

Academy Awards® Qualifying SHORT SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL & ASIA Asia's Largest International Short Film Festival Kicks Off as the 28th SSFF & ASIA 2026 Opens with Star-Studded Ceremony and Cutting-Edge "Cinema Engineering" Theme



TOKYO — May 25, 2026 — Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia (SSFF & ASIA) 2026, one of Asia's largest international short film festivals accredited by the Academy Awards®, officially commenced today with its grand Red Carpet and Opening Ceremony held at "MoN Takanawa: The Museum of Narratives" in Tokyo. Marking its 28th anniversary, this year's festival runs from May 25 through June 9 at various Tokyo venues, with the online venue streaming globally until June 30. ## "Cinema Engineering": Redefining the Future of Film. This year's festival theme is "Cinema Engineering."

It spotlights the meticulous "architecture" of filmmaking—the synergy of cameras, lighting, sound, and increasingly, Artificial Intelligence (AI)—to create deeply resonant audience experiences. Out of approximately 5,000 submissions from over 100 countries and regions, around 250 selected films will be showcased.

A major highlight of the opening was the screening of Cinema Traveler, a groundbreaking full-AI short film directed by Yamaguchi. The project stars "AI Tetsuya Bessho," a digital twin generated by providing personal data and expressions from the festival's founder and veteran actor, Tetsuya Bessho. The project aims to explore the co-existence and copyright authenticity of digital rights in the entertainment industry, positioning AI as a creative partner rather than a rival.

Major Awards Announced at the Opening Ceremony

Several prestigious awards celebrating cinematic excellence and innovation were presented during the ceremony:

TAKANAWA GATEWAY CITY AWARD: Presented to the internationally acclaimed director Hirokazu Kore-eda (Shoplifters, Broker) for his lifelong contribution to cinema and his ongoing dedication to nurturing young creators and improving industry working environments.



J-WAVE SOUND OF CINEMA AWARD: Awarded to *Samia* (Directed by Selma Alaoui & Bruno Tracq / Belgium), a film recognized by audiences for its unique and effective use of sound.

Special Contribution Award: Granted to *The World is Dancing* (Directed by Toshimasa Kuroyanagi / Japan), a beautiful animation exploring the origins of traditional Noh theater through the youth of Zeami.

DCP Award (Voted by Creators): Awarded to *DOCOOK* (Directed by Misaki Habu / Japan).

Star-Studded Red Carpet and New Projects

The red carpet was graced by high-profile Japanese talent and creators, introducing the festival's diverse new programs:

The Culinary Program: Acclaimed actor/producer Takumi Saito appeared alongside director Takumi Koyama and actor Hiroshi Asahina to promote *Ramen Maro: Where Our Paths Crossed*, a youth ensemble drama that connects universal human values through food. Saito hinted at future plans to expand the project into a feature-length film.



The Comedy-Film Crossover: Kuruma Takahira, member of the popular comedy duo "Reiwa Roman," made his directorial debut with *BREAK SHOT*, an ambitious short aiming to blend the timing of stand-up comedy with cinematic expression.

Global Collaboration: The festival announced official screenings of award-winning films from the World AI Film Festival 2026, including Rewrite and *This is me*, highlighting the cutting edge of AI-generated entertainment.

SSFF & ASIA 2026 Awards announced at the Opening Ceremony

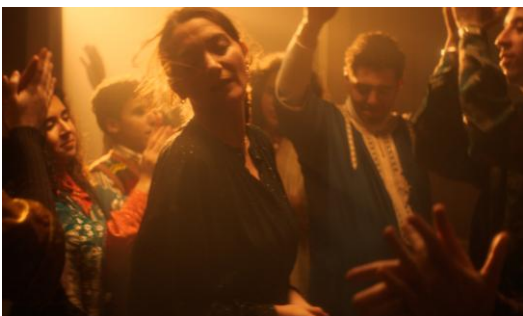
★TAKANAWA GATEWAY CITY AWARD Hirokazu Kore-eda (Director)



【Reason for the Award】

For many years, they have continued to depict the inner lives of human beings and the subtle nuances of society with a sharp yet warm gaze, leading the Japanese film industry. Furthermore, in recent years, they have dedicated significant effort to supporting young creators and improving working environments. Their commitment to honoring cinematic traditions while striving to update its future into something more open embodies the very spirit of this award—"To pioneer the future of visual media and creatively connect the world"—which has led to this selection.

★J-WAVE SOUND OF CINEMA AWARD 『Samia』



『Samia』

Directors : Selma Alaoui & Bruno Tracq
20:00 / 2025 / Bergy

Samia meets Farhan and follows him to his apartment, where he organizes Moroccan music concerts. The joyful gathering helps her forget the funeral that same day of a father she never knew. Leaving the building, she realizes she forgot her wallet. When she returns, a neighbor warns her that no one has lived there for decades.

★Special Contribution Award『The World is Dancing』



『The World is Dancing』

Director : Toshimasa Kuroyanagi / 20:35 / 2026 / Japan

The year is 1374, a turbulent era marked by the ongoing conflict between the Northern and Southern Courts. Oniyasha is a young boy born into a family of Sarugaku performers. While spending his gloomy days harboring a vague question—"Why do people dance?"—he encounters a "true" dance one day. The story now unfolds into the world of this beautiful boy, who would later create Noh theater and come to be known as Zeami.

★DCP Award 『DOCOOK』



『DOCOOK』

Director : Sorami Habu / 04:24 / 2023 / Japan

Left home alone, a young girl uses everything she can find around the house to...

[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]

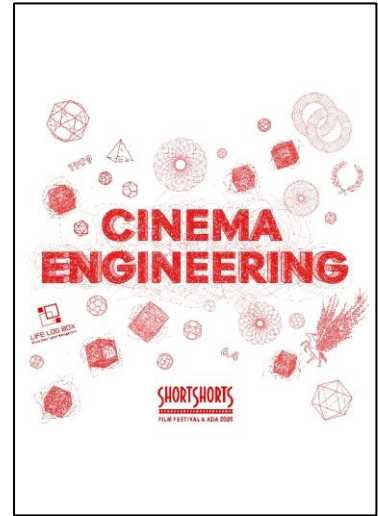
General: 7,000 yen, Students / Seniors / Persons with Disabilities: 5,500 yen

[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



[PRESS INQUIRY]

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【Stills are available here:】

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zrOg2uTmdfzst_wFtPGlj0DAgiv928VP?usp=sharing