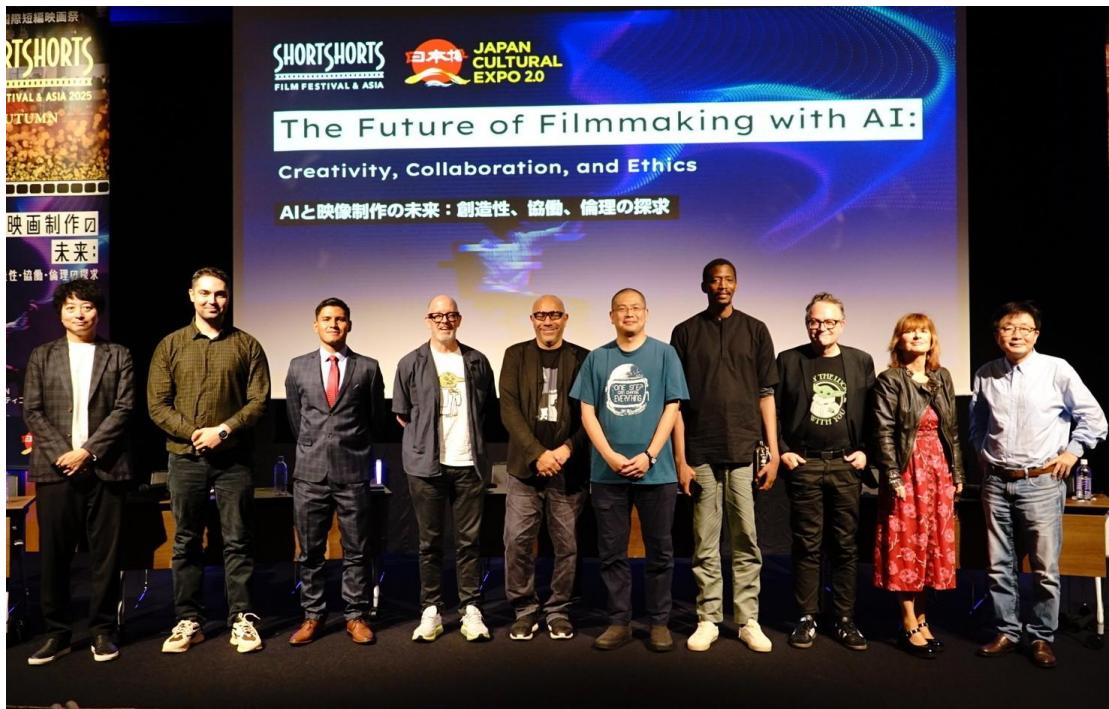


U.S. Academy Awards® Qualifying Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia 2025

The Future of Filmmaking in the Age of AI Debated by Global Industry Leaders — International Conference Now Available On-Demand



An Academy Award®-qualifying festival and one of Asia's largest international short film festivals, Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia (SSFF & ASIA), released today the archived video of its international conference **"The Future of Filmmaking with AI: Creativity, Collaboration, and Ethics,"** held on October 26 as part of the SSFF & ASIA 2025 Screening in Autumn.

The conference is now available to audiences in Japan and overseas.

URL: https://youtu.be/rK8lMt5JA_8

The conference opened with remarks by Seigo Tono, Executive Director of SSFF & ASIA, who provided an overview of the growing presence of AI-powered works at the festival.

He noted that SSFF & ASIA receives approximately 5,000 submissions from abroad each year, and that the share of films utilizing AI has been rising rapidly in recent years. He reported that AI-assisted works accounted for about 2% (112 films) in 2024, increasing to approximately 6% (275 films) in 2025.

The conference brought together filmmakers, producers, researchers, and industry leaders from 10 countries. Participants engaged in lively discussions across three themes: "Creativity & Collaboration," "Ethics & Cultural Responsibility," and "Future Vision of AI Cinema."

