



MARCHÉ DU FILM
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

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Animation Day

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Annecy Brings Five Works in Progress to Cannes' Marché du Film Animation Day (EXCLUSIVE)

"A New Dawn," the feature debut of Yoshitoshi Shinomiya, an animator on Makoto Shinkai's blockbuster "Your Name," is one draw in a five-title Annecy Animation Showcase which involves producers of real impact on the global independent animation scene.

The showcase will unveil a second brand-new animation project, "Mu-Ki-Ra," co-produced by "Unicorn Wars" backer Abano Producciones. The Showcase also features two key French prestige animation titles: "Conference of the Birds," now backed by Le Pacte, and "In Waves," from Silex Films, Anonymous Content, and leading sales agency Charades. Rounding up the selection is the anticipated Mexican feature "The Language of Birds."

The Annecy Festival has long been the most important date on the international animation calendar, unfolding on the picturesque shores of Lake Annecy in France each summer.

In 2016, Cannes' Marché du Film started providing a spring sneak peek at a small collection of work-in-progress titles that would later be spotlighted at Annecy or beyond. Once referred to as AnnecyGoes to Cannes, the event, now the Annecy Animation Showcase, is part of Cannes Animation Day, the 2024 edition taking place on Sunday, May 19.

This year, four of the five titles feature women directors or co-directors, a promising proportion for an industry that has long struggled to approach anything close to gender parity.

All titles being previewed by Annecy are works in progress, although how far each is into production varies from title to title.

Here is a look at the 2024 Marché du Film Annecy Animation Showcase lineup:

"Conference of the Birds" (Atiq Rahimi and Caroline Piochon, France, Luxemburg)

"Conference of the Birds" is directed by project creator Caroline Piochon and Atiq Rahimi, who co-wrote the film's screenplay with Nahal Tajadod-Carrière. The 2D-animated film is an updated adaptation of Farid al-Din Attar's 900-year-old Persian poem of the same name. According to the filmmakers, the film draws visual inspiration from sources including Paul Grimault's "The King and the Mockingbird," Hayao Miyazaki's films, and Carlos Saldanha's "Rio." "Conference of the Birds" is produced by Diabolo Film, Mondex et Cie, Bidibul Productions, and Le Pacte.

S.A.: Le Pacte

"In Waves" (Phuong Mai Nguyen, France, Belgium, U.S.)

A France-Belgium-U.S. co-production, "In Waves" is produced by Paris-based Silex Films and and co-produced by Anonymous Content, Belgium's Panique and leading sales agency Charades, which handles international distribution. The stylish 2D/CG mixed-technique film turns on AJ, a shy teenager who meets Kristen, a passionate surfer and the most beautiful person he's ever met. The two embark on a whirlwind romance, but just as things start to work out for AJ, Kristen's life begins falling apart, shattered by illness. Together, the young lovers face adversity with dignity and the support of a loyal group of friends.

S.A.:Charades

"The Language of Birds" (Cynthia Fernandez Trejo, Mexico)

In this Mexican feature, Natalia, a young girl who loves birds, moves to a new town with a haunting mystery: all its children have disappeared, and the adults have forgotten about them. To save herself from joining the ranks of the forgotten, she will have to uncover this town's dark secrets with help from a winged ally. The film is created, written, and directed by Cynthia Fernández Trejo and produced by David Flores Mendieta and Cine Bandada. According to Fernández, the film's crew is excited about the narrative possibilities of addressing something sinister through children's fiction. "We believe in a cinema that allows itself to trust in children and their ability to enjoy a film that walks the border between fantastic and horror," she told Variety.

"A New Dawn" (Yoshitoshi Shinomiya, Japan, France)

Director Yoshitoshi Shinomiya cut his teeth working as an animator on Makoto Shinkai films, including "Your Name," "The Garden of Words," and "Children Who Chase Lost Voices," and makes his feature directorial debut with "A New Dawn." In the pastel-washed film, three young people overcome extreme weather conditions and natural disasters while discovering things about their unique identities. The film's narrative was inspired by The Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, which brought huge changes to the Japanese landscape and had a significant impact on Shinomiya's life at the time. Asmik Ace produces with France's Miyu Productions.

S.A.: Asmik Ace Inc.

"Mu-Ki-Ra" (Estefanía Piñeres, Colombia, Spain)

Colombia's Letrario ("Los malditos") and Spain's Abano Produccións ("Unicorn Wars") produce this story about a land haunted by monsters made of vegetation. There, Cleo, a thirteen-year-old girl, will face a horrible nightmare when her younger brother Martín is devoured by one of the native beasts. With the help of a magical old woman, Cleo attempts to track down Mukira, the monster who took her brother, and bring the boy home. The film's creator-director, Estefanía Piñeres Duque, teamed with María Barro Guntín on the screenplay for this vibrant and energetic 2D feature.

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