



San Sebastián Co-Production Forum: Murga, Rondón, Mariani and Many More

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Some of Latin America's greatest arthouse directors – Celina Murga, Mariana Rondón, Santiago Loza, Matias Mariani and Christopher Murray – feature among 15 projects set to be unveiled at San Sebastián's 2025 Europe-Latin America Co-Production Forum, the Spanish festival's biggest industry centerpiece.

The selection also frames hot emerging director such as Ernesto Martínez (*The Devil Smokes*) and first features which are sure to create interest. One case in point: Selma Cervantes' *Mourning Sound*, set up at Teorema, founded by Michel Franco and partner Eréndira Núñez Larrios and behind award-winning films such as *Memory*, *New Order*, *Heroic*, *Flies*, *Chronic* and *From Afar*.

Galvanised by new and emerging talent, the 2026 lineup also serves as a tribute to what outgoing San Sebastián Festival director José Luis Rebordinos has achieved with the Forum: Consolidating it as Europe's most significant Latin American meet and mart when a presence at co-production platforms has become ever more essential for the survival of so many Latin American filmmakers.

Selected for the Forum, *The Rehearsals* marks Murga's follow-up to *The Freshly Cut Grass*, presented by Martin Scorsese and a Tribeca best screenplay winner, and Murga's fourth fiction film – after *Ana and the Others* (2003), *A Week Alone* (2007) and Berlin competition contender *The Third Side of the River* – films often displaying a large sense of place and unspoken but keenly observed emotions.

Mariani impressed highly with his Berlin Panorama title *Shine Your Eyes*, a Netflix pick-up for the world. "*Nature Boy* began when I asked myself: what would it be like to be the father of an alien?" Mariani told "Variety" of his new Forum project.

Rondón, behind another 2026 Forum project, *Looking for Sam*, won San Sebastián's top Golden Shell in 2013 with *Bad Hair*; and, more recently, *It Would Be Night in Caracas*, a gripping thriller, "Variety" said, with Edgar Ramírez (*American Crime Story*) and Natalia Reyes (*Terminator: Dark Fate*).

San Sebastián-bound with *Giant Stones*, Murray competed in Venice 2016 main competition with *The Blind Christ* and at Sundance with *Sorcery* in 2024.

Giant Stones kicks off on Rapa Nui, 1914 as British archaeologist Katherine Routledge arrives on the most remote island in the world to solve the mystery of its extraordinary monolithic statues. Winner of Hubert Bals Fund Development Support, *Giant Stones* is set up at Fernando Basquian's Planta in which had three films at Cannes.



The Amateurs.

A selection of titles:

The Amateurs (*Los Inexpertos*, Felipe Solari Yrigoyen, Chile, Argentina)

Produced by Chile's Quijote Films (*The Mysterious Gaze of the Flamingo*) and Argentina's Gentil Cine, and set at an eccentric convention populated by people dressed as iconic movie characters where the original Maltese Falcon statuette vanishes along with a mysterious Russian guest. *The Amateurs* shows "how ordinary people, in a remote corner of South America and far from Hollywood, are forced to step up when circumstances spiral beyond their control," says Solari about his potential feature debut.

Giant Stones, (*Piedras gigantes*, Christopher Murray, Chile)

As Routledge's investigation of Rapa Nui monumental moai statues progresses, a native uprising led by a prophetess draws her into a conflict that will force her to confront the tension between revelation and madness. "Built on years of fieldwork and made alongside the Rapanui community, *Giant Stones* revisits her 1914 expedition and the tensions it reveals: the legacy of empire, gendered power, and clashing worldviews. Confronting these fractures is an urgent way of understanding our present," says Murray.

