



INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ANIMATED FILMS

ANIFILM

7–12 MAY 2024, LIBEREC

The 2024 Anifilm Has Announced the Winners of the International Competitions and Is Coming to a Close

The International Festival of Animated Films Anifilm is coming to a close, the awards ceremony for the international competitions in the film and game categories will take place today in the Auditorium G of the Technical University of Liberec.

The international competitions sections offered 10 feature films, 28 short films, 26 student films, 25 music videos, 22 abstract and non-narrative films and the selection of 12 VR films that were for the first time divided into 7 films in competition and 5 in the non-competition section Panorama. 15 computer games also competed to gain the festival's recognition.

The Award in the International Competition of **Feature Films** has gone to **Chicken for Linda!** written and directed by Chiara Malta from Italy and Sébastien Laudenbach from France, with the jury stating, *"The film managed to surprise and amaze as well as entertain all members of the jury. Its script was exceptional, with brilliant twists, sharply drawn characters and laugh out loud humour. The design was original and effective. The performances of the cast were first class, with infectious energy and humour."* The film tells a story of Paulette who realizes she has unfairly punished her daughter Linda. To make up

for it, she promises to cook her chicken with peppers, even though she cannot cook at all. But that's not the biggest problem. Paulette has to solve where to find a chicken on a strike day, when all the shops are closed. And what if the chicken is somewhat wild and causes a series of crazy situations? This comedy for a wide range of audiences entertained the festival's visitors of all ages.

The prize for **Best Short Film** has gone to *Winter*, a Polish film by the directorial duo of Tomek Popakul and Kasumi Ozeki. The jury explained their decision in the following statement, "*The clash between the ice-cold archaic village life with its manly rituals and the warm personal mystery of the strong young woman Anka has lingered on with us very long after the film. It is an artistically exceptional and wild contemplation about places that you would like to leave but which already have left traces on your soul.*"

Out of **Student Films**, the jury has ruled in favour of *Eastern Rain* from the Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallin, directed by Milly Yencken. The jury praised the film and its treatment with the following words, "*This visually stunning, breathtaking animation has enormous emotional depth. It has been drawing us in from the beginning and holding our attention throughout with every brush stroke and every chime of the bells.*" The main award for **Non-Narrative and Abstract Animation** has gone to the director Côme Lorans for *Crypto(zoïque)*, where he explores the evolution of the planet using abstract animation. And the award for **Best Music Video** will travel all the way to South Korea to the director Jin Woo for *Hilgeum: Illusion*. The category of VR films was dominated by the directors Marion Burger and Ilan Cohen and their *Emperor*, where we are sent on a journey into the mind of a man suffering from aphasia. The award for **Best Computer Games for Children** has gone to Daniel Benmergui's *Storyteller* and the award for **Best Visual Art in Computer Game** has gone to *Dordogne* by Un Je Ne Sais Quoi, UMANIMATION. One of the awards was chosen by the festival's audience. The **Audience Award** of the Region of Liberec has gone to the student film *I Will Die in This House* directed by Adriana Bendžalová from the Tomas Bata University in Zlín.

The winners of international competitions were selected by renowned **jurors**, many of whom also presented their own work and activities in animated film at the festival. The jurors included the experimental filmmaker **Steven Woloshen** (Canada), known for his films made directly on celluloid, or the director **Emma de Swaef** (Belgium), who works with felt puppets. Regular Anifilm visitors would be familiar with her award-winning films *Oh Willy...* and *This Magnificent Cake*. Among the jurors, the festival welcomed also **Milorad Krstić** (Slovenia/Hungary), the director of the feature film *Ruben Brandt, the Collector*; the director **Hugh Welchman** (Great Britain), a co-author of *Loving Vincent* and *The Peasants*; and the producer **Alena Vandasová** (Czech Republic), whose projects include *Daughter* and *Electra* by Daria Kashcheeva and many others.

