

Quickets, AnthroTek Win San Sebastián's Zinemaldia Startup Challenge

CALLUM MCLENNAN

Spain's Quickets and U.K. startup AnthroTek claimed the top prizes Friday at the Zinemaldia Startup Challenge, the San Sebastián Festival's flagship technology competition.

Quickets, which applies airline-style yield management to cinema and theater, won Best Spanish Project and also received the Special Mention for Entrepreneurship. AnthroTek, creator of fire stunt masks, which utilised AI in its prototyping process, secured Best European Project.

"I was genuinely surprised they sponsored this project," said AnthroTek CEO Dr. Raoul Peltier. "It's a niche market, but a real problem," alluding to the many digital only pitches who cited gargantuan markets. "Technology should also solve practical, real-world issues, not just billion-dollar ones." Stunt teams in flames everywhere will thank him.

Each main prize carries €10,000 (\$11,700), while the Special Mention adds €3,000 (\$3,500). All finalists gain access to potential Basque Country funding of up to €500,000 (\$585,000) and free incubation space at regional innovation hubs.

Backed by the Basque Government's Department of Industry, Energy Transition and Sustainability and its agency SPRI, and organized with Tecnalia, Alía and Vicomtech, the Challenge has become the centerpiece of the Zinemaldia & Technology showcase.

Since 2022, it has also hosted a Spain-specific competition under Spanish Screenings: Financing & Tech, promoted by the Culture Ministry (ICAA), the Digital Transformation Ministry and ICEX.

The finalists each had 10 minutes to present and answer questions.

We profile the companies below:

SPANISH FINALISTS

Bubbo (Spain)

Bubbo addresses streaming fatigue with an AI-powered app that personalizes recommendations across multiple platforms. Available on iOS, Android and web, it is already commercialized in Spain. In a crowded discovery market, Bubbo bets on ease-of-use and cross-platform integration to carve out a foothold as the number of streaming services multiplies and users demand more effective content navigation.

Crowdy (Spain)

Crowdy pitches an ambitious one-stop project management platform for the audiovisual industry. It combines AI workflow automation, HR-tech for global hiring, blockchain traceability, and fintech services such as payments and crowdfunding. Still



Dr Raoul Peltier of AnthroTek (L), Felipe Ortiz Sanchez of Quickets (R).

at MVP stage, Crowdy is trialing with early adopters, positioning itself as a professionalization tool for international co-productions where managing complex partnerships and transactions remains a hard problem.

It's On (Spain)

It's On enables real-time, remote monitoring of film shoots by producers, agencies and clients. Promising to cut logistics costs, shorten schedules and reduce Carbon emissions by lowering travel, the service is trialing with early adopters. It aligns with a post-COVID trend toward hybrid, sustainability-conscious production practices, offering producers a way to supervise shoots without needing to be on set.

Kultura Hub (Spain)

Kultura Hub proposed a B2B platform designed for cultural institutions - museums, universities, archives - to license and access curated audiovisual content. Targeting underrepresented cultures and minority languages, it offers fast 48-hour licensing, AI-powered subtitling in 24 languages

(including Basque, Catalan, Sami, Sorbian), and peer-learning services. Still early-stage, it aims to become a European cultural infrastructure, bridging content silos while boosting visibility for minority filmmakers.

Quickets (Spain)

Winner of best Spanish project and a special mention for entrepreneurship, Quickets is a dynamic-pricing app that releases discounted cinema seats only sixty minutes before showtime, filling empty theaters without cannibalizing presales. Already in sixty-five venues across Spain, with 450,000 tickets sold this year and 500,000 downloads, it boasts 250,000 social followers and ratings above 4.4. Expanding internationally, Quickets positions itself as both exhibitor recovery tool and youth-focused access platform.

EUROPEAN FINALISTS

Mimik (Sweden)

Mimik transforms smartphone scans into rigged avatars for film, games and interactive media. With a prototype lowering the cost and com-

plexity of personalized digital characters, it targets both studios and individual creators. Combining generative AI and customizable styling, Mimik seeks to capitalize on rising demand for scalable avatar creation across entertainment and interactive platforms, from virtual production pipelines to user-generated content.

AnthroTek Ltd – Novel Fire Masks (U.K.)

Winner of best European project, AnthroTek has developed customizable fire stunt masks using AI-assisted 3D modeling and proprietary silicone materials. Featured in prep for *28 Years Later* and with experienced stunt co-ordinator Julian Spencer as a key advisor, the masks allow safe, realistic fire performances, offering a practical alternative to CGI. The startup's next step is securing Class III PPE accreditation for the masks, enabling insurability and broader rollout through top stunt coordinators such as Spencer across the U.K.

PXLD (U.K.)

PXLD, founded by computer vision researcher Dr. Will Rowan, develops software to replace costly LED volumes with AI-driven tools that instantly convert actors into 3D models, composited into virtual environments in real time. Targeting low- and mid-budget productions underserved by current virtual production tech, PXLD promises cost savings of up to €480,000 (\$561,60,) and halved post-production timelines. Early pilots include short films, commercials and music videos.

Signapse (U.K.)

Signapse is building the world's first AI-powered sign language translation software, creating photorealistic

AGENDA

INDUSTRIA

Entertainment Marketing: Nuevas fórmulas para alcanzar al público

KURSAAL – CLUB DE PRENSA

10:00 - 12:00

En colaboración con The Global Entertainment Marketing Academy of Arts & Sciences (GEMA). Este bloque explora cómo el marketing del entretenimiento abre caminos innovadores para conectar el cine y el audiovisual con sus audiencias. Desde la internacionalización de historias locales hasta la promoción digital y los modelos FAST, se analizarán estrategias que están transformando la manera de llegar al público.

10:00-10:45 **Estrategias de seducción: Cómo vender una historia vasca al mundo**

10:45-11:15 **Píldoras viajeras: Microcontenidos para conquistar el algoritmo**

11:15-12:00 **El modelo FAST: nuevas oportunidades para el cine independiente**

digital interpreters based on twenty years of University of Surrey research. With products for live events (Sidestream) and post-production content (Site Studio), it aims to address the global shortage of interpreters where there is just one for every 300 deaf people. Backed by strong ties to deaf communities, Signapse targets a \$500 million serviceable market, expanding beyond BSL and ASL toward 300+ sign languages.

Tape It (Germany)

Tape It offers an iOS audio-recording app tailored to musicians and sound designers. They pitched a denoising tool to tackle noisy onset audio, a persistent issue even in high-end productions. Its technology, first built for musicians, adapts dynamically to shifting noise floors, offering fully automated results. Endorsed by Phil Levine's Grammy-winning Igloo Music, they seem positioned as a prosumer-ready solution bridging music and film sound "...all the stuff we try to do is to solve boring problems," said founder Thomas Walther.

ZINEMALDIA STARTUP CHALLENGE 2025

Best Spanish Project

Quickets

Best European Project

Novel Fire Masks Engineered With 3D Technology from AnthroTek

Mention to Entrepreneurship

Quickets