



“Playing God” and “Nube” are crowned in the ANIMAYO 2025 Awards and get a direct pass to the Oscar® Awards preselection

The International Jury was chaired by Aubry Mintz, executive director of ASIFA-Hollywood. The Grand Prize of the International Jury and Best Stop Motion Award went to the Italian film “Playing God”, «with a bold and daring narrative, unusual in the animation scene».

“Nube” won Best Spanish-Speaking Short Film – ‘Animación con Ñ’ Animayo Gran Canaria 2025, «a deeply human work».

On the occasion of its 20th Anniversary, for the first time, Animayo Gran Canaria has created the Critics’ Award. Its international jury unanimously awarded the prize to the French film “Courage”.

Animayo is the only animation festival in Spain with double qualification for the Oscar® Awards. The winners of Best International Short Film and Best Spanish-Speaking Short Film – ‘Animación con Ñ’ receive 2 direct entries to the Oscar® Awards preselection.

The Official Winners of Animayo Gran Canaria 2025 will tour various cities and countries around the world, including Los Angeles, Madrid, Barcelona, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Brussels, Chicago, Mumbai, Prague, Belgrade, or Mexico, through its ‘Animayo Itinerante’ program.

The 20th edition of Animayo Gran Canaria, International Festival of Animation, Visual Effects, and Video Games, has announced the winners of its official competition sections: a plural perspective on the world through creators **who chose animation as a form of art, critique, and emotion**. A total of 18 awards and 1 special mention make up its **Official 2025 Winners List**, marking the beginning of the Oscar® race for two of its winners, as well as the launch of **‘Animayo Itinerante’, a worldwide tour through cities and countries such as** Los Angeles, Madrid, Barcelona, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Brussels, Chicago, Mumbai, Prague, Belgrade, or Mexico, among others.

As **the first and only animation festival in Spain designated as an “Oscar® Qualifying Festival” by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences of Hollywood in two categories:** international animated short film for the ‘Grand Prize of the Animayo International Jury’ (since 2018) and Best Spanish-Speaking Nationality Short Film – ‘Animación con Ñ’ (since 2022), **the two winning works in these categories earn a direct spot on the coveted shortlist for Best Animated Short Film at the Oscars®**. In addition, the Grand Jury Prize winner also receives a €3,000 cash prize and an honorary trophy.

This is no trivial matter, considering Animayo’s unstoppable international rise. Over its 20 successful and uninterrupted editions, always committed to quality and talent in the film and animation sectors, it has consistently highlighted excellence through its awards. **These awards open the door to the Hollywood academy**, as was the case with the 2024 Grand Jury Prize winner, which went on to win Best Animated Short Film at the 97th Academy Awards. Also, “Our Uniform”, Grand Jury Prize winner in 2023, was nominated for Best Animated Short at the 2024 Oscars®, and “Late Afternoon” saw similar success in 2018, while “Kapaemahu” made it to the 2021 Oscar® shortlist after winning the 2020 Grand Jury Prize at Animayo.

The strong presence of Europe, America, and Asia as the origin of many of the entries once again underscores **the inclusive and international nature** of Animayo Gran Canaria, which gives visibility to both young independent talents and top schools. In this 20th edition of Animayo Gran Canaria, **the festival reviewed over 2,000 works** in 2D and 3D animation, visual effects, experimental cinema, animated advertising, music videos, video game cinematics, and virtual reality **from more than 80 countries worldwide**. Of these, 836 short films passed the first selection phase, **with 55 making it to the final competition in the four Official Competitive Sections:** International, Animación con Ñ, Cinematics, Video Games and Commissioned Works, and the children's/youth section ‘My First Festival’ (Children’s Audience Award).

The selection follows **a rigorous process** based on five key pillars that guide the program: script (emphasizing values such as diversity, equality, coexistence, family, love, respect, the environment, childhood, solidarity, and social well-being), originality, technique, theme, **and the articulation of ideas in well-constructed stories with relatable characters and appropriately matched animation techniques**.

The **techniques** represented include traditional and digital 2D, 3D, stop-motion, and mixed techniques such as 2D plus 3D, rotoscoping, and collage. The shorts come from **independent authors and prestigious international educational institutions such as** France’s Gobelins, L’école de l’image, Supinfocom Rubika, and ESMA; the UK’s Royal College of Art; Denmark’s The Animation Workshop; the U.S.’s CalArts and Ringling College of Art and Design; Germany’s Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg; Canada’s Sheridan College; China’s Beijing Film Academy; Korea National University of Arts; and Spain’s U-tad, UPF, and ECAM. These works take us on a journey around the world, starting in Spain and moving through France, the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, China, South Korea, the U.S., Canada, and Iran.

