

SAN SEBASTIÁN REVIEW DAILY

71st San Sebastián International Film Festival Preview



Joxean Fernández

PODCAST: The 71st edition of the San Sebastián International Film Festival is fast approaching, set to take place from September 22-30. TFFV's Matt Micucci kicks off his podcast festival coverage by previewing its program with Joxean Fernández, who has been a member of the festival's management committee since 2011 and is the director of the Basque Film Library.

The conversation touches on a wide range of topics, from this year's official selection to the ways in which the festival helps showcase talent from the

Basque region. We also spoke about the festival's multi-decade history, the traits that distinguish it from other film festivals held throughout the year, its industry section and some more recent challenges, including its response to the ongoing SAG-AFTRA strike.



Matt Micucci

PERLAK

SOCIETY OF THE SNOW

VERDICT: The 1972 air crash of a Uruguayan flight in the Andes is recreated in great but respectful detail in 'Society of the Snow', the edge-of-seat disaster movie that closes the 80th Venice Film Festival, directed by J.A. Bayona of 'The Impossible' fame.

Deborah Young, September 9, 2023

Spanish director Juan Antonio Bayona plunges the audience into another memorably harrowing disaster based on a real-life tragedy, this time a plane crash in the Andes, in *Society of the Snow* (La sociedad de la nieve).

Almost as heart-stopping as his 2012 hit *The Impossible* with Naomi Watts and Ewan MacGregor battling for survival during the Indian Ocean tsunami, this Netflix production is a choral drama whose dozens of characters mostly never come to the fore, making the viewer's emotional investment in them much more contained.

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Venice Film Festival

GERMAN FILMS IN SAN SEBASTIÁN



AFIRE

by Christian Petzold



ACHILLES

by Farhad Delaram (DE/IR/FR)



SHE CHEF

by Melanie Liebherr, Gereon Wetzel

Snow from page 1

Still, the film's recreation of a famous 1972 crash in the forbidding Andes mountains — the airliner was on its way to Chile with a Uruguayan rugby team aboard — is possibly the most frightening evocation of disaster in the air that anyone will ever want to see, or even experience vicariously in a movie. The terror is in the details, and just as *The Impossible* first showed the overwhelming power of nature to derail human lives in a matter of minutes, followed by accidents and after-shocks, so this film is packed with incident long after the small plane smashes to pieces against a mountain.

The accident happens half an hour into the film. A few moments of turbulence and the happy, carefree joking of the strong young men aboard comes to a standstill. Moments after a crew member tensely orders everyone to fasten their seatbelts, the plane seems to enter freefall. Numa (Enzo Vogrincic), a 24-year-old law student who joined the party at the last minute to make his brother happy, looks out of the small oval window seconds before they hit the mountain and the rear of the plane breaks off, sucking many passengers out the rear. Then it starts sliding through the deep snow amid screams of pain and terror.

[Full review, click here](#)



Netflix

PERLAK

LA SOCIEDAD DE LA NIEVE

CINE VERDICT: La caída del avión uruguayo en 1972 en los Andes es recreada respetuosamente y en gran detalle en “La sociedad de la nieve,” una película infartante sobre el desastre, que cierra el festival de cine de Venecia número 80, y es dirigida por J.A. Bayona, que ganó fama con “Lo imposible.”

Deborah Young, September 9, 2023

El director español Juan Antonio Bayona sumerge al público en otra catástrofe memorable desgarradora, basada en una tragedia real, esta vez un accidente aéreo en los Andes, en

La sociedad de la nieve. Casi tan infartante como su éxito de 2012 *Lo imposible*, con Naomi Watts y Ewan MacGregor luchando por sobrevivir durante el tsunami del océano Índico, esta producción de Netflix es un drama coral cuyas docenas de personajes en su mayoría nunca pasan a primer plano, lo que hace que la identificación emocional del espectador con ellos sea mucho más contenida.

Aun así, la recreación que hace la película del famoso accidente de 1972 en la imponente cordillera de los Andes -el avión se dirigía a Chile con un equipo de rugby uruguayo a bordo- es posiblemente la evocación más aterradora de un desastre aéreo

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Venice Film Festival

MEMORY

VERDICT: Mexican director Michel Franco follows up his unsettling but well-liked Tim Roth thriller 'Sundown' with 'Memory', a paint-by-numbers romance/family drama starring Jessica Chastain as an emotionally damaged social worker in Brooklyn

Deborah Young, September 9, 2023

At his most harshly confrontational, Michel Franco just about splits audiences down the middle. His best-known work *New Order*, which describes a violent revolt of the poor against Mexico's super-wealthy, won the Silver Lion Jury Prize in Venice in 2020. *Memory*, his new film, is also likely to put its viewers on opposite banks of the river, but for different reasons.

