

KRISTINA HOLLSTEIN

Director, co-productions and development, documentaries, ZDF Enterprises



CAREER

1996 Joins ZDF Enterprises, rising to director of documentary co-production. Also tutors at the Discovery Campus Master School and regularly lectures on economics and TV production at German universities
1988 Begins working in independent film production and distribution in co-production and development

There's a tendency for TV executives to be looking for their next job while their name is still being painted on the door of their current office. So ZDF Enterprises must be delighted to have held on to Kristina Hollstein, director, documentary co-productions and development, documentaries, for 15 years.

She's played a key role in establishing ZDFE as one of the top documentary co-producers in the world, working with the BBC, Channel 4, History Channel, Discovery Channel, National Geographic TV, NHK, Arte, and many more. Four of the top 30 most-screened programmes at MipDoc 2011 were in the company's catalogue, more than any other factual distribution company.

For MipCom, ZDFE and Hollstein are hoping for a similar buyer response to *Saving The Titanic*, a big-budget drama-documentary that began shooting in mid-August in the UK and Ireland and is being launched now in anticipation of the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic next April.

Of course, one of the risks with marking such an anniversary is you're unlikely to be alone. ITV is producing a mini-series, as is De Angelis. ZDFE, meanwhile, is not just producing *Saving The Titanic*, but also a documentary called *Titanic The Myth* (working title).

Standing out

Hollstein is confident that *Saving The Titanic* will find its place. "Many of the new documentaries being produced are using archive material that is very well known, while we are shooting very high-end, large-scale, new material using Red cameras," she says.

Produced jointly by Stephen Rooke of Tile Films and Reinhardt Beetz of Gebruder Beetz Filmproduktion, *Saving The Titanic* will be offered as 1 x 90 minutes or 2 x 52 minutes and will, for the first time, tell the story based on eyewitness accounts of the engineers, stokers and fireman who kept the ship running.



Saving The Titanic

Irish director Maurice Sweeney is staging drama re-enactments with extensive use of CGI, created by Windmill Lane Pictures, to bring to life the final hours of the Titanic.

In addition to representing the documentary output of parent broadcaster ZDF (around 300 hours a year) ZDFE represents approximately 60 hours of documentaries produced for National Geographic – titles such as *Alaska State Troopers*, *Hard Times* and *Repossessed*. "We invest in about 400 hours of documentary a year, about half of which is for German-speaking rights," she says.

Among the more impressive recent co-productions in which ZDFE has invested are *Dawn Of The Ocean* and *Planet Egypt* (pictured, left). *Dawn Of The Ocean* tells the story of the world's seas from the very beginning to the diverse eco-systems we see today.

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It is available as 3 x 50 minutes or 1 x 90 minutes, both in HD, and is a Gruppe 5 production for ZDF and National Geographic Channel in co-operation with ZDFE. *Planet Egypt*, meanwhile, is produced by Gruppe 5, and is a co-production with The History Channel US, Arte and ZDF (4 x 50 minutes HD).

So what makes Hollstein such a good co-producer? Partly it's down to her creative instinct, and partly her diplomacy. But mostly it's because she has the commercial acumen required to navigate an arena that has become more and more complex as a result of the number of international thematic channels in the market.

She's an expert in economics and not one IP right escapes the grasp of ZDFE until its true value has been assessed. Not only does this provide her company with some stability, it also means that relationships with partners are conducted on a completely transparent basis. Viewed like this, it's not just ZDFE, but the entire documentary-making community, that benefits from Hollstein's experience.

