



**MARCHÉ DU FILM**  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

**PRESS REVIEW**  
Variety

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Author: Rafa Sales Ross

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## **Brazil Comes Strong to Cannes to Bank on ‘I’m Still Here’ Oscar Momentum: ‘A Defining Moment For Brazilian Production’**

There is momentum, and there is the current moment of Brazilian cinema. This year, Walter Salles’ “I’m Still Here” made history as the first-ever Brazilian film by a Brazilian director to win an Oscar, scoring Best International Feature and bringing the country its first best picture nomination as well as a best actress nomination for Fernanda Torres. The week before, Gabriel Mascaro won the prestigious Berlinale Silver Bear for “The Blue Trail,” with the country having a chance at winning another major festival award with Kleber Mendonça Filho’s “The Secret Agent” playing in main competition at Cannes, where [Brazil](#) is also the Country of Honor at the Marché du Film.

“Brazil stood out immediately with its cinematic heritage, a dynamic industry undergoing a strong resurgence, and a prominent presence in Cannes,” Marché du Film Executive Director Guillaume Esmiol tells *Variety* of choosing the Country of Honor. “And, of course, Brazil brings an unmistakable festive spirit to the Croisette.”

Some of the initiatives connected to the celebrations at this year’s Marché du Film include a selection of emerging Brazilian producers at the Producers Network; four Brazilian documentaries at Cannes Docs and new fiction projects in the Rio Film Festival Goes to Cannes showcase; plus masterclasses and training programmes. Brazil is the leading Latin American territory in the market, with the fastest regional growth in recent years.

Minister of Culture Margareth Menezes, who will be in Cannes to attend the celebrations, highlights that one of the priorities since President Lula reinstated the Ministry of Culture — dismantled by former President Jair Bolsonaro — is “a strategic vision of culture as an economic pillar that can generate jobs, income and market competitiveness.”

“Brazil is back in cinemas,” she continues. “National productions took over 12 million people to cinemas in 2024, with five national films selling over 1 million tickets. The total gross from national titles reached \$45 million, and cinemas earned over \$442 million last year. Since the beginning of our term, we reinstated cultural policies that had been stopped or dismantled and are responsible for a historic investment in the sector.”

A representative for Ancine, the country’s National Film Agency, notes a significant strengthening of Brazil’s internal market, with titles like “I’m Still Here” elevating the market share of Brazilian films to 30% at the beginning of 2025. “Ancine will continue to prioritize the production and international circulation of works that strengthen Brazil’s image as a production hub,” they said.

Over 2023-24, the Ministry of Culture invested over \$742 million in Brazil’s audiovisual industry through the country’s primary public financing mechanism, the Audiovisual Sector Fund (ASF). The federal government also invested a further \$495 million in the sector through the Paulo Gustavo Law, a historic post-pandemic recovery initiative that saw a historic one-time cash injection delivered to the country’s



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27 states and 5,000 cities to use in production and distribution incentives or the creation of a local knowledge economy.

The Ministry of Culture also created 94 new screening rooms, taking the country to a record 3,509 screens nationwide, and reinstated the national quota in cinemas to “ensure Brazilian films have a strong theatrical presence.” Other initiatives include Tela Brazil, a free streaming platform for Brazilian content, and plans to create a National Film Commission. Menezes also recently published an executive order extending fiscal incentives through the Audiovisual Law until 2029.

“We’ve been consolidating our independent audiovisual industry for the last 25 years,” says producer Fabiano Gullane, one of the founders of Gullane, the major production company behind “Senna,” Netflix’s first global series produced in Brazil. “Today, not only are we a key consumer market to streamers — we are Netflix’s second largest market in the world — but we are also protagonists in content production.”

“We have producers in all stages, who speak all languages, and are ready to take on any project,” adds Gullane. “Brazil has a very mature market. It’s not just about ‘I’m Still Here,’ it’s about the work of 30 years. But this moment, of course, clearly enables international producers to see Brazil as a strategic partner. Today, we have resources, technology, and talent comparable to any country.”

“I’m Still Here” is the first original feature film produced by Globoplay, the streaming arm of media powerhouse Globo. Alex Medeiros, the director of drama, documentaries and films at Globoplay originals, says the success of “a film in Portuguese, with a Brazilian story, is very meaningful to us.” “An Oscar places a spotlight on new Brazilian productions, within the country and internationally. It’s a defining moment for Brazilian audiovisual production.”

Gustavo Gontijo, executive producer for development at O2 Filmes (“City of God”), similarly emphasizes the need for Brazilian producers to “seize this great moment.” “We have just come out of years under Bolsonaro in a government that unfortunately did not invest in our audiovisual industry and said we were not a priority. Thankfully, with Lula back in power, incentives and investments have returned, and we are already seeing the consequences.”

“In the next few years, we will see many projects being made in Brazil, thanks to the return of federal incentives, including projects by O2 Filmes.” The production company is currently working on big partnerships with streamers such as Fernando Meirelles’s ambitious Amazon film “Animal Race” and Netflix mini-series “Pssica.” We made a strategic decision not to seek public funds under Bolsonaro, but we are now bidding again. We want to make cinema,” Gontijo says.

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