

MIFA PRESS REVIEW

Extracts - 2015

ANNECY 2015



International Animation Film Market
17 - 19 June

ANNECY 2015

MEDIA COVERAGE

The 39th Annecy International Animation Film Festival welcomed 300 journalists from all over the world.

To date, we have bought together over 1,500 publications, TV and radio broadcasts and reports.

A few figures for 2015:

- ➔ Around **190 articles** published in the **French press**
- ➔ Around **140 articles** in the **local and regional press**
- ➔ **Over 715 online publications** on French **internet sites** and **blogs**
- ➔ **35 news reports** from **French press agencies**
- ➔ Over **50 broadcasts and reports** shown on **national TV** and **daily regional reports**
- ➔ **40 radio broadcasts**
- ➔ Around **250 publications and coverage abroad**

EXAMPLES OF AUDIOVISUAL PRESS:

09 APRIL 2015

TV8 MONT-BLANC: *JT 8 info* – Fanette Debuissou
Annecy Festival: a book about 50 years of the event (1min25)

27 APRIL 2015

TV8 MONT-BLANC: *JT 8 info* – Fanette Debuissou
Annecy Festival: Salma Hayek's visit to present the opening film "The Prophet" (30sec)

28 APRIL 2015

CANAL+ : *La Nouvelle Édition* – News with Émilie Besse
Film adaptation of Kahlil Gibran's "The Prophet", co-produced by Salma Hayek (2min)

11 MAY 2015

I-TÉLÉ: A colourful adaptation of "The Prophet" (1min47)

28 MAY 2015

TV8 MONT-BLANC: *JT 8 info* – Fanette Debuissou - A foretaste of Annecy 2015 (2min48)



JUNE:

CINÉ+ Par ici les sorties: Festival announcement the week beginning 8 June

35 TV régionales: interview with Marcel Jean shown over the following channels during the week beginning 8 June:

ANGERS TV, ARMOR TV, AZUR TV (Côte d'Azur), **BDM** (Région parisienne), **CANAL 32** (Aube), **CELA TV** (Charente-Maritime), **CTV, IC1** (Clermont-Ferrand), **LA CHAÎNE NORMANDE, LA LOCALE** (Seine Saint-Denis), **LCM** (Marseille), **LM TV** (Le Mans), **MA TÉLÉ** (Saint-Quentin), **MIRABELLE TV** (région de Woippy), **NORMANDIE TV, OPAL TV** (région de Dunkerque...), **REFLETS DU RIED** (Marckolsheim), **TÉBÉO** (Finistère et ouest des Côtes d'Armor), **TÉBÉSUD** (Morbihan), **TÉLÉ NANTES, TÉLIM** (région du Limousin), **TERRITORIAL TV** (Nord Haute-Marne et Sud-Meuse), **TLT** (Toulouse), **TV7 COLMAR, TV8 MONT-BLANC** (Hautes-Alpes), **TV SUD** (Camargue-Nîmes), **TV SUD** (Montpellier), **TV TOURS, VOO TV** (Dijon), **VOSGES TV...**

SATURDAY 13

M6 Cinésix: Festival trailer

SUNDAY 14

FRANCE 3: *19/20 Alpes* – Julien Sauvadon - Interview Simon Rouby (*Adama*)

M6 Absolutement Stars: focus on Salma Hayek's visit + trailer shown on 14 June

MONDAY 15

ITÉLÉ: Olivier Benkemoun / 2 live broadcasts

Anney Festival: four French films in competition + interview with Patrick Eveno + tribute to women (3min40)

TV5 MONDE Y'a du monde à...: Estelle Martin

TV8 Mont-Blanc

The start of Anney 2015 (2min30)

French attendance at Anney 2015 (1min)

The Anney Festival: a bonanza for traders and restaurants (2min30)

TV8 TV8 MONT-BLANC: Special broadcast - Anney 2015 – Day 1 (6min)

FRANCE 3 Le Grand Soir 3: *Soir 3* – Patricia Loison - Anney: capital of films for kids (41sec)

FRANCE 3: *12-13 Rhône-Alpes* – Silvie Boschiero

Anney: the world stage for animation this week (1min20) / Report Julien Sauvadon. Pixar's "Minions" and "Inside Out" rubbing shoulders with Folimage.

GAME ONE Le Buzz: Festival announcement + multicasting of the trailer from 15 June

J ONE Le Buzz: Festival announcement + multicasting of the trailer from 15 June

MTV Le Buzz: Festival announcement + multicasting of the trailer from 15 June

PARAMOUNT CHANNEL Le Buzz: Festival announcement + multicasting of the trailer from 15 June

TUESDAY 16

TV8 MONT-BLANC: Special programme - Anney 2015 – Day 2 (6min50)

FRANCE 3: *19/20 Alpes* – Ingrid Pernet-Duparc - Interview with Monique Simard (2min)



RTL Télé Lëtzebuerg: 5 minutes- Christophe Wantz - Paying tribute to women at Annecy 2015 (40sec)

EURONEWS: Frédéric Ponsard - Annecy: the appointment with animation: interviews with Roger Allers, Mohammed Saeed Harib and Marcel Jean (3min45)

AB ACTION Ciné Choc: announcement (with trailer and film extracts) in the News section at 8:35 pm (+ repeats)

BFM TV: announcement by Candice Mahout on set pictures from the week

WEDNESDAY 17

TV8 MONT-BLANC: Special programme - Annecy 2015 – Day 3 (6min)

ARTE: TV News at 1:00 – William Irigoyen

Interview with Marcel Jean + Peter Sohn and Michaël Marin (3min) – reports by Virginie Apiou

ARTE: TV Evening News – Carolin Ollivier

Interview with Michaël Marin (2min45) – reports by Virginie Apiou

FRANCE 24 À l'affiche: announcement with visual and trailer

FRANCE 24 (in English): with Lisa Nesselson

CANAL+: *Le Petit Journal* – Yann Barthès

Announcement of the next day's animated programme to celebrate Annecy 2015 (20sec)

LCI: announcement + trailer

THURSDAY 18

TV8 MONT-BLANC: Special programme - Annecy 2015 – Day 4 (6min)

CANAL+: *Le Petit Journal* – Yann Barthès - An animated *Petit Journal* especially for the biggest animation festival in the world (22min)

FRIDAY 19

CANAL+: *Le JT* – Émilie Besse - Premier of "Minions" – Report by Juliette Vallon from Annecy – Footage from "Minions" – Universal visual– Reminder of "Despicable Me" – Interview with co-director Pierre Coffin.

TV8 MONT-BLANC: Special programme - Annecy 2015 – Day 5 (7min10)

CINÉ+ Tous Cinéma: announcement

SATURDAY 20

FRANCE 2: *Histoires Courtes* – Jeanne Feton - Interview with Florence Mialhe (15min)

SUNDAY 21

FRANCE 3: TV News 12-13 Alpes - The end of Annecy 2015 – Extracts of winning films "April and the Extraordinary World" – Jacques Tardy quote

TV5 MONDE (film section): report by Jean-Baptiste Urbain



EXAMPLES OF PRESS RADIO

28 APRIL 2015:

RADIO PLUS: Flash Info – Nicolas Marin - Salma Hayek and *The Prophet* at the Festival (30sec)

28 MAY:

VIRGIN RADIO LÉMAN: News – Cindy Anjorand - Interview with Patrick Eveno and the premier of *Minions* (1min)

JUNE 2015:

SUNDAY 14

EUROPE 1: Festival announcement by Bruno Cras

MONDAY 15

VIRGIN RADIO LÉMAN: News noon – Cindy Anjorand - Annecy 2015 begins: *The Prophet* + interview with Marcel Jean (1min10)

VIRGIN RADIO LÉMAN: News 8:00 pm – Cindy Anjorand - Annecy 2015 begins: paying tribute to women + interview with Marcel Jean (1min10)

FRANCE BLEU PAYS DE SAVOIE: Report by Richard Vivion - Opening + interview with Marcel Jean + interview with Dominique Puthod + interview with a volunteer (2min45)

LE MOUV': *Culturecite* – Hélène Merlin - Presentation of the Festival (3min)

FRANCE INFO JUNIOR: 4:30 pm – Gilles Halais - Interview with Laurent Valière (6min40)

RCF LYON: Flash info – Valérie-Anne Maitre - Opening of Annecy 2015 (20sec)

ODS RADIO: Flash Info – Quentin Lienard Opening of Annecy 2015: the film appointment of the year (30sec)

TUESDAY 16:

RCF: Flash info – Valérie-Anne Maitre - Yesterday's opening + interview with Patrick Eveno about the programme (1min30)

VIRGIN RADIO LÉMAN: News noon – Cindy Anjorand
Interview with Dominique Puthod + *Inside Out* (interview with Pierre Niney) (1min50)

CHÉRIE FM: Opening of the Festival

VIRGIN RADIO LÉMAN: News 8:00 pm – Cindy Anjorand
Interview with Dominique Puthod + Mifa's 30th, interview with Michaël Marin (1min50)

ODS RADIO: Flash info – Quentin Lienard
Pixar in the spotlight + interview with Dominique Puthod (1min15)

FRANCE BLEU PAYS DE SAVOIE – Report by Richard Vivion - Festival news

WEDNESDAY 17

FRANCE INTER: L'Éco du matin – Catherine Boullay - Mifa (3min10)

RADIO CLASSIQUE: La Matinale – Guillaume Durand - Annecy 2015 (50sec)

RTL Laissez-vous tenter: Festival announcement by Stéphane Boudsocq



FRANCE BLEU PAYS DE SAVOIE: Report by Richard Vivion - Festival news

VIRGIN RADIO LÉMAN: News noon– Cindy Anjorand - "Minions" tomorrow + interview with Michaël Marin

VIRGIN RADIO LÉMAN: News 8:00 pm – Cindy Anjorand - "Minions" tomorrow + interview with Marcel Jean (French film)

ODS RADIO: Flash info – Quentin Lienard - Opening of Mifa (15sec)

THURSDAY 18

VIRGIN RADIO LÉMAN: News noon – Cindy Anjorand - *My Life as a Zucchini* (interview with Claude Barras) (2min)

ODS RADIO: Flash info – Armand Atangana - Street interviews and animated *Petit Journal* (1min40)

FRANCE BLEU PAYS DE SAVOIE: Report by Richard Vivion - Festival news

FRIDAY 19

VIRGIN RADIO LÉMAN: News noon/8:00 pm – Cindy Anjorand
Interview with Marcel Jean about the official selection (45sec)

FRANCE BLEU PAYS DE SAVOIE: Report by Richard Vivion - Festival news

SATURDAY 20

FRANCE BLEU PAYS DE SAVOIE: Report by Richard Vivion - Festival news

SUNDAY 21

FRANCE BLEU PAYS DE SAVOIE: Report by Richard Vivion - "April and the Extraordinary World", Festival best feature

WEDNESDAY 24

FRENCH RADIO LONDON: *Culture FRL* – Maïa Morgensztern

ANNECY 2015

EXTRACTS

Review: 'Khalil Gibran's The Prophet' Opens Annecy 2015

The new animated feature written and directed by 'The Lion King's Roger Allers, which includes work from nine of the biggest names in animation, wows the opening night audience at the 2015 Annecy International Animated Film Festival.

By [James Brusuelas](#) | Wednesday, July 8, 2015 at 10:53am

In 2D, Event, Festival, Films, People, Reviews | [ANIMATIONWorld](#) | Special Events: [Annecy](#) | Geographic Region: [All](#)



'Khalil Gibran's The Prophet.' All images © 2014 GKIDS / Participant Media.

When I first learned that Khalil Gibran's *The Prophet* had been transformed into an animated feature length film, I had one simple question. How? Like many, I first read Gibran's collection of twenty-six prose poetic essays as an undergraduate in college. Gibran's dense meditations on the human condition, covering topics such as love, friendship, work, marriage, children, and houses, are indeed bewitching and esoteric.

Still, *The Prophet* taps into a human vein, as its ongoing global popularity attests. For generation after generation, since its publication in 1923, people love reading it. In the home of a dear friend in Laguna Beach, Ca, I remember her mother always had a worn copy in clear view. The book was always moving around the living room, constantly being re-read. So, how does one take a collection of deep poetic essays covering a large swath of the human experience and transform them into a movie? On the opening night of this year's Annecy International Festival of Animation I was very fortunate to screen a response wonderfully articulated by Salma Hayek, Clark Peterson, and Roger Allers.



Although the premise of Gibran's work is quite simple, it's by no means a script waiting to be turned into a film – on his way to board a ship home, the prophet Almustafa is stopped by a group of people with whom he then discusses a vast range of human issues. Nevertheless, Allers' script, which incorporates Hayek's idea of introducing a child character, adequately transforms a tangible book into a visual experience for everyone. The framing story of Almitra, a child struggling to cope with the death of her father, is the accessible point of entry into the prophet Mustafa's philosophical world. Refusing to speak and causing trouble about town with her seagull companion, Almitra is clearly the hook for younger audiences. Mustafa, on the other hand, is not only the metaphysical character of the original, but also becomes somewhat of an ideological dissident in Allers' story. His journey to the ship, guided by the local police, is a path potentially leading to his death. A deeper layer of story. Something for the adults. Overall, a good balance between the comic low of Almitra's antics and the tragic high of Mustafa's life is maintained. How both young and old respond to each element of the framing story will undoubtedly be varied. But neither is so overcooked as to leave a bad taste in your mouth. And as Almitra follows Mustafa on his path toward the harbor and deals with her own emotional issues, you are treated to a kaleidoscopic sequence of unique animated vignettes.



For each essay, Peterson's idea of applying a Fantasia-like vignette model to render the individual prose poems was spot on. Better still, each segment was assigned to a cast of international artists. The result is a journey through the creative minds of animators such as Joan Gratz, Mohammed Saeed Harib, Nina Paley, Bill Plympton, and Joann Sfar. Each time Mustafa stops and speaks you're immersed in new worlds where the laws of physics often give way to fluid and morphing images of landscapes, animals, and bodies as Gibran's words are read. Quickly it becomes evident why animation was the best medium for a film adaptation. Just as the visual arts, poetry and philosophy deal in abstracts, similes, and metaphor. Thus the unbound nature of animation was the only way to visually bring Gibran's words and emotion to life. Some of these segments are even further blessed with the musical talents of Yo-Yo Ma and Damien Rice. Rather than go into every individual segment here, let me just say that, in using her signature technique of clay painting, Joan Gratz notably adds a mesmerizing layer of three-dimensionality to the earth she depicts in her translation of the essay *On Work*. Mohammed Saeed Harib succeeds in his desire to make the audience "dive into a watercolor painting" in his vision for the essay *On Good & Evil*. And one cannot overlook the hand-drawn style of Bill Plympton, of course, in *On Eating & Drinking*. The overall effect is an animated feature that embeds a sequence of animated short films, shorts in the sense that each director was encouraged to experiment in merging their creative voice with that of Gibran's. But such direction definitely results in the creation of individual works of art, and audiences will thus find some more pleasing than others.



For the obvious reasons of time and story, only eight of Gibran's essays are included, and deciding on which poems to use must have been difficult. But Roger Allers once again shows his innate ability to guide the ship. The task of interweaving multiple and varied artistic voices and styles while simultaneously preserving Gibran's art was a gamble in many respects; it could have easily turned into an unwieldy multi-faced monster. But this film always had one thing going for it. The success of *Khalil Gibran's The Prophet*, I think, is that it was clearly a labor of love. During Anney Peterson recounted the film's long journey: from the original live action concept, to negotiating with Gibran's village in Lebanon that owns the rights to his work, to a budget that basically depended on the kindness of friends and interested artists. And the artists involved in this film are impressive; besides those already mentioned: Paul and Gaëtan Brizzi, Tomm More, Michal Socha, Gabriel Yared, Liam Neeson, John Krasinski, Alfred Molina, Frank Langella and John Rhys-Davies. In the end, it was the gravity of Gibran's words that attracted this ensemble. Before even coming onto the project, everyone seemed to have a prior connection to Gibran, whether through Lebanese culture or simply the inspiration and contemplation that results from reading his words. Consequently, *Khalil Gibran's The Prophet* is not only an animated film that audiences of all ages can watch, but also a visually delightful experience.

Annecy: Marion Cotillard's 'April and the Extraordinary World' Takes Top Prize



Marion Cotillard

AP Images



by TESS SMITH

8/22/2013 1:03pm PDT

The festival is famous for bringing animators in while they still are at work on their labors of love.

[Watch](#)

The Annecy International Animation Film Festival announced its winners on Saturday, June 20, honoring the top animated projects.

Founded in 1960, the festival -- which runs June 15-20 -- and its MIFA film market have become a major European launchpad for Hollywood, with the studios frequently on hand to premiere their latest animated releases or offer previews.

[READ MORE](#)

Annecy Film Fest Preview: How a Tiny French Village Woos Hollywood Year After Year

The festival also is famous for bringing animators in while they still are at work on their labors of love. This year, Annecy will feature exclusive first footage of Disney's *Zootopia* and a Q&A with directors **Byron Howard** and **Rich Moore**, and director **Steve Martino** and art director **Nesh Dunnigan** will discuss footage of *The Peanuts Movie* as a work in progress.

See the top winners list below.

The Cristal du long metrage (Cristal for a Feature Film)

Avril et le Monde truqué (April and the Extraordinary World)

FRANCK EKINCI, CHRISTIAN DESMARES, France, Canada, Belgique > Belgium

Prix du Jury (Jury Award)

Sarusuberi: Miss Hokusai

KEIICHI HARA, Japon > Japan

Prix du public (Audience Award)

Tout en haut du monde (Long Way North)

RÉMI CHAYÉ, Danemark, France > Denmark

Teeth

DANIEL GRAY, TOM BROWN, États-Unis, Hongrie, Royaume-Uni > USA, Hungary, United Kingdom

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AnneCY Film Fest Preview: How a Tiny French Village Woos Hollywood Year After Year



Prix Fipresci – Mention spéciale (Fipresci Award – Special Distinction)

Guida

ROSANA URBES, Brésil > Brazil

Prix André Martin pour un long métrage français (André Martin Award for a French Feature Film)

Conversation animée avec Noam Chomsky

MICHEL GONDRY, France

Prix André Martin pour un court métrage français (André Martin Award for a French Short Film)

Rhizome

BORIS LABBÉ, France

Prix André Martin – Mention pour un court métrage français (André Martin Award – Distinction for a French Short Film)

Yûl et le Serpent (Yûl and the Snake)

GABRIEL HAREL, France

"Aide Fondation Gan à la Diffusion" pour un Work in Progress ("Gan Foundation Support for Distribution" for a Work in Progress)

Ma vie de courçette (My Life as a Zucchini)

CLAUDE BARRAS, France, Suisse > Switzerland

Prix de la meilleure musique originale, avec le soutien de la SACEM, dans la catégorie courts métrages (Best Original Music Award for a Short Film, sponsored by the SACEM)

Dissonance

TILL NOWAK, Allemagne > German

Musique (Music: OLAF TARANCZEWSKI, FRANK ZERBAN)

Prix "CANAL+ aide à la création" pour un court métrage ("CANAL+ Creative Aid" Award for a Short Film)

Edmond

NINA GANTZ, Royaume-Uni > United Kingdom

Cristal du court métrage (Cristal for a Short Film)

Mi ne mozhem zhat bez kosmosa (We Can't Live Without Cosmos)

KONSTANTIN BRONZIT, Russie > Russia

Cristal pour une production TV (Cristal for a TV Production)

Hello World! "Long-Faced Owl"

ÉRIC SERRE, France

Cristal pour un film de commande (Cristal for a Commissioned Film)

Rotary "Fatehoo"

SURESH EHIYAT, Inde > India

Cristal du film de fin d'études (Cristal for a Graduation Film)

My Dad

MARCUS ARMITAGE, Royaume-Uni > United Kingdom

Prix du jury (Jury Award, Short Film)

Isaod (The Master)

RIBHO UNT, Estonie > Estonia

Prix "Jean-Luc Xiberras" de la première œuvre ("Jean-Luc Xiberras" Award for a First Film)

Guida

ROSANA URBES, Brésil > Brazil

Mention du jury (Jury Distinction, Short Film)

Prix du public (Audience Award, Short Film)

World of Tomorrow

DON HERTZFELDT, États-Unis > USA

Prix du film "Off-Limits" ("Off-Limits" Award)

Mynarski chute mortelle (Mynarski Death Plummet)

MATTHEW RANKIN, Canada

Prix du jury pour une série TV (Jury Award for a TV Series)

Rita og Krokodille "Fisketuren" (Rita and Crocodile "Fishing")

SIRI MELCHIOR, Danemark, Royaume-Uni > Denmark, United Kingdom

Prix du jury pour un special TV (Jury Award for a TV Special)

La Moufle (The Mitten)

CLÉMENTINE ROBACH, Belgique, France > Belgium

Prix du jury (Jury Award, Commissioned Film)

NSPCC "Lucy and the Boy"

YVES GELEYN, Royaume-Uni > United Kingdom

Prix du jury (Jury Award, Graduation Film)

Edmond

NINA GANTZ, Royaume-Uni > United Kingdom

Mention du jury (Jury Distinction, Graduation Film)

Brume, cailloux et métaphysique

LISA MATUSZAK, France

**Prix Festivals Connexion – Région Rhône-Alpes en partenariat avec Lumières Numériques
(Festivals Connexion Award – Région Rhône-Alpes with Lumières Numériques)**

Dans les eaux profondes (In Deep Waters)

SARAH VAN DEN BOOM, France, Canada

Prix du jury junior pour un film de fin d'études (Jury Junior Award for a Graduation Film)

Roadtrip

XAVER XYLOPHON, Allemagne > Germany

Prix du jury junior pour un court métrage (Jury Junior Award for a Short Film)

Mi ne mozhem zhit bez kosmosa (We Can't Live Without Cosmos)

KONSTANTIN BRONZIT, Russie > Russia

COMPLETED
2ND T20

cricbuzz

145/7
ZIM
20 Ov

135/9
IND
20 Ov

Zimbabwe won by 10 runs

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TOP STORIES ACROSS CITIES

Malayali's animation film bags Anney award

TNN | Jul 9, 2015, 05:07AM IST

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KOCHI: Fateline, an animated campaign film on child labour produced by Malayali Suresh Eriyat won the Anney Cristal Award in the commissioned film category at the prestigious Anney International Animation Film Festival 2015.

This is the first time that an Indian production has bagged this coveted award, considered to be the highest honour for animation across the globe.

Suresh's studio Eeksaurus in Mumbai produced the film for Rotary International in collaboration with JWT, Kolkata. The film revolves around a child labourer determined to break free from the bonds that hold him down. The one-and-a-half minute film also portrays the efforts by the Rotary Club to provide free e-learning opportunities in 10,000 schools across India.

"This is the first time that any ad campaign from India has won an award at the prestigious festival. It is a matter of pride for us to have represented India on an international platform. The core ethos of this campaign was to reach out to the masses and that has been possible through the use of 2D animation in the film" said Suresh, a Tripunithura native who is now settled in Mumbai.

Concentrating on the design-centric approach to weave distinct stories for every brand, Eeksaurus looks forward to work on more such campaigns which truly challenge the definition of communication with the masses," he added.

The Anney International Animation Film Festival had received 2,604 films from 95 countries this year, of which 199 films were selected. The award was announced on June 20.

News Headline |

Eeksaurus bags first ever award for India at Annecy

By [indiantelevision.com Team](#) Posted on : 30 Jun 2015 12:34 pm



MUMBAI: In a first for India at Annecy, France's International Animation Film Festival, Eeksaurus has bagged the Annecy Cristal Award in the Commissioned Film Category for its film on child labour for Rotary International titled 'Fateline'

The jury at Annecy was mightily impressed with the campaign calling it a film that was a fantastic mix of technique and aesthetics, a kind they had never seen before. The festival received a total of 2,604 films from 95 countries this year, of which 199 films made the official selection

The campaign which is based on the concept of a young child labourer determined to break free from the bonds that hold him down, is a simple yet effective rendition of how the impossible can be made possible when people join hands in working towards a cause. Working with the team of JWT, Eeksaurus had outlined the hands of the palm drawing in from the concept of fate or *haath ke lakker* combined with the use of strong imagery and music to lay emphasis on the sensitivity of the situation

Eeksaurus founder and creative director Suresh Eriyath said, "This is the first time ever that any ad campaign from India has won at this prestigious festival which is a matter of great pride. We thank all those who have put in tremendous efforts to bring this campaign to life especially

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our fantastic in-house team of animators, Rajat and Taufiq, Chester, Arun Crasto and the lovely children from Govandi who lent the soul to this film. The core ethos of this campaign was to reach out to the masses hence no caste, gender or creed was highlighted which has been possible through the use of 2D animation in the film. It is extremely heartening to be recognised for your work at Annecy which gives us a tremendous boost to further explore the scope of animation in India."

