



Padilla.



Kings of the World.

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Four industry takeaways from the 70th San Sebastian Festival:

San Sebastian Grows (Again)

“There are markets that have improved during COVID-19, and others that haven’t and San Sebastian is a festival that’s improved thanks to its industry activities,” says Film Factory’s Vicente Canales. That build comes from afar, with a Films in Progress strand in 2002, an Europe-Latin America Co-Production Forum from 2012, the Ikusmira Berriak development residency from 2017 and now a Creative Investors Conference. There’s a form of cross collateralization here. Competition movies can blow hot and cold. The 40 titles, often entirely unknown, brought onto the market by these industry strands guarantee something of interest for producers and sales agents who decide where their hottest films premiere as well.

“At the industry level, more and more things are happening here, and it’s highly interesting for me to be in San Sebastian,” said Filmax’s Iván Díaz, head of international at Filmax, which is selling Cesc Gay’s ensemble comedy *Stories Not to Be Told*, premiered on Thursday at the San Sebastian Festival as an RTVE Gala.

Sales Business Slows (Even More)

“There was a race to catch up with Netflix among streamers and now people are recognizing that that’s

2022 San Sebastian Takes: Growth, Deals, and a Slowing Sales Biz

not necessarily the best business model,” said 30West’s Trevor Groth. “So now there’s there’s a sort of a pause. I think there’s gonna be a push back, a swing back towards theatrical distribution and exhibition.” That pause, however, compounded with uncertainty about when an adult audience will come back en masse to theaters, looks to be currently hurting the sales business. French sales agents, who often use San Sebastian to announce first sales on hot Venice and Toronto tickets, looked particularly mooted.

... But That’s a Sign of the Times

“San Sebastian is a launching pad, not a market for closing,” says Latido Films’ Antonio Saura, noting that he will not sell out the world on Rodrigo Sorogoyen’s piping hot *As Bestas*, a movie that Le pacte has opened to 316,000 admission sales in France, about \$2 million or more, in gross box office, until late November’s Ventana Sur. So San Sebastian cut, in general, two ways: Sales agents pick-ups announcements, especially in the run-up to the event; co-production deals as producers reach out to production partners to compensate for an ever more challenged international

sales market on more arty packages. The one exception to this slow down is Spain. Galvanized by exceptional box office on event art films – *Alcarràs*, *Lullaby* – key players closed deals at San Sebastian or unveiled bold distribution moves:

The Deals:

*Spanish distribution rights to highly anticipated film *Cerrar los ojos*, by legendary Spanish director Victor Erice (*The Spirit of the Beehive*), have been acquired by Avalon Distribución Audiovisual, whose credits include *Alcarràs*. Film is scheduled to roll next year. Tandem Films, Pecado Films and Nautilus produce.

*Energetic Spanish distributor-producer Bteam Pictures inked with Film Factory the Spanish rights to Colombian Laura Mora’s *Kings of the World*, a San Sebastian competition world premiere, and part of Toronto’s Industry Selects section.

*A Contracorriente Films has bought Spanish rights to Cuban Pavel Giroud’s Horizontes Latinos player *The Padilla Affair*, co-produced by Spain’s Ventú Productions and Lia Rodríguez in Cuba, and sold by Figa Films.

*International sales rights of Petr Václav’s sumptuous period film *Boemo*, which world premiered in

main competition, were picked up by Paris-based Loco Films, which also pounced on *Woman at Sea*, a San Sebastian New Directors buzz title from Paris-based Slot Machine (*Melancholia*).

**Walls Can Talk*, the latest film from Spain’s Carlos Saura (*Raise Ravens*, *Deprisa, Deprisa*, *Carmen*) was acquired for intentional sales by Latido Films. Produced by Malvalanda (*Madre*, *The Mole Agent*) and distributed in Spain by Wanda Vision, the film world premiered as a RTVE Gala.

*Madrid-based Latido also took sales rights to documentary *Tequila, Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll*, from Goya Award-winning producer-helmer Alvaro Longoria.

*Film Factory Entertainment snapped up Roger Zanuy’s documentary *Mibu, The Moon in a Dish*, which opened the Culinary Zinema sidebar. It also picked up world sales rights to *El Otro Hijo*, the feature debut of Colombia’s Juan Sebastián Quebrada.

*Indie Sales took international on Emad Aleebrahim Dehkordi’s feature debut *A Tale of Shemroon*, which debuted in New Directors. The film will be released in France via Jour2Fête.

*Denmark’s LevelK boarded damning U.K. immigration drama *Great Yarmouth: Provisional Figures* by award-winning Portuguese director Marco Martins, a main competition world premiere.

*Emiliano Torres’ *Rona*, one of the highest-profile of 14 titles selected at San Sebastian’s Europe-Latin America Co-Production Forum, saw Italy’s Emanuele Crialesi (*L’immensità*) teaming with Argentina’s Nicolás Gil Lavedra to produce.

*Ulises Porra’s *Bajo el Mismo Sol* secured a first co-production deal ahead of the festival, with Argentina’s Pucará Cine boarding the project from lead producer Wooden Boat Productions in the Dominican Republic.

*Buenos Aires-based Vega Cine and Cordoba Argentina’s Guacho Cine are teaming on *Todo el Mundo*, from Agustina San Martín, a leading light of Latin America’s new generation of female genre cineastes.

*France’s Cité Films has boarded *The Fire Doll*, from Chilean Niles Atallah (*Rey*) and *Left Over*, from San Sebastian Gold Shell winning Turkish director Yesim Ustaoglu (*Pandora’s Box*).

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