



UNDERTOW

JAVIER FUENTES-LEÓN | PERU, COLUMBIA, FRANCE, GERMANY | 2009 | 101 MINS

Synopsis

In the eyes of his village, Miguel is the very image of an upstanding citizen – he is a popular and pious fisherman whose wife is about to have a baby. Miguel, however, is also having a secret relationship with Santiago, a painter spurned by the traditional Peruvian community for his effeminacy. Torn between his role as a protective father and his love for Santiago, a tragedy seems to free Miguel from making a decision, but ultimately he must make a choice between facing up to his conservative community and forever tormenting Santiago.



Overview

Undertow is a striking debut from director Javier Fuentes-León. Capturing the beauty of the Peruvian coastline in its stunning cinematography, the film takes on modern sexuality within a conservative community of deeply embedded traditions. It explores honesty, integrity, and the meaning of masculinity in Latin America. As the director examines Miguel's dilemma, without judging the choices of the three main characters, he focuses on emotion rather than melodrama.

A sensitive and well-measured film, *Undertow* presents some exceptional performances from its lead actors and offers a lesson in love as well as tolerance.

Director's Quote

"I think cinema can help — art in general — can help change people's minds. I do think though what will really change people's minds will always be having somebody else next to them say, 'Hey, I'm gay.' Somebody they love or admire or respect. And seeing them live their lives as who they are. I don't want to diminish the power of cinema and art, but I don't want to overstate it either. This is an issue that we've been dealing with for a long, long time. At some points it has been something that's more accepted, then definitely not, then back again. I'm happy about a lot of the things that are happening in Mexico and Argentina and Colombia, and hopefully people will see this film as something they can relate to as a love story and that will help be part of that movement that is making people change their minds. Because I think it's about time."

Booking Information

DVD bookings on the BFFS Booking scheme: Jaq Chell | info@bffs.org.uk | 0114 221 0314

All other bookings: Sophie Bush | sophie@axiomfilms.co.uk | 020 7243 3111 | www.axiom.com

Cast and Crew

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|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Cristian Mercado | Miguel |
| Tatiana Astengo | Mariela |
| Manolo Cardona | Santiago |
| Atilia Boschetti | Senora Rosa |
| Jose Chacaltana | Hector |
| Javier Fuentes-Leon | Director, Producer, Writer, Editor |
| Rodrigo Guerrero | Producer |
| Mauricio Vidal | Director of Photography |
| Roberto Benavides | Editing |
| Diana Trujillo | Art Director |
| Selma Mutal | Music |

Film Information

Length 101 mins; colour; Spanish with English Subtitles

World Premiere: 26th January 2010, Sundance Film Festival.

Awards and Quotes

- *Sundance Film Festival 2010* - Winner of the World Cinema Dramatic Audience Award, nominated for the Grand Jury Prize
- *Miami Film Festival 2010* - Winner of the Audience Award
- *San Sebastián Film Festival 2009* - Sebastián Award

“A touching, warm-hearted fable about honesty and tolerance with an authentic lyrical quality.”

Philip French, The Observer

“A stroke of genius...a tender, unforced, well-constructed and attractively shot fable about what it means to be a man.” *Independent on Sunday*

“A nuanced and daring debut” *Derek Malcolm, London Evening Standard*

“A beautiful, intriguing film...a moving meditation on sexuality, freedom and the delicate balance of human happiness.” *Irish Independent*

“A story told with such lyricism, tenderness, beauty and pain it transcends niche categorisation and delivers a powerfully affecting message.” *Easy Living*