

Locarno: ‘Jack,’ ‘Heimatland,’ ‘Olmo’ in Fest Run-up Sales News



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Picture Tree Intl, Wide, Taskovsky Films acquire international sales rights to Locarno titles



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In first announced dealings on Locarno Fest titles, international sales agents have swooped on Elisabeth Scharang's "Jack" (*pictured*) multi-hander "Heimatland," and "Olmo & the Seagull," directed by Petra Costa and Lea Glob, the Locarno Festival announced Monday.

Picture Tree Intl. has acquired international sales rights to "Jack," a Locarno Fest world premiere which will play its Piazza Grande, an enormous square sitting up to 8,000 spectators used by sales agents and potential distributors alike to gauge audience reactions to often more accessible titles playing at Locarno.

The second fiction feature film from Austrian docu pic director Scharang, after 2011's Holocaust death march drama "In Another Lifetime," thriller "Jack" turns on the real-life Jack Unterweger, a convicted murderer of a prostitute whose road to redemption, while

imprisoned, was to write stories and poems. Released after 15 years, following a campaign by writers such as Gunter Grass, he saw his biography taught in schools, hosted TV discussions on criminal rehabilitation, and became a high-society celeb as a poet and lover.

But can a man defeat or at least silence the devil inside him? That is the question the film asks.

“One of the most famous and controversial characters in recent criminal history, Jack Unterweger was a convicted serial killer, writer and womanizer. About 20 years ago, he polarized intellectuals, justice and the media alike. We are thrilled to present his incredible story to the audience at Piazza Grande,” said PTI founder-managing director Andreas Rothbauer.

Thimfilm will release “Jack” in Austria on Sept. 18. Vienna’s Epo Film produced.

In another deal, Loic Magneron’s [Wide](#) has picked up international distribution rights to the only Swiss movie playing International Competition and hence, inevitably, one large focus of attention at Locarno this year. Its world premiere status and direction by 10 new or up-and-coming directors only sharpens that interest

“Heimatland” revolves around the 10 young local directors take on one of the country’s biggest claims to a sense of identity: Its independence from foreign intervention. In it, Switzerland is threatened by a hurricane of catastrophe proportions. But the film also relates how Swiss people react to another huge disaster: Dependency on other countries.

Directors are Michael Krummenacher, Jan Gassmann, Lisa Blatter, Gregor Frei, Benny Jaberg, Carmen Jaquier, Jonas Meier, Tobias Nolle, Lionel Rupp and Mike Scheiwiller. Bern-based Contrast Film produces. Look Now! one of Switzerland’s leading arthouse distributors, will release in Switzerland.

“Besides gathering the best of the new generation of Swiss filmmakers, ‘Heimatland’ proposes an original approach to collective cinema, and aims to reach a broad audience. The philosophy of Wide being to promote new talents and innovative arthouse cinema, representing this film was natural for us,” Magneron said.

In a third deal, [Taskovsky Films](#) has acquired international sales rights on “Olmo & the Seagull,” from Petra Costa and Lea Glob. Tim Robbins exec produces; Denmark’s Zentropa Entertainment 5, Brazil’s Busca Vida Filmes, and Portugal’s O Som e la Furia co-produce.

A multi-layered docu-fiction hybrid, “Olmo” turns on two real-life actors from the Theatre du Soleil, Olivia Corsini and Serge Nicolai whose life is turned upside down when she gets pregnant, Olivia weighs the impact on her bohemian life and stage career, where she has a chance to play the femme lead in “The Seagull” in New York, but not with a swollen belly. The film includes scripted reenactments: the audience will never be sure to what extent Olivia or Serge are acting; adding narrative drive, they will have to see if the film is essentially a fiction/reality play or a love story; or both.