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## S.A. filmmaker Gutierrez's 'Please, Don't Bury Me Alive!' inducted into National Film Registry

Posted on December 17, 2014 | BY HECTOR SALDAÑA

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Efrain Gutierrez's 1976 indie film "Please, Don't Bury me Alive!" was inducted into the National Film Registry. It is considered to be the first Chicano film. (File photo)

SAN ANTONIO - The Library of Congress announced Wednesday that pioneering independent Chicano filmmaker Efrain Gutierrez's 1976 film "Please, Don't Bury Me Alive!" was inducted into the National Film Registry.

It joins 24 other films inducted this year, including Stephen Spielberg's "Saving Private Ryan" and John Hughes' "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" as worthy of film preservation.

Gutierrez's best films - "Please, Don't Bury Me Alive!" "Run Tecato Run," "Chicano Love Is Forever/Amor Chicano Es Para Siempre" and "El Juanio" - reveled in the gritty realism of the barrio, a world of junkies, hustlers and Chicano thug life.

"Please Don't Bury Me Alive" is cherished for its historical significance. It is considered the first Chicano indie film.

"It's quite an honor," said Gutierrez, 68, who was born in S.A. and graduated from Edgewood High School. "I knew that it was something. But I didn't know how big of a 'big deal' it was. It's starting to kind of sink in."

UCLA professor and film historian Chon Noriega has been Gutierrez's loudest (and often the only) champion of his early work. He once described the renegade Chicano filmmaker as "one of the least likely, most bewildering figures of the celluloid era."

Gutierrez credited Noriega, who nominated the film for the prestigious honor.

"I have to give him all the credit," said Gutierrez, who learned about the announcement late

The filmmaker's rediscovery actually goes back farther. Playwright Gregg Barrios, in a 1985 essay, made a critical assessment of Gutierrez's underground films.

1 of 9 12/18/2014 11:05 AM These days Gutierrez, with his wife, Irma, and son, Efrain-Abran, operate the Efrain Gutierrez Taller de Cine, Arte, Music y Comida at the corner of South Flores Street and West Glenn Avenue. The cultural community arts center opened earlier this year. Gutierrez's film is available for sale there.



Efrain Gutierrez at his cultural arts community center on South Flores Street. (File photo)

Gutierrez, whose surviving film prints are part of UCLA's massive film collection and scripts and printed materials are at Stanford University, said the last remaining Holy Grail is finding (and then restoring) the 16mm film footage and Nagra reel-to-reel audio tapes of his "La Revolucion Chicana" concert, the doomed so-called Chicano Woodstock staged on a South Side farm on Sept. 16, 1977.

Categories: Movies

Tags: Chon Noriega | Efrain Gutierrez | Library of Congress | National Film Registry |

Please Don't Bury Me Alive

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2 of 9 12/18/2014 11:05 AM