

72nd International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, 28 April – 3 May 2026

All Awards of the 72nd International Short Film Festival Oberhausen

Award ceremony: Sunday, 3 May 2026, 7 p.m. CEST, Lichtburg Filmpalast, Elsässer Str. 26, 46045 Oberhausen

High-resolution stills of award-winning films are available in the Downloads section from Monday, 4 May, here: <https://www.kurzfilmtage.de/en/presse/>

Awards of the International Competition

Awards of the International Jury

Members:

Mario Kozina (Croatia), Mariángela Martínez Restrepo (Argentina), Angela Summereder (Austria), Weronika Szyma-Chahed, (Poland), Deimantas Narkevičius (Lithuania)

Grand Prize of the City of Oberhausen

worth 8,000 euros

Opera

Igor Zelić

Croatia 2026, 19'39", colour

Statement:

For staging light and darkness, space and time into an ode to cinema and the drama of life.

Principal Prize

worth 4,000 euros

Hei Dong Dong

(Dark Channel)

Yu Zhe

China 2025, 11'35", colour

Statement:

For reshaping an everyday space into a work of art through the power of cinematic observation.

Promotional Prize of the International Competition

worth 1,500 euros

Daylight

Anna Heisterkamp

Ireland/USA 2025, 21'53", colour/black and white

Statement:

For an artistically accomplished research on the architectural project placed in the middle of the city but slipping from the public view.

European Film Awards 2026 Short Film Selection

August och kriget

(August and the War)

Leandro Netzell Cerón/Samori Tovatt

Sweden 2026, 14'24", colour

Statement:

For offering a critical and humorous reflection on the rising militarization.

Special Mention

TEÊMBA!

(FLOW!)

Kagoma Ya Twahirwa

Rwanda 2025, 22'15", colour/black and white

Statement:

For challenging the language of cinema to express what is beyond narratives and images.

1st Prize of the Jury of the Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia

worth 5,000 euros

Members:

Danila Lipatov (Germany), Ulrike Sprenger (Germany), Faris Alrjoob (Germany), Angelika Lepper (Germany)

Opera

Igor Zelić

Croatia 2026, 19'39", colour

Statement:

From a static perspective, we see village life at night come to life in its cyclical rhythms. At daybreak, the lights of the spirit world fade into an irretrievable past. What remains is a sense of dread at the ruthlessness of history.

2nd Prize of the Jury of the Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia

worth 3,000 euros

Gei3 Yik1 Jo6 Biu1

(Map of Traces)

Chan Hau Chun

Hong Kong 2025, 29'27", colour/black and white

Statement:

In *Street View* images that promise boundless orientation and control, the film searches in vain for fading memories. It finds them in idiosyncratic, secret signs and fleeting encounters. Longing, state violence, resistance – the urban space is examined for its role as a witness.

Special Mention

Hei Dong Dong

(Dark Channel)

Yu Zhe

China 2025, 11'35", colour

Statement:

An inconspicuous space, easily overlooked, becomes a recording channel. Like a distant echo, the movements of a metropolis are reflected on the water's surface of a microcosm. Through focused observation, Yu Zhe uncovers the poetry of the peripheral.

The International Critics' Prize (FIPRESCI Prize)

Members:

Amirata Joolaei (Iran), Meena Karnik (India), Fabian Tietke (Germany)

Opera

Igor Zelić

Croatia 2026, 19'39", colour

Statement:

Nocturnal darkness covers a rural road in the night. Bit by bit lights are added, interspersing the darkness with bright spots, thus revealing the depths of the space. Over the whole length of the film a carefully choreographed movement of lights adds and subtracts visible elements allowing us glimpses into the mysterious space lining the road. The pale glow of colours gives the image the beauty of a painting of light, the appearance and disappearance of people turns the road into a nocturnal theatre stage until the arrival of the daylight sets an early end to the night's magic. Igor Zelić's *Opera* is an astonishing piece of film art whose creativity and crafty play with the basic elements of film (light, sound and space) left us deeply impressed.

