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Henrik Meyer's True West Films in Canada

THE MOST WESTERN FORT FOR GERMAN PRODUCTIONS

Hamburg/Vancouver (sw) – Feature films, international co-productions and service productions—the scope of Canadian True West Films Ltd. (TWF) is broad. Among the current projects for principals Elizabeth Yake and Henrik Meyer is Mika Kaurismäki's "Ice Man" and "Everything's Gone Green", the first screenplay by cult-author Douglas Coupland.

He has produced successful motion pictures such as "Talk of the Town", "Gran Paradiso" and "Rosenstrasse" for Studio Hamburg, but for almost a year now, Henrik Meyer has made Canada his new home. As Vice President and Producer, he runs TWF together with Elizabeth Yake. "Elizabeth wanted to broaden the company's scope and offered me the opportunity to build and grow the Vancouver office of TWF. This was a great option for me since I was looking for a new challenge," says Meyer. While Yake focuses mainly on financing from TWF headquarters on Salt Spring Island, Meyer puts his main focus on project development. In addition to that, he is building the service production business for TWF in "Hollywood North". "The service business is big in Vancouver, but almost exclusively with the USA. Instead, we are planning to co-operate with European and especially German film and television producers. Our idea is to become the most western fort for German producers. Our advantage is that we know the German film business very well, which quickly creates trust and confidence for a solid foundation," emphasizes Meyer. As a first example, TWF took on the service production of "Miss Texas" (see BF 43/04) and is currently discussing a successor project with Studio Hamburg Productions in Berlin. "We offer a compelling service package consisting of finding the right locations, providing the know-how, putting together and supervising the team, as well as tax credit interim financing," explains Meyer.

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Nevertheless, TWF's main focus remains the production of high-quality feature films, from "low-budget guerilla films" to expensive large-scale pictures, always with a focus on international co-productions like "It's All Gone Pete Tong", the company's latest project. Henrik Meyer plans three low-budget films for this year. The zeitgeist comedy "Everything's Gone Green" is slated to be shot in June based on the script by the Canadian star-author Douglas Coupland. "We are delighted that we will produce Douglas Coupland's first project written for the screen." The director of this co-production with Radke Films, Toronto, is Paul Fox, and the lead actor is Luke Kirby. A debut film, "Tough City", is scheduled to be shot in the fall 2005. In this surf drama, the descendants of Natives and settlers are competing in surfing. "This is an extraordinarily beautiful story. In short: Natives in wetsuits, co-developed by me." Also planned for the fall 2005 is "Hiding Larry", a black comedy about a blind man who needs to hide a dead body.

TWF has three feature co-productions with Germany in the pipeline for 2006. "Ice Man" is a co-production with Kai and Kati Wiesinger's Arranque Film, which will be directed by Mika Kaurismäki. In the fish-out-of-water story, an Inuit finds his true destiny on a journey to Hamburg. "Invisible" is a co-production with Rudi Teichmann's B&T Film in Berlin. The screenplay for this teenage ghost story is written by Martin Rauhaus, and it will be directed by Martin Duffy. Ambitious and lavish at the same time, the feature film "Village of Widows" is Henrik Meyer's next project planned with "Gran Paradiso" director Miguel Alexandre. The Canadian/German/Japanese co-production is based on the historical events of Canadian Natives who were callously misused in the mining of uranium for the nuclear bombs on Japan. "We want to tell a moving story about a dark chapter in Canadian history," says Meyer.

Caption: Henrik Meyer explores new frontiers for German and international projects