

CASE STUDY: A CAT IN PARIS BY ALAIN GAGNOL AND JEAN LOUP FELICOLI

Wednesday June 9th at 9am

Annemie Degryse – Lumière (Belgian theatrical distribution)

Valérie Yendt – Gebeka (French theatrical distribution)

Sébastien Beffa – Films Distribution (French international sales company)

The case study begins with **Annemie Degryse** who explained the involvement of [Lumière](#), as coproducer and distributor in the animation movie, *A Cat in Paris* (the company split the 2 activities recently, in order to take advantage from the tax shelter scheme and to put the benefits in production – whereas you wait in distribution). At Cartoon Movie 2007, she got the script from [Folimage](#) producer Jacques-Rémy Girerd, read it in Annecy 2007 and loved it. The collaboration has started in August 2007, structured as a Belgian – French coproduction. It was crucial to be part of the creative process: thus, Lumière is not only a licensor anymore, but also owner of the movie. Furthermore, the movie becomes local, it's not a "foreign" movie.

The budget is 4,7 millions euros, and the Belgian part is 10%. They got the support from the Flemish Fund. The animation work started one year later, with 8 designers, and also one background artist in Folimage studio. Now, the image post production is being done in Belgium.

They just started the distribution strategy, between arthouse and crossovers in theaters, with 16 prints booked for Holland (it will be similar in Belgium). They showed 30 minutes to exhibitors in Cannes Film Festival, and the feedback was positive. There will be magazines sent to school, press invited to dubbing, etc. Concerning the release date, they're obliged to open at the same date than France, on December 15th 2010. It will be the only animation movie released for 2010 in Belgium.

Then, **Valérie Yendt** from [French theatrical distribution company Gebeka](#) explained her vision. The main strength is the strong original and narrative universe, developed by the well know writers, [Alain Gagnol](#) and [Jean Loup Felicioli](#). The movie will be released during Christmas, with competitors such as *Harry Potter*, *Narnia*, etc, with a base of 150 prints.

For now, the strategy is in its early stages. the poster has not been chosen yet (see below the different ideas). Though, the [Facebook](#) page and the Folimage blog have been opened. A partnership has been set up with CRDP (regional center for educational resource) from Lyon to target 12 yo children and their teachers. They got support from [AFCAE](#) (French association for arthouse theaters), with flip books sent to theaters. UGC and Europalaces are also keen on programming it. The idea is to market *A cat in Paris* as the only accurate animation movie for schools. Many previews are scheduled during French November holidays and children festivals, before the December release. Besides, the movie will be released one week before in Drôme region (in which Folimage studio is based).



Finally, **Sébastien Beffa** from [Films Distribution](#), the international sales agent of *A cat in Paris*, talks about their involvement and sales strategy. The deal has been broken three years ago (an interesting point has been raised by a distributor about the availability of the DCP master: Sébastien Beffa answered that at the time they closed the deal, it was not an obligation and still not...), whereas usually the traditional timing is one year circle (script => images => promoreel => presentation in a festival/platform => sell the film!). The key point in sales is to bring different news to each market for a movie, they need to recreate the timetable, to build a relationship with local distributors. They showed 2 reels in Cannes but it was too much, and the distributors got frustrated. They targeted arthouse distributors with crossover potential, they got good signal for the market, but distributors will wait for the movie to be completed. So now, they need to manage timetable between Cannes 2010 where the 2 reels have been shown, and Berlin 2011 where the movie has been selected for Generation section. They maybe try to show the French Gebeka trailer, the 2 reels in AFM only to Asian buyers who weren't in Cannes (2 presales have been already done in Asia). But they need to comply with Generation regulation (the movie can't be released in other territories than the 2 coproducing territories, France and Belgium, before the festival).

So, **the main concern for selling animation movies is the timetable**: it's not as sudden as feature films, there is always a second chance. You need to work in depths, after market screenings. There is no super pricing volatility neither. The best next market now to talk about it will be French Rendez Vous in Paris in January 2011. The key territory will be Germany (the sale will be depending on free TV), as it will be shown there. For UK, it would be less easy, it's a very tough territory for animation movies and distributors will need to be covered by video. So, it will take time to sell it and after all, to have good admissions in every territory.