At the opening ceremony of Anifilm, the winners of the national competition **Czech Horizon**, selected by the Council of Animated Film, were announced. The **PPF Foundation Award** for Best Short and Feature Film went to **Filip Pošivač** for his puppet film *Tony, Shelly and the Magic Light*. The same film also won the director the **Czech Television Award** for Best Czech Animated Work, given across categories. The award for Best Student Film went to **Daria Kashcheeva** for *Electra*. The pilot episode of *Veggierado* directed by **Jan Bubeníček** won the award for Best Series. The award for Best Czech Commissioned Work went to **Marek Berger** for his compelling *The Rapid Arrows Celebrates 85 Years* and the award for Best Czech Music Video went to the distinctive *Prezident Lourajder: Lunapark* directed by **Matej Mihályi**.

Anifilm also saw the second edition of pitching for the **Czech Horizon Grant supported by the PPF Foundation**, whose objective is to support production of Czech auteur professional

short animated films. The jury chose to support four out of the submitted projects: *Period Drama* directed by Michaela Mihalyiová; *Happy Epi* directed by Noemi Valentína; *The Princess and the Wolf* directed by Michaela Hoffová; and *Dagon* directed by Prokop Wilhelm.

About This Year's Anifilm Programme

This year's **International Festival of Animated Films Anifilm** took place in Liberec from **7 to 12 May**. Just as every year, the **international and national competitions** presented the best and the latest works created in contemporary animation across the world. The main themes of the festival's non-competition programme were **manipulated puppets in film** and **visual art in animation**. The festival included traditional Animo programme designed for children and families as well as the popular **Midnight Animation**, which was solely for the grown-ups. **Taking Stock** offered a summary of the last year's animated features and **Eastern Promises** presented animated films from Georgia. Newly restored films were introduced in **Classics Rebooted** and the visitors could also see all the **short films nominated for this year's Academy Awards**. In **Animation Workshops**, children and adults alike created their very own animated films and the festival also served as a platform for the presentation of computer games both in and outside the competition, some of which were available for try-out in **Game Zone**. The extra programme included **exhibitions, concerts, theatre performances, foley and dubbing studios**. **Industry Programme** offered a number of lectures, masterclasses and round-tables, which attracted many visitors.

However, the festival would not make any sense without the most important ingredient of all: the programme of this year's edition of Anifilm has attracted **more than 36,000 visitors**.

Stills from all awarded films and games as well as some photographs from Liberec during the festival can be downloaded until 18 May from <https://we.tl/t-sSpb1YAEYa> (just copy the link in your browser address bar) ...or give us a shout and we'll be happy to send them to you.

For more on Anifilm, go to www.anifilm.cz

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This year's winners are listed below.

2024 ANIFILM WINNERS

International Competition of Feature Films

Jury: Hugh Welchman (Great Britain), Milorad Krstić (Slovenia), Alena Vandasová (Czech Republic)

Best Feature Film

Chicken for Linda!

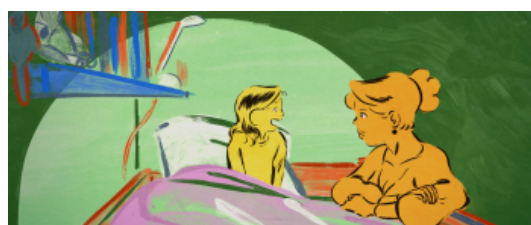
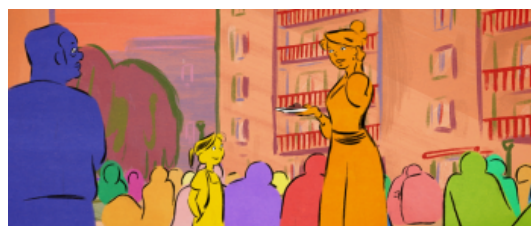
(Linda veut du poulet!)

Directed by **Chiara Malta, Sébastien Laudenbach**

France, Italy, 2023, 76 min

Technique: 2D computer animation

Producers: Dolce vita films, Miyu Productions



Statement of the Jury:

While there were several very good films, there was one which was exceptional, and for this reason we are giving out one prize for Best Feature. It is in the category of Best Film for children, but it was also the stand out film for adult audience. The film managed to surprise and amaze as well as entertain all members of the jury. Its script was exceptional, with brilliant twists, sharply drawn characters and laugh out loud humour. The design was original and effective. The performances of the cast were first class, with infectious energy and humour. To draw it all together, there was a very relevant and modern premise for our urbanised consumerist world at its heart: our alienation from the food we eat. The problems faced by the characters in working out how to kill a chicken meant the film managed to be thought-provoking and philosophical as well as wildly entertaining and impressive from a film-making perspective. We congratulate the filmmakers on their achievement and thank them for this film.

