



Bayala

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

EUROPE

12 Movies to Catch in Cannes



By Animation Magazine

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With the Cannes Film Festival and Market happening this month (May 23-25), we thought it would be a good time to take a look at some of the indie and international animated features that are wrapping up their final funding stages and getting ready for their big-screen close-ups. Here are some of the titles that may be making a splash at the market this year:

Arctic Justice: Thunder Squad. Directed by Canadian animation veteran Aaron Woodley (*Spark*), this CG-animated adventure centers on underdog arctic fox Swifty (Jeremy Renner) who joins forces with a group of misfit animals to fight the evil plans of one Von Walrus who wants to melt the polar ice caps. Impressive voice cast also includes James Franco, Alec Baldwin, Anjelica Huston, John Cleese, Omar Sy and Heidi Klum. (AMBI Group, Assemblage Ent. Open Road Films)

The Ark and the Aardvark. A reluctant aardvark named Gilbert (Miles Teller) has to become the leader of a ragtag group of animals trying to reach Noah's Ark in this charming adventure directed by DreamWorks veteran John Stevenson (*Kung Fu Panda*, *Sherlock Gnomes*). Voice cast includes comic thespians such as Aubrey Plaza, Jenny Slate, Stephen Merchant, Craig Robinson, Rob Riggle. (Unified Pictures, Stellar Creative Lab)

Arkie. Directed by Aussie animation helmer Luk Jurevicius (*Figaro Pho*, *The New Adventures of Figaro Pho*), this family movie follows a spirited young girl (Shailene Woodley) who has to overcome her fears and travel to the mysterious city of light, save her dad from a dangerous scientist and stop the destruction of her planet. With Jai Courtney, Tim Minchin. (Passion Pictures Australia, Highly Spirited)

Bayala. Fairy princess Surah and her sun elf friends have to save the dragons from extinction in their magical world, away from the evil schemes of Shadowqueen Ophira in this colorful CG-animated movie directed by German TV animation veterans Aina Jarvine (*Bibi and Tuna*, *Zombie Hotel*) and Federico Milella (*Ziggy and the Zoo Tram*). (Fabrique d'Images, Ulysses Filmproduktion).

Call of the Wild. Following the success of *White Fang* last year, we have another animated adaptation of a popular Jack London novel. Three-time Oscar-nominated director Chris Sanders (*Lilo & Stitch*, *How to Train Your Dragon*, *The Croods*) leads the feature, which centers on the adventures of Buck, a half-Saint-Bernard, half-sheepdog who is kidnapped and sold to work as a sled dog in the North. Script is by Michael Green (*Blade Runner 2049*, *Logan*, *American Gods*) and voice cast includes Harrison Ford, Dan Stevens and Karen Gillan. (3Arts Entertainment, Fox)

Dalia and the Red Book. Directed by David Bisbano (*Rodencia and the Princess Tooth 3D*), this innovative project combines CG characters, stop-motion and 2D animation to tell the story of recently deceased writer's 12-year-old daughter, who has to complete her father's unfinished novel, as she comes face to face with the characters from his imaginative stories. (Argentina's FilmSharks and Vista Sur, Peru's Golem, Zentropa's Spanish studio Doce)

Dragonkeeper. This first Spanish-Chinese co-pro is directed by Ignacio Ferreras (*Wrinkles*) and produced by A-listers Manuel Cristobal and Larry Leven. Based on the prize-winning novels by Carol Wilkinson, this thrilling adventure tells the story of a brave orphan named Ping who discovers her true powers and helps the dragon race survive extinction in her magical kingdom. The stereoscopic 3D animation is produced by Ilion Animation Studios (*Wonder Park*), China Film Animation and Dragoia Media.

Jacob, Mimmi and the Talking Dogs. Edmunds Jansons' charming 2D-animated family follows the adventures of a young boy who is sent to the suburbs to spend a summer with his uncle and cousin. Based on the book by Luīze Pastore, the movie features digital cut-out animation, and is perfect for younger audiences. (Latvia's Atom Art Studio, Poland's Letko Studio.)

Neighborhood Pet Watch. Two puppies team up with their neighborhood pet pals to thwart an evil gang from taking over their city in this CG-animated family feature, produced by Simon Crowe (SC Films), Feng Yi and Stephen Meier. Kevin Riley, CEO of Riley Animation Studios, is directing. (China's Flame Node Ent and Paintfree, SC Films)

Pokémon: The Movie: Mewtwo Strikes Back Evolution. While *Detective Pikachu* is getting all the buzz in the U.S., another big CG-animated *Pokémon* movie is also getting fans excited in Japan. This sequel to the 1998 *Mewtwo* movie is billed as the first 3D CGI movie in the series and the 22nd in the history of the franchise. The awkwardly titled film is directed by Motonori Sakakibara (*Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*) and Tetsuo Yajima (*Pokémon: The First Movie*). The late Takeshi Shudō (*Pokémon: The First Movie*) is credited as the scriptwriter. (OLM Digital, TV Tokyo, Pokémon Co., Toho, Fathom, VIZ)

Princess Emmy. Directed by Piet De Rycker (*Laura's Star, The Little Polar Bear*), this charming 2D animated movie centers on a young girl who can speak to horses. Her life is perfect until her scheming cousin Gizana arrives to challenge her at every turn and threaten her chances of becoming a real princess. Franka Potente, John Hannah and Bella Ramsey are part of the voice cast. (Animationsfabrik, Red Kite Animation, Studio 100 Media, Witebox)

The Queen's Corgi. Directed by Belgian directors Ben Stassen (*The Wild Life*, *Turtle's Tale* movies) and Vincent Kesteloot (*The Wild Life*, *A Turtle's Tale 2*), this charming CG-animated movie follows the misadventures of Queen Elizabeth's beloved dog, Rex (voiced by Jack Whitehall), who loses track of his mistress and stumbles across a clan of eccentric common pooches. And yes, he does find a romantic partner in this movie. The brilliant Julie Walters provides the voice of the Queen. With Matt Lucas, Tom Courtenay. (nWave Pictures, Belga Productions, Lionsgate U.K.)