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Annecy-bound 'Away' finds home at Cinema Management Group (exclusive)

BY **JEREMY KAY** | 25 APRIL 2019



**SOURCE: CINEMA MANAGEMENT GROUP
AWAY**

Cinema Management Group (CMG) has boarded its latest prestige independent animation, acquiring sales rights to Annecy selection *Away* by director Gints Zilbalodis ahead of a Cannes market launch.

The film will premiere in Annecy's new Contrechamp section in June when it will compete for the newly created Contrechamp Award and Contrechamp Jury Distinction. It joins CMG's Annecy selection *Salma's Big Wish* (Dia de Muertos), which company president Edward Noeltner and his team began selling at the EFM in Berlin in February. Annecy International Animated Film Festival runs from June 10-15.

Away is told in four chapters and recounts the adventure of a young boy as he travels across a mysterious land, traversing deserts and forests while pursued by a dark spirit. The project marks Zilbalodis' first full-length feature after directing and producing seven animated shorts including *Priorities*, *Aqua*, and *Oasis*.

The filmmaker worked by himself for three-and-a-half years on *Away*, handling all aspects of production including screenwriting, storyboarding, animatic, rigging, animation, post-production, and composing the musical score.

"The result is an amazingly visual, singular journey of a young boy trying to survive what appears to be a plane crash on a deserted island", said CMG Noeltner. "Our CMG team became enamored with the project after seeing just the first images of the film."

Zilbalodis added, "I couldn't be happier than to be premiering *Away* in the Official Selection of the highest regarded animation film festival in the world in Annecy. In addition, to be working with Cinema Management Group, who have over the past 15 years brought so many high quality animated films to the market is very flattering. We are very excited to get the film in front of audiences soon."

In Berlin CMG pre-sold *Salma's Big Wish* film in more than a dozen territories. The film is scheduled to open theatrically this autumn and deals closed in Germany, Austria and Switzerland with Palatin Entertainment, Spain (Big Picture), Portugal (Cinemundo), Turkey (Movie Box), Russia, Ukraine and Baltics (Volga), Poland (Kino Swiat), Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia (Media Squad), Romania (Programs4Media), Bulgaria (A Plus Films), former Yugoslavia (2i Films), and China (Gene Culture). In Mexico the film is distributed by theatrical powerhouse Videocine.

The two films join CMG's Cannes sales slate of animated features including *The Canterville Ghost*, *Seal Team*, *Ainbo*, and *Noah's Ark*. Noeltner and his team have worked on the Oscar-nominated *Loving Vincent*, as well as *Hoodwinked*, *Adventures In Zambezia*, and *Khumba*.