

Accredited by the Academy Awards® Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia 2026 Award Ceremony

## George Lucas Award (Grand Prix) goes to “SPEEDY!” (South Korea) by Jiin Oh

### The winners of 12 Awards including Best Short Awards of Live-Action, Non-Fiction, Animation which are eligible to the next Academy Awards® were announced

TOKYO — Celebrating its 28th year, the Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia (SSFF & ASIA) 2026—an Academy Awards® accredited festival and one of Asia’s largest international short film festivals—has successfully concluded. Under this year’s theme, "Cinema Engineering," the festival delivered experiences that deeply resonated with audiences by seamlessly weaving together camera work, lighting, sound, and AI.

Out of an impressive 4,921 submissions from 114 countries and regions worldwide, 245 films were selected for screening. In addition to the competition programs, this year’s festival featured the "Culinary Program: Memories of Flavor" and the "Art Program," showcased trends in AI utilization and vertical video, and announced new collaborations with the Japan Africa Entertainment Business Council, the Yokohama International Film Festival, and the WORLD A.I. FILM FESTIVAL JAPAN .

At today’s Award Ceremony, marking the culmination of the 2026 festival, the winners were announced. SSFF & ASIA has been achieving a record high for domestic film festivals, with a total of 5 categories now eligible for Academy Awards® nomination.

These include the three Live Action competitions (International, Asia International, and Japan), the Non-Fiction competition, and the Animation competition. Awards were also presented for the U-25 Project, Shibuya Diversity Award, HOPPY HAPPY AWARD, CyberAgent Vertical Award, Best Thrill Award supported by CRG, and the newly established Tom Yoda Next Frame Award. The festival’s highest honor, the prestigious George Lucas Award (Grand Prix), was selected by an esteemed jury consisting of Yuya Ishii, Kristin Ji, Miki Mizuno, Ryan Ashore, Kazuki Kitamura, Chieko Murata, Ayaka Wada, Yusuke Hirota, and Tomoyuki Sugiyama.

The Grand Prix was awarded to “SPEEDY!” (South Korea), directed by Jiin Oh , which also won the Best Short Award in the Live Action Competition’s Asia International category. The jury offered high praise for the vast array of diverse films gathered from around the globe, highlighting their ability to effortlessly transcend borders and language barriers. “As the story progressed, I felt the language barrier completely dissolve,” remarked juror Miki Mizuno. Juror Kazuki Kitamura added, “Because it’s a short film, it truly questions whether 'cinema can command the atmosphere.’”

It reaffirmed the paramount importance of screenwriting, editing, and directing in capturing the audience's heart and powerfully delivering a message within a limited timeframe.“

In addition to the main award results announced at today’s ceremony, the Best Actor Awards have also been revealed below. Nominated films across the Live Action, Non-Fiction, and Animation competitions—including all award-winning titles—will be available for streaming on the Festival Online Grand Theater until Tuesday, June 30. We would highly appreciate your media coverage and features on this event.

**SSFF & ASIA 2026 Grand Prix “George Lucas Award” / Live-action Competition Asia International Best Short Award / Governor of Tokyo Award 【 Candidate for the 99<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards Nominee】**



『SPEEDY!』 Director : Jiin Oh / 17:48 / South Korea / Comedy / 2025

Seoul, 1989. Jung-min wants to become a speed-reading prodigy, just like Dong-hyun—the coolest guy in town, who can finish an entire book in just 60 seconds! Produced with the support of the Indian Paintbrush Productions Grant.

**【Jiin Oh】** Jiin received her MFA in Film Directing and Screenwriting from Columbia University in 2024. Her work primarily focuses on comedies, often exploring stories of individuals striving to fit into a bewildering, often incomprehensible world.

**【Reason for Award】** Brilliant and highly imaginative, SPEEDY! is a standout piece of cinema that lingers in the mind long after the credits roll. The jury highly praised the director’s outstanding cinematography and editing, which brings to life a uniquely dubious yet nostalgic 1980s setting. By using the 'speed-reading school' as a motif for the absurdity of human nature, the film highlights a beautiful contrast between a child’s purity and the complex world of adults. With its superb casting and masterful use of music and color, SPEEDY! is a confident, charming, and deeply moving Asia Competition Winner.