Anney 2015 Wraps with Record Attendance & New Deals

Anney International Animation Film Festival and International Animation Film Market wraps in France with a slew of deals and new partnerships.

By Jennifer Wolfe | Friday, June 26, 2015 at 5:40pm

In Business, Event, Festival, Films, Pieces, Television | ANIMATIONWorld, Headline News | Blogs: Animated Travels | Social Events: Anney | Geographic Region: Europe



France has wrapped the 39th edition of the Anney International Animation Film Festival, screening roughly 500 films for a record 8,250 attendees from 83 countries. Up 16 percent from last year, the festival was held June 15-20 alongside the International Animation Film Market (MIFA).

Celebrating its 30th Anniversary in 2015, the International Animation Film Market (MIFA) also saw a steep rise in participation, reporting 2,680 attendees from 63 countries, up 10 percent from last year. With 555 exhibiting companies -- a nine percent rise over 2014 -- and 364 buyers, distributors and investors making deals in

Anney, there was plenty of news coming from the ever-growing event, and deals included animated series and feature film projects from around the globe. Here are just a few:

- Luxembourg-based Melusine Production has signed a co-production deal for Cartoon Saloon's next project, *The Breadwinner*. Melusine will handle much of the animation and backgrounds on the feature, which is to be directed by Nora Twomey.
- A new feature version of *Ghost in the Shell* has concluded distribution deals with Anime Ltd. in France, Dynic Sri in Italy and Selecta Vision in Spain and Portugal. The new film is produced by I.G. and distributed in Japan by Toho. International sales are handled by rights holder Kodansha, which is the publisher of the original manga.
- New York-based independent animation distributor GKIDS picked up North American rights to StudioCanal's *April and the Extraordinary World* from Je Suis Bien Content, *Extraordinary Tales* from Melusine, and the Folimage-produced *Phantom Boy*.
- *Phantom Boy* has also landed distribution deals in Sweden, the U.K. and Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, the Middle East and Poland, while Italy, Portugal, Poland and several Eastern European territories are reportedly still under negotiation.
- Paul Leluc will direct *French Riviera* for Les Armateurs. Leluc had previously directed the animated TV series *The Long Long Holiday*, which tells stories of World War II from the perspective of children.
- *The Boy and the World* has closed distribution deals with Champ List for China, HSO for Latin America and film Verleih Gruppe for Germany, Austria and German-speaking Switzerland. The feature won the Cristal Award at last year's festival. Additional sales include Les Films du Preau in Belgium, Luxembourg and Monaco, Norwegian Federation of Film Societies in Norway, DBS in Israel, Central Park Films in Turkey, Modband in Spain, New Horizons in Poland, Conaculta in Mexico, Animaworka for Croatia and Slovenia, and Submarine for the Netherlands.
- Paramount Pictures acquired worldwide distribution rights to the Spanish film *Capture the Flag* and will release it on August 28. The film is produced by Telecinco Cinema and Telefonica Studios in conjunction with the film's writer and producer, Jordi Gasull, and producer Edmond Roch at 4 Cats Pictures. Animation is by Lightbox Animation Studios.
- *The Alamo Brothers*, from Chile's Zumbastico Studios, which was selected for MIFA's 2014 feature film pitches, will now be co-produced out of Spain by Somuga. The film is being partially financed by Chile's newly created Animation Production Fund.
- Imita Entertainment and Indian parent company Toont Media Group struck a deal with London-based independent production house Darrell Macqueen to co-develop and co-produce *Kat Frank & Abigail*. To be presented at Cartoon Forum, the series is an adaptation of *Fly High and Muggy*, a Darrell Macqueen-produced animated comedy originally commissioned by CBBC and CBeebies which launched in 2014.



THE WALL OF ANIMATIONWORLD | FASHION | FOOD | ART | MIFA | A BAKED SCHEDULE

Nine Illuminating Notes From 'Despicable Me' Producer Chris Meledandri

BY **SCOTT THILL** ON WEDNESDAY JUNE 24, 2015 11:18 AM

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Illumination honcho Chris Meledandri (left) speaks with Peter Debruge last week at the Annecy festival.

Illumination Entertainment's founder and CEO admits he has no idea what's in store for the future of animation, but he knows it will probably arrive online in short-form.

Chris Meledandri's keynote speech at the 2015 **Annecy** International Animated Film Festival also delivered more takeaways for animation artists and executives looking to understand how the studio that created the *Despicable Me* franchise, whose spinoff *Minions* started its international rollout last week, has managed to succeed in a world of \$150 million dollar movies from Disney, Pixar, and DreamWorks.

“I’m here to tell you I have no idea what the future will bring,” Meledandri said at the outset of his June 17 keynote at Annecy. “We’re in a period when distribution, technology and marketplace trends are changing at lightspeed. Consequently, our prognostication abilities are flawed at best.”

Even so, we made a list below of takeaways from Meledandri’s talk.

For those who wish to watch the whole keynote:



1. MIYAZAKI IS A GOOD PLACE TO START YOUR ANIMATION EDUCATION.

Meledandri admitted up front that he didn’t come near animation until his 30s, forbidden as he was from watching cartoons. “My mother *loathed* Disney,” he said, despite the fact that he grew up in a family that consumed films by Stanley Kubrick, Woody Allen, François Truffaut, and other auteurs. But a steady diet of Studio Ghibli schooled him quickly once he had his own children, who would watch the famed Japanese studios films until the tape was spooling out of the player, Meledandri said.

2. FAILURE MAKES YOU STRONGER.

Speaking of inexperience and flops, after helping bring live-action films like *Opportunity Knocks* and *Cool Runnings* into being, Meledandri suddenly found himself as the founding president of 20th Century Fox's animation division. Shortly after the release of (perhaps unfairly) floppy *Titan A.E.*, "I lost \$100 million dollars of Rupert Murdoch's money," Meledandri said. But during a follow-up discussion with *Variety*'s Peter DeBruge, Meledandri said that massive failure gave him "an inner confidence to go on and do everything that followed."

3. NEVER FOLLOW SOMEONE ELSE'S PLAYBOOK.

Titan A.E.'s failure, and the *Ice Age* franchise's subsequent success, taught Meledandri that trying to clone Disney is a bad plan. "Our entire animation business at Fox had been built on the foundation of trying to replicate Disney's success," he said. Once he abandoned that plan, his movie machine started working properly, especially with the international success of *Ice Age*. After that, Meledandri pushed himself even further out of his comfort zone, quitting Fox in order to use everything he learned to build a new company.

4. SHORT-FORM IS THE SPARK.

Meledandri attributes the success of the *Ice Age* franchise, as well as his subsequent projects, with his exposure to shorter formats. Chris Wedge's CGI sequences for *Joe's Apartment*, and Chris Renaud's short *No Time For Nuts*, both of which he showed during the Annecy keynote, "gave me confidence in choosing directors for our future films based on their short-form work," Meledandri explained. Additionally, using short-form animation to ignite audience and investor interest also proved fruitful, Meledandri explained during the follow-up Q&A. *Ice Age*'s memorable teaser trailer, a chopped version of the film's opening, dramatically set it apart from other homogenous marketing simply synopsisizing plot. "It ran in the theaters [amongst] seven or eight trailers that were all rhythmically the same, that were all messaging the same, that all had similar narration, then all of a sudden this little short film came up," Meledandri said. "The audience just couldn't get enough of it. Theater owners wouldn't take it down; it ran for months ... The idea that we would launch a film on the back of that, at the time, was innovative," he said.

5. SHORT-FORM IS THE FIRE.

Since then, the immediate distribution and interactivity of the internet has created a world where short-form animation can help animators and marketers alike find work like never before. "When you're making all this short-form content," Meledandri said during the Q&A, "there's a lot of opportunity for artists to move up. Most people who have crossed over into direction aren't four years out of animation or art school." Indeed, if today's animators want to work, they need to make shorts, put them online, and help them go viral. One reason he showed Wedge and Renaud's short-form work during his Annecy keynote, Meledandri said, "was primarily to demonstrate that making shorts is a fantastic bridge to making longer-form work, especially for us."

6. YOU'RE ONLY AS GOOD AS YOUR TEAM.

"Animation is the most collaborative medium," said Meledandri, who realized the critical importance of having good collaborators before he left Fox to start his own studio. In particular, he named Illumination head of production Janet Healey — who he would "clone" if he ever decided to leave Illumination and start all over again — as a crucial partner. "I wouldn't be standing here today without Pierre Coffin and Chris Renaud," he added. When DeBruge introduced Meledandri as the creator of the "adorable yellow race of munchkins" screening in *Minions*, Illumination's founder was quick to remind the audience that they were not his invention alone, and would have never come about without collaboration from Coffin and Renaud.

7. CLUTTER BAD, SUBVERSION GOOD

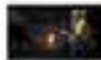
Original and distinctive animators have never had it so good — but also so hard. "A confluence of events — including the proliferation of CG animation software, universal access to digital distribution, and the first generation raised on digital imagery becoming adults, has brought us to this time where we are seeing a virtual eruption of creative talent in our medium all over the world," Meledandri explained. That means the field is dynamic and crowded, producing an "infinite amount of content" fighting for attention, but that only serves to help authenticity and originality to "cut through the clutter." Added Meledandri, "Resist the seductive illusion that creating work that is similar to what is already successful raises the chance that you too will have success. Subvert the expectation of the audience. Surprise them with unexpected choices."

8. ART - MARKET - SMART

The line between marketing and production, especially at Illumination, is a blurred one. Today's success in animation means that artists and marketers must find balance between expression and the marketplace. Identify the "marketable concept within the idea," Meledandri advised, explaining later during the Q&A that Illumination is a comparatively low-budget enterprise uninterested in making \$200 million dollar movies like Disney. "We have to make successful movies in order for our partners to give us money to make more movies, he said, explaining that Illumination's economic model "comes down to two primary components" — A talented team interested in creating stories and characters with "accessibility," and an idea trending towards the universal. "*The Secret Life of Pets* is probably the most commercially clear concept for a movie that I have ever done," he said, noting that, at its height, Illumination's marketing department, which isn't separate from its production department on purpose, numbered around 100 people. Further, the feature film directors often help out on the conception and creation of original marketing content that is designed to ignite an audience's interest in a movie and its characters, not to explain the movie.

9. GO INTERNATIONAL, OR GO HOME.

Meledandri started Illumination during "a period of time when the competition for digital artists in the U.S. was at a high point," he said. The notion that he could attract 250 world-class artists and production personnel was a fantasy; plus, the astounding commercial success of the *Ice Age* franchise taught him that the homeland isn't the entire planet. One of the tenets of Illumination Entertainment is that it has more of an international orientation, Meledandri said, where the dominant language is not verbal but visual. "Diversity of cultures in your creative leadership should be broader than the United States," Meledandri said.



SCREENING NOW: **The Last Gaucho** - Three gauchos meet for the

Home > News > [Hari toon catches Boomerang's eye](#)

Hari toon catches Boomerang's eye

French production company Studio Hari's new animation project Grizzy and The Lemmings has attracted interest from a US kids' broadcaster.



Studio Hari's Grizzy and The Lemmings

The series' commissioner, France Télévisions, revealed at [Annecy](#) last week that the studio is in negotiations with Turner Broadcasting System.

Turner's Boomerang channels will get involved in the show through a presales deal on a worldwide basis, including for the US. C21 has since learned.

Grizzy and The Lemmings (78x7') is a CGI comedy from Studio Hari, the Paris- and Angoulême-based animation studio behind such successful international properties as The Owl, Leon and The Gees.

The series follows the adventures of Grizzy, big as a bear and just as dum, who is challenged by the even more stupid Lemmings.

The first episode of the series, which is currently in development for France Télévisions, will be delivered this summer and the full series by the end of next year.



Marie-Agnes Bruneau

22-06-2015

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Deals and Highlights from Annecy 2015

Tom McLean Jun 22nd, 2015 No Comments yet

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Another Annecy festival has wrapped, with plenty of deals and news coming out of the ever-growing event.

Among the highlights of the festival:

Attendance at MIFA was up 10 percent over 2013's numbers with 2,680 accreditations, according to festival organizer CITIA. It also reported 555 companies and 364 buyers attended. The market celebrated its 30th anniversary.

- A new feature version of *Ghost in the Shell* has concluded distribution deals with Anime Ltd. in France, Dynit Srl in Italy and Selecta Vision in Spain and Portugal. The new film is produced by I.G. and distributed in Japan by Toho. International sales are handled by Kodansha, which is the publisher of the original manga and the rights holder.
- Luxembourg-based Melusine Production has signed on to Cartoon Saloon's next project, *The Breadwinner*, directed by Nora Twomey. Melusine will do much of the animation and backgrounds on the feature.
- Paul Leluc will direct *French Riviera* for Les Armateurs. Leluc had previously directed the animated TV series *The Long Long Holiday*, which tells stories of World War II from the perspective of children.
- *The Boy and the World* has closed distribution deals with Champ List for China, HBO for Latin America and Film Verleih Gruppe for Germany, Austria and German-speaking Switzerland. The feature won the Cristal Award at last year's festival. Additional sales include: Les Films du Preau in Belgium, Luxembourg and Monaco; Norwegian Federation of film Societies in Norway; DBS in Israel; Central Park Films in Turkey; Modiband in Spain; New Horizons in Poland; Conaculta in Mexico; Animateka for Croatia and Slovenia; and Submarine for Netherlands.
- Paramount Pictures acquired worldwide distribution to the Spanish film *Capture the Flag* and will release it Aug. 26. The film is produced by Telecinco Cinema and Telefonica Studios, in conjunction with the film's writer and producer Jordi Gasull and producer Edmond Roch at 4 Cats Pictures.

Animation is by Lightbox Animation Studios.

VARIETY

Annecy: 'Platypus,' 'Revolto,' 'Deedee Wahoo' pitched at Fest-Mart



JUNE 20, 2015 | 05:45AM PT

COURTESY OF CINEFANTASMA

Mexican Pixelatl animation org brims with activity

Emilio Mayorga

ANNECY— Platypus' "Deedee Wahoo," Cinefantasma's "Revolto," Dei Ar Guachin Os' "Popol Vuh" and MUV's "El Show de Lorenzo" are four Mexican projects which were presented Friday June 19 at MIFA Territory Focus under the title "Mexico: Connecting the Dots." The event was moderated by Jose Inesta, Pixelatl Animation fest director.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

Platypus Animation Studio and Cebolla Films co-produce "Deedee Wahoo," a cut-out 2D digital 24-seg TV skein. Deedee is a courageous six-year-old girl who embarks on adventures with Mangus the Chupacabras, her grandfather Gaspard, and B.A.B.U., a magical ship. First season "Deedee" is scheduled to be fully ready August 2016. "Deedee" is directed by Oscar Hernandez, Edgar Amor and Samuel Kishi, who wrote the script.

Cinefantasma's "Revolto" is helmed and written —with Mauricio Calderon— by brothers Roy and Vonno Ambriz.

"Revolto" is "a stop-motion short cubist film about the decision to become an artist. Jabalito, a small one-eyed boar, accidentally discovers cinema in the midst of the Mexican Revolution when the estate which he lives on is attacked," said Vonno.

Unidad 51 co-produces. "Revolto" is scheduled to finish postproduction at the end of 2015. Project is mentored by Guillermo del Toro, who became interested in it through its kickstarter campaign. Dei Ar Guachin Os' studio presented "Popol Vuh" —referring to legendary ancient Quiche text. A hybrid live action-animation feature, "Popol" is in development, Arnold Abadie will direct.

A second Dei Ar Guachin project is "Skywatcher," a feature project to be helmed by Pablo Angeles, who won an Ariel this year for his short "Pickman's Model." He is now seek financing for his [3D](#) stereoscopic "Skywatcher," turning on Gabriel, a young and rebellious astrophysicist, who during an alien invasion to of planet earth runs into a Skywatcher Device, which holds the power to stop the invasion and save the universe.

MUV's "Lorenzo's Show" is an irreverent and low-budget talkshow with singular guests whose skills are tested by extreme challenges. Targeting teens and young adults "Show" has snagged initial Mexican VOD pre-sales. Ariadna Medina and Jaime Cortes are the project's helmers and Brian Miranda is the scriptwriter.

"Mexican creative [producers](#) have found how to produce hundreds of animation minutes with very low-budgets. However, they are mostly producing animation for commercials, given the difficulty of raising start-up capital for independent productions," MUV's Gabriela Acoosta told Variety.

"This year will see five Mexican toon features released in Mexico: the NDMantarraya-distribbed "The Incredible Story of the Stone Boy"; the FilmSharks-sold "Wicked Flying Monkeys" and "El Americano: the Movie"; "Seleccion Canina," produced by Nahuala Producciones Cinematograficas and Imagination Films; and "Ana & Bruno," from Anima Estudios, Lo Coloco Films and Discreet Arts Productions.

"But financing continues being our main challenge. News platforms are, however, allowing us to reach other territories and animation tools are more and more accessible. That helps," he added.

Run by Pixelatl, the Cuernavaca Vidgames and Animation Fest, founded to promote animation from Mexico, will take place Sept. 9-13.

VARIETY

Annecy: Melusine Boards Cartoon Saloon's 'Breadwinner,' Among MIFA Deal News (EXCLUSIVE)



JUNE 20, 2015 | 03:32AM PT

COURTESY OF GKIDS

Gkids signals Oscar contenders as U.S., global animation energize 2015 Annecy



John Hopewell
International Correspondent
@john_hopewell

Emilio Mayorga

ANNECY – Linking two of Europe's animation leaders, Melusine Production, [producer](#) of Annecy out-of-competition player "Extraordinary Tales," has boarded Nora Twomey's "The Breadwinner," from Ireland's Cartoon Saloon, which produced Tomm Moore's Oscar-nommed "Song of the Sea."

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

Twomey co-directed with Moore "Brendan and the Secret of the Kells," also produced by Cartoon Saloon, which, like "Song," scored an Academy Award nomination.

Confirmed to *Variety* at Annecy by Melusine's Stephane Roelants, the deal will see Melusine taking charge of much of the animation and the backgrounds on the story of an Afghan girl who disguises herself as a boy in order to become her family's breadwinner, after her father is imprisoned by the Taliban.

The Cartoon Saloon-Melusine deal marks business as usual for Europe's animation industry: Melusine and Roelants' Studio 352 already teamed with Cartoon Saloon on "Song of the Sea." It was one of a slew of business announcements at a 2015 Annecy Festival and MIFA market edition that underscored both the vibrancy and challenges of the world's animation production.

Attendance at MIFA, which celebrated its 30th anni, was up an extraordinary 10% on 2013 at 2,680 accreditations, reported Patrick Eveno, CEO of CITIA, the Annecy Fest's organizer. 555 companies attended, 364 buyers.

2015 was the tale of two industries – the U.S. and France's – with ever more eye-catching intervention from a now near global animation industry led by Spain, Annecy's guest country, India and Japan – with a passionately attended Work in Progress of Mamoru Hosoda's "The Boy and the Beast."

Surging U.S. attendance – up a remarkable 60% going into the market – saw most major animation companies in Hollywood fire off big cannons at Annecy, led by Universal-Illumination's "Minions" world premiere, a first look at Fox-Blue Sky's "The Peanuts Movie" first look, presentations of Disney-Pixar's "The Good Dinosaur" and "Zootopia," DreamWorks Animation TV's "Dragons: Race to the Edge," released by Netflix on June 26, and one of Cartoon Network's big new broadcast plays, "We Bare Bears."

New York-based indie distributor Gkids, which since 2009 has scored six Best Animated Feature Oscar nominations, galvanized trading news at Annecy – and effectively marked three 2017 Academy Award contenders – announcing pick-ups for North America or the U.S. on Studiocanal's "April and the Extraordinary World" (*pictured*) from Je Suis Bien Content, the BAC Films-sold "Extraordinary Tales," from Melusine, and the Folimage-produced "Phantom Boy," sold by Doc & Film Intl. and Lumiere Publishing.

One of the biggest world premieres at Annecy, along with the Marion Cotillard-voiced "April," "Phantom Boy" has now closed Sweden (Folket's Bio), U.K./Ireland (Soda Pictures), Norway (Arthouse), Switzerland (Agora), Denmark (Angel Films), Middle East (Falcon Films) and Poland (Vivarto). Italy, Portugal, Poland and several Eastern European territories are under negotiation, Lumiere's Annemie Degryse said at Annecy.

Gkids pick-ups play off a growing awareness in the U.S. of independent animation.

"Even last year with 'The Tale of the Princess Kaguya' and 'Song of the Sea,' lots of people knew Hayao Miyasaki, fewer people knew Isao Takahata. It was wonderful to have that film 100% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes, with glowing reviews, and people realize there's another masterful filmmaker at Studio Ghibli," said Gkids' Eric Beckman.

A presentation made at Annecy by France's CNC and UniFrance of 2014 animation stats confirmed that France remains the world's third biggest animation powerhouse, in terms of animated feature production volumes, with 50 titles produced over 2010-14, said CNC president Frederique Bredin.

But French animation powerhouses face an ever-more competitive environment. The challenge is not only from new SVOD entrants in France, such as Netflix, which launched in France last September, but from other demands on kids' eyeball time, such as YouTube.

"Competition is fierce, so channel operators need to stand out, and not only from traditional broadcasters," said Mathieu Bejot, at export org TVFI.

On Thursday at Annecy, giant paybox Canal Plus announced it was tripling its investment in its kids channels, pre-school Pwi Plus and Teletoons Plus, for 7-11s, an announcement which drew applause from an audience packed with producers.

The two channels shows will offer "a universe which is familiar, with shared values, clearly differentiated from the competition, which is largely American, whose programs are mostly formatted, non-differentiated," said Laurence Blaevoet, head of Canal Plus' children's channels and programs.

Meanwhile, Gallic conglomerate Lagardere, which owns DTT channel Gulli and pay TV feeds Tiji and Canal J, continues to ramp up its original toon series, confirming at Annecy it had commissioned "Squish" from David Michel's new company Cottonwood, and "Krosmaster," from Ankama, which also unveiled a slew of new projects at Annecy, playing off its videogame and comicbook properties.

"TV production is done well abroad, with French export TV sales climbing over five consecutive years. When you have finished programs, there are so many outlets, though international pre-sales are tougher," Bejot noted.

Meanwhile, France Televisions, like the CNC, said it would plough more money into the development of original shows.

Switzerland's "My Life as a Zucchini," handled by Indie Sales, won the Gan Foundation Support for Distribution Award at Annecy's Work in Progress.

Variety's unofficial prize for best presentation, might go, tied, to Chris Meledandri, who received MIFA/*Variety's* Animation Personality of the Year Award, for his keynote/Q & A where he explained Matthew McConaughey's voice role as a koala legit theater owner in Illumination MacGuff's upcoming animation movie and delivered sage advice to young animators, laced with self-deprecating humor. And Pierre Coffin who gave a delightful conference Friday, backed by timed visuals, presenting his (near always hilarious) commercials, student films and shorts, talking about how the Minions came into being, and reflecting – about with passion about his favorite comic books as a kid – he wasn't allowed to see TV – that have proved a lifelong inspiration.

But toon business and deal announcements can these days come from anywhere in the world, both established animation powers, such as Japan, and relative newcomers from India to Latin America. For the first time, Hong Kong took a stand at Annecy's MIFA market. "We wanted to be at Annecy because Asia is here. According to feedback from the Hong Kong exhibitors, it was a very fruitful experience," said Michel Jourdan at the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. In multiple multifaceted announcements from around the world at 2015's MIFA:

*"The Mango Brothers," from Chile's Zumbastico Studios, which was selected for MIFA's 2014 feature film pitches, will now be co-produced out of Spain by Somuga, while snagging coin from Chile's newly-created Animation Production Fund, Zumbastico's Alvaro Ceppi said at Annecy. TV series "Puerto Papel" will be co-produced by Globo's Gloob in Brazil, Argentina's Canal Pakapaka and Colombia's Señal Colombia, as regional toon co-production grows in Latin America, he added.