Prize of the Ecumenical Jury

worth 1,500 euros

Members:

Rinke Dellebeke-van Hell (Netherlands), Iva Folajtárová (Czech Republic), Daniel Hercenberger (Germany)

Hei Dong Dong

(Dark Channel)

Yu Zhe

China 2025, 11'35", colour

Statement:

Film theorist Siegfried Kracauer once used the phrase "ordinary invisible things" to describe aspects of reality that are technically visible, but usually go unnoticed in everyday life. Cinema at its best captures these fleeting, everyday, seemingly mundane moments we tend to overlook or ignore. The Ecumenical

Jury would like to award its prize to a film that is at the same time seemingly simple and incredibly poetic, layered and emotionally involving. The filmmaker creates a filmic space, uses light to reflect on light and makes it a lifeline or, if you wish to see it, the spiritual presence of the flow of life.

Special Mention

wolno, szybko, wolno

(slow, fast, slow)

Jagoda Czarnek

Poland 2025, 1'02", colour

Statement:

We would also like to commend another film with a Special Mention. Speaking of subverting expectations: it is very rare to find a young filmmaker who has such a feeling for timing and dark humour that she can show both Memento Mori and Carpe Diem in just four shots and one minute.

ZONTA Prize

worth 1,000 euros

for a female filmmaker in the International or German Competition

Cold Call

Stefanie Schroeder

Germany 2025, 16', colour

Statement:

Stefanie Schroeder's film Cold Call lets us connect where we would least expect it: in a call centre conversation with an anonymous scam caller. It is the unconventional attitude – visible and audible in the film – with which Stefanie Schroeder confronts the constraints of this conversation, be they racist stereotypes, the steep social divide or the telephone scam itself, for a moment that lets us discover beauty, absurd humour and, above all, another human being. A cinematic experience that is humanising in the best sense of the word.

Awards of the German Competition

Members of the Jury:

Mikosch Horn (Germany), Ebba Jahn (Germany), Eva Könnemann (Germany)

Prize of the German Competition

worth 5,000 euros

Audry Lornacle or 14 Days in DJ's House

Dagie Brundert

Germany 2025, 8'16", colour/black and white

Statement:

With a playful and unconventional touch, the director finds symbols and images in her surroundings, from which she crafts a delightful dreamlike tale. Text and image come together to form a poem that is by turns humorous and thought-provoking, its cinematic form shaped by her personal narrative and her uniquely creative handling of the film footage.

Promotional Prize of the German Competition

worth 1,500 euros

Ein Meter Neunzig

(One Meter Ninety)

Gregor Bartsch

Germany 2026, 30', colour/black and white

Statement:

A former socialist computer centre in Potsdam has been converted artists' studios and now stands in the way of the reconstruction of a Baroque Prussian military church, as the two dissimilar buildings occupy the same plot of land. Taking the dedication ceremony of the half-finished church tower as its starting point, the film sets out to uncover layers of German history right up to the present day and to highlight the historical amnesia of today's culture of remembrance.

3sat Emerging Talent Prize

worth 2,500 euros

In addition the award includes a buying option on the awarded work to be broadcast on 3sat.

Catacombs

Shehab Fatoum

Germany 2026, 29', colour

Statement:

A film that shifts perspectives because its point of view is unstable. It seeks structure in chapters and in Greek mythology. The Syrian-born filmmaker explores the impossibility of returning to a time before – thereby broadening not only the scope of the German Competition, but also our view of Germany itself.

Special Mention

Berlin, Europacity

Leo Geisler

Germany 2025, 13'39", black and white

Statement:

It's understandable in a way. Who hasn't got annoyed at their landlord at some point? Nevertheless, we were surprised and delighted by the ease with which the director crafts his crime plot here and discovers previously unseen images from the heart of Berlin. When the story is reinterpreted through the lens of a blind photographer, you suddenly realise that you've not only been marvellously entertained, but also whisked away into the heart of the big questions of semiotics.

Awards of the 18th NRW Competition

Members of the Jury:

Oliver Flothkötter (Germany), Lili Hartwig (Germany), Brigitte Strubel-Mattes (Germany)

Prize of the NRW Competition

worth 1,000 euros

Garden of Edie

Miri Klischat

Germany, 2026, 20', colour

Statement:

The expulsion from paradise as an act of liberation. A courageous break with conventions and standardized ways of life leads to the discovery of one's own sexuality and one's own voice. 'She' becomes 'I', while the camera explores the new garden of temptation in precise images. Just as in the stories from the invisible worlds she described to her friends as a child, the protagonist's language guides us along the insightful path to self-empowerment.