Looking for Sam, (*Buscando a Sam*, Mariana Rondón, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico)

13 years after *Bad Hair*, Sam, its lead, has been forced to emigrate from Venezuela. Searching for him, director Rondón and producer Marité Ugas end up at the fashion catwalks Paris, discovering a tale of personal reinvention. "*Looking For Sam* wanders between fiction and documentary, where memory and identity blur and transform one another. It forces us to ask ourselves who we are when we leave behind who we once were," says Rondón tells "Variety".

Mourning Sound, (*El último sonidero*, Selma Cervantes, Mexico)

After years abroad, Karina returns to Mexico following her mother's death. Estranged from a country that no longer feels like home, she and her brother Nacho find a way to bridge their differences through their family's tradition of being sonideros: DJs at popular neighbourhood dances. Cervantes' first feature, following the

success of her short film *Sweatshop Girl*, starring Yalitza Aparicio, which premiered at Sundance 2023.

Nature Boy, (*O Estranho Meninho*, Matias Mariani, Brazil)

A departure for Mariani? "Celestino, a São Paulo public-school principal whose life fits on a form, takes in a boy who speaks no known language — a boy who absorbs organic matter, transforms with everything he consumes, and is quietly studying the man learning, against his will, to be his father, the logline runs. A sci-fi family drama penned with *Shine Your Eyes* co-scribe Maíra Bühler from Primo Filmes and Tatiana Leite's Bubbles Project. A title to track.

The Rehearsals, (*Los Ensayos*, Celina Murga, Uruguay, Argentina)

Eva (48) accompanies her mother Emilia (80), a prestigious retired doctor facing the progression of Alzheimer's. The family home is also shared by two caregivers, Eva's teenage son and her younger sister. Amid improvised celebrations, hos-



This Is the Memory I Would Like to Have of Mom.

AGENDA

INDUSTRIA

El nuevo guion del audiovisual. Diversidad, inversión y futuro

KURSAAL, CLUB DE PRENSA

10:00-13:30

Organizado por el Ministerio para la Transformación Digital y la Función Pública

Networking Cocktail: Let's Celebrate Catalan Cinema!

TABAKALERA, PRISMA (CON INVITACIÓN)

12:30-14:00

El ICEC - Instituto Catalán de las Empresas Culturales a través de Catalan Films le invita a un aperitivo de networking en el Festival de San Sebastián: un punto de encuentro para conocer de cerca las producciones catalanas seleccionadas en la presente edición del festival y conectar con el talento y las empresas de una de las industrias audiovisuales más vibrantes y prolíficas del sur de Europa.

Acompañando la creación: panorama de residencias y laboratorios internacionales

TABAKALERA, LABORATORIO DE CINE Y AUDIOVISUALES DE TABAKALERA

12:30-14:00

Entradas gratuitas disponibles en los canales habituales a partir del martes 16 de septiembre a las 9:00 h.

Presentación del Día del Cine Español

KURSAAL, CLUB DE PRENSA

19:00 - 20:30

Presentación de la 6ª edición del Día del Cine Español, una iniciativa del Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales (ICAA) destinada a celebrar y poner en valor el cine español, su patrimonio y sus profesionales. Durante el acto se presentarán los principales contenidos y actividades de esta nueva edición.

pital visits and conflicts over care, a mysterious presence of bulls surrounds the house. "Blending realism and the fantastic, the film explores fragility and the possibility of finding love and vitality in being there for another person," while "reflecting on the way our society looks at aging, deterioration and death," Murga told "Variety".

This Is the Memory I Would Like to Have of Mom, (*Este es el recuerdo que me gustaría tener de mamá*, Ernesto Martínez Bucio, Mexico, Spain)

Next up from Martínez Bucio and screenwriter Karen Plata after scoring the Berlinale Perspectives first feature award for *The Devil Smokes*, centering on Marina, 27, reeling from her mother's death when she is diagnosed with cancer. "An exploration of the grieving process, the search to understand one's own existence and family memory as a collective construction," says Martínez Bucio. Produced by México's Colectivo Colmena and the Basque Country's Txintxua Films.

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Foro



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