

International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam

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Coccinelle alights

Fledgling sales outfit Coccinelle Film Placement makes its IDFA debut this year with Belgian director Roel Nollet's Nathan – Free as a Bird.

The tale of Belgian transsexual Nathan Verhelst, who hit the headlines when he decided to end his life by euthanasia when sex change operations did not bring the sense of well-being he craved, world premieres in IDFA's Panorama section on Friday. Rome-based Francesca Breccia – a former manager at Italy's MGM Channel who also worked for Sky Cinema Italy and German sales company Media Luna – is the driving force behind Coccinelle.

Rather than operating as a traditional sales company, the outfit is a network of independent sales professionals working under the Coccinelle banner, Breccia explains. “We bring our own films and then help each other out with our network”, she says. “We try to keep costs to a minimum and do a lot of work over the internet.”

“Producers choose us because they get their sales revenue without any cost deduction or cut – apart from our sales commission”, she adds. Associated professionals include Gaetano Maiorino, who previously worked for Italian sales agent Adriana Chiesa and the industry office of the Toronto Film Festival; international sales veteran Jef Nuyts; Paris-based producer Sara Monacelli; entertainment law consultant Donatella Mugnano and Setsu Higa of Tokyo-based Action Inc.

Other Documentary titles on its slate include Mexican Horacio Alcalá’s *Grazing the Sky*, going behind the scenes in the circus industry, which Coccinelle has just sold to Arte and Sky Italia. The sales hub also recently sold Vittoria Colonna’s *Identities*, exploring Ireland’s multicultural transgender community, to Canada’s global LGBT channel OUTtv and its associated Utrecht-based channel which broadcasts into the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden.

Other titles on the Coccinelle slate include *The Age of Kommunalki* and *Radio Unnameable*. IFDA marks the first market for the final cut of [Nathan – Free as a Bird](#). Nollet spent three years with Verhelst, capturing her/his metamorphosis from Nancy to Nathan and then shock decision to opt for euthanasia. Breccia describes the work as a “shocking live recorded diary” combining up-close footage of Verhelst with expert interviews and context about the headlines his decision provoked.

Melanie Goodfellow