

JOHN HOPEWELL

Opening with the world premiere of Woody Allen's *Rifkin's Festival*, running Sept. 18-26, and maintaining an on-site format and all its main sections, 2020's 68th San Sebastián Film Festival takes place in extraordinary times. The impact of COVID-19 will play out throughout the festival. Here are six highlights of an exceptional edition of the biggest movie event in the Spanish-speaking world.

### San Cannesastian

Cannes Festival head Thierry Fremaux and San Sebastián director José Luis Rebordinos will take the stage at the festival's inaugural ceremony to pay joint homage to all the festivals that have soldiered on during COVID-19 turmoil.

In June, Cannes Film Festival canceled its on-site edition but announced an Official Selection. 17 titles from Cannes now screen at San Sebastián.

"Thierry presents the screening of a classic film at San Sebastián and comes every year to San Sebastián's Elías Querejeta Film School to talk about Cannes and film festivals, and we partner on a section at Cannes' Ventana Sur," says Rebordinos, who also works with the Producers Network of the Cannes Market. "Cannes and San Sebastián already have a very good relationship, and this year even more."

### San Sebastián: 2020's Toronto?

Some Latin America cineastes - a score or more, far more than originally expected - will make San Sebastián. Meanwhile a go-ahead rump of European sales agents and producers, especially from France, were considering taking meetings usually held at Toronto at San Sebastián instead. So San Sebastián shaping up as the most European of editions in decades. Many industry executives would certainly love to roll into the festival if they can. "San Sebastián has no equivalent in terms of guest hosting and audience enthusiasm," Yon says.

# San Sebastián Bows Extraordinary On-Site/ Online Edition



Limbo.



Gal-mae-gi.

### Stars at a Premium

Viggo Mortensen will receive this year's Donostia Award and present his directorial debut, *Falling*. Johnny

Depp, who takes a producer credit on Julien Temple's *Crock of Gold: A Few Rounds with Shane MacGowan*, will also be in town, as Matt Dillon,

director of Cuban music doc *The Great Fellove*, and Gina Gershon, star of Woody Allen's *Rifkin's Festival*. Beyond that, U.S. star presence, looks like one San Sebastián COVID-19 downside.

### A Vibrant Co-Production Forum

Since the turn of the century, Latin America's film production has boomed on the back of increasing state support. No more. Inflation and currency exchange, exacerbated by COVID-19, has ravaged Argentina's film industry, making overseas finance a must. That money can no longer come from Brazil, decimated by Bolsonaro's war on its film industry. So San Sebastián's Europe-Latin America Co-Production Forum looks like one of its strongest to da-

te, packed out by new projects from Latin America's rising stars — Benjamín Naishtat, Celina Murga, Marcelo Martinessi, Lucía Garibaldi — and intriguing almost-unknowns. Much of San Sebastián's 2020 business — co-production, sales pickups — will be done on these productions.

### More Buzz Titles

Of lesser-known titles, New Directors features Gull, a Jeonju festival grand prize winner; Basque mother-daughter drama *Ane*; and three Cannes Selection titles — João Paulo Miranda Maria's *Memory House*, a chronicle of Brazilian racism; Susan Lindon's rites-of-passage drama *Spring Blossom*; and Ben Sharrock's remote Scottish-island set *Limbo*. In WIP Europe, there is Turkish workplace accident drama *Between Two Dawns*. For talent spotters, *Chinese short Having a Good Time and I Am Afraid to Forget Your Face*, from Egypt's Sameh Alaa, are both in Zabaltegi-Tabakalera. "The level of short films at this year's festival is very high indeed," Rebordinos says.

### A Newest Basque Wave

Could the Basque Country follow in Catalonia's footsteps, and launch another new wave? Certainly, the writing's on the wall.

Six of the 11 titles selected for San Sebastián's Zinemira Basque showcase are first or second features. Two Basque movies — *Ane* and *Death Knell* — have made San Sebastián's prestigious New Directors' cut. Meanwhile, development residency Ikusmira Berriak is feeding into the festival, giving it Russia's *Chupacabra*, another buzzed New Directors movie, and sparking synergies with the Elías Querejeta Film School, co-overseen by the festival. All of which makes San Sebastián one of the most exciting places in Spain to begin making films.

"Multiple new directors are emerging with projects, and that's no coincidence," Rebordinos says. "A lot of things are coming together at the same time."

SADE

PRÓXIMAMENTE EN NUESTRAS SALAS DE CINE

68  
SSIFFDonostia Zinemaldia  
Festival de San Sebastián  
Colaborador

2 OCT 2020



AKELARRE

2 OCT 2020



RIFKIN'S FESTIVAL

1 ENE 2021



EL PADRE

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