『Trio』

Director: Fridtjof Josefsen & Morten Borgestad / 3:51 / Norway / Comedy / 2025

A short film about a man trying to find his place.



【Fridtjof Josefsen & Morten Borgestad】

Fridtjof Stensæth Josefsen is a Norwegian comedian and filmmaker who has created and performed in several sketch comedies over the past decade. The short film *Trio* is part of his first solo project, a series of short films made in collaboration with Oslo-based director Morten Borgestad.

**【Reason for Award】** *Trio* captures the very essence of what makes short cinema so brilliant. By stripping away all unnecessary noise, explanations, and dialogue, the filmmaker delivers a perfectly condensed, non-verbal masterpiece that can be universally enjoyed by audiences of all ages across the globe. The jury highly praised its exceptional entertainment value, noting that achieving this level of pure, unadulterated fun requires a masterful level of skill. Beneath its delightful pacing lies a deeply relatable core; the character of the 'third man' beautifully mirrors the quiet struggle of the everyday individual trying to find their place in a world filled with relentless competition. It is a joyful, masterfully executed film that you immediately want to recommend to everyone you know.



『Round and Round』

Director : Hayato Otogi / 13:26 / Japan / Sci-Fi / 2025

On an autumn afternoon, Sana and Asa reunite at the park where they once spent their days. What begins as small talk slowly sets the memories that had been paused for ten years back into motion. Told in a single, fixed shot, this is a quiet story of two people —and two unspoken confessions.



【Hayato Otogi】

In addition to working as an actor in Japan, he is also active as a film director. Drawing on the techniques and sensibilities he developed through theater, he frequently creates fixed-camera, one-shot films.

**【Reason for Award】**

*Round and Round* delivers a quiet, deeply reflective story through a brilliant single, fixed-shot approach. The jury highly praised the director's clever understanding of low-budget filmmaking, proving that constraints can yield immense artistic value. By relying on a long take that brings out the absolute best in the script, the film creates an intimate atmosphere where the dialogue and performances carry the profound emotional weight of a ten-year reunion. While exploring the familiar yet heavy theme of overcoming death, the narrative develops its characters with incredible speed and uses subtle visual motifs, such as the amulet, to create a powerful, theatrical, yet deeply cinematic connection.

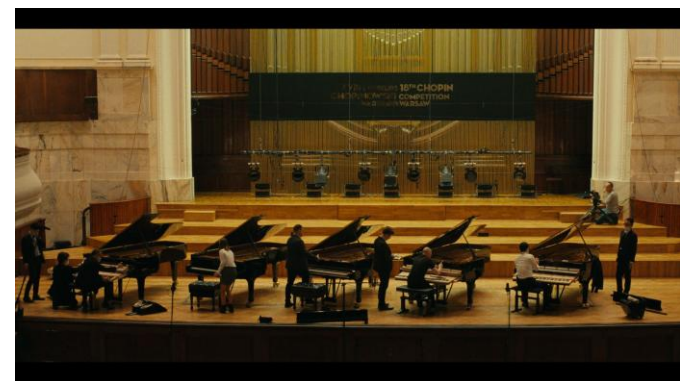
■ The number of submissions for the Official Competition

- International Competition Submissions : 2295 (99 countries and regions) Screened : 29
- Asia International Competition Submissions : 781 (46 countries and regions) Screened : 23
- Japan Competition Submissions : 255 Screened : 22

■ Prize Money : ¥600,000 (JPY)

■ Judges : International Yuya Ishii, Christin Ji, Miki Mizuno

Asia International / Japan Ryan Shore, Kazuki Kitamura, Chieko Murata



『The Tuners』

**Director : Pawel Piotr Chorzepa / 0:20:00 / Poland / Non-Fiction / 2026**

In the shadows of the world's most important piano competition, a group of expert tuners spend a month trying to achieve the perfect pitch so that the champion pianist will win on their instrument.



