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San Sebastian's WIP Latam: Grounded Tales & Genre

San Sebastian's pix-in-post showcases have often launched standout movies, such as Sebastian Lelio's *Gloria*, winner of the Films in Progress Award at the 2012 edition of the Festival, plus notable directors, such as Jayro Bustamante, whose praised debut *Ixcanul* played at the festival in rough cut in 2015 before winning the Alfred Bauer prize for innovation at 2016's Berlinale, breaking out handsome sales.

San Sebastian's 2023 Co-Production Forum registers two trends: Films that are genre pics or enrol genre tropes or genre blend; an exploration of identity.

This year's San Sebastian WIP Latam skews in another direction. "The films and stories are very grounded in reality, either by their hybrid formal move between fiction and non-fiction, their singular take on daily matters or the very social issues they address," Javier Martín, San Sebastian Latin American delegate, told LatAmCinema.com.

Yet genre surfaces in disparate ways: the mix of coming of age, apocalypse and fantasy in *Mi bestia*; the true-life horror of *Maybe It's True What They Say About Us*; the sense of surreal in Colombia's *Jungle*.

As LatAmCinema.com notes, multiple titles are co-productions, a fact martin hazards, could be for the reduction in moneys from Argentina's INCAA film institute, with Argentine titles dominating in the selection.

This year, of the total six films at WIP Latam, four pictures come from Argentina, one from Chile and one from Colombia. They will compete for the WIP Latam Industry and the EGEDA Platino Industry awards.

As ever, WIP Latam serves as a new talent showcase. Four of the WIP Latam contenders are first or second features. On the other hand, debutants take in Beltrán, director of the awaited *Mi bestia*, which as a project snagged the ArteKino International Award in the San Sebastian's Europe-Latin America Co-Production Forum in 2020.

Reas, another WIP Latam competitor, marks the second film by Argentine playwright and writer Lola Arias (*Theater of War*), winner of the HEAD Pitchings du Réel Award at Visions du Réel in 2020.

Co-produced by Gabriela Sandoval and Carlos Nuñez's Storyboard

in Chile and La Jauría Comunicaciones in Argentina, *Maybe It's True What They Say About Us*, directed by Camilo Becerra and Sofía Paloma Gómez, turns around Chile's horrific Colliguay sect.

Argentine filmmaker Maximiliano Schonfeld returns to San Sebastian after launching *Jesús López* in Horizontes Latinos in 2021, which previously played at WIP Latam. In 2022, Schonfeld's *Frankenstein* took part of residence program Ikusmira Berriak.

Many of the films shown in WIP Latam have enjoyed a successful international career. Two of the titles to have landed awards at WIP Latam 2022, Guto Parente's *Estranho Caminho* and Martín Benchimol's *El Castillo*, following their participation in the Tribeca and Berlin Festivals respectively, are competing at San Sebastian's Horizontes Latinos this year.

In 2021, Manuel Abramovich's *Pornomelancolía* won the best photography award at San Sebastian after playing in Ikusmira Berriak (2018) and WIP Latam (2021).

WIP Latam pictures will be introduced to an industry audience in San Sebastian Festival over September 25 to 27.

SAN SEBASTIAN WIP LATAM 2023:

Most People Die on Sundays (*Los domingos mueren más personas*, Iair Said, Argentina, Italy, Switzerland) The second film from Argentinian Said, who uses a sweet and sour comedy tone to follow the vicissitudes of a young homosexual Jew when he has to go home to face his father's last days and then mourning. Said's short films have screened at Cannes and BAFICI. Lead produced by Argentina's Campo Cine, headed by Ni-

colás Avruj and Diego Lerman, and behind Lerman's titles such as *The Invisible Eye* and Ana Katz's *Floriánópolis Dream*.

Mi bestia (Camila Beltrán, Colombia, France) Beltrán will pitch her feature debut, supported by Proimágenes Colombia, after her short film *Pacífico oscuro* was selected by Locarno in 2020. A genre blending coming-of-age tale, *Mi bestia* sets in Bogotá in the year 1999, turning on Milagros, a 13-year-old girl who hears rumors

that the Antichrist will arrive during a solar eclipse.

Maybe It's True What They Say About Us (*Quizás es cierto lo que dicen de nosotras*, Camilo Becerra, Sofía Paloma Gómez, Chile, Argentina) Inspired by the case of the Colliguay sect, the film focuses on the relationship between a psychiatrist mother and her daughter, one of its members, set against the backdrop of a murder investigation. An engrossing, universal and incredible story inspired by true events," says producer Carlos Nuñez at Chile's Storyboard Media.

Reas (Lola Arias, Argentina, Germany, Switzerland)

Arias debuted with *Theater of War*, a San Sebastian's Zabaltegi-Tabakalera player in 2018. Like *Theater*, *Reas* shuttles between reality and fiction, this time depicting women and transgender people, once cons in Argentina's Caseros penitentiary, now in ruins, reconstructing their past and imagining their future in the shape of a musical. Gema Juárez Allen Gema Films (Argentina) lead produces with Ingmar Trost's Sutor Kolonko (Alemania)

Jungle (*Selva*, Juan Miguel Gelacio, Esteban Hoyos García, Colombia)

First-timers Gelacio and Hoyos García narrate the main character's last days in Bogotá after receiving an enigmatic phone call at work, while a mysterious plague of flamingoes flies over the city. A movie about adolescent angst, its makers say.

Big Shadow (*Sombra grande*, Maximiliano Schonfeld, Argentina)

Set in the Argentine Entre Ríos province, an area inhabited by the descendants of German immigrants, who attempt to reconstruct the language of the Chaná, who lived in the same area. The language was believed to have been lost until a man appears who claims to speak it. A Storyboard Media production, partnered by La Jauría Comunicaciones (Chile), Murillo Cine (Argentina) and Morocha Films (Argentina).



Mi bestia.



Quizás es cierto lo que dicen de nosotras.

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