Promotional Prize of the NRW Competition

worth 500 euros

Ku Yendza (Trajectories)

Simon Rittmeier

France/Germany 2026, 16', black and white

Statement:

A collaborative portrait, as playful as the juggling balls in the air. On the breathless journeys to the next performance, in the quiet moments of reflection, whilst practising and rehearsing, the film develops a rhythm of its own that draws us into the protagonist's world. Across continents and languages, it is less the words than the sounds, beats and repetitions that characterise the protagonist and capture him on grainy 8mm film.

Special Mention

HOPE ROAD

Susann Maria Hempel

Germany 2025, 12'30", colour

Statement:

The film begins in a state of despair – a crisis with oneself, with one's own work, with the world. It explores what it means to make films when the future seems hopeless and new and old family responsibilities stand in the way of art. So the filmmaker works her way through her own feelings and thoughts, whilst at the same time taking us on a cinematic aesthetic discourse about the creation of images.

Prize of the WDR Westart Audience Jury

worth 750 euros, sponsored by WDR Westart

Members:

Christian Bauer, Elke Bauer, Doris Bremm, Wolf Diemer, Frank J. Engelhardt, Meike Hanke, Ursula Horst, Merle Hribar, Maren Kammrad, Stefanie Lambertz, Bernhard Naendorf, Markus Sanger

HOPE ROAD

Susann Maria Hempel
Germany 2025, 12'30", colour

Statement:

A ceaseless monologue on crises and one's own artistic identity: intense, exhausting, all-consuming – not light viewing. On motherhood and being an artist, from dystopia to utopia, from despair to hope. The world as a constantly renewing possibility.

The diversity of the themes is reflected in the execution: from deliberately flawed AI sequences to stop-motion and experimental techniques. Reinvention is possible! A cinematic triptych that overwhelmed us both in terms of content and form. A short film with a magnetic pull.

Awards of the 49th International Children's and Youth Film Competition

Awards of the Children's Jury

Members:

Katharina Abdullah, Jodie Alkassab, Adam Breitkopf, Tina Soso Khalaf, Nour Yahya

Prize of the Children's Jury

worth 1,000 euros, sponsored by Wirtschaftsbetriebe Oberhausen (WBO)

Under The Wave off Little Dragon

Luo Jian
UK 2025, 14'25", colour

Statement:

What we liked about our winning film was that the girl was very brave and didn't let anyone push her around. She had the courage to go out on her own to find her fish, even though she's only five. She was also very clever. We thought the ending on the beach was lovely because all the sand was glowing.

evo Prize of the Children's Jury

worth 1,000 euros, sponsored by Energieversorgung Oberhausen AG (evo)

Ha Tzel Sheli Ve Ani

(My Shadow and Me)
Yali Herbet
Israel 2025, 3'52", colour

Statement:

At the start of the film, the boy was sad because his mum couldn't play with him. But then he found a friend. We liked the beautiful shadow play, especially when the boy was riding the rabbit. The film was lovely and we wished it had gone on a bit longer!

Special Mention

Just Jools

Ezra Verbist

Belgium 2025, 16'40", colour

Statement:

We liked the fact that we learnt something from the film. The girl was very brave and didn't give up, even though others were mean to her. She had a teacher who helped her with her dancing. The dance moves were particularly beautiful and it made you want to join in straight away.

Prize of the Youth Jury

worth 1,000 euros, sponsored by the Rotary Club Oberhausen

Members:

Linus Bellinghausen, Erisalda Gjerga, Willi Hüsken, Marc Loginow, Jenina Sothilingam

BEI KUN ZHU DE GOU

(A Trapped Dog)

Xinying Lao

USA 2025, 12'12", colour

Statement:

We decided on our winning film because it shows how one can be oppressed by a system, and why, as a young person, one wants to break free from it precisely for that reason. In the film we selected, the protagonist ultimately manages to do just that, and that is what won us over.

