

Triggerfish selects entries from inaugural Story Lab

The Triggerfish Story Lab, established with the support of the dti and the Walt Disney Company, received 1378 entries from 30 countries across Africa. 23 features and 14 TV series were shortlisted and developed with Orion Ross, VP of Content - Animation, Digital and Acquisitions Disney Channels EMEA and Hollywood script consultant Pilar Alessandra, author of *The Coffee Break Screenwriter* in a two-week intensive workshop in Cape Town in November 2015.



An expert panel that included Peter Lord, British director, Hollywood writers Kiel Murray and Jonathan Roberts, a panel of development executives of the Walt Disney Company from the London and Los Angeles offices, South African comedian David Kau, screenwriter Paul Ian Johnson and Triggerfish's development team of Anthony Silverston, Wayne Thornley and Raffaella Delle Donne evaluated the entries.

"It was impressive to see how much all the projects had improved after the workshop," says Ross. "Clearly the Story Lab was doing something right, and it must have been difficult to pick just a few projects to move forward."

Triggerfish had planned to select three projects for film and TV respectively but increased this to four, due to the quality of the projects.

Selection

The feature films selected into the Story Lab are:

- *The Camel Racer* (Wanuri Kahiu and Nnedi Okorafor - Kenya/Nigeria)
- *Dropped* (Ian Tucker - SA)
- *Lights* (Kay Carmichael - SA)
- *The Wild Waste* (Naseem Hoosen - SA)

The TV series selected into the Story Lab are:

- *Bru and Boegie* (Mike Scott - SA)
- *KC's Super 4* (Malenga Mulendema - Zambia)
- *Ninja Princess* (Marc Dey and Kelly Dillon - SA)
- *Wormholes* (Lucy Heavens - SA)

The selected storytellers include Nnedi Okorafor, a Nigerian-American World Fantasy Award winning novelist; multi-award-winning Kenyan director Wanuri Kahiu; South African YouTube phenomenon Mike Scott, whose music videos for Goldfish have over 12 million views; and Lucy Heavens, one of the writers on the breakout South African animation hit *Supa Strikas*, which is broadcast in 120 countries around the world.

"From misfit Zambian girls, who become low-budget superhero-super-spies, to a stubborn 12-year-old Kenyan girl who defies tradition by racing camels, from a young South African scientist who accidentally turns her annoying little sister into a new source of electricity to a timid lemming who must defy his nature, these are characters we fell in love with," says Anthony Silverston, head of development at Triggerfish. "We're excited by the range of stories that explore everything from contemporary urban to Afro-futuristic worlds. We're looking forward to bringing something fresh to the screen."

More investment in Story Lab

"Story Lab exceeded our expectations at every turn, from the number of entries to the quality of the projects to the way they improved during the two-week intensive with Ross and Alessandra," says Triggerfish CEO Stuart Forrest. "Narrowing it down to eight projects was difficult enough; narrowing it down to six would have been almost impossible."

The selected storytellers will start 2016 with a two-week immersion trip to Disney's headquarters in Burbank, California, where they will receive mentoring from key studio and television executives.

Triggerfish will be investing up to R44m (\$2.8m) over the next three years in The Story Lab. The development process can take a number of years. For each phase of development, Triggerfish will provide financial support, workspace and expert guidance by internal and international consultants and mentors, as well as a route to market through top-tier relationships with leading Hollywood agency William Morris Endeavor.

Animation has proven to be a successful medium for South African films to travel internationally, with Triggerfish's films *Adventures in Zambezia* and *Khumba* being distributed in over 150 countries and dubbed into over 27 languages. For more information, go to <http://triggerfishstudios.com>.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>