

Hot projects attract standing-room-only crowds at Cartoon

The 19th annual edition of Cartoon Forum may have come to a close in a sedate pastoral setting where this year's delegates gathered to say goodbye and sample some excellent Riesling, but the event was anything but staid. Over the course of its three days (September 16 to 19), broadcasters, investors and producers got to see some of the hotter kids projects in development across Europe.

Highlights included Millimages' presentation of new preschool toon *Mouk's World Tour*. The crowd appeared quite enthusiastic about *Mouk's* publishing pedigree and global narrative potential, so expect this one to get made quickly. *Plankton Invasion*, a 39 x seven-minute CGI web series with France's TeamTO on-board, also drew a standing-room-only audience with its great timing, gorgeous animation and funny-first enviro-led stories. There's still a ways to go on moving it from web to tube, but this is one to watch.

On the second day, France's Image-in presented a terrific short series concept for young preschoolers. Titled *Beast in the Box*, the series plays on the universal kid appeal of guessing games. Each ep starts off with a mysterious white box with a beast of some sort hiding inside. Helped along by a quick string of clues (all animated comically enough to elicit belly laughs from Cartoon Forum's grown-up audience), a child narrator must guess what kind of creature the box contains. Those in attendance were universally impressed with the innovation and animation quality of the project. If you're curious, check out the pilot at www.image-in.cc.

Another noteworthy pitch came from András Erkel and Hungary's Studio Baestarts for 52 x two-minuter, *Hubu*. The short series populated by eight hapless owls wowed attendees with its physical comedy and detailed plan for ancillary revenue generation. With a proposed budget of roughly US\$1.15 million, Erkel is currently looking to shore up 62.5% to get the series into production. Check it out at www.studiobaestarts.com—those owls are a hoot! (Sorry, pun intended.)

Celebrating its 20th anniversary next year, Cartoon Forum 2009 will be held in Stavanger, Norway, which counts oil, sheep and animation as some of its greatest natural resources. **JC**

Millimages' *Mouk's World Tour* packed 'em in at Cartoon Forum held in Germany last month



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