

Berlinale: Cinema Management Group Boards Peruvian Animated Feature 'Ainbo'

John Hopewell

Chief International Correspondent

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International sales pickup continues the drive by Edward Noeltner's CMG into world cinema animation

Beverly Hills-based Cinema Management Group (CMG) has acquired international sales rights to 3D animation feature "Ainbo," produced by Lima-based Tunche Films and a standout animated feature project at Ventana Sur's new Animation! film-TV market in early December.

CMG will introduce “Ainbo” to buyers at next month’s Berlinale European Film Market.

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Picking up “Ainbo,” CMG continues to drive into select world cinema animation movies as animators in emerging markets seek to populate the minds of their young audiences with indigenous elements – rites, mythological characters, lush landscapes – which can complement highly popular Hollywood toon blockbusters, avidly consumed by local audiences.

International animation also aims often highlights key issues – ecology, diversity – whose importance doesn’t end at national borders.

A consequence is that the animated movies produced around the world can also command an audience outside their country of origin precisely because their local elements have large international appeal offering fresh, immersive worlds to spectators.

Written and directed by José Zelada, and biggest animated movie pitched at Ventana Sur, “Ainbo’s” eponymous heroine is a young indigenous girl who lives in the heart of the Amazon, protected by rainforest’s Mother Spirit. One day, she learns how her world is being threatened by Yacuruna, an ancient demon, embodied in deforestation and an illegal mining project. With the help of mythological creatures – a giant turtle, for instance – she sets out to battle these evils.

Launched in 2003 and headed by young brothers Sergio, Cesar and José Zelada, Tunche Films is at the forefront of Peru's CGI and VFX industries, as Peru rates as one of the fastest-expanding of film and TV markets in Latin America. Cinema tickets sold in Peru in 2015 (46.0 million) were not much under admissions in Argentina (52.1 million). Cable subscriber net adds at Movistar TV in Peru in the first half of 2016 were the third highest of any operator in Latin America, after Brazil's Net Servicios and Mexico's Megacable, according to IHS Technology.

"We couldn't be happier having met CMG at this year's Ventana Sur where we introduced 'Ainbo' for the first time as part of the market's focus on new Latin American animation companies," said José Zelada.

He added: "CMG has a wealth of knowledge in the field of animation having licensed worldwide nearly a dozen animated features over the past years."

For CMG president Edward Noeltner, "'Ainbo' was the most commercial and attractive animation project we'd seen in a while. The themes and indigenous character designs have a universal appeal."

Founded by Noeltner in 2003, CMG's Berlin sales slate describes a broad gamut of interests and target audiences. Beyond "Ainbo," CMG will hit the Berlinale's EFM with Mike Johnson's "Ping Pong Rabbit," Pierre Greco's "Mission Kathmandu" and Richard Claus and Karsten Kilerich's "The Little Vampire."

Other features from CMG at Berlin include Storm Ashwood's thriller "The School," Jean Van De Velde's true-event inspired historical thriller "An Act of Defiance" and Dorota Kobiela's adult animation biopic of Van Gogh "Loving Vincent." Also on CMG's slate is Scott B. Hansen's horror pic "The Possession Experiment." "Defiance" and "Experiment" are in post, the other titles are in pre-production or production.

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