



# Spanish Screenings: Big Investors, High Tech



Baltasar Kormákur.

## JOHN HOPEWELL

In industry terms, San Sebastian has never had it so good.

Over Sept. 19-20, many of the good and great of the international film business will descend on the festival to attend a first San Sebastian Festival Creative Investors' Conference, co-organized with CAA Media Finance.

The Conference's high-profile international investors, producers, agents and executives take in MUBI's Bobby Allen, Focus Features's Kiska Higgs, 30West's Trevor Groth, Vincent Maraval at Wild Bunch International and Netflix's Teresa Moneo.

Also confirmed are the Elysian Film Group's Danny Perkins, Neon CEO Tom Quinn, Cinetic Media's John Sloss, Killer Films' Christine Vachon, Patrick Wachsbarger at Picture Perfect Entertainment and Participant Media's Rob Williams.

Delegates will be pitched 10 higher-budget Spanish movies by their producers. In a cosmopolitan lineup, titles presented include international co-productions such as *Whalemen (At the Ends of the Earth)* from Everest director Baltasar Kormákur as well as the latest from *Amama* helmer

Asier Altuna and *Raga*, from Gerardo Herrero, an Academy Award winning producer for *The Secret in Their Eyes*.

CAA Media Finance's Roeg Sutherland, Benjamin Kramer and Sarah Schweitzman will moderate sessions, along with conference co-curator and San Sebastian Festival consultant Wendy Mitchell.

The event includes keynote talks, in-depth case studies of top Spanish productions, panel discussions on current industry trends, technology innovations for storytellers and opportunities created by the rise of the streaming platforms.

Later next week, San Sebastian will also deep dive into the metaverse with the Zinemaldia Startup Challenge, showcasing 10 tech projects in competition. Five European and five Spanish entrepreneurs or startups that apply technology to the film-TV sector compete for hefty prizes in cash and kind.

Spanish contenders take in IZI Record, which is developing technology for creating collaborative AI-based content. European projects include the U.K.'s PentoPix, an AI-assisted text-to-3D creative suite for generating storyboards and content pre-production.

Never has San Sebastian seen such a powerful presence of U.S.-based producers and distributors. It's far from casual of course. The Conference and Challenge form the Financing & Tech leg of Spanish Screenings XXL, a four-axes market running 2022-23 backed by Spain's government.

The Screenings XXL also dovetail with powerful new market forces. Seven of Netflix's 20 Top 10 non-English-language films and TV series are sourced from Spain which commands, thanks to streamers' reach, the biggest single accessible language market in the world, that of 577 million Spanish-speakers.

Paradoxically, however, the Creative Investors Conference takes place as, after the pandemic, given the weakness of Spain's post-COVID box office recovery, producers now battle to raise financing from Spain on projects budgeted at much above \$2 million-\$3 million. The only alternative for larger movies is either platform co-finance or international investment.

*Money Heist* and *Elites* numbers on Netflix and the tsunami of big shoots hitting Spain last decade, led by *Game of Thrones*, have also introduced a new mindset.



Backed by Spain's ICAA film agency, and ICEX, its export and inward investment office, the Spanish Screenings XXL are organised under the aegis of Spain's Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan as the country's government, as many across Europe such as neighbouring France, has come to recognise the robust growth potential of its audio-visual sector. In March 2021, Spanish prime minister Pedro Sánchez went as far as to announce a Spain AVS Plan, with a €1.6 billion (\$1.6 billion) budget.

The Malaga Screenings, the Spanish Screenings XXL's Content axis, already wrapped a first plus-size edition this March, overall industry attendees rocketing up to over 1,100. "There was a lot more dynamism to trading, taking the Screenings to a new level," recognized Ivan Díaz, Filmax head of international.

This Sunday at San Sebastián, ICEX and ICAA will unveil details of a

## AGENDA

### INDUSTRIA

16:30 - 18:00

KURSAAL – CLUB DE PRENSA  
**Jornada Series: To be continued... ¿qué ocurre tras una primera temporada de éxito?**

En colaboración con Europa Creativa Desk MEDIA Euskadi (con acreditación de industria o prensa).

Moderación: Marta Medina (El Confidencial)  
Participantes: Ana Rujas (Cardo); Anna R. Costa (Fácil)  
Conversación entre Jorge Gonzalo (Presidente del Observatorio de la Diversidad en los Medios Audiovisuales) y Anna Marchessi (Fácil).

18:30 - 19:30

KURSAAL – CLUB DE PRENSA  
**Patrocinios público-privados en el sector cultural. Una mirada desde los festivales de cine**

Esta mesa redonda pretende reflexionar sobre la importancia de los patrocinios para llevar a cabo un festival de cine. Además, también busca ahondar en los retos que este tipo de acuerdos conllevan para las empresas. (Con acreditación o invitación: solicitándola en eztabai@sansebastianfestival.com)

third axis, Spanish Screenings On Tour, to unspool at Buenos Aires' Ventana Sur, Latin America's biggest film-TV market, taking place over Nov. 28-Dec.2. On Tour promises a significant spike in the number of Spanish execs and creatives and titles at the market.

A fourth axis, Spanish Screenings 360, engages in active promotional actions throughout the year, aimed at boosting the presence of the Spanish Screenings brand.

Unveils and deals on Spanish and Spanish-language titles, film and TV, are already shaping up at this year's San Sebastian at a volume unthinkable just a few years ago. In a decentralised world of global production, Spain is no longer on the periphery. Hollywood and the Spanish government have both taken note.



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