



**SERIES MANIA FORUM  
ANNOUNCES WINNER OF THE CO-PRO PITCHING SESSIONS  
AND RECIPIENT OF THE €50,000 PRIZE**

**Series Mania Forum Best Project Award given to the  
South African drama “Paradys”**

LILLE, FRANCE – March 22, 2022 – Ms. Laurence Herszberg, founder and general director of Series Mania, and professional jury president Antony Root, EVP and Head of Original Production, WarnerMedia EMEA, announced this evening the winning project of Series Mania Forum’s annual Co-Pro Pitching Sessions. Of the 15 projects selected and pitched on the first day of Series Mania Forum, the industry arm of the Series Mania Festival, the jury team selected the South African drama *Paradys* as winner of the Series Mania Forum Best Project Award.

Along with Root, the jury included Noel Hedges, EVP Acquisitions, eOne, Germany, Yaël Fogiel, Producer, Co-Founder and Co-Director, Films du Poisson, France, Daniele Cesarano, Head of Drama, RTI Mediaset Group, Italy and Susanne Frank Director, ZDFE.drama, ZDF Enterprises, Germany. Together they had the honor of presenting a check for €50,000 to producer Nimrod Geva for Quizzical Pictures and creator/writer Darrel Bristow-Bovey.

*Paradys* was created by Darrel Bristow-Bovey and Anton Visser; Written by Darrel Bristow-Bovey; Produced by Nimrod Geva for Quizzical Pictures; with Executive Producer Avi Nir for Keshet International.

“The jurors were impressed by the wide range and high-quality of the fifteen pitches they watched from 56 different countries. There were some comedies, some dramas, some crime series, some horror, and some futuristic fantasy. Each project was considered for its own intrinsic qualities, for its originality for audiences, and for its potential to travel outside its country of origin,” commented Root.

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Added Root, “The jury’s final decision was unanimous that the award should be given to *Paradys* from South Africa. The project was presented with passion and precision, and we hope the Series Mania award will allow it to be developed further and start the journey towards production. Although the setting is local, we believe the story, its themes and its characters will also resonate for audiences outside South Africa. The country is well known for the high quality of the international productions that shoot there. To see the same standards applied to a distinctive and ambitious local project will be very exciting.”

“The Co-Pro Pitching Sessions are one of the most anticipated part of the Series Mania Forum. We are delighted to be giving the €50,000 prize to Nimrod and Darrel for their drama *Paradys*. This is the first time a South African drama has won the Best Project Award and we are delighted to be honoring this series which encompasses intriguing locations, complex characters, and timely and relevant issues. I have no doubt this series will soon find the perfect partners,” stated Herszberg.

More than a hundred projects have been pitched through this program since its creation in 2013, including winners at last year’s Festival *Blackport* (Best Series International Competition) and *The Last Socialist Artifact* (Best Series International Panorama). This year, two previous Co-Pro Pitching Sessions entrants are part of the official Festival selection: *Des Gens Bien* (Belgium/France) and *Hors Saison* (France/Switzerland).

The Forum’s Co-Pro Pitching Sessions has also been a launchpad for such series as *No Man’s Land* (France), *Banking District* (Switzerland), *Eden* (France), *Keeping Faith* (Great Britain), *Manor House* (Czech Republic), *Stella Blomkvist* (Iceland), *Tabula Rasa* (Belgium), *Trepalium* (France), *Warrior* (Denmark), *Devils* (Italy), *The Head* (Spain), *Ever After* (Italy), and *We Got This* (Sweden).

### **ABOUT PARADYS**

A whites-only enclave in the new South Africa. The horrific murder of an elder’s son. Two black cops drawn into a dusty town that refuses to let go of the past.

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With the first democratic elections of 1994, formal apartheid ended in South Africa ... except for one town in the north-west desert, on the banks of the Orange River, where a consortium of Afrikaans farmers bought a parcel of arid land to create a private, whites-only town they call Paradys. Paradys makes its own rules, has its own private police force and keeps outsiders out, but when a horrific murder opens the door, two detectives are the first black people ever to set foot in Paradys. Milly Tjale is young, conscientious, and respectful, on her first case, determined to play it by the book. Ezekiel Joyi is angry and embittered, and he just wants to burn this racist town to the ground. Somehow, they must work together to navigate an upside-down world of shifting allegiances, apocalyptic cults, and covert interference from the American alt-right to finally uncover a truth that is neither black nor white.

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