

# NEWS

## Co-producers find a way to shoot charging elephants

**H**OW DO you afford to film an army and 16 elephants charging across a plain? Co-produce internationally, according to David Royle, Smithsonian Networks executive vice-president of programming and production.

Speaking at MIPDoc's International Coproduction Summit, he outlined different models that worked for Smithsonian, and highlighted Angkor Wat, about the lost Cambodian city, produced by EBS (Korea).

He had contacted the company after screening one of their films at MIPDoc and then took rights to Angkor Wat, with lavish dramatic reconstructions, for the US. "It was late in the game but it drove us into a model that really works for us," he said.

This was the third annual international co-production summit, and the new format encompassed a presentation by Royle, round-table discussions focused on SVOD, and a panel, during which Laura Fleury of A+E Networks said her company intended to enter into more international co-productions, to help boost the profile of its channels outside the US.

Conrad Riggs, meanwhile, affirmed Amazon Originals' com-

mitment to unscripted international collaboration now that it was a truly global platform.

Bo Stehmeier of Red Arrow International presented *Inside Man*, a series digging into the hidden stories behind international news events that could be expanded to focus on co-producers' territories or interests; and Nicolas Deschamps of Gedeon Programmes presented technology-driven co-pro series, including *Versailles*, which uses sonar to map the hidden passages and intrigues of the French royal palace.

"SVOD is bringing a wave of change that is enveloping our business," Peter Hamilton of DocumentaryTelevision.com, who moderated the event, said. "Production costs will be shared in creative ways we haven't imagined before."



David Royle of Smithsonian Networks

## Japan history film reflects new outward-facing mood



NHK's Hiroshi Tanami

**I**T IS fitting that Tokyo Phoenix: The Rise Of Modern Japan was one of this year's MIPDoc World Premiere TV Screenings — the earliest known moving images of the Japanese capital were shot by Les Films Lumiere in 1898.

The film was introduced by Hiroshi Tanami, NHK's deputy director, programme production department, who said the film examined "why and how a city in the Far East became the biggest megalopolis in the world". He added that NHK had felt,

in its role as Japanese public broadcaster, that as interest grew around the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, it had a duty to help the world understand the city and its history.

The Japanese version of the film aired in 2014, and the tale of a rebirth from the ashes, twice over, had resonated in the aftermath of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

The international version, made with the input of international producers, is available in three versions of different lengths.

## Smaller producers meet their match

**THE MATCHMAKING** sessions are proving highly popular at MIPDoc as they give smaller

producers face-time with big players they might otherwise struggle to meet. MIPDoc first-



Kristina Hollstein of ZDF Enterprises meeting Odin Media's Julia Musatova



Planete+'s Isabelle Antraygue and Double Back's Jenni Koski and Niina Brandt

timer Julia Musatova of Odin Media is a case in point. She met leading documentary investor Kristina Hollstein, director acquisitions and coproductions, ZDF Enterprises. They discussed her documentary series *Kremlin: Era Of The Tsars*.

"It was a good meeting, but my head is spinning!" Musatova said. "You only have a short time to establish a connection and talk about your programmes — and we have a big catalogue."

Meetings are booked in ad-

vance, but there are last-minute opportunities.

"We left it too late to book meetings, but we came to have a look — we're so glad we did," said producer Jenni Koski of Double Back Documentaries in Finland, who had a meeting with Isabelle Antraygue of Planete+.

"Some people booked but didn't come, and we are hungry to find partners, so we took their slots." "We had emailed people in the past about our film *My Secret Forest*, but not all of them responded," added her colleague Niina Brandt. "We met them all here."