*-PRESS RELEASE-* Morelia, Michoacán, October 20, 2017.

**FICM celebrates its fifteenth birthday party**

**with the world premiere of COCO**

The **Morelia International Film Festival (FICM)** inaugurated its fifteenth edition with the world premiere of the new Disney • Pixar film, ***COCO***, directed by Lee Unkrich and Adrian Molina. This was the first time that the FICM opened with an animated film.

During the gala, which took place at Cinépolis Plaza Morelia, actress and producer **Johanna Murillo**, in charge of directing the opening ceremony, gave a welcoming speech before handing over the microphone to **Alfonso Martínez Alcázar**, Morelia's mayor, who thanked everyone involved for their participation in the realization of the festival, the Disney talent, filmmakers and actors present during the ceremony.

**PHOTOS OF THE RED CARPET AND INAUGURATION CEREMONY**

For his part, the governor of Michoacán, **Silvano Aureoles Conejo**, stressed that the festival is already part of the Michoacan culture and emphasized the beauty that envelops the tradition of the Day of the Dead, which is honored by ***COCO***. He also acknowledged that FICM "has established itself as a world-class cultural showcase".

The president of FICM, **Alejandro Ramírez Magaña**, accompanied by **Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Batel**, Vice-President, and **Daniela Michel**, general director of the festival, gave a speech where he referred to this edition as the "symbolic age of transition and evolution" of the festival. He emphasized that FICM has been an indispensable forum for the artistic proposals that have managed to gather the film community of Mexico and the world. He also highlighted the work of the team led by Daniela Michel over the years.

Later, **Lee Unkrich**, **Adrian Molina** and **Darla Anderson**, directors and producer of ***COCO***, along with **Gael García Bernal** and **Marco Antonio Solís "El Buki"**, talent of the film, took the stage to offer some words.

Unkrich emphasized that during the six years of research it took to make this film they found in Morelia a source of inspiration. "It's amazing to be back six years later to present this film that shows how beautiful this tradition is," he added.

Marco Antonio Solis said he was proud of being Mexican and especially being from Michoacan. For his part, Gael Garcia referred to people of Mexican descent who participated in the realization of COCO, and dedicated the film to them and all Mexicans who do not see "the wall" as an obstacle to get ahead.

In addition to the Disney talent, the red carpet saw the presence of the German director **Fred Kelemen**, who will present his latest film as director, ***Sarajevo Songs of Wo***e (2016); the Swiss-French director **Barbet Schroeder**; **Béla Tarr**, president of the jury of the Mexican Film Section of FICM; **Gregory Nava**, American director and screenwriter; the Mexican actresses **Ximena Ayala**, **Sofía Espinosa** and **Ximena Romo**; **Bertha Navarro**, producer and collaborator of MORELIA SUNDANCE Screenplay Lab; the director **Carlos Cuaron**; **John Bailey**, president of the United States Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; and **Édouard Waintrop**, director of the Fortnight of Directors of the Festival of Cannes; among others.

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