There will be the casual viewers of well-acted romantic drama and dyed-in-the-wool Jessica Chastain groupies (think of its upcoming bow at TIFF) who will swallow this tepid plate of familiar entertainment, particularly from the comfort of their living room sofa (this is where the characters in the film distractedly watch their movies). Then there will be the unhappy festival-goers who were expecting something edgy, maybe in the outlandish ballpark of *Sundown* (2021), in which Tim Roth drops out of middle-class English life to loaf and drink in Acapulco.

Considering who the writer-director is, *Memory* is remarkable chiefly for its steadfast conventionality, unrelieved by any type of irony or plot twist. Welcome to the sofa. Sylvia (Chastain) is a social assistant who

[Full review, click here](#)

MEMORIA

CINE VERDICT: Después de su inquietante pero bien recibido thriller 'Sundown', el director mexicano, continúa con 'Memoria' un drama familiar-romance dibujado con plantilla, actuado por Jessica Chastain en el papel de una trabajadora social emocionalmente afectada, en Brooklyn.

Deborah Young, September 20, 2023

En sus momentos de confrontación más dura, Michel Franco divide al público por la mitad. Su obra más conocida *Nuevo orden*, que describe una revuelta violenta de los pobres contra los millonarios en México, ganó el León de Plata, Premio del Jurado en Venecia en 2020. Es probable que *Memoria*, su nueva película, coloque también a sus espectadores en orillas opuestas del río, pero por diferentes motivos.

Habrán espectadores ocasionales para este drama romántico bien interpretado y los fanáticos incondicionales de Jessica Chastain (piense en su próxima presentación en el TIFF) que se tragarán este platillo tibio de entretenimiento familiar, particularmente desde la comodidad del sofá en su sala de estar (aquí es donde los personajes del filme miran distraída-mente sus películas). Luego estarán los descontentos asistentes al festival que esperaban algo atrevido, tal vez en la zona peculiar de *Sundown* (2021), en el que Tim Roth abandona la vida inglesa de clase media para holgazanear y beber en Acapulco.

Si tomamos en cuenta quién es su guionista y direc-

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PERLAK

THE ZONE OF INTEREST

VERDICT: 'Sexy Beast' and 'Under The Skin' director Jonathan Glazer makes his Cannes debut with this coldly compelling, boldly experimental Holocaust drama.

Stephen Dalton, May 20, 2023

As Nazi Germany lay in ruins following World War II, long-serving Auschwitz camp commandant Rudolf Höss scoffed at accusations that he had murdered three and a half million people. "No, only two and one half million," he calmly protested. "The rest died from disease and starvation."

The chillingly mundane domestic lives of Höss and his family lie at the centre of *The Zone of Interest*, British writer-director Jonathan Glazer's first feature in a decade. Hannah Arendt's over-used quote about the banality of evil is guaranteed to come up in almost every review, but that is understandable, as few films have so perfectly embodied the concept before. A formally austere portrait of Auschwitz that never goes inside the camps, leaving the horror and suffering off screen, the *Sexy Beast* (2000) and *Birth* (2004) director's fourth full-length work is a coolly detached, unsentimental, unflinching glimpse of Hell with overtones of Michael Haneke. Not exactly a fun watch, but serious and compelling.

Titled after the euphemistic Nazi term for the network of forced labour and extermination camps around Auschwitz, *The Zone of Interest* is freely

[Full review, click here](#)

TABAKALERA

THE DELINQUENTS

VERDICT: A delicious reverie on escaping capitalism's numbing daily drudge and finding the true meaning of freedom, "The Delinquents" is a rare three-hour charmer sure to be scooped up in multiple territories.

Jay Weissberg, May 18, 2023

In almost every Cannes there are one or two Un certain regard titles that make everyone wonder why they're not in competition rather than some of the mediocre entries from established auteurs. Rodrigo Moreno's *The Delinquents*, like last year's *Godland* by Hlynur Pálma-son, is that film, guaranteed to be talked about and celebrated far more than many in the splashier



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section. Putting a big ole' bullseye on capitalism yet doing so with a great deal of understated humor, *The Delinquents* wears its cleverness so lightly you barely realize how expertly Moreno (*A Mysterious World*, *El Custodio*) is weaving together characters and themes, sensationally accompanied by

musical selections as compelling as life outside the rat race. Paralleling a couple of bank employees who seek to escape the suffocating grip of daily clock-punching, the film backpedals the heist element to draw out an awakening to broader concepts of freedom and fulfil-

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TABAKALERA

LOS DELINCUENTES

CINE VERDICT: Una deliciosa ensoñación sobre cómo escapar de la adormecedora esclavitud diaria del capitalismo y encontrar el verdadero significado de la libertad. Los delincuentes es increíble hechizo de tres horas que seguramente será captado por múltiples territorios.