During the in-person edition of Animayo Gran Canaria 2025, held recently in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (May 7–10), the official competition sections **were voted on by the public and especially by the International Jury**, who decided on the awards and mentions of the Animayo 2025 Official Winners List, praising the exceptional artistic quality of the selected works.

Thus, Animayo Gran Canaria 2025 launches the Oscar® race for **the Italian film “Playing God”** by Matteo

Burani, **winner of the Grand Prize of the International Jury**, along with the honorary trophy and the aforementioned cash prize. This 9-minute stop-motion short made with puppets, clay, and pixilation tells the story of a clay sculpture that comes to life in the darkness of a workshop, surrounded by strange creatures. **The jury described this stop-motion work as “visually powerful, atmospheric, and visceral,”** highlighting its narrative on reinvention and the pursuit of perfection. Despite its intensity and rawness, they praised its meticulous art direction, animation, and impactful sound design, delivering a piece that is as disturbing as it is technically admirable. Its outstanding technique also earned it the Best Stop-Motion Award for being **«a powerful work, with a bold and daring narrative, unusual in the animation scene. With a technique of exceptional delicacy,»** in the words of Damián Perea, director and producer of Animayo.

Likewise, unanimously, Animayo opens the doors to Hollywood for a second work: the winner of **Best Spanish-Speaking Nationality Short Film – ‘Animación con Ñ’**, which this year goes to **“Nube”** by **Mexican** filmmakers Diego Alonso Sánchez de la Barquera Estrada and Christian Arredondo Narváez. A 3D short, it is a metaphor on motherhood and growth, featuring two clouds that journey through stages of detachment and maturity. The short was highly praised for its ability to evoke emotion through poetic, relatable, and symbolic visual storytelling that resonates with audiences of all ages.

The **Social Awareness Award** was given to the traditionally animated short “La Rivière des Ourses” by Belgian director **Anaïs Mauzat**, for its critical reflection on globalization, excessive consumption, and the need to preserve our environment. The jury valued its originality, thematic depth, and the sensitivity with which it portrayed the conflict between the natural and the artificial.

The festival also granted a **Special Mention to the Iranian short “Like Friend, Like Deer”** by director Malek Eghbali, in recognition of its excellent production design and the author’s outstanding artistic quality. The work evokes the animation style of Frédéric Back and the painting and engraving style of British artist Lucian Freud.

The **Critic’s Award**, also unanimously decided, went to the short film **“Courage”** created by students from **Supinfocom** (France). The jury highlighted it as “the most balanced piece in terms of narrative, animation, and artistic direction,” recognizing its original premise, flawless execution, and inspiring message.

In the **Cinematics, Music Videos, and Commissioned Works category**, the jury **unanimously** recognized the **extraordinary artistic quality** of the finalist works. As a result, **for the first time in the festival’s history**, the Best Use of VFX in Narrative Format Award was given to the commissioned work **“The Cause of the Accident that Started the Fire,”** produced by Spanish studio CANADA. The jury praised its exceptional artistic execution and outstanding use of visual effects, serving a cohesive script and high-level cinematic storytelling.

The **Best Cinematic Award** went to studio Unit Image for their impactful piece **“Secret Leve – Dungeons & Dragons: The Queen’s Cradle,”** a work that combines top-tier animation and visual effects in the **Dungeons & Dragons narrative universe**. Directed by **Maxime Luère**, this cinematic was praised for its technical quality, direction, and immersive capacity. A true masterpiece that showcases the narrative potential of cinematic formats in video games.

Among other highlights, the adult audience vote coincided with that of the jury, resulting in the 3D animated short **“Quota,”** by Studio Job, Joris & Marieke (Netherlands), winning both **Best Comedy for Adults and the Audience Award**. In this film, every citizen must control their CO₂ emissions quota. At first, nothing changes—until they reach the limit...

A total of **18 awards and 1 special mention, listed below**, make up the Animayo Gran Canaria 2025 Official Winners List, which pleasantly surprised its director and producer **Damián Perea**: «There are times when decisions connect with you in an unexpected, almost intimate way. What the jury selected resonates with what I personally value and admire in animation. That alignment of perspectives moves

me and fills me with gratitude—it speaks of a harmony you don't seek but, when it happens, confirms that you're on the right path.»

In short, with its online phase still to come, this **20th edition has stayed true to the competitiveness, excellence, and quality that define it**, once again putting Gran Canaria and its capital, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, on the global map as home to one of the most prestigious festivals of its kind in the world. **Animayo Gran Canaria, in its 20th Anniversary**, is once again a reality, thanks to the strong drive and support of its sponsors: the Cabildo of Gran Canaria, 'The island of my life' through the Presidency Department, the Society for the Promotion of the City of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce of the Canary Islands Government through Promotur, Turismo Gran Canaria, Fundación La Caja de Canarias, the Canary Islands Government, as well as the involvement of production companies, studios, schools and universities, and numerous private companies that strongly support the film industry and the effort to bring audiovisual and technological culture and education to all audiences.