Synopsis:

Paulette realizes she has unfairly punished her daughter Linda. To make up for it, she promises to cook her chicken with peppers, even though she cannot cook at all. But that's not the biggest problem. Paulette has to solve where to find a chicken on a strike day, when all the shops are closed. And what if the chicken is somewhat wild and causes a series of crazy situations?

This zany comedy for a wide range of audiences will entertain children and, thanks to some scenes and details, adults as well. During this and last year's festival season, it has managed to earn acclaim as it won the Best Feature Film Award at Annecy and earned nominations for the César Award and for the Best Animated Feature Film at the European Film Awards. This film by the Italian-French duo Chiara Malta and Sébastien Laudenbach is pleasantly playful, smoothly animated and, with its colour differentiation of characters and artistic shortcuts, also somewhat atypical. Despite that, it's audience-friendly and humorously depicts the difficulties

in parent-child relationships and communication and is therefore acclaimed mainly at festivals of films for children.

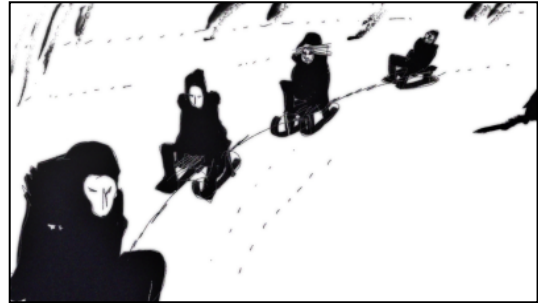
International Competition of Short Films

Jury: Mariam Kandelaki (Georgia), André Eckardt (Germany), Emma De Swaef (Belgium)

Best Short Film

Winter

Directed by **Tomek Popakul, Kasumi Ozeki**
Poland, 2023, 26 min
Technique: drawing on paper
Producer: Yellow Tapir Films



Statement of the Jury:

The clash between the ice-cold archaic village life with its manly rituals and the warm personal mystery of the strong young woman Anka has lingered on with us very long after the film. It is an artistically exceptional and wild contemplation about places that you would like to leave but which already have left traces on your soul.

Synopsis:

It grows as slowly as an icicle, but one day it drops and crashes. Anka loves cats. And Jesus. In a winter silence the lagoon freezes and the unspoken resurfaces like a crack on ice. Mosaic portrait of a small fisherman's village where human to human, human to animal, animal to animal interdepend on a delicate balance of warm tender care and cold emotional cruelty. An eerie story of loneliness.

Special Mention

Wander to Wonder

Directed by **Nina Gantz**
Netherlands, Belgium, France, 2023, 13 min 50 s
Technique: stop-motion
Producers: Circe Films, Kaap Holland Film, Beast Animation



Statement of the Jury:

This warm ode to the fondly remembered children's series of the 70's and 80's touched us with its delicate movements and expressions of the characters, contrasting wonderfully with the cheeky sense of humour and beautifully sinister atmosphere.

Synopsis:

Mary, Billybud and Fumbleton are three miniature human actors who perform in an eighties kids TV series called *Wander to Wonder*. After the creator of the series dies, they are left alone in the studio. With their slowly decaying costumes and growing hunger, they continue to make increasingly strange episodes for their fans.

International Competition of Student Films

Jury: Mariam Kandelaki (Georgia), André Eckardt (Germany), Emma De Swaef (Belgium)

Best Student Film

The Eastern Rain

Directed by **Milly Yencken**

Estonia, 2023, 9 min 7 s

Technique: painting on glass, drawing on paper

Producer: Estonian Academy of Arts



Statement of the Jury:

This visually stunning, breathtaking animation has enormous emotional depth. It has been drawing us in from the beginning and holding our attention throughout with every brush stroke and every chime of the bells.

