

Film London Takes Producers Across the Globe

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With a cohort of exciting strategic partnerships, Film London's Production Finance Market (PFM), produced by the Inward Investment and Business Development team, continues to strengthen its international scope, providing producers with unique opportunities to showcase projects across the globe. At the same time, PFM also benefits London with high calibre international producers who contribute to the film finance market and local industry.

Last month marked the second successful year of the PFM's alliance with the Ile de France Film Commission. Through this link, Ile de France assists in recruiting applications to the PFM from French producers and supports four or more French producers to attend the Market. In return, Film London supports four post-production/visual effects executives to attend Ile de France's Parisfx, the premier visual effects event which takes place in the French capital every December. This helps to increase the level and quality of French participation in the PFM and has resulted in some interesting and diverse projects being presented, including animation and documentary.

Ile de France is very pleased with the partnership, which they say offers "a unique platform for French producers to meet financiers from the UK and other countries. It is a great opportunity, especially for young producers who may not have easy access to financiers trying to reach them on their own. Some financing sources may also appear here that the producers would not have imagined and had not tried to get."

New in 2011 was a partnership with the International Financing Forum at the Toronto International Film Festival (IFF@TIFF), which gave UK producer Sam Taylor, of Film & Music Entertainment, the opportunity to pitch at the Toronto financing forum. In exchange, Canadian producing duo Scott Garvie and Patrick Cassavetti, from Shaftesbury Films, were selected to attend last year's PFM.

The Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC), who run IFF, were keen to establish this partnership with London which they say provides enhanced access to the UK and international film markets for a Canadian producer, and also meant a high quality UK producer and project were recruited for the IFF. James Weyman from the OMDC feels the link with the PFM is valuable as it "offers a filtered and orderly access to the UK market. Producers can spend a lot of time at a market like Cannes tracking down prospects, but the benefit of any organised market event like the PFM is that all the players are there and participants can accomplish a lot of business in a very condensed period of time, enhancing the potential for success."

The PFM's longest standing partnership, with the Rome International Film Festival's New Cinema Network (NCN), will be in its fifth year in 2012 and continues to flourish as a significant asset in broadening the market's international reach. The NCN is a co-production market which takes place in late October during the Rome Film Festival, and the collaboration involves three PFM producers being selected to attend the NCN, where they can build on progress made at the PFM and connect with potential European co-producers and financiers.

The PFM producers selected for the 2011 NCN were Gerald Conn (Gritty Realism Productions), Iain Brown (Brown Films) and Sarah Sulick (Bright Pictures). Gerald Conn presented his project *Heart of Darkness*, a unique animation based on the well known Joseph Conrad novel. The producer found attending the NCN a very worthwhile experience and he received a very positive response to his project: "the New Cinema Network event was a useful follow up to the PFM as a number of financiers travelled onto

this event after London and it was a chance to re-establish contact with them and discuss my project further. I wasn't previously aware of the New Cinema Network, but I was very glad that I had the opportunity to attend this event."

Finally, the farthest flung of PFM's existing international ties is the one with the 37°South market at the Melbourne International Film Festival.

Last year marked the third anniversary of the association which sees up to three Australian or New Zealand producers selected from the Melbourne based co-financing market attending the PFM. Mark Woods, Director of MIFF 37°South says: "the PFM-37°South partnership is our flagship alliance. What we wanted was for the sales agents at MIFF 37°South to be able to select producers at our event and to be able to send them to a similar event in one of the world's great film financing centres, where they could meet an even greater range of financiers again in a more selective environment than the likes of Cannes."

The latest Australasian producers to attend the PFM as a result of this partnership were Marian Macgowan (Macgowan Films) who presented a new project directed by Gillian Armstrong, and Nicole O'Donohue (GreenPark Pictures) who pitched an unusual romantic tale of magic realism. Macgowan found having access to the PFM through the partnership very beneficial, saying "it's a concentrated but effective means to test the critical international market for the strength and viability of the film both creatively and financially." She goes on to acknowledge the impressive level of distributors and sales agents that 37°South attracts to the Southern Hemisphere which is essential, particularly because of the remote geographical location of Australia. The PFM-37°South partnership, continues Macgowan, then facilitates a vital next step, "effectively providing a growth supplement to that initial outing for a new film and also for films at all stages of financing. The (glorious) isolation which is a part of where we live can be ameliorated by these ongoing and empathetic partnerships".