"The sessions explored how AI technologies are transforming the filmmaking process, with active debate around creativity, ethics, and copyright."

A detailed event report will follow on the next page.

This event was held as part of the FY2025 Japan Cultural Expo 2.0 program.

The Evolution of “Creativity & Collaboration” Brought by AI

In this session, speakers shared a wide range of real-world practices that position AI as a “creative partner” in filmmaking. Japanese filmmaker Takeshi Kushida (*Last Dream*) spoke about producing his AI-assisted short film *Last Dream*, describing AI as “a dialogue partner that draws out humanity’s memories through words—something that goes beyond being a mere tool.” Fellow director Hiroki Yamaguchi (*GRANDMALEVIT*) noted that “at this point, AI is closer to an assistant that helps visualize a creator’s intentions, but in the future it may become a true co-creator.”

From Germany, composer and filmmaker Marcel Barsotti presented the production process behind his AI film *Imperial*, completed after layering more than 30,000 prompts. He emphasized that “no matter what technology we use, the core of cinema remains the story.” Co-screenwriter Gundula Barsotti-Bast added that, while the fundamentals of writing do not change, AI production introduces a new kind of labor: “At the beginning there is no big difference between real and AI films, but once prompting starts, you have to rewrite over and over because the prompts never come out as you want.”

French media executive Alexandre Michelin added that “in France, some discussions view AI as a cultural threat, but looking back at the history of art, new technologies have always reinvented creativity.”



Possibilities and Challenges of AI Cinema Across Regions

Next, panelists from around the world shared the current state of AI adoption and the challenges emerging in their respective regions. Javid Sobhani, programmer for the Tehran International Short Film Festival (Iran), stressed that AI’s role cannot be reduced to a single label: “I can’t call it just a tool, and I can’t romanticize it as a co-creator either,” noting instead that in constrained environments AI becomes “a shield” that can even function like a producer or co-writer. Senegalese filmmaker Hussein Dembel Sow echoed this view from another context, emphasizing AI’s potential for leapfrogging production barriers: “Where I come from, we are happy because it will help us build new industry,” adding that without AI, large-scale VFX-driven genres such as fantasy or science fiction would remain out of reach.

Douglas Montgomery, former strategic advisor at Warner Bros. (USA), highlighted the expanding possibilities and future outlook enabled by AI, saying that “AI is not perfect and does not replace humans, but it is getting better every day,” and predicting that animation production timelines will likely be shortened not by small margins but “by a factor of two to five going forward.”



Submissions of AI-Assisted Works on the Rise — A New Wave of Cinematic Expression “AI Does Not Take Away Creativity; It Expands It.”

On the other hand, Mexican director Oscar Parres pointed out that Mexico is still in an early stage of adoption and that institutional frameworks lag behind creators: “They told me AI is not creative or copyright—it’s just a tool,” insisting that education and ethical awareness will be essential as technology spreads.

In addition, Shin Chul, Festival Director of the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival (Korea), warned that “every morning a new game-changer AI tool appears,” and expressed concern that a drift toward “full auto-creation” could be frightening, risking the loss of a filmmaker’s intent—yet he also emphasized the democratizing upside, arguing that AI allows young creators to start from “the same starting point as James Cameron,” shifting the competition toward originality.

With the growing number of submissions incorporating AI technologies, AI cinema is no longer a passing experiment. Rather, it may be establishing itself as a new genre of visual expression.” Guided by this question, one message was repeatedly underscored throughout the discussions: AI is not something that deprives humans of creativity, but a presence that expands it. At the conference, Tetsuya Bessho, Founder/President of SSFF & ASIA, expressed this vision in his remarks: “Our mission is to continue celebrating the power of storytelling, no matter what era of technological innovation we are in.” With strong attendance and enthusiastic engagement, the conference concluded on a high note—sharing a collective sense of anticipation for a new era of filmmaking in which humans and AI create together.