*Playing out of competition at Annecy, "Dragons Nest: Warriors Dawn," which is produced by Shanghai's Mill Pictures' Bill Borden ("Desperado") and a Universal Pictures International release this summer in 25 territories including North America, has been sold by All Rights Entertainment to the Middle East (Gulf Films), Ex-Yugoslavia (Megacom), Russia (Paradise), South America (Latin American Theatrical Group), India (Star Films), Korea, Philippines and Indonesia (Chantal Chauzy). The sequel is now in production.

*"Ghost in the Shell," which world premieres June 20 day-and-date in Japan and Annecy, has secured distribution in France with Anime Ltd., for Italy with Dynit, and Spain/Portugal with Selecta Vision.

*Sold by Francesco Prandoni at Japan's Production I.G., "Miss Hokusai" has closed German-speaking Europe (Viz Media), Spain and Portugal (Selecta Vision) and Hong Kong (NeoFilms). Eurozoom will release it in France Sept. 2, Anime Ltd. plans a Oct./Nov. U.K. release.

*Spanish pubcaster TVE is in advanced negotiations to co-produce "Bubble Bip" with Planeta Junior.

*Germany's Your Family Ent. will co-produce "Deena, Deena, Deena," produced by Cosmos Maya, said its CEO Anish J.S. Mehta. Your Family will also distribute in German-speaking Europe.

* In negotiations launched at 2014's MIFA, H. Gagnon Distribution will handle international sales on "My Child: Teenage Mutant Azanians," an Afro-centric satirical toon TV show produced by Nick Wilson and currently in pilot production, Wilson said.

*Catalan pubcaster TV3 is set to produce a new season of "The Three Triplets," an iconic Spanish animation title that has sold to 130 companies. TV3 is currently in discussions with potential international co-production partners.

*Mexico's Cinema Fantasma has sold "Revoltozo" to Poland's Momakin. Gabriela Acosta, director general of MUV and president of the Mexican Animation Cluster, has signed a strategic collaboration accord with India's Tiger Bells, headed by Vivek Kalyan.

VARIETY

Annecy: 'Ghost' Sold to France, Italy, Portugal, Spain (EXCLUSIVE)



JUNE 20, 2015 | 05:36AM PT

2015 film is a prequel of cyberpunk reference 'Ghost' (1995)

Emilio Mayorga

ANNECY— ["Ghost in the Shell: the Movie,"](#) a new feature adaptation of the hit manga comic book, has just closed major territory sales deals with France (Anime Ltd.), Italy (DyNit Srl) and Spain/Portugal (Selecta Vision).

SEE MORE: Annecy Film Festival

Produced by I. G., "Ghost in the Shell: The Movie" world premieres simultaneously today Saturday June 20 at Annecy on the last day of the world biggest animation fest/mart, and in Japan, where it is distributed by Toho Company. International sales are handled by publishing company Kodansha Ltd., who also informed Variety that it is in advanced talks to sell U.S., Germany and Asia country rights.

Manga book "Ghost in the Shell" is a reference work that rapidly became an keystone for cyberpunk sci-fiction universe. Shirow Masamune was the author of the original manga comic book that started off an endless saga of novels, TV skeins, vidgames and features.

Directed by Kazuchika Kise ("Ghost in the Shell Arise" feature collection) and Kazuyuna Nomura ("Sengoku Basara Samurai Kings: The Last Party"), "Ghost in the Shell: The Movie" is a prequel to the original "Ghost in the Shell," helmed in 1995 by Mamoru Oshii. Kise worked on the first—and now cult-movie "Ghost" as key animation supervisor. Tow Ubutaka penned the script.

The action of "Ghost in the Shell: The Movie" is set in 2029, after the end of the non-nuclear World War IV, when a country's prime minister is assassinated. One of the collateral victims is a former manager of a full cyber prosthesis Motoko Kusanagi, a hacker in the film, who initiates an investigation.

As in the other iterations of saga, "Ghost in the Shell" recreates an action-packed universe combined with metaphysical ruminations about A.I., where technological crime fuses with thriller elements, told via an intricate plot.

Eagerly awaited by genre followers worldwide, "Ghost in the Shell" has been revered by its fans as one of the most iconic, sci-fi franchises of all-time.

"Ghost in the Shell: Arise" gave fans the opportunity to dig into the origin stories of these characters they know and love so much," said Yuko Ogawa, at Kodansha International Business Division.

"With 2015's 'Ghost in the Shell: The Movie,' they are hoping this film will have an impact similar to the original film from over two decades ago. We're expecting the new film to be a hit that leaves its mark on the sci-fi/action genre," Ogawa concluded.

Hollywood is preparing its own version of "Ghost in the shell," starring Scarlett Johansson, directed by Rupert Sanders and produced by DreamWorks and Paramount. It is scheduled for release in March 2017.

Haunted by "Ghost in the Shell," the Wachowsky brothers informed their [producer](#) that they wanted to direct a live action makeover. The final result: "Matrix."

Inside the delightfully dark world of adult animation

By [Phoebe Parks](#), for CNN

Updated 1:46p GMT (21:46:18CT) June 19, 2015



'Guida' by Rosanna Urbes

Source: CNN

Incredible animations from [Annecy Festival](#) 01:33

More from Ones to Watch



Maisie Williams: 'I was the weird acting kid'



The ultimate Back to the Future quiz



The 10 'living' paintings that leap from walls



Inside the dark world of adult animation

(CNN)—The world of animation isn't all child's play. Savage deaths, troubling dreams, and passionate relationships are just some of the topics covered in these beguiling films created by highly-skilled hands.

We asked the artistic director of the prestigious [Annecy International Animated Film Festival](#) in France, Marcel Jean, to pick out the best nominated short films from the event, which runs from June 15 to 20.

Hailing from across the world, the surreal movies were made with everything from clay, to illustration, and cut-out papers.

Here are five of our favorites.

Estonia: Aleteadvuse Maja by Priit Tender



This Estonian film, which bears the English title "House of Unconsciousness" is a surreal imagining of the dreams of chimney sweepers.

Director Priit Tender used a study on dreams as the basis of his surreal 10 minute piece which explores the most frequent images chimney sweepers dream about – from women on fire to giant seals.

Portugal/Germany: Amelia & Duarte by Alice Guimaraes and Monica Santos



This eight-minute pixilation tells the story of two lovers who are struggling to cope after their relationships ends.

They divide the city into two and Duarte tries to remove memories of Amelia from his life by cutting her name out of his vast book collection. Meanwhile, Amelia boils down her memories of Duarte into cold chemical equations.

Spain: The Guardian by Alessandro Novelli



Alessandro Novelli used the parable "Before the Law" from Franz Kafka's book "The Trial" as inspiration for this mindful piece. Here, a peasant stands in front of a gate guarded by a fearsome guardian who denies him entrance.

When the film showed at the Arizona International Film Festivals, Novelli commented said of piece: "Sometimes we don't have the strength to take decisions and live our lives how we want."

Brazil: Guida by Rosanna Urbes



Guida has been working as an archivist for 30 years when one day she sees a newspaper ad looking for models for a life drawing class.

She re-finds her beauty, creativity and inner child through the experience as the film asks us to rethink what beauty is really about.

Russia: We Can't Live Without Cosmos by Konstantin Bronzit



Two cosmonauts, who have been friends since birth, go through rigorous training to achieve the dream of traveling in space.

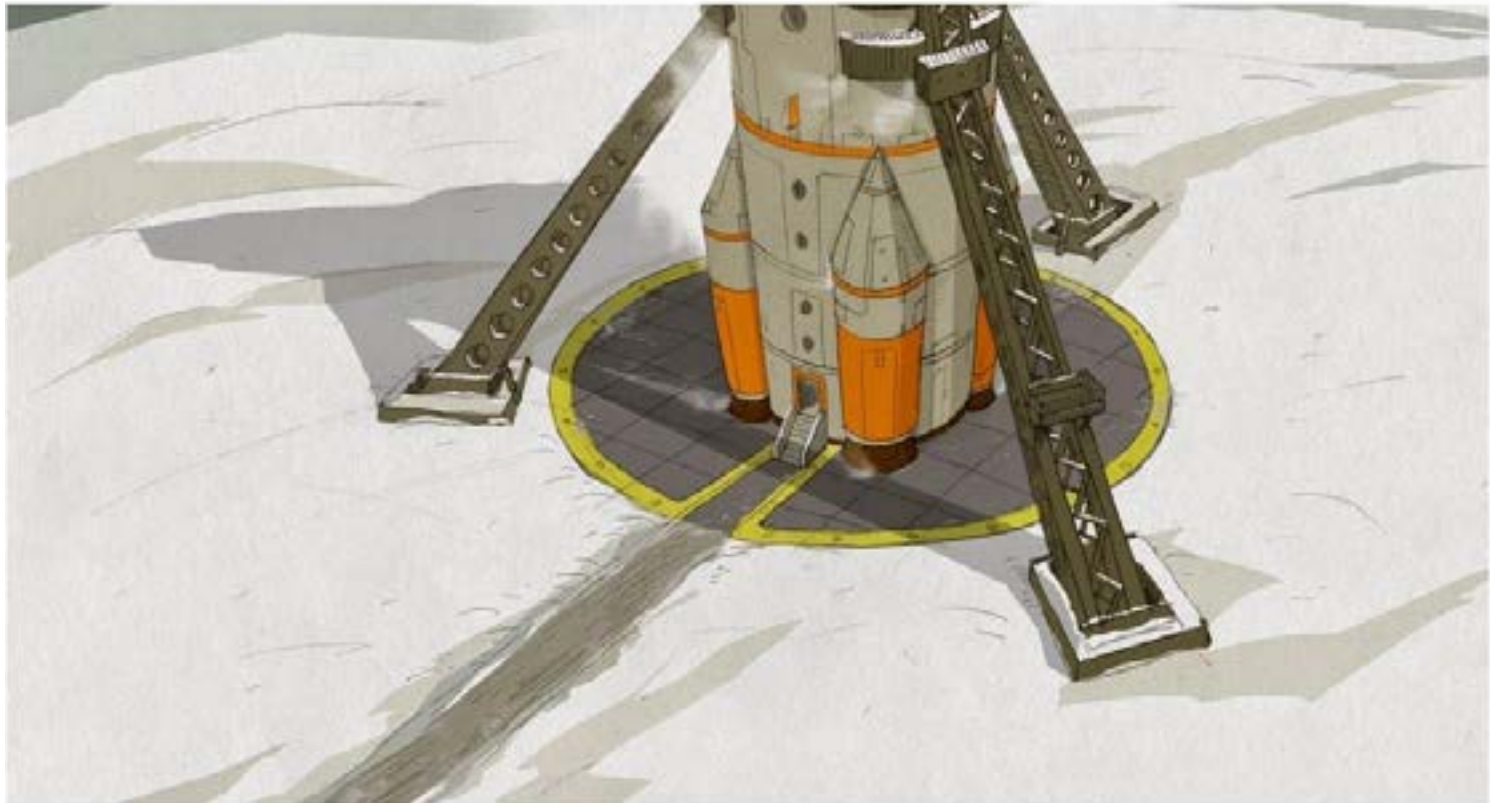
This animated short by Konstantin Bronzit shows us just how important friendship is.

Special Prizes Awarded at Annecy 2015

Among 11 special prizes, Konstantin Bronzit's 'We Can't Live Without Cosmos' wins Junior Jury Short Film Award at the 39th edition of the Annecy International Animated Film Festival.

By [Jennifer Wolfe](#) | Friday, June 19, 2015 at 12:34pm

In [Awards, Films, Short Films](#) | [ANIMATIONWorld, Headline News](#) | Blogs: [Animated Travels](#) | Special Events: [Annecy](#) | Geographic Region: [Europe](#)



Konstantin Bronzit's 'We Can't Live Without Cosmos'

Eleven special prizes were handed out at the 39th edition of the [Annecy International Animated Film Festival](#), running this year June 15-20.

Among the winners was Konstantin Bronzit's *We Can't Live Without Cosmos*, which took home the Junior Jury Award for a Short Film.

See the full list of awardees below:

"CANAL+ Creative Aid" Award for a Short Film

Edmond by Nina Gantz

NATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION SCHOOL (United Kingdom)

Festivals Connexion Award – Région Rhône-Alpes with Lumières Numériques

In Deep Waters by Sarah Van den Boom

PAPY3D PRODUCTIONS ONF (France, Canada)

Junior Jury Award for a Graduation Film

Roadtrip by Xaver Xylophon

KUNSTHOCHSCHULE BERLIN-WEIBENSEE (Germany)

Junior Jury Award for a Short Film

We Can't Live Without Cosmos by Konstantin Bronzit

MELNITSA ANIMATION STUDIO (Russia)

Fipresci Award

Teeth by Daniel Gray & Tom Brown

HOLBROOKS (USA, Hungary, United Kingdom)

Fipresci Award – Special Distinction

Guida by Rosana Urbes

RR ANIMAÇÃO DE FILMES (Brazil)

André Martin Award for a French Feature Film

Is the Man Who is Tall Happy? An Animated Conversation with Noam Chomsky by Michel Gondry

PARTIZAN FILMS (France)

André Martin Award for a French Short Film

Rhizome by Boris Labbé

SACREBLEU PRODUCTIONS (France)

André Martin Award – Distinction for a French Short Film

Yûl and the Snake by Gabriel Harel

KAZAK PRODUCTIONS (France)

"Gan Foundation Support for Distribution" for a Work in Progress

My Life as a Zucchini by Claude Barras

BLUE SPIRIT PRODUCTIONS RITA PRODUCTIONS GEBEKA FILMS (France, Switzerland)

Best Original Music Award for a Short Film, sponsored by the SACEM

Dissonance by Till Nowak

Music: Olaf Taranczewski & Frank Zerban

FRAMEBOX (Germany)

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Inside the delightfully dark world of adult animation

Posted on Friday, June 19, 2015 by CNN in International News

The world of animation isn't all child's play. Savage deaths, troubling dreams, and passionate relationships are just some of the topics covered in these beguiling films created by highly-skilled hands.

We asked the artistic director of the prestigious Annecy International Animated Film Festival in France, Marcel Jean, to pick out the best nominated short films from the event, which runs from June 15 to 20.

Hailing from across the world, the surreal movies were made with everything from clay, to illustration, and cut-out papers.

Here are five of our favorites.

Estonia: Aleteadvuse Maja by Priit Tender

This Estonian film, which bears the English title "House of Unconsciousness" is a surreal imagining of the dreams of chimney sweepers.

Director Priit Tender used a study on dreams as the basis of his surreal 10 minute piece which explores the most frequent images chimney sweepers dream about — from women on fire to giant seals.

Portugal/Germany: Amelia & Duarte by Alice Guimaraes and Monica Santos

This eight-minute pixilation tells the story of two lovers who are struggling to cope after their relationships ends.

They divide the city into two and Duarte tries to remove memories of Amelia from his life by cutting her name out of his vast book collection. Meanwhile, Amelia boils down her memories of Duarte into cold chemical equations.

Spain: The Guardian by Alessandro Novelli

Alessandro Novelli used the parable "Before the Law" from Franz Kafka's book "The Trial" as inspiration for this mindful piece. Here, a peasant stands in front of a gate guarded by a fearsome guardian who denies him entrance.

When the film showed at the Arizona International Film Festivals, Novelli commented said of piece: "Sometimes we don't have the strength to take decisions and live our lives how we want."

Brazil: Guida by Rosanna Urbes

Guida has been working as an archivist for 30 years when one day she sees a newspaper ad looking for models for a life drawing class.

She re-finds her beauty, creativity and inner child through the experience as the film asks us to rethink what beauty is really about.

Russia: We Can't Live Without Cosmos by Konstantin Bronzit

Two cosmonauts, who have been friends since birth, go through rigorous training to achieve their dream of traveling in space.

This animated short by Konstantin Bronzit shows us just how important friendship is.

VARIETY

Annecy: Colombia's 'Sabogal' – History From a Victims' Viewpoint



JUNE 19, 2015 | 05:45AM PT

Animated Colombian crime feature competes at Annecy

Emilio Mayorga

"*Sabogal*" is a rare and notorious example of animation for adults, with very strong political content. It's the [producers'](#) – 3da2animation – first sally into entertainment as well as its feature film debut. Despite powerful underlying social criticism, "*Sabogal*" has been financed, in a healthy democratic move, by Colombian broadcaster Canal Capital. "*Sabogal*" turns on a lawyer and staunch defender of human rights who is overwhelmed in a country that's in crisis and is constantly under threat and in danger. But, undaunted, he battles obsessively for justice to be done. The producers of *Sabogal*, Juan Jose Lozano, Sergio Mejia Forero and Liliana Rincon, plan to continue in this vein, given the success of the film in their country, and its upbeat reception at Annecy.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

"*Sabogal*" is a judicial thriller in defence of for human rights that is very rooted in recent Colombian history. It's not a documentary, but it wants to be faithful to a political situation, and seems a very committed piece of filmmaking.

Yes, "*Sabogal*" shows a very specific historic context, a country whose recent history has been marked by cruel violence. What we did was create a product that offered a new narrative and aesthetic perspective, to re-tell the recent history of the country. Our priority, our main objective, is to allow new generations to approach that reality with new eyes.

How does this very special animation format fit in with something as serious as the fight for human rights?

As Colombians, we have grown accustomed to always seeing that reality in the same way. It is more and more difficult to be surprised or moved by anything. Furthermore, history is rarely told from the point of view of the victims, from the point of view of those who have been wronged and are gradually ostracized from official history. Animation allows us to take something that is so close to our day-to-day reality, but which is also so painful that when it is shown in such an unusual way we can start to break down the paradigms used to construct our memory.

The film is now starting to make the rounds on the international festival circuit and is looking for an international sales agent. What's the state of play there at present?

There are, at present, several sales agents who have shown interest. To date, "Sabogal" has been screened at the International Film Festival and Forum for Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland. We are quite advanced with negotiations with several international sales agents who have also shown interest.

"Sabogal" was initially a series, if I'm not mistaken. So the feature is a kind of spin-off. Why was the feature made?

Yes, "Sabogal" was indeed initially a series of 13 24-minute episodes, for Colombian public television. 3da2animation is a company that's worked in animation on the theme of human rights, sexual discrimination, and similar topics since 2006... Our clients have been The United Nations, the Colombian Republic's Vice President's Office, etc. and we have found in animation a splendid tool to reflect what we are as a country.

Your company worked before in the documentary field. Why this shift to fiction now?

We worked in the documentary field for 20 years. But social criticism through documentary remains in that domain, the documentary public. With animation we can transcend those limits. With animation, we get to young audiences, adult audiences...

But sales results for animation for adults are not very encouraging.

We are doing this for public TV. That's why it's public TV: to raise awareness, to take risks. Public television has realized that with such products it can show young and adult audiences alike our own recent history. Public television networks have enormous possibilities with this type of projects.

"Sabogal" was fully financed by Colombia's Canal Capital, right? What was the budget?

It was \$600,000 (she laughs)

We are interested in 3da2animation's projects. Can you give us any details in that regard?

For the production of "Sabogal," we had to do a fair amount of research on the technological aspects, because, as far as we know, it's the first time in Latin America that we were capturing facial movement, body movement, voice, all at the same time, and doing the animation with open code software. "Sabogal" was a very demanding experience, which allowed us to learn a lot. We want to bring all that we learnt to our next projects: another feature that mixes animation and documentary, along similar lines to "Sabogal," and we are also developing an animated series on the peaceful resolution of conflicts, that provides us with useful tools at a moment when the winds of peace and hope are blowing across Colombia.

**SCREENING NOW: Zoo Revolution** - Go deep inside the increas[Home](#) > [News](#) > [‘European Annies’ to launch in 2017](#)

‘European Annies’ to launch in 2017

ANNECY: Veteran French producer Didier Brunner has set up a new awards ceremony to celebrate European animation, with the first scheduled to take place at the end of 2017.

The European Animation Pride Awards are designed to highlight outstanding work in the animation sector just like the Annie Awards in the US have since 1972, the organisers say.

The current team is made up of experienced animation professionals such as Brunner, Olivier Catherin, Jean-Paul Commin and Denis Walgenwitz.

Students, technicians, screenwriters, artists, directors, producers, investors, distributors and broadcasters will all be invited to vote to reward feature films, short films, television series and video games in 15 different categories.

The technical and logistical support for the awards will be provided by Reginald de Guillebon and Laurent Cotillon through Le Film Français.

The organisers say they will announce the official structure and define the operating principles of the association and the ceremony after this summer.



Nico Franks
19-06-2015
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19-06-2015

Canal+ ups kids' content investment

Canal+ Group has revealed plans to triple content investment for its themed channels, including its kids' and documentary nets.

The group recently shuttered its cabsat lifestyle channels Maison+ and Cuisine+, with series channel Jimmy's shutdown also imminent.

"If we have decided to close some of our channels, that was to be able to invest more in our remaining ones," said Canal+ director of thematic channels Claire Basini in Annecy yesterday.

"Lifestyle is not our speciality, and Jimmy's existence became pointless with the competition of the free-to-air DTT channels," she told C21. "Our kids', documentary, and comedy channels are more strategic.

"That is especially true for our kids' channels, as people usually subscribe to a pay TV offer when they start a family. But with the increased competition, we need more exclusive series, with both acquisitions and more ground-breaking original animation shows."

Canal+'s kids' offering comprises Canal+ Family; Teletoon+, aimed at 7-11s; and Piwi+, targeting preschoolers to seven-year-olds.

"To differentiate from the other kids' offering in France, which comprises many American players, we will focus on European fare, with one focus being adaptations of European children's literature," Basini added.

The group is poised to announce new plans for its Planète+ documentary channels next week at Sunny Side of the Doc.



SCREENING NOW: NFL Rush Zone - An epic battle with six Guard

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Animation study spotlights gender

ANNECY: The gender disparity in the animation industry has come under the spotlight thanks to research released by the non-profit organisation Women In Animation (WIA)

WIA co-presidents Marge Dean and Kristy Scanlan hosted a panel discussion about the state of women in animation here in Annecy at the International Animation Market on Tuesday.

The theme for this year's International Animation Festival is "honouring women," and there have been calls for greater awareness of a gender imbalance in the business, with data gathered by the Animation Guild showing that men make up 80% of the industry



Kristy Scanlan

"Having a presence at Annecy this year has given us the amazing opportunity to meet the women who have made a name for themselves in a largely male-driven industry, and to learn from their perspective and experience," said Scanlan.

"We have been collecting statistics from studios and schools around the world which show that women dominate art schools but then make up only about 20% of the creative workforce," added Dean.



Marge Dean

The presentation and panel discussion included WIA Advisory Board members Margie Cohn of DreamWorks Animation and Turner Broadcasting's Adina Pill.

According to the Animation Guild's findings, 10% of all producer/directors are women, 17% of writers, 21% of art/designers and just 23% of animators.

These are all average numbers, mainly focused on LA-based studios, both large and small, WIA noted.

WIA has also found that the numbers are similar in Canada. At the eight studios in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, 16-18% of the creative roles are currently filled by women.

In France, the funding body CNC said that 54 television series were financed in 2014 and out of a total of 233 scriptwriters involved, 54 were women (23%), and just 16 of the 82 directors (20%).

WIA also noted that in the past 15 years there have been only two solo woman directors of US-produced animated features: Jennifer Yuh Nelson on Kung Fu Panda 2 (2011) and Jun Falkenstein on The Tigger Movie (2000).

"There is a lot of promise for increasing the role of women in the animation industry, simply based on the increased number of women studying animation at college level. But we've learned from experience that an increase in student enrolment alone will not change the employment numbers," Dean added.

WIA relaunched under the leadership of Dean and Scanlan, from production outfits Mattel and Technicolor respectively, in 2013.



Nico Franks
18-08-2015
@C21Media

France TV to expand toon offering

ANNECY: Public broadcaster France Télévisions plans to dedicate more time to developing children's shows and to diversify into new types of animation, including serials.

During the Annecy International Animation Film Market (Mifa) this week, the group explained that it needs to distinguish itself with more creative shows and experiment if it is to cater for kids' changing viewing habits and face the "hyper competition" from new platforms.

As a result, it told French producers that the development process will be extended. For some series, web episodes or specials will be produced before the television series, in order to fine-tune the property, test its market and start to build the brand.

Les Grandes Grandes Vacances, France Télévisions' first try at an animation serial, was a big success on both linear television and new platforms, where it was broadcast simultaneously, the group claimed. Over the past year, the pubcaster has overhauled its children's offering for both linear television and on-demand.

