

UK FILM FESTIVAL GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE UK FILM FESTIVAL GUIDE, PRESENTED BY THE BRITISH COUNCIL FILM TEAM

This guide offers a window for international friends to see into the rich and diverse landscape of film festivals taking place across the UK. Listed is a cross-section of events catering to all ages and interests, from world-renowned red carpet gala showcases to talent-launching short film festivals and platforms dedicated to amplifying underrepresented voices in cinema.

HOW THE BRITISH COUNCIL WORKS WITH FILM FESTIVALS

Film Festivals are places for discovery, capturing the zeitgeist, championing independent filmmaking, and nurturing careers. They continue to play an important role in supporting connections between the UK film sector and international counterparts. At the British Council, we proudly collaborate with a network of film festival partners in the UK and worldwide to foster exchange, by:

- **Previewing new UK work** – Inviting senior programmers from international A-list festivals to watch new UK feature films fresh from production through our [Selector Screenings](#) in London.
- **Industry Guidance** – Offering advice to festival partners on the latest UK-made features, documentaries, animations, short films and XR work through our annual [digital catalogues](#), [UK Shorts Portal](#), and [UK Film Database](#).
- **Bringing visibility to film festivals** worldwide via our comprehensive [International Film Festival Database](#).
- **Filmmaker Support** – Enabling UK directors, writers and producers to attend festivals and participate in well-renowned Development Labs and Co-production Forums through our [Travel Grants Fund](#) delivered in partnership with BFI NETWORK and BFI International using National Lottery Funds.
- **Creative Collaboration** – helping to facilitate ties between UK and international festivals, through our global networks and programmes. Supporting mutually beneficial international cultural projects.

USING THIS GUIDE

This guide highlights a selection of UK film festivals with a strong international profile and at least three previous editions, categorised by event type, format or focus. Beyond film festivals, we also spotlight curated cross-arts showcases and introduce the UK gaming scene – highlighting key events and conventions that drive innovation in creative technology.

Each entry includes hyperlinks to the British Council Film Festivals Database, where readers can find details on festival dates, locations, key contacts, and programming. At the end of this guide, you'll find festivals listed alphabetically and by the month they take place, along with information on:

- Festivals that are **qualifying events for major awards**
- Festivals with **competition strands** (UK, International, and/or Audience Awards)
- Festivals featuring **significant XR** (extended reality) showcases

This guide highlights a selection of key festivals across the UK but is by no means exhaustive. There are many other excellent film events marking the UK cultural calendar not included here. We encourage readers to explore the **British Council Film Festivals Database** for an even broader view.

If you're a UK festival organiser new to the database, we invite you to **register and be part of the network!**

FILM FESTIVALS

**KEY UK FILM FESTIVALS / DOCUMENTARY / SHORT FILM / ANIMATION /
NATIONAL OR REGIONAL FOCUS / BLACK FILMMAKERS & FILM FOCUS /
ARTISTS' MOVING IMAGE / LGBTQIA+ / GENDER FOCUS /
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE / DISABILITY FILM FESTIVALS /
GENRE AND SPECIAL INTEREST / CURATED OR MIXED-ARTFORM EVENTS**



KEY UK FILM FESTIVALS

Highlighting leading, internationally recognised UK festivals with programmes that cover a breadth of forms and genres, as well as a range of other influential festivals serving different audiences and supporting film talent across the UK.

KEY UK FILM FESTIVALS



Belfast Film Festival / Press Eye Ltd

BELFAST FILM FESTIVAL

Established in 1995, Belfast Film Festival offers a diverse and wide-ranging programme of international work, whilst also championing local film. Submissions are focused on films for their Irish/Northern Irish short film competition, New Cinema: Irish Shorts and NI Independents feature film strand. Since 2022, the Festival has held a Best International Film Competition and also recognises Best Craft Contribution and Breakout Performance. Belfast XR Festival is dedicated to showcasing new immersive technology content.

British Council works with Belfast International Film Festival to help find new British feature films by organising annual Selector Screenings.

www.belfastfilmfestival.org

Festival month: November

Location: Belfast, Northern Ireland

Contact: info@belfastfilmfestival.org



BFI London Film Festival / Getty

BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

Run by the British Film Institute, LFF is the UK's biggest film festival, boasting a strong international profile. Audience-focused, but with a substantial industry and events programme, this flagship festival launches the best new films alongside TV series, and XR work from around the world. The festival attracts a glitzy red carpet of A-list guests to major galas and premieres and its international awards recognise Best Film, First Feature, Documentary, and Best Short.

British Council regularly partners the LFF supporting a UK Talent Focus linking up international industry delegates with UK producers, highlighting UK talent and showcasing works in progress.

www.bfi.org.uk/lff

Festival month: October

Location: London, England and UK-wide

Contact: lffsubmissions@bfi.org.uk



© Christopher Preece

BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

Borderlines (programmed by British Council partners [Independent Cinema Office](https://www.independentcinemaoffice.com)) is the largest rural film festival in the UK, taking place in 23 different venues (large and small) across 17 days in Herefordshire, Shropshire, Malvern and the Marches. This public facing festival offers access to a huge range of films and live events to audiences outside of the UK's urban centres and is highly regarded with a strong focus on accessibility. The Borderlines programme themes include New British Talent, and many of the selected films offer audiences a sneak preview ahead of their UK cinema release.

www.borderlinesfilmfestival.co.uk

Festival month: March

Location: Herefordshire, Shropshire, Malvern and the Marches, England

Contact: info@borderlinesfilmfestival.co.uk



© Mike O'Brien

CAMBRIDGE FILM FESTIVAL

Established in 1977, the Cambridge Film Festival is the UK's second-longest running Festival, showing the best in UK and international cinema, with a focus on diverse storytelling and innovation. CFF hosts a special industry day with talks, presentations and workshops for filmmakers and professionals, and runs the CFF Youth Lab, a year-round initiative for film evaluation and criticism skills aimed at young cinephiles. The festival also presents the Golden Punt Awards, named after the iconic vessels of the city's waterways.

www.cambridgefilmfestival.org.uk

Festival month: October

Location: Cambridge, England

Contact: info@cambridgefilmfestival.org.uk

KEY UK FILM FESTIVALS



Carmarthen Bay Film Festival

CARMARTHEN BAY FILM FESTIVAL

Taking place annually in beautiful South West Wales, Carmarthen Bay Film Festival showcases independent films from all around the world, whilst actively supporting films made in Wales or by Welsh filmmakers and often featuring bilingual (English and Welsh) screenings and materials. Established in 2012, the self-described “filmmaker’s festival” has grown in scope and profile since its inception, and comes accredited by BAFTA, as well as hosting two additional events: Ffresh Festival for media art students in Wales; and International Media Festival of Wales.

<https://carmarthenbayfilmfestival.co.uk>

Festival month: May

Location: Llanelli, Wales

Contact: support@cbff.org.uk



© Alex Stanhope

CHICHESTER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Chichester International Film Festival, founded in 1992, is the largest film festival in southern England. Over the course of 15 days each August, CIFF is a vibrant mix of the old and the new, with half of the festival made up of contemporary work from across the World, and the other half consisting of archive restorations, centenary screenings and retrospective titles. The festival also presents a selection of talks and events, and hosts a series of Open Air screenings in Priory Park, Chichester.

www.chichesterfilmfestival.co.uk

Festival month: August

Location: Chichester, England

Contact: info@chichestercinema.org



© Tim Barclay

CINECITY THE BRIGHTON FILM FESTIVAL

Founded in 2003, CINECITY has established itself as Brighton’s most prominent film festival, with a programme in which contemporary world cinema titles screen alongside archive classics, installations, live cinema events, and more. CINECITY also presents special events year-round, including a film programme for the Brighton Festival each May.

Programme collaborations between CINECITY, Dovzhenko Centre and Kyiv Short Film Festival have been supported by the UK/UA Creative Partnerships, created by the British Council and the Ukrainian Institute.

www.cine-city.co.uk

Festival month: November

Location: Brighton, England

Contact: info@cine-city.co.uk



© Cameron Allan

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The world’s oldest continually running film festival and one of the UK’s premier international film events. Coinciding with the Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe, EIFF showcases the very best talent in filmmaking: attracting local audiences, international film fans and industry professionals. From 2024, EIFF introduced two new major competitions with cash prizes for emerging directorial voices; The Sean Connery Prize for Feature Filmmaking Excellence of £50,000 and the Thelma Schoonmaker Prize for Short Filmmaking Excellence of £15,000, both awarded by audience vote.

British Council works with EIFF to help find new British feature films by organising annual Selector Screenings

www.edfilmfest.org

Festival month: August

Location: Edinburgh

Contact: info@edfilmfest.org

KEY UK FILM FESTIVALS



FilmBath



© Katja Ogrin



Foyle Film Festival



© Ingrid Mur

FILMBATH

Previously the Bath Film Festival, FilmBath has been running since 1990 in the historical Roman spa city, and screens films in some of Bath's most unexpected buildings. Focused largely on contemporary world cinema, the festival is notable for its IMDb-affiliated awards for newcomers, its 'pay what you can' sliding scale for ticket prices, and the pioneering 'F Rating' which highlights work from female creatives. FilmBath also hosts monthly screenings with Q&As and post-film discussions, keeping the spirit of the festival alive year-round.

www.filmbath.org.uk

Festival month: October,

Location: Bath, England

Contact: hello@filmbath.org.uk

FLATPACK FESTIVAL

Known for its eclectic mix of genres and formats, Flatpack showcases a variety of films, alongside live performances, interactive exhibitions, and unique audio-visual experiences. Since its inception in 2006, Flatpack has attracted attention for its innovative approach, often blending cinema with other art forms in unconventional venues, from museums to abandoned warehouses. The festival presents multiple awards in various categories, including the *Flatpack Short Film Award* and the *Audience Award*.

The Flatpack and Dovzhenko Centre's collaborative short film/live soundtrack Resonance of Time, was supported by UK/UA Creative Partnerships, created by the British Council and Ukrainian Institute.

www.flatpackfestival.org.uk

Festival month: May

Location: Birmingham, England

Contact: info@flatpackfestival.org.uk

FOYLE FILM FESTIVAL

Taking place at venues across Derry-Londonderry each November, Foyle Film Festival showcases a diverse selection of films, including features, shorts, documentaries, and animation. Since 1987, it has gained international acclaim, and today stands as one of only a few festivals worldwide that holds Oscar-qualifying status in three categories: Best Short Film, Best Animated Short, and Best Documentary Short. The festival's *Light in Motion (LIM)* awards highlight emerging talent. Alongside screenings, Foyle offers workshops, panels, and networking opportunities, fostering creativity and supporting both local Northern Irish talent and international filmmakers.

www.foylefilmfestival.org

Festival month: November

Location: Derry-Londonderry, Northern Ireland

Contact: info@nervecentre.org

GLASGOW FILM FESTIVAL

Now the UK's second largest film festival, Glasgow Film Festival prides itself on being the 'friendliest film festival on the planet'. Championing films selected through open submissions, the festival's wide-ranging programme showcases the best in contemporary world cinema, fostering new talent and providing a platform for the best of Scottish film. The festival celebrates excellence in short filmmaking with a Scottish Short Film Award and the Bill Douglas Award for International Short Film, as well as a Scottish and International Audience Award.

