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Fack Ju Gohte leads 2013 German box office

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Austria's local hits led by documentary *Alphabet*; Local film boom in Switzerland.

Constantin Film's release of Bora Dagtekin's school comedy *Fack Ju Göhte* [pictured] (known in English as *Suck Me Shakespeer*) sold over 5.48m tickets in German cinemas last year to become 2013's No.1 based on admission figures.

The No. 1 according to box-office takings, however, was the latest Tolkien saga, *The Hobbit: The Desolation Of Smaug*, whose more expensive 3D tickets amassed over €44m compared to *Fack Ju Göhte's* €41m.

Dagtekin's film reunited him with Elyas M'Barek, the star of his feature debut *Turkish For Beginners* which had been 2012's most successful German film with over 2.3m admissions.

Following the continued success of *Fack Yu* – it is still screening on over 600 screens and has now pass the 6m admissions mark - plans are afoot for a sequel to be shot later this year for release in 2015.

M'Barek had also been a cast in a supporting role in Constantin's attempt to launch a new international franchise with *The Mortal Instruments: City Of Bones*. However, that film's disappointing performance led the producer-distributor to delay shooting of a second instalment *City Of Ashes* in order "to have more time to reposition the film in the current marketplace."

According to provisional figures collated by Rentrak for the period from Jan 3 to Dec 29 2013, cinemas posted 117.3 m admissions and €941m box-office.

The takings from such releases as *The Hobbit* and *The Physician* from the final days of 2013 and later reporting of box-office figures to the German Federal Film Board (FFA) might see the final result approach the €1bn mark again.

German cinema's market share

Meanwhile, German films attracted 27.2m cinema-goers and generated over €191m takings, according to Rentrak, translating into a 23.2% or 20.3% market share, respectively.

Fack Ju Göthe is the first German film since Til Schweiger's *Kokowääh* from 2008 to be the year's most popular film.

Other successful local titles included Philipp Stölzl's €26m English-language historical epic *The Physician*, which was released on Dec 25 and took over €7.6m on its first weekend; new films by hit merchants Til Schweiger (*Kokowääh 2*) and Matthias Schweighöfer (*Schlussmacher, Frau Ella*); and David Wnendt's *Wetlands (Feuchtgebiete)*, which is showing in Sundance's World Cinema Dramatic Competition next week.

Warner Bros. most successful arthouse distributor in 2013

Statistics collated by Germany's arthouse cinemas from the AG Kino-Gilde in association with Rentrak found that releases such as *The Great Gatsby*, *Blue Jasmine* and *Gravity* had made Warner Bros. the most successful distributor on their screens, followed by Concorde Filmverleih, who released the year's most successful title in the AG Kino-Gilde cinemas: *Night Train To Lisbon*, and Berlin-based NFP, the distributor of *Hannah Arendt*, 2013's

second most popular arthouse title.

Documentary Alphabet top Austrian release

Next door in Austria, the year ended with the news that only one local title had passed the 100,000 admissions threshold, Erwin Wagenhofer's documentary *Alphabet*, which had its international premiere at IDFA in Amsterdam last November.

Alphabet, about the changing educational systems around the world, is also one of three films nominated in the Best Documentary category for this year's Austrian Film Awards to be presented in Grafenegg on Jan 22.

According to Box Office Mojo's figures, Filmladen's release of *Alphabet* took just over \$1m to be 45th in the year's Top 100 which was led by *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* (\$ 7.6m) and *Django Unchained* (\$ 6.6m).

The only other local title to make the Top 100 – at No. 93 – was Andreas Schmied's feature debut, the romantic comedy *Die Werkstürmer*, which was seen by over 39,000 cinema-goers.

Boosted by the Oscar win, Michael Haneke's *Amour* attracted another 34,000 into the cinemas last year in addition to the 2012 figures, while Ulrich Seidl's *Paradise* trilogy posted between 18,000 and 31,000 admissions.

Swiss market share up, admissions down

According to provisional figures from Switzerland's film umbrella organisation ProCinema, releases of Swiss films sold over 1m tickets in 2013, the third time this has happened since 1976, leading to a domestic market share of around 8.5% (up from 2012's 5%).

This was largely thanks to the success of such Swiss films (or minority Swiss co-productions) as Bille August's *Night Train To Lisbon*, Oliver Rihs' army comedy sequel *Achtung, fertig, WK!*, Markus Imhoof's international hit documentary *More Than Honey* and Alain Gsponer's family film *Das kleine Gespenst*.

Based on admissions up to the beginning of December, ProCinema reported that the number of tickets sold had fallen year-on-year by over 12% to 12.2m.

However, there will be sure to be an upward correction for the final year-end figures which could cancel out or lessen this fall, since ProCinema has yet to include the admissions, for example, of such December releases as *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* and *The Physician*.

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