France 4's audience share has grown from 2.4% of 4-14s when it relaunched as a daytime channel over a year ago to 8.5% this June, the group said.

Its on-demand platforms Ludo and Zouzous have so far reported 700,000 downloads of their app and a total of 47 million views in 2014.

France Télévisions now produces YouTube channels and had huge success with one for its preschool brands, Le Petit Ours Brun, which became the sixth most-viewed French YouTube channel.

Games are being developed for more of its animation shows, as was the case for Les Grandes Grandes Vacances and Rabbid Invasion.

France Télévisions, the country's main animation commissioner, yesterday presented some of its new series at Annecy. It is currently developing a total of 73 projects, with 16 series in production. About half are original shows and the rest adaptations of children's books or remakes.

Among the shows in production are new CGI series for properties such as Boule & Bill, produced by Ellipsanime, and Noddy, from Gaumont Animation. Original series include Xilam Animation's Paprika, Anakama's Abraca and Studio Hari's Grizzi & Les Lemmings.

The pubcaster is also developing hybrid shows such as Method Animation's ambitious Sept Nains et Moi (Seven Dwarves and Me) a live-action sitcom set in the present day featuring a young girl called Snow who is friends with seven CGI dwarves.

Animation study struggles with VoD

ANNECY: A major research project designed to boost the European animation production industry has been hindered by a lack of available data from established VoD services.

The first results of the Mapping the European Animation Industry project, which was commissioned and funded by the European Commission, were presented here at the Annecy International Animation Film Market (Mifa) yesterday.

Those behind the study, available to download for free [here](#), note that profiling the animation industry in relation to television, and on-demand in particular, has been a challenge.

The study aims to track the production volume, distribution and circulation of European animated feature films and TV content and provide a general overview of the structure of the animation industry. The VoD space has emerged as a new battleground for kids' content, accelerated by the likes of Netflix and Amazon investing heavily in the genre to attract customers, while TV players such as Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network have simultaneously ramped up their presence online to adapt to their audiences' shifting viewing habits.

According to figures from the European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO), which tracks the continent's audiovisual sector, there are more than 100 on-demand services in Europe that carry content targeting children.

These come in addition to the catch-up TV services of major broadcasters around Europe, such as the BBC's iPlayer, Gulli Replay, Kika Plus and Ludo.fr from France Télévisions.

Deirdre Kevin, analyst at the EAO, said that the online world was clearly going to be of huge significance to European animation in the future, but obtaining data on viewing and consumption habits for these on-demand services is very difficult.

Major players such as Netflix and Amazon have made a point of refusing to share information about their subscribers' viewing habits.

"It's very difficult to get information on consumption, as the big companies do not release who's watching what and how much. It's not as transparent as the audience data that you can have for television," Kevin said, adding that the VoD services are not obliged to divulge viewing figures.

Providing an overview of the catalogues of these services has also proved challenging, as in some cases they are vast and often differ between countries, meaning "expensive customised research" is required to access the data.

The challenges and opportunities for European animation presented by increased VoD viewing and the potential impact of the YouTube Kids app in Europe will be examined further in the next study, due for release in Paris later this year.

'Peanuts' Director Steve Martino on Translating the Comic to CG-Animated Film



'The Peanuts Movie'

by Rhonda Richford

6/17/2015 10:23am PDT

"We embrace that 2D thinking but do it with computer animated 3D models," the director explained.

The Peanuts Movie director **Steve Martino** and art director **Nash Dunnigan** brought exclusive footage on Tuesday to the Annecy International Animation Film Festival in France.

The duo spoke with *The Hollywood Reporter* about the challenges of bringing beloved characters to the big screen while staying true to the simple aesthetic of creator **Charles Schulz** in a 3D world.

"From day one I knew there would be a lot of people that would go 'Computer animation? I don't know,'" said Martino of the strip's longtime fans. There was internal debate about how to approach the aesthetic of the film before they decided to stay as close to Schulz as possible.

Martino took inspiration from the Charles Schulz museum and videos of Schulz sketching Snoopy and his pals. "It came to me that mantra on this film would be to find his penline in everything we created," he said.

Martino cites the dog house and even Snoopy's smile as examples of the way the team embraced the aesthetic. "That's all about still paying homage to and referencing the line that Sparky (that's Schulz to you and me) gave us." The Blue Sky team refers to Schulz by the affectionate Sparky on request of his son and film collaborator **Craig Schulz**. "We spent hours and hours and hours deriving our poses from the comic strip, our design aesthetic – everything came from the comic strip."

The story centers around Charlie Brown and his beloved beagle, as Charlie first encounters the Little Red Haired Girl and attempts to change himself in order to woo her. He fails to become a cooler Charlie, but woos her just the same with his natural, kind character. In between, there are lots of action scenes for both Brown and Snoopy, who fights the Red Baron as the Flying Ace and zips around the Eiffel Tower.

Blue Sky, the studio behind Dr. Seuss' adaptation *Horton Hears a Who*, adapted existing technologies to stay true to Charles Schulz line drawing and vintage aesthetic. "There's a lot of handcrafting in the animation," Martino says, including traditional blur methods with multiples on screen at one time. "We embrace that 2D thinking but do it with computer animated 3D models," he says.

"In order to capture that kind of 2D aesthetic from the comics and try to get the essence of that in 3D, we had to – not abandon – but break our old production pipeline a bit. It was a new approach for our studio," said Nash.

"The characters are so round and so simple, we couldn't shoot them close up because they are big orbs. So we had to use longer lenses, but that also helped the aesthetic, because Schulz drew Charlie Brown's world kind of tableaux, kind of stagey, so using long lenses helped shoot the characters better and helped communicate the aesthetic of the comic better."

The team still has about one month of animation on the film before taking it to post production and sound mixing, and then on to its Nov. 6 U.S. release date. The film will roll out globally between then and the Christmas holidays.

"I can see the light at the end of the tunnel," jokes Martino of the end of the three-year process. As for showing Snoopy to Ancey audiences: "I'm really excited to share these things with the people that really nerd out about animation."

Rotoscopers

DreamWorks, News, TV

Annecy 2015: DreamWorks Animation TV Head Talks 'Dragons: Race to the Edge'

Posted by Brandon Smith 2 weeks ago



(Image courtesy of Variety)

While much of the big news at this year's Annecy Film Festival focused on feature animation, there was also some attention payed to TV animation. This attention specifically focused on a high-profile project set to debut next Friday!

[John Hopewell of Variety](#) was one of the people to attend an exclusive screening of the first two episodes of *DreamWorks Dragons: Race to the Edge*, followed by a Q&A with Margie Cohn, the current head of television for DreamWorks Animation.

From what he tells us, the impact of moving *DreamWorks Dragons* from Cartoon Network to Netflix can be felt from the get-go. Compared to the more episodic nature of *Riders of Berk* and *Defenders of Berk*, *Race to the Edge* wastes no time in establishing its more serialized nature in the opening two-parter that screened for Annecy (collectively titled "Dragon Eye of the Beholder").

Part One was written by F.M. De Marco, John Tellegen, Jack Thomas, and executive producers Art Brown and Douglas Sloan. Brown and Sloan solely take up writing duties in Part Two and Elaine Bogan directs both installments. Directors on further episodes include John Sanford (a holdover from *Riders/Defenders*), visual effects supervisor David Jones, Simon Otto (head of character animation for the *How to Train Your Dragon* films), Gil Zimmerman (head of layout at DreamWorks), and more.

Goodman goes on to label *Race to the Edge* as "A story of young adults aimed at young adults," which depicts Hiccup and the gang on their journey to full adulthood.

As explained before, the "Edge" of the title is a geographic point far from Berk where the Riders set up an outpost. Cohn told the attending press that *Race to the Edge* will truly be a story about them figuring out their pace in the world without the adults to back them up.

Goodman describes Bogan's directorial style as "muscular," with scene shots staged at more dramatic diagonals.

The Dragon Eye will very much be at the center of *Race to the Edge's* storyline, as episode one shows Hiccup and his Dragon Riders the artifact in a gloomy, fog-shrouded graveyard of ships. In episode two, they are accompanied with Gothi as they go to collect the tooth of a Snow Wraith in order to unlock the Dragon Eye.

Lastly, *Race to the Edge* was designed for the Netflix viewer in mind, with a serialized format and a more sophisticated story structure. In Cohn's words:

"Some things that happen are resolved at the end of each episode, but there's a narrative line that goes through the series, so that you can have a richer experience while watching it."

Dragons: Race to the Edge will premiere exclusively for Netflix on June 26. Be sure to follow Kajsia's coverage of the DWA press junket for *Race to the Edge* and *Dinotrux* on our [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) (full report to follow). Stick around next Monday for our pre-show discussion article for The DRAGONS TV Recap.

Annecy 2015: GKIDS Picks Up Folimage's 'Phantom Boy'

GKIDS acquires North American rights for latest feature from Jean-Loup Felicioli and Alain Gagnol, the Oscar-nominated writers and directors of 'A Cat in Paris.'

By [Jennifer Wolfe](#) | Thursday, June 18, 2015 at 12:49pm

In [2D](#), [Business](#), [Films](#) | [ANIMATIONWorld](#), [Headline News](#) | Blogs: [Animated Travels](#) | Special Events: [Annecy](#) | Geographic Region: [North America](#)



NEW YORK -- Independent animation distributor GKIDS has acquired North American rights to *Phantom Boy*, the highly anticipated new animated feature from Jean-Loup Felicioli and Alain Gagnol, the Oscar-nominated writers and directors of *A Cat in Paris*. The film premieres on June 19 at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival and GKIDS plans a theatrical release in spring 2016. The deal was negotiated between Daniela Elstner for Doc & Film International, Annemie Degryse for Lumière Publishing, and Eric Beckman for GKIDS.

Phantom Boy marks a return to the stylish animated noir of Felicioli and Gagnol's *A Cat in Paris*, which was also distributed by GKIDS and earned the writing/directing duo their first Academy Award nomination. In the new film, the setting has shifted from Paris to New York in this family- and adult-friendly crime animated thriller. The film was produced by Jacques-Remy Girerd and Annemie Degryse, and is a co-production between Folimage, Lunanime, France 3 Cinéma and Rhône-Alpes Cinéma.

Here's the synopsis:

Leo has a secret. A mysterious illness has transformed him into a phantom boy, able to leave the confines of his body and explore the city as a ghostly apparition. While in the hospital, he befriends Alex, a police officer injured while attempting to capture a nefarious gangster, who has taken control of the city's power supply, throwing the metropolis into chaos. Now they must form an extraordinary duo, using Leo's phantom powers and Alex's detective work to stop the plot and save New York from destruction. Phantom Boy continues Gagnol and Felicioli's fascination with animated film noir, in a heart-thumping adventure that pushes their trademark visual style to literal new heights, as Leo soars above the greatest skyline in the world.



VARIETY

Annecy: Gkids Buys 'Phantom Boy' for North America



JUNE 18, 2015 | 09:00AM PT

Dave McNary
Film Reporter
@Variety_DMcnary

Gkids has bought North American rights to "Phantom Boy," the new animated feature from "A Cat in Paris" directors Jean-Loup Felicioli and Alain Gagnol.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

"Phantom Boy" premieres Friday at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival. Gkids plans a theatrical release in spring 2016.

The film has a noir style similar to "A Cat in Paris," which was also distributed by Gkids following its 2010 Oscar nomination for best animated feature. The movie was produced by Jacques-Remy Girerd and Annemie Degryse, and is a co-production of Folimage, Lunanime, France 3 Cinéma and Rhône-Alpes Cinéma.

"Phantom Boy" is set in New York and centers on a boy whose mysterious illness has transformed him into a phantom able to leave the confines of his body and explore the city as a ghostly apparition. While in the hospital, he teams up with a police officer injured while attempting to capture a nefarious gangster who has taken control of the city's power supply, throwing the metropolis into chaos.

The deal was negotiated between Daniela Elstner for Doc & Film International, Annemie Degryse for Lumière Publishing, and Eric Beckman for Gkids.

Gkids also bought North American rights to "Extraordinary Tales," an animated anthology based on five of Edgar Allan Poe's stories, and U.S. rights to "April and the Extraordinary World," with Marion Cotillard voicing, earlier in the fest.

Cartoon Network Brings 'We Bare Bears' to Annecy 2015

New original series from Daniel Chong -- the latest to come out of Cartoon Network's short form animation program -- to receive exclusive screening at Annecy; Network returns to festival to seek next generation of talent.

By [Jennifer Wolfe](#) | Thursday, June 18, 2015 at 8:26pm

In [2D](#), [Business](#), [Cartoons](#), [Event](#), [Festival](#), [People](#), [Places](#), [Television](#) | [ANIMATIONWorld](#), [Headline News](#) | Blogs: [Animated Travels](#) | Special Events: [Annecy](#) | Geographic Region: [Europe](#)



ANNECY, FRANCE -- Cartoon Network is returning to Annecy for the 2015 Animation Festival and MIFA, where it will celebrate the latest success to emerge from its prestigious short form Artists' Program and continue the search for emerging talent to take part in the program.

On Thursday, June 18, Cartoon Network representatives will host a series of face-to-face interviews with artists, in a bid to source promising new talent to work with the studio. Cartoon Network will also run two special panel events: "Cartoon Network: From Short to Series" and "The Making of Cartoon Network's *Adventure Time*," on Thursday, June 18th and Friday June 19th, respectively.

Taking place in Salle Pierre Lamy (4 – 5.15pm), “Cartoon Network: From Short to Series” will offer attendees a peek inside the Studios’ award-winning Artists’ Program, as well as an exclusive first look at *We Bare Bears*, created by Daniel Chong. Coming to Cartoon Network US in July 2015, followed by EMEA from September 2015, *We Bare Bears* is the latest series to be developed as part of the program.



Moderated by Cartoon Network Studios Chief Content Officer Rob Sorcher, the panel will feature Elizabeth Ito, director and storyboard artist on the network’s global phenomenon *Adventure Time* and creator of the brand new short *Welcome to My Life*; George Gendi storyboard artist on *The Amazing World of Gumball* from Cartoon Network Studios Europe and creator of the brand new pilot *Apple & Onion*; and Daniel Chong, creator of *We Bare Bears*. The panel will be preceded by Cartoon Network’s renowned Picnic by the Lake, at the Plage de L’Imperial from 12.30 – 2.30pm, where festival-goers will have the opportunity to meet creators and programming executives and take home some specially-created *We Bare Bears*-inspired treats.

The following day, “The Making of Cartoon Network’s *Adventure Time*” will take place from 2 – 3.15pm in Salle Pierre Lamy. Now in its sixth season, the blockbuster franchise has built a broad-ranging, worldwide fan base of adults and children alike since it premiered in 2010. This panel presents an opportunity to hear from the key creative and production team behind the show, taking us through the making of this much-loved animated phenomenon. Focal points will include recent guest-directed shorts, including the Anney-nominated *Food Chain*, and an exclusive sneak-peek of an upcoming episode by guest director Kirsten Lepore rendered solely using stop motion animation – a significant first for the series.

“Anney attracts some of the world’s most talented and innovative creatives and we’re excited to return and discover new emerging talent as they develop the next generation of animation,” Sorcher said. “We’re proud of what’s been achieved to date through our Artists’ Programme and we are looking forward to sharing an exclusive first look at *We Bare Bears*.”

“Cartoon Network is a global leader in the creation of kids’ animation and we’re committed to continuing to entertain and surprise our audiences with engaging, high quality and laugh-out-loud storytelling,” added Patricia Hidalgo, SVP & Chief Content and Creative Officer, EMEA. “Our presence at Anney and the success of the shows to come out of the Artists’ Program so far is evidence of just how important the search for new talent, from right across the world, is for a global brand like Cartoon Network.”

“Cartoon Network is a global leader in the creation of kids’ animation and we’re committed to continuing to entertain and surprise our audiences with engaging, high quality and laugh-out-loud storytelling,” added Patricia Hidalgo, SVP & Chief Content and Creative Officer, EMEA. “Our presence at Anney and the success of the shows to come out of the Artists’ Program so far is evidence of just how important the search for new talent, from right across the world, is for a global brand like Cartoon Network.”

“We’re seeing a wealth of fun, innovative and highly-engaging concepts coming from right across our diverse region,” commented Mark Eyers, Chief Content Officer – Kids, Asia Pacific. “We have currently identified three creators in Korea, India and Australia that could be a perfect fit for the Artists’ Program – and it will be exciting to turn these locally-produced ideas into content that can reach audiences across the world. Anney really is a global get-together of top animation talent and we’re looking forward to seeing what it has to offer this year.”



WIA Addresses Gender Disparity in Animation at Annecy 2015

Women In Animation co-presidents Marge Dean and Kristy Scanlan present findings and host a panel discussion with advisory board members Bonnie Arnold, Margie Cohn, Lenora Hume and Adina Pitt on the state of women in animation.

By Jennifer Wolfe | Wednesday, June 17, 2015 at 6:48pm

In Business, Event, Festival, Jobs & Recruiting, People, Pieces | ANIMATIONWorld, Headline News | Special Events: Annecy | Geographic Region: Europe



ANNECY, FRANCE – In line with the Annecy International Animation Festival's theme this year of "honoring women," non-profit professional organization Women in Animation (WIA) hosted a program this week aptly titled "Women in Animation" at the Imperial Palace Hotel. The presentation and panel discussion included WIA Advisory Board members Bonnie Arnold, Margie Cohn, Lenora Hume and Adina Pitt as well as WIA co-president Kristy Scanlan and WIA chairpersons Jinko Gotoh and Tracy Campbell, with moderation by WIA co-president Marge Dean.

"Having a presence at Annecy this year has given us the amazing opportunity to meet the women who have made a name for themselves

in a largely male-driven industry, and to learn from their perspective and experience," says Scanlan.

"We have been collecting statistics from studios and schools around the world which show that women dominate art schools but then only make up about 20% of the creative work force," adds Dean. "We used this ratio as a launching point for today's program, and then talked about what we're doing to rectify the situation."



"Women in Animation" panel at Annecy 2015 included WIA Advisory Board members Bonnie Arnold, Margie Cohn, Lenora Hume and Adina Pitt as well as WIA Co-President Kristy Scanlan and WIA Chairpersons Jinko Gotoh and Tracy Campbell, with moderator by WIA Co-President Marge Dean.

WIA board members performed various surveys and gathered data to inform themselves of the most recent ratios in the workforce. WIA discovered that according to a survey of several LA-based animation schools and statistics gathered by the Animation Guild (TAG, Local 839 IATSE), in 2015:

- 40% of all animation students are women
- 20% of all animation creatives are women

For some historical perspective, here are additional percentages:

- In 2006, men made up 84% of the animation workforce, whereas roles filled by women total 16%
- In 2015, men make up 80% and roles filled by women still only total 20%

"We know there are many roles that women can play in animation, but we wanted to highlight specific areas in our discussion today," Dean explains. "We can see that there are very few women who are creatively leading animated productions and need to address that imbalance."

Case in point, the survey revealed that in the last five years, only three animated features in the U.S. and two in France have had a woman director, and those were only as part of male/female directing teams. In the past 15 years, there have only been two solo woman directors of U.S. produced animated features – Jennifer Yuh Nelson for *Kung Fu Panda 2* (2011) and Jun Falkenstein for *The Tigger Movie* (2000). To further support these concerns, the breakdown of women's roles in various creative positions in animation today are as follows, according to the Animation Guild:

- 10% of all producer/directors are women
- 17% of all writers are women
- 21% of all art/designers are women
- 23% of all animators are women

These are all average numbers, mainly focused on Los Angeles-based studios, both large and small.

WIA has also found that the numbers are similar in Canada: among eight studios between Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, only 16 -18% of the creative roles are currently filled by women. In France, the Centre National de la cinématographie et de l'image Animée (CNC) released the following ratios related to 54 television series financed in 2014:

- Women scriptwriters: Based on a total of 233 scriptwriters, 54 were women (23%)
- Women directors: Based on a total of 82 directors, 16 were women (20%)

Also, according to Réseau des écoles françaises de cinéma d'animation (RECA), the network of French animation schools, women average 50.14% of the student body across 25 different animation programs.



WIA co-presidents Kozzy Scanlan and Marge Dean

"There is a lot of promise for increasing the role of women in the animation industry simply based on the increased number of women studying animation at the college level," Dean concludes. "But we've learned from experience that an increase in student enrollment alone will not change the employment numbers. This is ultimately going to take awareness, training, support and courage for women to step out and have their voices heard. We so admire those who can say 'here's my voice, this is what I think, this is me.' WIA will continue to encourage women in the industry to be brave enough to say this to others."

Source: *Women in Animation*



Jennifer Wolfe is Director of News & Content at Animation World Network.

Annecy: Brunner's Folivari Sets Full Slate

Tom McLean Jun 17th, 2015 No Comments yet

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Former Les Armateurs chief Didier Brunner's new Folivari shingle has announced at Annecy additions to its slate of animation productions.

In addition to the previously announced adaptation of the manga series *The Summit of the Gods*, Folivari is planning a TV series titled *Ernest & Celestine: The Collection*; the TV special *The Big Bad Fox and Other Tales*, from writer-director Benjamin Renner; the feature *Pachamama*, from Argentina's Juan Antin.

For *Summit*, Brunner is producing with Jean-Charles Ostorero of Julianne Films to make the movie as a 2D-CGI feature; the movie is at the screenplay stage. Brunner's credits include producing *Secret of Kells*, the *Kirikou* series, *Triplets of Belleville* and *Ernest & Celestine*.



Pachamama



Annecy: BRB, China's Mili Partner on 'Dogtanian' Feature

Tom McLean Jun 17th, 2015 1 Comment

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Spain's BRB Internacional has announced production on the feature film version of the hit series *Dogtanian and the Three Musketeers*.



BRB will produce with Screen21 with China's Mili Pictures as co-producer for an expected completion by the end of next year.

Jose Javier Martinez will direct and the film has a reported \$8 million budget. The film is based on the original cartoon series, produced in 1981 with a second series following in 1990.



Dogtanian and the Three Musketeers



CULTURE | Cinema

Animation industry and festival fans flock to Annecy

Produced by [Fred Ponsard](#)

17/06 11:12 CET



The [Annecy International Animated Film Festival](#) is one of the most celebrated animation gatherings in the world. Created in 1960, the festival takes place each June in [France](#), this year featuring 215 films in competition from 40 countries. More than 125,000 tickets were sold last year, proof of this surging market

"Having a public festival and the film industry at one event is quite exceptional."

Opening the festival this year is *The Prophet*, produced by Salma Hayek-Pinault and directed by the *The Lion King*'s Roger Allers.

It is based on the literary bestseller of the same name written in the '20s by Lebanese poet Kahlil Gibran. A message of peace, love and brotherhood, the adaptation is a collection of nine stories of Mustafa, a poet imprisoned for his writings. Through his adventures, he delivers poems to others which serve as life lessons.

Director Roger Allers' objective was the creation of a narrative thread to connect the poems.

Explains Allers, "There was the challenge of adapting the book which has very little story and increasing its narrative to support a film and finding a way of folding the poems into the narrative, letting them grow out of the narrative in a graceful, integral way."

The creators brought on board the likes of animators Bill Plympton and Johan Sfar to interpret the poems. Each of the story's mission was to perform a sequence, a segment corresponding to one of Gibran's works. The end result is a beautiful mosaic work of words, images and music.

Newcomer Mohammed Saeed Harib of the Emirates showcases his stunning 3D work in *The Prophet*.

Says Saeed Harib, "I'm super proud because you know Arabic literature is full with the Aladins, the Ali Babas, the 1001 nights ... and that's very, very cultural and very old. But this is very contemporary, something that is very well celebrated, one of the most-selling books around the world, and we are all gathered together here to celebrate Arabic creativity."

The festival brings together animation fanatics and professionals from across the globe.

Says Canada's Marcel Jean, director of the event, "I don't think there is an animation festival in the world which competes with Annecy. Having a public festival and the film industry at one event is quite exceptional. It compares to the large, traditional film festivals in Venice, Locarno, Toronto ... we will leave aside Cannes!"

Also in the spotlight this year in Annecy is a celebration of 100 years of Spanish film animation, from the early days of black and white to today's 3D works.

"Hundreds of films, short and feature film competitions, retrospectives, outdoor screenings, and pre-screenings ... prestigious Annecy is now recognised as the location for animated film. From the Annecy International Animated [Film Festival](#), Frédéric Ponsard for Euronews."

