

Brad Cox to oversee a push into factual entertainment and lifestyle programming.

The company, which had made documentaries such as *The Talwars: Behind Closed Doors* for HBO Asia and Star India, is now seeking to compete with large production houses in South-East Asia to produce local versions of major formats while developing its own lifestyle formats.

However, Cox, who has worked on shows such as *Amazing Race Asia*, *Cash Cab Asia* and *Asia's Next Top Model*, believes that although Singapore has much to attract the interest of international TV companies, it is not the best market in which to get new ideas off the ground. Many international networks may be headquartered there and it is an easy place to film, but Cox says the local channels "tend to play it very safe."

Conversely, in Indonesia, a diverse local broadcasting industry means that each network is on the hunt for ideas that will help it stand out from its competitors, says Cox.

"If you come up with a wacky, offbeat idea that is against the norm, they will run with it, as it may just be



"South Korea is becoming more complicated because since we planted the flag years ago, the big guys have moved in and a lot of good new formats have one of them attached already."

Tim Crescenti, Small World

the idea that gives them the edge over the other networks. So my preference is Indonesia or the Philippines as markets that will take a little bit more risk," says Cox.

However, the exec adds that he can't see any other country unseating South Korea as the current cultural powerhouse in Asia any time soon, such is the strength of its activities

not only in TV but also in fashion, food and music.

"Perhaps Thailand would have a better chance culturally than Malaysia, but I don't think either would be any threat to South Korea anytime in the near future. The only country that could re-emerge against South Korea in terms of popularity would be Japan," says Cox.

Meanwhile, there are other examples of producers with a firm footing in factual content branching out into other genres as they seek to grow their international footprint. Take Thailand's TV Burabha, which, after over a decade of producing documentaries, is now working on one of its first formats, *The Samurai Camp* (working title).

International content director Nattanan Kulrapeekorn says the Bangkok-based company, which is also working on lifestyle shows such as *Creepy Crawly Superfoods*, is adapting its content to cater to the tastes of European and Asian broadcasters.

"The mood and tone the European market wants is mostly straightforward observational narration, without too much

dramatisation. But the Asian markets like to take the story with salt and pepper," says Kulrapeekorn, using a forthcoming doc about a town in Thailand overpopulated by monkeys as an example. "The one for the Asian market has the title *Monkey Town* and is more like an action film, whereas the one we are proposing to the European market is called *Amongst Monkeys*. It's told from the human perspective and is more straightforward," says Kulrapeekorn.

In order to grow awareness around the country's burgeoning factual market at international events, TV Burabha has aligned with nine other local producers to form the Thailand Documentary Filmmakers Association.

Kulrapeekorn adds that, because of the mobile-centric viewing habits of young people in Thailand and across Asia, TV Burabha is sharpening its focus on producing for online platforms, rather than traditional TV. This includes Line TV, a YouTube-style video service from a company known for its messaging app in Thailand. "All the money is shifting to these online providers. The commissioning fees from broadcasters have gone down significantly in Thailand because they are struggling," says Kulrapeekorn.

It's clear that as the local format industries in Asia continue to mature, the exportable IP that emerges will keep global production and distribution outfits, as well as independents, scanning the continent for new IP.

In addition, as producers, distributors and broadcasters in both the East and the West grapple with developments in tech and the rise of digital-based buyers, it's likely that headlines announcing co-development deals between companies in the two territories will only become more familiar. ■



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News from C21Media.net

Bomanbridge, Arrow, CJ join NPact

Bomanbridge Media in Singapore, the UK's Arrow Media and CJ E&M in South Korea are among the prodcos to have joined North American non-fiction trade body NPact as part of a wider shake-up of the organisation.

US producers Super Delicious and Ugly Brother Studios have also joined NPact, which serves as the industry voice for producers of non-fiction entertainment content in North America. Meanwhile, Revolution Entertainment Services has joined the organisation as an associate member. NPact, which was formed this year following the merger

of the Nonfiction Producers Association and PactUS – overseen by the late David Lyle – has also announced its new 25-strong board of directors, nine of whom will comprise the new executive committee. It is made up of Jenny Daly (T Group Productions), David Garfinkle (Renegade 83), Eli Holzman (IPC), Laura Palumbo Johnson (Magilla Entertainment), Bruce David Klein (Atlas Media), John McVay (Pact), Brent Montgomery (ITV America), John Pollak (Electus) and Eric Schotz (Anvil 1893). NPact represents 90 prodcos and 11 associate members, which are service providers to the unscripted industry.