

# VARIETY

## ***Mundial's Cristina Garza: 'Our Mission Is To Sell Really Unique Films'***



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***Garza, EVP at Mundial, the IM Global/Canana j.v., talk about its tastes – broad – back-up, rationale and roadmap***

*John Hopewell*

A pioneering joint venture of IM Global and Mexico and L.A.-based Canana, founded by Gael Garcia Bernal, Diego Luna and Pablo Cruz, Mexico City-based film sales-financing entity Mundial launched one year ago on the very eve of Ventana Sur. It is the most ambitious initiative ever to sell Latin American films to the world. One year later, Mundial has acquired world sales rights on seven titles, placing three, a considerable

feat, at Toronto: “Paradise,” a Mexico City-set love story from Mariana Chenillo (“Nora’s Will”); Alberto Arevalo’s Venezuelan epic “The Liberator,” starring Edgar Ramirez (“Carlos”) and Fernando Coimbra’s questioning abduction thriller, “A Wolf at the Door.” All three now play Ventana Sur. “The Well,” Matthew Rowe’s follow-up to Cannes Camera d’Or winner “Leap Year” makes its market premiere in Buenos Aires. Diego Luna’s English-language debut “Chavez” is shaping up as one of Mexico’s highest-profile movies of 2014. As Mundial turns one, its EVP, Cristina Garza talked at Ventana Sur about its rationale, broad-based slate, trends in Latin American production, genre fanboyness, and gameplan going forward.

### **Looking back on it, why did you launch Mundial?**

There is a lot of very strong talent coming out of Latin America and we felt that the filmmakers from that region were being underserved. Canana has co-produced over twenty films. We often didn’t think our films were adequately being taken care of with regards to reporting or getting the kinds of numbers they should be getting. When IM Global approached us, we recognized the opportunity to sell our own movies with a certain level of aggressiveness and ambition that allow films to really be serviced adequately. IM Global has great resources and sells movies in a very structured, transparent way, building a very strong back office that supports both filmmakers and distributors’ needs.

### **So you share a back office with IM Global for collections, for example?**

Yes, by back office I mean their lawyers, their accountants, their delivery team, collections, press, publicity and marketing teams: We’re talking about a back office of more than 25 people that work on every single one of my movies. This doesn’t happen normally on Latin American films. This helps our films grow. When I go to a market, I have the IM Global team also promoting my films and putting my films in front of their big buyers in territories where it’s harder to get distribution for Spanish-language movies. By opening up windows for distribution, we are allowing production in Latin America to grow.

### **Is Mundial continuing to a certain extent one of Canana’s founding missions of nurturing the careers of new directors?**

Absolutely: We want to find new voices and help those voices grow. Our mission is to sell really unique films, and a lot of those films end up coming from first and second-time directors. But we don’t want to focus on just one kind of cinema. We are also interested in selling bigger commercial movies that may have recognizable talent. So our line-up right now has very big ambitious movies like “The Liberator,” with Edgar Ramirez, and we also have Mariana Chenillo’s second film, “Paradise,” Michael Rose’s second film, “The Well,” which market premieres at Ventana Sur, and Fernando Coimbra’s “A Wolf At the Door,” a first-time film but an incredibly strong, very director-driven arthouse piece.

**Mundial has launched as international markets – and it's a long-term trend – tend to contract in sales terms around titles that are ever more successful: Either a film sells very well or very little. How does Mundial face up to this?**

Because of the quality and quantity of film production, there is huge competition to screen movies at festivals and markets and for the limited screen space in territories. We are really aiming to make this company survive on the sales we do for Latin American movies and that's one reason why we have to be very aggressive.

**Are there trends in Latin American cinema that could help the sale of its films?**

Most importantly perhaps, the talent pool has grown in a large way. Latin American films are getting ever more awards at film festivals. There are a lot of state and national funds for film production in, for example, Colombia, Brazil, Mexico and Chile. Some filmmakers are moving over to mainstream movies, or shoot in English in Latin America with recognizable talent. At the end of the day, however, films break out because they are extraordinary, truly unique pieces: There is no formula for a successful Latin American film.

**Mundial turns one as Ventana Sur launches its first genre pic market, Blood Window. Canana partnered with Robert Rodriguez and Austin's Fantastic Fest to launch a Fantastic Market featuring Latin American genre pic projects. What's your take on genre in Latin America?**

September's Fantastic Market was really incredibly successful, as Blood Window could well be. We had very good attendance, extraordinary feedback. Next year, we will see a dramatic increase in the number of projects we get and the industry attendance. In general, there is an extraordinary amount of genre talent coming up in Latin America, and genre is something that sells easier because it defies language in a way. Genre filmmakers are getting their films picked up by IFC Midnight, Magnolia, which helps with international distribution. Both IM Global and Mundial are die-hard genre fans, so we would love to find more genre films from Latin America.

**Do you feel that many genre pics in Latin America are, rather like in Spain, auteur genre movies?**

Exactly: The films of Adrian Garcia Bogliano, Dennison Ramalho, Gustavo Hernandez and Jorge Michel Grau, to name a few, deliver social commentary with genre. Many other Latin American genre movies, the majority of films maybe, do as well.

**And Mundial's roadmap for the immediate-medium-term future?**

We started off as a sales company. That's a very good way to figure out how the market works, through the films you're selling. Like IM Global, we've had a very strong desire to be involved in the film industry in more than just a sales capacity. We would love to begin financing movies, we are already making strategic partnerships with production companies in regions that are important to us.