VARIETY

Annecy: Estudio Teremim Unveils TV Series 'Lulina' (EXCLUSIVE)



JUNE 17, 2015 11:00AM PT

COURTESY OF ESTUDIO TEREMIM

Directed by Marcus Vasconcelos, pre-school project forms part of MIFA market pitches

Emiliano De Pablos

Sao Paulo based [Estudio Teremim](#) is boarding pre-school animated TV series "Lulina and the Moon," one of the 25 projects chosen to be pitched at Annecy Festival's Mifa market.

SEE MORE: [Annecy 2015 Festival](#)

Produced by Lutz Fevold and helmed by Estudio Teremim founder [Marcus Vasconcelos](#), project centers on Lulina, a young girl who, before going to bed every night, is taken to the moon by Nocturne, her fabric owl. Lulina and her friend George, who lives in the moon with Pepper, a pet dragon, illustrate their adventures on the moon's white surface.

Currently in development, "Lulina" has already gathered financing support from Spicine, a Sao Paulo fund that backs the development, production and distribution of film, TV and videogame projects.

"We have the main narrative arc, the characters, some synopses and the first treatment of the pilot screenplay and have boarded the first visual studies and the business plan for the first season," said Marcus Vasconcelos.

"Lulina" could enter into production by next year if a TV broadcaster joins the project, kicking off with a 26 x 11 minute first season, which would be produced in 18 months, according to Teremim estimations.

Marking project's international market debut, "Lulina" will be unveiled on Thursday, June 18, as part of MIFA's TV Series/Specials Pitches Program.

"We are very interested in developing partnerships in different areas such as co-production, funding or distribution. Annecy will be the best opportunity to see how the industry reacts to our project," Vasconcelos says.

Although "Lulina and the Moon" was initially launched as a 100% Brazilian TV series, [producers](#) aim to add international expertise and collaboration to the project. "In Brazil there are some good examples of successful animation projects internationally co-produced, and we would like to follow this model," he said.

A promo on "Lulina" will be produced during the second half of the year, backed by Brazil's federal Fundo Setorial do Audiovisual.

"Animation production is experiencing a good moment in Brazil. The government constantly releases new investment funds for the industry," said Vasconcelos.

VARIETY

Annecy: Chile's Nino Viejo, Pinata, Punkrobot Set 'Legend' (EXCLUSIVE)



JUNE 17, 2015 | 11:46AM PT

COURTESY OF MIFA

TV series co-production project, selected for Annecy 2015 MIFA market pitches

Emiliano De Pablos

Chilean toon houses Nino Viejo Animation, [Pinata Corp](#) and [Punkrobot Studio](#) have partnered to co-produce animated TV series "[The Legend of Zeta & Ozz](#)," a project selected to form part of Annecy 2015's Mifa market pitches.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

Targeting teens and young adults, the 2D computer-generated TV series turns on two friends, Zeta, an extremely egocentric fox, and Ozz, a childish enthusiastic bear, trying to show the world they are the best at everything. They see the chance to compete everywhere, even when there is no need or nobody challenging them.

Created and written by Pinata Corp's Bambu (aka Jorge Orellana), directed by Leo Beltran at Nino Viejo, and exec produced by Punkrobot's Pato Escala, project will be presented Thursday June 18 as part of the TV Series/Specials Pitches Program at Annecy's Mifa market.

"The Legend of Zeta & Ozz" offers "a history of characters with notoriously developed flaws, basically losers, but they are so enthusiastic and determined that never give up and become lovable for the audience," Bambu says.

"Legend's" production partners have been mentored by Disney EMEA for their Mifa pitching, Pato Escala said. Currently, they are working on a "Legend" pilot episode on track to launch at Mip Junior in 2016, and developing treatments for a 39-episode seven-minute season.

Fully financed, project development is backed by Chile's National Council for Culture and Arts.

Boasting one of Latin America's fastest-growing animation industries, Chile has been a regular presence in key international toon markets and festivals in recent years.

"There is a large creative and artistic talent, eager to produce, which has prompted the development of an industry which is still emerging but, with the necessary support, can consolidate in the short term," Escala says.

Pursuing that goal, one key factor has been the creation of Chilean animation [producers.org](#) Animachi, which has coordinated and promoted the sector's international development, Escala adds.

VARIETY

Annecy: Women in Animation Present Gender Disparity Data



JUNE 17, 2015 | 11:55AM PT

COURTESY OF WOMEN IN ANIMATION

Marge Dean, Kristy Scanlan host panel on state of women in animation

Emilio Mayorga

ANNECY—According to a survey of several L.A.-based animation schools 60% of animation students are women. But only 20% of all animation creative's are women.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

The telling data, from [Women in Animation](#) (WIA) board member surveys and statistics gathered in 2015 by the Animation Guild, formed some of the key talking points at a panel discussion entitled Women In Animation that took place Wednesday June 17 at Annecy's MIFA market.

In other data, in 2006, men made up 84% of the animation workforce, whereas roles filled by women totalled 16%. In 2015, men make up 80% and roles filled by women still only total 20%.

Also according to the Animation Guild findings, 10% of all [producers](#)/directors are women. 17% of all writers are women, 21% of art/designers are women and 23% of animators are women.

These are all average numbers, mainly focused on Los Angeles-based studios. According to WIA, the numbers are similar in Canada, with 16 -18% of the creative roles currently occupied by women.

The survey revealed that in the last five years, only three animated features in the U.S. and two in France have had a woman director, and those were only as part of male/female directing teams.

In the past 15 years, there have only been two solo woman directors of U.S. produced animated features – Jennifer Yuh Nelson for "Kung Fu Panda 2" (2011) and Jun Falkenstein for "The Tigger Movie" (2000).

"The numbers are out of proportion because there has been very little work done to intentionally change the status quo. Most hiring in entertainment is risk averse where people hire who they know. It's easier but what that leads to is the hiring of the same people and up until recently primarily men," said Marge Dean, WIA co-president and production director at Mattel's newly formed Playground Productions, told Variety.

"Additionally, women have been trained to be artists in animation schools but not to be leaders. They need to be encouraged to be brave enough to step up to the plate," she added.

"As Lisa Henson said in her keynote address last night, 'Women love to help make things happen and nurture projects ... but my experience is that young women are not brave enough to say I want the film to be my film and I want to be the director.'"

"So, our work is twofold: Get the industry to make the extra effort to find the new untapped talent available and then get the women to have the courage to see themselves as creative leads and pursue that goal," Dean added.

Panelists included WIA Advisory Board Members Bonnie Arnold, Margie Cohn, Lenora Hume and Adina Pitt as well as WIA Co-President Kristy Scanlan and WIA Chairpersons Jinko Gotoh and Tracy Campbell. Panel was moderated by Dean. WIA has chapters in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Toronto, Dublin, Paris and New Delhi. New ones will soon be opened in Vancouver, Montreal, Seattle, London, Tokyo and Seoul.

The animation lobby had 120 members in 2013, now 1,020.

Some of its activities include educational programs, a shorts production program and measuring stats to check the progress of its mission.

"Animation is a small niche in the greater world of entertainment and creating content. Therefore, it is a more manageable battlefield. When we are successful in having real impact in changing the animation industry, it will be a great example of what is possible on a larger scale," Dean said.

She added: "Further, because animation is primarily kid's and family content, we will be able to show a different representation of female characters in both quantity and quality to a younger and more impressionable audience; leading to a very different view of women and their role in the world."

WIA's aim is for 50/50 employment in 2025.

John Hopewell contributed to this article

VARIETY

Annecy: 14 Spanish Projects Pitched at MIFA Market



JUNE 17, 2015 | 11:45AM PT

COURTESY OF DEAPLANETA "BUBBLE BIP"

Focus on Spain showcase underscores creative energy, suggests signs of industry recovery

Emilio Mayorga

ANNECY-BRB 's "Bubble Bip," "Animal Crackers," "Pumpkin Reports" and "Dino Games" were some of the fourteen Spanishtoon projects pitched at Focus on Spain, a standout Territory Focus at this year's Annecy [MIFA market](#), coinciding with Spain's status as the guest country at the French animation fest, the biggest dedicated event of its kind in the world. Focus on Spain showcase Eight features and seven TV skeins, one completed, Sam's "Possessed," an Annecy competition contender whose director Sam, who presented the project, is seeks territory or broadcaster sales, and co-production partners and investors at Annecy.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

Spain's animation spread at Focus on Spain served to underscore that, apart from the now occasional big-budget live-action co-production backed by Spanish broadcast networks Mediaset España and Atresmedia, Spain's animated feature sector now weighs in with both the most consistently higher-budget and international of Spanish features. At least three of the movie productions at Annecy have international co-production partners.

The TV spread, also enjoyed by the Annecy industry audience, also underlined the invigorating diversity of genres, graphic styles and industry models informing Spain's animated TV production, despite or because of a far lower local TV support than in many other countries in Europe.

Four projects are family-targeted, one is preschool-focused, another one for all audiences, yet another another for 16-and-overs. The other seven Focus on Spain titles targeted 4-10s.

Spanish pubcaster TVE, DeAPlaneta label Planeta Junior, Triacom Audiovisual, Catalan pubcaster TV3 and Indian animation group Toonz Media Group -which recently acquired Imira Entertainment- team on "Bubble Bip," a 52-seg short-format TV skein for kids 4-7. TVE is currently negotiating the last details for a co-production investment. "Bip" turns on a weird and wild videogame superhero that flees from his virtual universe to the real one.

Sam's "Possessed," a very Spanish and sometimes hilarious riff on "The Exorcist," seeks international sales. Guido Rud Film Sharks handles foreign rights.

Madrid-based Able & Baker Studios presented "Momochi," a 52 x 7 min. preschool series about a lovely creature seeing the world from a new viewpoint.

Also based out of Madrid and targeting 6-to-8 girls Anima Kitchen's "Piny, Pinypon, Institute of New York" series is set at an exclusive New York institute specialized in design, fashion and new careers. Already in production, "Animal Crackers" targets all auds. It is being produced from Spain by Valencia-based Blue Dream Studios Spain, founded by Spanish Academy Goya winner Jaime Maestro ("The Smoke Seller"). "Crackers" tells the story of a traveling circus where the main character discovers a magic cookies box.

Imira Entertainment's "Planet Play," a Focus on Spain highlight already described by Variety, and Motion Pictures Distribution's "Pumpkin Reports" are two 52-seg 12 min series, "I Elvis Riboldi" an 52-episode 11-minute one. "Pumpkin" turns on the most popular kid in a quiet village facing a new situation when he discovers his newly adopted brother and sisters are aliens; "Planet Play" turns on Play, the new-kid-in-town in Orbitrom23, a planet where every kid has a Bot, a kind of robot-nanny-smarphone device. But Play doesn't have one; and "Rivoldi's" main character is Elvis, an excruciatingly hyperactive and destructive boy.

Also presented, Dream Team Concept and Moonbite Games' "Dino Games" is a feature in pre-production telling a story of two worlds: Chuby and his friends are magically transported to Dino Games, their favourite videogame.

Another feature is "Alfred & Anna Save the Music," also in preproduction, from Sevilla's based Forma Animada: a music promoter wants to take over all talented music stars, but Alfred & Anna's school stands in his way.

Other projects that were pitched at Focus on Spain, the subject of dedicated Variety Annecy articles, were high-tech studio Screen 21 and BRB Internacional's "Dogtanian and the Three Musketeers," Capitan Arana's "Run Ozzy, Run," The Spa Studios' "Klaus" and "Capture the Flag," produced by Lightbox Animation Studios, Spain's big animation feature release of 2015 and a Paramount Pictures pick-up for worldwide distribution.

VARIETY

Annecy: Sergio Pablos Preps Directorial Debut 'Klaus'



JUNE 17, 2015 | 06:55AM PT

COURTESY OF THE SPA STUDIOS

SPA Studios, Atresmedia co-produce



John Hopewell
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ANNECY – “Despicable Me” co-creator Sergio Pablos, one of the key figures in Spain’s potential animation renaissance, is teaming with Gustavo Ferrada, a senior Spanish industry figure and [producer](#) on Juan Jose Campanella’s “Underdogs,” and Atresmedia Cine, a production powerhouse in Spain, to produce “Klaus,” an animated feature whose novel 3D-looking 2D animation is stirring buzz at this week’s Annecy Festival.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

Produced by Pablos’ Madrid-based SPA Studios and Atresmedia Cine, “Klaus” marks the directorial debut of Pablos, best known for originating “Despicable Me,” and as an animation supervisor on “Tarzan’s” Toppler, Dr. Doppler in “Treasure Planet” and Juan Jose Campanella’s “Underdogs” (aka “Foosball”).

Also written by Pablos, “Klaus” plot is being kept under-wraps. A teaser, now online, pictures a young man dispatched in 1878 to a snow-covered, unidentified part of Scandinavia in order to introduce the ultra-modern concept of the postal service. Irrepressibly optimistic, with a winning smile, he bangs on doors of villagers attempting to interest its died-in-the-wool citizenry in the postal service. After 176 days, trying one last cottage, which appears to house some sort of laboratory, a big burly white bearded man comes up behind him. That man is Klaus.

Presenting the project Wednesday at Anecy's Focus on Spain, Pablos described "Klaus" as a Christmas tale.

In MIFA's *Anatomy of a Studio* series, on Thursday Pablos will talk an industry audience through first images of "Klaus." It is "definitely a comedy, yes, but with a strong heart behind it. Our guiding principle in telling this story has been: 'Make them laugh 30 times and make them cry twice: first tears of sorrow, then tears of joy'. Not an easy feat to pull off, mind you, but we're confident the story deserves it," Pablos told *Variety*.

Released early month, "Klaus" teaser trailer caught attention as the images shown at Anecy's Focus on Spain, for its application of cutting-edge digital technology to traditional hand-drawn animation. 2D animation simply fitted "Klaus" better, Pablos said at Anecy, and allows animators more freedom. That said, in a technological combination which Pablos may go into in more depth at his *Anatomy of a Studio* presentation, backgrounds have a gloss more usually associated with 3D.

Pablos commented: "The idea is to deliver an amusing, heartwarming, family oriented adventure with the best possible look of state-of-the-art 3D technology merged with the warmth and organic feeling of traditional hand-drawn animation."

Working a film whose target audience is "3-103," and seeking international co-producers, investors and worldwide distribution, the producers aim to close financing in the coming year and begin principal animation in Spring 2016, Ferrada said.

"Our bet is that a smaller budgeted film with a strong story can hold its own in the current marketplace," Pablos added.

Ferrada's producer credits include "Underdogs," a The Weinstein Company U.S. pick-up set for an Aug. 14 release, and in live action, Alex de la Iglesia's "Perfect Crime" and Mateo Gil's "Nobody Knows Anybody."

Led by president Mikel Lejarza and managing director Mercedes Gamero, Atresmedia Cine has co-produced over 40 titles, including international co-productions such as Woody Allen's "Vicky Cristina Barcelona," Alberto Rodriguez's "Marshland," and Spain's biggest 2015 B.O. hit to date, Nacho Garcia Velilla's "Off Course," which has grossed over \$10 million.

VARIETY

Annecy: Chris Meledandri Receives MIFA, Variety's First Animation Personality of the Year Award



JUNE 17, 2015 | 07:00AM PT

Meledandri claims award reflects team achievement



John Hopewell
International Correspondent
@john_hopewell

ANNECY – One day before one of Universal's biggest bets of 2015, "Minions," premieres at France's Annecy Festival, [Chris Meledandri](#), founder and CEO of Illumination Entertainment and its [producer](#), accepted MIFA and Variety's first Animation Personality of the Year Award.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

Mickael Marin, head of Annecy's MIFA's market, and Peter Debruge, Variety's Chief Intl. Film Critic, presented the award.

The Mifa-Variety Animation Personality Award recognized the achievements of one of the toon industry's global driving forces, whose "Despicable Me," "Dr Seuss" and "Ice Age" franchises, the last produced at 20th Century Fox, have grossed over \$4.9 billion worldwide. The creative force behind Universal's family movie business, Meledandri is also an animation pioneer, reaching out to Jacques Bled's Mac Guff for animation on "Despicable Me," and then to create Illumination Mac Guff, the studio for "Despicable Me 2," "The Lorax" and now "Minions," all produced by Meledandri's Illumination Studios for Universal Pictures. Lower production costs at Illumination Mac Guff allows for larger risk-taking, and doesn't require all the films made there to be global blockbusters, Meledandri argued at an Annecy keynote an hour before, where he also stressed that animation is the most collaborative medium.

"I've realized the critical importance of having great collaborators. And there's no better illustration that my partners today at Illumination Mac Guff. My producing partner Janet Healey is the single most gifted producer working in animation. Jacques Bled, the founding partner of Mac Guff, is the soul of our studio and he's built a team whose talented is only surpassed by their character and integrity."

"I cannot imagine having a more supportive and dynamic motion picture studio partner than Universal Pictures. I wouldn't be standing here today without the extraordinary talents of Pierre Coffin and Chris Renaud among many, many others."

Meledandri insisted again on the importance of his collaborators when accepting the MIFA/Variety Award, thanking his entire team, accepting the award on their behalf.

Produced by Meledandri and Illumination Entertainment's Janet Healy, and directed by Pierre Coffin and Kyle Balda, adapting a Brian Lynch screenplay, "Minions" is sparking enormous expectation at Annecy.

VARIETY

Annecy: 'Ballerina' Producers Prep Second Period Toonpic 'The Bravest'



JUNE 17, 2015 | 10:10AM PT

Quad's second animation movie an adventure film with heart, said producer Laurent Zeitoun

Elsa Keslassy
International Correspondent
@elsakeslassy

Following "[Ballerina](#)," the team behind "Intouchables" — Laurent Zeitoun, Yann Zenou and Nicolas Duval — are poised to explore further the animation world with their second toonpic, "[The Bravest](#)."

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

"The Bravest" marks the [producer's](#) second animated film after "Ballerina" (pictured) which is being presented at Annecy in the Work In Progress section.

The English-language feature is currently in development. The animation will be created out of L'Aspèr Animation in Montreal.

Set in the 1920's, against the backdrop of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory disaster, "The Bravest" turns on a 15-year old girl who desperately wants to make her father proud. After finding out that her dad used to be a firefighter, she [sets](#) out to become one and enrolls into a fire station.

Zeitoun told Variety that "The Bravest" will be in the same artistic vein as "Ballerina," the 1884-set film charting the journey of Felice, an 11-year-old orphan girl from Brittany who dreams of becoming a ballerina at the Paris Opera.

"It's an adventure film with heart which turns on ordinary children living extraordinary tales. Both films carry values and an educational dimension," said Zeitoun, who will soon unveil the name of the director and the rest of the key [crew](#).

With Eric Summer and Eric Warn's "Ballerina," Zeitoun, Zenou and Duval proved they could deliver an upscale feature and attract high-profile talent and creatives. Indeed, "Ballerina's" voice cast is led by Elle Fanning and Dane DeHaane, while Theodore Ty, who worked on "Madagascar" 1 & 2 and "Kung Fu Panda" 1 & 2, directed the animation.

"Ballerina" will be released by [Gaumont](#) in France in Christmas 2016. Gaumont International has already pre-sold the feature to nearly 20 territories.

VARIETY

Shibuya, Caribara, Frame Team For 'Lily'



JUNE 11, 2015 | 12:20PM PT

COURTESY OF SHIBUYA PRODUCTIONS

Ben Cross heads voicecast on pioneering Bulgarian animated feature



John Hopewell
International Correspondent
@john_hopewell

ANNECY – Underscoring the build in animation worldwide, Monaco's [Shibuya Productions](#) is teaming with Bulgaria's [Frame Productions](#) and France's [Caribara Animation](#) to produce animated feature ["Lily and the Magic Pearl,"](#) with Ben Cross, the film's narrator, and Ella Hutchinson, who plays Lily, heading the U.S. voice cast.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

Helmed by vet Bulgarian director Anri Koulev, "Lily" is billed as Bulgaria's first animation feature. Shibuya has boarded, taking international sales rights outside Bulgaria, including distribution rights to France. Animation has been carried out totally in Bulgaria.

From a screenplay by revered Bulgarian writer Valeri Petrov, who adapted his own book, "Five Tales," and with inevitable echoes of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" "Lily" turns on a little girl who stands in a telephone box by the beach listening to a fairytale that takes her to the bottom of the sea. There, she meets an ugly monster, Gillon (Cross), and together they set off in search of a magic pearl, braving encounters with a Jellyfish, Turbot and Octopus – who all want to eat Lily.

A mix of 2D and CGI, Lily" is "an underwater tale about underwater things, about real friendship and parting and hope. These are concepts which have been slightly forgotten about these days," commented Koulev, who, with six live action features to his credit, worked from 1974 at the former state-owned Boyana Film Studio, now owned by Nu Image and Millennium Films, as a director, art director and scriptwriter.

Backed by the Bulgarian National Film Center, "Lily and the Magic Pearl" is produced by Cedric Biscay, CEO of Shibuya Productions, Kosta Yanev and Adrian Georguiev.

"Lily and the Magic Pearl" is a poetic, ornic fable, the work of an auteur," Shibuya's Dominique Langevin said at Annecy's MIFA market Wednesday. A [product](#) at Shibuya Productions, Langevin will represent international and France sales rights. A U.S. voice version will be completed shortly.

VARIETY

Annecy: How Big-Budget 'The Peanuts Movie' Stayed True to the Strips



JUNE 17, 2015 | 07:00AM PT

COURTESY OF 20TH CENTURY FOX

'The Peanuts Movie' director Steve Martino explains how the CG toon's "snappy" style protects Charles M. Schulz's (AKA 'Sparky') style

Peter Debruge

Chief International Film Critic

@AskDebruge

Yesterday, the trailer for Fox's ["The Peanuts Movie"](#) debuted online, winning over skeptics who'd wondered whether Blue Sky (the toon studio responsible for the "Ice Age" franchise) was worthy of bringing Charlie Brown, Snoopy and the rest of cartoonist Charles M. Schulz's beloved characters to the bigscreen.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

Wednesday morning, director [Steve Martino](#) and art director Nash Dunnigan took the stage at France's Annecy Intl. Animated Film Festival to share the elaborate thought process that went into respecting the legacy of Schulz — known by the nickname "Sparky" by friends and members of the production. And who better to tackle the challenge than the helmer who'd taken such care in adapting "Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who," embracing computer-animation technology while staying true to Theodor Geisel's original designs?

According to Martino, nearly everyone he encounters responds to news of "The Peanuts Movie" with the same concern: "Don't screw it up!" But the challenge is far more complicated than "Peanuts" fans might think. "It's the complexity of getting something to the screen that looks so simple," said Martino, whose [crew](#) had to develop a computer-generated animation technique that preserved the hand-drawn "soft wiggle" pen line of Schulz's strips, while translating the characters into a full-color, stereoscopic [3D](#) world.

"I want to find that pen line in everything we do," told his team. Easier said than done for an ensemble of 14 bobble-headed characters whose faces, the Blue Sky artists quickly learned, Schulz had drawn in just six different poses: profile left and right, facing not-quite-forward (turned a quarter left or right), looking "extreme up" (nose on top) or "extreme down" (nose all the way down).

When it came to Charlie Brown, they found that his features changed every time he turns his head. When Charlie Brown swivels his face forward, his nose moves up, but his ears move down, meaning the animators couldn't build a single virtual model for the character, but instead had to build separate models for each of his poses, then cycle through them, dropping the "in-betweening" (or smoothing stage) typical of computer animation. Rather than using the popular bejeweled eyes seen in most CG toons, the "Peanuts" characters' peepers retain a certain inky quality. So does the curlicue of [hair](#) in the center of Charlie Brown's forehead, and many of the visual effects, from rain to the cloud of dust that follows Pigpen everywhere he goes.

Though working in 3D, the animators also had to rein in the stereoscopic aspect of what they were doing, using perspective in the backgrounds, but limiting it with the characters. When it comes to Charlie Brown's head, "It's got dimensionality, but you can't have his face become this big basketball reaching out into the audience," Martino explained. "So we embraced old techniques from 2D animation." Motion blur doesn't work in the film's "snappy" style (inspired not only by Schulz's drawings, but also the "Peanuts" TV specials directed by Bill Melendez), so they used "multiples," where movement is conveyed by duplicating certain elements in the same frame.

The many TV specials also suggested how Martino should handle the characters' voices: The entire kid cast is voiced by actual children, aged 7 to 12, rather than easily marketable stars, while the adults' speech will be handled as a muffled trombone, as it was for television. When Snoopy "speaks," the production plans to use vintage recordings of Melendez's voice.