【Pawel Piotr Chorzepa】

Director and cinematographer working in documentary and narrative cinema. His directorial debut, *Sonny*, premiered at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) and received multiple awards for direction and cinematography at international film festivals. His films have been awarded and presented at leading festivals such as IDFA, Berlinale, Visions du Réel, Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival.

【Reason for Award】 Set against the glamorous backdrop of a high-stakes piano competition, *The Tuners* brilliantly portrays usually behind-the-scenes piano tuners as incredibly cool characters, delivering a poignant lesson that the top, highlighted spot can change at any time in any industry. The jury highly praised its thrilling and entertaining aspect with a powerful sense of tension, keeping the audience on the edge of their seats while offering a unique glimpse into a hidden world. Enhanced by a beautifully musical direction, the story leaves a lasting impact, particularly with its purposely ambiguous ending that gives the audience room for imagination.

■Non-fiction Program Submissions : 354 (61 countries and regions) Screened : 16

■Prize Money : ¥600,000 (JPY) ■Judges : Yuya Ishii, Christin Ji, Miki Mizuno



『With Tapes and Toasts in the Car』

**Director: Kiana Naghshineh / 14:24 / Germany, France / Animation / 2025**

After a long illness, Shari learns that she won't recover — she has only a few months left to live. Overwhelmed, she doesn't know how to face her family. In an attempt to escape reality, the sky collapses above her, and she finds herself drifting through space.



【Kiana Naghshineh】

Kiana Naghshineh is a German-Iranian director from Mannheim. During her studies at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg, she created several award-winning films and was nominated for the Student Academy Award, the Student BAFTA, and the Annie Award. As a freelancer, she works as an animation director and designer.

【Reason for Award】 While dealing with the profound weight of incurable illness and real-life suffering, *With Tapes and Toasts in the Car* masterfully balances its heavy themes with a light, imaginative touch, specifically Shari's cosmic journey and search for Laika. The jury highly praised how the narrative beautifully intersects reality with a cosmic escape into space, offering a unique, scientific, and atomic connection to the universe. Complemented by impressive, gender-neutral character designs, light colors, and a deeply moving ending filled with family warmth, this animation truly resonates as a powerful and comforting piece of storytelling.

■Animation Program Submissions : 417 (35 countries) Screened : 52

■Prize Money : ¥600,000 (JPY)

■Judges (Alphabetical Order) : Tomoyuki Sugiyama, Tao Okamoto, Ryōhei Odai

## U-25 Project Best Short Award



### 『Backstitch』

**Director : Yugo Takada / 0:04:52 / Japan / Sci-Fi / 2026**

On a quiet afternoon, a group of idle men are confronted by identical versions of themselves and a mysterious button that appears out of nowhere. Acting on impulse, they press it, triggering a series of unforeseen events. A mockumentary that stitches together the aftermath of a single press.

**【Reason for Award】** Backstitch is a perfect example of what smart and resourceful filmmaking is. It presents an original and funny idea in a limited space. The film grabs the audience right away with its lively energy, natural performances, and excellent editing. While it feels raw and youthful, the film shows a level of skill, fun, and enthusiasm that represents the best of the U-25 competition. It's an extremely entertaining piece that keeps a smile on your face from start to finish.



### 【Yugo Takada】

A high school student from Aichi Prefecture. Enjoys watching films. Began making videos in middle school in an attempt to become the center of attention among classmates. Averages eight hours of sleep per night.

## Shibuya Diversity Award

This award will be given to a work chosen from a selection of films that picture diversity and inclusion, which are part of the educational activities to spread the fundamental plan of Shibuya City.



### 『Baldies: What about my hair』

**Director : Eliška Soffer Podzimek / 0:09:47 / Czechia / Animation / 2026**

Brave kids, bold hearts, redefining strength beyond hair.



### 【Eliška Soffer Podzimek】

Czech multimedia artist Eliška Soffer Podzimek blends humor, design, and animation into award-winning films and campaigns for Vogue Magazine and Jamie Oliver. After illustrating *The Little Prince*, she returned to Prague to create “Baldies,” inspired by her own cancer journey.