British Council has worked with Glasgow Film Festival by offering Festival strategy surgeries to filmmaker attendees.

www.glasgowfilm.org

Festival month: March

Location: Glasgow, Scotland

Contact: programme@glasgowfilm.org

KEY UK FILM FESTIVALS



© Tatiana Hepplewhite



© Steve Marsh



Manchester Film Festival



North East International Film Festival

LEEDS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Taking place in West Yorkshire, LIFF is England's largest festival outside of London. Commercial and independent films screen across five distinct programmes which includes the best new world cinema of the year and UK feature debuts, retrospective work, genre films and a high profile and eclectic short film programme. The Festival has an international shorts competition, a world animation award and an official feature competition for Best Film. Leeds International Film Festival also hosts the UK's largest family film event, *Leeds Young Film Festival* (March/April); and the *Independent Directions Film Festival* for young filmmaking talent (March/April).

www.leedsfilm.com

Festival month: November

Location: Leeds, England

Contact: leeds.film@leeds.gov.uk

LIVERPOOL FILM FESTIVAL

Taking place in the hometown of The Beatles, the Liverpool Film Festival is a proud associate of the Manchester Film Festival and continues to grow year on year. Starting in 2017, LIVIFF is committed to screening bold and innovative work that is befitting of such a culturally historic city, priding itself on being a platform for up and coming filmmakers. The festival offers audiences a chance to interact directly with filmmakers, actors, and other artists through Q&A sessions, panel discussions, and workshops.

www.liviff.com

Festival month: December

Location: Liverpool, England

Contact: www.liviff.com/contact

MANCHESTER FILM FESTIVAL

Having celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2024, the Manchester Film Festival continues to grow in both size and stature. Committed to celebrating diverse cinema from all across the globe with its vast programme of features, shorts, and documentaries, the festival is becoming increasingly recognised as a significant platform for independent filmmakers. With an intimate, filmmaker-focused vibe, MANIFF also features a two day industry programme of panels and discussions with industry experts, offering filmmakers and professionals an opportunity to network in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

www.manchesterfilmfestival.com

Festival month: March,

Location: Manchester, England

Contact: hello@maniff.com

NORTH EAST INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Celebrating independent cinema across genres, the Newcastle-based North East Film Festival launched in 2021 and stands as the youngest BIFA qualifying festival. Committed to inclusivity and diversity both on screen and behind the scenes, NEIFF was the first festival to sign up to the BBC 50/50 Equality Project, and was also the first festival to receive the Raising Films Ribbon, presented to organisations which support parents and carers. In addition, the festival awards highlight underrepresented groups, such as female filmmakers and the LGBTQIA+ community.

www.neiff.co.uk

Festival month: November

Location: Newcastle, England

Contact: www.neiff.co.uk/contact

KEY UK FILM FESTIVALS



Raindance Film Festival

RAINDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

Based in London's West End, Raindance is the UK's largest independent film festival. Known for celebrating emerging talent, and championing new media and interactive formats which reflect the evolving nature of film and storytelling, Raindance has been likened to Slamdance in the US, and has been a launchpad for directors like Christopher Nolan and Guy Ritchie. With industry panels, masterclasses, and networking events running alongside the film programme, Raindance is a great event for new and emerging independent filmmakers and is also the founder organisation of the prestigious British Independent Film Awards (BIFAs).

www.raindance.co.uk

Festival month: June
Location: London, England
Contact: info@raindance.co.uk



Ramsgate International Film Festival

RAMSGATE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Since debuting in 2017, the Ramsgate International Film Festival has built a reputation as one of the UK's friendliest film events. Screening contemporary shorts and features alongside unique events and seminars with industry professionals, the festival also hosts a variety of screenings throughout the year to bring more international independent cinema to local audiences as well as various events and workshops. RIFF presents several awards, the most prestigious being the Anchor trophy, which was designed by the late Dominic Grant.

www.ramsgateiftvfest.org

Festival month: December
Location: Ramsgate, England
Contact: info@ramsgateiftvfest.org

DOCUMENTARY FESTIVALS

While most of the festivals included throughout this Guide include documentary film within their programmes: several distinctive and high profile UK events are dedicated to non-fiction storytelling in all its forms. The UK is also home to one of the world's leading documentary film markets.

DOCUMENTARY FESTIVALS



© Whyler Photos

CENTRAL SCOTLAND DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL

The Central Scotland Documentary Festival, curated by Macrobert Arts Centre, honours creative non-fiction filmmaking in Stirling, birthplace of documentary pioneer John Grierson. The 2024 edition spanned five days, screening 29 features, including premieres and top documentaries of the year. The festival also presents a selection of awards; the Jury Award, selected by industry professionals, and the Audience Award, chosen by festival-goers. Additionally, the Stirling 900 Award celebrates Grierson's legacy and outstanding contributions to documentary film.

www.macrobertartscentre.org/cs-doc-fest

Festival month: October

Location: Stirling, Scotland

Contact: info@centscotdocufest.org



© Bruna Amaral

DOC'N ROLL FILM FESTIVAL UK

The Doc'n Roll Film Festival is a UK-based, womxn-led event celebrating visionaries and innovators across the worlds of music, sound and visual art. Founded in 2013, it highlights compelling stories of artists, labels, and scenes through an annual festival and special screenings nationwide. Expanding in 2017 to offer boutique distribution and sales services, Doc'n Roll also launched Doc'n Roll TV in 2019, a global streaming platform for music documentaries. Known for its loud, immersive cinema experiences, it champions unique, unforgettable narratives in music.

www.docnrollfestival.com

Festival month: October

Location: multiple UK cities

Contact: info@docnrollfestival.com



© Jim Corr

DOCS IRELAND

Docs Ireland is a renowned international documentary film festival held every June. Founded in 2019 as a sister event to Belfast Film Festival, it highlights the best in global and Irish non-fiction filmmaking, showcasing work that captures Ireland's culture and creativity. Notable competitions include the Pull Focus Competition for Irish documentaries and the prestigious Maysles Brothers Award for observational documentaries. The festival supports filmmakers through the Docs Ireland Marketplace, IGNITE-Docs talent development, industry programs, masterclasses, and networking sessions, fostering cross-border collaborations and promoting emerging talent in documentary making.

www.docsireland.ie

Festival month: June

Location: Belfast, Northern Ireland

Contact: info@docsireland.ie



Folkestone Documentary Festival and Studio A/D

FOLKESTONE DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL

The Folkestone Documentary Festival (which launched in 2021) brings the best new independent feature documentaries and shorts to local audiences in the seaside town's bustling creative quarter. Alongside screenings, Folkestone presents a VR exhibition, a large-scale group walk and communal meal, late night parties, and an impressive industry day formed by an experienced founding team. The festival gives a platform to filmmakers based in the region, and both new and established figures in documentary filmmaking. It pays screening fees, invites directors to attend and hosts both an Audience Award and a Short Film Award.

www.folkestonedocumentaryfestival.co.uk

Festival month: October

Location: Folkestone, England

Contact: info@folkestonedocumentaryfestival.co.uk

DOCUMENTARY FESTIVALS



© Adam Pietraszewski

OPEN CITY DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL

Founded by UCL's Centre for Public Anthropology, Open City celebrates non-fiction cinema. Alongside curatorial partners, Open City assembles a diverse programme of international, contemporary and retrospective film, audio and cross media, as well as offering filmmaker Q&As, curated panels, talks, walking tours and workshops. Always in dialogue with new creative forms, the festival's Expanded Realities showcases innovative nonfiction storytelling at the intersection of art and technology; including VR, video games and interactive films.

www.opencitylondon.com

Festival month: April/May

Location: London, England

Contact: info@opencitylondon.com



© Anh Do

SHEFFIELD DOCFEST

Sheffield DocFest is the UK's leading documentary film festival, hosting a world-renowned nonfiction market. The festival presents work across all forms of nonfiction, spanning film, TV and art, and hosts a significant showcase of XR work through its influential 'Alternate Realities' programme. Curated industry events and discussions are a key feature of the festival – often in very fitting settings for debate, such as the City's Town Hall.

British Council is a regular partner of Sheffield DocFest helping to bring international delegations, contributing to the Alternate Realities showcase and taking part in panels and other events.

www.sidf.co.uk

Festival month: June

Location: Sheffield, England

Contact: info@sidf.co.uk

SHORT FILM FESTIVALS

Several prominent festivals in the UK bring visibility to the craft of short film storytelling and are dedicated to elevating the talent and diversity of new and emerging filmmakers, both in the UK and from around the world.

SHORT FILM FESTIVALS



© Jim Poyner / Aesthetica

AESTHETICA FILM FESTIVAL

One of the UK's largest film festivals, Aesthetica takes place across the historic city of York (a UNESCO City of Media Arts). The official selection includes a mighty 300 shorts alongside a selection of features, VR & Immersive, and is the first UK film festival to include Video Games as part of its public programme. They host conversations with leading industry such as Ridley Scott Associates, DNEG, Framestore, Aardman and more; as well as thought-provoking guest programmes curated by global partners. All films are eligible for 'Best in' category awards, craft awards and the festival's unique Audible 'Listening Pitch' awards documentary grants of up to £30,000.

www.asff.co.uk

Festival month: November

Location: York, England

Contact: asff@aestheticamagazine.com



Bolton International Film Festival

BOLTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Since its inaugural edition in 2017 the Bolton International Film Festival has fast evolved into a top destination for launching new short form work. Driven by a dedicated local team (with support from patron Maxine Peake), this welcoming festival provides vital access to audiences, students and emergent creatives in the North West of England. Extensive industry talks draw professional speakers on a range of key topics from funding to distribution and with both an in-person and online edition, all genres, forms and themes can be found as part of an eclectic programme.

www.boltonfilmfestival.com

Festival month: October

Location: Bolton, England

Contact: info@boltonfilmfestival.com



Portland Productions

ENCOUNTERS FILM FESTIVAL

Launched in 1995, Encounters is one of the UK's leading short film, animation and virtual reality festivals, taking place on the beautiful harbourside of Bristol, a UNESCO City of Film. A vital springboard for emerging and established filmmakers from around the world, and a unique meeting place for the industry, Encounters hosts a world-leading international competition and is a key destination for discovering rising UK filmmaking talent.

www.encounters.film

Festival month: September

Location: Bristol, England

Contact: hello@encounters.film



© Ingrid Mur

GLASGOW SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Established in 2008, the Glasgow Short Film Festival now stands as Scotland's largest competitive short film showcase. Dubbed as one of the 'coolest film festivals in the world', the inclusive and welcoming GSFF brings together Scottish and international filmmakers, industry delegates and the local audience for an eclectic line-up of competition screenings, unique special programmes, workshops and parties. The Scottish Short Film Award recognises homegrown talent, and submitted films are eligible for the Bill Douglas Award for Best International Short Film.

GSFF ran a residency program for Indonesian and Scottish filmmakers in 2025 as part of British Council's Asia Pacific 'Connections Through Culture' grants scheme.

glasgowshort.org

Festival month: March

Location: Glasgow, Scotland

Contact: info@glasgowshort.org

SHORT FILM FESTIVALS



Kinofilm

KINOFILM MANCHESTER SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Established in 1995, Kinofilm is the longest-running short film festival in the North of England, selecting short form work from across the UK and Western Europe. The festival dedicates space for underrepresented filmmakers, particularly women and marginalised voices, whilst also championing micro-budget films, offering a platform for bold, boundary-pushing storytelling in Manchester's creative scene. The festival presents work across an array of thematic programmes, including a dedicated showcase of animated work, as well as presenting an array of awards including Best UK Short and Best Student Film.

www.kinofilm.org.uk

Festival month: May

Location: Manchester, England

Contact: info@Kinofilm.org.uk



© Harry Sweeney @harrysweeneyevents

LONDON SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Originally founded in 2003 as 'The Halloween Film Society', LSFF is the UK's most successful and high-profile festival dedicated to short film, with the edge on innovative and radical programming. Presented each January through an energetic, 'zine' aesthetic, LSFF showcases around 500 British and International films, collaboratively selected from 5000+ open submissions. Films screen alongside special events and an industry programme for filmmakers and cinema workers. Cash prizes go to the Best UK, Best International and Best Lo-Budget shorts screening in competition.

