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SCREENDAILY

Female-focused financing event Breaking Through The Lens marks second edition at Cannes

BY MELANIE GOODFELLOW | 20 MAY 2019



SOURCE: BREAKING THROUGH THE LENS

Canadian director Shelley Thompson, Philippines filmmaker Maritte Go and UK-based documentarian Emily James were among the participants at the second edition of female-focused financing event Breaking Through The Lens in Cannes over the weekend.

The initiative - spearheaded by filmmakers Daphne Schmon, Emily Carlton and Elpida Stathatou - is aimed at connecting female directors and their producers with financiers and other partners on upcoming projects.

Carlton explains they launched the platform to address the challenges female directors face when looking to finance their projects.

“There’s clearly a disconnect happening in the industry when you look at the numbers of women coming out of film schools and the numbers of features being directed by women,” she said.

As a director and a woman myself, I found that the biggest obstacle was getting finance for my films. When you’re in Cannes it can be very difficult to get meetings with some of the bigger financiers. It can be overwhelming.”

A total of 10 projects were presented at this year’s invite-only event, selected out of 200 submissions from 54 territories.

Writer and director Thompson presented her family drama *Dawn, Her Dad & The Tractor*, about a transgender woman who reconnects with their estranged farming father over the restoration of an old tractor.

The project, produced by Terry Greenlaw at Picture Plant, was one of the closest to production, with a September 2019 shoot date in place.

Go unveiled her unusual horror project *Binarang* about a young US-raised woman who travels back to the Philippines to get to track-down a fetus-eating demon who murdered her pregnant mother when she was a child.

James attended the event with her hybrid work *Finding Satoshi*, a detective thriller set against the backdrop real world of crypto-currency and intermingling real people with fictional characters.

“Pitching to such an amazing group of financiers was fantastic, it will no doubt help to speed up the development and further financing of the project,” said *Finding Satoshi* Raymond van der Kaaij at Amsterdam-based Revolver.

Elisabeth Bentley, producer of Terrence Malick’s *A Hidden Life*, was also at the event with Nina Menkes’ political thriller *Heatstroke*, set between LA and Cairo.

The full list of 10 projects are:

- *A Life Electric*, dir. Michaela Moir, prod. Fraser Morton
- *Binarang*, dir. Maritte Go, prod. Roman Kopelevich, Chris Abernathy
- *Carbon*, dir. Priscilla Anany, prod. Claire McClanahan
- *Clara Sola*, dir. Nathalie Alvarez Mesen, prod. Nima Yousefi
- *Dawn, Her Dad & The Tractor*, dir. Shelley Thompson, prod. Terry Greenlaw
- *Finding Satoshi*, dir. Emily James, prod. Raymond van der Kaaj
- *Heatstroke*, dir. Nina Menkes, prod. Elisabeth Bentley
- *Mrs. Robinson's Disgrace*, dir. Olivia Hetreed, prod. Andy Peterson
- *Sirens*, dir. Rita Baghdadi, prod. Camilla Hall
- *The Good Iranian*, dir. Tina Gharavi, prod. Neil Wallace