

VARIETY

Mundial Moves Into Brazil

(Exclusive)



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'Wolf' signals first Brazil deal for IM Global-Canana joint venture

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MADRID — Teaming Stuart Ford's IM Global and Mexico and L.A.-based Canana — headed by Gael Garcia Bernal, Diego Luna and Pablo Cruz — new sales-financing venture Mundial has entered Brazil.

Taking world sales rights on Fernando Coimbra's drama-thriller "A Wolf at the Door," which world premieres at next month's Toronto Festival, Mundial has linked from the get-go with two of Brazil's most powerful and internationally-minded movie players.

"Wolf" is produced by Gullane Filmes, which topped June's Annecy Animation Festival with "Rio 2096" and closes the Venice Festival with "Amazonia 3D"; Rio de Janeiro town hall film fund RioFilme, one of the most successful and ambitious film financiers in Brazil, also co-financed "Wolf."

Ford and Mundial head Cristina Garza have made no secret of their desire to establish a strong presence in Brazil, Latin America's fast-awakening film giant.

The feature debut of a buzzed-up filmmaker – Variety featured Coimbra as a talent to track in its Cannes Brazilian Cinema Spotlight – "Wolf" stars Leandra Leal ("The Dognapper"), Milhem Cortaz ("Elite Squad," "Elite Squad: The Enemy Within") and Fabiula Nascimento ("Estomago: a Gastronomic Story") in what

Mundial describes as a nerve-rattling tale of a kidnapped child and the distraught parents left behind that captures the darkness ensuing when panic breeds suspicion and love turns to hate.

Coimbra also penned the screenplay. In characteristically Brazilian collegiate style, Gullane Filmes produces with Brazil's T.C. Filmes, Cabra Filmes and Pela Madrugada.

The versatile Coimbra, who has helmed nine shorts, caught attention with 2007's extended short, the road movie-come-love-on-the-rocks drama, "Tropic of Goats," which won 21 awards. Imagem will distribute "Wolf" in Brazil – an unusual move for a company whose eye is usually on the main chance of potential blockbusters, such as the upcoming Leal starrer "Dognapped."

Mundial vice-prexy Garza, IM Global's Ford and Gullane's Fabiano Gullane brokered the "Wolf" deal.

"Wolf" is Mundial's first Brazilian pick-up. It is unlikely to be its last.

"Young Brazilian filmmakers are really breaking new ground and we couldn't be more honored to represent this debut feature. When it comes to foreign cinema, international buyers and audiences are looking for daring visions and provocative filmmaking," Garza said.

She added: "This film is so powerful and completely different from anything we've seen. With new government stimulus and more opportunities for filmmakers, we are sure to see more new voices of this kind."

Said Ford: "A big part of Mundial's gameplan is to promote the best of Brazilian cinema and 'A Wolf at the Door' is a perfect fit for Mundial's bespoke services."

Mundial's "Wolf" deal was announced just hours before the start of the first Film Finance Forum in Latin America, which runs all day Wednesday in Rio de Janeiro, organized by Winston Baker and lead sponsored by RioFilme. Variety serves as its media partner.

Speakers will include Mundial's Garza, Tatyana Joffe from IM Global and RioFilme CEO Sergio Sa Leitao.

The Forum will in part explore new distribution parameters for Latin American production. One is simply a step-up in international sales and subsequent theatrical distribution in foreign markets. But that is a challenge for a national industry such as Brazil's which currently boasts only one Brazil-based sales agent: the international sales division of Europa Filmes. That is a gap that Mundial, which focuses on films from Latin America, Spain and Portugal, will hope in part to breach.

For the near-nine-month-old Mundial, September's Toronto Festival represents a coming-of-age with three of its current seven movies receiving their world premiere there: "Wolf," Simon Bolivar bio "Libertador," the biggest independent movie ever produced in Latin America, and the Canana-produced "Paraiso," Mexican Mariana Chenillo's follow-up to well-received debut, "Nora's Will."

Mundial films will go on to play San Sebastian, Zurich, Morelia, Baja and Rome, a sign of slate muscle.