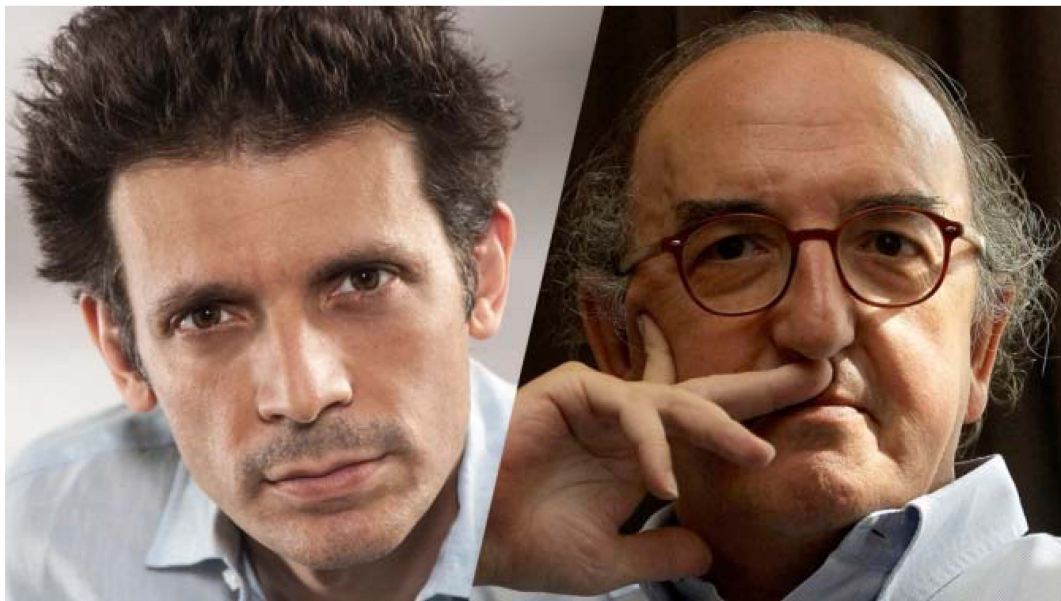


Berlinale: Mediapro Takes Stake in Burman Office, Creating TV Creation-Production Hub (EXCLUSIVE)



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COURTESY OF DANIEL BURMAN AND JAUME ROURES

Mediapro, Burman Office set to unveil two series at Berlin, 'Stroke' and spy thriller based on book 'IOSI El espía arrepentido'

BERLIN — Creating one of the biggest independent creation-production TV hubs in the Spanish-speaking markets which is aimed at making contents for the whole world, Spain's Mediapro, a "The Young Pope" co-producer, has bought a substantial stake in Argentina's Burman Office. Headed by Daniel Burman, a leading light of the New Argentine Cinema, Burman Office is set to produce "Edha," Netflix's first TV series in Argentina.

One of the key axes in a fast-emerging new independent production TV scene in Latin America and Spain, the alliance will be unveiled Feb. 16 in Berlin by Mediapro head Jaume Roures and Burman. It builds on a strategic co-development deal between Mediapro and Burman Office for high-end fiction TV series and formats that was announced last July.

Mediapro's equity investment goes further, however, seeing Burman Office becoming part of the Mediapro, one of Southern Europe's largest and most international of TV-film groups with production offices in 35 cities in 25 countries.

First projects announced are "Stroke," from an original script by Daniel Burman, and an adaptation of 'IOSI El espía arrepentido,' a book by Miriam Lewin and Horacio Lutzky about a spy who infiltrated the Jewish community in Argentina paving the way for the terrorist attack on the building of the Israelite Argentine Mutual Association which killed 85 people in 1994.

"Stroke" is a 13-part comedy on a 40-year-old man rebooting his life after suffering a stroke. Together, Mediapro and Oficina Burman have around 20 projects in development. All series will be three seasons long.

Though both companies have their H.Qs in the Spanish-speaking world, Roures said that the new partnership "is not focusing only or principally on the Latin American market."

He added: "Based on the quality of the screenplay and product, these types of contents have a universal market."

"With Mediapro's presence, we will form a creative hub of enormous potential and strong production values, adding our joint capacity of contents creation, [Mediapro's] enormous production capacity and its capacity to deliver to the market," Burman added.

Burman Office's incorporation into the Mediapro fold follows on the appointment last May as its head of international content development of Ran Telem, a Primetime Emmy Award-winning producer on "Homeland" and longtime V.P. of programming and content at Israel's Keshet Broadcasting. Burman called Telem "one of the people who knows most about storytelling."

Having launched a writers' room in Buenos Aires, one of Oficina Burman's distinguishing characteristics as a creator of high-end series has been its insistence on longterm development. That of course is highly costly. But it is now

far more feasible with Mediapro as a partner-shareholder.

“We need the muscle and financial power which can create time for stories. Mediapro understands development, that it is a cornerstone,” Burman said.

Though aiming to make content for markets around the world, Mediapro-Burman Office alliance comes as Latin America is in the throes of a TV revolution. For Burman, “consumers are accustomed to a level of sophistication and production values which they see on their platforms. We have to be at that level of sophistication.”

In this sense, high-end TV drama, whether made in English or Spanish, not only encourages take-up at new TV online services but unlocks the keys to the future for broadcasters who run multi-billion dollar businesses.

Tying down a deal with Burman Office, Mediapro has “associated with talent,” said Roures, a policy, he added, that it has followed in its film production, making films with Woody Allen (“Midnight in Paris”) and Roman Polanski (“Carnage”), of international directors, and Spain’s Fernando Leon (“A Perfect Day”) and Isabel Coixet (“The Secret Life of Words”).

While there is a feeding-fever for upscale, ambitious TV drama around the world, the challenge is to find the talent that can create it. The Mediapro deal ties down Burman Office whose first series, “Supermax, which screened at the Berlinale’s Drama Series Days this week, was the first Spanish-language drama to be produced out of Brazilian TV giant Globo’s Rio studios.

Partnered with Mexico’s Televisa, ad media giant WPP and investor Torreal, Mediapro owns a 7% stake in Atresmedia Group, a Spanish broadcast giant. Their joint conglomerate, in which Mediapro holds a controlling 48% participation, posted revenues of €1.509 billion (\$1.7 billion) in 2015, per company sources.

While Burman Office, now part of Mediapro, will focus on high-end TV drama as the core of contents produced, it does not rule out making entertainment formats and branded content.