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CMG Sells Ancestry-Bound 'Ainbo: Spirit of the Amazons' to U.K. Ireland, Australia, New Zealand (EXCLUSIVE)

By Anna Marie de la Fuente ▼



Los Angeles and Paris-based [Cinema Management Group](#) (CMG) has closed major sales to Peruvian-Dutch animated feature “Ainbo: Spirit of the Amazon” ahead of its world premiere at this week’s 60th Annecy International Animation Film Festival.

Signature Entertainment has snapped up rights to the toon for the U.K. and Ireland while Rialto Distribution has picked up rights for Australia & New Zealand. Signature is releasing the film this year along with the 80-plus other territories which pre-bought the film from CMG.

“Ainbo: Spirit of the Amazon” has been a box office phenomenon worldwide, opening at No. 2 in all of Central America, No. 3 in the Ukraine and Norway and No. 4 in German-speaking Switzerland as well as Iceland and Vietnam.

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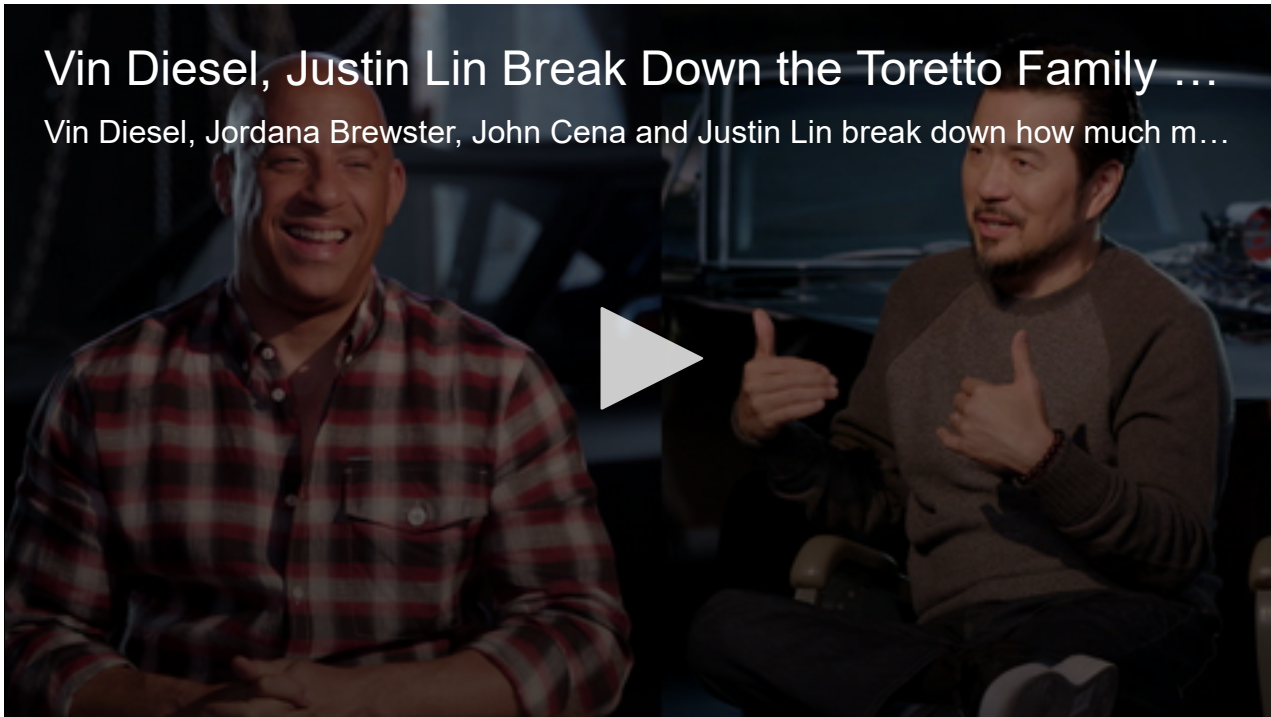
The toon feature follows the epic journey of Ainbo, a thirteen-year-old indigenous girl and her wise and quirky spirit guides, Dillo, an armadillo, and Vaca, an oversized tapir. Together, they set out to save the endangered Amazon rainforest. Not unlike Disney hits “Moana” and “Frozen,” the toon delivers a topical message on the importance of saving our planet’s fragile natural resources.

Shared by nine countries, with most of it contained within the borders of Brazil, the Amazon forest has been severely impacted by fast-growing human settlements, wildfires and unscrupulous mining companies. Some 30 million people of 350 different ethnic groups are said to live in the Amazon, with indigenous peoples making up 9% of the total.

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“Ainbo” is in the Official Selection at Annecy where it will screen at the Grande Salle Bonlieu, the festival’s central screen, on Saturday, June 19. Jean Labadie’s Le Pacte Distribution releases it across France on July 14.

It has been one of sales agent and executive producer CMG’s most coveted toons since it launched sales on the film in Berlin 2018.

“Signature Entertainment’s director of acquisitions & development, Elizabeth Williams, had expressed interest in the film a while back already and now, just before the start of the Festival, we are impressed by the release strategy they have put forth for the fall release of the film in the U.K. and Ireland. They definitely convinced us they were the most motivated U.K. distributor for the film,” said CMG President Edward Noeltner.

“I was captivated by the stunning animation of ‘Ainbo’ from the first time I saw a clip and am so pleased Signature is now the home of the film in the U.K. and Ireland. Our commitment to distributing the very best independent animation continues with this spectacular and magical story and we look forward to its release later this year, said Williams.



Ainbo

Courtesy of Cinema Management Group (CMG)

“It was likewise with Kelly Rogers’ Rialto Distribution,” said Noeltner, who noted that CMG’s India-based Head of Business Development Sumedha Saraogi “negotiated a deal that is a win-win for both parties.” “We are delighted to be in business again with Rialto on our second animated feature with Kelly,” said Saraogi.

