

Discovering the Creators Shaping the AI Era. The 1st International AI Creator Award [AICU Award 2026] Opens Its Second Call for Entries

An international open call across 10 fields and 7 languages, discovering remarkable creators and preserving their work as part of the emerging history of the AI era. Award ceremony at Inter BEE 2026, Makuhari Messe, in November. Entries and partnership applications are now open.

AICU Inc. (Delaware, USA) and AICU Japan K.K. (Institute of Science Tokyo Certified Venture No. 7), a creative AI media company committed to empowering the people who create in the generative AI era, today announced the opening of the second call for entries for the **International AI Creator Award 2026 (AICU Award)**, held under the patronage of the Digital Content Association of Japan (DCAJ).

The Award seeks to **discover, recognize, and record** outstanding creators and creative work emerging from the rapidly evolving intersection of AI and human creativity.

The award ceremony will take place on **20 November 2026** as a stage event at **INTER BEE IGNITION × DCEXPO**, held at Makuhari Messe from 18 to 20 November.

Official site: <https://aicu.ai/award> Official hashtag: **#AICUaward**

Discovering the Creators Shaping the AI Era

The AICU Award is an international initiative to discover and recognize outstanding creators and works of the generative AI era, regardless of nationality, affiliation, discipline, or scale. Work published from 1 January 2025 up to the entry deadline is eligible.

Following a strong response to the first call, the second call for entries is now open through **15 October 2026**, welcoming an even broader range of creators, regions, and disciplines.

Entering begins with just **one URL**. AI-assisted submission tools help creators prepare their entries across languages and creative fields, making it easier for remarkable work to be discovered beyond linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Four Ways to Take Part

1. Enter Your Work — Second Call

Work published from 1 January 2025 onwards and accessible through a public URL may be entered until **15 October 2026**.

► Submit: <https://award.aicu.ai/2026/dashboard/>

The review fee is **USD 10 per work**. Entrants provide a URL to their work, such as YouTube, X, or an AICU CERT work certificate, and the system automatically prepares the entry form. After submission, AICU verifies the existence of the work.

Previously published works and works that have already received awards elsewhere are also eligible. The first call closed on 24 September 2026 after receiving entries from AI creators around the world.

Preserving a Verifiable Record of Creative Work

Creative work shared on social platforms can quickly disappear into the stream, even when it becomes a source of inspiration for what follows.

AICU CERT uses licensing technology compatible with **Really Simple Licensing (RSL) 1.0**, together with AICU's rights-resolution technologies, to preserve verifiable records of the work, its creator, and its origin. These technologies include Japanese Patent No. 7814797, with all 12 claims registered, and international application WO/2025/143271, currently pending in the United States, China, and Europe.

► <https://cert.aicu.ai/>

From Award Recognition to Commercial Publication

One example is “**Minty Berry**” by **Mankyu**, Grand Prize winner of AICU's C2606 “Kawaii! AI Character Audition,” which was subsequently selected for commercial publication.

Certificate: <https://cert.aicu.ai/v/C2606-1>

Original post on X: <https://x.com/manaimovie/status/2071210712077406270>

2. Partnership — Companies and Organizations

Bronze, Silver, and Gold partnership tiers are available, with opportunities including sponsored prizes and collaboration around selected works. Applications close on **5 October 2026**.

Public-interest organizations may also qualify for non-monetary partnerships with logo placement, subject to review. Corporate partnership applications are reviewed separately, with discussions already underway with prospective partners around the world.

Partners: <https://aicu.ai/award/2026/partners/>

Partnership guide: <https://aicu.ai/award/2026/for-partners/>

3. Individual Support — Founders

We also welcome individual supporters who share the vision of the Award. Supporters may have their names and messages featured on the acknowledgements page and receive voting rights in the final review in November.

Creators, media professionals, investors, and other supporters, including **Jerry Chi**, have already joined the initiative. <https://aicu.ai/award/2026/thanks/>

“I am always impressed by the creativity and imagination of AI creators. I look forward to seeing them go even further through this Award.”

— Jerry Chi, X @peacej

4. Public Vote — Opening Soon

The public vote will take place in October 2026. Voters around the world may cast **one vote in each of the 10 fields**, for a total of 10 votes. Comments will be automatically translated across seven languages, while reactions that transcend words can be expressed and counted through emoji.

Voting information will be announced through AICU's official social channels, AICU media, AICU Magazine, and the free Weekly AICU newsletter.

The Award is also supported by **AiCutty**, the human-and-AI idol project created through an AICU open contest, together with **Marsha Arancia**, a new character born from a reader-submitted work by Matcha Orange.

Three Features of AICU Award 2026

1. Start with a URL

All you need to begin is a URL to your work and a declaration of authorship. Once a URL is submitted, AI assists in preparing information such as the primary field, title, synopsis, publication date, representative information, and key visuals. The submission system uses the latest AI technologies, including **Jev** and **AICU API**. ► <https://api.aicu.ai/>

2. A Verifiable Record for the Future

Works that pass the preliminary review receive an **AICU CERT work certificate**, creating a verifiable record of **who created what, and when**. Through RSL 1.0-compatible licensing, the record can also indicate how others may seek permission to use the work, helping connect creative provenance with future opportunities.

