FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS, [1 NOVEMBER 2026]

IFFH 2026 Announces Its Award Nominees

Nominees across fourteen categories, with the awards ceremony on Sunday 15 November at Pathé Buitenhof

THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS, [1 November, 2026] — The International Film Festival The Hague (IFFH) today announces the nominees for its 2026 awards, honouring independent cinema, emerging talent and underrepresented voices from around the world. The 8th edition runs from **13 to 15 November 2026** at **Pathé Buitenhof** in The Hague, and the awards ceremony takes place on **Sunday 15 November**.



[Photo credit: Light Falling Down]

This year's nominees span documentary, narrative, animation, experimental, horror, comedy and science fiction, with films from Azerbaijan, Montenegro, Palestine, the Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, Australia and beyond. Several titles carry the weight of real history, from wartime shelter and survival to the aftermath of trauma, and many are making their mark on the festival circuit for the first time

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Four industry masterclasses on 14 and 15 November at Pathé Buitenhof, led by established directors, scholars and industry professionals.
- Director Q&As with visiting filmmakers throughout the weekend.
- Screenings in two newly renovated halls, Zaal 4 and Zaal 5, in a historic 17th-century national monument.

The Nominees

GLOBAL PEACE / HARMONY / HUMAN RIGHTS

The Dance of Triumph AZERBAIJAN

Director: Geray Hasan

Jalal, a war veteran who has lost both legs, struggles to reclaim his dignity and hopes to keep a promise to dance at his fallen friend's sister's wedding.

EUROPEAN PREMIERE

Obraz / The Tower of Strength MONTENEGRO

Director: Nikola I. Vukcevic

During WWII in Yugoslavia, a persecuted child finds shelter in a stranger's home, forcing the host to choose between his principles and his family's safety.

DUTCH PREMIERE

Free Fish PALESTINE & PORTUGAL

Director: Bisan Owda

Filmed in Gaza, two brothers separated by siege and displacement find a fragile connection through the sea that once sustained them.

DUTCH PREMIERE

Bystander UNITED KINGDOM

Director: Ian Roderick Gray

Commissioned by UN Women, this tense short captures everyday harassment of women and the split-second choice to intervene or stay silent.



[Photo credit: OBRAZ/ The Tower of Strength]

WOMEN IN FOCUS: SOCIAL, POLITICAL & SPIRITUAL STORIES

Light Falling Down UNITED STATES

Director: Aimee Greenberg

In 1942 Poland, a fragile woman who discovers a Jewish girl hiding on her farm must choose between survival and morality.

WORLD PREMIERE

Fanny THE NETHERLANDS

Director: Karlijn Milder, Lotte Milder

A hairdresser in the Viennese court defies the rules of her time and draws the attention of Empress Sisi in this tragicomic period piece.

Lotus AUSTRALIA

Director: Nurgul Odabas Nash

A breast cancer survivor, pressured by male doctors into implant surgery, must make her own choice in a story about “My Body, My Choice.”

EUROPEAN PREMIERE

The Testimony THE NETHERLANDS
Director: Ellen van Kempen
A woman makes an irreversible decision, driven by revenge and love for her daughter, in an intimate blend of theatre and film.

The Last Rehearsal UNITED KINGDOM
Director: Carling Ernstzen
A beloved acting teacher rallies his favourite students one last time to stage his final play.



[Photo credit: Fanny]

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

Dear Lara CANADA & UNITED STATES
Director: Lara St. John
Violinist Lara St. John goes public about her childhood assault at an elite music school and uncovers a global pattern of abuse in classical music.
DUTCH PREMIERE

Invisible Injuries AUSTRALIA
Director: Kelly Bergsma
Australian veteran Andy Fermo returns from war with PTSD, and its hidden wounds reshape his family life as he works to heal.
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

Zwaar Plat (Knocked Cold) THE NETHERLANDS
Director: Tom Druppers
Kickboxing sensation Thian de Vries, with a past of addiction and youth detention, rises through the ranks as the system that protects him begins to crack.



