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Two for '03: Fox has Galifianakis, Bennett on team

By Cynthia Littleton

Fox Broadcasting Co. has lined up two new faces for its 2003 development slate, striking talent holding deals with comic Zach Galifianakis and Canadian actress Sonja Bennett.

Galifianakis is a regular on the alternative comedy showcase circuit, and he had a brief stint on VH1 this year as host of the late-night variety show "Late World With Zach."

Bennett is a discovery of Fox casting executive vp Marcia Shulman, who was impressed by her performance in the indie feature "Punch," which screened in August at the Toronto International Film Festival.

In particular, Shulman said she was struck by how Bennett pulled off a convincing performance in a dark film that involved a romantic triangle between a father and daughter and the father's new girlfriend.

"She carried the film," Shulman said of the 23-year-old ingenue. "I ran after her after the screening and gave her my card. She's beautiful, tough and smart — a great get for Fox."

As for Galifianakis, Shulman said that the network has long had its eye on developing something for the comic, known for his rumpled slacker look and onstage ennui. "He's very lovable and really has a unique voice," Shulman said.



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