

EMMY®- AND GOLDEN GLOBE® NOMINATED ACTOR ANTONIO BANDERAS TO STAR AS PABLO PICASSO IN *GENIUS* SEASON TWO FROM NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, FOX 21 TELEVISION STUDIOS, AND IMAGINE TELEVISION

Season Two of the 10-Episode Anthology Series Again Hails from Showrunner Ken Biller with Executive Producers Brian Grazer, Ron Howard, Ken Biller, Francie Calfo and Gigi Pritzker

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Antonio Banderas. Image courtesy of National Geographic.

Toronto, September 6, 2017 – As [National Geographic](#) heads into this year's Emmys with 10 nominations for the first season of [Genius](#), Emmy- and Golden Globe nominated actor **Antonio Banderas** (*Evita*, *The Mask of Zorro*, *El Mariachi*) has been cast as Pablo Picasso in season two, which will chronicle the life and work of the Spanish painter, one of the 20th century's most influential and celebrated artists. The new season, from Fox 21 Television Studios, will again be executive produced by Brian Grazer and Ron Howard's Imagine Entertainment, Madison Wells Media's OddLot Entertainment and EUE/Sokolow, and will premiere in 2018.

"The life story of Pablo Picasso has long since fascinated me and I have so much respect for this man, who also comes from my birthplace Málaga," said Banderas. "I am thrilled to work with National Geographic, Brian, Ron, Ken and the rest of the *Genius* team to tell an authentic story of one of the most innovative painters in the world."

“Antonio was the natural choice. He, like Picasso, has a no-holds barred approach to life that will add to the geniuneness that we’re looking for,” said Ron Howard. “He has such tremendous range as an actor, who I know will bring this brilliant and unconventional artist to life.”

“From Pancho Villa to Ernesto “Che” Guevara, Antonio has had such a successful track record in portraying real-life, larger-than-life iconic figures with such honesty and depth. And with Picasso, I’m looking forward to seeing his interpretation of the man behind the artistic greatness,” added Grazer.

The artistic career of Pablo Diego José Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno Crispín Crispiniano María Remedios de la Santísima Trinidad Ruiz Picasso spanned more than 80 of his 91 years, much of it in his second home of France. Much like the subject of the first season of *Genius*, Einstein, Picasso imagined and interpreted the world in totally new and unorthodox ways, and constantly reinvented our perceptions of art and creativity. The prolific artist generated an estimated 50,000 works, among the most notable being *The Old Guitarist* from his Blue Period, now on display at the Art Institute of Chicago; *Guernica*, inspired by the Nazi bombing of a small Spanish town of the same name, recently displayed at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid, Spain; and *Les Femmes d’Alger (O. J. R. M.)*, now on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Picasso’s passionate nature and relentless creative drive were inextricably linked to his personal life, which included tumultuous marriages, numerous affairs and constantly shifting political and personal alliances. He lived most of his life in the vibrant Paris of the first half of the 20th Century and crossed paths with writers and artists including Coco Chanel, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Gertrude Stein, Georges Braque, and Jean Cocteau. Picasso constantly reinvented himself, always striving to innovate and push the boundaries of artistic expression.

The first season of *Genius*, which starred Geoffrey Rush (*The King’s Speech*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*) as Einstein, was recently nominated for 10 Emmys including Outstanding Limited Series, Outstanding Lead Actor in a Limited Series or Movie, Outstanding Directing for a Limited Series and more, marking a network first.

Showrunner, executive producer and writer Ken Biller will continue his role overseeing the new season. The second season will also once again hail from Fox 21 Television Studios, whose recent *The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story* dominated every awards contest and critics’ list; Imagine Television, the producer of *24* and *Empire*, with executive producers Grazer and Howard along with executive producer Francie Calfo and producer Anna Culp; and Madison Wells Media’s OddLot Entertainment, which earlier this year produced the Academy Award-nominated film *Hell or High Water*, with executive producers Gigi Pritzker and Rachel Shane. Sam Sokolow and Jeff Cooney from EUE/Sokolow are also executive producers. Filming is expected to begin later this year for a 2018 premiere on National Geographic.

Genius is produced by Fox 21 Television Studios, Imagine Television, Madison Wells Media’s Oddlot Entertainment, and EUE/Sokolow.

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About National Geographic Partners LLC:

National Geographic Partners LLC (NGP), a joint venture between National Geographic and 21st Century Fox, is committed to bringing the world premium science, adventure and exploration content across an unrivaled portfolio of media assets. NGP combines the global National Geographic television channels (National Geographic Channel, Nat Geo Wild, Nat Geo Mundo, Nat Geo People) with National Geographic's media and consumer-oriented assets, including National Geographic magazines; National Geographic studios; related digital and social media platforms; books; maps; children's media; and ancillary activities that include travel, global experiences and events, archival sales, licensing and e-commerce businesses. Furthering knowledge and understanding of the world has been the core purpose of National Geographic for 128 years, and now it is committed to going deeper, pushing boundaries, going further for consumers... all while reaching over 730 million people around the world in 171 countries and 45 languages every month. NGP returns 27 percent of its proceeds to the non-profit National Geographic Society to fund work in the areas of science, exploration, conservation and education. For more information visit natgeotv.com or nationalgeographic.com.

