



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**--- 14 MAY 2009, 1800HRS (Cannes' time)**

### **'BUBBLEGUM CRISIS' HEADED FOR BIG SCREEN**

Cannes, 14 May 2009 - A six country effort to produce a live-action version of the Japanese anime series 'Bubblegum Crisis' kicked off with a Production Agreement Signing Ceremony at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival. 'Bubblegum Crisis' is a popular cyberpunk, sci-fi-style anime set in the distant future.

Singapore based production firm Axxis International and Tokyo based Anime International Company (AIC), together with partners from Australia (Arclight Films), Canada (Wizzfilms Inc.), China (Infotainment China Media Company) and the United Kingdom (Latec International) inked a production agreement in Cannes on 14 May 2009.

As the first Singapore-Japan-Australia-Canada-China-United Kingdom co-production, 'Bubblegum Crisis' also targets to become the first feature film made under the Singapore-Australia, Australia-Canada, Canada-Singapore, China-Australia and China-Canada co-production treaties. The governmental treaties involved are expected to be a significant boon to the production, which gives a nod to the efforts of each authority in boosting the international film industry.

Axxis Group's CEO, Mr. Benjamin TOH says:

*"Bubblegum Crisis paves the way for Axxis International's business specialisation – to concentrate on live-action feature films with intense CGI and special effects. We look forward to doing more live-action remake of hugely popular game, anime or manga series."*

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**Axxis Group**

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Mr. Toru MIURA, President of AIC, is also looking forward to the partnership.

*"I am pleased to be working with Axxis International to create one of our better known properties and bring it to the live action genre from the anime domain. I cannot be more excited to see the start of the production, working with so many experienced partners around the globe. It will be a truly international collaboration!"*

The Australian partner, Arclight Films has also been appointed the International Sales Agent of 'Bubblegum Crisis'. Mr. Gary HAMILTON, Managing Director of Arclight Films says:

*"We're thrilled to be representing this visionary project and we're confident of its global appeal. It's a truly international production, not just because it's a co-production between six countries, but because the material itself transcends cultural barriers."*

The partners are planning a USD 30 million budget for the project, with an intended worldwide release by early 2012. Principle photography will be carried out in Australia, with post-production done in Canada by Mokko Studio – a partnering studio of Wizzfilms Inc. Mr. Anthony LaMolinara from Mokko Studio, who won an Academy Award for 'Spider-Man 2' in 2005, and nominated for 'Spider-Man', as well as two nominations for the British Academy will also be involved in 'Bubblegum Crisis'. Mr. LaMolinara was also previously an animation director at VIFX (Twentieth Century Fox Digital Effects) where he worked on 'Planet Ice', 'Blade' and 'T-Rex', as well as Walt Disney where he was animation director on 'Toy Story 3'.

Mr. Danny BERGERON, President of Wizzfilms Inc. is excited about the film's potential.

*"Look at all the major blockbusters that are coming out now - the 'X-men' series, 'Iron Man', '300'; they have all been taken from comic books. 'Bubblegum Crisis' fits into the trend and yet, as one of the first animations to have crossed overseas years ago, it has an edge. I believe it will make for a riveting live-action film."*



The participation of Infotainment China Media Company paves the way for 'Bubblegum Crisis' to enter into the much coveted Chinese film market. With the expertise and experience of Infotainment China, 'Bubblegum Crisis' sets to gain phenomenal exhibition exposures in the Chinese film market. Infotainment China will be responsible for distribution in greater China (mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong) and selected Asia countries.

Ms. Cindy Mi Lin, Managing Director of Infotainment China is excited about the partnership. She says:

*"I am pleased to be working with so many experienced international producers on this film. My objective is to ensure that foreign producers enjoy the strong market growth in the China Box Office, which has been increasing with a more than 20% annual rate in the last 6 years."*

China's film industry is forecasted to grow from generating \$250 million in box office profits in 2005 to reach close to \$900 million by 2010 and almost \$2 billion by 2015. Furthermore, China will follow a steep upward trend to overtake the U.S. film industry, currently the dominant global market leader, by sometime in 2050. While the full realization of China's motion picture industry is still many years away, now is the right time for foreign entertainment and media companies to initiate entry strategies and develop long-term plans in order to fully capitalize on this media promise land. The growth of China's film market will drive key regional Asian markets with an increase of mutually beneficial regional cooperation and integration in filmmaking that will lead to heightened visibility, awareness and profitability of the Asian entertainment industries.

