

Animayo Gran Canaria: A Luxury Celebration for Its 20th Anniversary

Leading international studios and production companies will take part in Animayo Gran Canaria, including Walt Disney Animation Studios, Skydance Animation, Platige, Steamroller Animation, Rodeo FX, Illusorium Studios, and Fortiche, among others.

Over 40 distinguished guests and keynote speakers will participate in 14 masterclasses, 15 educational talks, 5 workshops, 6 premieres and screenings, 3 auteur presentations, 5 school stands, 20 talent booths, 2 exhibitions, and 18 hours dedicated to recruitment, portfolio reviews, and signings.

The Walt Disney Animation Studios is sponsoring Animayo Gran Canaria 2025, represented by a key figure from its team: Spanish production designer and visual development artist Lorelay Bové, known for her work on Zootopia, Big Hero 6, Encanto, and Wreck-It Ralph, who will deliver a masterclass.

Emmy Award-winner Sherry Gunther, former producer of The Simpsons and former Senior Vice President at Hanna-Barbera/Cartoon Network, with credits including The Simpsons, Rugrats, and Family Guy, will also be among the featured guests.

The original Spanish voice actors for Homer, Bart, and Lisa Simpson will take part in a special voice acting panel.

Animayo is the first and only festival in Spain designated as a 'Qualifying Festival' by the Hollywood Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for the Oscar® Awards in the category of animated short film, for the Grand Prize of the International Jury and for the Best Animated Short Film from a Spanish-Speaking Country – 'Animación con Ñ'. Five international competition sections will be screened.

The main program of the new edition will take place at the CICCA and the Guiniguada Theater in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, from May 7 to 10.

Animayo, the International Festival of Animation, Visual Effects, and Video Games—the **first and only festival in Spain** officially designated as an “**Oscar® Qualifying Festival**” by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for the animated short film category, and since 2022, also the only one of its kind to qualify **the best Best Animated Short Film from a Spanish-Speaking Country**—has presented a preview of its upcoming **20th edition**. The festival will take place in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria from **May 7 to 10**, and its online program will extend through September 2025.

The announcement was made during a press conference held on Wednesday morning at the headquarters of the Cabildo of Gran Canaria, with the participation of Antonio Morales, President of the Cabildo of Gran Canaria; Carolina Darias, Mayor of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; and Fernando Fernández, General Director of the Fundación La Caja de Canarias—main sponsors and partners of the festival. Alongside them, filmmaker Damián Perea, director and producer of Animayo, presented an overview of the new edition.

Welcoming the media, **Antonio Morales** emphasized the festival’s consolidation and growth: “Animayo places our island on the international map of animation cinema, with a trajectory of continuous expansion and global recognition. A festival that, since its inception, has been unique in both the Canary Islands and worldwide—**born in Gran Canaria, developed entirely by a Canarian team, and projecting the island’s name internationally through its global venues**. The Cabildo of Gran Canaria has always understood Animayo as a key platform for showcasing the potential of this film industry, which supports the projection of our creative talent and contributes to the diversification of our economy. This year, as in the past, studios such as Gigglebug and Platige Image will attend Animayo 2025 and plan to establish operations in Gran Canaria after evaluating the advantages of our territory and human capital, which they know well after attending the festival for ten years.”

Indeed, Gran Canaria is emerging as a strategic hub for talent in the animation, VFX, and digital creation industries. The island offers an unmatched combination of factors: a temperate climate year-round, diverse natural landscapes, excellent connectivity with Europe’s main airports, strong institutional support for culture, and a thriving local scene increasingly aligned with the audiovisual sector. Closing his remarks, Morales highlighted that “the quality of this festival is evident in the fact that Animayo’s official international competition section has secured one Oscar and four nominations in recent years. The festival’s international prestige is undisputed, and it’s programming consistently features leading professionals and companies. This year, for example, **Aubry Mintz, Executive Director of ASIFA-Hollywood—the world’s most prominent animation association**—will serve as president of the Animayo 2025 International Jury. After 20 years, the Cabildo proudly continues to support this festival for its remarkable innovation and its vital role in the future of Gran Canaria’s audiovisual industry. Congratulations to its director, the organizing team, and all attendees.”

