

An Academy Award®-Qualifying SSFF & ASIA Presents
New Short Film Expression

The CyberAgent Vertical Award

— Global Call for Entries

Submission Deadline: March 31

Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia (SSFF & ASIA)—Asia's largest international short film festival and an Academy Award®-Qualifying Film Festival—announces a global call for entries for the CyberAgent Vertical Award, to be presented at SSFF & ASIA 2026 in collaboration with CyberAgent, Inc. (Headquarters: Shibuya, Tokyo; President & CEO: Takahiro Yamauchi). Established in 2025, the CyberAgent Vertical Award was created to explore the creative potential of vertical-format short films and to serve as a hub for emerging forms of cinematic expression. The award recognizes works that demonstrate exceptional impact, expressive power, and innovation within the vertical format.

About the CyberAgent Vertical Award

The award is open to creative works including **short dramas, branded films, tourism videos, and other narrative-driven projects** that push the boundaries of vertical films storytelling. Particular attention is given to works distinguished by **strong creativity, clear messaging, and inventive visual language**.

In its first year, five works were nominated, and **CONECO FILM** received the inaugural award. At the ceremony, filmmaker **Shunji Iwai**, who served as presenter, commented:

"Seeing everyone's expressions makes me smile unintentionally. I've become a real fan."

His remarks highlighted both the cinematic qualities of the nominated works and the growing integration of vertical video into everyday visual culture.

Expanding to a Global Stage in 2026

For its second edition, the CyberAgent Vertical Award expands beyond Japan and officially opens submissions to creators worldwide. In addition to festival nominations, **a public international call for entries** will be held, with the goal of receiving the **largest number of vertical-format submissions in SSFF & ASIA's history**. Selected works will be showcased both in Japan and internationally, further strengthening the presence of vertical short films within the global film community.



SSFF & ASIA 2025 Award Ceremony
Left : CyberAgent Tatsuya Ando Right : Shunji Iwai



2025 Award Winner CONECO FILMS

<About the CyberAgent Vertical Award>

Awards & Prizes

- Prize Money: JPY 500,000
- Supplementary Prize: An experiential tour of Kiwami AI Odaiba Studio and the opportunity to produce a work using the studio's facilities



About “Kiwami AI Odaiba Studio”

Kiwami AI Odaiba Studio is CyberAgent's advanced creative production studio, specializing in AI-driven and 3DCG-based content creation. The facility features state-of-the-art LED walls, high-quality volumetric capture with 4D scanning, editing suites, recording rooms, and more—providing creators with an environment optimized for next-generation visual production.

<Comments>

Shunji Iwai (Filmmaker)

“Vertical films have made remarkable progress in recent years, emerging as a new form of expression. I’m very much looking forward to seeing which work will receive the CyberAgent Vertical Award next time.”

Tatsuya Ando

General Manager, Creative Director, CyberAgent

“It is a great honor to present the CyberAgent Vertical Award again in 2026 at this globally recognized festival. I look forward to encountering the bold and dynamic expressions of creators and performers working at the forefront of vertical short films.”

<How to Apply for the CyberAgent Vertical Award>

If you apply by Saturday, January 31, 2026

If you submit your work to any of the following SSFF & ASIA 2026 competition categories—

Live Action (International / Asia International / Japan), **Non-Fiction**, or **Animation**—your film will automatically be considered for the **CyberAgent Vertical Award**.

* Application guidelines follow those of each competition category.

* In the application form, please answer the question:

“Does your film use any new technologies or involve innovative formats?
by selecting/indicating that your work includes a **vertical format**.

Application form: <https://app.lifelogbox.com/festival/shortshorts?tab=competition>

If you apply between Sunday, February 1 and Tuesday, March 31, 2026

Please submit your work via the **dedicated application form for the CyberAgent Vertical Award** at the URL below. <https://app.lifelogbox.com/festival/shortshorts?tab=competition>

【Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia】



Actor Tetsuya Bessho, who is also a member of the American Actors Association (SAG), founded the American Short Shorts Film Festival in 1999 with the desire to introduce "short films," which he encountered in the United States, to Japan as a new genre of film. In 2001, the festival was renamed the Short Shorts Film Festival (SSFF) and in 2004 it was recognized as a recognized film festival by the Academy Awards®. In the same year, the Short Shorts Film Festival Asia (SSFF ASIA, co-hosted by Tokyo) was established with the aim of expanding new visual culture originating in Asia, fostering young filmmakers, and currently operates as SSFF & ASIA.

In 2018, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the film festival, the Grand Prix was named after Director George Lucas. In January 2019, the Short Shorts Film Festival in Hollywood was held to commemorate the 20th anniversary. Since 2019, the four Best Short Award-winning short films from the official competitions (International, Asia International, Japan) and the Non-Fiction Competition, and from 2022, five short films, adding the Best Short Award-winning short film in the Animation competition, have become eligible to be nominated for the Academy Awards for Best Short Film the following year. The SSFF & ASIA will continue to support young creators.

【Official website】 <https://www.shortshorts.org/en>

【Press Inquiry】

Committee for Short Shorts PR Fuyumi Tanaka

E-mail : press@shortshorts.org

Stills are available here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1P6uGdLc4_i4U_eGQa_IPpy5woCne5mxz?usp=sharing