[Photo credit: Invisible Injuries]

BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT

Faceless People: The Journey of Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in India INDIA

Director: Radhakrishnan R.K.

Six Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India speak about life in camps, decades of uncertainty and their hopes for the future.

DUTCH PREMIERE

Buskers of Porto THE NETHERLANDS STUDENT FILM

Director: Matties Dielemans, Guus Engelbregt

A documentary journey through the streets of Porto and the musicians who give the city its sound, and the freedom and challenges of their lives.

DUTCH PREMIERE



[Photo credit: Buskers of Porto]

BEST NARRATIVE SHORT



Grace IRELAND
Director: Anna Rodgers
A woman in her late 20s with Down Syndrome navigates adulthood, independence and first love from within a residential support house.
DUTCH PREMIERE

The Fountain SLOVENIA
Director: Andrej Srebrnjak
After losing her parents, eleven-year-old Mila stops speaking, until she discovers a forest fountain that seems to return what was lost.
DUTCH PREMIERE

When I Was Little, I Wasn't Afraid
THE NETHERLANDS
Director: Guido F.G. Jeurissen
In tough IJsselmonde, 10-year-old Gush clings to his dream of becoming an astronaut until a neighbour revealed as his future self offers one last weekend of childhood.

Somewhere Between Here & There THE NETHERLANDS
Director: Frank van der Wulp
At her own wake, Mia is dead but not quite gone, and must help her loved ones find closure before she can let go.
WORLD PREMIERE

[Photo credit: When I was Little, I Wasn't Afraid]

BEST MUSIC VIDEO

MADS & the Freak Factory THE NETHERLANDS
Director: Yda Neves
A young girl enters the surreal MADS Factory, an allegory about identity and the labels that define us.
WORLD PREMIERE



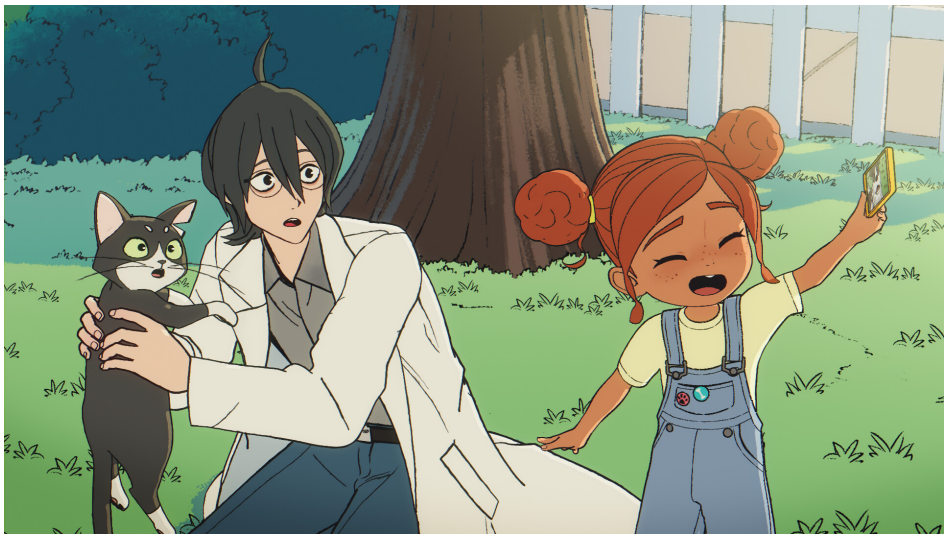
El Film CANADA
Director: El Mehdi
A self-directed conceptual musical short by Moroccan-Canadian artist El Mehdi, a ritual of pop, poetry and cinema that reclaims North African visual language.

Frith: Pinocchio UNITED STATES
Director: Lauren Hoover
A puppet in Bob Baker's Marionette Museum begins to feel human emotion and leads the other puppets out into the real world.

