

## Presentation of “Decent People”

26<sup>th</sup> August, 2017

Leonard Huxley Lecture Theatre - ANU

By Ambassador Clemencia Forero-Ucrós



Ladies and gentlemen, good evening and welcome to tonight’s movie.

First of all, I wish to thank the Australian National Centre for Latin American Studies – ANCLAS – and the Council on Australia Latin America Relations – COALAR for the support to this project, and our special gratitude to the Embassy of Guatemala as coordinator of the 13<sup>th</sup> Latin American Film Festival. It is indeed a great privilege to receive their support for this Festival that promotes the Latin-American culture in Australia.

Today’s exhibition is possible thanks to the program *Plan de Promoción de Colombia en el Exterior* or Plan for the International Promotion of Colombia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, developed by the Embassy of Colombia.

Tonight’s film “Gente de Bien / Decent People” is a Colombian-French co-production with the Support of “La Region Ile de France”, “Ciclic Region Centre”, “Region Basse Normandie” and “Maison de L’image”. It is the work of Franco Lolli, a young Colombian Director (born in 1983), who studied film directing in France and whose work has been very recognized in the Gallic country. The screenplay for “Gente De Bien” was written by Lolli at the Ciné fondation Residence of the Cannes Film Festival.

In 2014, “Gente de Bien” was nominated for Semaine de la Critique (Critics Week Grand Prize) and Camera d’or (Golden Camera) both at Cannes Film Festival. The film has being

Level 2, 40 Macquarie St

Barton ACT 2600

P. +61 2 62732090/91 – Fax +61 2 62732092

[www.cancilleria.gov.co](http://www.cancilleria.gov.co) <http://australia.embajada.gov.co>

[eaustralia@cancilleria.gov.co](mailto:eaustralia@cancilleria.gov.co)

Canberra – ACT – Australia



GP-CER 221918



SC-CER 221917



awarded with the Horizons Award – Special Mention at San Sebastián International Film Festival and Best Film at Ghent International Film Festival. I wish to highlight that most of the cast are not professional actors.

The film has been selected to participate in more than 40 international festivals, and in 2015 it was part of the Official Fiction Competition and the Official Colombian Film Competition of the 55th edition of the International Film Festival of Cartagena de Indias - FICCI - where it was screened for the First time in Colombia and where Lolli also was one of the jurors in the category of New Creators of this cinematographic event.

The title in Spanish has a double meaning, loosely translated both as "decent people", "respectable people" and even "rich people." In an interview with UK Journalist Nick MacWilliam, Lolli told that the idea from the movie came from memories of his childhood: *"The class situation comes from impressions of my childhood. I come from a kind of rich family, but I was always the poorest one among the rich. My mother didn't have a job for two or three years, and we didn't have the money to pay for school. So these things were on my mind, and I met a carpenter and his son, who had kind of the same relationship. Also, my mother once wanted to adopt a child who was in a difficult financial situation. So I took all this, mixed it up, and there was the film."*<sup>1</sup>

With his movie, Lolli touches a very sensitive nerve in Colombia: in one hand the drama of a little boy who has been removed from his "normal environment" and is forced to live with his father; on the other hand, the willing of a high class, educated woman, who tries to help them without really understanding their situation. To make things even more complicated –at

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://soundsandcolours.com/articles/colombia/new-colombian-social-drama-gente-de-bien-an-interview-with-director-franco-lolli-27735/>

least for Eric-, the film is set during the Christmas period, which probes it is not a “Merry season” for all. Tensions soon begin to crackle between the rich family and their poor guests, exposing the gap between festive pieties about Christian charity and the starker realities of the class structure.

Despite all the tensions, father and child can create a new bond and the sentiment of abandonment and lack of belonging is mitigated through affection and the love inspired for their pet.

Please, enjoy the film.