CREATORS’ Superpanel

The Creators’ Superpanel, taking place at MIPJunior in partnership with World Screen, turns the spotlight on some of the leading creative minds in kid’s TV today.

Panelist Jonathan M Shiff heads up Australia’s Jonathan M Shiff productions, creator of Mako Mermaids, the spin-off from the hit series H2O – Just Add Water, which has sold to over 160 territories. Shiff said that, while new technology that is available to young people today gives them “the power to push you away with one swipe”, some technology can be empowering. “Like most story-tellers I can only be motivated by a deep connection to story drivers within myself and hope that the story and the characters resonate equally with my audience,” he said. “I am certainly enjoying new-found freedoms in the way we can tell stories, particularly for SVOD. For instance, denser stories, different lengths, surprise twists and cliffhangers work well, whereas in a linear environment these would have been discouraged.”

Panelist Ben Bocquelet, creator of The Amazing World Of Gumball for Cartoon Network, was only slightly kidding when he said: “To me the main problem is the undeniable quality of TV nowadays. People expect this level of quality all the time now and it is a massive pain to deliver.” He added: “Personally I believe the best way to connect with an audience is to give them heart, honesty and truth so they can throw all that love back at my face. Joking aside I truly believe these are the magic ingredients that usually give way to the most successful projects.”

Shiff agreed with Bocquelet that high standards put pressure on creatives. “It’s not always easy to bring high production value stories to the screen, often dealing with scarcely large production challenges in ambitious live action,” he said. “However, I remain a firm believer in inspiring and imaginative stories especially for empowering young people in a world where they are often undervalued or disempowered.”

* The Creator’s Superpanel is on October 13 at 10.10 in the Grand Theatre of the JW Marriott hotel

A chance to visit Summer Camp Island

Cartoon Network presents an exclusive European preview of series Summer Camp Island at MIPJunior, including an opportunity to hear from British creator Julia Pott.

The Cartoon Network Original follows two best friends Oscar and Hedgehog, who must summon all their courage to navigate the mysteries and wonders of the magical camp where the counselors are witches, horses become unicorns, and monsters live under the bed.

The original Summer Camp Island short, developed as part of the Cartoon Network Studios’ Artists Program, was screened at Sundance Film Festival, SXSW and the Tribeca Film and won awards at the Ottawa International Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival and the American Film Institute.

Pott joined Cartoon Network in 2015 as a writer for the pop culture phenomenon, Adventure Time.

* Saturday 13 October, 11.00, Grand Theatre