[Photo credit: El Film}

[Photo credit: BRIDGE- My Little Friends]}

BEST ANIMATION

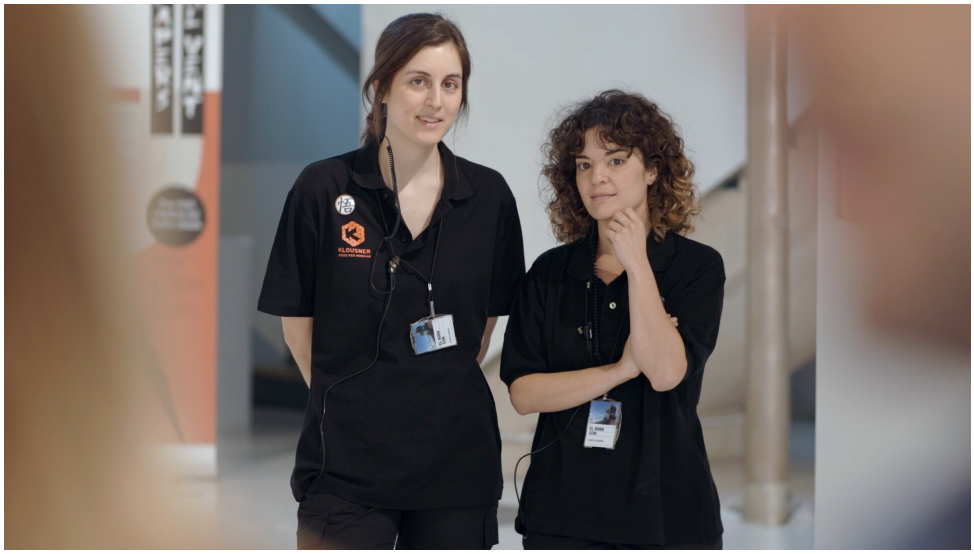


Machines Learning
UNITED STATES
Director: Anthony Koithra
In a dark factory, a bullying worker drives his robot crew harder and harder, until they observe, learn and eventually act.
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

BRIDGE -My Little Friends- JAPAN
Director: Kazuyuki Ishihara
Jin the cat promises to bring back Mugi's beloved dog Shiro, and with help from pigeons and squirrels sets out to reach the Rainbow Bridge.

Sana LEE's Sajupalja SOUTH KOREA STUDENT FILM
Director: Jinhwa Lee
Sana Lee, a gig driver dishonourably discharged from the military, embarks on an adventure in the spirit world to change her fate.
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

LGBTQIA+ & SEXUALITY / EROTIC CONTENT



Yr Wyddfa NETHERLANDS & UNITED KINGDOM
Director: Sander Blom
A father and daughter hike Yr Wyddfa together, and a painful argument about her relationship and his acceptance becomes a reconciliation.

Collage SPAIN
Director: Marius Conrotto
A museum worker tries to convince a co-worker that two visitors are flirting, using scientific signs of attraction.
DUTCH PREMIERE

[Photo credit: Collage}

HORROR / THRILLER



Codes UNITED KINGDOM
Director: Eleanor Rhode
After a major attack, a newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister must decide whether to kill a man to get the nuclear codes and save his country.
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

Moral Hazard THE NETHERLANDS
Director: Luuk Audenaerde
A wealthy married woman tries to escape her guilt after she and her husband accidentally injure a sex worker.

Em & Selma Go Griffin Hunting
UNITED STATES
Director: Alexander Thompson
From Roy Lee, a 1930s-set coming-of-age fable about mothers, daughters and the beasts they hunt, starring Milly Shapiro and Pollyanna McIntosh.

BAAB UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Director: Nayla Al Khaja
After her twin sister's death, a woman is drawn into a surreal Emirati landscape where grief takes physical form and the living and dead blur.

[Photo credit: Moral Hazard}

COMEDY



Todd & The Toad GERMANY
Director: Julia Mücke
Socially paralysed Todd is pushed to meet an online date in person, and ends up in a surreal therapy session with an unusual psychologist.
DUTCH PREMIERE

Gnocchi THE NETHERLANDS
Director: Dylan Geurts
After a mispronunciation of “gnocchi”, Emma leaves society for a self-sufficient life in the woods, but her obsession follows her.

