

SCREEN DAILY STORIES

Euros 50m German fund lines up US indie projects

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US independent producers **Inferno Distribution**, Bob Yari Productions and Internationalmedia are being lined up as possible sources of projects for a new Academy Film Fund launched by ABN Amro's private bank Delbrueck Bethmann Maffei (DBM).

The Academy Film Fund aims to have a volume of at least Euros 50m and would finance the production of three features for the international market.

According to the Academy Film Fund prospectus, the fund has already concluded a framework agreement with **Jim Seibel and Bill Johnson's Inferno Distribution** for them to submit at least three projects for consideration in time for an investors meeting on December 23. Bob Yari Productions and Internationalmedia - both of whom have worked with the Academy funds in the past - were also being approached to offer projects.

The first Academy fund was launched in 2001 by the Commerzbank to raise Euros 140m which were invested in two Franchise Pictures productions: *Ballistic: Ecks vs Sever*, starring Antonio Banderas and Lucy Liu, and the action comedy *The In-Laws*, with Michael Douglas and Albert Brooks. This was followed a year later by another fund which produced the Bruce Willis action comedy *The Whole Ten Yards* with Franchise and two Internationalmedia projects: the Pierce Brosnan/Julianne Moore romantic comedy *Laws Of Attraction* and the Owen and Luke Wilson comedy drama *The Wendell Baker Story*.

In 2003, ABN Amro took over the running of the Academy funds and placed third tranche. At their initial meeting in December 2003, the investors decided to invest a total of Euros 42m in Stratus Film's *Tishomingo Blues* and Internationalmedia's *Me Again*.