

## Filmmaker Walter Salles Recipient of 2020 FIAF Award



© Miranda Filho

The **International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF)**, the world's largest international network of cinematheques and film archives, announces that the recipient of its 2020 FIAF Award is Brazilian filmmaker **Walter Salles**. He follows Jean-Luc Godard, to whom the award was presented during the 75th FIAF Congress in Lausanne in April 2019.

Since 2001, when Martin Scorsese received the first FIAF Award for his pioneering work in the cause of film preservation, over the years the FIAF Award has been presented to a film personality from outside the archival world whose experience and personal commitment to cinema matches FIAF's missions. Previous recipients of the FIAF Award include Ingmar Bergman (2003), Mike Leigh (2005), Hou Hsiao-hsien (2006), Peter Bogdanovich (2007), Agnès Varda (2013), Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne (2016), Christopher Nolan (2017), and Apichatpong Weerasethakul (2018). The recipient of the

FIAF Award is chosen by the FIAF Executive Committee on the basis of a shortlist of nominations from staff members of all FIAF affiliated archives worldwide.

**Walter Salles**, whose name was put forward by our colleagues at the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro, is one of the most internationally famous and respected personalities in Brazilian cinema. His films have been selected and distinguished in some of the world's most prestigious festivals (Cannes, Berlin, Venice) and at the Academy Awards, Golden Globes, and BAFTA Awards. In addition, Walter Salles has been very active in the preservation of film heritage for nearly three decades.

A devoted lifelong cinephile with eclectic tastes, Salles took great interest in the history of Brazilian cinema from an early age. He has long advocated a passionate, innovative, and politically committed Brazilian cinema, initially as an intellectual and journalist, but over time this has turned into a more concrete commitment, notably through the foundation of the Mário Peixoto Archive, and his work on the restoration projects which led him to join the collective that went on to found the World Cinema Foundation (now the Film Foundation's World Cinema Project) in 2007. On that occasion, Salles said: "There is a saying by someone who worked with Glauber Rocha as producer and director of photography: 'A country without cinema or cinema history is like a house without mirrors.' So you understand very rapidly that the question of preserving films is a question of preserving cultural identity, plurality, and cultural diversity."

An important part of Walter Salles' involvement in film preservation activities is rooted in his admiration for the work of filmmaker Mário Peixoto (1908-1992), whose film *Limite* (1931) is a major milestone in the history of Brazilian and world cinema. Walter Salles' efforts were instrumental in both the rediscovery of this film in Brazil and abroad and the conservation of the documents of Peixoto's archive. He played a similarly discreet but effective role in the founding of the Mário Peixoto Archive, and then enabled the restoration of *Limite*.

The Mário Peixoto Archive was entrusted to the guardianship of the first restorer of *Limite*, Saulo Pereira de Mello (1933-2020), who thanks to Walter Salles was able to accomplish his life's mission – to preserve and promote the work of Mário Peixoto. Since its creation in 1996, the Mário Peixoto Archive has been managed by VideoFilmes, the production company founded by Walter Salles and his brother João Moreira Salles, a renowned documentary filmmaker.

Walter Salles also played a key role in the restoration and promotion of *Limite*. Launched shortly after Peixoto's death in 1992, the digital restoration project was carried out by the Cinemateca Brasileira in partnership with the Cineteca di Bologna and its laboratory L'Immagine Ritrovata, and was one of the very first such projects to secure the support of the World Film Foundation.

In deciding to present the 2020 FIAF Award to Walter Salles, the FIAF Executive Committee wishes to honour a great filmmaker whose commitment to the preservation of film heritage is widely recognized. It also wishes to express its support and solidarity with the three FIAF affiliates in Brazil – the Cinemateca Brasileira, Cinemateca do MAM,

and Arquivo Nacional – for their unwavering commitment to the cause of cinema in Brazil in today’s extremely worrying political context. At a time when the very existence of the Cinemateca Brasileira, a historic member of FIAF, is increasingly under threat, giving the 2020 FIAF Award to Walter Salles (a former member of the Cinemateca’s Board of Directors and recent signatory of an international petition in support of the institution) seems to us particularly timely.

Due to the Covid-19 global health crisis, the presentation ceremony of the 2020 FIAF Award has unfortunately had to be postponed to a later date, and discussions are underway with Walter Salles to reschedule it.

## About FIAF

**FIAF**, the **International Federation of Film Archives**, is a global organization dedicated to the preservation of, and access to, the world’s film heritage. Founded in June 1938 with four members (the British Film Institute in London, the Cinémathèque française in Paris, The Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Reichsfilmarchiv in Berlin), as of 2020 FIAF brings together 171 institutions in 76 countries. FIAF fosters solidarity, exchange, and co-operation between the most prominent cinemathèques and film archives worldwide.

**FIAF** wrote and strives to uphold the **code of ethics** for film preservation and standards for all areas of film archive work, promotes the creation of moving image archives in countries which lack them, encourages the collection and preservation of documents and materials relating to the cinema, seeks the improvement of the legal context in which archives operate, ensures the permanent availability of material from the collections for study and research by the wider community, and develops co-operation between members to ensure the international availability of all films and documents.

**FIAF** also oversees an ambitious **Training & Outreach program**, which runs or takes part in training events for professionals of the film archiving field all over the world, and provides assistance to new archives or those at risk.

It publishes the bi-annual ***Journal of Film Preservation*** (a key platform for discussions on all theoretical, technical, and historical aspects of moving image archival activities), the ***International Index to Film Periodicals*** and the ***Treasures from the Film Archives*** database – two research tools dear to scholars and researchers around the world, and a wealth of other resources, many of which can be found in digital form on the FIAF website ([www.fiafnet.org](http://www.fiafnet.org)).

**FIAF** is an official partner of UNESCO (with consultative status) and is a **member of the Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA)**, which represents the interests of worldwide professional archive organizations having interests in audiovisual materials and co-ordinates the celebrations of the World Day for Audiovisual Heritage each year on October 27.

Contact: [c.dupin@fiafnet.org](mailto:c.dupin@fiafnet.org)

Photograph of Walter Salles © Miranda Filho