Once Upon a Time in Venezuela

Once upon a time—not too long ago, actually—there was a small village named Congo Mirador floating atop the waters of Lake Maracaibo, Latin America’s largest oil field. In its homes perched on stilts lived fishermen, musicians, and families. Due to pollution, corruption, and neglect, the once vibrant and prosperous community has since deteriorated. Its residents fight to hold onto their way of life as sedimentation causes the village to sink and the developing swamplands bring disease. Knowing their future is at stake, two leaders arise as Congo prepares for parliamentary elections. On one end is Mrs. Tamara, Chavist party representative and local businesswoman known for getting votes by any means necessary. On the other is Natalie, a teacher who refuses to be ousted from her position despite vocally opposing the government. As political tension rises, Congo grows less inhabitable by the day, displacing an increasing number of families. Venezuelan director Anabel Rodríguez Ríos’ beautiful, yet haunting, observational documentary serves not only as a microcosm for her country’s present crises, but also as an empathetic portrait of a community on the verge of extinction.

Directed by: Anabel Rodríguez Rios. VENEZUELA. 99 minutes. (in Spanish with subtitles)

SUNDAY 5:35pm  MONDAY 1:40pm  TUESDAY 11:40am

TICKETS. For $1 off the regular ticket price, use the code IRTFCA
1—online: www.clevelandfilm.org/tickets
2—by phone: 1-877-304-FILM
3—in person: Film Festival Box Office in the Tower City Cinemas lobby

TIP: Many films at the 44th annual Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF) will go on standby. Don’t wait until the day of the film to purchase your ticket. Make an early purchase for any CIFF film you’d like to see during the festival. Regular ticket price for non-CIFF members is $16. Students and seniors: $14. College students: films are free with valid ID, M-F 9am-3pm.