Friends with Benefits UNITED STATES
Director: Nancy Pop
After losing their insurance, two former coworkers turn to couples therapy as an unlikely way to get affordable help.
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

[Photo credit:Todd & The Toad}

SCI-FI / TECHNOLOGY

Waterlanders THE NETHERLANDS
Director: Jan Rekelhof
In a flood-ravaged Netherlands, a father and daughter live isolated on an off-grid ship until a soldier arrives claiming peace has returned.
WORLD PREMIERE

Singularity THE NETHERLANDS
Director: Andy Goralczyk
A small space critter loses his icy home to a cosmic event and must find refuge among a colourful flock watched over by a vast celestial being.

The Phenomenon of Presence
UNITED KINGDOM
Director: Simon Brooks
A virtual world called Presence eases dementia symptoms, but a daughter inside it tries to bring her mother back to the physical world.
EUROPEAN PREMIERE



[Photo credit: The Phenomenon of Presence]

EXPERIMENTAL

Ode (An Acknowledgement of Sea Country)
AUSTRALIA
Director: Kirsten Hudson
A cameraless animation made from handmade seaweed film, running 365 seconds, one for each day of the year.
DUTCH PREMIERE

Overwork GERMANY
Director: Céline Berger
A found-footage reinterpretation of educational 16mm films from the German Employment Agency.



[Photo credit: Ode (An Acknowledgement of Sea Country)]]

SCRIPT / SCREENPLAY

Aktion T-4
Writer: John Martins III
In Nazi Germany, a Lutheran bishop, a Catholic deacon and a deaf mother fight to save her epileptic son from Hitler's euthanasia programme, Aktion T-4.

The Fourth Psalm
Writer: John Martins III
Two Catholic priests clash at a New Mexico parish during the 1980s Sanctuary Movement, endangering three Salvadoran refugees.

Riverside n.487
Writer: Kirby Gilshamoch
Forged in Breda and destined for an Amsterdam canal, a single bicycle witnesses the messiness of human life as it passes from owner to owner.

In Their Words

“Our jury reviewed 503 films and screenplays this year, and every one of them deserved careful attention. Behind each decision was a long process of watching, discussing and reconsidering, and I'm grateful to every member of the jury for the time, rigour and care they brought to it. The films we are honouring reflect the range and courage of today's independent filmmakers, and I hope audiences in The Hague will see in them what we saw: stories worth sharing and voices worth hearing.”
— Scott Blum, Chief of Jury

“Every film in this year's programme carries a message of hope among variety of challenges in the society. Whether it comes from a child finding shelter, a refugee holding on to a sense of home, or a survivor finding the courage to speak, these stories remind us that people can endure and still find light. We hope audiences leave Pathé Buitenhof with that feeling, and with a renewed belief in the power of cinema to bring us closer together and mirror true colours of the society across nations.”
— Dr. Avnish Rajvanshi, IFFH Director

Awards Ceremony

DATE	TIME
Sunday 15 November 2026	20:00 – 21:00
VENUE	**TICKETS**
Pathé Buitenhof, Zaal 5 Buitenhof 20, 2513 AG Den Haag	Available at www.iffh.nl (powered by KoorTickets)

Notes to Editors

About IFFH. Founded in 2018, the International Film Festival The Hague (IFFH) is an annual festival dedicated to championing independent cinema, emerging talent and underrepresented voices. As a registered non-profit foundation (Stichting), IFFH brings together international filmmakers and local audiences in the heart of The Hague to foster creative dialogue and global storytelling.

Press & interviews: Laura Linga, Communications & PR Manager · laura.linga@iffh.nl · +31 (0)6 1291 2090 · www.iffh.nl

Sponsorships & collaborations: Eva Palomino · eva.palomino@iffh.nl

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