



## **Fest Anča Presents its Official Selection**

**Fest Anča International Animation Festival will showcase some of the most outstanding works from the world of animation. Audiences can look forward to a unique selection of films with the power to spark emotion, imagination, and critical thinking. Žilina will come alive with animation from June 30 to July 5.**

We received a record 1,823 submissions from 86 countries, including Ghana, Paraguay, Pakistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The pre-selection committee – Jakub Spevák, Ema Nemčovičová, and Peter Gašparík – chose 233 films and created a diverse official selection for 2026. Most of these titles will be presented as Slovak premieres.

**For the third consecutive year, Fest Anča remains the only Academy Award®-Qualifying festival in Slovakia.** Films awarded the Anča Award for *Best Animated Short* and *Best Slovak Animated Short* automatically become eligible for consideration in the Oscar® short film competition.

## **A Cosmic Journey and a Dadaist Song**

The main competition section will feature 32 films, including 12 student works, showcasing a wide range of approaches, themes, and animation techniques. Recurring themes include the search for identity, anxiety about the future, and the need for community and belonging.

Audiences can look forward to remarkable techniques such as pin screen animation in the Japanese film *Rest*, glass painting in the Brazilian short *The Girl & The Pot*, as well

as a striking blend of cut-outs and 3D collage in the Estonian experiment *ab mala usque ab ovo*.



*Merrimundi – Niles Atallah*

Viewers can embark on an intergalactic journey of longing for singles in the Slovak premiere of *Cosmonauts*, previously screened at the prestigious Berlinale. Or they can step into *Merrimundi*'s twisted utopia – a cosmic dadaist song with a psychedelic edge and references to virtual reality.

The main competition also features leading names in animation, including two-time Academy Award nominee **Don Hertzfeldt**, last year's jury member and guest **Sara Koppel**, **Ala Nunu** – whose success story was featured at Student Forum 2025 – and Ukrainian animator and director **Mykyta Lyskov**.

## Hybrid Approaches in Slovak Animation

The Slovak category attracted a notably higher number of submissions than usual this year. In addition to the competition section, we are also introducing a non-competitive

Slovak programme. The selection includes student films, particularly from The Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and FAMU in Prague.

The final selection of six diverse films in the Slovak competition features an experimental work by multidisciplinary director Viera Čákanyová, reflecting on the meaning of life. Her film **Bardo**, inspired by a spiritual experience during a stay in darkness, explores themes of hallucination using generative artificial intelligence.



*Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe! – Andrea Szelesová*

The section will also present the highly anticipated **Tourists** by Mária Kralovič, a story about rekindling intimacy in a stagnant marriage, which premiered at Clermont-Ferrand. The children's film – infused with elements of Greek mythology – **Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe!** arrives fresh from its Berlinale premiere, by Andrea Szelesová, winner of the Slovak competition at Fest Anča 2022.

## ***Don't Look Away***

Audiences can also look forward to *Short Animated Documentary, Anča in Mordor*, and *Anča in Wonderland* sections. Children will love colourful adventures, while music lovers will enjoy a curated selection of genre-spanning music videos by both emerging and established artists.

This year the newly-launched *Don't Look Away* section will focus on human rights themes. Highlights include ***Because, I am a Girl***, created in collaboration with teenage girls in Kyrgyzstan, and the Iranian documentary ***By the Way***, which explores a love for electricity. The film ***Ping Pong*** reflects on how political tensions and differing views can strain personal relationships.



*Ping Pong – Tianji Yu*

## **The Loch Ness Monster May Emerge**

The 19th Fest Anča's central theme is *Fake*. Our programme this year delves into myths, facts, and conspiracies, blurring the line between truth and illusion while playfully questioning the very premise of reality.

While the theme does not directly shape the Fest Anča 2026 official selection, it resonates throughout specially curated sections, feature film programmes, retrospectives, and a vibrant accompanying line-up. There's plenty to discover.

## **Partners and Supporters**

**The 19th edition of the Fest Anča International Animation Festival 2026 is financially supported by the Audiovisual Fund, the LITA Fund, and the SPP Foundation.**

### **Organiser**

ANČA Civic Society

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New Synagogue

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### **Main partners**

The festival is financially supported by the Audiovisual Fund

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