British Council partners with LSFF on their Best UK Short Film Competition offering winning filmmakers an international travel opportunity

www.shortfilms.org.uk

Festival month: January

Location: London, England

Contact: info@shortfilms.org.uk



© Malachy Luckie

NORWICH FILM FESTIVAL

Established in 2009, the Norwich Film Festival is one of the UK's key short film showcases. In addition to the many shorts screened each year, the festival includes a number of special events, panel discussions and workshops, as well as presenting a selection of awards, with the winners receiving a trophy, cash prize, and industry support for global promotion. A registered charity since 2017, NFF is a BAFTA and BIFA qualifying festival, with a strong reputation for discovering new cinematic voices.

www.norwichfilmfestival.co.uk

Festival month: November

Location: Norwich, England

Contact: info@norwichfilmfestival.co.uk



Wycombe 89 Media

SUNDERLAND SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL

Since 2015, Sunderland Shorts Film Festival has showcased the best short films and music videos from around the world, earning recognition as a BIFA Qualifying Festival and being named a "Top 100 Best Reviewed" event on FilmFreeway. Passionate about promoting both global and local talent, the festival offers screenings, networking, and industry events with partners like BFI NETWORK and BBC Writersroom. The festival supports filmmakers at all stages of their careers, champions diversity, and fosters a creative, inclusive community. All selected films are eligible for awards and prizes.

www.sunderlandshorts.co.uk

Festival month: May

Location: Sunderland, England

Contact: info@sunderlandshorts.co.uk

SHORT FILM FESTIVALS



Watersprite

WATERSPRITE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

The world's largest student film festival, Watersprite showcases the best short fiction, documentary, animation, and experimental films from emerging filmmakers across the globe. The festival offers awards across various categories, providing long-term career support, including opportunities to work with industry professionals and access cutting-edge equipment. Offering both in-person and online access to screenings, workshops, panels, and networking sessions—all completely free of charge, the festival aims to foster creative, vibrant, and inclusive spaces for the next generation of filmmakers.

www.watersprite.org.uk

Festival month: March

Location: Cambridge, England

Contact: info@watersprite.co.uk

ANIMATION FESTIVALS

The UK's animation sector is world-leading and is a flourishing part of the cultural scene. Animation in all its variety is celebrated by a number of dedicated festivals across the country.

ANIMATION FESTIVALS



Animex

ANIMEX INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ANIMATION, VFX AND GAMES

Held annually at Teesside University (where it was founded in 2000), Animex serves as a major platform for animators, VFX artists, and game developers. Industry talks, workshops, masterclasses, and screenings, bring together leading figures from global animation studios, VFX companies, and gaming firms, to share their knowledge with others working in the field. Collaboration is very much at the heart of Animex, which aims to provide networking opportunities, creative inspiration, and a platform for exploring animation's impact on film, TV, gaming, and beyond.

<https://animex.tees.ac.uk/index.cfm>

Festival month: November

Location: Middlesbrough, England

Contact: animex@tees.ac.uk



© Clare Leach

BRIGHTON INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Championing next-gen filmmakers and pioneering animation techniques, Brighton International Animation Festival was established in 2021, and is committed to screening a diverse range of animated work, alongside a programme of masterclasses and events, and awards including Best UK, International, Student and AR films. Committed to providing an accessible place for people to learn about the medium in both an artistic and commercial context, BIAF is also notable for its inclusivity and diverse themes, with a dedicated Queer Animation programme, and having BSL interpreters at all events.

www.brightoninternationalanimationfestival.com

Festival month: April

Location: Brighton, England

Contact: brightonanimation@gmail.com



Film Festival Guild

BRITISH ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL

The British Animation Film Festival celebrates the art of animation across a wide range of genres and forms, from independent shorts and feature-length films to music videos and TV pilots. Held annually in London, it highlights both emerging and established animators, from homegrown UK talent to international animators, emphasising creativity, technical excellence, and storytelling in the animation field. The festival also presents a number of awards each year, including Best Student Animation, Rising Star Award, and the Lotte Reiniger Award which is named after the pioneering German filmmaker.

www.filmfestivalguild.com/british-animation-film-festival

Festival month: May

Location: London, England

Contact: info@filmfestivalguild.com



© Chris James

CARDIFF ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Since its first edition in 2018, the Cardiff Animation Festival has presented some of the very best animated work from all over the world, with a wide selection of animated short films, features, masterclasses, workshops, filmmaker Q+As, retrospectives, an education programme, behind the scenes screenings, industry events, panels, networking events and parties. Held at Chapter in Cardiff each April, the festival highlights Welsh, British, and international animation, offering a platform for independent filmmakers and established professionals, organised by a passionate, non-profit team of creators.

www.cardiffanimation.com

Festival month: April

Location: Cardiff, Wales

Contact: festival@cardiffanimation.org

ANIMATION FESTIVALS



© Factual Animation Film Festival 2023

FACTUAL ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL

The first festival of its kind anywhere, the Factual Animation Film Festival celebrates non-fiction films that explore real-world topics through animation. Founded in 2015, the festival takes place in both London and Berlin (and online) and highlights documentaries, educational content, and animated journalism. The festival showcases all mediums and techniques of animation, on any topic, as long as it is non-fictional in nature. As well as the film programme, FAFF hosts filmmaker Q&As, and presents awards for the best films of the festival.

www.factualanimation.com

Festival month: October

Location: London, England and Berlin, Germany (and online)

Contact: factualanimation@gmail.com



© Tracey Paddison

KOTATSU JAPANESE ANIMATION FESTIVAL

The Kotatsu Japanese Animation Festival launched in 2010. It screens the best in Japanese animation and culture to audiences in Cardiff and Aberystwyth, and is the only festival in Wales to focus on Japanese animation. In addition to film screenings, you can find music performances, a raffle and a festival marketplace which offers Japan inspired crafts, Manga comics and DVDs. A 'Kotatsu' is a unique Japanese table, which is draped in a blanket, futon or quilt, and which has a heater underneath.

www.kotatsufestival.com

Festival month: October

Location: Cardiff and Aberystwyth, Wales

Contact: info@kotatsufestival.com



London International Animation Festival

LONDON INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL

The London International Animation Festival (LIAF), founded in 2003, showcases a diverse range of independent animation from around the world, proving that animation is not only for children. The annual 10-day event features premieres, retrospectives, Q&A sessions, workshops, and audience voting. LIAF also organises year-round events, tours, screenings, and masterclasses, bringing creative animation to cities globally. The festival celebrates animation as an art form for all, with intelligent, entertaining, and thought-provoking films that cater for a wide range of tastes.

www.liaf.org.uk

Festival month: November, December

Location: London, England

Contact: info@liaf.org.uk



Manchester Animation Festival

MANCHESTER ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Hosted at leading arts complex HOME, the Manchester Animation Festival is the largest of its kind in the UK. Working with organisations including Netflix, Disney and Aardman, the festival is designed for those passionate about animation in any form, whether you are a seasoned pro or curious newcomer, offering a programme of contemporary and retrospective screenings, workshops, networking events, panel discussions, masterclasses and screen talks from leading industry figures over the course of one week. MAF also hosts an international competition for short, feature and VR animation.

www.manchesteranimationfestival.co.uk

Festival month: November

Location: Manchester, England

Contact: jen@manchesteranimationfestival.co.uk



ANIMATION FESTIVALS



Still from *The Colours Within* dir. by Naoko Yamada

SCOTLAND LOVES ANIME

Launched in 2010, Scotland Loves Anime is a colourful celebration of anime films, from classics to new releases, brought to you by the UK's longest-running Japanese animation festival. Taking place every October in Glasgow and Edinburgh, the festival provides what is often the only chance to see many of these films at the cinema, which often only receive limited runs in UK cinemas. The festival also features an array of Q&A sessions with directors, industry panels and other special events.

www.lovesanimation.com

Festival month: October

Location: Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland

Contact: andrew.partridge@scotlandlovesanimation.org.uk

NATIONAL OR REGIONAL FOCUS

The UK's huge international population is reflected by its festival scene with dozens of well regarded film festivals dedicated to national, regional and diaspora output.

● NATIONAL OR REGIONAL FOCUS



Africa in Motion



Cinema Made in Italy



Film Africa



© Pako Mera

AFRICA IN MOTION

Africa in Motion (AiM) is the largest African film festival in the UK and maintains an international profile as one of the leading platforms for African film. AiM supports and showcases work from African and Black diaspora artists with an aim to empower African and Black artists from the diaspora to take control of their own narrative, celebrate their heritage, and showcase their stories to global audiences. The festival has been celebrating African Cinema in Scotland for over 15 years.

africanmotion.uk

Festival month: August

Location: Glasgow & Edinburgh, Scotland

Contact: contact@africanmotion.uk

CINEMA MADE IN ITALY

The Italian Cultural Institute teams up with Cinecittà, Institut Français and Ciné Lumière in London to present Cinema Made in Italy, a showcase for the newest and most anticipated Italian films fresh from the international festival circuit, plus one or two classics from Italy's rich cinematic history. Curated by Adrian Wootton OBE, and taking place at the Ciné Lumière in South Kensington, the festival screens between 8-12 films each year (several of which will be UK premieres), with many screenings featuring filmmaker Q&As with directors and actors.

institut-francais.org.uk/festivals-and-series/cinema-made-in-italy

Festival month: March

Location: London, England

Contact: icilondon@esteri.it

FILM AFRICA

The Royal African Society's biennial film festival is London's biggest celebration of African and African diaspora cinema from across the continent. Accompanying a wide-ranging film programme are multiple events, talks and discussions, masterclasses, school and family activities and Film Africa LIVE! music nights. Film Africa also recognises new filmmaking talent with its short film and audiences awards.

British Council Nigeria have partnered with Film Africa on a UK showcase event as part of their British Council Film Lab Africa, Nigeria, an accelerator-to-showcase programme designed to support 60 emerging filmmakers from Nigeria & the UK.

www.filmafrica.org

Festival month: October, November (Biennial)

Location: London, England

Contact: info@filmafrica.org.uk

FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL UK

Encompassing more than 30 towns and cities (with a flagship event at London's Ciné Lumière), the long-standing French Film Festival UK has been delivering French cinema to UK audiences for three decades. The programme ranges from top Francophone hits to independent films by emerging directorial names. The festival also collaborates with the Paris-based Mobile Film Festival, by showcasing 12 films from the United Nations Development Programme, and a learning programme that offers French language films and resources free of charge to schools.

www.frenchfilmfestival.org.uk

Festival month: November/December

Location: UK-wide

Contact: info@frenchfilmfestival.org.uk

🌐 NATIONAL OR REGIONAL FOCUS



© Nicola Treev

JAPAN FOUNDATION TOURING FILM PROGRAMME

The UK's largest festival of Japanese Cinema, the Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme is an annual event that brings a curated selection of Japanese films to 30 cities across the UK. Organised by the Japan Foundation, it showcases a diverse range of genres, from contemporary dramas and comedies to classics and documentaries, highlighting Japanese culture, society, and cinematic artistry. With post-screening discussions and Q&A sessions, the programme offers audiences deeper insights into Japan's film industry and cultural narratives, fostering cultural exchange and appreciation of Japanese cinema throughout the UK.

www.jpff-film.org.uk

Festival month: February-March

Location: UK-wide

Contact: Junko_Takekawa@jpf.go.jp



© Elzbieta Piekacz

KINOTEKA POLISH FILM FESTIVAL

Organised by the Polish Cultural Institute and supported by the Polish Film Institute, the KINOTEKA Polish Film Festival is an annual celebration of Polish cinema, taking place every March in London. Since its inception in 2003, the festival has been committed to screening a wide range of contemporary features and short films, whilst also celebrating films of the past with its Polish Cinema Classics strand. The festival also includes a selection of boundary-pushing XR and experimental work, alongside workshops, director Q&As, exhibitions and more.

Kinoteka is a partner on the British Council UK/Polish Season 2025.

kinoteka.org.uk

Festival month: March

Location: London, England

Contact: london.pci@instytutpolski.pl



London East Asia Film Festival

LONDON EAST ASIA FILM FESTIVAL

The London East Asia Film Festival is a prominent celebration of East Asian cinema, showcasing films from countries such as South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and China. Established in 2015 as a non-profit arts organisation to champion the growing collaboration and diversity in East Asian filmmaking, the festival screens both contemporary works and restored classics, alongside Q&As and discussion events. LEAFF is known for its competitive section, highlighting emerging talents, and also features themed strands like "Stories of Women" and a special Halloween horror selection.

www.leaff.org.uk

Festival month: October

Location: London, England

Contact: leaff.tickets@gmail.com



London Indian Film Festival

LONDON INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL

Debuting in 2010, the London Indian Film Festival is Europe's largest annual showcase of South Asian cinema, screening a rich assortment of entertaining and thought-provoking Indian and South Asian independent new cinema, along with masterclasses, panel discussions and industry events. The festival's annual Satyajit Ray Short Film Competition celebrates films which explore the South Asian experience, either in South Asia, or in the Asian diaspora. The festival is supported by the Bagri Foundation and British Film Institute, and takes place in London, Birmingham, Manchester and other cities in the UK.

www.londonindianfilmfestival.co.uk

Festival month: October

Location: London, Manchester, Birmingham, England

Contact: info@londonindianfilmfestival.co.uk

🍷 NATIONAL OR REGIONAL FOCUS



Korean Cultural Centre UK

LONDON KOREAN FILM FESTIVAL

The London Korean Film Festival is the world's longest running and largest festival dedicated to Korean cinema outside of Korea itself. LKFF screens 40+ titles annually to a growing audience, including premieres of major blockbusters and films by directors leading the K-cinema wave, as well as documentaries, animation, shorts and golden age classics. Among its assortment of festival strands you will find a strong focus on South Korean women's voices and, in 2023, a celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Korean Academy of Arts.

www.koreanfilm.co.uk

Festival month: November

Location: London, England (with a year-round touring programme)

Contact: kcclkff@gmail.com



© Hana Hilaly

LONDON PALESTINE FILM FESTIVAL

Celebrating the power of film to connect people across borders, the London Palestine Film Festival screens the most anticipated films reflecting on Palestine alongside classics from throughout the years, in addition to a supporting selection of talks, events and occasional live performances. Established in 1999, the festival takes place over two weeks in November across multiple London cinema venues, spotlighting stories of political realities as experienced by Palestinians at home and in the diaspora through the creative lens of filmmaking.

www.palestinefilm.org.uk

Festival month: November

Location: London, England

Contact: contact@palestinefilm.org.uk



© Pau Ross

LONDON SPANISH FILM FESTIVAL

The London Spanish Film Festival is an annual event celebrating contemporary Spanish cinema, held in London since 2005. The festival showcases a diverse selection of Spanish films, ranging from dramas, comedies, and documentaries to independent and experimental works. It highlights both established filmmakers and emerging talent, offering audiences a unique insight into Spain's cinematic landscape. Alongside screenings, the festival hosts Q&A sessions, panel discussions, and special events featuring actors, directors, and industry professionals. The festival's aim is to promote Spanish culture and foster a deeper appreciation of Spain's rich film heritage among UK audiences.

www.londonspanishfilmfestival.com

Festival month: September

Location: London, England

Contact: info@londonspanishfilmfestival.com



© Louis Lingjaerde

ODYSSEY

Odyssey is a UK-wide annual independent Chinese film festival with a programme which revolves around a unique theme each year. The festival showcases over 60 films, hosts discussion panels and exclusive Q&As online and offline in different UK cities. The festival also partners with organisations to present special screenings and events out of the festival period internationally. Odyssey is presented by the UK-China Film Collab which exists to encourage film related collaboration and debate between the UK and Greater China.

www.odysseychinesecinema.uk

Festival month: May

Location: UK-wide

Contact: admin@ukchinafilm.com

🌐 NATIONAL OR REGIONAL FOCUS



© James Ho



Tongues On Fire



VIVA! Spanish & Latin American Film Festival



Windrush Caribbean Film Festival

SAFAR FILM FESTIVAL

Run by the Arab British Centre, SAFAR Film Festival is the largest festival in the UK dedicated to cinema from the Arab world, offering audiences a unique space in which to explore and celebrate the diversity of Arab cinema past, present, and future. Through close collaboration with a network of curatorial and screening partners, SAFAR offers access to a broad range of Arab cinema across the UK, including insightful short film programmes, as well as industry opportunities that give profile to emerging Arab British filmmaking talent.

British Council Egypt is a long supporter of SAFAR, enabling filmmakers and guests from the Middle East and North Africa to attend

www.safarfilmfestival.co.uk

Festival month: June

Location: London, Birmingham, Manchester, Hull, Liverpool, Oxford, Plymouth, Nottingham and Bristol (England), Cardiff (Wales), Glasgow (Scotland)

Contact: hello@safarfilmfestival.co.uk

UK ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

Led by the non-profit organisation Tongues on Fire since 1998, the UK Asian Film Festival is the world's longest-running South Asian festival outside India. The 10 day programme showcases a wide range of shorts and features, documentaries and experimental films, encouraging bold storytelling, fresh perspectives, and artistic experimentation. The festival is also host to numerous filmmaker Q&As, providing an essential opportunity for filmmakers and audiences alike to engage with the richness and vibrancy of South Asian culture, history, arts, storytelling and communities.

www.tonguesonfire.com

Festival month: May

Location: London and Leicester, England and Glasgow, Scotland

Contact: info@tonguesonfire.com

¡VIVA! SPANISH & LATIN AMERICAN FESTIVAL

¡Viva! Spanish & Latin American Festival, held annually at HOME in Manchester, showcases the best of Spanish and Latin American cinema. Launched in 1995, it is the UK's largest celebration of Spanish-language cinema, and features an eclectic mix of film screenings (both contemporary and retrospective), alongside filmmaker Q&As, talks, and various other events. A celebration of diverse cultures and voices, the festival proudly fosters cultural exchange, offering audiences in the UK an insight into contemporary Spanish and Latin American storytelling.

www.vivafilmfestival.com

Festival month: April

Location: Manchester, England

Contact: viva.assistants@cornerhouse.org

WINDRUSH CARIBBEAN FILM FESTIVAL

Launched in 2020, the Windrush Caribbean Film Festival shines a spotlight on work made by filmmakers from Caribbean backgrounds and/or exploring Caribbean themes, with a specific focus on engaging audiences about the contributions and impact of the Windrush generation. In addition to film screenings, audiences can enjoy discussion events and interactive workshops that take place in cinemas, schools and community centres across the country. Further expanding its footprint, the 2024 edition saw the festival's first ever outdoor screening, which took place in Brixton's Windrush Square.

www.windrushfilmfestival.com

Festival month: October/June

Location: London, Birmingham and Newport, England

Contact: info@windrushfilmfestival.com

NATIONAL OR REGIONAL FOCUS



WOW Wales One World Film Festival

WOW WALES ONE WORLD FILM FESTIVAL

Founded in 2001, WOW brings together a dedicated showcase of rarely seen films from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and stands as the longest running film festival in Wales. The festival is committed to deepening cultural understanding, uplifting marginalised female and indigenous voices and highlighting global issues, as well as its continued commitment to ecological issues and sustainability, both on and off screen.

Bangladesh-Cymru Climate Stories, a global filmmaking exchange programme between WOW and Dhaka DocLab, was supported by the British Council's International Collaboration Grants programme.

www.wowfilmfestival.com

Festival month: March

Location: Various in Wales and online

Contact: info@wowfilmfestival.com



FESTIVALS FOCUSED ON BLACK FILMMAKERS

Several national and regional focused festivals listed in the previous section centre the work of Black, global majority and diaspora filmmakers, but a number of festivals specifically amplifying Black creatives in film are highlighted below.

FESTIVALS FOCUSED ON BLACK FILMMAKERS



British Urban Film Festival



Freeze Frame Media



TNBFC



© Joanne Pacholec

BRITISH URBAN FILM FESTIVAL

Established in July 2005 to showcase UK urban independent cinema in the absence of any state-sponsored activity, BUFF is the longest standing Black-owned film festival in the UK, with a programme that showcases mainly UK, US and films from the African continent and speaks up for all marginalised voices. A multi-faceted platform that puts filmmaking talent front and centre, participating films qualify for the African Academy Awards. BUFF also has its own production arm (BUFF originals). Previous award-winners include top level UK talent such as Amma Asante, Asif Kapadia and Ashley Walters.

www.britishurbanfilmfestival.co.uk

Festival month: October

Location: Leeds and Halifax, England

Contact: info@buffestival.com

SOUL FEST

Founded in 2019, S.O.U.L (Screening Our Unseen Lives) Fest is an annual celebration of Black British talent in film, both behind and in front of the camera, showcasing new features and shorts enabling audiences the opportunity to see a diverse representation of Black Britain. The festival was founded collaboratively by media platform The British Blacklist, arts organisation We Are Parable and SOUL Film and is now presented in partnership with ABFF (American Black Film Festival) Global: London at BFI Southbank.

soulfilmfest.co.uk

Festival month: August

Location: London, England

Contact: info@soulfilmfest.co.uk

TNB XPO

Not strictly a festival, but a fast-growing annual symposium led by the New Black Film Collective, striving to build a more equitable ecosystem to empower Black filmmaking talent in the UK screen industries. TNB XPO rallies top film and TV industry figures to share news on industry opportunities, as well as facilitating peer-to-peer support. Alongside keynotes and panels, the extensive schedule highlights new feature films (both UK and international), partnered short film showcases and space for pitching and networking.

British Council Film participates in panel events about international opportunities for audiences at TNB XPO

www.tnbfc.co.uk

Festival month: March

Location: London, England

Contact: info@tnbfc.co.uk

WOMEN OF THE LENS

Created in response to the underrepresentation of Black women in the creative industries, Women of the Lens Film Festival champions Black women in the film sector. The festival, which debuted in 2017, accepts submissions for shorts, features, broadcast, web-series and podcast productions. As well as British stories, the festival welcomes other representations of Black women, in front of and behind the camera from around the world, whilst each year the festival delivers a range of industry panels centred around the exchange of knowledge.

www.womenofthelens.com

Festival month: November

Location: London, England

Contact: info@womenofthelens.com

ARTISTS' MOVING IMAGE FESTIVALS

Embracing an abundance of moving image, new cinema, experimentation and expansive work, these exploratory festivals lead the way in critically-engaged curation and dialogue around shape-shifting forms of cinema.

ARTISTS' MOVING IMAGE FESTIVALS



© Sanne Gault / Alchemy Film & Arts



© Amelia Read, 19th Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival, 2024



Braziers International Film Festival



Slow Film Festival

ALCHEMY FILM & MOVING IMAGE FESTIVAL

The Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival is the UK's festival of experimental film and artists' moving image, and the flagship event of Alchemy Film & Arts, taking place in the welcoming and intimate setting of the Scottish border town Hawick, each spring. Presenting an international programme of cinema screenings, moving-image exhibitions, live performances, and a ceilidh in venues around town, the event, which values inclusion, equity, and social justice, is known for the openness, solidarity, humour and the non-competitive nature with which it is delivered.

www.alchemyfilmmandarts.org.uk

Festival month: May

Location: Hawick, Scotland

Contact: info@alchemyfilmfestival.org.uk

BERWICK FILM & MEDIA ARTS FESTIVAL

Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival is the UK's Festival for new cinema and artists' moving image. Taking place in England's most northerly town, Berwick-upon-Tweed, screenings and installations can be discovered in old gymnasiums, the town hall and a 19th century maltings-turned-arts venue. The festival is recognised for its innovative programming and critical engagement and its New Cinema Awards (awarded jointly to all selected in this category) champion filmmakers from around the world who push the boundaries of genre, form and convention.

BFMAF is a grantee of British Council Visual Arts programme Biennials Connect.

www.bfmaf.org

Festival month: March

Location: Berwick-upon-Tweed, England

Contact: programme@bfmaf.co.uk

BRAZIERS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The Braziers International Film Festival (BIFF) is a three-day annual event at Braziers Park in Oxfordshire, UK, showcasing diverse independent films in Braziers' historic 17th-century barn. Curated by artist Nick Jordan and run by a collective of artist-filmmakers, the festival includes documentaries, animations, fiction, and contemporary art films, with proceeds supporting Braziers Park's educational charity. Filmmakers attend for post-screening discussions, and guests can camp on-site, enjoying 55 acres of gardens, woodlands, and meadows at one of Europe's oldest intentional communities.

biff.braziers.co.uk

Festival month: August/September

Location: Oxfordshire, England

Contact: braziersiff@gmail.com

SLOW FILM FESTIVAL

The world's only festival dedicated to duration in film, the Slow Film Festival offers a platform for durational and landscape moving image art, and a space for discussions on the art of slow cinema, as well as pop-up events in galleries and cinemas throughout the UK. The SFF was founded in 2016 in the village of Mayfield, East Sussex, UK. As of 2023 the Festival took up a new home at the Good Shepherd Studios in Waltham Forest, East London.

www.slowfilmfestival.com

Festival month: October

Location: London, England

Contact: info@slowfilmfestival.com

LGBTQIA+ FILM FESTIVALS

Offering a great opportunity to explore diverse and inspiring LGBTQIA+ stories from around the world, there are several notable UK film festivals dedicated to showcasing the best in queer cinema.

LGBTQIA+ FILM FESTIVALS



BFI Flare Film Festival / Getty



Bristol Pride



© Jonah Garrett-Bannister



© Harrison Williams for Iris Prize © Iris Prize Outreach

BFI FLARE: LONDON LGBTQIA+ FILM FESTIVAL

Europe's largest queer film festival, BFI Flare showcases the best in contemporary LGBTQIA+ cinema from across the world. In addition to film screenings, BFI Flare hosts numerous special events, including screen talks and panel discussions, while quizzes and club nights further enhance its vibrant, celebratory atmosphere, making it a key social event in London's queer calendar. The BAFTA-supported Flare Mentorship Programme, designed to support and develop emerging LGBTQIA+ filmmakers, is another integral part of the festival.

British Council Film and Flare have partnered for over a decade on Five Films For Freedom – an online celebration of global LGBTQIA+ stories.

www.bfi.org.uk/flare

Festival month: March

Location: London, England

Contact: bfiflaresubmissions@bfi.org.uk

BRISTOL PRIDE: QUEER VISION FILM FESTIVAL

As part of Bristol Pride, Queer Vision Film Festival presents a diverse programme of LGBTQIA+ cinema from across the globe, including independently-made features, animation and award-winning short films. While international in scope, Queer Vision is also committed to nurturing local talent, with its South West Queer Filmmakers Network and South West Queer Shorts Competition designed to support emerging queer filmmakers from the South West of England. In addition to the festival itself, Queer Vision also hosts regular events and activities all year round.

www.bristolpride.co.uk/queervision

Festival month: June/July

Location: Bristol, England

Contact: harriet@bristolpride.co.uk

FRINGE! QUEER FILM & ARTS FEST

Fringe! Queer Film & Arts Fest is an annual event held in London that celebrates LGBTQIA+ cinema, art, and culture. Launched in 2011, the festival showcases a diverse range of films, including features, documentaries, and shorts, alongside performances, workshops, and panel discussions. It highlights underrepresented voices in the queer community and provides a platform for both emerging and established queer artists and filmmakers. Fringe! is known for its inclusive, community-driven ethos, promoting visibility and creativity while addressing important social issues. The festival takes place in various venues across East London.

www.fringefilmfest.com

Festival month: September

Location: London, England

Contact: submit@fringefilmfest.com

IRIS PRIZE LGBTQ+ FILM FESTIVAL

One of the UK's most highly regarded queer film events, the Iris Prize LGBTQ+ Film Festival celebrates the very best in queer cinema, bringing filmmakers from around the world to Cardiff, Wales, UK. Iris is home to the largest short film prize in the world – the coveted £30,000 Iris Prize. Supported by the Michael Bishop Foundation, the prize allows the winner to make their next LGBTQ+ short film in Cardiff. Iris also works with Film4 to share all Best British shortlisted films on Channel 4, the UK's largest free streaming platform.

www.irisprize.org

Festival month: October

Location: Cardiff, Wales

Contact: info@irisprize.org



🍀 LGBTQIA+ FILM FESTIVALS



© Emily Obeng

LEEDS QUEER FILM FESTIVAL

Leeds Queer Film Festival is an annual, volunteer-run event that celebrates LGBTQIA+ cinema, showcasing independent films that explore diverse queer experiences and perspectives. Founded with a commitment to inclusivity, the festival prioritises works by underrepresented voices, often highlighting stories that challenge mainstream narratives. Alongside film screenings, the festival hosts Q&As, panel discussions, and community-building events in a welcoming, accessible environment. LQFF is dedicated to creating a safe, non-commercial space for queer cinema, fostering connections that empower the community and celebrate queer identities on screen.

www.leedsqueerfilmfestival.co.uk

Festival month: March

Location: Leeds, England

Contact: leedsqueerfilmfestival@gmail.com



Queer East Film Festival

QUEER EAST FILM FESTIVAL

The Queer East Film Festival is an annual celebration of LGBTQ+ cinema from East and Southeast Asia. Founded in 2020, the London-based festival showcases a diverse range of films, including features, documentaries, and shorts, offering unique perspectives on queer identities, stories, and issues from across the region. By spotlighting both contemporary and classic works, Queer East aims to challenge stereotypes, promote cross-cultural understanding, and amplify underrepresented voices in both the Asian and LGBTQ+ communities. The festival also hosts panel discussions, filmmaker Q&As, and cultural events, fostering dialogue on intersectionality and global queer experiences.

www.queereast.org.uk

Festival month: April

Location: London, England

Contact: info@queereast.org.uk



© Tiu Makkonen

SCOTTISH QUEER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Since 2015, the Scottish Queer International Film Festival (affectionately known as SQIFF) has brought the best of contemporary queer film to Glasgow, continuing to connect people with films they might not otherwise have access to. With a strong commitment to inclusion and diversity, SQIFF prioritises films made by those with typically less access to film industries, something reflected in the 'pay what you can' submission fees policy. In addition to screenings, the festival offers numerous events, including filmmaking workshops for audiences interested in learning about the creative process, exhibitions and a crafts fair with local queer artists. The festival hosts an annual Best Scottish Short Award.

www.sqiff.org

Festival month: October/November

Location: Glasgow, Scotland

Contact: info@sqiff.org

FESTIVALS WITH A FOCUS ON GENDER

Supporting better representation in front of and behind the camera, festivals that screen and celebrate work by female-identifying and gender non-conforming filmmakers.

🍀 FESTIVALS WITH A FOCUS ON GENDER



Sea Change



© Sharon Kilgannon



Woman X

SEA CHANGE

Scotland's only annual film festival dedicated to female filmmakers, the Sea Change festival occupies the most westerly island in the inner Hebrides. Embedded in a compact programme of (mostly non-fiction) films directed, produced and written by women, community events and industry talks, are stories and discussions that hold particular relevance for coastal communities, exploring environmental issues, social justice, and sustainability through film. The festival brings together activists, filmmakers, and audiences to inspire action for climate solutions and environmental awareness.

www.screenargyll.co.uk/sea-change

Festival month: September
Location: Isle of Tiree, Scotland
Contact: info@screenargyll.co.uk

WOMEN OVER 50 FILM FESTIVAL

The Women Over 50 Film Festival (WOFFF) celebrates and champions the work of older women on screen and behind the camera. Founded by Nuala O'Sullivan, WOFFF hosts an annual festival and year-round events with the mission of achieving equality for women over 50 in film. By highlighting ageism and sexism, WOFFF spotlights filmmakers who centre and celebrate older women. The festival fosters connection across generations, creating inclusive spaces to combat isolation and promote community.

www.wofff.co.uk

Festival month: October
Location: Brighton, England
Contact: info@wofff.co.uk

WOMAN X FILM FESTIVAL

Founded in 2019, Women X is a dynamic film festival in the North of England, celebrating the work of women and gender nonconforming filmmakers. It showcases a diverse range of genres and voices, offering groundbreaking stories that entertain, challenge, and inspire. With a focus on inclusivity and creative collaboration, the festival features themed screenings, networking, industry talks, and filmmaker roundtables. Past selections have included comedies, horrors, and stories of diversity, motherhood, and community, creating a unique experience for film lovers and creators alike.

www.riannepictures.com/womanx

Festival month: September
Location: Darlington, England
Contact: info@riannepictures.com

FESTIVALS FOR CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE

Festivals play a vital role in bringing the magic of cinema to the next generation, whether as burgeoning audience members, young critics, or aspiring filmmakers.

FESTIVALS FOR CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE



© Harry Sweeney

BFI FUTURE FILM FESTIVAL

The BFI's Future Film Festival is the UK's largest launchpad for budding creatives aged between 16-25 looking to break into the screen industries. Hosted at BFI Southbank in London, across the UK and online globally, with a wraparound programme of talks and workshops giving young filmmakers a chance to hear from high profile speakers (such as Daisy Ridley), jury members and industry representatives out to spot talent. The festival awards cash prizes to both UK and international shorts under 10 minutes across thematic programmes.

whatson.bfi.org.uk/futurefilmfestival

Festival month: February

Location: London, England, UK-wide, online

Contact: filmacademy@bfi.org.uk



© Alan Torres

CHRONIC YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL

Curated by the Barbican Young Film Programmers, the Chronic Youth Film Festival is a vibrant event offering a bold selection of films that reflect perspectives of today's youth. With screenings of international indie films, documentaries, shorts, and experimental cinema, the festival is dedicated to showcasing stories that will resonate with and inspire Gen Z and intergenerational audiences. Chronic Youth is a space for emerging filmmakers and cinephiles alike, encouraging engagement and discussion not just with its screenings programme, but also with Q&As, panels, workshops and much more.

www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/series/chronic-youth-film-festival-2025

Festival month: April

Location: London

Contact: chronic.youth@barbican.org.uk



© Cinemagic

CINEMAGIC

Cinemagic International Film and Television Festival for Young People offers a creative platform to inspire and educate through film. Held annually, it features screenings of films from around the world, along with workshops, masterclasses, and Q&A sessions with industry professionals. Cinemagic promotes filmmaking and storytelling among children and teenagers, providing hands-on opportunities to learn about various aspects of the film industry, from directing to acting, and is the largest film and television festival designed for and by young people in the UK and Ireland.

www.cinemagic.org.uk

Festival month: October

Location: Belfast, Northern Ireland

Contact: info@cinemagic.org.uk



© Erika Stevenson

DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL

Discovery Film Festival is a youth-focused international film festival based at Dundee Contemporary Arts, which also tours across Scotland. With three weekends of films, activities, and gala events, plus two weeks of screenings for schools, Discovery enriches media literacy and cultural understanding among young audiences. Partnering with venues across Scotland, it brings global stories to new viewers. Organised by DCA's Cinema Youth Development Officer, the festival is guided by Young Ambassadors and educators, who help curate the program and create classroom resources.

www.dca.org.uk/discovery-film-festival

Festival month: October, November

Location: Dundee, Scotland

Contact: dca@dca.org.uk

🍷 FESTIVALS FOR CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE



© Erika Stevenson

GLASGOW YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL

One of the most innovative youth-focused film events in the UK, the Glasgow Youth Film Festival is co-programmed by young people and offers a carefully curated selection of international films aimed at teenagers and young adults. The festival features premieres, workshops, Q&As, and other interactive events, empowering young audiences to engage with cinema in a creative and critical way. With its emphasis on developing future filmmakers and cinephiles, it's a vital platform for fostering a passion for film among Scotland's youth.

www.glasgowfilm.org/gyff-2024

Festival month: September
Location: Glasgow, Scotland
Contact: youth@glasgowfilm.org



INDIs Film Fest

INDIS FILM FESTIVAL

INDIs (Independent Directions) Film Fest is one of the few film festivals in the UK dedicated exclusively to emerging creatives aged 16-25. Featuring bold new cinema and VR experiences, filmmaking short courses, and an annual film festival, INDIs is all about connecting young filmmakers with industry opportunities and inspiring the next generation of film fans. Established in 2017, the INDIs is part of Leeds Young Film, which also includes Leeds Young Film Festival, a festival which gives children the chance to learn about filmmaking first hand.

www.leedsfilm.com/indis

Festival month: February
Location: Leeds, England
Contact: leeds.film@leeds.gov.uk



Into Film Festival

INTO FILM FESTIVAL

Into Film is the UK's largest free film festival for schools and young people, helping educators use film to inspire and bring learning to life for 5-19 year olds. Featuring a host of film screenings, special events and previews: the festival delivers enriching big screen experiences to young viewers and future filmmakers across the UK.

Into Film is a UK partner organisation on British Council's Cámara Chica (Little Cameras) programme, which supports filmmaking workshops and resources for young people in different countries.

www.intofilm.org/festival

Festival month: November
Location: UK-wide
Contact: cinemabookings@intofilm.org



Leeds Young Film Festiva

LEEDS YOUNG FILM FESTIVAL

Leeds Young Film Festival (LYFF) is an annual event celebrating cinema for children and families, showcasing diverse short films, feature films, documentaries, and a VR Cinema Experience. Designed to inspire young film enthusiasts, LYFF offers hands-on workshops, masterclasses, and interactive activities to develop filmmaking skills. Committed to accessible film education, LYFF collaborates year-round with schools and community groups to promote media literacy, cultural understanding, and critical thinking. By nurturing creativity and storytelling, LYFF aims to inspire and empower the next generation of filmmakers.

www.leedsfilm.com/lyff

Festival month: April
Location: Leeds, England
Contact: leeds.film@leeds.gov.uk

🍷 FESTIVALS FOR CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE



Wicked Wales International Film Festival

WICKED WALES INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL

Established in 2016, Wicked Wales International Youth Festival supports young people from Wales (and around the globe) who are interested in the creative industries. Helping to bridge the gap between their learning and work, Wicked Wales screens short films made by young filmmakers, hosts masterclasses and workshops, and supports international film productions. Since 2020, the festival has embraced new ways of digital working and the festival continues to be presented in a hybrid way, making the most of all opportunities online and face to face.

www.wickedwales.com/festival

Festival month: October

Location: Rhyl, Wales

Contact: contact@wickedwales.com



DISABILITY FILM FESTIVALS

Showing disability through a complex and diverse lens, these inclusively-led UK festivals bring critically under-or-misrepresented stories and storytellers to the big screen.

DISABILITY FILM FESTIVALS



© Mark Mecklenburgh, Willow Photography Ltd.

DEAFFEST

Deaffest, hosted by Deaf-led charity Zebra Access CIO in Wolverhampton, is the UK's premier Deaf-led Film & Arts Festival, celebrating Deaf culture and supporting D/deaf filmmakers and artists. Held biennially, it features subtitled films, an Art & Photography Exhibition, workshops, panel discussions, and a Film and TV Awards Gala. Deaffest fosters inclusion by bridging gaps between D/deaf and hearing media professionals, promoting sign languages like British Sign Language, and empowering D/deaf individuals to develop confidence and potential in film, media, and arts.

www.deaffest.co.uk

Festival month: May [biennial]

Location: Wolverhampton, England

Contact: enquiries@deaffest.co.uk



Oska Bright Film Festival

OSKA BRIGHT FILM FESTIVAL

Oska Bright Film Festival is the world's leading festival for films made by or featuring people with learning disabilities or autism. With less than 5% of disabled people working in the UK film industry, Oska Bright Film Festival is driven to make change happen. Working internationally with industry partners, and funded by the British Film Institute (BFI), the team produces the BAFTA qualifying Oska Bright Film Festival, promotes accessible screenings, runs training for venues and develops skills for aspiring filmmakers. In 2022, Oska Bright screened 99 films from 17 different countries to an audience of 3,000.

www.oskabright.org

Festival month: March

Location: Brighton, England

Contact: oskabright@carousel.org.uk



Together! Disability Film Festival

TOGETHER! DISABILITY FILM FESTIVAL

Together! Disability Film Festival showcases work by Deaf/Disabled filmmakers and films with a strong central Deaf/Disabled character. The festival developed the 'D' system (in response to Bath Film Festival's 'F' system) to highlight the contributions of Disabled people in cinema, and celebrate the talents of emerging and mid-career Deaf/Disabled filmmakers. Online since 2020, Together! screens films via YouTube, making each programme available for 24 hours to extend access around the world. Many of the films are world or international premieres, and go on to festivals worldwide. Together! run live events for audiences and filmmakers on Zoom during the festival is free for all to access.

www.together2012.org.uk

Festival month: December

Location: Online

Contact: info@together2012.org.uk



GENRE & SPECIAL INTEREST FESTIVALS

A range of first-rate UK festivals that bring specialist expertise on the most popular and enduring genres of cinema; as well as those built around specialist themes, interests, issues or communities.

GENRE & SPECIAL INTEREST FESTIVALS



Abertoir Horror Festival of Wales

ABERTOIR: THE INTERNATIONAL HORROR FESTIVAL OF WALES

Abertoir takes place at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre in Wales and is a long-standing member of the Méliès International Festivals Federation (promoting 'fantastic' cinema around the world). The line up delivers genre loving fans accessible and affordable new big-budget movies, cult classics and horror indies; as well as Choice Cuts from their programme online. In addition to film screenings, the festival regularly features concerts, theatre shows and masterclasses. Short film competition winners are put forward for the prestigious Méliès d'Or Award for Best European Fantastic Short Film.

www.abertoir.co.uk

Festival month: November
Location: Aberystwyth, Wales
Contact: gaz@abertoir.co.uk



© ChelseyCliff

CINEMA REDISCOVERED

Cinema Rediscovered celebrates the 'rediscovery and revival of great films on the big screen', bringing a mix of screenings, expert-led talks, Q&As, workshops and lively conversation to the Watershed in Bristol, a UNESCO City of Film. Taking its inspiration from the legendary Il Cinema Ritrovato festival in Bologna, Italy, the co-curated festival programme provides audiences a rare opportunity to engage with digital restorations, contemporary classics and lesser known world cinema of the past. A new BFI-backed touring programme takes highlights to venues across the UK and Ireland.

www.watershed.co.uk/cinema-rediscovered

Festival month: July
Location: Bristol, England
Contact: cinema.rediscovered@watershed.co.uk



© Julie Edwards

FRIGHTFEST

FrightFest is the UK's most popular horror, fantasy and thriller film festival. Originating in 2000 on a single screen at the Prince Charles Cinema in central London, the 5 day festival has evolved and expanded into a multi-screen behemoth, with guests travelling from all over the world to attend. Outside of the main festival which takes place over the August Bank Holiday weekend, FrightFest also stages a Halloween weekender in London every October, in addition to a three-day terror-a-thon as part of the Glasgow Film Festival every February.

www.frightfest.co.uk

Festival month: February, August, October
Location: London, England and Glasgow, Scotland
Contact: frightfest@mac.com



Grimmfest

GRIMMFEST

Grimmfest is a renowned UK horror and genre film festival held annually in Manchester. Established in 2009, it celebrates independent horror, science fiction, and dark fantasy films, showcasing new voices and bold storytelling from around the world. Known for its eclectic lineup of premieres, cult classics, and exclusive screenings, Grimmfest provides horror fans with unique access to genre-defining films, director Q&As, and interactive events. The festival also awards outstanding films and supports emerging talent, making it a vital hub for horror enthusiasts and creators alike.

www.grimmfest.com

Festival month: October
Location: Manchester, England
Contact: info@grimmfest.com



GENRE & SPECIAL INTEREST FESTIVALS



© Kat Gollock



Horror-on-Sea



Kendal Mountain Festival



LOCO London Comedy Film Festival

HIPPFEST

HippFest (Hippodrome Silent Film Festival) takes place in Scotland's oldest cinema and screens silent film classics with accompanying live music. With its unique atmosphere for discovery and featuring world premieres of newly commissioned scores to exceptional silent films from around the world, Scotland's only festival dedicated to silent cinema attracts a broad audience of cinephiles, music lovers and industry professionals. The programme includes live events, workshops and discussions, as well as a window to international audiences through their online presentations.

www.hippodromecinema.co.uk/hippfest

Festival month: March

Location: Falkirk, Scotland

Contact: hippfest@falkirk.gov.uk

HORROR-ON-SEA

Taking place over 6 days each January, Horror-on-Sea is an annual celebration of independent horror cinema from the UK and across the world. Filmmakers and fans alike gather in the coastal town of Southend-on-Sea for an eclectic programme of screenings (from low-budget indie projects to international premieres), Q&As, events, and networking opportunities, fostering connections within the horror community. Known for its dedicated audiences and diverse lineup, the festival has become one of the UK's most beloved horror film events.