AICU CERT combines automated and human review to verify each work and assess ethical considerations under AICU's **Generative AI Creator Shigusa 2026.7**, the Award's **Code of Conduct**, and international standards including NSFW policies. Once certified, each record can be accessed in **seven languages**. The program also accepts invited entries of previously recognized works recommended by sponsors, patrons, and partner organizations.

3. An Open Vote Across 10 Fields

The public vote is scheduled for **26 October through 15 November 2026**. Anyone aged 18 or older, or participating with guardian confirmation where applicable, may vote free of charge after age verification and registration of their country of residence.

Each voter can participate across all 10 fields, encouraging discovery beyond individual creative disciplines and promoting interaction between communities. The final review will include contributors from among entrants, supporters, and the Award review committee, with critiques published alongside the results.

AICU Award 2026 — 10 Fields

AICU Award 2026 welcomes work across the spectrum of **generative AI + creativity**, organized into 10 fields.

Service

Products and services powered by generative AI.

Commercial Film

Films, streaming productions, drama series, and VFX created for commercial release.

Independent Film

Independent productions, personal projects, short films, and video works.

Character, Manga & Webtoon

Characters, illustrations, manga, and webtoons that connect stories and audiences across borders.

Music, MV & Dance

Music, music videos, dance, virtual idols, and related forms including K-pop.

Advertising, PV & Broadcast

Advertising, promotional videos, broadcast content, social video, influencer work, and spatial experiences.

Publishing

Books, magazines, zines, and digital publishing.

Game, Tool & App

Games, creative tools, and applications that expand play and creation.

Event & XR

Film festivals, events, exhibitions, metaverse experiences, virtual idols, and XR live performances.

Open

Experimental creativity that crosses established disciplines, including scientific and technical research and work that does not fit into the other nine fields. Entrants describe “**What is new here?**” in up to 500 characters.

Award at a Glance

Name	International AI Creator Award 2026
Who can enter	Anyone creating with generative AI, including individuals, corporate teams, university laboratories, and startups. Self-nominations and nominations by others are accepted.
Eligible work	Works, events, and content published from 1 January 2025 through the entry deadline, accessible through a public URL without login, including teasers.
Fields	10. Entrants select one primary field; works may be considered in all relevant fields.
Languages	Japanese, English, Korean, Chinese, French, Spanish, Portuguese.
Entry review fee	USD 10 per work, payable upon submission.
Public vote	Free with an AICU account. Age verification and country-of-residence registration are required.
Award ceremony	20 November 2026 at INTER BEE IGNITION × DCEXPO, Makuhari Messe.

Pen names, artist names, and VTuber identities may be used. For AITubers, producers may participate as representatives. Film festivals, exhibitions, and other forms of creative event-making are also eligible.

Patronage and Partners

- **Patronage:** Digital Content Association of Japan (DCAJ), Digital Hollywood University
- **Technology Support:** OpenAI, ElevenLabs Grants
- **Cooperation:** AI Film Festival Japan 2026
- **Media Partner:** Mado no Mori

As confirmed at the close of the first call on 25 September 2026. Additional corporate partnerships are currently in discussion.

Partnership guide: <https://aicu.ai/award/2026/partner/>

First-Round Entries and What Comes Next

Despite the short first-round entry period, the Award received **28 works from 24 creators across five countries and regions**. Entries reached **nine of the 10 fields**. The **Generative AI Expo Vol. 6**, held in Hamamatsucho, Tokyo, on 23 September 2026, generated **13 entries**. The following works currently under review are listed with the consent of their creators.

First Penguins Selection

We thank everyone who took the initiative to enter during the first call. In recognition of both the works themselves and the creators who stepped forward early, we introduce them as our “**First Penguins**” selection.

<https://aicu.ai/award/2026/first-penguins/>

Titles appear exactly as registered by each entrant.

Service

“PRIVACY-FIRST AI IDENTITY” — Dr. Yulia B.

Independent Film

“量子の国のアリス | Alice in Quantumland” — Doraking / “母の1000日” — 3D ROBOT CLUB (TAM TSZ YAN) / “Emotion Planet — Chapter 1: Healing” — Shinye Ro

Character, Manga & Webtoon

“クリエイター芝犬・アイくん” — InusawaBow / “隈おさげ女子の脳内変換” — 経験値ゼロの夜 / “アイのあるミライ” — Hachiro / “ゆめみなな” — Yoshiharu Kayanuma / “月白ルナ — 日常と幻想のあいだで / TSUKISHIRO LUNA” — TSUKIHA

Music, MV & Dance

“Eight Years Old” — SzymiSzu / “動画タイトル（影片名称）『九龍ゼロ号城：記憶 - Timeline Reboot』公式コンセプトトレーラー” — Wong Tik Lung / “好き嫌いの恋のハナシ-白瀬ノア/404IDOL” — Yasu Tanabe / “未来系ガールズバンドSTARLIT SPARKS: SPARK UP! – Rise of Astra City” — TAKASUMI SHINDO / “ティラリラ☆スターチューン” — Yoshiharu Kayanuma