OUTLINE of the International Conference “The Future of Filmmaking with AI”

- ◆ Date & Time : Sun, Oct. 26 10:00-13:00
- ◆ Venue : Akasaka Intercity Conference the AIR
- ◆ URL : https://shortshorts.org/jce_mice/
- ◆ Organizer: Pacific Voice Co., Ltd., Japan Arts Council, Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan

【Japan Cultural Expo 2.0】



“Japan Cultural Expo 2.0” aims to build momentum toward the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, promote the recovery of inbound tourism, and further stimulate domestic travel demand. At the same time, it seeks to foster the advancement of Japan’s culture and arts, which embody the beauty and spirit of the nation, and to share their diverse and universal appeal with the world.

<https://japanculturalexpo.bunka.go.jp/en/about/>

Panelists of the International Conference "The Future of Filmmaking with AI"



(Germany) **Marcel Barsotti** Composer, Filmmaker

In 2024, Marcel Barsotti made his debut as a film director with 'TRANSFORMATION', a dystopian, elaborately AI-generated science fiction short film that received 12 international awards and 37 nominations, also the 'Valuable Rating' in Germany. With IMPERIA Barsotti realized his second big AI Science Fiction project, together with BAI Pictures and Schmerbeck Entertainment, which received just the 'Honorary Tribute Film Award' at the International Peace Festival in Toronto and starts worldwide on international festivals in Tokyo, Rome, Toronto, Utah, Munich, Paris and many more. Barsotti is also an international film composer from more than 100 international motion picture projects, like 'Pope Joan', 'The Sea Wolf' or 'The Miracle of Bern' and received more than 50 international awards for his film scores, and music videos. Also he composed many commercials and corporates for tv and streamers, among Sky, Concorde or RTL2, Barsotti is lecturing on universities in Europe, realized orchestral concerts with his film scores worldwide, he is CEO of the International Sound Library ETHNO WORLD and the music production company TUNESFORMOVIES. Barsotti is also brand ambassador of VSL, Waldorf and UVI products.



(Germany) **Gundula Barsotti-Bast** Author

Gundula Barsotti-Bast has been managing the office of the chair for Educational Sciences at Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich. She was a member of the Munich International Choral Society as soprano for decades. She works as a consultant on the film scores of her husband Marcel Barsotti and for the publishing house BAM Music Publishing. Gundula Barsotti-Bast was co-author on the film projects 'Transformation' and 'Imperia'.



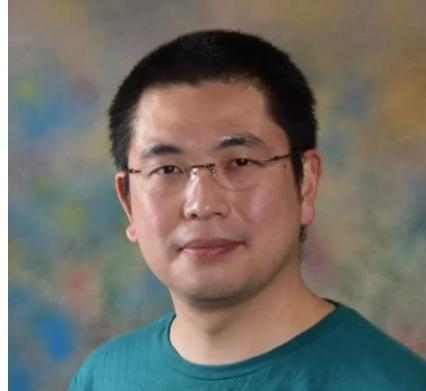
(Korea) **SHIN Chul** Festival Director, Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival (BIFAN)

Shin Chul, head of the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival (BIFAN) since 2019, has been central to the modernization of Korean cinema. As a producer, he shaped influential works such as *Marriage Story*, *Lies*, and *My Sassy Girl*. The latter ignited the Korean Wave, sweeping across Asia and inspiring remakes in Hollywood, China, and beyond. Its success attracted fresh creative talents and prompted major companies to invest in film, marking a new golden era. Widely recognized as the producer who reshaped Korean cinema, Shin continues to pursue new goals. Since BIFAN 2024, he has led the "BIFAN+" project, dedicated to exploring the impact of generative AI. The initiative seeks to expand artistic freedom and present a vision for the future evolution of films and film festivals worldwide.



