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Conecta Fiction Unveils Co-Production Project Line-Up

10 projects forefront heroines, not heroes, France, genre, a gathering new production ecosystem

By John Hopewell | [@john_hopewell](#)



MADRID — ZDF's "La Señora: The Woman Who Defied The Inquisition," Invercine & Wood's "An Ordinary Soldier" and "Día Cero," from Spain's Versus Ent., feature among 10 projects to be presented at the 2nd Pitch Co-Pro Series, the biggest industry event at this year's [Conecta Fiction](#).

A Europe-Latin American drama series co-production forum, backed by Spanish TV giants Movistar + and pubcaster RTVE, [Conecta Fiction](#) established itself in a vibrant first edition last June as Spain's premiere TV event.

Unspooling June 18-21 in Galicia's Santiago de Compostela, at the end of the St. James Way, 2017's inaugural edition caught the modern miracle of the international drama series scene where many titles now have a market outside their country of origin and companies team to share IP and divvy up release windows.

Sponsored by Movistar +, which offers development support for the winning project, the second Co-Pro Series points up further contours in Europe and Latin America's still-emerging higher-end drama series production landscape: the Germany-Spain production axis; innovation in comedy formats; France's TV renovation; Spanish-language producers' bold embrace of genre; above all, perhaps, the consolidation of woman's fiction: Dramas driven by heroines who battle to shape their futures, whatever the challenges.

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Budgeted at reportedly over €20 million (\$24 million), so by far the highest-end of series on display, "La Señora: The Woman Who Defied The Inquisition" is billed as a true-life action adventure. It turns on the extraordinary Gracia Nasi, a Jewish noblewoman and kind of Renaissance Europe Oskar Schindler, who leverages her own huge wealth via bribes, donations, the payment of higher taxes to wrestle protection from European states, while she set up an escape route for Inquisition-menaced Jews from Portugal to Constantinople and began to create a Zionist state. Written by Emmy-winning Gavin Scott ("The Borrowers," "Legends of Earthsea") and Germany's Kersken Uwe, the

10-part "La Señora" is produced by G5fiction, part of ZDF, and ZDF Enterprises, the German pubcaster's commercial arm.

Produced by Spain's Versus Entertainment in association with Different Entertainment and Sentido Films ("La próxima piel"), "Día Cero" is the latest example of high-profile film companies, here distribution-production house Versus, moving into TV production. It weighs in as a high-concept comedy half-hour about people confronting the end of the world when it didn't happen. Suddenly, their pre-Apocalypse passions, errors and illusions leave hostages to fortune. Alejandro Miranda's Versus lead-produces. Based out of Different, David Sainz, star-scribe of the enormously popular web-series "Malviviendo," writes with Enrique Lojo ("Serramoura"). Producing are Miranda, Different's Teresa Segura and Rafael Portela at Sentido Films.

A scribe on "Profugos," Pablo Larrain's pioneering HBO Latin America series, Enrique Videla writes and Julio Jorquera directs "An Ordinary Soldier." It promises an intimate portrait of Chile's Augusto Pinochet, a dictator who defined himself as a "an ordinary soldier." Described as an action-drama, the six-part series marks the latest drama from Invercine & Wood. At the forefront of Chile's high-end drama, it teamed with Turner Latin America to produce "Mary & Mike," presented at this year's Natpe and Berlin, directed by Jorquera, and a pioneering Chilean upscale pay TV drama.

"An Ordinary Soldier's" protagonist is obviously a man. Apart from this title, however, five projects at Conecta Fiction's 2nd Pitch CoPro Series turn around women; the remainder frame couples or ensemble casts.

Director of the Jaime Collet-Serra produced "Mindscape," and episodes of "The Department of Time" and now Movistar +s "Giants," Jorge Dorado will pitch "Cuatro Amores," an almost text-book narrative of a woman, Luisa, and her battle to live her own life, create her own storyline, in a post-Civil War Spain and Paris from 1940 to 1976.

"La Comandante," co-written again by Videla and a return-to-arms action thriller, features a woman in a role which would most ordinarily just a few years back have been allotted to a man – think "Taken." Elisa Ramirez, once part of the armed guerrilla underground battling Pinochet, returns to Chile, to old allies and enemies, to free her abducted daughter, take what it may, who has been kidnapped during a business trip to the Atacama.

Part inspired by real events, "El Palmar" (Apocryphal), an example of Spanish noir, tracks a Belfast homicide squad officer, Anne Keane, who travels to Seville to investigate the stomach-churning murder of an Irish bishop in a religious sect. With echoes of "The Name of the Rose," Dan Brown, and indeed "The Bridge," "El Palmar" is backed by Spain's Emotion Media and Area de Television y Noticias (ATN).

Produced by Elephant, the most established of French production companies presenting projects in Santiago, the central question asked by the true events-inspired "The Florence Cassez Case" is whether the heroine, French citizen Florence Cassez, really forged her own destiny or was a passive victim of events. Sentenced in 2007 to 60 years for kidnapping and organized crime, the series offers to tell portray "the true story, its context and its heroine."



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Just the second edition of an event which looks set to one more attract top TV executives from Latin America, plus a larger turnout from Spain, France and Germany, the 2nd Co-Pro Series underscores new two trends for the forum: Renovation in an ever more cosmopolitan French fiction production sector; Spain's burgeoning new drama series production ecosystem.