Carolina Darias also expressed the City Council’s support for a festival that “positions our city as a meeting point for animation and digital creativity, making Las Palmas de Gran Canaria not only more creative, but also more international.” She congratulated the entire Animayo team and its director, Damián Perea, for 20 years of global influence, and emphasized that the festival “enriches the city’s cultural offerings and helps position it as a benchmark in this field.” She added: “Animayo is culture, education, economic development, and international promotion for our city within the creative industries.”

Fernando Fernández stated, “For Fundación La Caja de Canarias, it is a great honour that CICA once again serves as the official and **main venue** for the International Festival of Animation, Visual Effects, and VFX. In this special 20th anniversary edition, we will host the festival at the Fundación’s CICA Center for Cultural Initiatives. This partnership, which began in 2014, has allowed us to witness

Animayo's transformation into a significant **cultural and educational platform**. It also serves as a socioeconomic resource that plays a central role in Gran Canaria's and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria's audiovisual, cultural, leisure, and tourism offerings, generating substantial economic impact and promoting sustainable growth.

Taking the floor, Damián Perea began by expressing his gratitude for the continued support received over the years, as well as for the new partnerships established. He extended special thanks to the Office of the Presidency of the Cabildo of Gran Canaria and its president, Antonio Morales, "for making it possible for us to celebrate 20 years of this festival, as main sponsors of **an event we proudly carry forward in Gran Canaria under the brand 'La Isla de mi vida'.** I also want to especially thank the **Sociedad de Promoción de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria** and Mayor Carolina Darias—an institution that has supported Animayo for two decades. Their commitment to culture, creativity, and the international projection of our city has been key in continuing to drive this festival forward."

He also acknowledged **CICCA** for once again hosting the festival as its main venue, "offering us a symbolic and welcoming space for the core activities of Animayo," and gave a special mention to Fernando Fernández for "his continued support and outstanding work as a cultural manager." Perea also highlighted the contribution of **Filmoteca Canaria**, which once again serves as a screening venue this year, "enhancing the audience experience."

Additionally, he recognized the important role played by **Turismo de Gran Canaria** and its outstanding management team, "for their essential support and their commitment to promoting both culture and tourism in Gran Canaria—an objective we proudly share." Finally, Perea announced a new addition: "Thanks to a grant from **Promotur Turismo de Islas Canarias**, a public enterprise under the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce of the Government of the Canary Islands, we will extend our program in 2025 to other islands as well, combining in-person and online formats in what we call *Animayo Itinerante*."

Program Highlights

Offering a preview of the **upcoming edition**, Perea revealed that **world-renowned production companies and studios** such as Walt Disney Animation Studios, Skydance Animation, Platige, Steamroller Animation, Rodeo FX, Illusorium Studios, and Fortiche will be attending in person. Some of these will also take part in one of the festival's key components: creating real professional opportunities through "Professional Encounters" that include in-person recruitment sessions (by prior registration). Additionally, the festival will host exclusive media activities such as meet-and-greets with guest speakers, studios, and partner schools, as well as the "*Animated Breakfast*", offering the press an up-close opportunity to meet international industry guests.

Animayo Gran Canaria 2025 will feature over **40 top-tier speakers** and special guests, including **artists, creators, and experts from leading studios, production houses, and academic institutions**—both national and international. Held at CICCA and Teatro Guiniguada, the program will include: **14 in-person masterclasses** (90 minutes each) on topics such as animation, directing, production, character design, VFX, and leadership. **5 practical workshops** (240 minutes each) covering storyboard creation, concept art, character design, dubbing, and video game development. **15 educational talks, 2 panel debates, screenings, 3 auteur presentations, school and talent booths, and 18 hours of recruitment sessions, portfolio reviews, and signing events** involving over 6 companies from the industry. Distinguished guests will be joining from cities and countries including New York (USA), Los Angeles (USA), Calabasas (California, USA), Germany, France, Poland, Canada, and Spain. Among those highlighted by Perea: **Sherry Gunther Shugerman (USA)** – Two-time Emmy winner with seven nominations, a CableACE Award, and numerous film festival accolades. An iconic executive producer and director behind landmark television hits like ***The Simpsons, Family Guy, and Rugrats***. She has led production divisions at Twentieth Century Fox, Warner Bros., and Nickelodeon, and was part of the

