

Visual EXPO by BRANDED SHORTS Debuts in Tokyo: Celebrating Excellence in Branded Storytelling with Announcement of 2026 Category Winners *Showcasing Global & National Award Winners, New AI Video Partnerships, and Online Streaming Worldwide Through November 30*



TOKYO, Japan — September 30, 2026 — Pacific Voice Inc. has officially held “**Visual EXPO by BRANDED SHORTS**” at Akasaka Intercity Conference in Tokyo on September 28 and 29, 2026. Evolved from “BRANDED SHORTS”—the branded film unit linked with the Academy Awards®-accredited Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia (SSFF & ASIA)—the inaugural EXPO serves as a physical platform under the theme “*Creating the Future of Business Through the Power of Cinema.*”

Out of 654 submissions from around the world, the festival announced the prestigious **Branded Shorts of the Year 2026** along with category winners celebrating human-centric storytelling and brand identity. **To reach a global audience, all nominated and award-winning films, along with archived industry panels, are currently streaming worldwide for free on the official Visual EXPO online platform through November 30, 2026** (<https://app.lifelogbox.com/visualexpoonline>).

Honoring Human Storytelling: Branded Shorts of the Year 2026

The award ceremony highlighted films that addressed profound social issues and human relationships through delicate storytelling:

◆ National Category Winner:

"Even Though No One is to Blame" |

Director: Ayumu Omori /

Brand: Marriage For All Japan /

Production: Spoon Inc.

Overview & Jury Comment: A moving narrative depicting the internal conflicts of a family navigating same-sex marriage in Japan. The jury praised the work for avoiding villainy and instead illuminating the mutual care and underlying emotions between family members, bringing a broad social topic down to an intimate, relatable level.



◆ International Category Winner:

"Feel" | Director: Judith Veenendaal / Brand: checkyourbreasts.today / Production: Bonkers United, division7, SMUGGLER

Overview & Jury Comment: A beautifully crafted piece focusing on touch and bodily self-care to raise breast cancer awareness. The film was commended for its poetic imagery and sensory storytelling that seamlessly guides viewers toward early detection without feeling prescriptive.



Category Awards: HR, Tourism, Personal Branding, and Special Mention

In addition to the main awards, Visual EXPO presented honors across various sectors demonstrating the expanding footprint of branded content:

◆ HR Best Short Award:

"The Last 'Thank You' #32-34 'Tears From the Toughest'" (Brand: Tear Corporation / Director: Yui Miyatake)

Recognized for portraying the genuine dignity of working in funeral services, based on true stories that highlight corporate values and empathy.



◆ 15th Tourism Video Award (Commissioner's Award, Japan Tourism Agency):

"Fukufuku Map" (Brand: Fukushima Prefecture / Director: Sunao Katabuchi)

Directed by renowned anime director Sunao Katabuchi ("In This Corner of the World"), this animated brand movie captures the heart of travel through delicate world-building.



◆ Personal Branding Award:

Awarded to Kazu Languages (multilingual content creator bridging global cultures across 15+ languages) and KELO (dancer/artist creating unique visual performances).



◆ Public Impact Award

SEKAI NO OWARI's 15th Anniversary Dome Tour "THE CINEMA" (Directed by Dai Ikeda)

Celebrated for seamlessly blending live music performances with custom-shot short films ("YOKOHAMA blues" starring Fukase and Sairi Ito) across giant screens to redefine immersive entertainment.



Innovation & Business Alliances: Japan Direct × ByteDance AI Partnership

A key highlight of the event was a special presentation announcing a global strategic partnership between Nihon Chokuhan (Japan Direct) and ByteDance. Leveraging ByteDance's generative AI video technologies (including "Seedance") and TikTok platforms, the initiative aims to build an AI-driven video ecosystem to nurture new creators and pioneer innovative advertising frameworks. Furthermore, all award winners were presented with Web3-based Digital Certificates (Digital Trophies) hosted on "LIFE LOG BOX," leveraging blockchain technology to verify creators' credentials and support future business opportunities.



About Visual Voice Inc., SSFF & ASIA and Visual EXPO by BRANDED SHORTS

Founded by actor Tetsuya Bessho, Visual Voice Inc. operates the Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia (SSFF & ASIA), one of Asia's largest international short film festivals and an Academy Award-qualifying event. Launched in 2016, BRANDED SHORTS has illuminated the strategic and artistic intersection of cinema and brand strategy. In 2026, Visual EXPO expands this mission into a multi-faceted summit uniting advertising, HR, regional tourism, food culture, and AI innovation.

<https://expo.brandedshorts.jp/>



【PRESS INQUIRY】

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Still images are available here :

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13tDxKVx1hm0xoFko5yLYOpoaD_JS9pLs?usp=sharing