OFFICIAL WINNERS LIST ANIMAYO GRAN CANARIA 2025

International Jury – Animated Short Film Category

Presided by Aubry Mintz, Executive Director of ASIFA-Hollywood (USA). Jury members: Terrence Masson, Creative Executive and VFX Supervisor, School of Visual Arts (USA); Sherry Gunther Shugerman, former Senior Vice President of Production at Hanna-Barbera and Cartoon Network, and Producer of Prime-Time Animated Series for Netflix (USA); Aaron Gilman, CEO of Steamroller Animation, VFX Supervisor (Canada); Benoit Berthe Siward, Founder of The Animation Showcase (France).

- **Grand Jury Prize.** €3,000 cash award, Oscar® preselection, and honorary trophy: "Playing God" by Matteo Burani. Italy. Technique: Puppets, clay, Stop-motion, Pixilation. Synopsis: In the darkness of a workshop, a clay sculpture comes to life, surrounded by strange creatures.

[Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEm8lq-4z_k]

- **Best Student Short Film:** "Trash" by Gregory Bouzid, Maxime Crançon, Robin Delaporte, Mattéo Durand, Romain Fleischer, Alexis Le Ral, Margaux Lutz, and Fanny Vecchie. ESMA School. France. Technique: 2D, 3D. Honorary trophy. Synopsis: In a dark alley, a starving rat and a pigeon fight over a slice of pizza, launching into a frantic chase down the street.

[Teaser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEA1X8YdTS0>]

- **Best Art Direction:** "Forevergreen" by Nathan Engelhardt and Jeremy Spears. USA. Technique: 3D. Honorary trophy. Synopsis: An orphaned bear cub finds a home under the care of a paternal evergreen tree. However, his hunger for human trash leads him into danger.

[Clip: <https://vimeo.com/1087417071/7981505f8a?share=copy>]

- **Best Social Awareness:** "La Rivière des Ourses" by Anaïs Mauzat. Belgium. Technique: 2D. Honorary trophy. Synopsis: In a city obsessed with drink production, Mackenzie, a sensitive being, strays from the system as a hungry bear approaches. [Teaser: <https://vimeo.com/1055235819>]

- **Best All-Ages Humor:** "Eureka!" by Kris Borghs. Belgium. Technique: 3D. Honorary trophy. Synopsis: Tom and Ed, two intelligent lamp-like beings, inspire moments of illumination on various planets. But when they reach Earth, their good intentions unleash unexpected chaos.

[Clip: <https://vimeo.com/1087418061/a43e8b797a?share=copy>]

- **Best Comedy for Adult Audiences:** "Quota" by Studio Job, Joris & Marieke. Netherlands. Technique: 3D. Honorary trophy. Synopsis: When every citizen must monitor their CO₂ emissions quota, at first nothing changes... until they reach their limit. [Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bdlw2jAG4T4>]

- **Best Stop Motion:** "Playing God" by Matteo Burani. Italy. Technique: Puppets, clay, Stop-motion, Pixilation. Honorary trophy. Synopsis: In the darkness of a workshop, a clay sculpture comes to life, surrounded by strange creatures. [Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEm8lq-4z_k]

- **Best Story:** “Two Ships” by McKinley Benson. Portugal. Technique: 2D. Honorary trophy. Synopsis: While working opposite shifts, a couple struggles to maintain their connection through fleeting encounters.

[Trailer: https://www.instagram.com/reel/DIJXT_iipqB/]

- **Best 3D Animation:** “Forevergreen” by Nathan Engelhardt and Jeremy Spears. USA. Honorary trophy. Synopsis: An orphaned bear cub finds a home under the care of a paternal evergreen tree. However, his hunger for human trash leads him into danger.

[Clip: <https://vimeo.com/1087417071/7981505f8a?share=copy>]

- **Best 2D Animation:** “The Girl with the Occupied Eyes” by André Carrilho. Portugal. Honorary trophy. Synopsis: While working opposite shifts, a couple struggles to maintain their connection through fleeting encounters. [Teaser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NFputx0k0Q>]

- **Special Mention of the Festival:** “Like Friend, Like Deer” by Malek Eghbali. Iran. Technique: 2D, 3D. Certificate of merit. Synopsis: A deer-man who has killed a hunter is handed over to a soldier-master to be taken to a detachment. [Clip: <https://vimeo.com/1087418722/f46eafb7f2?share=copy>]

International Jury – Best Spanish-Speaking Nationality Short Film – ‘Animación con Ñ’ Category

Members of this Jury: Sandra Lasso, Director of Talent Acquisition at Skydance Animation; Isabel Fonseca, Manager of Artist Management at Skydance Animation; Raúl Rocha, Co-founder and CEO of Illusorium Animation Studios; Daniel Fernández Casas, Character Designer and Art Director; Miriam Hidalgo ‘Perditah’, Concept Artist and Illustrator specialized in 2D character and background design.