team that launched Cartoon Network. Currently, she is the founder of **KazooBadoo**, an educational platform for early childhood and primary education already implemented in schools across California. **Lorelay Bové (Spain/USA)** – Visual development artist and production designer at Walt Disney Animation Studios, with credits including *Zootopia*, *Big Hero 6*, *Encanto*, *Wreck-It Ralph*, *Raya and the Last Dragon*, *The Princess and the Frog*, and *Tangled*. **Vanitha Rangaraju (USA)** – Vice President of Production Operations at Skydance Animation and VFX supervisor/ animator, known for her work on major DreamWorks projects including *Shrek*, *Madagascar*, *Puss in Boots*, and *The Boss Baby*. **Bruce Anderson (USA)** – Producer and Head of Production at Skydance Animation, whose credits include beloved franchises such as *Lilo & Stitch*, *Tarzan*, *Pocahontas*, *Horton Hears a Who!*, *Ferdinand*, *Rio*, *Rio 2*, and *Spellbound*. **Aaron Gilman (Canada)** – Executive Director at Steamroller Studios, animation director and VFX supervisor involved in major productions such as *Avatar*, *The Avengers*, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, *Iron Man 3*, *Godzilla*, and *Pacific Rim: Uprising*. He will also present a **world premiere** during the festival. **Terrence Masson (USA)** – Animation producer, VFX supervisor, and educator at the School of Visual Arts (SVA) in New York, with over 30 years of experience in landmark film productions including *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, *Hook*, *True Lies*, *South Park*, *Interview with the Vampire*, *Titanic*, and *Batman Forever*. He is also the original creator of the animation method used in *South Park*.

More star guests will be joining us to **share their knowledge, convey their experiences in an engaging and relatable manner, to educate and inspire new generations**. These professionals not only take the stage but also interact with festivalgoers, participating in autograph signings. Among them is **Rémy Terreaux (France)**, Animation Supervisor at Fortiche Production, known for major projects such as *Arcane*, whose groundbreaking impact earned it the Emmy Award for Best Animated Series and multiple accolades at the Annie Awards, establishing it as a genre-defining title and a milestone in adult animation. **Jordi Solanes**, Lead Animator at Fortiche Production, has contributed to numerous productions across Spain and London, leaving his mark on international series and films, including the acclaimed *Arcane*. **Magdalena Rudnicka (Poland)**, VFX Producer at Platige Image, has worked in production and post-production for clients such as Mattel, Activision, Blizzard, Netflix, DC Comics, Discovery, and Warner Bros. Since 2021, she has been part of Platige Image, coordinating visual effects for standout productions such as *The Witcher* (Seasons 2 and 3), *The Witcher: Blood Origin*, *Shadow & Bone*, *Time Bandits*, and the latest cinematic trailer for *The Witcher 4* by CD Projekt Red. **Yvon Jardel (Canada)**, Head of Animation Operations and Animation Director at Rodeo FX, brings over 15 years of international experience spanning stylized animation to hyperrealistic creatures. He is one of the industry's top talents, responsible for bringing to life some of the most complex scenes in *Stranger Things*, *It*, *Sonic*, and *Ant-Man*. He has led teams at both MPC and Rodeo FX on globally impactful projects. His presence at Animayo embodies the link between creativity and cutting-edge technology in animation. **Ángela Iturriza (Spain)**, storyboard artist and animator with extensive industry experience, is also a professor at U-tad, University of Technology and Digital Art. She has worked in animation departments for renowned studios such as Disney and Warner Bros. **Daniel Fernández Casas (Spain)**, professor at ECIB, Barcelona's School of Film and Animation, is a distinguished character designer. He was nominated for an Annie Award for Best Character Design in 2024 for *Robot Dreams*. He is the creative mind behind characters from *Despicable Me 4*, *Klaus*, *Sing 2*, *Super Mario Bros: The Movie*, *Minions: The Rise of Gru*, *The Secret Life of Pets*, *The Grinch*, and *Smallfoot*.

