

Mariona Viader and Javier H. Estrada appointed co-directors of the 71st edition of SEMINCI

- *The current heads of programming and coordination of SEMINCI, Javier H. Estrada and Mariona Viader, will co-direct the next edition of the festival to ensure its stability and the continuity of the project launched in 2023*
- *The decision taken by the Mayor, Jesús Julio Carnero, has been endorsed by the Governing Council of the Municipal Culture Foundation and announced today by the Councillor for Tourism, Events and City Branding of Valladolid City Council, Blanca Jiménez Cuadrillero*
- *Valladolid City Council will soon launch a public competition to select the director who will lead the festival in 2027*

Valladolid, 14 January 2026. The 71st edition of the Valladolid International Film Festival (SEMINCI) will maintain the spirit and guiding principles of the project developed by its recently deceased director, **José Luis Cienfuegos**. While awaiting the outcome of the public selection process for a new director, which will be announced shortly, the current general coordinator, **Mariona Viader**, and the head of programming, **Javier H. Estrada**, will co-direct the 71st edition of SEMINCI, to be held from 23 to 31 October 2026.

The decision taken by the mayor, **Jesús Julio Carnero**, has been endorsed by the Governing Council of the Municipal Culture Foundation and announced today by the Councillor for Tourism, Events and City Branding of Valladolid City Council, **Blanca Jiménez Cuadrillero**. During the Governing Council's extraordinary meeting, the mayor met with the SEMINCI team to discuss the future of the festival in this new phase. The aim is to guarantee the continuity and organisational and artistic stability of the event, which, according to the councillor, 'has reached new heights of notoriety, achieved remarkable figures and opened up a new way of understanding SEMINCI, which we believe should continue in the future'.

Both professionals have been part of José Luis Cienfuegos' creative and organisational team since he took over as director of SEMINCI in 2023, having also worked with him at the Seville European Film Festival since 2013 and 2017, respectively. Estrada is also a professor, film critic and member of the editorial board of Caimán. Cuadernos de Cine Magazine. He has been co-founder and head of programming at FILMADRID, a member of the selection committee at DocumentaMadrid and Oberhausen International Short Film Festival. Mariona Viader, for her part, has a solid track record in film festival management, collaborating in the planning and execution of the 2018 European Film Awards, among other events, as well as promoting the participation of festivals in European networks.

'We don't believe there is a better way to give continuity to the festival in this new stage than with the help of the team that has made SEMINCI's progress possible in the last three editions, of which we are really proud,' said Blanca Jiménez Cuadrillero. 'The festival is in good hands and what lies ahead is the continuation of a project as successful as the one we have been enjoying until now,' added the councillor.

'We take on this co-direction with affection and admiration for José Luis Cienfuegos, with deep respect for SEMINCI, the City Council, the institutions and sponsors that support it, the city and the public of Valladolid. Our proposal is for SEMINCI to move forward with continuity and respect for Cienfuegos' legacy,' said Mariona Viader, adding that both co-directors are

fully aware of the complexity of their task due to the irreplaceable nature of José Luis Cienfuegos. She also expressed her confidence in the festival's stable team to continue operating with 'normality, solidity and ambition', as well as in the contracting companies and their teams, 'who are also part of SEMINCI, contributing decisively, through their professionalism, involvement and knowledge, to maintaining the high standards that characterise it'.

Javier H. Estrada, who will take on management duties without abandoning programming, has confirmed that the film programming team for the 71st edition will continue to be made up of the professionals who have consolidated it in recent years: **Jose Cabrera, Andreea Pătru, Eulàlia Iglesias, Carolina Martínez and Álvaro Arroba**. 'Our goal is to create an edition following the same criteria as José Luis Cienfuegos, the best film festival director ever: ambitious, open in terms of geographical and cinematic perspectives, solid and at the same time unpredictable. Because SEMINCI should be a place for revelations and discoveries, while also being welcoming, warm and extremely human, maintaining the character that has historically identified the festival as a pillar of international auteur cinema,' assured Estrada.

Mariona Viader recalled that Cienfuegos believed that 'film festivals are more than just programming films; they are places for meeting, conversation, enjoyment and community.' And this conviction will be upheld by the management team at the 71st edition.

An international icon of arthouse cinema

José Luis Cienfuegos' project at the helm of the Valladolid International Film Festival has been characterised by a clear and consistent auteur identity, based on the defence of contemporary arthouse cinema and personal and daring perspectives. Under his direction, SEMINCI reinforced its international vocation, consolidating itself as a space for discovering filmmakers, accompanied by a constant commitment to cinema that is attuned to social and political reality.

The proposal also stood out for the rigour and coherence of its programming, articulated in well-defined sections and supported by recognisable editorial criteria, which favoured dialogue between the films and the context of the festival. All of this was supported by a close relationship with the public, conceived as an active part of the event, through round tables, meetings and spaces for reflection that reinforced the accessible and educational nature of SEMINCI.

This balance between tradition and renewal has allowed the festival to preserve its historical identity as a reference point for quality cinema, while opening up to new narratives, formats and generations of filmmakers, consolidating SEMINCI as a festival with its own personality and international recognition.

The City Council thus reaffirms its commitment to the legacy of José Luis Cienfuegos and to a 'coherent, solid and recognisable' SEMINCI, while opening a transparent process to define its future artistic direction, which will be incorporated in 2027, in the 72nd edition, 'under stable conditions' according to the councillor.

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