

FANTOCHE

INTERNATIONALES FESTIVAL FÜR ANIMATIONSFILM
BADEN/SCHWEIZ

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Closing Time for Fantoche: This Was the 2025 Festival

The 23rd edition of the Fantoche International Animation Film Festival ended with the award ceremony followed by a screening of a selection of the winning films. It was a successful night for Swiss animation: director Lea Favre won the two main prizes, Best Film and Best Swiss, with "Qui part à la chasse." The festival counted around 22,000 admissions over the week.

Highlights and Audience Favorites

For six days, Fantoche turned Baden and Wettingen into destinations for animation lovers from all over the world. Around 100 film programs and special events awaited an enthusiastic audience in five cinemas, the festival center, and numerous satellite venues. This year's focus "9 to 5" featured diverse perspectives on the world of everyday work, whereas guest country Estonia presented itself in surreal images.

Apart from these two focus programs and the competitions (see below), there were many other highlights to discover. The tragicomic coming-of-age story "Memoir of a Snail" by Australian Oscar winner Adam Elliot ("Harvey Krumpet," "Mary and Max") proved a big audience favorite. Another feature film from Down Under was also received enthusiastically: the sci-fi comedy "Lesbian Space Princess," shown twice in Baden during the week and once at a pre-festival screening in Zurich in cooperation with Filmpodium and the festival Pink Apple. The director duo, Emma Hough Hobbs and Leela Varghese, were in high spirits during the accompanying making-of, garnering both laughter and ecstatic applause.

Two productions with Swiss participation also turned out to be crowd-pleasers: "Mary Anning," the first feature-length film by animator Marcel Barelli from Ticino, enchanted young viewers. "One Minute Movies," a collaboration between Swiss director Stefan Halaus and Austrian comic artist Nicolas Mahler, was more trenchant but no less charming. The program of 26 satirical short films celebrated its world premiere at the festival in a sold-out auditorium.

Outside of cinemas, our exhibitions were especially popular. For the fourth time, we collaborated with the Zurich University of the Arts to present a selection of groundbreaking multimedia exhibits in "REFRESH x Fantoche." And for the first time, we showcased objects from the films of artists in attendance in "Animation Artefacts" at Kunstraum Baden.

The Industry at the Festival

Fantoche is not just a festival for the public, but also an important hub for the local and international animation film industry. Our main event for professionals, the Industry Day, was held for the 11th time and extremely well attended this year. A presentation by the successful French studio Fortiche about its Emmy-winning series "Arcane" was a particular treat. The other program items also contained numerous highlights, including an Artist Talk by Estonian director Sander Joon, lively discussions

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during panels on commercial animation and coproductions, a Pitching Workshop, and a Portfolio Review Session.

Next up was the Swiss Animation Industry Award for the best domestic commissioned film, selected by the festival's Swiss jury for the first time this year. Their choice fell on "What makes us human?" by Lars Würgler. The symposium concluded with the Animation Apéro networking event in the new festival lounge.

Filmmakers were also ubiquitous throughout the whole week. There were making-ofs for the film "Le parfum d'Irak" and the game "Harold Halibut"; Nina Gantz, Lucija Mrzljak, and David Szauder offered insights into their work; and filmmaker and former Lucerne University lecturer Jesús Pérez was honored with a retrospective.

And the winners are...

The most outstanding competition entries were duly celebrated at the Fantoche awards ceremony. The big winner of the evening was Swiss animator Lea Favre: She became the first filmmaker ever to win the main prize in both the Swiss and International Competitions, Best Swiss and Best Film, with the latter qualifying her for the Oscars. The Audience Award in the International Competition went to "Winter in March" by Natalia Mirzoyan, while the Swiss Competition's Audience Award went to "Double or Nothing" by Tokay. In the children's film competition, the kids' jury honored "Bobel's Kitchen" by Fiona Rolland, while Philippe Kastner's "Wolfie" received the most audience votes. The new Youth Award for Best New Talent, presented by a youth jury, went to "Cottage Cheese" by Liina Luomajoki, Lena Metzger, Janina Müller, and Alice Kunz.

The full list of winners is available at <https://fantoche.ch/awards-2025>.

Festival Directors' Summary

Preliminary numbers indicate that Fantoche counted about 22,000 admissions this year, a slight increase on the previous year. That's an encouraging development, especially given the strong competition from the Day of Cinema, which coincided with the festival this time. Seven screenings sold out in no time at all: "One Minute Movies," "Lesbian Space Princess," "Swiss Competition 1," "Kids for Kids," and all three screenings of "Memoir of a Snail."

Festival director Ivana Kvesić found the focus "9 to 5" especially rewarding, as it addressed the often precarious working conditions in the cultural sector and encouraged viewers to think and talk about their own work. She noted that achieving sustainable structural improvement requires us to actively tackle problems and to join forces in pursuing positive change. In her closing speech, Kvesić thanked all guests for the energy they bring to the festival and for making it a place "where you can be touched by films, immerse yourselves in conversations, and simply enjoy yourselves."

For questions about this media release: Mischa Haberthür, media@fantoche.ch, +41 56 290 14 44