"You look at Snoopy, and he's the ultimate Picasso challenge," Martino said. "He's got two eyes on the side of his face." The helmer showed the crowd an example of Snoopy in profile with both eyes, nose and mouth all facing the viewer. "We're animating for the [camera](#)," he explained, rotating the model 180 degrees so audiences could see what the other side of his head looked like in the same shot: completely blank, except for the toon beagle's appealing white fur, more like a plush animal than a real dog.

Schulz drew more than 18,000 comic strips over the course of "Peanuts'" 50-year run, which provided a direct reference for any visual question, no matter how small. That also applied for the addition of Fifi, a French poodle mentioned in Snoopy's fantasies, but never before seen. (She was designed by synthesizing traits from other animals Schulz had drawn during his career.)

Like any cartoon character, from Mickey Mouse to Calvin and Hobbes, designs changed over the years, so the crew tried to focus on the way Snoopy and the dog's best friends looked during the strip's "golden era" in the '80s and '90s. "It was never a case where we had to imagine what something looked like," Martino said. "If you go back to the comic strip, the answers were always there. You just had to do the work."

VARIETY

Anney: Chris Meledandri on Matthew McConaughey as a Koala Legit Theater Owner, 'The Grinch'



JUNE 17, 2015 | 02:42PM PT

TONY BARSON/FILMMAGIC

Delia After an Anney keynote/Q & A, Meledandri receives the MIFA and Variety's first Animation Personality of the Year Award



John Hopewell
International Correspondent
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ANNECY, France – [Matthew McConaughey](#) will voice Buster, a showman entrepreneur koala running a legit theater in Illumination Entertainment's upcoming music-driven event comedy, Illumination CEO [Chris Meledandri](#) revealed Wednesday at an Anney Fest.

SEE MORE: [Anney Film Festival](#)

Written-directed by Garth Jennings ("Son of Rambow"), the movie is set for release Dec. 21, 2016. The story follows Buster's problem with his theater, which is empty. To save it, Buster comes up with the idea of a local singing competition.

Buster's best friend, a black sheep, is voiced by John Riley.

The movie posits a world entirely inhabited by animals who have jobs and drive cars, Meledandri added.

"The movie ends up becoming the story of the lives of the five characters vying to win the competition," adding the movie has "parts of about 85 songs," all known. "But it doesn't become a story about winning the competition but about character, and that's ultimately because any of our films have the potential to be successful because they're about character," Meledandri said at an Anney Fest keynote/Q&A, before receiving the first Mifa/Variety Animation Personality of the Year Award, presented by Peter Debruge, Variety's chief international film critic, and Mickael Marin, head of Anney's Mifa market.

"The starting point for the movie came from looking at what the role of the [producer](#) is. Buster creates wonderful entertainment out of nothing. The producers I admire the most, because it's the opposite of me, are people like Janet [Healey, Illumination's production head], who have incredible optimism. Their positive force of energy makes things happen," Meledandri explained.

Beyond "Minions," which world premieres tomorrow Thursday at Annecy, Illumination has three other pics in the pipeline: "Despicable Me 3," "Doctor Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas" and "The Secret Life of Pets."

"Grinch" goes back to what Ted Geisel's original intention was," Meledandri told Debruge, who conducted the Annecy Q&A.

"Even though it is sometimes perceived as very American, the essence of what was driving Ted Geisel's work is very universal," Meledandri argued. "Grinch's release date will be holiday 2017," Meledandri said.

Voiced by Louis C.K., Eric Stonestreet ("Modern Family") and Kevin Hart ("Ride Along"), "The Secret Life of Pets" will be helmed by "Despicable Me" co-director Chris Renaud.

Meledandri also revealed that Illumination was tracking the evolution of China's CG animation industry, though it is "very, very young." "We're following the progress of a couple of studios very closely, and there is the possibility that at some point we might do something with one of those two studios in a limited way or, who knows, it could be more extensive."

Asked to talk about the future of animation, Meledandri claimed – with a self irony which would be a ingrating leitmotif of his keynote – that he had no idea what the future might bring. "We are in a period when distribution, technology, market place, are changing at light speed and consequently our prognostication abilities are flawed at best."

Instead, he delivered insights from his own experience to a largely student audience, though he cautioned them not to listen too much to him.

"My early experiences in animation taught me that following someone else is not a great idea," Meledandri said, citing the case of his first film when head of animation at Fox, 2000's "Titan A & E," which bombed.

"The movie was simply not good enough, but perhaps more importantly our entire animation business on Fox had been built on trying to replicate Disney's success."

In contrast, the success of "Ice Age," the feature debut of Chris Wedge, "gave me confidence in choosing directors for future projects based on their short form work," Meledandri argued, screening Chris Renaud's "No Time For Nuts" and an excerpt from a short by Pierre Coffin.

"A confluence of events like the proliferation of the use of CG animation software, the universal access to distribution and the first generation raised primarily on digital imagery becoming adults have lead us to this creative time where we've seen an eruption of creative talent in our media all over the world.

"It's a dynamic time but it's also a crowded time with an infinite amount of content fighting for audiences attention."

Meledandri's advice to his audience: "Embrace risk. The driving force behind our economic model at Illumination Mac Guff is designed to preserve the opportunity to take risk. Subvert the expectation of the audience. Surprise them with unexpected choices."

16-06-2015

Cartoon Network seeks talent online

Cartoon Network is to launch a web-based initiative across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) as part of its search for new talent working in animation.



The Amazing World of Gumball

Cartoon Network Imagination Studios (CNIS) will give viewers a "behind the scenes" look at how the channel's cartoons are made and a chance to participate in a number of artistic activities on the website.

These include drawing, colouring, storyboarding, music, special effects, voiceovers, movement and animation.

Select countries across the region, including the UK, will also offer children aged 6-12 the chance to enter their original creations – in the form of new

character drawings, storyboards or animations – and potentially see them brought to life on air.

In the UK, CNIS will launch in early July and open for entries from September 1, while the site is due to launch across EMEA in the coming months

CN artists and creators, such as Ben Bocquelet ([The Amazing World of Gumball](#)) and Rebecca Sugar ([Steven Universe](#)), will also feature on the site to give tips on creating characters, animating and telling stories.

Patricia Hidalgo, senior VP and chief content and creative officer for kids at Turner Broadcasting System EMEA, said the company already receives a lot of fan art and story ideas from viewers.

"We wanted to create a destination to encourage and facilitate all the amazing creativity stored in the minds of our young audiences."

Hidalgo and the network's chief content officer, Rob Sorcher, will be at the [Annecy Animation Festival](#) in France this week to source new talent. The event runs until Saturday June 20.

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VARIETY

Annecy: Disney Gives Toon Fans a Taste of 'Zootopia'



JUNE 16, 2015 | 11:10PM PT

COURTESY OF DISNEY

With Disney Animation Studios back on track, the Mouse House develops an old-school anthropomorphic animal movie with 'Zootopia.'

Peter Debruge

Chief International Film Critic

@AskDebruge

What "Tangled" and "Frozen" did for animated fairy tales, "[Zootopia](#)" aims to do for talking-animal toons — at least, that's the take-away from Disney's side-splitting Tuesday afternoon presentation at the Annecy Intl. Animated Film Festival.

After an oddly timed walk-through of the creative thinking that went into "Frozen" from director Chris Buck (odd considering the fact the film opened more than 18 months earlier), followed by a screening of already-seen spinoff short "Frozen Fever" (which screened theatrically attached to "Cinderella" last spring), the Mouse House delighted the crowd with a forward-looking glimpse of its first-quarter 2016 release "Zootopia."

Co-directed by Byron Howard ("Tangled") and [Rich Moore](#) ("Wreck-It Ralph") — who ran out on stage dressed in furry rabbit and fox costumes — the film recalls the anthropomorphic style of Disney's 1973 hand-drawn "Robin Hood," taking place in an elaborate society where humans don't exist, but all the different creatures speak, wear clothes and walk on their hind legs.

"I've been trying to get an animal movie made at Disney for a long time," Howard said. "Our boss, John Lasseter, feels that better storytelling comes from research." At first, Lasseter sent them to a local wild-animal park to study the animals' behavior and movement, but that wasn't enough, packing the creative team off to Kenya, where they observed zebras, cheetahs and giraffes in the open savannah.

Those trips directly informed how the animators adapted the animals' natural movements to walking upright, as well as the personalities of the various critters in the film. Oddly enough, that sort of species-specific stereotyping happens to be what the prejudice-challenging film aims to debunk, using creativity and humor to deliver a pointed commentary on racial tolerance.

"One of the biggest problems in Zootopia is bias," Moore explained. "Animals are quick to stereotype each other."

In the film, Ginnifer Goodwin plays Judy Hopps, the society's first bunny cop. (The rest of the Zootopia police force is made up of bigger animals, like rhinos and buffalo.) Rather than give up her dream, she accepts work as a meter maid, dispensing tickets, until getting mixed up with wily fox Nick Wilde (Jason Bateman) threatens to derail what little progress she's made on the force.

Talking-animal stories were one of the Disney cliches Lasseter swore off during the early days of Pixar (along with the Broadway-style "I want" song, so wonderfully revived in "Frozen's" "Let It Go"). In the interim, DreamWorks Animation has delivered several, including "Over the Hedge," "Madagascar" and "Kung Fu Panda," with Sony released "Open Season" and "Surf's Up."

Judging by the material presented at Annecy, "Zootopia" vis-dev artist Cory Loftis and his colleagues appear to have designed some of the studio's most visually appealing CG characters yet for the film. At the very least, Judy Hopps and Nick Wilde represent a marked improvement over the Bratz-doll look of their recent human counterparts.

VARIETY

Annecy: Pixar Reveals Evolution of Troubled Toon 'The Good Dinosaur'



JUNE 16, 2015 | 11:12AM PT

COURTESY OF ANNECY INTL. ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL

Replacement director Pete Sohn offers hints of what he's done to fix the toon studio's long-delayed dinosaur movie.

Peter Debruge

Chief International Film Critic

@AskDebruge

"At [Pixar](#), we ask a lot of 'what ifs,'" the studio's Pete Sohn told a crowd of cartoon devotees (a mix of animation students, professionals and fans) at France's Annecy Intl. Animated Film Festival: "What if the toys come to life when we leave the room? What if the monsters really were real inside the closet? What if a rat became a world-famous French chef?"

So far, those hypotheticals have yielded "Toy Story," "Monsters Inc." and "Ratatouille," respectively, but according to Sohn, "With ([The Good Dinosaur](#)), we would ask the biggest 'what if' of all." With that, he cued a clip in which a gigantic asteroid misses the Earth, narrowly averting a mass extinction event: What if instead of being wiped off the Earth, dinosaurs had continued to evolve?

That's the hypothetical that audiences will see answered when the film opens later this year, just in time for Thanksgiving, on Nov. 25. But internally, Pixar was asking another question: What if you scrap the original director of your upcoming dino movie and plug someone new in his place? In this case, [Peter Sohn](#) replaced "Up's" Bob Peterson — the similarity between their names providing an added irony to the swap.

Of course, "The Good Dinosaur" is hardly the first Pixar movie to get a massive overhaul in production ("Toy Story 2," "Ratatouille" and "Brave" were all repair jobs of some sort, losing their original directors along the way), but it could be the riskiest. Sohn's only previous helming credit was 2009's "Partly Cloudy" short, and though the Korean-American animator is a favorite among his Pixar peers, inspiring the character of Asian boy scout Russell in "Up," this project put an enormous responsibility in his relatively untested hands.

Naturally, Pixar is trying to offset that gamble with notes and ideas from the studio's "brain trust" (the top-level feedback committee made up of John Lasseter, Pete Docter, Andrew Stanton, etc.), unveiling hints of the new direction the film has taken at a press conference last month at Cannes and now for an even bigger audience at Annecy.

In this new-and-improved version of "The Good Dinosaur," instead of being wiped off the face of the Earth, dinosaurs have survived. The magnificent creatures have learned to farm, co-existing with humans, who have no language and still run on all fours. That premise inspires an inverted "boy and his dog" story, where the main character is an orphaned Apatosaurus named Arlo (yes, here's another Disney film in which a parent dies at the outset), and his best friend is a boy named Spot who tags along like his trusty pet.

Earlier this week, Pixar revealed an all-new voice cast for the film, led by Raymond Ochoa (a child actor with a long list of credits) as Arlo, and featuring Jack Bright (from "Monsters University") as the wordless Spot, illustrating just how drastic the changes to the original concept have been. Still, judging by what Sohn presented at Annecy, the film delivers on a couple different levels.

First, visually, Sohn and his team have pushed the Pixar tools as far as possible toward rendering photorealistic environments, against which their cartoonishly stylized main characters will perform. Fifteen years after Disney's live-action/CG hybrid "Dinosaur," wherein plausible-looking virtual dinosaurs interacted against a series of practical background plates, Pixar is flipping the equation. But it's an odd choice as well: When the driving question asks "what if dinosaurs continued to evolve?" shouldn't the movie's dinos look more sophisticated than the "Jurassic World" variety, rather than cute and cartoony, with simplified features, dopey expressions and big, Aardman-style teeth?

Second, in terms of emotion, Sohn may have cracked the project. Growing up with a mother who didn't speak English, Sohn recalls a childhood screening of Disney's classic "Dumbo," in which the scene between the baby elephant and his mother (who extends her trunk to embrace little Dumbo from behind bars) made Sohn's own mother cry. Normally, Sohn would have to translate the movie, but with "Dumbo," he said, "I remember my mom slowly but surely feeling this moment. It really got her. It hit me so hard. I didn't have to explain anything to her. She saw it, and it was told visually so well. It really inspired me."

Instead of showing a multitude of clips at Annecy, Sohn focused on a key scene from "The Good Dinosaur" in which he aimed to achieve a comparable emotional moment to the one in "Dumbo": Arlo and Spot bond over the discovery that both have lost parents. Lying side-by-side in the sand, unable to understand one another's words, they use broken sticks to communicate their feeling toward their missing parents, arranging the wooden figures to represent their families, then sadly knocking over those who have died. It's a beautifully animated bonding scene, which ends with the two characters howling mournfully at the sky.

That personal approach was echoed in Annecy's world-premiere screening (not counting the press-only glimpse given at Cannes) of the new Pixar short film "Sanjay's Super Team," directed by Sanjay Patel, about an Indian kid growing up in the States who daydreams about his favorite superhero action figures coming to life — only to discover a surprising twist about the Hindu gods his father worships.

VARIETY

Annecy: Nickelodeon's Nina Hahn on How the Animation Industry is Changing (EXCLUSIVE)



JUNE 16, 2015 | 10:40PM PT

COURTESY OF VACOM INTERNATIONAL

Hahn SVP Nickelodeon International development, also talks about how the network approaches Annecy, and creative talent worldwide



John Hopewell
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At 2015's Annecy, Nickelodeon will for the first time take exhibition space. Between screenings – of "Breadwinners" seg "Employee of the Month" and "The SpongeBob Movie: Fish Out of Water" – a Global Animated Shorts Program showcase, an analysis of "SpongeBob" franchise and a share with [Nina Hahn](#), SVP Nickelodeon International development, it organizes nine events. One of animation biggest brands, it is also changing the animation industry as the industry also evolves. Hahn took time out just before Annecy to talk about both changes.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

I believe you've been coming to Annecy for quite some time. How has Annecy changed, or the animation industry evolved?

I think that the business of animation has changed around Annecy. Annecy's been such a nimble festival and market that it has been able to adapt organically to these exponential shifts in attendance. Annecy has always been about creators, and now that's definitely even more true, giving Annecy its uniqueness as a festival – everyone coming together to watch great films. That's certainly the case in Europe, where there aren't huge numbers of festivals or large animation events that are really creator-driven. And the creative voice is becoming stronger and stronger and really the cornerstone of what we're trying to make at Nickelodeon. This is what really draws us to the market – the bespoke nature of what Annecy is and the invasion and success of animation in general over time, makes for a perfect partnership.

Could you explain this invasion and success?

Unlike 20 years ago, today everyone can be an animator and /or creator and/or critic. With all the options available to create (online, on computer, in your basement, in your attic, on your phone) and all the options available to share what you create, everyone can be a creator. It's truly an exciting time for those who create and those who crave the creations! One example is the online world, and animation being a new home there. We've got so many additional places for animation to live, so many other ways for animation to be made without the need for a giant studio. Compared with other models previously where you had to go through a very laborious studio system and at great expense in order for that animation to reach everybody, animation has exploded in the last decade and can now come from everywhere and everyone and can reach everybody rather quickly. It is a really exciting time for us and therefore we see it as a good 'invasion'.

And Nickelodeon has responded to that and is pushing that in several ways...

At Nickelodeon we are embracing the market not by dictating our brand to the creator, but rather by opening up a conversation with them and embracing their visions, passions, ideas, stories, characters and wrapping ourselves around them, to give them a great and inspirational new home in which to create and flourish. It isn't just a big foot-printed network landing on their doorstep saying 'This is what we're looking for, can you squeeze yourself into it?' In fact, it's really the reverse. It's: 'What story do you have to tell? What is your passion? What is your vision? What do you see? And, how can we be the home for what you see?' Keeping the network in general quite nimble, to act upon what comes through our doors in such a way that we can of course still look at it as potential for long-form 22-minute or 11-minute episodes still remains important to us, but there are other ways we can look at things also, especially in the new multiplatform world we are living in. If a creator comes in with something that doesn't necessarily suit that particular linear formula, can we find a life and a lifespan for the content that might be interesting across the App or across our digital footprint? Or look at it as a movie first? Or in various other ways that keep us true to the messaging, which is finding and working with, great creators, being a home for these creators. In the case of LA it's under a roof. But when you expand beyond Hollywood, there are a ton of creators out there and we also want to be able to be their home away from home.

And digital is so important because of the evolving ways in which the natural audience for animation is consuming it...

Exactly... so it's a really win-win situation...

On the creative surge in animation, it seems to me there is a kind of globalization, in that Hollywood is definitely reaching out to the world, for talent, for markets, and at the same time an animation world globally is reaching out to the world...

We use a very simple phrase at Nickelodeon which we really live by: 'Make it everywhere and use it everywhere'. Ideas don't just come from Hollywood any more. We are supporting the Hollywood creative push with our studio and creative outreach but we also have a robust creator hunt for talent outside of Hollywood and across the U.S. East Coast, Latin America, Europe and Asia, and although we don't have the bricks and mortar in these locations we create a bespoke production plan and environment (appropriate for the content) wherever we produce – this is our 'studio without borders' approach.

And I think that really has come into play in so many of our experiences across the animation world, which was not the case even a [few] years ago and is fuelled by what's happening in the non-linear space, where kids have access to content everywhere. The linear space certainly has to follow suit and make sure it behaves in the same way, where Hollywood and anybody else can no longer just make content for Hollywood. We have to make it for everybody and it has to be relevant, because for this generation of consumers, it doesn't matter where the content is from and it doesn't matter how they get their content (they don't necessarily see the difference between one platform and another – they are platform agnostic). If it's good content, it's good content.

Could you point to some examples of where talent has come from around the world and grown with Nickelodeon from short form to slightly longer, or repetitive, recurrent short-form?

The Global Animated Shorts Program Showcase, which takes place on Wednesday, is really a whistle-stop tour of the universe with representation from probably all major countries of the world and certainly from every continent. We are now going into Season 3 of the program. Because of the time it takes to produce animation, we are just now putting into production the ones that we chose from Season 1. Those will be announced soon, so unfortunately I can't talk about those yet – but stay tuned! Those pieces of content, whether they were put into long-form development or remained just as a short, still have a life. The shorts air on the App and on nick.com for instance. We've seen content coming from Australia, South Africa, Brazil, Canada, France, Ireland. The list is endless. All that content is being aired across Nick.com and the App, and some of that content is being advanced into the second and third [stages](#) of development and will go into full production, to be announced shortly and do come from very vast corners of the world.

I believe that 2015 is the first time that Nickelodeon is taking exhibition space at Annecy's MIFA market....

Yes it is. It's for us to have a space and a footprint on the floor, during the festival.

So you have another way of people coming to you?

Exactly. An additional touch-point. It definitely will be a hub for talent, and for our members of staff that are attending the market, and I think it also represents our commitment to the festival and how we want to be absorbed into the global culture of animation.

Do you think that the Hollywood studios, or congloms and their French high profile counterparts have learnt over the years how to use the festival very well in what is essentially energetic multi-tasking. You don't just show a show and flop out with champagne by the lake. Nickelodeon has I think nine events

I can't speak for the other networks, but I can speak to the Nickelodeon position, which is definitely yes. We have an on-going commitment to Annecy, which is just as you've described it. We want to be much more in a conversation with the festival, and be about show, tell and listen. All of the various events that we have decided to put on speak to that mission and speak to us setting up an experience at Annecy which is really bespoke to the creator and to the creator feeling comfortable with our brand and what we do, and so creating events and moments in the festival that will be magnetic for them, is very important to us.

Annecy has a strong focus on women in animation this year. Yet few direct fest-selected long-features...

It's hard. In our business it is an unfortunate fact that there are less women doing this than we would all like. However, I think, looking forward, we will start to see more and more of these women being at front and centre of key animation positions including writing and directing. In fact across our shorts program we have a good amount of female creators, Australian creator Mel Roach being one of them, who's done a short for us. I think it's a commitment we have internally to making sure that we've got diversity of voice, in every aspect. So hopefully when we talk next year we'll say there are more women involved this year, maybe even double on last year!

VARIETY

Annecy: DreamWorks' Margie Cohn Unveils 'Dragons: Race to the Edge'



JUNE 16, 2015 | 10:45PM PT

COURTESY OF DREAMWORKS ANIMATION TELEVISION

New TV spinoff shows immediate impact of DreamWorks Animation-Netflix deal



John Hopewell
International Correspondent
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ANNECY – “This changes everything,” “How to Train Your Dragon” hero Hiccup (once more voiced by Jay Baruchel) mysteriously announces at the opening credit roll climax of [DreamWorks Animation TV's new series spinoff, "Dragons: Race to the Edge,"](#) as he brandishes an emblazoned metal cylinder with a light-shaft.

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

He's referring the cylinder, soon known as the Dragon Eye, but he could have been talking about the migration of “How To's” smaller screen riff from Cartoon Network to [Netflix](#) that exclusively releases the first 13-seg season of “Race” on June 26, as part of its groundbreaking multiyear deal with DreamWorks Animation.

The Netflix impact is clear to see from the get-go of “Race to the Edge,” which had its European premiere Tuesday at Annecy Fest, the world's biggest animation meet, with DreamWorks Animation head of television Margie Cohn fielding questions at a Q&A, after a screening of “Race's” first two episodes of the new series, the latest iteration of one of DreamWorks Animations' most beloved franchises.

"DreamWorks Dragons," the first TV spinoff, which played Cartoon Network, was episodic in nature, turning on Berk's challenged co-habitation with its dragons. "Race to the Edge" underscores immediately its more serialized nature, announcing that its first seg is "Dragon Eye of the Beholder Part One."

An action suspense drama with comedic interludes, if its first two episodes screened at Annecy are anything to go by, "Race to the Edge" episode one and two are written by F.M. de Marco, John Tellegen, Jack Thomas and exec [producers](#) Ari Brown and Douglas Sloan. Chad Hammes produces, Elaine Bogan directs, as on Episode two, where Brown and Sloan take on writing duties. Directors on further episodes include Robert Briggs, David Jones, Jae Hong Kim, Simon Otto, John Sanford, TJ Sullivan, Greg Rankin and Gil Zimmerman.

"Race to the Edge" unspools about a year before the action in "How to Train Your Dragon 2," said Cohn.

A story of young adults aimed at young adults, one of Netflix's natural demos, "Race to the Edge" captures Hiccup on the often-challenged, halting odyssey to full adulthood.

Hiccup is still looking to pursue his adolescent dream of charting all the dragons on the archipelago as his retinue setting down. Even Astrid suggests she might join the Berk Guard.

"Race to the Edge" is a kind of prequel to "How to Train Your Dragon 2." In the Cartoon Network series, the kids are still young, here they're young adults," Cohn explained.

She added: "In 'How to Train Your Dragon 2,' Hiccup and his friends are already grown ups so we built a story previous to the events of the second movie to show how they reach the way they appear in the second movie."

