



AFM veterans flying new flags

New companies make debuts at the market

By Stuart Kemp

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Familiar faces hawking under new banners is a theme during AFM as veterans of the market circuit take up the battle to secure financing for projects after seeing the hard-hit sales sector suffer and companies disappear.

This year's AFM will boast a brace of familiar faces from Stateside boasting new companies and two newly formed international sales companies operating under the banners Metropolis International Sales and Timeless Films from the U.K.

Veteran sales agent Reiko Bradley -- who recently survived a brain hemorrhage -- has launched Eclipse International, a sales and distribution company. Bradley is the CEO, and Stephen Durham is the president of the L.A.-based company.

The company wheels into the market with four films, including science fiction thriller "New World Order" detailing a time-traveling quest to prevent terrorists from attacking an international peace summit in 2012.

In late 2006, Bradley, now 47, suffered a brain hemorrhage, underwent surgery to remove the congenital malformation that caused her sudden stroke and then set about launching a sales company.

"It was a very scary and debilitating experience," Bradley said. "Thanks to the support of some pretty incredible friends and physical therapists, I have been able to recover enough to do something I have always wanted to do -- launch my own sales company."

Broadside Capital CEO Christopher Petzel has formed the Aura Film Partnership, which will focus on the production, acquisition and worldwide distribution of independent features.

Aura has established a \$50 million financing fund and will seek out film projects in the \$5 million-\$20 million range. The company will also target completed films for acquisition and distribution.

Its first production is the post-apocalyptic action film "Tundra," which follows a band of survivors struggling through a frozen world wrecked by climate change and oil dependency. Veteran stunt coordinator Nicholas Powell ("The Bourne Identity") is directing a screenplay by Michael Thoma ("The Set Up").

Original Pictures' Kim Todd ("Leaving Metropolis") is producing along with Lindsay Moffat. Filming is scheduled for early 2010 in Manitoba, Canada.

Broadside's portfolio company Clandestine Service, an international feature film sales agency, will bring Aura's productions to the global marketplace.

Aura is repped by Fierce Entertainment in L.A. and Invicta Capital in London.

Metropolis and Timeless launched as a joint venture in the U.K. in September with veteran sales executive Ralph Kamp, formerly head of the now defunct Odyssey Entertainment, and Tim Smith, managing director of financier and movie fund Prescience spearheading them.

MIS marks Prescience's first foray into the international sales arena and it plans to handle all product genres excluding family and children.

But the set up of two companies covers that with Timeless looking to specialize in the family field.

Under the joint venture, both Timeless and Metropolis will be spearheaded by Kamp and underwritten by Prescience, giving buyers somewhere to come in search of movie titles for slates.

Kamp said: "We are differentiating family product from other genres and creating brand recognition for distributors and ultimately, audiences. Timeless Films will become synonymous with quality family entertainment, whilst Metropolis will have the freedom and scope to handle all other genres."

Timeless will be hoping projects such as "Wickie the Mighty Viking," from Michael "Bully" Herbig and "Animals United," a 3D animated feature both from Constantin Film will help buyers stop by the suite to rustle up biz.

Metropolis Films, a wholly owned subsidiary of Prescience, will be repped at the AFM by Tim Smith and Ralph Kamp, with head of sales, James Scott and Jemma Sands, head of marketing on hand. Its sales slate includes "sex&drugs&rock&roll," the movie inspired by the life of Ian Dury and starring Andy Serkis, Olivia Williams and Ray Winstone.