Jay Weissberg, May 19, 2023

En casi todos los Cannes hay uno o dos títulos de Una cierta mirada que hacen que todos se pregunten por qué no están en competencia en lugar de alguna de las participaciones mediocres de autores establecidos. Los delincuentes de Rodrigo Moreno, como Godland de Hlynur Pálmason el año pasado, es esa película; está garantizado que será comentada y celebrada mucho más que varias en la sección más llamativa. Poniendo un gran centro



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de diana en el viejo y conocido capitalismo, pero haciéndolo con una gran cantidad de humor sutil, Los delincuentes usa su ingenio tan a la ligera que apenas nos damos cuenta de cuán expertamente Moreno (Un mundo misterioso, El Custodio) está entretejiendo personajes y temas, sensacionalmente acompañado por selecciones musicales tan atractivas como la vida fuera de la carrera de ratas. Paralelamente

a un par de empleados bancarios que buscan escapar de las garras sofocantes del reloj checador, la película da marcha atrás al tema del atraco para provocar un despertar a conceptos más amplios de libertad y auto realización. Los únicos delincuentes aquí serán los compradores dudosos que deberían atrapar esta joya, larga pero maravillosamente gratificante.

[Full review, click here](#)

MEET THE TFW CRITICS & TEAM WHO ARE AT SAN SEBASTIAN FILM FESTIVAL



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THE FILM
VERDICT



PERLAK

MAY DECEMBER

VERDICT: The combined talents of Natalie Portman, Julianne Moore and veteran indie auteur Todd Haynes are largely wasted on this humdrum Cannes competition contender.

Stephen Dalton, May 21, 2023

Nobody gives better Resting Bitch Face than Julianne Moore. Reunited with director Todd Haynes for a fifth time on *May December*, the diva of dysfunction radiates repressed rage and tremulous inner pain on screen, especially in her gently acerbic exchanges

than the connoisseur indie cineaste credentials of Haynes or Moore.

A passion project for Portman, who first pitched it to Haynes during Covid shutdown, *May December* is based on a screenplay by Samy Burch, an occasional shorts director primarily known for casting credits, notably on the *Hunger Games* series. Burch plays with some fairly heavy material here: the lines between sexual consent and abuse, guilt and forgiveness, rehabilitation and eternal damnation for child sex offenders. But despite Haynes' track record of artfully re-framing the language of camp melodrama, he maintains a kind of middlebrow issue-movie flatness here, never delivering the emotional fireworks



with co-star Natalie Portman. The electrical charge from their shared scenes could power a small city. But sadly, all this energy gets dissipated by an oddly conventional story with soapy overtones and fuzzy intentions. Despite its baffling high-profile slot in the main Cannes competition, this is a slender effort from the auteur creator of *Far From Heaven* (2002), *I'm Not There* (2007) and *Carol* (2015). Box office prospects will hinge more on Portman's marquee pulling power

and psychological catharsis that the set-up seems to promise.

Set in 2015, *May December* loosely mirrors the real case of Mary Kay Letourneau, a Washington state schoolteacher jailed in 1997 for second-degree rape after she began a sexual relationship with 12-year-old student Vili Fualaau, who she later married. Moore plays Gracie Atherton-Yoo, a superficially steely but brittle 60-ish mother now married to Joe

[Full review, click here](#)

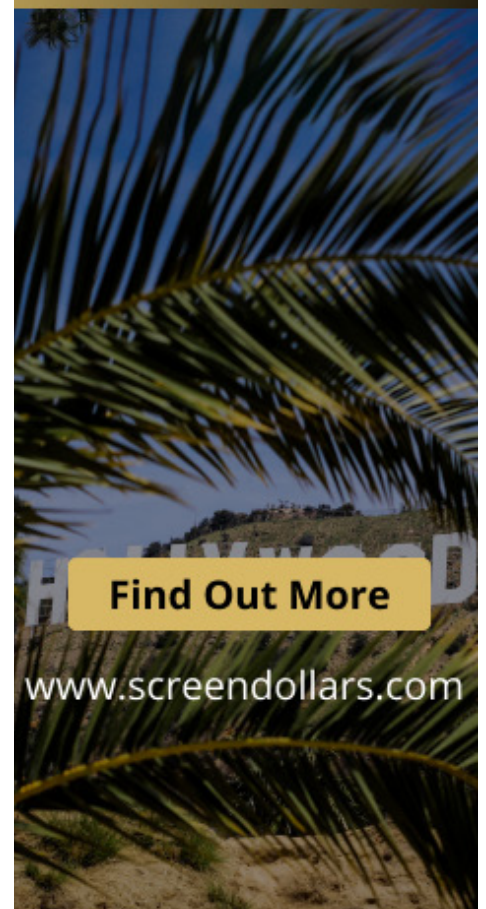


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