## Tom Yoda Next Frame Award

An award presented among the 2026 nominees to young Japanese creators—students or those who have not yet begun their professional careers—who demonstrate strong ambition on a global scale, supporting their learning in filmmaking and encouraging their challenge toward the next stage.



### 『Not a Bad Sound』

**Director: Koki Nakamura / 0:03:50 / Japan / Drama / 2025**

With a stethoscope in hand, a man listens closely to the sounds of the city. Amid the noise, he begins to notice moments of unexpected beauty. These small discoveries gradually lead him back to himself.



### 【Koki Nakamura】

Born in 2002 in Kanagawa, Japan. Graduated from the Department of Environmental Design, Faculty of Art and Design at Tama Art University. Currently enrolled in the Graduate School of Film and New Media, Tokyo University of the Arts. Drawing on a background in architecture and spatial design, explores audiovisual expression through sensory elements such as light and sound.

## HOPPY HAPPY AWARD

The “Be HAPPY with HOPPY Award” will be chosen from among the nominated short films by Japanese directors that best embodies Hoppy beverage’s theme of being “HAPPY with HOPPY.” The winning works will be screened at “HOPPY HAPPY THEATER” which will open in June.



### 『Destinagency』

**Director : Hiroki Yagi / 0:23:55 / Japan / Romance / 2025**

Believing that fate can be created, a man who stages encounters for others works as a “Destinagency.”

Once hurt after placing his faith in fate, he finds his heart shaken by what seems to be a chance meeting.

Caught between orchestrated coincidence and genuine emotion, he must confront the possibility of believing once again.



### 【Hiroki Yagi】

Hiroki Yagi was born in 1995 in Atsugi, Kanagawa, Japan. He spent his childhood in Tennessee, Hiroshima, Kitakyushu, and Saitama due to his parents’ job transfers. After graduating from Josai International University in 2018, he began working as a freelance assistant director while creating independent films.

## Best Thrill Award supported by CRG

Focusing on unique, addictive, and uncanny horror that thrives in the social media era, this section explores subtle unease in daily life. Creator agency CRG will present the Common Theme Award (Special Saikyo Award) for “Fear Hidden in Everyday Life,” four Monthly Theme Awards, and the Best Thrill Award Supported by CRG—the grand prize chosen from the five winners for the piece that most powerfully shakes the audience.



### 『The Ghost Photo Studio』

**Director: Haruki Kawanaka/ 2:27**

UTA, a delivery man living on an isolated island in Japan, arrives at the scene with his cowherd TAKESHI to clean up after his girlfriend NANA, who has committed murder. The three go into the forest to remove the body and dump it in a bottomless pit that TAKESHI saw when he was a child.



### 【Haruki Kawanaka】

Award-winning filmmaker handling directing, CG, and motion graphics for top artists like Mr.Children and LiSA. Selected for “100 Japanese Motion Graphic Creators.” Their short film *An Alien in the Smartphone* (judged by Michihito Fujii and Go Ayano) won 15 domestic awards, including 4 Grand Prix titles.

## CyberAgent Vertical Award

An award presented to works or projects that have demonstrated “high impact and expressive power” in vertical short film content within Japan in recent years.



### AIDOL KACHO

**Director: Chavo/ 20:58**

A plain-looking middle-aged section chief leads a double life as a popular idol streamer, using cross-dressing and AI filters. In the real world, he goes unnoticed—but through his virtual persona, he begins to receive the recognition he never had. As that validation grows, the boundaries between his job, his family, and his own identity slowly begin to unravel.



### 【Chavo】

Born in Kitakyushu, Japan. After working as a photographer and manga artist, he began making films independently in 2023. His short films have been screened seven times at Academy Award®-qualifying film festivals. He pursues cinematic expression shaped by silence, pauses, and emotional space.

## BEST ACTOR AWARD

This award is presented to actors from each category of the Live Action Competition—International, Asia International, and Japan—whose exceptional performances brought profound emotion to the film.