Synopsis:

This poetic film combines the lyrical effect of traditional animation techniques such as drawing on paper and painting on glass with the mysterious and disturbing atmosphere of the portrayed places and scenes. A carefully chosen colour palette enhances the unique visual experience from a strangely familiar yet geographically unspecified setting.

Special Mention

Children of the Bird

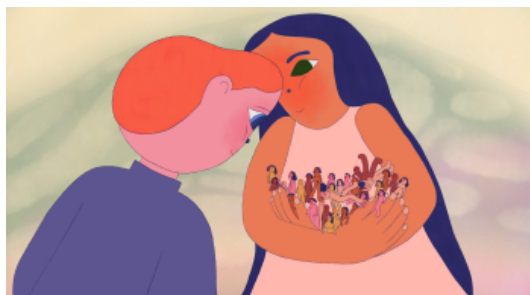
(*A madár gyermekei*)

Directed by **Júlia Tudisco**

Hungary, 2024, 11 min 30 s

Technique: 2D computer animation

Producer: MOME



Statement of the Jury:

The jury was very impressed by the colourful explosions and mesmerizing sound design of this film, which playfully explores the symbiotic balance between chaos and nourishment in the act of creation.

Synopsis:

A picturesquely colourful fictional mythological film full of visual ideals about the birth and death of our planet. The story is seen through the eyes of two naive god figures – a wild girl who has the power of creation and a shy boy who has the power of destruction. This is not a fight between 'good' and 'evil' but a game between two equal parts to find harmony.

International Competition of Abstract and Non-Narrative Animation

Jury: Steven Woloshen (Canada), Wiola Sowa (Poland), Jan Brukner (Czech Republic)

Best Abstract and Non-Narrative Animation

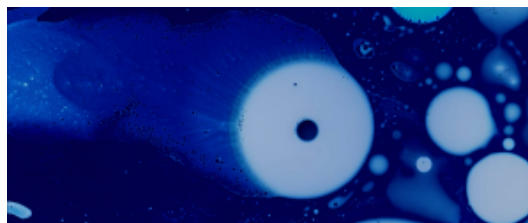
Crypto(zoïque)

Directed by **Côme Lorans**

France, 2023, 9 min 36 s

Technique: stop-motion, puppet, other, real footage

Producer: ENSAD



Statement of the Jury:

Under the cover of abstract animation, we explore the dynamics of planetary evolution with a variety of artistic techniques.

Synopsis:

Crypto(zoïque) shows the crossing of a celestial object. It's an immersive journey in the heart of matter, from a macroscopic to a microscopic scale. This probe is formally stylised as a disturbing sci-fi film and the selected soundtrack underscores it. With its approach to the object's surface, the film transforms into a fantastic nature documentary.

Special Mention

Right in the Eyes of the Mirror

(Les yeux fixes du miroir)

Directed by **Mélusine Peduzzi**

France, 2023, 8 min 40 s

Technique: 2D computer animation, drawing on paper

Producer: Cellofan'



Statement of the Jury:

We loved this technically well-crafted dream state.

Synopsis:

Beneath the skeleton, the flesh that rustles, turns and returns to our heads before rotting in silence. This is the story of this flesh. This surrealist narrative draws us into a darkened world of the unconscious. No matter how bizarre the spectacles we watch are, thanks to superb animation they flow smoothly and surely.

International Competition of Music Videos

Jury: Steven Woloshen (Kanada), Wiola Sowa (Polsko), Jan Brukner (ČR)

Best Music Video

Hilgeum: Illusion

Directed by **Jin Woo**

South Korea, 2023, 5 min 33 s

Technique: 2D computer animation

Producer: Sewingbug



Statement of the Jury:

This music video uses a metaphysical and surrealist fusion of graphic arts.

Synopsis:

This suggestive and strongly graphic music video for *Illusion* was made by a young animator commuting between Korea and Poland. Jin Woo works with a limited colour pallet and mostly dark tones and creates an obscure world where it is unclear whether strange things are happening inside or outside the observer's head.

