

Academy Awards® Accredited SSFF & ASIA 2026 Launches "Generative Tokyo Project" with AI-Themed Short Film starring Yuki Saito, as Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike Announces Prestigious Governor's Award



TOKYO, May 14, 2026 — Tetsuya Bessho, actor and founder of the Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia (SSFF & ASIA), Asia's largest international short film festival, paid a courtesy visit to Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building on Thursday, May 14. Accompanied by the festival's official Gen-Z navigators, Hirona Nagahama and Ayaka Honmou—both highly popular social media icons among Japanese youth—the delegation discussed the unique charms of Tokyo from a social-native perspective and highlighted the power of visual media in showcasing the metropolis to the world.

During the visit, Governor Koike officially announced the winner of the "Cinematic Tokyo Competition" Best Short Award (Governor's Award), selecting the visually stunning fantasy drama TOKYO SUBMARINE from a competitive pool of 478 submissions worldwide. Concurrently, the festival unveiled its milestone initiative for 2026: the launch of the "Generative Tokyo Project" alongside the global release of its flagship short film, So Far Away, So Close (Kanata no Koe).

Highlight 1: "Cinematic Tokyo" Governor's Award Winner Unveiled — TOKYO SUBMARINE

The "Cinematic Tokyo Competition," which crowdsources short films from around the globe under the theme of "Tokyo's Diverse Charms," received 478 entries from various countries this year.

Taking home the prestigious Best Short Award (Governor's Award) is TOKYO SUBMARINE.

<https://www.shortshorts.org/2026/program/tokyo-submarine/>



■The Story: Set in the rarely seen, subterranean world beneath the metropolis, the film follows a young man working in Tokyo's massive underground drainage system. His mundane reality takes a magical turn when he discovers a miniature submarine floating in the water channels. Through his interactions with the mysterious vessel, the film beautifully juxtaposes the invisible infrastructure supporting the city with the protagonist's inner emotional growth and imagination.

■Award Details: The director will be officially honored at the SSFF & ASIA 2026 Award Ceremony on Thursday, June 10, 2026, where they will receive the Governor's Trophy and a cash prize of 1 million JPY.

Highlight 2: The Launch of the "Generative Tokyo Project" & Sci-Fi Human Drama *So Far Away, So Close*

Expanding on its long-standing collaboration with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, SSFF & ASIA has launched the **Generative Tokyo Project**. This new initiative explores the creative, innovative, and generative energy of Tokyo through the lenses of cutting-edge technology and human emotion.

The project's inaugural film, ***So Far Away, So Close*** (Directed by Tekko Nogami / 21:56 / Drama / 2026), is a poignant human drama starring legendary actress **Yuki Saito** and rising star **Kohei Shoji**. Set against a futuristic Tokyo, it explores a grieving young man who is granted 24 hours with an AI consciousness reconstructed from the brain data of his deceased partner. The film is available for global streaming starting today.

https://www.shortshorts.org/Tokyo_project/generative_Tokyo/



Highlight 3: Gen-Z Voices "Cho-Judai" Bridge Tradition and Future Tech

Representing the digital-native generation, festival navigators Hirona Nagahama and Ayaka Honmou shared their vision with Governor Koike on how young creators can capture Tokyo's duality—both its hyper-technological advancements and its deeply rooted cultural heritage—through short-form video content and social media.

Comment from Tetsuya Bessho (Founder of SSFF & ASIA):

"This year's Governor's Award winner, 'TOKYO SUBMARINE,' brilliantly captures a side of Tokyo that remains unseen to most—the magnificent underground world that keeps our metropolis running. Short films possess the unique power to condense the vast, multi-layered identity of a city into a potent cinematic experience. Between this masterpiece and our new 'Generative Tokyo Project' film, we are thrilled to show global audiences a Tokyo that is constantly evolving—where imagination, AI, and human emotion blend seamlessly."

Stills of Event Report and Short Films are available here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ezQzNDYISoE93LNTHmNFGk-gfcXnLLvt?usp=sharing>

【PRESS INQUIRY】

Committee for Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia

PR : Fuyumi Tanaka / E-mail press@shortshorts.org

【Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia 2026 Overview】

■ Festival Period :

Monday, May 25th : Opening Ceremony

Tuesday, May 26th to Tuesday, June 9th : Screening at Tokyo

Wednesday, June 10th : Award Ceremony

※Online Venue: Monday, May 25th to Tuesday, June 30th

■ **Screening Venues** : MoN Takanawa: The Museum of Narratives
(Box1000、Tatami、Park Terrace)

Akasaka Intercity Conference, Euro Live,

WITH HARAJUKU HALL, LIFORK HARAJUKU

※Dates and programs vary by venue

■ Official Website:

<https://www.shortshorts.org/2026/en/index.html>

※Full Lineup Announcement: Scheduled for April 23, 2026.

■ Ticket Sales:

[Advance Tickets]

General: 1,500 yen, University Students/ U29/ Seniors / Persons with Disabilities: 1,200 yen

Elementary School · Junior High School · High School Students: 1,000 yen

Preschool Children (under elementary school age): Free

[Same-Day Tickets]

General: 1,800yen, University Students /U29 / Seniors / Persons with Disabilities: 1,500 yen

Elementary School · Junior High School · High School Students: 1,200 yen

Preschool Children (under elementary school age): Free

[Passports]

General: 7,000 yen, Students / Seniors / Persons with Disabilities: 5,500 yen

[Online Venue] 2,500 yen (Within Japan) / 15 USD (Outside Japan)

*passport for the Online Venue will be on sale from May 25th.

■ **General Inquiry** : info@shortshorts.org

■ **Host** : Committee for Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia

