SAPPORO INTERNATIONAL
SHORT FILM FESTIVAL AND MARKET

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
**October 30, 2026**

# Norwegian Sci-Fi Film “Animalia” Wins the Human Intelligence Prize | Sapporo International Short Film Festival 2026

*A fable about humanity, set in a future where nature has reclaimed the world*

The 21st Sapporo International Short Film Festival (SSF) was held from Friday, October 23 to Sunday, October 25. The Norwegian sci-fi film “Animalia” won the Human Intelligence Prize, a special award newly established for this year’s festival. Created in partnership with YumeBau Inc. of Vancouver, Canada, the prize recognizes films that demonstrate the uniquely human artistry of filmmaking through human technique and craftsmanship, and the winning film receives a cash prize of JPY 200,000.

## Winning film

***Animalia***
Directed by Marius Rolfsvåg | Norway | 2026 | Sci-Fi | 25 min

*Animalia* is a fable about the relationship between humans and animals. Set in a future where nature has reclaimed overgrown cities and humans have turned into animals—except

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those sealed inside—Alm (Ines Høysæter Asserson) is sent to rescue newborns from the animal-like humans, discovering humanity in animals and the animal within herself.

## Comment from the Juror

**Wilson J. Tang, CEO and Founder, YumeBau Inc.** (from his video message shown at the Award Ceremony)
“I’m proud to represent our company in presenting the first Human Intelligence Prize. As we enter the age of AI, we created this prize to celebrate films that are uniquely human. While there were many great films worth mentioning, including *Hanako*, directed by Eunuk Jeong, and *Brute*, directed by Jérémy Comte, one film epitomizes everything we were looking for.

Set in a future where nature has reclaimed the world, cities are overgrown. When the main character is sent to rescue newborns from the animal-like humans, she discovers the humanity within herself. At its core, *Animalia* is a concentrated myth. It carries a vital, timely reminder: we’re not separate from nature. We are part of it.

No matter how advanced our technology becomes, we cannot deny the animal nature of our bodies or the human nature of our emotions. Tightly scripted, powerfully acted, beautifully shot. Above all, it reminds us that every human life is worth fighting for. We are proud to present the 2026 Human Intelligence Prize to Director Marius Rolfsvåg and actress Ines Høysæter Asserson for *Animalia*.

Congratulations and thank you.”

Video Message；SSF2026 YumeBau presents the Human Intelligence Prize winner!

https://youtu.be/Ah5h7QX-Hkg?si=c84zEfsZcqq4Udyb

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# Message from the Director

**Marius Rolfsvåg, Director, *Animalia*** (from the video message sent to the Award Ceremony)

“We are deeply grateful for the Human Intelligence Prize. Thank you so much. With *Animalia*, we try to explore what it means to be human and what it means to preserve our humanity, in a time where both nature and technology are changing faster than ever before.

We’re also deeply honored to get this prize in Japan, because both me and my team are deeply influenced by Japanese cinema and storytelling. Arigato.”

Video Message； SSF2026 Human Intelligence Prize winner dir. Marius Rolfsvåg "ANIMALIA"：https://youtu.be/NZIQh26zi7k?si=WxD9hqzuToEYoKpP

# Statement from the Sapporo International Short Film Festival

We are deeply honored to present the Human Intelligence Prize, newly established this year, to *Animalia*. Our heartfelt congratulations go to director Marius Rolfsvåg, actress Ines Høysæter Asserson, and the entire production team. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude once again to Wilson J. Tang and everyone at YumeBau, who created this prize and joined the jury in selecting the winner. At a time when AI is increasingly shaping creative expression, this award, which celebrates the power of uniquely human storytelling, has brought a fresh perspective to our festival.

# About the Human Intelligence Prize

The Human Intelligence Prize recognizes films that demonstrate the uniquely human soul of filmmaking through human craftsmanship and artistry. Open to films nominated in the 2026 International Competition, it was established as a special award for this year’s festival. For details, see our earlier release.The winner was selected by a six-member jury including Mr. Tang.

Earlier release: https://sapporoshortfest.jp/page_news_en/yumebau-prize/

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# About YumeBau Inc.

YumeBau Inc. is an independent game studio and creative technology company developing immersive digital experiences across gaming, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and emerging platforms. Based in Vancouver, Canada, YumeBau brings together artists, designers, and developers to create innovative ways for people to play, learn, and connect.
Its work includes collaborations on Fortnite, research and development with Meta on spatial computing experiences, and the development of its original VR game, BuildPort Xumia.
Guided by its philosophy, “Made By Humans. Made For Humans,” YumeBau believes that technology is most meaningful when it serves human creativity, imagination, and connection.
Website: https://www.yumebau.com/

# About Sapporo International Short Film Festival

The Sapporo International Short Film Festival (SAPPORO SHORT FEST) has been held every autumn in Sapporo since 2006. One of Japan’s leading international short film festivals, it is recognized by the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television and has introduced many emerging filmmakers from Japan and abroad. For its 21st edition in 2026, the festival received 2,622 submissions from 94 countries and regions, and screened 96 films from 28 countries and regions as its Official Selection.
Website: https://sapporoshortfest.jp/

## Online Screenings

The 21st Sapporo International Short Film Festival will hold online screenings from November 13 to 29, 2026. Viewing is available in Japan only.
Details: https://ssif.dada-streaming.com/

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# Media Contact

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