Nippon Connection – 27th Japanese Film Festival
June 8 – 13, 2027, Frankfurt am Main / Germany

Festival Regulations

Article 1
The Nippon Connection Film Festival is the world's largest showcase of Japanese cinema and takes place in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The festival aims to contribute to the development and promotion of Japanese film culture by presenting the full spectrum of Japanese cinema: from blockbusters and dramas to animation, experimental works, documentaries, and short films. Nippon Connection pays special attention to emerging and innovative talent, as well as independent productions.

Article 2
The festival is organized by the non-profit organization Nippon Connection e.V., Schwedlerstr. 1-5, 60314 Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The 27th edition will take place from June 8 to 13, 2027, at Künstler*innenhaus Mousonturm, Produktionshaus NAXOS, DFF – Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum, Eldorado Arthouse Kino, Cinéma Arthouse Kino, Mal Seh'n Kino, as well as other venues in Frankfurt am Main.

Article 3
Entries may consist of films of any length and genre, including feature films, short films, animation, documentary, experimental works, music videos, and TV series. Submitted works must have been completed between 2025 and 2027 and must either have been produced or shot in Japan, or directed by a Japanese filmmaker. All films are selected by the festival's program committee. Not all selected films take part in the competitions.
The program is divided into seven sections: NIPPON CINEMA, NIPPON VISIONS, NIPPON DOCS, NIPPON ANIMATION, NIPPON RETRO, NIPPON KIDS & TEENS, and NIPPON CULTURE.

The festival accepts the following screening formats: DCP, Blu-ray, and MP4. All films must include English or German subtitles, or must be dubbed in one of these languages. Unencrypted DCPs are preferred. If an encrypted DCP is submitted, the KDM must be valid from May 31 through June 14, 2027, to allow for testing on the cinema servers.

The submission deadline is February 15, 2027. There is no submission fee. The online entry form is available at NipponConnection.com and must be completed in Romaji (with the title and name of the director in Kanji/Kana and Romaji). Submission requires the consent of the rights holder. The selection process will be finalized by April 30, 2027, at the latest.

Article 4
The festival hosts the following competitions:

NIPPON CINEMA AWARD
Endowed with EUR 4,000 (courtesy of Bankhaus Metzler) and determined by audience vote. The award is presented to the director of the winning film.
All films competing for this award are presented in the NIPPON CINEMA section and must meet the following criteria:

1. Produced in Japan or directed by a Japanese filmmaker

2. At least a German premiere at the festival
3. Minimum running time of 60 minutes
4. Produced in 2026 or 2027

NIPPON VISIONS JURY AWARD
Granted by an international jury of three members, appointed by the festival organization. The award is presented to the film's director and includes free English subtitling for the director's next film (courtesy of Japan Visualmedia Translation Academy), provided it is produced in Japan and primarily in Japanese. The jury may also grant one special mention.
All films competing for this award are presented in the NIPPON VISIONS section and must meet the following criteria:

1. Produced in Japan or directed by a Japanese filmmaker
2. At least a German premiere at the festival
3. Minimum running time of 60 minutes
4. Produced in 2026 or 2027

NIPPON VISIONS AUDIENCE AWARD
Endowed with EUR 2,000 (courtesy of Japanisches Kultur- und Sprachzentrum Frankfurt am Main) and determined by audience vote. The award is presented to the director of the winning film.
All films competing for this award are presented in the NIPPON VISIONS section and must meet the following criteria:

1. Produced in Japan or directed by a Japanese filmmaker
2. At least a German premiere at the festival
3. Minimum running time of 60 minutes
4. Produced in 2026 or 2027

NIPPON STORYTELLING AWARD
Award for the best screenplay in the NIPPON VISIONS section. Endowed with EUR 1,000 (courtesy of Storymaker Public Relations Agency) and granted by the NIPPON VISIONS jury. The award is presented to the screenwriter of the winning film.
All films competing for this award are presented in the NIPPON VISIONS section and must meet the following criteria:

1. Produced in Japan or directed by a Japanese filmmaker
2. At least a German premiere at the festival
3. Minimum running time of 60 minutes
4. Produced in 2026 or 2027

NIPPON DOCS AWARD
Endowed with EUR 2,000 (courtesy of Nippon Connection e.V.) and determined by audience vote. The award is presented to the director of the winning film.
All films competing for this award are presented in the NIPPON DOCS section and must meet the following criteria:

1. Produced in Japan or directed by a Japanese filmmaker
2. At least a German premiere at the festival
3. Minimum running time of 60 minutes
4. Produced in 2025, 2026 or 2027

NIPPON ANIMATION SHORTS AWARD
Endowed with EUR 2,000 (courtesy of Wacom Europe GmbH) and granted by an international jury of three members, appointed by the festival organization.The award is presented to the director of the winning film.

All short films competing for this award are presented in the NIPPON ANIMATION section and must meet the following criteria:

1. Produced in Japan, directed by a Japanese filmmaker, or primarily dealing with Japan-related themes
2. Maximum running time of 20 minutes
3. Produced in 2025, 2026 or 2027

The final selection of competition entries is made by the festival's program committee.
The winners of all awards, with the exception of the Nippon Animation Shorts Award, will be announced at the award ceremony on June 13, 2027. The winner of the Nippon Animation Shorts Award will be announced on June 12, 2027.

Article 5
Submitted films that do not comply with the award regulations may still be accepted but will not be considered for the competitions. The festival program and all screening schedules are determined by the festival's program committee. The festival organization reserves the right to assign films to specific sections. Participation in the festival program or in one of the competitions cannot be claimed as a legal right.

Article 6

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) must be disclosed upon submission. Filmmakers are required to specify which elements of their film have been generated or substantially modified using AI, such as the screenplay, visuals, animation, voices, music or sound.
The use of generative AI does not automatically disqualify a film from consideration. However, the festival's program committee reserves the right to take the nature and extent of AI use into consideration during the selection process.

Article 7

For sustainability reasons, all digital screening formats (DCP, MP4) should be transferred online. The festival's preferred platform is filmfetch.net. In exceptional cases, files may also be transferred via other cloud services or on a hard drive sent by mail.

The costs for shipping Blu-rays, analog film prints, and hard drives to Frankfurt am Main will be covered by Nippon Connection. If the materials are forwarded directly to another festival, that festival is responsible for the return costs. If the materials are returned to the distribution company or the rights holder, Nippon Connection will cover the costs. Nippon Connection will ensure that Blu-rays, hard drives, and analog prints are insured from their arrival at the festival until their return. IMPORTANT: All materials sent by mail from non-EU member states must be clearly marked with a customs declaration stating: 'For cultural purposes only. No commercial value.' A pro forma invoice with a declared value of no more than USD 15 must be enclosed.

Press materials, including EPKs, trailers, stills, synopses, and credits required for promotional purposes, must be submitted by the specified deadline following confirmation of participation. The festival reserves the right to use the stills, the trailers and a short excerpt of the film (up to three minutes) for promotional purposes without prior notice.

Article 8
The festival does not charge any fees for submitting a film.

Article 9
Submission to the festival implies acceptance of these regulations.

Article 10
The festival director and the program director reserve the right to make decisions in cases not clearly covered by these regulations.

Frankfurt am Main, Germany, October 1, 2026

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