

The Shape of Toons to Come

European animation studios present 60 animated show ideas at the 19th edition of Cartoon Forum in Ludwigsburg.

Like charming sidewalk cafes and long summer vacations, the annual Cartoon Forum event is one of those sublime European concepts that's been envied by Americans for years. The 19th edition of the animated TV co-production confab takes place in the historic city of Ludwigsburg in Germany (Sept. 16-19) and will offer 360 hours of animation with over 700 industry professionals in attendance.

Under the guidance of general director Marc Vandeweyer and manager Annick Maes, the Forum has continued to show signs of growth with each passing year, and this year is no exception. The four-day event will present 60 projects from 14 countries to broadcasters, investors and co-producers

from across Europe. "We're seeing series in 2D conceived also for new distribution platforms such as mobile phone, Internet and videogames," notes Vandeweyer. "Shows targeting children six to nine years of age remain the most popular audience in these proposed series."

The Forum's pan-European flavor is dominated by French studios, which are presenting a whopping 15 of the 60 pitches, followed closely by Germans with 11 and Brits with 10 projects. Many of the shows presented at the Forum will also be shopping for buyers and funding money at the MIPCOM market in October.

Cute and cuddly critters, feisty pint-size heroes and goofy little monsters take center stage as the presenters show clips and illustrations of their proposed shows.

Calon's *Abercadabra* (U.K.), Studio Baestarts' *Huhu* (Hungary), Les Armateurs' *Marine* (France), Studio 88 GmbH's *Marvelous Adventures in the Insect Kingdom* (Germany), Millimages' *Mouk's World Tour* (France), Imira Entertainment's *Myo & Ga* (Spain), Alphanim/Vivement Lundi's *Pok & Mok* (France), Nordisk Film Prod.'s *Rocky* (Sweden), A.Film's *Tott Igelkott* (Denmark), Il Luster Prod.'s *The Tumbles* (Netherlands) and Mackinnon & Saunders' *Rah Rah!* are some of the interesting new toons competing for producers' coin at the Forum this year. Among the contenders that may need new English titles or have some difficulty crossing cultural barriers: *Paper Bag Lady*, *Paper Clips and Nail Polish*, *Plankton Invasion*, *Sturmtruppen* and *D.E.A.D!*

Also on the agenda this year is a special screening of the five finalists for the annual Cartoon d'Or award which is given to animated shorts that have made the festival rounds. Vincent Bierrewaerts for *The Bridge* (Belgium/France), Arnaud Demuyne for *Breakout* (Belgium), Pierre-Luc Granjon for *The White Wolf* (France), Benjamin Renner for *A Mouse's Tale* (France) and Matthew Walker for *John and Karen* (U.K.) are the lucky nominees for 2008. ■

—Ramin Zahed

For more event info, visit www.cartoon-media-be/forum.

