the 34th Miami Film Festival include Olympia Theater, MDC's Tower Theater, Regal Cinemas South Beach, O Cinema Miami Beach, the Colony Theatre, Coral Gables Art Cinema, Miami Beach Cinematheque, Faena Miami Beach Hotel, MDC Live Arts Lab, and the Screening Room.

### Miami Film Festival 2017

March 3 through 12 at various venues across

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