The edge of the title is a geographic point far from Berk where the kids set up a kind of outpost. "It's rather like kids going to college, going far from home, figuring out their pace in the world," Cohn commented. "Adults make appearances in 'Race to the Edge' but they're not so present.

Presaging this near geographic allegory for leaving home, episodes one and two take the Dragon Riders away from an idyllic Berk, which has spawned some suburbs to more inhospitable climes: A gloomy fog-shrouded ships graveyard, an inclement iceberg island, inhabited by a white dragon that steals up on its victims.

As befits a series that might be binge viewed, "Race to the Edge" goes out in early summer vacation, potentially to be watched on smaller screens than the TV set, such as iPhones. Bogan's directorial style is muscular, with the [camera](#) following Hiccup and Toothless as they swoop over Berk in the opening credits. Scene shots emphasize dramatic diagonals.

And episode one's credit roll already anticipates but hardly fully explains the season's central suspense driver: The Dragon Eye which, aided by dragon Toothless shooting blue plasma bolts, creating a light beam, casts mysterious patterns on a wall, rather like a primitive projector.

With Dagur the Deranged reappearing in episode one, sporting the bushiest of brown eyebrows and irrepressible villainy, and a keen interest in the same strange cylinder, the Dragon Eye is "the center of 'Race to the Edge's' story structure," Cohn said.

Episodes one and two are cases in point. In the first, Hiccup and his [crew](#) discover the Dragon Eye on a ghostly ship. In episode two, they fly to an icy island with Gothi in tow to secure the tooth of its Alien-jawed Snow Wraith dragon in order to unlock the Eye.

"We are assuming consumers will want to watch 'Race to the Edge' in a linear kind of way. So we definitely want it a little bit more serialized, with a more sophisticated story structure. We are really trying to distinguish the Netflix series from the Cartoon Network series," Cohn said.

"Some things that happen are resolved at the end of each episode, but there's a narrative line that goes through the series, so that you can have a richer experience while watching it."

VARIETY

Annecy: GKids Buys Edgar Allan Poe's 'Extraordinary Tales'



JUNE 16, 2015 | 10:30PM PT

COURTESY OF ANNECY

Dave McNary
Film Reporter
@Variety_DMcNary

[Gkids](#) has bought North American rights to "[Extraordinary Tales](#)," an animated film anthology of five of Edgar Allan Poe's best-known stories.

The film features the voices of Christopher Lee (in one of his final film performances), Bela Lugosi, Julian Sands, Roger Corman and Guillermo del Toro. The stories are "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valdemar" and "The Masque of the Red Death."

The movie screens throughout this week at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival. GKids plans a day-and-date release on October 30 in theaters and on VOD.

Directed by Raúl García, the film is produced by Stephan Roelants, and co-produced by Raúl García, Rocio Ayuso, Serge Ume and Isabelle Truc.

The deal was negotiated between Stephan Roelants for Melusine Productions and Eric Beckman for GKids.

VARIETY

Annecy: BRB, Mili Unsheathe 'Dogtanian' (EXCLUSIVE)



JUNE 16, 2015 | 10:25PM PT

China's Mili Pictures co-produces swashbuckler

Emilio Mayorga

ANNECY, France — [BRB Internacional](#), one of Spain's biggest kids TV producers, is moving into movie production, with a spinoff feature of one of the most successful Spanish TV series ever, "[Dogtanian](#) and the Three Musketeers."

SEE MORE: [Annecy Film Festival](#)

"Dogtanian" is produced by BRB and Screen21 and is co-produced with Chinese animation firm [Mili Pictures](#), producer of Annecy out-of-competition player "Dragon Nest: Warriors' Dawn." The Chinese linkup ensures entrance into China's market and a link to a building producer: Mili Pictures opened a division in Los Angeles last year.

Series and now feature film are based on Alexandre Dumas' 17th century classic adventure "The Three Musketeers," but with dogs embodying the swashbucklers. Loyal to the spirit, plot will be significantly different from the book and series in order to increase the surprise factor, said Carlos Biern, CEO of BRB Internacional.

Jose Javier Martinez, a children and young adult literature writer ("The Author of this Book is a Zombie") a toon series helmer ("Iron Kid," "Cloud Trotters"), will direct. Trained in L.A., Martinez won a Fulbright Scholarship. His plaudits include an Annual Student Academy Award and Japan Media Arts Festival Excellence Award.

"Dogtanian's" production budget is about \$8 million, depending on final voice cast.

"D'Artagnan" is a giant and vibrant brand that is very well known in France, U.K., Spain, Italy, but also in countries such as Japan and Mexico," said Biern.

Producers are in advanced talks with Hollywood majors for an international distribution deal.

"Dogtanian" will bring together all the bedrock musketeers mythology: The new-guy-in-town, adventure/action, love, frenetic clashes between heroes and villains, palace intrigue and justice, honor and friendship — all gathered together amid a bold comedic tone, announced Biern.

Recent references could be "Kung Fu Panda" and "Puss in Boots," both also addressing the "Dogtanian" target — children and family auds.

Production-distribution-licensing company BRB, which is based out of Barcelona and Madrid, produced the original toon TV series in 1981. It went on to sell worldwide. Series was co-produced with Nippon Animation. More than 130 broadcasting stations have aired it through these three last decades, including BBC, France's TF1, Japan's MBS and Italy's Mediaset.

A second season was co-produced with Thames Television and Spanish pubcaster TVE in 1990.

Some of BRB's other hit series are "Iron Kid," "Angus & Cheryl" and "Bernard."

BRB has also offices in Shanghai and has a high-volume sales business targeting VOD platforms. Co-production treaties between Spain and China require 20% minimum local investment in order to avoid China's quota system for theatrical distribution.

Spain's animation sector was ravaged by recession but may now showing some signs of recovery. One galvanizing factor is the digital revolution, argued Biern, who is also president of Spanish animation lobby Diboos. "In a single digital market, which is now being talked about, where shows will not be sold by territories but languages, working with digital platforms is not a future but a fact," said Biern.

"Children's shows are an ideal product for VOD platforms, all of them have kids shows. It's a way of having content for the whole family and kids don't watch TV just in living rooms but on tablets, sofas, their bedrooms, the cars, so for kids shows anytime-anywhere viewing via smart-phones is perfect."

"Dogtanian's" production is scheduled to finish by the end of 2016.



Cartoon Network Shops for Talent at Annecy

Mercedes Milligan Jun 16th, 2015 No Comments yet

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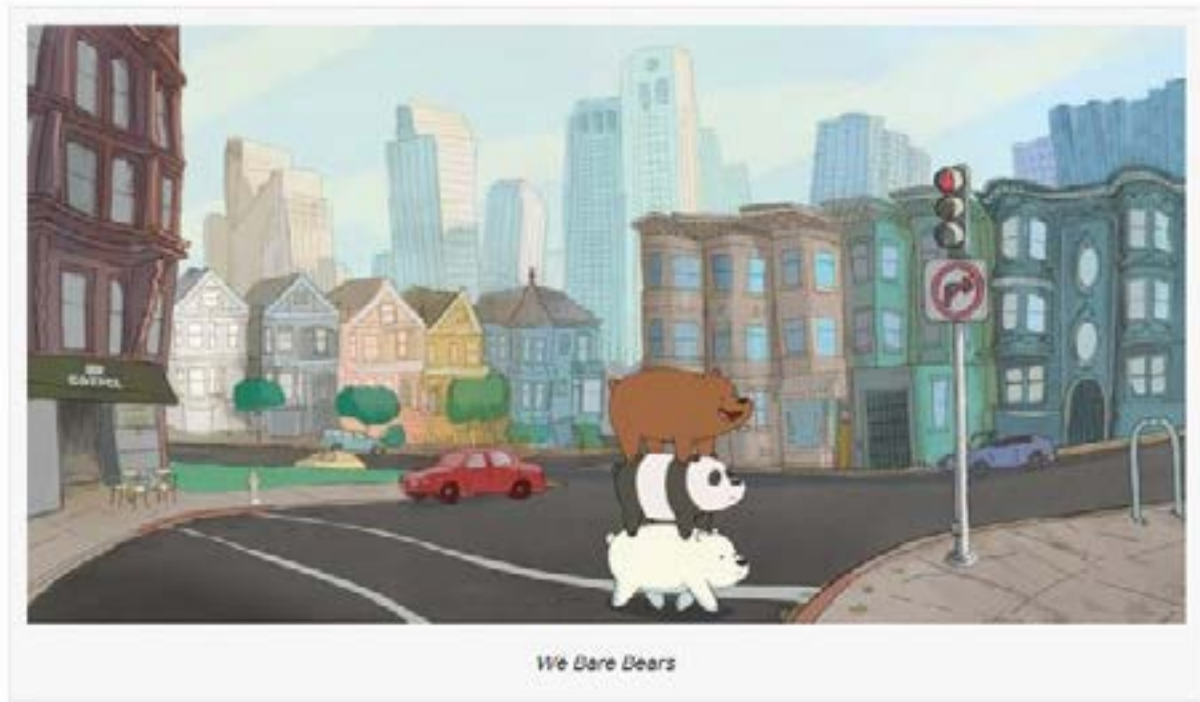


Cartoon Network will return to Annecy, France for the 2015 Animation Festival and MIFA market, where it will toast the latest project to emerge from its short form Artists' Program and seek out emerging talent from the indie scene to join the program. This Thursday, June 18, representatives from the company will host face-to-face artist interviews to source new talent for the studio. It will also run two panel events: "Cartoon Network: From Short to Series" and "The Making of Cartoon Network's *Adventure Time*" on Thursday and Friday.

Taking place in Salle Pierre Lamy (4 – 5.15pm), "**Cartoon Network: From Short to Series**" will offer attendees a peek inside the Studios' award-winning Artists' Program, as well as an exclusive first look at *We Bare Bears*, created by Daniel Chong. Coming to Cartoon Network US in July 2015, followed by EMEA from September 2015, *We Bare Bears* is the latest series to be developed as part of the program.

Moderated by Rob Sorcher, Cartoon Network Studios' Chief Content Officer, the panel will feature: Elizabeth Ito, director and storyboard artist on the network's global phenomenon *Adventure Time* and creator of the brand new short *Welcome to My Life*; George Gendi storyboard artist on *The Amazing World of Gumball* from Cartoon Network Studios Europe and creator of the brand new pilot *Apple & Onion*; and Daniel Chong, creator of *We Bare Bears*. The panel will be preceded by Cartoon Network's renowned **Picnic by the Lake**, at the Plage de L'Imperial from 12:30 – 2:30pm, where festival-goers will have the opportunity to meet creators and programming executives and take home some specially-created *We Bare Bears*-inspired treats.

The following day, "**The Making of Cartoon Network's *Adventure Time***" will take place from 2 – 3:15pm in Salle Pierre Lamy. Now in its sixth season, the blockbuster franchise has built a broad-ranging, worldwide fan base of adults and children alike since it premiered in 2010. This panel presents an opportunity to hear from the key creative and production team behind the show, taking us through the making of this much-loved animated phenomenon. Focal points will include recent guest-directed shorts, including the Annecy-nominated *Food Chain*, and an exclusive sneak-peek of an upcoming episode by guest director Kirsten Lepore rendered solely using stop motion animation – a significant first for the series.



We Bare Bears

Tags: Adventure Time, Anecy, Apple & Onion, Cartoon Network, Cartoon Network Studios, Cartoon Network Studios Europe, Cartoon Network: From Short to Series, Daniel Chong, Elizabeth Ito, Food Chain, George Gendi, Kirsten Lepore, MIFA, Picnic by the Lake, Rob Sorcher, The Amazing World of Gumball, The Making of Cartoon Network's Adventure Time, We Bare Bears, Welcome to My Life

As Animation Booms Globally, So Does Annecy

BY AMID AMIDI ON MONDAY JUNE 15, 2015 11:35 AM

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The comics industry has San Diego Comic-Con, animators have Annecy. First held in 1960, the [Annecy International Animation Film Festival](#) is not only the world's oldest animation festival, it is also the biggest, by a wide margin.

Beginning today, a record-breaking 7,700-plus attendees will descend on the French alpine resort town of Annecy for a weeks' worth of film screenings, conferences, workshops, and the important International Animation Film Market (Mifa), celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

Cartoon Brew conducted a joint-interview by telephone with Marcel Jean, the Annecy festival's artistic director, and Mickaël Marin, the head of Mifa, about the festival's unique acknowledgement of women animators, the booming global animation market, the importance of government investment in industry infrastructure, and the growing number of Los Angeles artists who attend the festival every year.

Cartoon Brew: Annecy has shined a major spotlight on women animators this year, including an all-women jury, numerous screenings devoted to films by women, and an honorary Cristal award to Florence Mialhe. What inspired this focus on women filmmakers?

Marcel Jean: When I was appointed here, I already had an idea at the time to place a spotlight on women in animation. There was an important moment a few years ago on the Internet, when there appeared an [old letter written by the Disney studio](#) to young women who wanted to work there. To me, there has been clear discrimination in *all* of the studios, not just Disney, for years. So my question was, "What is the situation now?"

Even here, I have a selection committee of four men; there are no women on the Annecy selection committee. It was a preoccupation of mine to make sure that we were fair in our evaluation of the films that were made by women, so I asked my colleagues to do some statistics on film submissions. We soon realized that around 28-30 percent of the short films submitted to the festival were made by women, which is far from a real equity. We also realized that about 50 percent of the student films were made entirely by women, or a team of students including women filmmakers, so my reflection was that this situation was about to change in the world of animation. For me, it was important to take a sort of Polaroid of the actual situation, to look both at the history of women in animation, and their place right now. This is what I wanted to do.



Marcel Jean, the artistic director of the Annecy animation festival. (© S. Matier/CITIA)

Cartoon Brew: What are some of the other highlights of the women's spotlight?

Marcel Jean: There are some special programs, including two retrospectives, including one of **Stacey Steers**'s work. It was important to me to find a woman filmmaker who wasn't as well known in the world of animation. Stacey Steers is an interesting case, because she was very active in the world of experimental film and contemporary art but still relatively unknown in animation, despite being an animator. There is also a retrospective of **Janet Perlman**, who is interesting because she has been making cartoon films since the mid-1970s. At that time, there were very few women who made funny animation; most of the films that were made by women at that period, and even into the 1980s, were very serious, let's say more mature films that wanted to say something about the condition of women, maternity, and family life. And so it was very interesting for me to look at the work of a women animator who was in the middle of the man's world of animation, in the heart of the funny, cartoon films.

There is also a third retrospective of Florence Mialhe's work, who will be awarded an Honorary Cristal, the third we have given at Annecy. The first was given to Jerzy Kucia and the second last year to Isao Takahata, so it was important for us this year to find a woman. The role that Florence Mialhe has played in French animation for more than 25 years is crucial. She's an inspirational filmmaker but she is also a teacher, and a large number of young filmmakers have had Florence as their teacher, so it was important to put the spotlight on her.

Cartoon Brew: Let's switch gears and talk about Hollywood coming to Annecy. Over the last decade, I've noticed a substantial increase in the number of artists who come from Los Angeles to the festival. Is there a conscious effort on the part of Annecy to work more closely with the industry or has it been an organic growth?

Marcel Jean: I would say it's a mix of the two. Mickaël Marin and I have been aggressive in building relationships in Hollywood and San Francisco. Every year, we take a trip there together to talk about the festival and Mifa, to try and help them understand the real dimension of Annecy and make them realize there are multiple levels of benefit. There are clear possibilities to present their work but also to connect with other studios and recruit artists from other countries.

Mickaël Marin: Yes, if we are talking about television, there are opportunities to find partners and producers. And producers can find new partners and content here for sure. We have noticed an increase in their presence, and for me, it's just the beginning. Annecy is the perfect place, and perfect tool, for the United States to choose, and we feel the same about Canada, especially on Mifa's side, where we have a much larger Canadian presence recently.

Marcel Jean: Next November, we are also planning to go to Portland, Oregon for the first time. So we really think there is a place for development in our relationships with people in the United States. We are doing the same kind of work in Asia, South Africa, and South America. Every year, someone from Mifa goes to Argentina or Brazil or Mexico; since I was appointed, I have visited South Korea and Japan. It's very important to us for Annecy to go worldwide and to be dynamic in our relations with people from all over the world.

At the same time, I don't think there was ever more experimental film at Annecy than there is right now. There are more big things arriving from the major studios in Hollywood and Japan, but there are also more short, experimental films than ever before. So it is not a battle between the big studios and the independent filmmakers. We are really seeing complementarity between different formats and ways of working in the animation world.



Mickaël Marin, head of economic development and Mifa. (© G. Pies/CITIA)

Cartoon Brew: Mickaël, this is the biggest Mifa ever. Where do you see most of that growth coming from?

Mickaël Marin: There are for sure more players in the game, which has become much more international. I think we have seen at the festival that South America is growing; the last two Cristals for feature films were won by Brazil. At the market, we have delegations from Colombia, Chile, Mexico, and Argentina, so South America for sure is developing a place within the global animation industry. Africa will likely be next; we have South Africa, but we see other territories growing. We've created a pitching session called "Animation du Monde," or "Animation From the World," to help new talents coming from places like Africa.

Cartoon Brew: One of the Mifa pitch sessions this year is entirely devoted to South Africa...

Mickaël Marin: Yes, we work closely with the French embassy over there and want to promote new cinema and talent from that region. We do the same in Indonesia, Madagascar, and Georgia. It's just beginning; we developed the new concept for the pitch session this year, and will open it up to more countries next year. But the idea is to give their projects the same level of consultancy and visibility as French or American projects, and to help them make the right connections at Mifa.

Cartoon Brew: I've noticed that some Asian countries, such as Singapore, invest a lot of money into their animation, while others in South America don't have that luxury to invest in the animation sector. How important, from your perspective, is government support for developing a country's animation infrastructure?

Mickaël Marin: It's crucial. When the Mifa market was created in 1985, it was related to a government plan to develop the audiovisual sector. The idea was to help create an animation industry and market in France. Thirty years later, France is an international animation leader in Europe, and the third largest animation producer in the world. It's crucial for the animation industry and for culture when you have a government that invests money. Every year, we can notice a difference when national or regional agencies help their local talent come to Annecy. It really makes a difference.



An outdoor screening at the Annecy festival.

Cartoon Brew: One concern I notice among those I speak to in developing animation countries is the worry that they will become service studios rather than creators of content. At Mifa, have you noticed studios from developing countries pushing to do service work, or are they more interested in pitching their own ideas?

Mickaël Marin: My feeling is that, for example, many South American countries will go directly to creating their own content and IPs. On the other hand, in some Asian countries, they were first service companies that moved later into developing their own content. The crucial point is education—strong schools that teach their students how to create, write, and animate their stories. America, France, Germany and other countries are strong in animation because they have highly skilled schools. Because it's an ecosystem: It works here because you have schools, you have the government and regional funds investing in co-productions, and broadcasters that are required to invest in animation co-production. Countries that set up this kind of animation ecosystem will for sure find success and build a real industry.

Cartoon Brew: Do you have any advice for first-time attendees? How can they get the most out of the experience?

Marcel Jean: You know, there are so many things to do at the festival, so many different screenings and programs. You can have a completely different experience at Annecy, depending on your interests. For example, we haven't talked yet about the spotlight on Spanish animation. There will be a retrospective on the history of Spanish animation at Annecy this year that is certainly the most important retrospective ever organized about their animation cinematography. Some attendees will experience this, while others will not see a single Spanish animation program, yet they can have a strong experience too.

My personal point of view on festivals is that we must work very hard to develop events that are unique. These days it's possible to watch films on web platforms, so you can't justify coming to a festival just to watch films. You must take advantage of all the benefits of a festival: to meet with people, to go see filmmakers and producers talk about their work, to watch works-in-progress, to understand the creative process of different artists.

This is what we're trying to offer at Annecy. I would recommend to somebody who's attending for the first time to make sure that they will attend at least one or two of these encounters.

Annecy 2015 Spotighting Guest Country Spain

Program of Spanish animated cinema, 'From Doodles to Pixels: More than one hundred years of Spanish animation,' will premiere at the 55th edition of the Annecy International Animated Film Festival.

By [Jennifer Wolfe](#) | Monday, June 15, 2015 at 2:28pm

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'Via Tango' by Adriana Navarro (2013)

The program of Spanish animated cinema *From Doodles to Pixels: More than one hundred years of Spanish animation* will premiere on the 55th edition of the International Animated Film Festival of Annecy, in France, running June 15-20, during which Spain will be guest country for the first time in the history of this prestigious festival.

This program has been produced by the CCCB (Contemporary Culture Center of Barcelona) and Acción Cultural/España, with more than 50 titles for theatrical screening, and as many on an accompanying triple DVD-Catalog. This program collects forgotten historical pieces and recent works on the centenary of the birth of animated cinema in Spain.

This selection, curated by Carolina López, includes films from authors such as Segundo de Chomón, Josep Escobar, Francisco Macián, José Luis Moro, Jordi Amorós, Tomàs Bases, Raúl García, Juan Pablo Etcheverry, Isabel Herguera, Javier Mariscal, Anna Solanas, Marc Riba, Alberto Vázquez, Pedro Rivero, Izibene Oñederra, Nicolai Troshinsky and Rocío Álvarez, among many others. Titles such as *Garbancito de la Mancha* (Arturo Moreno, 1945), Europe's first colour animated feature; vintage black-and-white commercials from the 30s by Catalan cartoonists such as Serra i Massana and Ferrán; the short *The Age of the Stone* (Gabriel Blanco, 1965), with drawings by Chumy Chúmez; commercials by Estudios Moro; and *Estela*, a short film by Frederic Amat specifically created for the occasion, are some of the more amazing and less known pieces from this cycle. The triple DVD-catalog, published by Cameo, contains some titles not featured in the cycle and a booklet with articles by Spain's main animation specialists.

The program *From Doodles to Pixels* will be screened in the recently renewed Bonlieu Center and in Salle Pathé, the festival's main venues. 20 filmmakers will attend the festival to present their works, including José Antonio Sistiaga, Jordi Amorós, Sam, Juan Pablo Etcheverry, Jossie Malis, César Díaz Meléndez, Paulo Mosca, Rocío Álvarez, Laura Ginès, among others, and Isabel Herguera, a member of the Official Jury of this year's festival

In addition to this cycle, there will be a strong Spanish presence in the Festival. Lorena González, director of ICAA (Spain's Institute for Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts), will be the representative of Spain, guest of honor country of the 2015 edition of the Annecy Festival. On the official section, 3 short films in competition will be screened: *Travel by Feet* (Khris Cembe), *Zepo* (César Díaz Meléndez, 2014) and *The Guardian* (Alessandro Novelli, 2015); 1 feature film, *Possessed* (Sam, 2014), and on the non-competitive Panorama section *Mort & Phil: Mission Implausible* (Javier Fesser, 2014).

The Spanish animation film industry will also get top billing thanks to contributions from various companies and institutions, coordinated by 3D Wire. ICEX, in partnership with DIBOOS, will organize within the MIFA 'Focus on Spain'. Furthermore, projects in production stage will be presented, and there will be conferences with renowned Spanish creators, such as Guillermo García Carsí (creator of *Pocoyo*), Enrique Gato (creator of *Tad, the Last Explorer*) and Sergio Pablos (creator of *Despicable Me*).

From Doodles to Pixels has meant a work of two years of research and recovery of materials, some of which were withdrawn from circulation due to their state of condition. This project has received the collaboration of Filmoteca de Catalunya (Cinematheque of Catalonia), Filmoteca Española (Cinematheque of Spain) and Movierecord, among other companies and institutions. After its premiere in the prestigious Annecy Festival, the cycle will be released internationally on key museums, cinematheques and festivals.



'Veranillo verano' by Javier Mariscal (1999)



'Doomed: A Biological Cartoon' by Guillermo García Carsí (2011)



'Un siega' (Fragmento de Historias de Amor y Misericordia) by Jordi Amorós



'Minotauromaquia Pablo en el laberinto' by Juan Pablo Etcheverry (2004)



'Onemorettime' by José González, Tonet Calabulg & Elisa Martínez (2014)

Annecy Film Fest Preview: How a Tiny French Village Woos Hollywood Year After Year



by Rhonda Rickford

6/13/2015 2:00pm PDT

Cobin

'Inside Out' will screen at the international animation festival this year, while 'The Peanuts Movie' directors will offer a sneak peek at their film.

This story first appeared in the June 15 issue of The Hollywood Reporter magazine. To receive the magazine, [click here to subscribe](#).

