



Press Release

Paris, 11 December 2025

Xilam and UGC Team Up for Series Adaptation of Bernard Werber's Bestselling Novel *Empire of the Ants*

UGC, one of France's leading players in the film and audiovisual industry, and Xilam Animation, Academy Award®-nominated French animation group, are partnering to adapt Bernard Werber's bestselling novel *Empire of the Ants* for television. Through this collaboration, the two companies aim to combine the best of their respective expertise to bring to screen this visionary work, which has enthralled readers worldwide for 35 years and sold seven million copies globally, including four million in France.

Targeted at family audiences, the series will follow two parallel investigations unfolding simultaneously: in the human world, exploring who killed the brilliant ant expert Edmond Wells; and in the ant world, uncovering the secret that the Queen and her militia are hiding that could threaten the unity of the colony.

The adaptation will be produced using live action for the human narrative, and visual effects for the ant world. The project is being written by Vladimir Haulet (*Mixte*, *Mash Up*), with the VFX direction being led by globally renowned specialist in photo-realistic animation Nicolas Deveaux, alongside Quentin Reubrecht (*Arcane*, *I Lost My Body*).

The series will be produced by Marc du Pontavice and Caterina Gonnelli for Xilam, and by Franck Calderon and Céline d'Asaro Biondo for UGC.

Bernard Werber said: *"I am thrilled to see Empire of the Ants finally come to life on screen. This adaptation from such creative powerhouses as UGC and Xilam will bring a unique level of ambition to my universe. I look forward to audiences experiencing this work in a new form."*



About Xilam

A major player in animation, Xilam is an integrated studio founded in 1999 that creates, produces and distributes original programmes in more than 190 countries for both children and adult audiences. Xilam content is broadcast on television, and is also available on SVoD platforms including Netflix, Disney+, Amazon and AVoD streaming platforms including YouTube and Facebook. Xilam also launched TOON BOX, its brand new, kids safe, ad-free streaming platform. With its creativity and capacity for innovation recognised worldwide, its unique expertise in CGI, as well as editorial and commercial expertise at the cutting edge of its industry, Xilam is positioned as a key player of the market.

Each year, Xilam builds real successes and capitalises on its powerful historical brands including “Oggy and the Cockroaches”, “Zig & Sharko” and “Where’s Chicky?”, as well as new properties such as “Piggy Builders” for a preschool audience, “Mr Magoo” and “Karate Sheep”, and Academy Award® nominated adult feature film I Lost My Body. Additionally, Xilam handled the production of the new adaptation of the Chip ‘n’ Dale characters for Disney+. Xilam’s expanding and strong catalogue now consists of over 3,000 episodes and several feature films. Xilam employs more than 400 individuals across its studios in Paris, Angoulême in France and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam. Xilam was ranked France's leading animation studio for the 2018-2023 period in a report by the French National Centre for Cinema and Animation (CNC).

Xilam is listed on Euronext Growth Paris- PEA – PME Eligibility.

ISIN: FR0004034072- Symbol: ALXIL

For more information: www.xilam.com



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About UGC

UGC is one of the leading players in the film industry across French-speaking Europe. The Group operates 48 cinemas and 510 screens in France—including UGC Ciné Cité Les Halles in Paris, the world's most-attended cinema—as well as 7 cinemas and 74 screens in Belgium.

In parallel, UGC has established itself as a major force in film creation through its production and distribution activities. In recent years, UGC has produced films such as *Serial (Bad) Weddings* by Philippe de Chauveron (the seventh biggest French box-office success of all time), *Ducobu*, whose sixth instalment will be released in 2026, *Doux Jésus* and *C'était mieux demain*, both ranking among the Top 10 comedies of 2025. UGC also distributes leading filmmakers including Jean-Pierre Jeunet (*Amélie*), Jacques Audiard with *The Beat That My Heart Skipped* (four César Awards in 2006), *A Prophet*, *Rust and Bone*, and *Dheepan* (Palme d'Or 2015), Bruno Podalydès—supported by UGC for over 20 years—as well as Leos Carax with *Annette* (five César Awards), and Florian Zeller, notably with *The Father* (Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay and César for Best Foreign Film).

In television production, UGC has, over the past eight years, become one of the industry's key groups, working with nearly all major broadcasters (TF1, France Télévisions, Arte, Canal+, M6, Netflix, Disney+, HBO, Amazon...). Since *Jacqueline Sauvage*, *It was Him or Me* in 2018 (TF1's top audience of the year), UGC's subsidiaries have delivered both critical and commercial successes. Notable examples include the hit series *HIP: High Intellectual Potential* for TF1 (the highest-rated French show since the creation of DTT, with a successful remake on ABC), and more recently *Cette nuit-là* for France 2, *Soleil Noir*—one of the most successful launches for a French series on Netflix—*Master Crimes* and *Flashback* for TF1, *Les Disparues de la gare* for Disney, and *Merteuil*, the first French production labelled as an HBO Original, available on HBO MAX.

Learn more about UGC's activities : www.groupeugc.com

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