(Source: <http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/c46966> )



Mr. Ravi WETHASINGHE, Managing Partner of Latec International is also thrilled about the partnership. He says:

*"It is our privilege to work with Axxis International on this production. Looking at the pool of talents and well-known co-production partners, I have no doubt that 'Bubblegum Crisis' will be a prime movie title to look out for."*

Mr. Kenneth TAN, Chief Operating Officer of the Media Development Authority (MDA) of Singapore, who witnessed the Production Agreement Signing Ceremony says:

*"The Media Development Authority of Singapore is delighted that a home-grown production company is undertaking a project of this magnitude and involving renowned international media companies as partners. I have full confidence that this property, besides its vast appeal amongst anime fans, will also draw new audiences to watch the live action film because of its intriguing storyline, high quality special effects and international cast. I wish the Axxis Group and its partners every success in the production of Bubblegum Crisis."*

The producers are currently in talks to firm up the script, director and cast. Audiences can expect to see some fresh faces alongside A-list names. A reality TV series is also in deliberation - to spot up and coming young starlets to be casted in the movie.

### **About 'Bubblegum Crisis'**

AIC first produced 'Bubblegum Crisis' since 1987 as an eight-part series for the straight-to-video market. Its popularity inspired a prequel, 'AD Police Files', and follow-up 'Bubblegum Crash' series, as well as TV cartoons, games and various spin-offs. Total video and laser disc sales amounted to more than 600,000 units. It was also widely exported abroad, becoming a key player in the worldwide anime boom.



Synopsis: ‘Boomers’ – machines built to serve mankind, have slowly become deadly instruments in selfish hands, and the city’s citizens are helpless in the shadow of mega corporation Genom’s baronial tower. A team of four young female mercenaries who call themselves the Knight Sabers make it their mission to deal with Boomer threats and protect the city. A symbol of hope and change, the vigilante group leads secret lives, emerging only to unleash their formidable battle prowess in times of need.

### ***About Axxis International***

Axxis International is involved in film-financing, film-making, animation production, CGI and special effects, as well as co-production. Axxis draws from a vast global network of stakeholders, including distributors, content owners and financiers, to provide end-to-end media services.

[www.theaxxis.com](http://www.theaxxis.com)

### ***About Anime International Company***

Anime International Company (AIC) is a Japanese anime studio based in Tokyo and founded on 15 July 1982. In addition to producing anime for domestic consumption in Japan, AIC has provided animation assistance on other animated series such as ‘Inspector Gadget’. AIC has produced many direct-to-video and TV cartoons, including the international hits ‘Tenchi Muyo’ and ‘Oh My Goddess’.

[www.aicanime.com](http://www.aicanime.com)



### ***About Arclight Films***

Arclight Films is a full service international sales, production and distribution company. Founded in Australia in 2002 by Gary Hamilton and Victor Syrmis, the company currently has offices in Los Angeles, New York, London, Sydney, Melbourne, Toronto and Tokyo, and works with many of the most creative and successful professionals in the entertainment industry. Arclight Films encompasses two subsidiary releasing labels, Darclight Films and Easternlight Films. The labels catering respectively to genre films and Asian films are the product of Arclight's unique understanding of the global marketplace, and its experience and expertise at effectively positioning films within it.

[www.arclightfilms.com](http://www.arclightfilms.com)

### ***About Wizzfilms Inc.***

WizzFilms is a Canadian production company specializing in international co-productions as well as in acquiring and developing original creative properties. The company has concentrated its efforts on numerous projects, most notably for the following features: Guy X (a UK-Iceland-Canada co-production directed by Saul Metzstein and starring Jason Biggs, Natascha McElhone and Jeremy Northam) and Les temps changent (a France-Canada co-production starring Nancy Tate, Vernon Doptcheff, Tantoo Cardinal and David La Haye).

[www.wizzfilms.com](http://www.wizzfilms.com)



### ***About Mokko Studio***

Established in early 2003, Mokko Studio is the brainchild of Danny Bergeron and Alain Lachance, both of whom have long been a part of the digital visual effects and animation industries in Canada. The variety of artists give Mokko Studio the opportunity to offer a wide range of services that consist of VFX design, storyboards, on-set supervision, animation, compositing, matte painting and miniatures. Most notable projects include CGI animation and visual effects for 'Journey to the Center of the Earth' (2008), 'Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium' (2007), and 'Silent Hill' (2006).

[www.mokkostudio.com](http://www.mokkostudio.com)

### ***About Infotainment China Media Company***

Infotainment China Media is founded by Ms. Cindy Mi Lin who has over 20 years of experience in the China's entertainment industry, and worked previously in Universal Studio, Disney, Kodak, and the Virgin Radio. Being the first private international sales agent from China, it carves out an international distribution channel for China art house feature films and named the path breaker with "Independent Spirit" by <Variety>. As the brainchild of "China Film Pitch and Catch Forum" in Shanghai International Film Festival, Infotainment China Media formed the first international co-production market in China as the match-maker for Creative and Capital. Infotainment China has a multilingual production management team specializes in 'Production Service Vending' for foreign producers in China with strong fund raising capability.

[www.infotainmentchina.com/index.html](http://www.infotainmentchina.com/index.html)



### ***About Latec International***

Latec International was started in 1985 by a consortium of companies from United Kingdom and Sri Lanka. Since then, the company has expanded in many international markets and has dealt with a wide variety of services and participated in many government and private projects. Company portfolio includes real estate development, manufacturing of buses and commodity trading.

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