A star-studded lineup that will continue to grow as Animayo gradually unveils more prominent guests in the coming weeks. Among them, we will welcome some of the most iconic "**Voices of Cinema**"—voice directors and actors who have shaped generations. **Carlos Ysbert**, the voice behind legendary characters who has connected with audiences of all ages, including Homer Simpson in *The Simpsons*, Tony Soprano in *The Sopranos*, Chef Skinner in *Ratatouille*, and Hank Schrader in *Breaking Bad*. **Sara Vivas**, widely recognized for her versatility in voicing child characters, has brought to life Bart Simpson in *The Simpsons* (since 1989), Kyle Broflovski in *South Park* (1997–present), and Dexter in *Dexter's*

Laboratory (1996–2003). **Isatxa Menjíbar**, admired for her vibrant portrayals of young and energetic female characters such as Lisa Simpson in *The Simpsons*, Rory Gilmore in *Gilmore Girls*, and Angelica Pickles in *Rugrats*.

Specialized Educational Offer

To explore the careers of the future and achieve the real goal of working in this industry, it is essential that young students, parents, and guardians gain first-hand insight into the top-tier educational pathways available at leading national universities. To this end, **Animayo Gran Canaria once again hosts the “Decide Your Future” program**, featuring a wide range of talks spanning from the most artistic to the most technological disciplines. Educational centers can now register to attend by sending an email to dori@animayo.com. Participating institutions in this year’s edition include: U-Tad, University Center for Technology and Digital Art (Madrid), U-DIT, University of Design, Innovation, and Technology (Madrid), ECIB, School of Film and Animation of Catalonia (Barcelona), Artediez School (Madrid), School of Visual Arts (Los Angeles), L’Idem Animation School (Barcelona), Trazos Movie School, Higher School of Digital Arts (Madrid), ECAM Studio, School of Cinema and Audiovisual Arts (Madrid), 3Doubles Campus.

In addition to portfolio reviews for young students, the **Animayo Talent Scholarships program** will once again offer **over €600,000 in scholarships** to support both online and in-person studies at several of the aforementioned schools and universities for the 2025–2026 academic year. This is a **globally open call**, with some application periods extending until August 2025 (depending on each institution’s terms), and applications can be submitted online through the Animayo website.

Screenings

Screenings hold a prominent place within the Festival’s programming. As the **first and only festival in Spain to be designated a “Qualifying Festival” by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences** for the **Oscar® Awards in the category of Best Animated Short Film**, and since 2022, **the only festival of its kind that qualifies Spanish-language animated works**, Animayo offers two direct entries into the Oscar® pre-selection. From **May 7 to 10**, the Festival will present **five Official Competition Sections** at the **Teatro Guiniguada**, open to both pass holders and the general public.

The selection comprises short films chosen from an annual competition of **over 2,000 submissions**, including 2D and 3D animation, visual effects, experimental cinema, advertising pieces, animated spots, music videos, video game cinematics, and virtual reality works. These films, originating from countries such as **Spain, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Norway, France, Hong Kong, Poland, Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, and Australia**, will be screened across the five Official Sections, culminating in the **Animayo 2025 Official Awards**, as decided by an international jury.