The presence of three French projects, one from Germany, plus a focus on Germany, gives this year's Conecta Fiction a far more European thrust.

Adding to France's notable sci-fi fiction scene – think Thomas Cailley's Series Mania winner "Ad Vitam," "Missions," prized at the 2017 MipDrama Screenings, or Lagardère Studios' "Trepalium" and "Transfer" – the late '60s "Ummo" tracks a French scientist and Spanish female journalist plumbing mysterious disappearances and murders in Madrid. These may – or may not – be connected with the alleged arrival of an alien race, the Ummos. Nicolas Deprost's Paris-based Wild Horses produces.

A potential highlight, bringing something new to the table, "Once a Year," from a woman screenwriter, Delphine Labouret, is a down-the-years' romantic thriller tracking two lovers, both happily-enough married, who experience love at first sight in 2000 and agree to meet just once a year, on Dec. 29. If one doesn't show, that means the end of the affair.

At least five of the 10 projects at Conecta Fiction are set up by companies founded in the last ten years, or are being developed by companies moving into the sector: ZDF unit G5fiction, launched in 2015, Versus Ent.; Chile's Invercine & Wood and Villano Producciones. Spain's Kubelik Productions was founded 2008.

Kubelik is developing 'Condor,' an international crime thriller set in 1976 in which a rogue Spanish intelligence operative and ex-Chilean activist team to expose an international conspiracy targeting dissidence to Latin American dictatorships. At Conecta Fiction last year with "Penumbra," Spanish author Pablo Barrera writes with Spain's Alberto Macías. "Condor" marks the third project turning – as past context, central issue, or source of suspense – on the homicidal crimes of Augusto Pinochet's regime.

DIGITAL WEB SERIES

Adapting – quite extensively – NZTV Digital Emmy-winning "Reservoir Hill," interactive drama "If I Were You," showcased at April's Canneseries, Spanish pubcaster RTVE has run up a reputation for pioneering short format web series in Spain. It will now extend development coin via digital platform Playz to the winner of a Conecta Fiction Pitch Digiseries contest. The five contenders, to be talked up on June 19, are:

"Y SIN EMBARGO AMIGAS (BEST FRIENDS FOREVER)"

A pioneering feminist sitcom for Spain, a 30something sorority comedy with three childhood female friends rebounding as their share a no-men-allowed flat. Written by Diana Lopez Varela, whose credits include "Memories of a Man in Pajamas," "Amigas" is produced by Coruña's Lady Bug Films

"DRAMA IN PANAMA"

Something different: A Bulgarian 15-minute format, inspired by Jack London's epic tale and adventure comedy "Hearts of Three," about the formerly wealthy Francis Morgan heading to Panama for treasure and enchanting "savages." Expect a modern-day recasting of some elements.

"PLANETA ROSS"

An adoption drama with a LGBT twist as P.E. teacher Santiago obtains custody of Ramiro. Gaining a son, the new father discovers he wants to be a mother. El Calefón, a stalwart on Cordoba, Argentina's film-TV production scene, is handling development.

"STREISAND EFFECT"

Presented at December's Filmarket Hub TV Pitchbox in Madrid, directed by Paco Caballero, a co-scribe on Pau Freixas' 2018 hit TV series "Welcome to the Family," and produced by Compacto, a crowdfunding specialist. A half hour comedy about the travails of a young YouTube celebrity, who tries to return to anonymity.

"WHITE DRAGONS"

A series steeped in the culture and architecture of Barcelona genius Antonio Gaudi, which contains the secret to the mystery of a real-life white dragon discovered by five students at the Barcelona International School. "An adventure full of love encouraging the values of art conservation and nature," its description runs. Paco Caballero again directs, Compacto produces.

CONECTA FICTION 2ND PITCH COPRO SERIES, JUNE 19, 2018

(Project title, screenwriter/producer, country of origin)

"La Señora: The Woman Who Defied The Inquisition," (Gavin Scott, Kersken Uwe/G5fiction, ZDF-Enterprises, Germany)

'Día Cero,' (David Sainz, Enrique Lojo /Versus Entertainment, Different Entertainment, Sentido Films, Spain)

"An Ordinary Soldier," (Enrique Videla / Invercine&Wood, Chile)

"Cuatro amores," (Jorge Dorado / Fasten Films, Spain)

"La Comandante," (Enrique Videla Urra, Juan Ignacio, Sabatini Mujica/Villano Producciones Ltda., Chile)

"El Palmar," (Alejandro Torres, Eligio R. Montero, Simón Casal/Emociona Media, ATN, Spain)

"The Florence Cassez Case," (Fred Garson, Benoit Jaubert/Elephant Story, France)

"Ummo," (Delphine Labouret/Chabraque Productions, France)

"Once a Year," (Nicolas Deprost/Wild Horses, France)

"Condor," (Pablo Barrera, Alberto Macías/Kubelik Producciones, Spain)

WEB SERIES

"BFF (Best Friends Forever)," (Diana López Varela / Ladybug Films, Spain)

"Drama in Panama," (Deyan Sedlarski, Ivo Alekseev, Mirela Mircheva/Activist38.Ltd, Bulgaria)

"Planeta Ross," (Matías Herrera , Florencia Bastida/El Calefón, Argentina)

"Streisand Effect," (Paco Caballero/Compacto, Spain)

"White Dragons," (Antonio Fernández/Motion Pictures Entertainment, Spain)



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