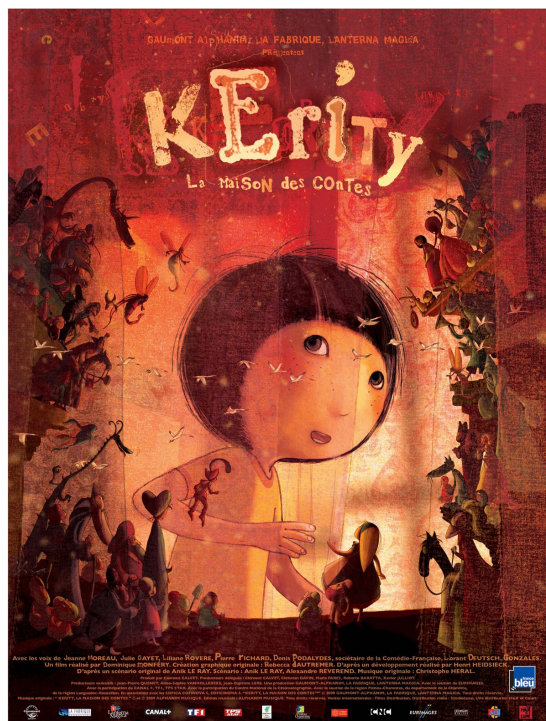
CASE STUDY: ELEANOR'S SECRET BY DOMINIQUE MONFÉRY

Sébastien Beffa – Films Distribution

Laurence Petit – Haut et Court (French theatrical distribution)

Sébastien Beffa explained Films Distribution bought *Eleanor's secret* in January 2008 from animation production company [Alphanim](#), which has been acquired by Gaumont meanwhile. So the movie could be sold as a Gaumont movie, which was a good asset. The first presentation has been done during Rome Film festival 2008 (there is an Italian coproduction with [Lanterna Magica](#)), there have been market screenings in AFM 2009 and Berlin 2009. Promotional advertising consists in flyers, presskits, posters, excerpts, etc. The sales have been decent (UK: Soda Pictures, Switzerland: Agora, Germany: Telepool, Spain: not yet, well in Eastern Europe, Germany and Italy) and the movie is still to be released in Europe. Sébastien Beffa also relies on the good TV value of the movie, and thinks MIP TV market could be a second market for it.

Then Laurence Petit presented the [Haut et Court](#) distribution strategy for *Eleanor's secret* (in French, [Kérité](#), [la maison des contes](#)). Before reading the script, they have seen the first drawings whose design has been done by the famous children writer [Rebecca Dautremer](#) whose books have been published in more than 20 territories. They bought the movie in November 2008 for French theatrical distribution (the producer kept TV rights, and the DVD rights have been bought by Studio Canal). The movie has been released on December 16th 2009 on 220 prints, and so far scored 500 000 admissions (6 months). The target was 6 to 8 yo children, with parents prescription; Rebecca Dautremer fans, very “mothers” audience oriented; and also school teachers (the main character tries to learn reading). The total P&A was 600 000€, and the minimum guarantee 300 000€. They created all the materials (teaser, trailer, poster): a 30 secondes trailer has been posted on their website 5 months before the release (in August 2009). Plus, the trailer has been programmed in



theaters at the end of October during Holidays, one week before Luc Besson's *Minimoys*. The poster campaign was on Morris advertising pillars from December 8 to 15th. The voice casting was composed by top French actors: Julie Gayet, Jeanne Moreau, Denis Podalydès, Pierre Richard and the musician Gonzales. They created a 3D library game on their website, organized a fairy tale writing contest (the reward was a drawing by Rebecca Dautremer), published a book with Flammarion (released 2 weeks after the theatrical release). The movie has been programmed in city screens, arthouse sites and multiplexes, so a wide range for different audiences. The DVD has been released on April 2010. The Belgian distributor Cineart added that the movie has been released at the same date, in December 2009, but only remained 3 weeks in theaters.

Films Distribution presentation

Founded in 1996 by François Yon (sales on the rest of the world) and Nicolas Brigaud Robert (sales in Asia and USA), with Sébastien Beffa joining them in 2006 (sales on French speaking territories and UK), the company Films Distribution is focused around 3 main activities: French feature films TV library, worldwide feature films TV / VOD / video rights (for example, movies from La Fabrique, Ad Vitam, Haut et Court, Jacques Tati library, etc.), world sales all rights for new feature films. They have 500 movies in the library, and for each movie, one sale every two years. In the line up, 2/3 of the movies are French speaking, 2/3 are picked up at script stage, 2/3 are backed by Soficas (companies for financing movie and audiovisual industry, based on tax incentives for individuals) with minimum guarantees. They make all the deals with the producers, and after go and see Soficas to leverage money.