Experiencing Animayo

The Festival experience extends beyond the screenings to the **Fan Zone and Animayo Experiences area (CICCA)**, where attendees can explore talent showcases, hands-on experiences, and interactive games in virtual environments. This year, the space will also host the launch of the latest book by **Raúl García**, *“Storyboard Artist’s Manual”*. A director, producer, and animator with over 40 years of experience, Raúl is a Madrid-born artist based in Los Angeles and a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. His accolades include Goya Awards, Oscars®, Annie Awards, and numerous internationally recognized works. His published books are considered essential reading by leading animators and directors in the field. A trailblazer in international animation, García has served as a bridge between European animation and major Hollywood studios. After a decade at Disney, working on classics such as *Aladdin* and *Beauty and the Beast*, he set out on his own path as a director and producer. In 2025, he returns to **Animayo Gran Canaria** to present his new publication and participate in the portfolio reviews, reaffirming his role as a mentor and influential figure for the next generation.

of creatives. His award-winning experience and independent vision solidify his status as a key player in the global animation landscape.

Also, within the **Fan Zone and Animayo Experiences**, two **graphic novels** will be unveiled by their respective creators: *"Take Care of Ángela"*, by digital illustrator and content creator **Ivart (Iván Pineros)** and *"Red Hurts Less"*, by digital illustrator, content creator, and author **Gema Vadillo**.

For All Audiences

True to its inclusive spirit, **Animayo Gran Canaria** once again places the spotlight on the youngest members of the family. As Festival Director Damián Perea affirms, *"Animayo is a festival that teaches how to watch, how to create, and how to think critically. We aim to nurture a future audience from an early age—among whom we are sure the talents of tomorrow are already emerging."* The **"My First Festival"** event (a special program for family audiences) will be held again this year on Saturday, May 10, at Teatro Guiniguada, with free admission until venue capacity is reached. Aimed at children aged 5 and up, as well as youth and adults, this screening allows attendees to **vote for the best animated short film** of the edition from a curated selection of **international animated shorts**. These works promote core social values such as solidarity, friendship, respect for tradition, the pursuit of dreams, and joy through creativity.

The 20th edition of **Animayo Gran Canaria – International Festival of Animation, Visual Effects, and Video Games** launches its programming with the unveiling of the **winning poster of the Animayo 2025 International Poster Contest**—a celebration of the fusion between **art and technology**, once again driving limitless talent forward. The selected artwork, titled **"A Journey into the Unknown,"** was created by **19-year-old Ukrainian artist Kateryna Cheromukhina**, currently living as a refugee in **Warsaw, Poland**, since the onset of the war in Ukraine. According to Kateryna, the characters in the poster came to her in a dream and captivated her so deeply that she felt compelled to draw them— aspiring to create an image that looked like a frame from an animated film. *"I deliberately drew the characters from behind so that viewers could feel like part of the scene and imagine their own story,"* she explained. Kateryna is currently a first-year student at the Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology, studying Graphic Design and Multimedia Arts.

This year's **international poster contest** received a total of **893 submissions from artists representing 77 countries**, including **Spain, Mexico, Turkey, Ukraine, Taiwan, Russia, Iran, Belarus, Japan, China, Germany, Cuba, India, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Poland, among others**. Popular techniques used in the entries included traditional illustration, digital illustration, collage, photomontage, graphic minimalism, and 3D design.

Available in both in-person and online formats, Animayo, based in Gran Canaria (Spain), expands its reach through its "Animayo Itinerant" version, bringing its program to cities and countries including Los Angeles, Madrid, Barcelona, Lanzarote, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Brussels, Chicago, Mumbai, Prague, Colombia, Belgrade, and Korea, among others.

Animayo Gran Canaria continues to thrive thanks to the strong support of its sponsors, including the Cabildo of Gran Canaria through the Presidency Department, the Society for the Promotion of the City of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, the Department of Tourism, Industry and Commerce of the Government of the Canary Islands through Promotur and from the Canary Islands Institute for Cultural Development (ICDC), Gran Canaria Tourism, the La Caja de Canarias Foundation, and the Government of the Canary Islands. Their backing, along with the collaboration of production companies, studios, schools, universities, and numerous private companies, is essential in advancing the film industry and promoting access to audiovisual and technological culture and education for all audiences.

HD Video: 20 years of Animayo / Summary video of Animayo 2024 / Posters