www.horror-on-sea.com

Festival month: January

Location: Southend-on-Sea, England

Contact: horror@thewhitebus.org.uk

KENDAL MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL

Taking place every November, the Kendal Mountain Festival is an event like no other, bringing together a global community of adventurers, storytellers, artists and filmmakers, who are united by their passion for nature, the environment, adventure and exploration. The four-day Festival offers a vast array of screenings, talks and activities, taking over the entire market town of Kendal, utilising a host of different venues. The mix of films, talks and activities come at different prices, including some that are completely free.

www.kendalmountainfestival.com

Festival month: November

Location: Kendal, England

Contact: info@mountainfest.co.uk

LOCO – THE LONDON COMEDY FILM FESTIVAL

LoCo has been bringing the laughter to screens since 2012 and is the largest festival of funny films in the world. Featuring independent British premieres, comedy shorts, star-studded anniversary screenings, expert panels, highly-rated training sessions, workshops and networking events, there is something to delight all comedy aficionados and creators, whether you are drawn to the lighter or darker shades of humour. LoCo is pretty serious about the importance of laughter and offers Discovery awards for the films that do it best.

www.locofilmfestival.com

Festival month: May

Location: London, England

Contact: hello@locofilmfestival.com

GENRE & SPECIAL INTEREST FESTIVALS



London Fashion Film Festival

LONDON FASHION FILM FESTIVAL

The London Fashion Film Festival is an annual celebration of fashion film, held in London, blending fashion, film, and advertising in a vibrant showcase of talent. Featuring work from students, industry professionals, and major brands, the festival highlights the innovative fusion between fashion and film through screenings of documentaries, fashion shorts, and films inspired by the fashion world. Attendees can enjoy networking opportunities, practical masterclasses, and panel discussions led by top industry experts, all culminating in an award ceremony that honours excellence in the genre.

www.londonfashionfilmfestival.com

Festival month: September
Location: London, England
Contact: info@lfff.co.uk



London Migration Film Festival

LONDON MIGRATION FILM FESTIVAL

The Migration Film Festival accepts films of all lengths and genres from around the world exploring themes of migration, asylum, displacement or intersecting issues. The programme is purposefully diverse in tone, with lighthearted as well as harder hitting work, challenging preconceptions about migration and movement. With a new rights-based approach to migration, LMFF focuses on inclusion – what is shared between rather than what separates people – bringing together people of different backgrounds and communities around the intersection of art, academia and action

www.migrationcollective.com/london-migration-film-festival

Festival month: November
Location: London, England
Contact: themigrationcollective@gmail.com



© Chris Harvey

SCI-FI-LONDON

Science fact, as well as science fiction is explored in full at the long-running London International Festival of Science Fiction and Fantastic Film which takes place live and online. In addition to screening the best contemporary science-fiction and fantastic cinema from across the globe, the festival also brings together scientists, comic artists, leading genre writers and filmmakers to explore innovations in the field. To encourage female directors and writers underrepresented in the genre to participate, the festival offers 'F-RATED' fee waivers.

www.sci-fi-london.com

Festival month: September
Location: London, England and online
Contact: info@sci-fi-london.com



© David Betteridge

SLAPSTICK FESTIVAL

The Slapstick Festival celebrates and builds appreciation for silent and visual comedy, especially films from 1895-1930, through live and online events in Bristol. Featuring rare silent films paired with live music by world-class musicians and commentary from experts, the festival aims to engage diverse audiences in this unique art form. Since 2005, Slapstick has hosted over 350 events for 130,000 attendees, continually expanding access to silent comedy and fostering new audiences with innovative outreach and programming strategies.

www.slapstick.org.uk

Festival month: February
Location: Bristol, England
Contact: jacqui@slapstick.org.uk

GENRE & SPECIAL INTEREST FESTIVALS



Take One Action!



UK Green Film Festival



© David Mirzoeff



© Christian Tuckwell-Smith @c.tuckwellsmithphoto

TAKE ONE ACTION!

Take One Action unites communities through film and storytelling, fostering collective change and social action in Scotland and beyond. The organization spotlights voices impacted by oppressive systems, celebrating stories of resilience and transformation. Collaborating on engaging film and art events, they inspire audiences to work toward a better future. Take One Action prioritizes accessibility, fair work practices, and well-being in all activities, creating inclusive, imaginative spaces that encourage meaningful action for social justice and environmental sustainability.

www.takeoneaction.org.uk

Festival month: September

Location: Glasgow, Scotland and other venues across Scotland

Contact: info@takeoneaction.org.uk

UK GREEN FILM FESTIVAL

Taking place each year up and down the country, the UK Green Film Festival screens some of the very best films from around the world, exploring some of the big environmental issues of the day and uniting a nationwide network of film lovers and green thinkers. Shining a spotlight on global environmental stories and celebrating the best in independent filmmaking, the festival continues to grow with each edition, with an ever expanding number of fantastic cinemas joining the UKGFF screening network each year.

www.ukgreenfilmfestival.org

Festival month: June

Location: UK Wide

Contact: info@ukgreenfilmfestival.org

UK JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

Established in 1997, the UK Jewish Film Festival brings together audiences across London and other UK cities, showcasing a programme of international films (of all forms and genres) that reflect Jewish stories and themes. The festival also has a year-round streaming platform, as well as an education programme that puts film at the core of learning about Jewish values, heritage and culture. The festival offers UK filmmakers two grant opportunities for the production of short films with British-Jewish related themes.

www.ukjewishfilm.org

Festival month: November

Location: London, England and UK-wide

Contact: info@ukjewishfilm.org

WILDSCREEN FESTIVAL

Intent on celebrating and advancing natural world storytelling, the biennial Wildscreen Festival is the world's leading wildlife film and TV industry gathering. Founded in 1982, Wildscreen now exists as a fully hybrid event, providing delegates with headliners, masterclasses, screenings and more available in person in Bristol, UK and online via an exclusive Wildscreen Festival platform. Wildscreen is committed to connecting people with nature through storytelling, and to connecting creativity with conservation by nurturing a global community of filmmakers and conservationists.

www.wildscreen.org/festival

Festival month: October (Biennial)

Location: Bristol, England

Contact: hello@wildscreen.org.uk

CURATED SHOWCASES & MIXED ARTFORM EVENTS

Highlighting specially curated showcases and events in which film intersects with other art forms.

CURATED SHOWCASES & MIXED ARTFORM EVENTS



In the Eyes of the Animal by Marshmallow Laser Feast, Abandon Normal Devices Festival, Grizedale 2016



© Jim Corr



Shutterstock for Edinburgh TV Festival



Native Spirit Festival

ABANDON NORMAL DEVICES (AND FESTIVAL)

With creative reimagining and disruption at the heart of Abandon Normal Devices, it isn't one to be easily classified. A radical arts organisation that curates and commissions new forms of artistic making in the UK's North and globally (working with artists, technologists, researchers and creatives), AND is also a site-shifting biennial festival that engages artists and audiences in critical conversations about the changing world and alternate visions for a sustainable future. Expect public realm interventions, live research, exhibitions, performances, films, online projects, live labs and more.

www.andfestival.org.uk

Festival month: Varies, Biennial

Location: Liverpool, Manchester, Lancashire, England

Contact: hello@andfestival.org.uk

BELFAST XR FESTIVAL

Established in 2022 and the only festival of its kind in the UK, Belfast XR Festival leads the way in presenting all things immersive across the different artforms with which it intersects. They introduce audiences to a curated selection of world-class experiences from both emerging and established creators of XR, including 360 film, interactive VR and AR and screen-based installations. Recent presentations include an award-winning exploration of eternal life and a VR journey into the work of Catalan architect Gaudi.

www.belfastxrfestival.com

Festival month: February/March

Location: Belfast, Northern Ireland

Contact: www.belfastxrfestival.com/contact

EDINBURGH TV FESTIVAL

The Edinburgh TV Festival is a notable premier television industry event offering over 60 keynotes, debates, and masterclasses each year. Drawing more than 2,000 global industry professionals, it provides networking opportunities and a platform for independent debate. Known for its provocative and insightful sessions, the festival emphasises quality, relevance, and editorial independence. Held every August at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre since 1976, it remains a must-attend event for professionals, fostering global conversations and shaping the TV landscape.

www.thetvfestival.com

Festival month: August

Location: Edinburgh, Scotland

Contact: info@thetvfestival.com

NATIVE SPIRIT FESTIVAL

The Native Spirit Festival, founded by Mapuche leader Freddy Treuqil in 2007, is an annual event celebrating Indigenous film, culture, and knowledge-sharing. Held in the UK with branches in Spain and Taiwan, the festival showcases Indigenous-made films, talks, and performances, aiming to bridge cultural understanding and preserve Indigenous identity. The festival also collaborates internationally, including initiatives like #microIndigenous with Buffalo's MicroMania Film Festival and UK events for Native American Heritage Month, highlighting diverse perspectives and the resilience of Indigenous communities worldwide.

www.nativespiritfoundation.org

Festival month: October

Location: London, England

Contact: nativespiritfilms@gmail.com

🍀 CURATED SHOWCASES & MIXED ARTFORM EVENTS



© Tracey Welch

SENSORIA

Sensoria is the UK's festival of film and music. The festival presents a unique mix of live performances, film screenings, installations, and exhibitions plus music and film industry activity at venues across Sheffield (a city known for its creative and technical innovation and rich in musical heritage). SensoriaPro gathers composers, filmmakers, music publishers, music supervisors, games developers and festivals all under one roof to discuss the latest innovations in music and the moving image.

www.sensoria.org.uk

Festival month: October

Location: Sheffield, England

Contact: info@sensoria.org.uk

A SNAPSHOT OF UK GAMING EVENTS

Across British Council Arts, we are embracing the exciting creative landscapes being charted by emerging media and gaming, and the cultural significance of video games for the evolving screen sector, both here and abroad. Taking a different shape to film festivals, we're briefly introducing some key UK gaming events here as we continue to see how new and traditional forms of storytelling intersect for both makers and audiences.

Britain has a flourishing and dynamic games sector and is the leading video game market in Europe, welcoming new content creators, storytellers, developers from around the world.

The UK's largest gaming event **EGX** and other major players such as the **London Games Festival** celebrate and underpin the cultural value of games as an artform to be reckoned with. **Now Play This** (part of London Games Fest) delves into the most experimental and critically engaging innovations in games design and at the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford the **Yorkshire Games Festival** celebrates games culture, design and production with gamers of all ages.

Several significant Comicon conventions take place in different UK cities, leading the charge on everything pop culture; from fandom, fantasy genre, gaming and anime to cosplay. The largest is **MCM Comicon** taking place in London and Birmingham.



A-Z & CHECKLIST

- XR** Festivals that include a significant strand or showcase of immersive work
- UK** Festivals that include a competition strand/s for UK films
- INT** Festivals that include a competition strand for international films
- AUD** Festivals that include an audience award

- ★** **BAFTA** means the festival is on the BAFTA list of qualifying short film festivals or animation film festivals
- ★** **BIFA** means the festival is on the BIFA qualifying list for UK shorts or features or both. NB BFI London Film Festival is the only UK festival that qualifies international features for BIFA entry.
- ★** **OSCAR** means the festival is on the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences list of qualifying short film festivals i.e The Oscars.

