

For Giros, a Brazilian Film Company, Documentary and Excitement Go Together

Contributed by Geovana Pagel
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The films and documentaries of Brazilian production company Giros, based in Rio de Janeiro, have already been screened in 148 countries. The company pioneered international partnerships in Brazil.

It is currently negotiating a reality show in the Amazon, entitled "Animal Zipcode," with French-based Gedeon. It will be a "Big Brother" of sorts, with intrusive cameras capturing the daily life of animals.

Giros is also interested in working with new partners in the Arab market. "We even have projects written for the Middle East. Our goal is to show that, in Brazil, Arabs and Jews live in harmony," stated Luiz Antônio Silveira, owner of the production company.

According to Silveira, one of the scripts would be set in "Sahara," a traditional commercial area in downtown Rio de Janeiro, attesting to the peaceful coexistence of Arab and Jewish salesmen sharing the same space.

Another example that Luiz Antônio intends to record is a soccer championship, in the southern Brazilian city of Foz do Iguaçu, where Arabs and Jews play in opposing teams, but the rivalry is limited to the realm of sport.

"I have the utmost interest in working with the Arab world. One access channel could be the Al Jazeera TV network, for instance," claims Silveira. "Our business is all about partnerships. We are a content production company, therefore we make films in the format and duration requested by our partners," he emphasizes.

In fact, for many companies, exporting means surviving. Since Brazilian production companies produce everything they air, not giving independents a chance, a large number of TV shows gathers dust in the archives and is never screened.

The first show produced by Giros through an international partnership was "Ecoadventure" (free translation from the Portuguese "Ecoaventura"), screened on Discovery Latin America. Recorded in the Amazon, the show features a group of urban children from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo engaging in jungle adventures.

The second export-type show was "Mission Astronaut" (from the Portuguese "Missão Astronauta"), also made for Discovery Channel, this time for worldwide screening. "We gathered teenagers from many different nationalities to participate in a NASA astronaut training program in the US," says Silveira.

In 2001, Giros produced the documentary film "New Heroes" ("Novos Heróis" in Portuguese) for Animal Planet. The special show told stories of people who dedicate their lives to protecting animals.

Among them is a Brazilian woman who looks after the blue macaw of the Pantanal, the wetlands in the mid-western Brazilian state of Mato Grosso.

Afterwards, they recorded "Animal SOS," featuring the world's most endangered species. These include the Javan rhinoceros from Indonesia, the monk seal from Greece and the red wolf from the US.

"It takes a specialized crew to work with animals. You cannot make any noises and you cannot give off any smells. It requires a lot of patience, focus, and no fear of mosquitoes," claims Silveira.

"We also work with brands. Between 2003 and 2004, we made films for (Brazilian aircraft maker) Embraer as it entered the Chinese market. Those were entertainment films whose contents helped introduce the product to the market," he explains.

Another successful Giros project is "Seven Times Bossa Nova" ("Sete Vezes Bossa Nova"), produced in 2005 and comprised of seven 60-minute long episodes, making it the most comprehensive inventory of the musical genre ever made for TV, aired in 2005 on Direct TV.

Regarding Giros' most recent project - "Animal Zipcode" -, still under negotiation with French production company Gedeon, Silveira explains that several micro cameras will be installed in a 100-square-meter area containing several animals from the Amazon, in order to record what takes place in the jungle at night.

"The idea is to show how the ecosystem, the life cycle, the food chain works. Ants, for instance, play a key role in nature," he claims. The project is estimated at US\$ 250,000, and should be carried out in 2007.

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