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SCREENDAILY

Locarno roundup: Wetlands stirs controversy, new Swiss distributor and festival emerge

12 August, 2013 | By [Martin Blaney](#)

Social media platforms ban explicit trailer for Wetlands.

Wetlands stirs controversy

As if Charlotte Roche's eponymous novel hadn't already attracted enough controversial reaction on its publication, David Wnendt's adaptation of *Wetlands* (Feuchtgebiete) is now generating its own kind of headlines after its world premiere in Locarno's Competition on Sunday evening.

Ahead of its German theatrical release by Majestic Filmverleih on August 22, Facebook, Google and You Tube have removed the film's trailer from their platforms "due to sexually explicit and provocative content."

The 12-rated trailer for the 16-rated film has now been replaced by a censored [version](#) which, Majestic assures cinema-goers, is "100% G-rated."

"Out of consideration for our American friends, but also for all those people who sicken at very sight of their own body, we want to help protect our youth," the distributor declared with tongue firmly in cheek.

The trailer in its original uncensored glory with an array of bodily fluids and "dirty talk" can still be viewed on Locarno's [festival site](#) at the online catalogue entry for the film.

Swiss film festivals probe, new players in the local distribution and festival landscape

The first festival weekend saw the local Swiss film industry gathering in Locarno for various meetings with film funding institutions and political decision-makers, with ScreenDaily also learning of new developments in the Swiss distribution and festival landscape.

Esther van Messel of the Zurich-based sales agent First Hand Films revealed that she will be launching a theatrical distribution arm in Switzerland from this autumn.

Marketing and publicity chores for the new operation have been entrusted to Supermarket's Olivier Müller and Christian Ströhle, both formerly staff members at the Federal Office for Culture (BAK) in Berne.

In addition, the Federal Statistical Office (BfS) unveiled the first results of a study about films shown at festivals and in Swiss cinemas, which had been commissioned by the Conférence des festivals association of Swiss festivals including those in Locarno, Nyon and Solothurn.

The BfS researchers found that a quarter of the 2,186 feature-length films shown in Switzerland in 2011 - 575 - were exclusively shown at festivals, while 149 were also shown theatrically in cinemas after having been initially presented in a festival programme.

Moreover, of the 723 film premieres in Switzerland in 2011, more than half (379) were first shown at a film festival, underscoring the significance of film festivals as an alternative distribution channel.

Ski resort to host new film festival

Meanwhile, a new festival is appearing on the horizon at the Alpine resort of Saas-Fee, to be held March 19-23, 2014, and organised by project manager Gabriel Zurbriggen and artistic director Stefan Fichtner.

Speaking exclusively to ScreenDaily in Locarno, Zurbriggen and Fichtner explained that the Saas-Fee Filmfest (SFFF)

will focus on films from Switzerland which have not yet had a local theatrical release as well as from the neighbouring countries where the nation's four languages are spoken, i.e. Italy, France, Germany and Austria.

The first edition will present a competition section with a three-person professional jury deciding on the best film and awarding a cash prize of \$5391 (CHF 5,000) to the film's director, while the festival audience will be invited to vote for their favourite film for the Audience Award.

Zurbruggen, who himself hails from Saas-Fee, pointed out that festival guests will have the opportunity to spend time on the piste during the daytime since the skiing season continues until the end of April at an altitude of 1,800 metres and above.

Fichtner said that "the selection is interested in free, personal, innovative cinematic approaches and strong, moving stories which challenge viewing and thought habits. The production budget and the length of the director's filmography play a secondary role as selection criteria."

A favourite haunt of such VIPs as Tina Turner, Michael Schumacher and Seal, Saas-Fee was also chosen as the setting for Wham's music video for its 1984 hit Last Christmas.

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