Best Spanish-Speaking Nationality Short Film – ‘Animación con Ñ’. Oscar® Preselection and Honorary Trophy for “Nube”. Authors: Diego Alonso Sánchez de la Barquera Estrada and Christian Arredond Narváez. Mexico. Technique: 3D. *Synopsis:* After seeing an old storm cloud cry out her sadness until she disappears, Noma, a fluffy white cloud, realizes that her daughter Mixtli is at risk of raining prematurely. [Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6sAMq1E1V0>]

Best Cartoon: “Ciao Peskao” by Guillermo González Fidalgo and Andrea García García. School: U-Tad. Spain. Technique: 2D. Honorary Trophy. *Synopsis:* What’s a pink cat doing on a remote island? Starving, being stalked by deep-sea creatures, and riding a floating boat five meters above the ocean! And best of all: he doesn’t even know he has company! [Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LD-fFIOR8c>]

International Jury – Cinematics, Commercials, and Music Videos Category

Jury Members: Aubry Mintz, Executive Director of ASIFA-Hollywood (USA); Léa Laurain, Studio Manager & Business Development Coordinator at Fortiche Production (France); Klaus Scherwinski, Storyboard and Visual Development Artist (Germany); Yvon Jarden, Creative and Animation Director at Rodeo FX (Canada); Raúl Rocha, Co-founder and CEO of Illusorium Animation Studios (Spain); Cécile Hergaux Essame, Head of Production at Fortiche Production (France).

- **Best Video Game Cinematic:** “Secret Level – Dungeons & Dragons: The Queen’s Cradle” by Maxime Luère. France. Technique: 3D. Honorary Trophy. *Synopsis:* In search of a dragon cult, a group of adventurers rescues a child tormented by a sinister force. [Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzBQqWvbLcQ>]

- **Best Music Video:** “AJR – Maybe Man” by Edoardo Ranaboldo. United States. Technique: 3D, motion capture. Honorary Trophy. *Synopsis:* Animated music video for the band AJR from their album Maybe Man. [Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU24A9C8BUK>]

- **Best Advertising / Commissioned Work:** “Hero – June” by Paulo García. Brazil. Technique: 3D. Honorary Trophy. *Synopsis:* A man who doesn’t want to be seen as a hero. He is simply human, goes through ups and downs, struggles with life every day, and believes in himself. That man is Lukas, known as Vintage

Culture. [Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sZhzKHPDTE>]

- **Best Use of VFX in a Narrative Format:** “*The Cause of the Accident that Started the Fire*” by Lope Serrano. Spain. Techniques: SFX, VFX, Animation. Honorary Trophy. Synopsis: A young director experiences a creative crisis during her film shoot when she can’t find a clear narrative cause for a car crash scene. Her insecurity leads her into a reflection between vanity and the genuine anguish of artistic creation. [Trailer: <https://www.canadacanada.com/project/icex-la-causa>]

Critics’ Award Jury

Presided by Rocío Ayuso, journalist, writer, and producer (Spain – USA). **Members:** María Estévez, film journalist (USA); Michele Manelis, journalist, Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) (USA); Jonatán Cortés, Founder and Director of the animation and VFX studio Animal Studios and the portal notodoanimacion.es (Spain); Fran Villalba, film and TV screenwriter (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain).

Awarded: “Courage”. Authors: Margot Jacquet, Nathan Baudry, Marion Choudin, Jeanne Desplanques, Lise Delcroix, Salomé Cognon. School: Supinfo.com. France. Technique: 2D. Honorary Trophy. Synopsis: Anna, an Olympic athlete, pushes herself to the limit to never fail again. But after crossing that line, she collapses and must face the harsh judgment of others—and her own.

[Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93uACxo8hr0>]

Audience Awards

Adult Audience Award: “Quota” by Studio Job, Joris & Marieke. Netherlands. Technique: 3D. Honorary Trophy. Synopsis: When every citizen has to monitor their CO₂ emission quota, nothing changes at first... until they reach the limit. [Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bdlw2jAG4T4>]

Children’s Audience Award – ‘My First Festival’. The winning film in this official competition section will be announced soon, once the ‘Animayo Without Leaving the Classroom school’ program is completed. Votes from children attending in person will be added to the final tally.

MEDIA RESOURCES

Links to trailers/clips of awarded films at the end of the note.

Stills of winning works: in note text.

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