A-Z & CHECKLIST

	FESTIVAL NAME	SECTION OF GUIDE	INCLUDES XR	COMPETITION	AWARDS QUALIFYING*
A	Abandon Normal Devices	Curated or cross arts	XR		
	Abertoir: The International Horror Festival of Wales	Genre or Special Interest		INT AUD	
	Aesthetica Film Festival	Short Film Festival	XR	UK INT	★ ★
	Africa in Motion	National or Regional		INT	
	Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival	Artists' Moving Image			
	Animex International Festival of Animation, VFX and Games	Animation			
B	Belfast Film Festival	Key Film Festival		UK INT AUD	★ ★
	Belfast XR Festival	Curated or cross arts	XR		
	Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival	Artists' Moving Image	XR		
	BFI Flare LGBTQIA+ Film Festival	LGBTQIA+			★ ★
	BFI Future Film Festival	Children or Young People		UK INT	★
	BFI London Film Festival	Key Film Festival	XR	UK INT	★ ★
	Bolton International Film Festival	Short Film Festival		UK INT	★ ★
	Borderlines Film Festival	Key Film Festival		UK	
	Braziers International Film Festival	Artists' Moving Image		INT AUD	
	Brighton International Animation Festival	Animation		UK INT	★
	Bristol Pride: Queer Vision Film Festival	LGBTQIA+			
	British Animation Film Festival	Animation		INT	
	British Urban Film Festival	Black Filmmaker Focus		UK INT	★ ★
	C	Carmarthen Bay Film Festival	Key Film Festival		UK INT
Cambridge Film Festival		Key Film Festival		UK INT AUD	
Cardiff Animation Festival		Animation		UK INT AUD	★
Central Scotland Documentary Festival		Documentary		INT UK AUD	
Chichester Film Festival		Key Film Festival		AUD	
Chronic Youth Film Festival		Children or Young People			












A-Z & CHECKLIST

	FESTIVAL NAME	SECTION OF GUIDE	INCLUDES XR	COMPETITION	AWARDS QUALIFYING*
	CINECITY The Brighton Film Festival	Key Film Festival	XR	AUD	
	Cinema Made in Italy	National or Regional			
	Cinema Rediscovered	Genre or Special Interest			
	Cinemagic	Children or Young People		UK INT AUD	
D	Deaffest	Disability		UK INT	
	Discovery Film Festival	Children or Young People			
	Doc'n Roll Film Festival	Documentary		UK INT AUD	★
	Docs Ireland	Documentary		UK INT AUD	
E	Edinburgh International Film Festival	Key Film Festival		UK INT AUD	★ ★
	Edinburgh TV Festival	Curated or cross arts			
	Encounters Short Film Festival	Short Film Festival	XR	UK INT AUD	★ ★
F	Factual Animation Film Festival	Animation		INT	
	Film Africa	National or Regional		INT AUD	
	FilmBath	Key Film Festival		UK INT	
	Flatpack Festival	Key Film Festival	XR	UK INT AUD	★ ★
	Folkestone Documentary Festival	Documentary	XR	UK INT	
	Foyle Film Festival	Key Film Festival	XR	UK INT	★ ★ ★
	French Film Festival UK	National or Regional			
	FrightFest	Genre or Special Interest		UK	★
	Fringe! Queer Film & Arts Festival	LGBTQIA+			
G	Glasgow Film Festival	Key Film Festival		AUD	★
	Glasgow Short Film Festival	Short Film Festival		UK INT AUD	★ ★
	Glasgow Youth Film Festival	Children or Young People		UK	
	GrimmFest	Genre or Special Interest		INT AUD	



A-Z & CHECKLIST

	FESTIVAL NAME	SECTION OF GUIDE	INCLUDES XR	COMPETITION	AWARDS QUALIFYING*
H	HippFest	Genre or Special Interest			
	Horror-on-Sea	Genre or Special Interest			
I	INDIs Film Fest	Children or Young People		UK	
	Into Film Festival	Children or Young People			
	Iris Prize LGBTQ+ Film Festival	LGBTQIA+		UK INT	 
J	Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme	National or Regional			
K	Kendal Mountain Film Festival	Genre or Special Interest		INT AUD	
	Kinofilm Manchester Short Film Festival	Short Film Festival		UK INT AUD	
	KINOTEKA	National or Regional	XR		
	Kotatsu Japanese Animation Festival	Animation		INT	
L	Leeds International Film Festival	Key Film Festival		UK INT AUD	  
	Leeds Queer Film Festival	LGBTQIA+			
	Leeds Young Film Festival	Children or Young People	XR	UK INT	
	Liverpool Film Festival	Key Film Festival		UK INT	
	LoCo – The London Comedy Film Festival	Genre or Special Interest		UK	
	London East Asia Film Festival	National or Regional		INT	
	London Fashion Film Festival	Genre or Special Interest			
	London Indian Film Festival	National or Regional		INT AUD	
	London International Animation Festival	Animation	XR	UK	
	London Korean Film Festival	National or Regional			
	London Migration Film Festival	Genre or Special Interest			
	London Palestine Film Festival	National or Regional			
	London Short Film Festival	Short Film Festival		UK INT	 
	London Spanish Film Festival	National or Regional			



A-Z & CHECKLIST

	FESTIVAL NAME	SECTION OF GUIDE	INCLUDES XR	COMPETITION	AWARDS QUALIFYING*
M	Manchester Animation Festival	Animation	XR	UK INT AUD	★ ★ ★
	Manchester Film Festival	Key Film Festival		UK INT AUD	★ ★
N	Native Spirit	Curated or cross arts			
	North East International Film Festival	Key Film Festival		UK INT AUD	★
	Norwich Film Festival	Key Film Festival		UK INT	★ ★
O	Odyssey	National or Regional		UK INT AUD	
	Open City Documentary Festival	Documentary	XR		★ ★
	Oska Bright Film Festival	Disability		UK INT AUD	★ ★
	OtherField Film Festival	Short Film Festival			
Q	Queer East Film Festival	LGBTQIA+			
R	Raindance Film Festival	Key Film Festival	XR	UK INT	★ ★ ★
	Ramsgate International Film Festival	Key Film Festival		UK INT AUD	★
S	SOUL Fest	Black Filmmaker Focus		UK	★ ★
	SAFAR Film Festival	National or Regional			
	SciFi London	Genre or Special Interest		UK INT	
	Scotland Loves Anime	Animation		INT AUD	
	Scottish Queer International Film Festival	LGBTQIA+		UK	★
	Sea Change Film Festival	Gender			
	Sensoria	Curated or cross-arts			
	Sheffield DocFest	Documentary	XR	INT AUD	★ ★ ★
	Slapstick Festival				



A-Z & CHECKLIST

FESTIVAL NAME	SECTION OF GUIDE	INCLUDES XR	COMPETITION	AWARDS QUALIFYING*
Slow Film Festival	Artists' Moving Image			
SOUL Fest	Black Filmmaker Focus		UK	★ ★
Sunderland Shorts Film Festival	Short Film Festival		UK INT	★
T Take One Action!	Genre or Special Interest			
TNB XPO	Black Filmmaker Focus			
Together! Disability Film Festival	Disability		INT	
U UK Asian Film Festival	National or Regional		INT	
UK Green Film Festival	Genre or Special Interest			
UK Jewish Film Festival	Genre or Special Interest		INT	★ ★
VIVA! Spanish & Latin American Film Festival	National or Regional			
V Watersprite International Student Short Film Festival	Short Film Festival	XR	INT AUD	★
W Wicked Wales International Film Festival	Children or Young People		UK INT	
Wildscreen Festival	Genre or Special Interest	XR	UK INT	
Windrush Caribbean Film Festival	National or Regional		INT	
Woman X Film Festival	Gender		UK INT	★
Women of the Lens	Black Filmmaker Focus			
Women Over 50 Film Festival	Gender		INT AUD	★
WOW Wales One World Film Festival	National or Regional		AUD	



FESTIVALS BY MONTH

JANUARY

London Short Film Festival
Horror-on-Sea

FEBRUARY

Belfast XR Festival (also March)
BFI Future Film Festival
FrightFest (also August and October)
INDI
Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme (also March)
Slapstick Festival

MARCH

Belfast XR Festival (also February)
Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival
BFI Flare LGBTQIA+ Film Festival
Borderlines Film Festival
Chronic Youth Film Festival
Cinema Made in Italy
Glasgow Film Festival
Glasgow Short Film Festival
Hippodrome Silent Film Festival
Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme (also February)
KINOTEKA
Leeds International Film Festival
Manchester Film Festival
Oska Bright Film Festival
TNB:XPO
Watersprite International Student Short Film Festival
WOW Wales One World Film Festival

APRIL

Brighton International Animation Festival
Cardiff Animation Festival
Flatpack Festival (also May)
Leeds Young Film Festival
Open City Documentary Festival
Queer East Film Festival
VIVA! Spanish & Latin American Film Festival

MAY

Alchemy Film and Arts Festival
British Animation Film Festival
Camarthen Bay Film Festival
Deaffest
Flatpack Festival (also April)
Kinofilm Manchester Short Film Festival
LoCo – The London Comedy Film Festival
Odyssey
Sunderland Shorts Film Festival
UK Asian Film Festival

JUNE

Bristol Pride: Queer Vision Film Festival (also July)
Docs Ireland
Raindance Film Festival
SAFAR Film Festival
Sheffield DocFest
Sundance Film Festival London
UK Green Film Festival
Windrush Caribbean Film Festival (also October)

JULY

Bristol Pride: Queer Vision Film Festival (also June)
Cinema Rediscovered

AUGUST

Africa in Motion
Braziers International Film Festival (also September)
Chichester Film Festival
Edinburgh International Film Festival
Edinburgh TV Festival
Frightfest (also February and October)
OtherField Film Festival
SOUL Fest

SEPTEMBER

Braziers International Film Festival (also August)
Encounters Short Film Festival
Fringe! Queer Film & Arts Festival
Glasgow Youth Film Festival
London Fashion Film Festival
London Spanish Film Festival
SciFi London
Sea Change
Take One Action!
Woman X Film Festival



FESTIVALS BY MONTH

OCTOBER

BFI London Film Festival
Bolton International Film Festival
British Urban Film Festival
Cambridge Film Festival
Central Scotland Documentary Festival
Cinemagic
Discovery Film Festival (also November)
Doc 'n' Roll Film Festival UK
Factual Animation Film Festival
Film Africa (also November)
FilmBath
Folkestone Documentary Festival
Frightfest (also February and August)
GrimmFest
Iris Prize LGBTQ+ Film Festival
Kotatsu Japanese Animation Festival
London East Asia Film Festival
London Indian Film Festival
Native Spirit
Scotland Loves Anime
Scottish Queer International Film Festival
Sensoria
Slow Film Festival
Wicked Wales International Film Festival
Wildscreen Film Festival
Windrush Caribbean Film Festival (also June)
Women Over 50 Film Festival

NOVEMBER

Abertoir: The International Horror Festival of Wales
Aesthetica Short Film Festival
Animex International Festival of Animation, VFX and Games
Belfast Film Festival
CineCity Brighton Film Festival
Discovery Film Festival (also October)
Film Africa (also October)
Foyle Film Festival
French Film Festival UK (also December)
Into Film Festival
Kendal Mountain Film Festival
Leeds Queer Film Festival
London International Animation Festival (also December)
London Korean Film Festival
London Migration Film Festival
London Palestine Film Festival
Manchester Animation Festival
North East International Film Festival
Norwich Film Festival
UK Jewish Film Festival
Women of the Lens

DECEMBER

French Film Festival UK (also December)
Liverpool Film Festival
London International Animation Festival (also November)
Ramsgate International Film Festival
Together! Disability Film Festival



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