About Fox 21 Television Studios:

Fox 21 Television Studios is a production unit housed within Fox Television Group devoted to making creatively ambitious scripted and unscripted series for all distribution platforms. Fox 21 Television Studios is responsible for two of this year's Emmy contenders for Outstanding Limited Series in Ryan Murphy's "FEUD: Bette and Joan," (19 nominations) and Ron Howard, Brian Grazer, Francie Calfo, Gigi Pritzker, Rachel Shane, Sam Sokolow, Jeff Cooney, Ken Biller and Noah Pink's "Genius" (13 nominations). The studio also produced the Emmy and Golden Globe-winning sensation from Ryan Murphy, Nina Jacobson and Brad Simpson "The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story" (with FX Productions), the Emmy and Golden Globe winning "Homeland," starring Claire Danes and Mandy Patinkin and the critically acclaimed "The Americans" (with FX Productions) starring Matthew Rhys and Keri Russell. Additional series include "Dice," from Scot Armstrong, Sean Furst, Bryan Furst, Richard Shepard, Bruce Rubenstein and Andrew Dice Clay, "Queen of the South," executive produced by David T. Friendly and Natalie Chaidez, and "Chance" from Kem Nunn, Alexandra Cunningham, Lenny Abrahamson, Michael London, and Brian Grazer. Upcoming projects include "Seven Seconds" from Veena Sud, and the next two installments in the "American Crime Story" anthology entitled "The Assassination of Gianni Versace" and "Katrina."

About Imagine Entertainment:

Imagine Entertainment was founded in 1986 by Ron Howard and Brian Grazer to create independently produced feature films, television programs and other original programming. Imagine Entertainment has been honored with more than 60 prestigious awards including 10 Academy Awards and 42 Emmy awards. Past productions include the Academy Award Best Picture winner "A Beautiful Mind," as well as Grammy Award Best Film winner "The Beatles: Eight Days a Week — The Touring Years." Additional films include "Get on Up," "Rush," "J. Edgar," "Frost/Nixon," "American Gangster," "The Da Vinci Code," "Apollo 13," "8 Mile," "Liar, Liar," "Backdraft" and "Parenthood," to name a few. Upcoming films include "Lowriders," "The Dark Tower" and "American Made." Television productions include Fox's "Empire" and "24" franchise, Nat Geo's **MARS** and **Breakthrough**, NBC's "Parenthood" and "Friday Night Lights," Fox's and Netflix's "Arrested Development," and HBO's "From the Earth to the Moon," for which Howard and Grazer won the Emmy for Outstanding Mini-Series. Upcoming television productions include Fox's "Shots Fired" and Nat Geo's **Genius**. Ron Howard and Brian Grazer began their collaboration in 1985 with the hit comedies "Night Shift" and "Splash," and continue to run Imagine Entertainment as chairmen.

About Madison Wells Media's OddLot Entertainment:

Founded in 2001 by producer Gigi Pritzker, Madison Wells Media's OddLot Entertainment is a film and television production company that develops, produces, finances and arranges distribution for quality commercial properties for the U.S. and international markets. OddLot teams with first-class filmmakers and provides them with resources that go far beyond equity investment to produce a range of high-quality films. Most recently, OddLot produced the Academy Award-nominated film "Hell or High Water," written by Taylor Sheridan and starring Jeff Bridges, Chris Pine and Ben Foster, for CBS Films. OddLot's past releases include the 2010 Academy Award-nominated drama "Rabbit Hole," starring Nicole Kidman; "The Way Way Back," starring Steve Carell; "Drive," starring Ryan Gosling; the futuristic sci-fi film "Ender's Game;" and Jon Stewart's directorial debut, "Rosewater." OddLot CEO Gigi Pritzker is part of a consortium that launched the film studio STX Entertainment founded by producer Robert

Simonds. OddLot has a preferential co-producing, financing and development deal with STX. The company is based in Los Angeles, California, and is a subsidiary of Madison Wells Media, a diversified premium content company.

About EUE/Sokolow:

Founded in 2010 by producer/director Jeff Cooney and veteran television producer Sam Sokolow, EUE/Sokolow is an independent television studio that develops, finances, produces and arranges the distribution of premium television shows and content. EUE/Sokolow attracts high-end talent to develop television properties in a forward thinking business model designed for today's global television marketplace. Recently, EUE/Sokolow independently produced pilot/presentations of "Co-Op", a television show created by and starring Zachary Levi and written & directed by Nancy Hower & John Lehr; "Diplomatic Immunity", a comedy starring Australian comedy troupe The Peloton; "Shalom Y'all", a comedy by showrunner Caryn Lucas based on the work of Julia Fowler; "Win With Les", starring Josh Lucas and created and written by Blair Singer; and are in development with Jaleel White and Pitbull's Honey, I'm Home Inc on a currently untitled original digital series. Since opening their doors, Cooney & Sokolow have set up shows at HBO, ABC, NBC, Freeform, Nat Geo, TNT, E!, Lifetime Movie Network & OWN. EUE/Sokolow is a subsidiary of EUE/Screen Gems, whose infrastructure includes studio complexes in Atlanta, Wilmington and Miami that have been home to productions such as "Stranger Things" (Netflix, "Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1" (Lionsgate), "Sleepy Hollow" (Fox), "Iron Man 3" (Marvel Studios), "Six" (A&E/History Channel), "The Conjuring" (New Line Cinema), "Under the Dome" (CBS), "East Bound and Down" (HBO).

For media inquiries, please contact:

Emily Crane
Associate Publicist
Corus Entertainment
416.860.4220
Emily.Crane@corusent.com

Catrina Jaricot
Publicity Manager
Corus Entertainment
416.479.6397
catrina.jaricot@corusent.com