Special Mention

Vonfelt: Je Pars

Directed by **Michelle Brand**

Germany, France, 2023, 3 min

Technique: 2D computer animation, 3D computer animation, other, cel animation

Producer: STINK Films



Statement of the Jury:

We award our special mention for a colourful exploration of a beautiful night in the city.

Synopsis:

As the night comes, the journey begins. Running, rushing, racing. Unbound from time and swept away by the night's surreal cascade of lights, we leave the day life behind. The director skilfully managed to depict the magical atmosphere of a city at night.

International Competition of VR films

Jury: Steven Woloshen (Canada), Wiola Sowa (Poland), Jan Brukner (Czech Republic)

Best VR Film

Emperor

Marion Burger, Ilan Cohen

France, Germany, 40 min, 2023



Statement of the Jury:

This game strikes a careful balance of teaching by interaction and compelling storyline that improves our understanding of and empathy with mental health issues.

Synopsis:

In this highly interactive and virtual imaginative story, we delve into the mind of a man suffering from aphasia, a disorder impairing a person's ability to communicate. His daughter tries to communicate with the man and looks for a way to unlock his mind again. When she tries to piece together fragments of his speech, she finds out that individual words are linked to specific memories. Memories of his whole life.

International Competition of Computer Games

Jury: Eva Marková (Czech Republic), Onat Hekimoğlu (Germany), Vojtěch Buchta (Czech Republic)

Best Visual Art in Computer Game

Dordogne

UN JE NE SAIS QUOI, UMANIMATION, 2023



Statement of the Jury:

Choosing from the many beautiful and imaginative games was challenging, but this game stands out with its watercolour visuals that give it a warm, human touch. Its soft, dreamy brushstrokes and warm colours perfectly complement the game's poignant story about memories of a childhood summer trip. The artistically rich setting feels almost life-like. We would like to point out that thanks to the interesting combination of real watercolour painting applied to 3D models, the game offers enough interactivity and space that is very pleasant to explore... The result of this approach is an artistically beautiful experience that resonates deeply and captures the essence of a forgotten childhood through every sensitively conceived detail.

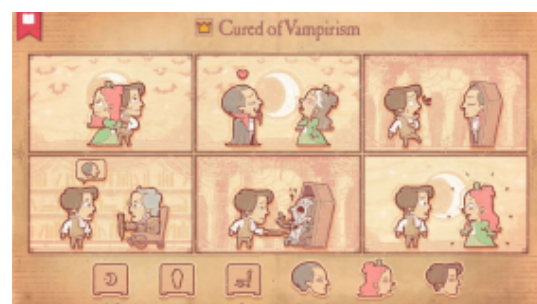
Synopsis:

Explore the *Dordogne* landscapes of a thousand summer colours within sumptuous hand-painted watercolour environments. During your adventure, recall the moments, the panoramas, the scents, the sounds and the sensations. Recount these vivid memories in your journal as a recollection of Mimi's family past that's unique to your experience and a nostalgic, touching reflection of your journey.

Best Game for Children

Storyteller

Daniel Benmergui, 2023



Statement of the Jury:

When we were choosing a game to show the kids and play with them, this game was always at the top of our list. We chose it because it offers a mechanism that appeals to all ages and

encourages logical thinking through story construction. Players enjoy experimenting with different combinations and discovering how each twist affects the outcome of the storyline, making it ideal for intergenerational play. The game design is clean and straightforward, with archetypal characters providing clear and enjoyable gameplay. Its humour and animations add to its charm and show how games can be both entertaining and educational.

Synopsis:

Storyteller lets you build stories using a visual language. The goal on each level is to make a story that fits the given title by placing settings and characters that react to each other, creating a narrative through their relationships. *Storyteller's* comic-panel design and charming animations allow for experimentation within the framing of its many stories: just drag and drop characters to see how the story plays out!

Audience Award – Award of the Region of Liberec

I Will Die in This House

Directed by **Adriana Bendžalová**
Czech Republic, 2023, 7 min 30 s
Technique: 2D computer animation
Producer: UTB – Tomas Bata University in Zlín



Synopsis:

The film follows Irma and her weird neighbours during the final days before the world is supposed to end. This farcical story full of black humour is highly topical and shows us that it is possible to find friendship and understanding among all sorts of people.

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