In France, they have a real potential for teaming with theatrical distribution companies, especially in the arthouse sector (like Gebeka, Haut et Court, Diaphana, Mars Distribution, Ad Vitam, etc.), in order to compete with integrated companies like MK2 or Pyramide.

Concerning animation, Films Distribution decided to be involved in one movie a year: in 2008, [Piccolo Saxo](#) (they did a multi-territory deal with Miramax) ; in 2009, *Eleanor's secret* ; in 2010: *A Cat in Paris*.

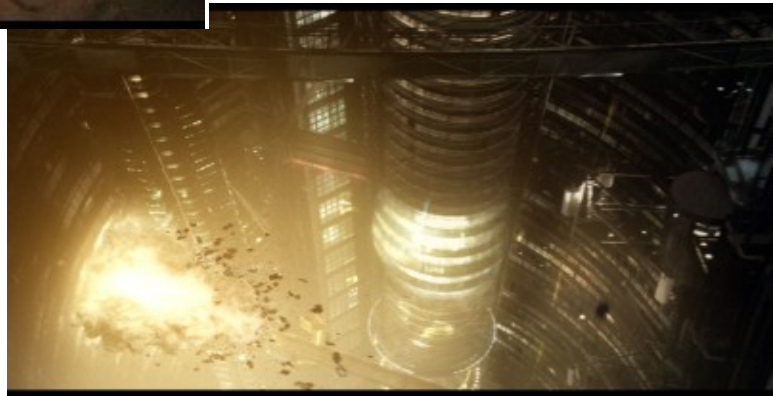
A sister company, [Films Boutique](#), has been founded in 2008 in Berlin, with 7 to 10 new films a year.

CASE STUDY: METROPIA BY TARIK SALEH

Susan Wendt – TrustNordisk (Danish international sales agent)



Susan Wendt from [TrustNordisk](#) presented the sales strategy and background for the animation movie [Metropia](#). The director, [Tarik Saleh](#), has a strong background in documentaries (*Gitmo*, *Sacrificio – Who betrayed Che Guevara*) and cofounded Swedish [Atmo](#) production company. He developed *Metropia* with [Martin Hultman](#), during 6 to 7 years (the script has been



written directly in English). The sci-fi thriller animation¹ has been structured as a Scandinavian coproduction (with the 4 countries) for a budget of 3,5 millions euros. The voices for the main characters have been done by Vincent Gallo and Juliette Lewis. The animation has been made in Hong Kong.

The movie opened in Venice Days 2009, and did very well in animation or fantastic films festivals like Annecy or Stuttgart. It's a big challenge for sales, because it's a movie targeted towards 15 yo and +, more male oriented, so distributors are not yet used to buy animation movies for adults. So far, the movie has been sold to US ([Tribeca](#) new distribution platform), Australia and Eastern Europe.

Susan Wendt thinks the writers should have worked more on the script, the story, instead of focusing everything on the artwork.

Presentation of Olsen Gang by [Jorgen Lerdam](#)

[Olsen Gang](#) is a classic in Scandinavia in the sixties and seventies. Later they were made as family titles and now the first Stereoscopic 3D animation is on its way. The movie has been produced by a Danish company, [A-Film](#) (frames, structure – the rest has been done in the Baltics) for a 3 millions euros budget. The theatrical release is planned for October. It may be too commercial for Generation section in Berlin Film Festival. The movie, available in CGI and 3D stereoscopic, has been presold in Germany and Eastern Europe. Susan Wendt thinks the movie could work everywhere, not only in Scandinavia. There is no English version for the moment, because the budget was tight, but if English speaking sales are done, they will think about that.

¹ *Metropia* takes place in a not-so-distant future. The world is running out of oil and the underground train Systems have been connected into a gigantic subway network beneath Europe. Through this system the Government is able to manipulate with peoples minds and Roger sets out to stop this conspiracy.

TrustNordisk presentation

2 years ago, in April 2008, the sales companies Trust (owned by Lars Von Trier's Zentropa) and Nordisk (owned by Nordisk Films) have merged. It was a bit confusing at the beginning to combine 2 ways of working, mixing arthouse (mainly Trust), mainstream and family movies (mainly Nordisk). The library is now composed of 600 movies. They sell usually Scandinavian movies (they got often from Zentropa or Nordisk but not always), like [Armadillo](#) by Janus Metz which topped Critic's Week prize 2010, or *Antichrist* by Lars Von Trier, in official competition in Cannes Film Festival 2009. Sometimes, they sell some German or British movies (like David McKenzie).

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