

PRESS RELEASE

SONY FUTURE FILMMAKER AWARDS 2026 WINNERS ANNOUNCED



JUNE 11, 2026 – The Sony Future Filmmaker Awards have revealed the **2026 winners** at a gala ceremony hosted by Emmy-award winner Denny Directo (Entertainment Tonight) in the iconic Sony Pictures Studios Scenic Arts Building in Culver City. Now in its fourth edition, this prestigious global awards program for short films uncovers the filmmakers reshaping cinema's future. Established by Creo and sponsored by Sony, the Awards aim to highlight outstanding original talents and launch them directly into the heart of the film industry.

Selected from a global shortlist of 30 films representing over 20 countries, drawn originally from more than 8,400 filmmakers across 162 countries and territories, the winners of the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards 2026 are:

- **FICTION:** **Jack Hughes**, *Deadheading* (UK)
- **NON-FICTION:** **Christine Seow**, *Two Travelling Aunties* (Singapore)
- **ANIMATION:** **Michelle Brøndum & Ida Melum**, *Ovary-Acting* (Denmark/Norway)
- **STUDENT:** **Ana A. Alpizar**, *Norheimsund* (Cuba)

The jury gathered leading figures from the industry including Golden Globe-nominated director and producer **Will Gluck** (*Anyone But You*, *Peter Rabbit*, *Easy A*); acclaimed producer and President of Film and Television at Pascal Pictures **Rachel O'Connor** (*Challengers*, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, *Little Women*); animation co-director **Adam Rosette** (*GOAT*, *The Wild Robot*, *Orion and the Dark*); and jury chair and award-winning director **Justin Chadwick** (*Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, *Brothers Under Fire*), to evaluate creative excellence and innovative storytelling, selecting the winning filmmakers from a wider shortlist.

The **Sony Future Filmmaker Awards jury** shared their collective admiration for this year's winners and shortlisted filmmakers: *"The winning films captivate, challenge, and resonate long after viewing. These are artists who command their craft with confidence, execute their vision without compromise, and observe the world with clarity and empathy. What distinguishes the winners, and the wider shortlist, is how far their stories reach - across borders, across cultures; across the full spectrum of human experience. Cinema remains the universal language, and these filmmakers demonstrate that its most essential voices are rising from every corner of the globe. It's precisely filmmakers of this caliber that the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards were created to discover and to champion."*

The Awards operate at the crucial juncture where talent meets opportunity. By identifying exceptional filmmakers at their breakthrough moment and connecting them directly with the industry, the program transforms potential into momentum. Winners and shortlisted filmmakers were immersed in Hollywood's inner workings during an intensive four-day program at Sony Pictures Studios (June 8-11, 2026), culminating in the Awards ceremony. Through a carefully curated program of workshops and masterclasses led by Sony Pictures executives, screenings, and behind-the-scenes access, participants deepened their understanding of the craft and sharpened their skills while forging meaningful connections with industry leaders and fellow creators from around the globe. The program explored topics such as cinematography, animation, script-writing, documentary filmmaking, global acquisitions marketing, technology demonstrations, and the art of soundtracking a story. In addition, the four winners also receive cash prizes and Sony Digital Imaging equipment.

The winners of the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards 2026 are:

FICTION

The **Fiction** category rewards narrative-led submissions that convey an original fictional story or event. The category winner receives Sony Digital Imaging equipment and a \$5,000 (USD) cash prize. In the Fiction category, the winner was presented by Will Gluck, Golden Globe-nominated director and producer (*Anyone But You*, *Peter Rabbit*, *Easy A*) and Sony Future Filmmaker Awards 2026 jury member:

- **Jack Hughes** (UK), [Deadheading](#) - When her husband is given months to live, a determined wife sets out to jump the waitlist for his dream allotment garden, by whatever means necessary.

