



## Middle East gets creative with animation films

Jordan's RGH was in Cannes for distribution rights of its full-length feature

By Manoj Nair, Associate Editor Published: 18:47 May 29, 2013

Dubai: Networking in Cannes and breaking ground on a mixed-use themed development in Jordan is all a week's work for the Jordan headquartered multimedia company RGH Entertainment.

At Cannes, it was working on awarding the distribution rights for its second feature-length animated movie, 'Life and Adventures of Santa Clause', currently in production and due for a Christmas 2014 release date. RGH is also at an advanced stage with filming 'Postman Pat' in 3D and featuring the voices of David Tennant (of the ITV thriller 'Broadchurch' fame), Oscar winner Jim Broadbent and Rupert Grint (Ron Weasley from the Harry Potter franchise).

"Life and Adventures of Santa Clause met with much enthusiasm in Cannes - RGH has multiple offers on the table for single- and pan-territory distribution of the film," said David Corbett, RGH's executive director - North America. As for Postman Pat, "the film is in final stages of production, so much so that a trailer is finished and was presented to Prince Charles on his recent visit to the RGH headquarters in Amman."

The company maintains studios in Los Angeles and Manila apart from the one in Amman. The Jordan base in fact hosts a virtual reality suite, a CGI studio and motion capture systems.

Regional entities have been lighting up Hollywood, principally as producers. Recent films such as the ensemble cast led 'Contagion' and the Richard Gere vehicle 'Arbitrage' are cases in point.

The animation films represent RGH's "soft" creative side. RGH is also involved in an ambitious and sprawling brick-and-mortar venture in Jordan. Ground-breaking for the \$1.5 billion, 184-acre development - The Red Sea Astrarium - was flagged off to coincide with the latest World Economic Forum Summit in the Jordanian capital.

Developed by the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, the creative concept for what is Jordan's first entertainment themed resort was provided by RGH. The funding structure that will come into play for the multi-phase project is in progress.

Along with the ground-breaking, the layout for land development, entertainment designs and architectural and engineering plans were revealed. Apart from four upscale hotels and a retail and fine dining cluster, it will host the American Museum of Natural History's Silk Road Exhibition throughout its Hijazi Gardens.

There will also be a touch of space embedded in the earth-bound attractions through a dedicated zone for Star Trek, the CBS-owned property and designed by Paramount Pictures.

"A major goal in the design of The Red Sea Astrarium is to actively engage the local communities through training with on-site hospitality academies, job creation, promoting the length of a tourist's stay and encouraging repeat visitation," said Dr. Kamel Mahadin, chief commissioner of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone. "The entertainment resort will make it a high-end tourism hub for Jordan. It will do so while telling stories from our regional culture, integrating alternative energy sources and promoting the development of the entertainment industry in Jordan."