SURPRISE. Prize for the most surprising film

worth 1,000 euros, sponsored by Methode Film

Mappillai

(The Groom)

Padakathai Illaka Collective

India/Germany, 2026, 16'50", colour

Statement:

The beauty of surprises is that they catch us when we least expect them. Our winning film had us hooked right from the start. We thought we knew where the story was heading, but just at that moment the film took us by surprise and turned everything upside down. This dramatic twist really piqued our interest. We chose a film that gives us an insight into many cultural and historical contexts, which we also found quite interesting. We were particularly impressed by the involvement of the entire village and the authentic insight into a culture that brought the film to life.

Special Mention

Des Gens Vivent Ici

(People Live Here)

Gabrielle Côté

Canada 2025, 12'12", colour

Statement:

The short film we selected tells the story of a vibrant, warm neighbourhood where people come together, support one another and life flourishes. Yet this idyll is brutally shattered when it is forced to make way for towering skyscrapers – an anonymous, soulless architecture that drives life away. But in the end, life returns: the neighbourhood is rebuilt. We chose this film because it manages to capture our longing for identity and community, and reminds us how important it is to fill our cities with life.

Prize of the Ecumenical Jury of the Children's and Youth Film Competition

worth 1,500 euros

Members:

Irina Grassmann (Germany), Lars Karmark Obel (Denmark), Balázs Szövényi-Lux (Hungary)

Just Jools

Ezra Verbist

Belgium 2025, 16'40", colour

Statement:

A documentary that tackles a difficult subject in a deeply loving way, managing to make a particular issue feel universal.

The main character finds her strength in settling into herself and feeling the dance, rather than in the gaze and judgment of others. The film portrays this journey through authentic characters and a storyline that almost gives the documentary the feel of bordering on fictional drama.

The director's gentle eye ensures it remains personal without getting to private. The dance comes to life for the girl not just through the music, but in collaboration with the dance teacher, in nature, and through her imagination.

Special Mention

Jésus Marie Joseph

Patxi Meerman

France 2025, 3'27", colour

Statement:

At once a deeply loving, handheld film and razor-sharp in its exploration of life's fundamental "why" — a question just as valid for a 3-year-old boy running through a Greek village as for an old man. It manages to tell a full story in 3 minutes without explaining or oversimplifying.

The film is organic and follows the boy at a playful pace that lends the film the boy's own energy... The images portray the island small-town through a boy's eyes as white light and contours — with the church bell as the distant goal.

ECFA Short Film Award Nomination

(The award consists of a nomination for the ECFA Short Film Award 2025)

Members:

Julia Fleißig (Germany), Marija Georgiev (Croatia), Daniel Lundquist (Sweden)

LE JOUR OÙ J'AI LÉCHÉ UN CAILLOU

(The Day I Licked a Pebble)

Flavie Eliézer/Chloé Bernuchon, Goli Atefi/Maud Kolasa/Nathan Jauze/Marie Pijollet

France 2025, 6'35", colour

Statement:

Not least because of the three siblings' unique cinematic journey to a bakery, we – as jury members here in Oberhausen – could identify deeply with our award-winning film. Time and again, we found ourselves lost between the festival venues, but always with plenty of joy and some great dialogues, just like the protagonists.

We selected the film for its surprising form: it's an animated film styled to look like a home video or found footage, and it has been created with remarkable precision.

28th MuVi Award

Awarded on Saturday, 2 May 2026, 10 pm CEST, Lichtburg Filmpalast, Elsässer Str. 26, 46045 Oberhausen

Members of the Jury:

Jim Avignon (Germany), Nela Gluhak (Croatia), Tintin Patrone (Germany)

1st Prize

worth 2,000 euros

Rentrer à la maison (Anadol & Marie Klock)

Timo Schierhorn, Uwe

Germany 2026, 3'35", colour

2nd Prize

worth 1,000 euros

IDLU (TEIL A ViSiON)

Lars Zimmermann, Paulina Wetzel

Germany 2026, 3'19", colour

Special Mention

All Glock No Cock (ildikó)

Olga Ringleb, Paula Kiermaier

Germany 2025, 3'25", colour

MuVi Online Audience Award

chosen by online vote on www.muvipreis.de and worth 500 euros

All Glock No Cock (ildikó)

Olga Ringleb, Paula Kiermaier

Germany 2025, 3'25", colour

Oberhausen, 3 May 2026

Press contact: Sabine Niewalda, niewalda@kurzfilmtage.de, Tel. +49 (0)208 825-3073