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According to the co-managing director of animation studio Tunche Films, in Lima, Peru, Cesar Zelada, “Ainbo” was first pitched at Ventana Sur’s first Animation! event in Dec. 2017.

“We are so grateful for the support given by Ventana Sur and Annecy, who in 2019 also had us present ‘Ainbo’ as a Work-in-Progress at the 2019 Ventana Sur Animation! We feel we’ve come full circle with our official Annecy selection this year,” he said.

“We saw the first images of ‘Ainbo’ in December 2017 and immediately felt we could help produce and direct a four-quadrant appealing feature that tells an indigenous story with universal appeal,” concurred Richard Claus, “Ainbo” co-director and managing director of Cool Beans in The Netherlands.

“Judging from the first theatrical results, ‘Ainbo’ appears to be winning over hearts around the globe,” he observed.

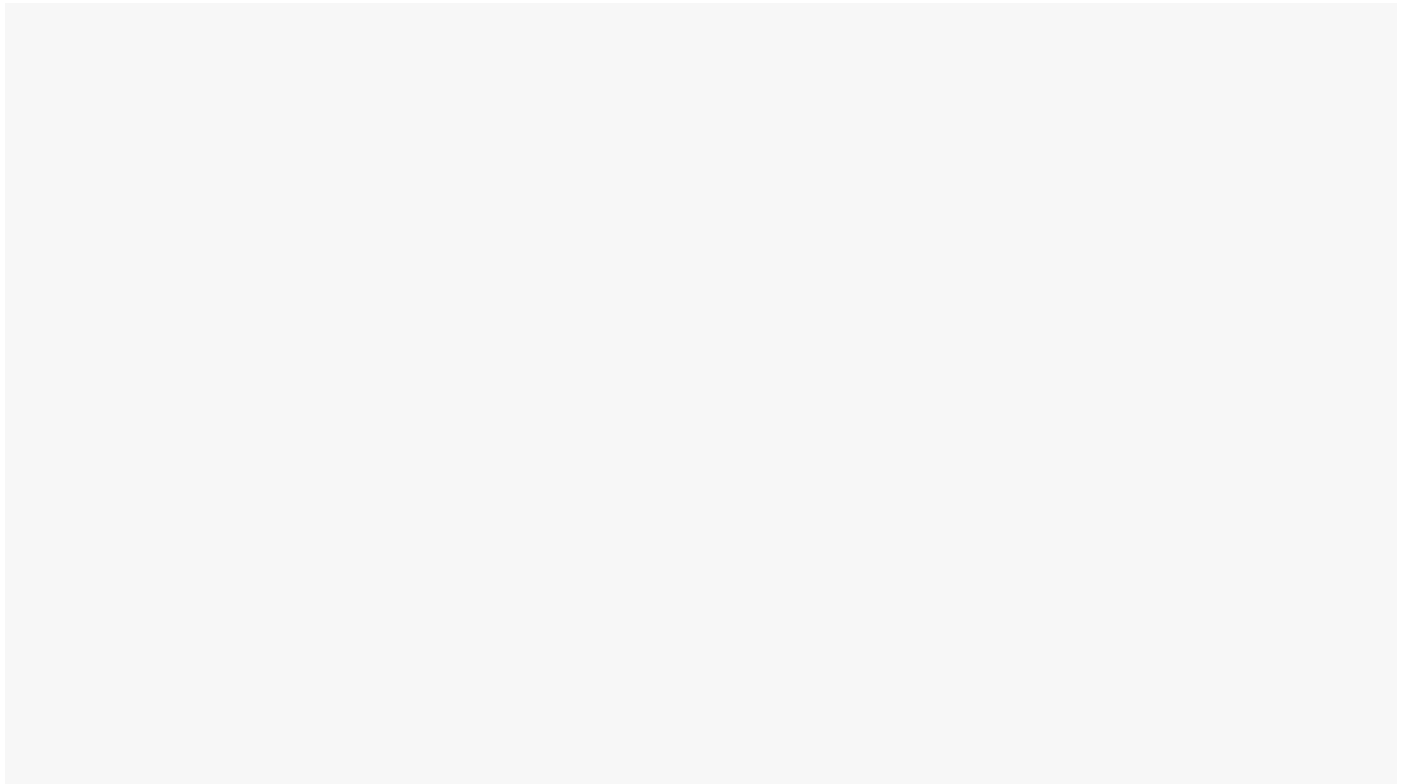
Concluded Zelada: “My brother, Jose Zelada is the co-writer and co-director of ‘Ainbo.’ We were both born and raised in the Amazon, listening to local stories and myths full of magic and mysticism, fantastic

stories of local tribes that despite the increasing presence of modern civilization, are willing to give everything to preserve the nature that surrounds them and their customs.

He went on: “With ‘Ainbo’ we want to carry this message of love and care for the Amazon, in which today there are areas the size of football stadiums that are being illegally exploited every minute.”

“‘Ainbo’ is a beautiful journey through the Amazon jungle that speaks to aspects of the local indigenous culture,” he added.

CMG also handles sales on South Africa-based Triggerfish Studios’ “[Seal Team](#),” now in post. Its toon slate includes Katuni and A-Film’s “Panda Bear in Africa”; “Kayara,” a Tunche Film-Toonz Animation co-production set in the Incan Empire; the Gullane Films and Symbiosis Technologies co-production “Noah’s Ark” and Oscar Wilde’s classic tale “The Canterville Ghost” with Stephen Fry, a Melmoth Films-Toonz Media Group co-production. Since 2004, CMG-licensed animated features have grossed over \$400 million at the worldwide box-office.



Ainbo

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