Advertising, PV & Broadcast

“プロンプトインジェクションで壊されるAIずんだもん” — Kiratchi

Game, Tool & App

“OSHIRO MUSIC — Interactive Exhibition Player” — Ai / “MADE IN AI” — Akira Kuroiwa / “Text-To-VRMA — VRM特化型Text-To-Motionツール” — Kiratchi / “Adjective Parade” — Shimpei Sato / “世界崩壊少女 初希アイ / The World End Girl HATSUKI AI” — Kurumi Hyogo

Event & XR

“廻り視：固定視点を用いた実世界ホラー体験” — Taisei SHIROISHI / “3Dフォトスタジオ” — PONDA / “桜並木 Sakura 3D Scan [3DGS]” — takayan / “新・深夜の京都散歩 / New Kyoto Midnight Walk [3DGS]” — takayan660 / “蒸気機関車 VR動態復帰プロジェクト [3Dスキャン]” — takayan660

Open

“霞” — 猫兎

The Second Call: Expanding the Network

Every entry begins with a URL. AI analyzes and translates the work, helping new creative work reach audiences beyond its original language and community. The second call expands the open submission process with recommendations from partner organizations.

Certified or recommended works from the **Digital Content Association of Japan, Digital Hollywood University, AI Film Festival Japan, and AICU's monthly contests** will join the program, together with entries in the Commercial Film field.

The aim is to build an open international framework in which organizations that recognize creative achievement, together with companies, services, brands, and investors that support creators, can discover and encourage people creating with AI across commercial, independent, and personal production, beyond national and cultural boundaries.

At Inter BEE, with the cooperation of the Digital Content Association of Japan, a special exhibition booth and award ceremony are planned within **INTER BEE IGNITION × DCEXPO**. It will be a place to discover nominated and award-winning works and to meet the people behind them. <https://www.dcexpo.jp/>

Schedule

5 October 2026	Partnership applications close — award@aicu.ai
15 October 2026	Second call for entries closes

16–26 October	Preliminary review and nominee announcements
26 October – 15 November	AICU Magazine public vote and online program
18–20 November	Exhibition at INTER BEE IGNITION × DCEXPO
20 November 2026	Award ceremony and reception
After 20 November	Talks and screenings featuring award-winning creators

From the Organizer

Akihiko SHIRAI, Ph.D. CEO, AICU Inc. / Representative Director, AICU Japan K.K. X: @o_ob

Generative AI has fundamentally changed the relationship between people and creative work. There was a time when becoming recognized as a creator often meant dedicating one's life to a particular craft. AI is now opening creative expression to a much wider range of talent, experience, and perspectives, while enabling people to continue creating in ways that were previously difficult or impossible.

Yet much remains to be done before creators in the generative AI era can be properly recognized and supported in continuing their work. Since 2023, AICU has pursued its vision of “**Creating People Who Create**” through media, publishing, workshops, festivals, contests, and collaborations with creators and organizations around the world. The International AI Creator Award is the next step.

Presented by AI Creator Union (AICU Inc.) and operated by AICU Japan K.K., the Award respects the festivals, contests, exhibitions, and creative communities that already exist. As a media organization, we seek to remain independent and neutral while connecting these communities wherever possible.

Our goal is to create an open platform where creators, companies, supporters, and fans of creative AI can discover one another, learn from one another, and build new opportunities across languages and cultures. Most importantly, we want remarkable creators and their work to be **discovered, recognized, and recorded as part of the history now being made.**

We invite you to enter, share the works that inspire you, participate in the vote, and help us write this new chapter of creative history together.

Akihiko SHIRAI, Ph.D. — CEO of AICU. Doctor of Engineering, Tokyo Institute of Technology (Intelligent Systems Science). His fields include VR entertainment systems, generative and creative AI, and the social implementation of media technologies. Latest book: *Making and Moving Characters — A Starter Guide to Image and Video Generative AI* <https://j.aicu.ai/SG26>

Partnership

We welcome partners who want to support the next generation of creators. Details: <https://aicu.ai/award/2026/partner/>

About AICU

AICU Inc. — Delaware, USA / AICU Japan K.K. — Institute of Science Tokyo Certified Venture No. 7

AICU works across generative AI media, AIDX consulting, creator APIs, AI media R&D, publishing, corporate training and workshops, AI chatbot development, open-source development, social implementation, and the planning and operation of contests and film festivals.

Official site: <https://aicu.ai/> X: @AICUai Media: <https://note.com/aicu>

International AI Creator Award 2026

Official site: <https://aicu.ai/award/2026/> Presented by AICU Inc. Operated by AICU Japan K.K.

Regulations / Partners / Code of Conduct / Privacy / Terms of Sale are available on the official site.

Press Enquiries

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Multilingual enquiries are handled by the AI-supported Award Office and Organizing Committee. Official site: <https://aicu.ai/award/>