

FANTOCHE

INTERNATIONALES FESTIVAL FÜR ANIMATIONSFILM
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Planet Earth, To Be Continued: 2026 Festival Recap

The 24th edition of Fantoche International Animation Film Festival concluded with the Award Ceremony followed by a screening of a selection of the winning films. “Uka-Uka” by Estonian Henri Veermäe won the Best Film category, while the hilarious “To Kill a Velofahrer” took home the prize for Best Swiss. Under this year’s focus theme “Calling Planet Earth” the festival turned its attention to the state of our planet – an urgency which, given the midsummer temperatures in early September, was palpable beyond the festival’s packed cinemas.

Highlights and Audience Favourites

Roughly 100 film programmes, talks, and workshops, as well as established series like the short film screenings at the thermal bath pop-up Bagno Popolare and our cinematic “Midnight Snacks” offered numerous highlights across Baden’s cinemas and around the festival centre. The latest DreamWorks project, **“Forgotten Island”**, which celebrated its Swiss premiere at Fantoche, quickly emerged as one such highlight. Another was the “Meet the Artist” session featuring **Sarah Cox** with a queue outside the box office and sold-out screenings. The British artist spoke about her career path, from her time as an animation designer for MTV to her current role as Chief Creative Director at Bristol’s renowned Aardman Studios. The zany queer comedy **“Jim Queen”** and **“Carmen l’oiseau rebelle”**, an inventive adaptation of the opera “Carmen”, also proved major crowd-pullers.

The Industry at the Festival

Under the motto “Hope is a word with 24 fps”, the 12th Industry Day offered a ray of hope in challenging times. In talks hosted by comedienne Jane Mumford, animators Michael Frei, François Chalet, and Lea Vidakovic discussed how we can reimagine animation beyond the traditional cinema screen, whereas Tariq Ali, Jadwiga Kowalska, and Joanna Quinn spoke about resilience, humour, and artistic creation in the face of adversity. Daniel Harisberger from Team Tumult shared practical skills in his workshop, while multi-award-winning British director Joanna Quinn offered personal insights into her career and work and delighted audiences with a live drawing session. The Industry Day concluded with the presentation of the SAIA Award, which honours the best commissioned animated film in Switzerland. The award, presented in cooperation with the Swissfilm Association, went to **“Start in Kindergarten and School: Language as gateway to the world & Dealing with oneself and others”** by Fela Bellotto.

Up Close and Personal with Filmmakers

Beyond the Industry Day Fantoche once again proved to be *the* meeting place for animation professionals, with numerous opportunities for people to come together. At the popular “Artists’ Brunches” and the new “Artists’ Coffee & Cake” events, filmmakers and audience members struck up conversations in a relaxed atmosphere. Two “Making-of” sessions offered deep dives into two very

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different artistic processes and animation techniques: Momoko Seto's "**Dandelion's Odyssey**" and Zaven Najjar's "**Allah n'est pas obligé**". Seto's poetic, postapocalyptic fable was also part of the festival programme, with two nearly sold-out screenings. The "Meet the Artist" format featured personal appearances by Sarah Cox, Joanna Quinn, and Taiwanese director and animator Cheng-Hsu Chung. Swiss animator **Isabelle Favez** received a special tribute with a retrospective.

And the Winners Are...

At the closing Award Ceremony on Sunday, ten competition entries were honoured in various categories. This year's main prize in the International Competition, **Best Film**, went to "**Uka-Uka**" by Estonian **Henri Veermäe**. With dark humour and deep warmth, the film tells the story of a boy whose game of hide-and-seek at his grandparents' home takes an unexpected turn, confronting him with loss and the fragility of life. In the Swiss Competition, "**To Kill a Velofahrer**" by **Helmi Korhonen, Ines Nungasser, Livio Frauendorf and Marvin Bueler** was awarded "**Best Swiss**"; a film that has prompted plenty of smiles and appreciative comments both at the festival and beyond. It comes as no surprise, that "To Kill a Velofahrer" also won the 2026 Audience Award in the Swiss Competition. The Audience Award in the International Competition went to "**Im Auto Tapes und Butterbrot**" by Kiana Naghshineh.

The full list of winners is available [here](#).

Festival Director's Recap

Festival Director Ivana Kvesić was delighted by the lively atmosphere and curiosity during the festival as well as by the presence of several prominent women from the international animation scene, among them Sarah Cox, Joanna Quinn, Isabelle Favez, and Momoko Seto. The Focus on Egypt attracted a great deal of audience interest. "Having the descendants of the **Frenkel brothers**, Egypt's animation pioneers, travel to Baden to celebrate 90 years of Egyptian animation with us was a personal highlight for me", said Kvesić, who was equally impressed by the work of the Egyptian Cimathèque, which is deeply committed to the country's cinematic heritage despite often difficult conditions. Fantoche contributed to the restoration of works by another pioneer of Egyptian animation, **Ihab Shaker**, which celebrated a second world premiere at this year's festival, decades after their initial creation.

According to initial estimates, Fantoche once again recorded around 22,000 admissions this year, maintaining the high level achieved in 2025.

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