(Senegal) **Hussein Dembel Sow** Filmmaker, Screenwriter

Hussein Dembel Sow est un réalisateur et scénariste sénégalais pionnier dans l'utilisation de l'intelligence artificielle pour la création cinématographique. Lauréat du World AI Film Festival (WAIFF) 2025 avec son film *Thiaroye 44*, il développe un studio de cinéma génératif en Afrique, visant à démocratiser l'accès à la création audiovisuelle et à promouvoir les récits africains à l'échelle mondiale. Passionné par les nouvelles technologies et leur impact sur l'industrie cinématographique, il est également le représentant à Dakar de la communauté mondiale AI Thinkerer, dédiée à l'innovation collaborative en intelligence artificielle..



(Japan) **Takeshi Kushida** Filmmaker

Born in 1982 in Osaka, Kushida works at Pyramid Film in Tokyo. His debut feature *Woman of the Photographs* (2020) screened at Tokyo, Fantasia, and FrightFest, winning 40 awards and releasing in 10 countries via MPX. Second feature *My Mother's Eyes* (2023) played top genre fests and is distributed by Reel Suspects. His third feature *Acting for Beginners* (2024) was produced for the opening gala of SKIP City International D-Cinema Festival. His latest AI-generated short film, *Last Dream* (2025), won the top AI prize at the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival, praised as "a groundbreaking work that will change the future of AI cinema."



(France) Alexandre Michelin Knowledge Immersive Forum (KIF) Founder & Curator

Alexandre Michelin is a French media executive whose career traces the constant search for new frontiers in storytelling. He began at Paris Premiere Cable TV, learning the fundamentals of broadcasting, before moving to Canal+ as Director of Programs, where he embraced the creative boldness of premium television and European digital innovation within the Canal+ group. In 2005, his pioneering work in interactive formats earned an International Interactive Emmy Award for Cult (France 5), confirming his instinct for innovation. In 2006, he joined Microsoft as Head of MSN for Europe, Middle East and Africa, leading for ten years one of the company's largest global regions and building the foundations of digital content platforms across three continents.. From 2021, he chaired the Centre National de la Cinématographie Commission on Digital Experiences, championing immersive formats in VR, AR, and XR. In 2024, he launched the initiative "You + AI", anticipating how artificial intelligence will redefine creative practices and cultural engagement. Today, as founder of the Knowledge Immersive Forum (KIF), he curates global conversations on the future of culture and technology.

(USA) Douglas Montgomery Global Media Executive



Douglas is a 20+ year media and retail executive. During this time, he worked for Walmart Stores integrating newly acquired overseas retail. After this, Montgomery worked 15 years for Warner Bros. in 3 different countries (U.S., Japan, and U.K.) as a strategic advisor for both WB management and major partners. Additionally, he was the Chairman of the 114-year-old Japan America Society of Southern California, which honored Marie Kondo and Shohei Ohtani as "International Citizens". In 2021, Douglas founded "Global Connects Media", where he serves as President and CEO. Global Connects Media aids its clients in gaining access to the world entertainment and retail market.

Douglas co-founded and produced "Global Stage Hollywood" Film Festival, focused on providing a platform in Hollywood for diverse groups from around the world. Montgomery also produced and curated the 2021 Taiwan Biennial Film Festival (both in-person and online) and served as a judge for the inaugural Ceylon Film Festival 2022 held in Santa Barbara. Douglas earned an MBA (Dean's List) from the University of Southern California. Prior to USC, Douglas completed a BComm from the University of Alberta. Douglas splits his time between Los Angeles and Tokyo, Japan. He also serves an AI consultant for anime

(Mexico) Oscar Parres Filmmaker



Oscar Adán López Parres is a Mexican engineer and independent filmmaker specializing in Artificial Intelligence. His work explores how technology can expand the limits of art and storytelling. In 2023, he was invited to speak at the Honorable Chamber of Deputies of Mexico about the role of AI in diverse sectors, highlighting his interest in implementing this technology in multiple areas of society and culture.

