

Animation Production Day 2012

Business platform for the international animation industry

An event hosted by the 19th Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film and the FMX 2012

Stuttgart, May 8th–9th/ 2012

Stuttgart, 10th May 2012

First steps on the path to a joint strategy

Animation producers, broadcasters, banks and funders develop measures to strengthen the German animation industry

Yesterday the sixth Animation Production Day (APD) in Stuttgart ended with a conference on “Financing & Brands”. Broadcasters, producers, banks and funders, in a joint effort together with European partners, developed a series of measures to better position the German animation market. The APD 2012 brought together a total of over 100 representatives of the animation industries of ten different countries.

Dr Christoph E. Palmer opened the conference on “Financing & Brands” yesterday morning in the Haus der Wirtschaft, describing the German animation industry as “capable of development – to put it mildly”. With this in mind, prominent representatives of the German and European animation industries were invited to discuss the “cultural and economic challenges of creating animated family entertainment in Europe”, with keynote speeches followed by a panel discussion.

Henrik Bo Nielsen, CEO of the Danish Film Institute and **Florence Avilés**, production director at the IFCIC (Institute for the Financing of Cinema and the Creative Industries, France) made clear that even in Denmark and France – both countries which have been successful in establishing productive and creative animation industries – there is no secret recipe for success. It is a long process, with many different areas where adjustments must be made if the aim of creating lasting stability in the difficult market environment of the animation industry is to be achieved. **Peter Dinges**, chairman of the Federal Film Board (FFA) also stressed that it was a question of making long-term strategic decisions. There was considerable interest in animation and children’s films in the political sphere, he claimed. Preserving one’s own narrative traditions whilst developing products for international exploitation was not a contradiction in terms, asserted Dinges. He emphasized the importance of producers coming together to formulate common goals and put forward proposals. It would then be a question of drawing up concrete measures and discussing these with the appropriate political representatives, he added.

David Sproxtton, co-founder and executive chairman of Aardman Animations (“Wallace & Gromit,” “Shaun the Sheep” and “Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists”) described the chameleonic nature of funding policy in England, but said that tax breaks for animation productions in England had been an extremely important factor in the success of the industry.

Jan Bonath, chairman of the animation section of the German Producers Alliance and member of the board of directors of scopas medien AG explained that German producers were at a significant structural competitive disadvantage because they were never able to deal directly with international broadcasters. This is due to the fact that, according to law, these broadcasters always require the involvement of a co-producer from their own country, whereas German stations can now buy abroad even without a German co-production partner. If this “quota” problem is not solved, he remarked, the German animation industry will be unable to survive in the long term. **Peter Boudgoust**, director of SWR, had already stressed SWR's commitment to animation film in his keynote speech, but added that this commitment was, of course, subject to budgetary limitations. Later in the discussion, **Stefanie von Ehrenstein**, head of the department for children's and youth film at SWR, gave her assurance that SWR would in the future make sure that all productions have a German partner on board. The ideas and proposals gathered must now be drawn up in more concrete form through further discussions.

Jürgen Walter, state secretary in the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts, emphasized in his speech as guest of honour at the APD farewell dinner that Baden-Württemberg's key support for the animation industry would continue in the future. Industry events at which international contacts were made and ideas developed – such as the FMX, the International Festival of Animated Film and Animation Production Day – were a crucial engine of growth for the industry, he added.

The previous day, producers, world sales companies, broadcasters, publishers, banks and funders had met together in one-to-one meetings which took place this year at the Hotel Le Meridien. In about 350 such meetings, participants discussed the brand potential of the 27 projects selected for this year's APD, as well as new financing channels, product strategies and exploitation options. With around 100 participants and 65 companies and institutions from a total of ten countries, the APD has grown by nearly 40 percent in this, its sixth year.

Alongside well known brands such as “Mullewapp” (MotionWorks GmbH) and classic materials like the “Magic Flute” (WunderWerk GmbH), there were adaptations of children's books, like “Latte Hedgehog” (simonsays.pictures) and original materials such as “Marnie's World” (UFA Cinema GmbH). The Spanish company Cromosoma brought their successful “Triplets” series along to the APD and there were some most exciting projects from France and England. Thanks to a close collaboration with the Danish Film Institute, it was possible to put a special focus on the strong, creative Danish animation market, with the aim of pushing more German-Scandinavian co-productions. Six Danish producers were on board this year to present their projects at the APD. The spotlight was also on approaches and ideas for 360° projects, i.e. materials suitable for exploitation in various different media, from books to TV, films, games and even mobile platforms.

“We have received some really positive feedback and are proud to have had so many great projects presented at the APD this year,” said Michael Schmetz, head of the APD. “The conference on “Financing & Brands” has once again taken us an important step further, and I believe that through such talks and discussions the APD can make a vital contribution to better position the German animation market in the long term.”

Animation Production Day is a part of the 19th Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film and the FMX 2012, the 17th Conference on Animation, Effects, Games and Transmedia, and is hosted by the Film- & Medienfestival gGmbH and by the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg's Institute of Animation, Visual Effects, and Digital Postproduction, in co-operation with [Michael Schmetz Mediaconsult](#).

**Press contact: Marlene Wagener,
Tel.: +49 (0) 30 70760831, marlene.wagener@animationproductionday.de
www.animationproductionday.de**