Over the past decade, the Annecy International Animation Film Festival has redrawn itself, transforming from a niche event into the epicenter of the animation world. Founded in 1960, the festival – which runs June 15-20 – and its MIFA film market have become a major European launchpad for Hollywood, with the studios frequently on hand to premiere their latest animated releases or offer previews. So how does the event lure such major players? Location, location, location. Perched in the Haute-Savoie region in southeast France, the tiny alpine village is so picturesque that it could have been drawn by **Walt Disney** himself.

But the global animation industry doesn't make the trip (a 20-minute drive from the Geneva airport or a 3½-hour train ride from Paris) just for the charming atmosphere. Under artistic director **Marcel Jean** and his predecessor, **Serge Bromberg**, the fest has spent a decade building relationships with U.S. studios, including DreamWorks, Disney, Pixar, Sony and Universal. "A few years ago, it was harder to obtain these films, but the scale of the festival, MIFA and the reputation of the festival are doing a big part of the job," says Jean.

One of the ways the fest accomplished this was by building loyalty among animation royalty, including screenings of the early works of **Tim Burton** and Pixar's **John Lasseter**. That personal connection with the festival keeps filmmakers coming back even after they hit it big. Oscar winner **Pete Docter** (*Up*), who had one of his first films in competition back in the '90s, will return to Annecy this year for a screening of his latest, *Inside Out*, which received a rapturous response at its premiere in Cannes in May. "[Annecy is a] kind of homecoming," says Docter. "These are our people, the fellow nerds."

He's not the only one returning: Illumination Mac Guff's **Chris Meledandri** and **Jacques Bled**, who premiered both of the *Despicable Me* films at Annecy, will be back this year with a special preview screening of spinoff *Minions*. The event also is drawing new star power: **Salma Hayek** will be on hand for the first time to present her passion project -- an animated adaptation of **Kahlil Gibran's** *The Prophet*, which she produced.

The festival also is famous for bringing animators in while they still are at work on their labors of love. This year, Annecy will feature exclusive first footage of Disney's *Zootopia* and a Q&A with directors **Byron Howard** and **Rich Moore**, and director **Steve Martino** and art director **Nash Dunnigan** will discuss footage of *The Peanuts Movie* as a work in progress.

Says Martino: "For one week in June, the city of Annecy transforms into this amazing melting pot that celebrates all styles and techniques of animation. We can't think of a better place to debut our process and research that went into the making of the film."



WIA Steps Up With Leading Role at Annecy

by Tom McLean | Jun 12th, 2015 | No Comments yet

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With this year's Annecy festival celebrating the contributions of women animators, it was clear that the organization Women in Animation had to take a big role at this year's event.

Last year, WIA co-president Marge Dean attended and did a small presentation to a group of women animators from Paris, but that's nothing compared to what the group has planned for this year.

"This is the first time we've gone out and done a big push," says Dean, who took over as co-president of the org along with Kristy Scanlan in late 2013.

She also met briefly with the Annecy organizers and says she was touched when they announced this year as spotlighting women animators. She also says the organizers have been fantastic to work with and have solicited suggestions from her for panelists and jurors.

For 2015, the organization has set up a trio of major events for the festival, which runs June 15-20 in Annecy, France.

- Jinko Gotoh will deliver June 16 a keynote address as part of a program titled "The Future of Animation: Combining Viewpoints." Gotoh is chairperson of chapter support for WIA and executive producer on the animated feature *The Little Prince*. The program will be held from 6:15-7:30 p.m. in La Petite Salle-Bonlieu and also will feature Lisa Henson and Francoise Guyonnet. Peter Debruge of Variety will moderate.
- WIA will host June 17 a program titled "Women in Animation" that will include WIA Advisory Board members Bonnie Arnold, Margie Cohn, Lenora Hume, Julia Pistor and Adina Pitt as well as Scanlan and Gotoh, with moderation by WIA Co-President Marge Dean. The program will be held from 10 a.m.-noon in Verdi A&B, on the third floor of the Imperial Palace.
- WIA Advisory Board members Margie Cohn, Julia Pistor and Adina Pitt will participate in a June 18 panel discussion titled "Is There a Recipe for a Successful Girl/Boy TV Series?" Producer Natalie Altman will moderate the discussion and Avril Blondelot, Eleanor Coleman and David Michel will round out the pool of panelists. The panel will take place from 2-4 p.m. in Ravel A&B at the Imperial Palace.

Additionally, WIA will hand out pins for its members to wear and will create a "WIA Picks" pamphlet with recommendations for screenings, panels and events.

WIA also will play host to more intimate gatherings of its members and supporters via coffee talks, dinner and cocktail party functions.

The group's increased presence at this year's festival reflects its own growth as well as a growing interest in their mission all over the globe.

"The small group of women from Paris I spoke to last year have organized ... and started moving toward a full-fledged chapter," says Dean. That group is hosting a cocktail party June 18 at Anecy.

Chapters also have started in London, joining a roster that includes Dublin, Montreal, New York, San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver and Pune, India.

And the group hit a milestone last week, when membership hit 1,000. "When Kristy and I started in 2013, there were 125 members," says Dean, who is serving as a juror for Anecy's features competition. "It reflects the hard work that our board has put in, but it also reflects the hunger for this kind of group. Everyone knows and recognizes that it's time to uncap this creative force."



Marge Dean and Kristy Scanlan



Disney's Anney Delegation Talk Year of the Woman

by Tom McLean | Jun 10th, 2015 | No Comments yet

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The Anney festival is celebrating women animators this year, with an all-woman jury, an honorary Cristal award to Florence Mialhe and some top-notch films made by women from all over the globe.

Disney is getting behind this movement, sending to the festival a delegation that includes: Daron Nefcy, creator and executive producer of *Star vs. The Forces of Evil*, an episode of which is in the TV competition; Chris Nee, creator of *Doc McStuffins*, who will appear on a panel titled

Writing Within the Production Chain at the Production Organization Conferences; Aliki Theofilopoulos Grafft, director of the "Eau de Minnie," episode of *Disney Mickey Mouse* that also is in the TV competition; and Brooke Keesling, director of animation talent development for Disney Television Animation.

Of the group, only Theofilopoulos Grafft has previously been to Anney — last year, with her Frederator short *Doctor Lollipop* — so the anticipation in the days before the festival started was quite high when Animation Magazine sat down with them to talk about the event and the topic of women in animation. Here are some excerpts from the discussion:

Brooke Keesling: For me, as talent development, it's meeting a lot of people in person that I follow on Tumblr. I teach at CalArts at night and we have an exchange program with Gobelins, so I'll be meeting more of the Gobelins students that I know their work but I haven't met them in person. There's something I love about any animation festival. I've never been to Annecy, I've been to Ottawa a million times and I love that one. But the thing is it's time for you to just have — you watch films and you enjoy the talent, but you also just get face time with each other. I'll get face time with people in Annecy that live in L.A. that I rarely get to see except for at the Annie Awards. So I'm looking forward to reconnecting with old friends, making new animation friends and just looking at all of the talent that I don't just have access to.

Animag: *You all have such different levels of experience and this is the year of the woman, so I'd like to ask what kind of changes you've seen in women's representation in the business in your varying careers.*

Neer: I think there's no question there are more women behind the scenes, enough so that you think about it less. It is getting to be close to 50 percent of the people on productions are women — a lot of the writers on shows are women, a lot of the directors. A couple of us just came from another panel on women in animation and what I loved is we were all just telling our stories of what we do and how we got here and we're no longer talking about how it's different because we're women. I don't really feel like it is, at this point. But 20 years ago, that wasn't necessarily the case. There were very, very few women doing this and I always tell the story of looking at the credits to find other women and finding so few that I almost didn't come out here to pursue animation. Sue Rose was the inspiration and ended up hiring me on my first show. But I just don't think that's the case anymore, which is great.

Theofilopoulos Grafft: I also got my start probably 20 years ago so I've watched quite a change in my time. When I started out, it was at feature animation in the animation department and when I was there almost everyone I met thought that I was in (the) clean up (department) because, typically, the women were in clean up. And even on my very last day I met somebody and they're like, 'How is your department affected by the layoffs?' And I'm like, 'My department?' And he's like, 'Yeah, you know, clean up.' And I was like, 'I'm in animation.' And I think there were just a handful of women animators and I too looked to them as examples. Through the years, I've watched more and more women come in and be in creative roles, particularly in production. But I feel like personally it's just now — and maybe it's not the same with preschool shows — just now we're seeing the female creators or the female directors. It's one thing to be 50-50, people working on a production, but to have women behind the leadership roles, the creative leadership roles, that's the change right now. That's why right now is very exciting, especially with Daron's show.

Neer: I think it's the creative leadership but also being the actual showrunners, being the person who deals with all pieces of the actual puzzle, in terms of these are big businesses, these shows; and there's a lot of business involved. ... So I'm glad that people are breaking through in that place as well.

Keesling: On the student level, we are talking about how over half of my students at CalArts are female and I'm seeing that when I go traveling to other art schools, as well. There are tons of women, so you wouldn't pose a question to them about, 'Do you ever want to be a female show creator?' They would just be like, 'I just want to be a show creator.'

Theofilopoulos Grafft: I feel like there's just been things to overcome. Like last night, we happen to all be represented by the same agency, so we were at a little women in animation function through our agency and we were having some really great conversations. And then one of the other women directors that I was talking to — she and I worked on Phineas and Ferb together, so we that was 2006 when we started; she's a writer, a board artist then became a director — but at first there was this need to prove that you could be funny. I think there's this idea that as soon as we walk in the room that, 'Oh, the girl is here. She's not going to be that funny, she's not going to be that good.' And we had to kind of prove we are funny, we are good, we can do story, we can get punchy with the guys. We established ourselves, and we don't really feel that way now, but there definitely was that before. And Dan Povenmire said to me when we first started, 'You know what? Let other producers think women aren't funny, because I'll just get to hire all of them, because I know they are.' And he did. I think the more and more we're out there doing it the more and more people are like, 'They're great!'

Of the group, only Theofilopoulos Grafft has previously been to Annecy — last year, with her Frederator short *Doctor Lollipop* — so the anticipation in the days before the festival started was quite high when Animation Magazine sat down with them to talk about the event and the topic of women in animation. Here are some excerpts from the discussion.

Animation Magazine: *Let's start by talking about Annecy. What are you looking forward to the most about going to Annecy?*

Daron Nefcy: I'm just so excited, I'm excited to check out some new films and I'm excited to be in France — I've never been in France before. It'll just be really cool to see what the animation community is like over there, because I haven't been to another country's animation festival.

Chris Nee: I'm excited to sort of creatively recharge my battery which is what I keep hearing people say is what happens when you're at Annecy. I work a lot in Europe and our production company is in Ireland, and so I know a lot of people in animation outside of the states. And everyone's going to be there and it's going to have that sort of high school reunion feel, but those are the times when you feel so good about this little niche in the industry, in my opinion. They're such good people and I'm so excited to see everyone in one place. But I've heard the panels are great and you really just remind yourself of the purity of what we love about what we do.

Aiki Theofilopoulos Grafft: What I loved about going last year is it's really easy to be in our corner of the world in animation, but you go to something like Annecy and you're meeting people from so many countries and it opens up your mind to the kind of work that's being done everywhere, and it can't not affect the way you think about your work and animation in general. So I love that part of it. But this year, what I'm excited about is going as a representative of Disney and this legacy character that happens to be a female legacy character, and I'm a woman in animation. Being that it is the year of the woman, I feel like this visit has even more depth. Last year was amazing, but this year is extra special.

Nee: There's funny on the page, which is one thing, and it's also — we all know part of hiring on a show, whether it's the writing stuff or the directing stuff, is who are the people you want to hang out with? And that's where it becomes a different thing in terms of like, are you funny? So often in animation, the rooms are very blue and it's can you hang with that? And that's a different side of it.

Theofilopoulos Grafft: And I think that was part of the boy's club thing. They weren't going to invite us into their locker room because they didn't know if we could handle the blue part of it, but we all can handle it.

Nefcy: When I was starting going to college and starting to pitch things, I don't know that I ever thought about it. I feel like it's come up a lot more now that I'm doing this show, but I don't feel like I ever really thought about it or anything.

Theofilopoulos Grafft: I think that's so cool. That's a testament to your generation. That's the change; that's so awesome that that's your experience now. That means it really is changing.



JUNE 08, 2015 3:05pm PT by Bryan Kit

'Three Stooges' Hitting the Screen as Animated Series (Exclusive)



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Courtesy of Titmouse

Christy Karacas, the co-creator of Adult Swim's "Superjail!," created the animatic for the pilot and will direct it.

The Three Stooges is coming back to the screen, this time in animation form.

Cake, the London-based family entertainment firm, has partnered with animation house Titmouse (*Turbo FAST*) and C3, the owners of the Stooges estate and brand, on the venture, which will be launched to potential buyers at the market of the Annecy International Animated Film Festival. The project will also be selling at licensing expo LIMA.

Titmouse will produce 52 segments that will be 11 minutes in length, featuring the classic physical, visual slapstick humor for which the Stooges are known. The stories will have limited dialogue, which is seen as ideal for global audiences and multiple platforms.

Christy Karacas, the co-creator of Adult Swim's *Superjail!*, created the animatic for the pilot and will direct it.

The Stooges have a strong following in the animation community and the goal is for the show to be directed by top creators in the field to offer their own spin on the iconic characters (the classic Stooges line up consisted of dunderheads Larry, Curly and Moe).

The Three Stooges were a vaudeville act that transitioned to shorts hugely popular in the 1930s and 1940s. When the shorts were compiled for syndicated television in the 1960s, their popularity and influence reached new heights. The Stooges were recently revived as a feature by the **Farrelly** brothers, who made a 2012 comedy that starred **Sean Hayes** and **Will Sasso**.

All told, over 220 films have been made featuring the Stooges.

Titmouse president **Chris Prynoski** said: "I grew up watching *The Three Stooges* with my father. When I signed on to helm this new show, I made a blood oath to my Dad that I would treat the Stooges brand like it was a newborn baby Fabergé egg. With the cartoon making team we have lined up at Titmouse, it's sure to be the most batty, bananas, insanely giggle-inducing version of the Three Stooges your eyeballs and brainhole have ever experienced. Dad, I won't let you down!"

Prynoski will executive produce with C3's **Earl** and **Robert Benjamin** as well as Cake's **Tom van Waveren** and **Edward Galton**.

Pablo Velez and **Stephen Christy** will act as producers on the series.

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• ANIMATION & GRAPHICS TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Animation SA heads to Annecy

PRD

Apr, 08 Jun 2015 14:48

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"The Crash," a 3D feature developed by Julia Smuts Louw

Animation South Africa, with financial assistance from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Gaul Commission (GFC), WESGRO and the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), will be taking an in 40-strong delegation of local animators, producers, writers and directors to the Annecy International Ani Festival this month.

One of the biggest events on the global animation industry calendar, Annecy provides an excellent opportunity for Animation SA to promote the local industry and network directly with international counterparts.

This year South Africa has every reason to show face: two local projects have been selected, through the prestigious MIFA International Call for Projects, to be pitched to an open room at the festival's market. One is *Anansi*, a project about kids with secret ties to African deities developed by Isaac Mogaqane Films). The other is *The Crash*, a 3D feature developed by Julia Smuts Louw (Sparks Flew Developer) about a de-horned rhino who sets out alone to find his missing daughter in a park fraught with poacher on the heels of Golden Planes' *Hillbrow* and Triggerfish's *Sea Monster*, this is the third year in a row in which a South African feature concept has been accepted into the international pitch sessions.

This year also marks the launch of a new category in the MIFA Pitch Sessions, Animation du Monde, with a special South African focus session. Off the back of this event, one South African director will see his or her work come to life through a six-month residency in France, working with top French studios as well as our own Triggerfish Animation in Cape Town. "This special opportunity is the result of our ongoing dialogue with the French Institute of South Africa, who have shown consistent dedication towards creating platforms for our two countries to collaborate," says Triggerfish partner and Animation SA board member Anthony Silverston. "This South African pitch session is in large part the result of their efforts."

This year's competing projects are *Waterloo and Trafalgar* by Matthew Torode (Tincup), *Muzi & Kuku* by Candice Argall (Bugbox Animation) and *Kariba* by Daniel Clarke (Blue Forest Collective).

Monica Rovik, manager for film and media promotion at WESGRO, the Tourism Trade and Investment agency for the Cape, will join the delegation along with representatives from the DTI, the IDC and the NTA. "This is a seminal event for marketing the industry which has and will continue to pay dividends for the growth of African animation," she said.

"This is a watershed moment for South African Animation, and not just because of our reception at Annecy. We recently-elected Animation South Africa chair, Nick Cloete. "We are reaching critical mass as producers of IP and content. We've outgrown our beginnings as a commercials-driven service industry and we're in a world that we're ready to tell our own stories."



Pixar to Debut Short 'Sanjay's Super Team' at Annecy

Tom McLean | Apr 29th, 2015 | 1 Comment

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A new Pixar short titled *Sanjay's Super Team*, directed by Sanjay Patel, is slated to premiere at the Annecy festival prior to its release attached to the studio's Nov. 25 release of the feature *The Good Dinosaur*.

PIXAR

The short is based on Patel's experience growing up as an Indian in American. A fan of cartoons, comics and toys as a kid, his parents were Hindu and he performed a prayer known as a puja daily with his father.

The short begins with Sanjay as a child, beckoned from the exciting world of cartoons to the puja, during which he begins daydreaming of the Hindu gods as a team of superheroes. The animation becoming increasingly vivid as the visions help Sanjay understand his father's faith.

Patel joined Pixar in 1996 as an animator and has worked on many of the studio's features since.



Sanjay's Super Team

Tags: Annecy Animation Festival, Pixar, Sanjay Patel, Sanjay's Super Team, The Good Dinosaur



Pixar artist Sanjay Patel gets personal with 'Sanjay's Super Team'



Concept art for "Sanjay's Super Team" by short film director Sanjay Patel. (Disney / Pixar)

By **REBECCA KEDGAN**

APRIL 28, 2015, 10:00 AM | REPORTING FROM EMERYVILLE, CALIF.

Growing up in San Bernardino in the 1980s a child of immigrants from Gujarat, India, Pixar Animation Studios artist Sanjay Patel straddled two worlds. Like many American kids of the era, he played with Transformers, watched Looney Toons cartoons and read Superman comics, but he also performed a daily Hindu ritual of meditation and prayer called a *puja* with his father.



"It took me a long time to feel safe with my identity," Sanjay Patel said. "But [Pixar Chief Creative Officer] John Lasseter felt strongly about celebrating the personal side of the story." (Deborah Coleman / Pixar)

The conflict and the connection Patel felt around that ritual, and around his Indian roots in general, inspired him to direct the short film "Sanjay's Super Team," which Pixar will release Nov. 25 ahead of its feature "The Good Dinosaur." In June, "Sanjay's Super Team" will premiere at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival in France, the festival announced Tuesday.

"My parents' whole world revolved around their gods, the Hindu deities," said Patel, 41, who joined Pixar in 1996 as an animator on "A Bug's Life" and has worked on several films including "Toy Story 3," "Monsters, Inc." and "The Incredibles." "Our worlds were diametrically apart. I just wanted my name to be Travis, not Sanjay."

When Patel was a child, his parents bought the Lido Motel, an old Route 66 stop-off where they still work and live, and which provides the setting for "Sanjay's Super Team."

The seven-minute short begins with young Sanjay watching cartoons and eating cereal in a bland, beige room as his father jingles a bell, beckoning him to join in meditation. Reluctant and bored by the ceremony, Sanjay begins daydreaming a kind of ancient, Hindu version of "The Avengers," with the gods appearing like superheroes. As the daydream progresses, the color, light and animation of the film grows increasingly dazzling and cosmic, and Sanjay grows closer to understanding his father's inner world.

Patel, who illustrates graphic novels of Indian culture in his spare time, first pitched the short to executives at Pixar in the summer of 2012.

In a screening room at Pixar this month, while wearing a Ramones T-shirt and a hoodie, Patel talked about the challenge of openly embracing his Indian background at work, even at a company with a significant number of Asian American employees (Peter Sohn, the director of "The Good Dinosaur," is Korean American).

"It took me a long time to feel safe with my identity," Patel said. "But [Pixar Chief Creative Officer] John Lasseter felt strongly about celebrating the personal side of the story."

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Pixar redraws the lines for 'Good Dinosaur'

"Sanjay's Super Team" is produced by Nicole Paradis Grindle, who served as associate producer on "Toy Story 3" and "Monsters University," with music by Canadian composer Mychael Danna, who is known for his work on Indian-set films like "Life of Pi" and "Monsoon Wedding."

Patel, who lives in Oakland with his fiancée and 2-year-old son, studied animation at the Cleveland Institute of Art and the California Institute of the Arts.

Though there are an increasing number of Indian Americans making their mark on pop culture, including Mindy Kaling, Aziz Ansari and Kal Penn, Patel said as a child he felt deeply the absence of anyone who looked like him in films and television.

"If I could, I would go back to the 1980s and give my younger self this short," Patel said. "I want to normalize and bring a young brown boy's story to the pop culture zeitgeist. To have a broad audience like Pixar's see this ... it is a big deal. I'm so excited about that."

April 28, 2015

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 Salma Hayek's 'The Prophet' to Open Annecy Animation Festival

The image shows a video player interface. On the left, there is a video thumbnail featuring Salma Hayek. Below the thumbnail is a blue refresh icon and the text 'Salma Hayek's 'The Prophet' to Open Annecy Animation Festival'. To the right of the video player is a dark grey area with the text 'Sponsored by'.

Salma Hayek's 'The Prophet' to Open Annecy Animation Festival



Salma Hayek

AP Images/Reuters

• Hayek produced the film based on a book of poetry with Oscar winner Nina Paley and Oscar nominee Tomm Moore, among others.

NEXT UP

Mark Buffalo Answers "Sexist" Questions in 'Avengers' Interview: "Do You Feel Much Pressure to Slim Down?"

by Rhonda Richford

4/27/2015 3:25am PDT

Animation is about to get a little glamour. **Salma Hayek** will premiere her new animated film *The Prophet* at the Annecy Animation Festival in June.

The Lion King director **Roger Allers** and artistic director **Bjarne Hansen** created the animation style for the storyline. Animators **Tomm Moore** (*The Secret of Kells*), who is an Oscar nominee, **Michal Socha** (*The Simpsons*), **Joan Gratz** (*Mona Lisa Descending a Staircase*), Oscar winner **Nina Paley** (*Sita Sings the Blues*), **Bill Plympton** (*Guard Dog*), **Joann Sfar** (*Le Chat du Rabbin*), **Mohammed Harib** (*Freej*) and **Paul and Gaetan Brizzi** (*The Emperor's New Groove*) collaborated to create eight segments for the film based on the poems of **Khalil Gibran**.

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['The Boy and the World' Wins Top Prize at Annecy Awards](#)

Hayek produced the film, which she has called her "passion project."

"Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet* has been read by more than 120 million people all over the world, so it was a real challenge for me to adapt it to ... animation. I decided to get help from nine of the best animation directors around. Each one was completely free to imagine a story based around the poems," said Hayek.

The story is set on the imaginary island of Orphalese, where a mute little girl Almitra and a political prisoner Mustafa form an unlikely friendship. After Mustafa is freed, he shares his poems with the people of Orphalese, while Almitra dreams up the landscapes that surround his words before danger sets in.

The Prophet will premiere on June 15. The Annecy Animation Festival runs from June 15–20. The town, in which it takes place, lies in South-Eastern France and is near Geneva.

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Chris Meledandri to Receive First-ever Mifa & Variety's Animation Personality of the Year Award



FEBRUARY 25, 2015 | 02:30AM PT

Prize ceremony takes place at 55th Annecy Intl. Animation Festival, which will host a 'Minions' sneak preview



John Hopewell
International Correspondent
[@john_hopewell](#)

[Chris Meledandri](#), a pioneering animation entrepreneur and creative force behind [Universal's](#) family movie business, will be the first-ever recipient of a new prize: Mifa & Variety's Animation Personality of the Year Award.

The [Illumination Entertainment](#) founder-CEO will be presented with the Award, made by Annecy's [Mifa market](#) and Variety, at this June's 55th Annecy Intl. Animation Film Festival as Mifa celebrates its 30th edition. Annecy will in addition host a sneak preview of the highly-anticipated 3D CG comedy adventure "[Minions](#)," a Universal Pictures-Illumination Ent. production, and one of Universal's biggest bets of 2015.



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