His debut short film, Who is God? (2023), created entirely with artificial intelligence, was officially registered at the National Institute of Copyright in Mexico as one of the first AI-generated short films in the world. The project positioned him as part of the new wave of creators who are redefining the relationship between cinema, spirituality, and emerging technologies. Currently, he is developing Yo Soy (I Am), a continuation of this exploration, conceived as a love letter to God and as the second part of a diptych that reflects his personal and spiritual search. This new project represents another step in his ongoing path to fuse symbolic narratives with technological innovation, aiming to reach international audiences.

(Iran) Javid Sobhani Tehran International Short Film Festival Programmer, filmmaker



Javid Sobhani is a screenwriter and director, born in 1991 in Iran, holding a Master's degree in Industrial Engineering. He is a member of the Iranian Society of Screenwriters Guild and has served as the Festival Programmer and International Programs Coordinator for the OSCARS®-Qualifying Tehran International Short Film Festival since 2018, one of the largest short film events in Asia. In this role, he handles strategic planning, programming, and international coordination.

Since 2020, Sobhani has been the International Programs Coordinator and representative at the Iranian Youth Cinema Society, one of the leading global institutions for short film production and film education.

So far, His works include a feature film screenplay (Torpedo) and short films as a writer and director. His latest project "The White Horse" received the Grand Prize for Feature Film Pitching at the 20th Kazan International Film Festival in Russia (2024). He is currently developing his second feature film project as a screenwriter.

Sobhani has served as a jury member and selection committee member for several international film festivals in Portugal, France, and Italy etc...

He introduced the AI competition program to the Tehran International Short Film Festival starting with its 41st edition in 2024, and it is now part of the official international competition since.

A black and white portrait of Hiroki Yamaguchi. He is a young man with dark, wavy hair, looking slightly to his left with a neutral expression. He is wearing a dark blazer over a white t-shirt.

(Japan) Hiroki Yamaguchi GAUMAPIX CEO/Film director

Hiroki Yamaguchi is a Tokyo-based Japanese film director from Kyoto. In 2004, his first theatrical feature, "Hellelevator," was released in theaters; the film won at the Fantasia International Film Festival in Montreal and was officially invited to the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival. He is known as a feature film director for "Bloody Chainsaw Girl" and "Torinoko City."

In 2024, his first generative AI film, "IMPROVEMENT CYCLE," was officially invited to the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival, the Busan International AI Film Festival, and the Trieste Science+Fiction Festival. In August 2025, the AI film "GRANDMALEVIT" had its theatrical release in Japan.

SHORTSHORTS



FILM FESTIVAL & ASIA

【SHORT SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL & ASIA】

Actor Tetsuya Bessho, who is also a member of the American Actors Association (SAG), founded the American Short Shorts Film Festival in 1999 with the desire to introduce "short films," which he encountered in the United States, to Japan as a new genre of film. In 2001, the festival was renamed the Short Shorts Film Festival (SSFF) and in 2004 it was recognized as a recognized film festival by the Academy Awards®. In the same year, the Short Shorts Film Festival Asia (SSFF ASIA, co-hosted by Tokyo) was established with the aim of expanding new visual culture originating in Asia, fostering young filmmakers, and currently operates as SSFF & ASIA.

In 2018, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the film festival, the Grand Prix was named after Director George Lucas. In January 2019, the Short Shorts Film Festival in Hollywood was held to commemorate the 20th anniversary. Since 2019, the four Best Short Award-winning short films from the official competitions (International, Asia International, Japan) and the Non-Fiction Competition, and from 2022, five short films, adding the Best Short Award-winning short film in the Animation competition, have become eligible to be nominated for the Academy Awards for Best Short Film the following year. The SSFF & ASIA will continue to support young creators.

【Official website】<https://www.shortshorts.org/en>

【PRESS INQUIRY】

Committee for Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia : Fuyumi Tanaka TEL : press@shortshorts.org

Still are Available :

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