NON-FICTION

The **Non-Fiction** category awards short films that are predominantly factual in content. These can include archive footage, documentary footage, reenactments and animation. The category winner receives Sony Digital Imaging equipment and a \$5,000 (USD) cash prize. In the Non-Fiction category, the winner was presented by Rachel O'Connor, acclaimed producer and President of Film and Television at Pascal Pictures (*Challengers*, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, *Little Women*) and Sony Future Filmmaker Awards 2026 jury member:

- **Christine Seow** (Singapore), [Two Travelling Aunties](#) - Two Singaporean women in their fifties trade conventional life for the open road, embracing newfound freedom and the joy of living life on their terms.

ANIMATION

The **Animation** category embraces filmmakers using stop-motion, motion graphics, computer animation, drawn-on-film, rotoscoping, experimental animation, and additional available techniques. The category winner receives Sony Digital Imaging equipment and a \$5,000 (USD) cash prize. In the Animation category, the winner was presented by Justin Chadwick, award-winning director (*Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, *Brothers Under Fire*) and jury chair of the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards 2026:

- **Michelle Brøndum & Ida Melum** (Denmark/Norway), [Ovary-Acting](#) - While stuck at her sister's baby shower, a thirty-something woman is forced to reflect on whether she wants to have children or not after unexpectedly giving birth to her reproductive organs.

STUDENT

The **Student** category rewards filmmakers studying a film course at a registered institution at a diploma or degree level worldwide. The category winner and their institution each receive Sony Digital Imaging equipment. In the Student category, the winner was presented by Yojiro Asai, Senior General Manager of Imaging Marketing Division, Sony Corporation:

- **Ana A. Alpizar** (Cuba), New York University, USA, [Norheimsund](#) - A long-distance romance with an older Norwegian man promises to lift a Cuban girl and her mother out of poverty, until the fantasy begins to crack.

Following a successful fourth edition, the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards will return for a fifth edition in spring 2027, with submissions opening July 2026. To learn more about the winning and shortlisted filmmakers, please visit sonyfuturefilmmakerawards.com.

FUTURE FORMAT

Also honored at today's ceremony is the winner from this year's **Future Format** competition, which challenges filmmakers to respond to a technical brief that explores the creative possibilities of bold and innovative storytelling. This year entrants were invited to submit shorts created specifically for vertical viewing (9:16 aspect ratio). The winner is **Innocent Yama Lamido** (Nigeria) for *Creating Without Permission*, a meditation on creation and 'the spaces between moments.' As part of his prize, Lamido receives Sony Digital Imaging equipment.

