
Press Release, 8 May 2021

Animation Production Days 2021: The 4-Day Online Programme Draws to a Successful Close

Stuttgart – The 15th edition of Animation Production Days (APD), which once again this year took place entirely online, ended yesterday at noon. APD 2021 saw 167 participants from 25 countries register, with 51 selected animation projects and potential collaborations discussed in over 700 individually scheduled video meetings. APD, a joint venture of the Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film (ITFS) and the FMX – Conference on Animation, Effects, Games and Immersive Media, is the most important business platform for animation in Germany.

This was the second time APD has taken place under pandemic conditions. During the event's four days, the participants discussed in pre-planned one-to-one video meetings the development, financing and coproduction possibilities of the 51 animation projects presented. In addition to German broadcasters such as ZDF, KiKA, SWR, MDR, WDR and Super RTL, Disney, Netflix, Amazon and Warner Media were also involved alongside numerous international companies including ARTE, France Télévisions, RAI, the BBC, Canal+, Nickelodeon, RTVE, YLE and many international distributors.

“The number of participants and scheduled meetings for this online edition was just as large as at our last physical event. This confirms for us that we've been able to provide a good and relevant event for the industry. Discussions between everyone involved in the industry are of course extremely important, especially at a time like this when media usage and, hence, also programming strategies and requirements, are changing so rapidly,” said Marlene Wagener, Head of APD.

For Prof Ulrich Wegenast, Artistic Managing Director of ITFS, *“this second and once again very successful APD online edition has demonstrated the resilience of the animation industry during the COVID-19 pandemic and the creative and productive ways in which its members are dealing with the situation.”* The ITFS Commercial Managing Director Dieter Krauß added: *“The APD's extremely successful online editions – alongside its physical iteration, which will hopefully be possible again in Stuttgart from next year – are leading international events which have paved the way for Germany to gain increasing recognition around the world as a place for animation.”*

“At a time like this in particular, it's more important than ever to create platforms for intensive discussions between broadcasters, streaming providers and creatives. The 2021 APD has achieved exactly this and is thus making an important contribution to the animation industry.”

Mario Müller, Project and Program Manager of FMX

In addition to the video meetings, there were also opportunities for participants to have more informal conversations in a digital lounge. Round table discussions and the Animation Production Days conference also took place entirely online. Alongside the question of how the animation industry has fared during the past year, these events also explored the perspectives and trends that are emerging for the post-crisis period. The first part of the conference, entitled “Enable! Case Studies and Market Trends”, was streamed on Thursday, May 6 from the FMX studio in Ludwigsburg and saw a team of students from the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg present their cyberpunk project “NEOSHIN” which combines a narrative series with music and new media to deliver a coherent transmedia experience. In the second case study, which looked at the Peruvian-Dutch co-production “Ainbo - Spirit of the Amazon”, sales agent Edward Noeltner (CMG)

and producer Richard Claus (Cool Beans) discussed the growing animation market in Latin America.

The conference's second part, the **Content Briefing Session**, was streamed yesterday from the studio of the International Festival of Animated Film in the Gloria cinema in Stuttgart. It featured four representatives from major broadcasters and streaming platforms who set out their current programming needs regarding animation: **Janine Weigold**, Manager of Kids & Family Original Content at Netflix; **Patricia Hidalgo**, Director of Children's & Education at the BBC; **Orion Ross**, Vice President, Animation at The Walt Disney Company – EMEA; and **Nicole Keeb**, Head of International Co-productions and Acquisitions for Children and Youth at ZDF.

Another highlight of this year's APD was the Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film (ITFS)'s fifth **Trickstar Business Awards** which were presented online at the Trickstar Professional Awards Gala yesterday evening. The 2021 prize winner is Uli Seis with **"Mitmalfilm"** which he presented as a project at APD in 2018. The Trickstar Business Award is endowed with €7,500 and honours ground-breaking national or international business models for projects or companies in the animation industry. The prize is donated by the Region Stuttgart association.

Once again this year, the cooperation between APD and CARTOON – the European Association of Animation has led to two German TV series projects receiving a 'wild card' to be included directly in the selection of projects for the Cartoon Forum international TV pitching event which will be held in September 2021 in Toulouse. This year, the wild card winners are **"Lambs"** by Studio FILM BILDER from Stuttgart and **"Bugs and Guns"** by the Berlin-based production company Wolkenlenker.

About Animation Production Days

Animation Production Days (APD) is a joint venture of the Stuttgart International Festival of Animated Film and the FMX – Conference on Animation, Effects, Games and Immersive Media. All three events take place simultaneously. The APD's funding partners are the Ministry for Science, Research and the Arts of Baden-Württemberg, the Creative Europe MEDIA Programme of the EU, the MFG Film Funding Baden-Württemberg and the Filmförderungsanstalt (FFA).

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