### [International Category]



#### 『Kentucky Gaza』

**Director : Omar Rammal / 21:00 / Jordan / Drama / 2025**

In besieged Gaza, where the existence of Kentucky survives only as legend, Anwar transforms the masses' craving into a successful smuggling venture, while single-handedly deepening the emotional wound between himself and his father.

#### **[Actor : Yazan Nobani Reason for Award]**

We are honored to award Best Actor in the International Competition to Yazan Nobani for his exceptional performance in Kentucky Gaza. Nobani's presence is so commanding that it is impossible to look away. Without relying on overt melodrama or heavy dialogue, he utilizes subtle expressions and powerful eye expression to convey a deeply authentic, natural conduct that blurs the line between fiction and reality. He masterfully transports the audience across a series of emotions of happiness, anxiety, and hope. The camera absolutely loves him, and he is undoubtedly a rising star to keep a close eye on. We are proud to celebrate his immense talent and know our audience will fall in love with his performance.

### [Asia International Category]



#### 『That's A Wrap』

**Director : Sunny Hinduja & Shinjini Raval / 22:48 / India / Drama / 2025**

On the final day of an indie film shoot, a married actor couple prepares for the story's defining scene. With every take, their performance begins to echo their real lives. Unspoken resentments surface, and fiction slowly collapses into truth, leaving them to confront a marriage far more complicated than the script.

#### **[Actor: Shinjini Raval, Sunny Hinduja) Reason for Award]**

We are incredibly proud to present the Best Acting Award jointly to Shinjini Raval and Sunny Hinduja for their towering performances in That's a Wrap. Fully relying on acting, this ultimate meta-cinematic film is a powerful tour de force. Their undeniable chemistry and fierce exchange prove they left their absolute souls in this masterpiece.

### [Japan Category]



#### 『Unknown』

**Director : Nanase Nakamura / 14 : 00 / Japan / Drama / 2025**

Yusuke, an elementary school boy who has lost his place to belong because of his parents' debt, spends time at an hideout with his younger sister Misa and their childhood friend Kazuya, the only person he trusts.

When they unexpectedly find six million yen in cash in an abandoned place, the relationship between the three begins to fall apart.

#### **[Actor : Miyabi Hori, Yusei Ando, Meisa Kikuchi Reason for Award]**

The film explores how a pure friendship begins to unravel under the weight of poverty, family circumstances, and the sudden appearance of a large sum of money. Despite the heavy subject matter, the three young actors portrayed their characters' struggles and heartbreak with remarkable authenticity, making every emotion feel real.

Their performances were natural yet deeply convincing. It was astonishing to see such emotional depth at such a young age. They are truly promising young talents, and we look forward to seeing their future work.

## **[Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia 2026 Overview]**

### **■ Festival Period :**

Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup> : Opening Ceremony

Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> : Screening at Tokyo

Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> : Award Ceremony

※Online Venue: Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, June 30<sup>th</sup>

### **■ 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]**

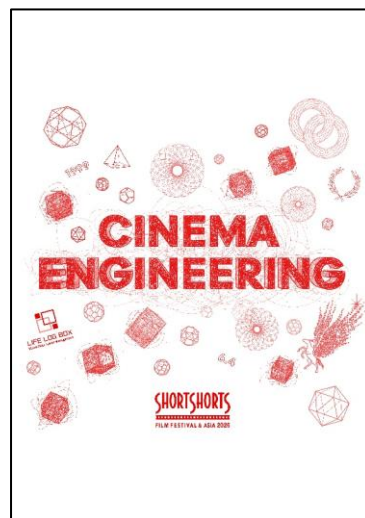
General: 7,000 yen, Students / Seniors / Persons with Disabilities: 5,500 yen

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

\*passport for the Online Venue will be on sale from May 25<sup>th</sup>.

**■ General Inquiry :** [info@shortshorts.org](mailto:info@shortshorts.org)

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



## **【Press Inquiry】**

Committee for Short Shorts PR: Fuyumi Tanaka E-mail [press@shortshorts.org](mailto:press@shortshorts.org)

【Stills are available here】

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LO3QWX6JHgIX2TrDwIUrbSovMoWTDAn>