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2026 SHORTLIST

FICTION

Winner

Jack Hughes (UK), *Deadheading*

NON-FICTION

Winner

Christine Seow (Singapore), *Two Travelling Aunties*

Shortlist

Eduardo Braun Costa (Argentina), *The Liars*

Jaap Deinum (Netherlands), *Babel*

Gus Flind-Henry & George Malcher (UK), *A Sisyphian Task*

Mitchell Greenberg (Canada), *Conditions of Release*

Kevin Jin Kwan Kim (Canada), *My Dad, the Rockstar*

Jen Nee Lim (Singapore), *Buah (Fruit)*

Mac Nixon (UK), *Flock*

Andy Reid (Canada), *Brief Somebodies*

William Simmons (UK), *Helping Hand*

ANIMATION**Winner**

Michelle Brøndum & Ida Melum (Denmark/Norway), *Ovary-Acting*

Shortlist

Corin Anderson (UK), *Expectation*

McKinley Benson (USA), *Two Ships*

Oscar Jacobson (Sweden), *The Undying Pain of Existence*

Young Chan Jeon (USA), *The History of the Pitiful Humanity*

FUTURE FORMAT**Winner**

Innocent Yama Lamido (Nigeria), *Creating Without Permission*

Commended

Hamza Baig Humayun (Pakistan), *Life is Like Ice Cream*

Nathan Burnby (Australia), *Adrift*

Arthur Teo Hui Teck (Malaysia), *The Night Shift*

Claudio Recenti (Italy), *A Bed Story*

Shortlist

Sophia Bihailo (Ukraine), *Echoes of Menchul*

Abdoul Razak Ceesay (UK), *Farming: Kemi's Story*

Freddie Gluck & Matteo Moretti (USA), *Gatorville*

Olaf Lawrence & Charlie Greaves (UK), *Green Ocean Gold*

Prashant Madan (India), *Showing Up*

Muhammad Mehdi (Pakistan), *Dreams in Dust*

Greeshma Sathiaraj (India), *Mermaids of Mannar*

sawe (Republic of Korea), *Darkness Has Gravity*

Hélène Sevaux (France), *Four Hands*

STUDENT**Winner**

Ana A. Alpizar (Cuba), *Norheimsund*
New York University, USA

Shortlist

Frederik Bösing, Terry Kraatz, & Vera Kayh (Germany),
Once in a Blue Moon
Filmakademie Baden Wuerttemberg, Germany

Talita Brits (South Africa), *Ongeluk (Accident)*
The Open Window Institute, South Africa

Kleif Alexander Tan & Kai Ming Ng (Singapore), *Mirage*
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Isabella Villalobos Figueroa, Manuela Ocampo
Bustamante, & Juan Camilo Mejía Flórez (Colombia),
Amará
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá

NOTES TO EDITORS

For media inquiries, please contact:

Polly Brock (Creo) – media@creoarts.com

Steven Wilson, Kylie Elliot, Austin Good (Scenario Communications) – sffawards@scenarioopr.com

Established by Creo and sponsored by Sony, the **Sony Future Filmmaker Awards** are a major annual awards program for short films devoted to supporting and elevating independent filmmakers and creators from across the globe. Set apart by an exceptional prize, the Awards provide successful filmmakers with invaluable opportunities in the form of a trip to Los Angeles and to the historic Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City, California, where they gain exclusive access to experts and unparalleled insight into the inner workings of the industry. Winners additionally receive cash prizes and a range of Sony Digital Imaging equipment. Free to enter, the Awards comprise five categories: Fiction, Non-Fiction, Student, Animation, and Future Format, and are judged by a panel of leading figures. By supporting talents in film, video and storytelling, the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards provide a gateway for the development of creative excellence. sonyfuturefilmmakerawards.com

Creo initiates and organizes events and programming across three key strands: photography, film and contemporary art. Since 2007 Creo's mission has been to develop meaningful opportunities for creatives and to expand the reach of its cultural activities. Its flagship projects include the Sony World Photography Awards, Sony Future Filmmaker Awards, PHOTOFAIRS and Photo London. Working in partnership with Angus Montgomery Arts (AMA), Creo helps deliver the group's ventures, comprising some of the world's leading art fairs. Taking its name from the Latin for "I create," it is in this spirit that Creo sets out to empower and give agency to creative voices. creoarts.com

Sony Corporation is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Group Corporation and is responsible for the Entertainment, Technology & Services (ET&S) business. With the mission to "create the future of entertainment through the power of technology together with creators," we aim to continue to deliver Kando* to people around the world. For more information, visit: www.sony.net.

**Kando is a Japanese word that roughly translates to the sense of awe and emotion you feel when experiencing something beautiful and amazing for the first time.*

Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) is a subsidiary of Tokyo-based Sony Group Corporation. SPE's global operations encompass motion picture production, acquisition, and distribution; television production acquisition, and distribution; television networks; digital content creation and distribution; operation of studio facilities; and development of new entertainment products, services and technologies. Sony Pictures Television operates dozens of wholly-owned or joint-venture production companies around the world. SPE's Motion Picture Group production organizations include Columbia Pictures, Screen Gems, TriStar Pictures, 3000 Pictures, Sony Pictures Animation, Stage 6 Films, AFFIRM Films, Sony Pictures International Productions, and Sony Pictures Classics. For more information, visit www.sonypictures.com/corp/divisions.

***sawe** is a media artist collective composed of Jaehwan Lee, Haim Gong (Jangho Kim), Jeho Park, Youngjin Seo, and Uisuk Jeong.