



Up to 34 Premieres at Animayo Gran Canaria 2026, Official Sections, and International Jury Headed by Tony Bancroft

The world premiere of *An Epic Yarn*, by Andrew Gordon, a leading animator, director and executive producer at Pixar Animation Studios, will be presented during the Live Guest Presentation Gala on Wednesday the 6th, open to all audiences.

Tony Bancroft, a Disney animation icon, will chair the Animayo Gran Canaria 2026 International Jury on his first visit to Spain as a guest of the festival.

75 short films selected from nearly 2,000 works submitted from 78 countries will take part in the 4 Official Competition Sections that will lead to the Animayo Gran Canaria 2026 International Awards.

34 premieres and special screenings come together at the 21st edition of Animayo Gran Canaria, the only animation festival in Spain with double qualification for the Oscar® Awards and recently named a qualifying festival for the Annie® Awards

The 21st edition of Animayo Gran Canaria-La Isla de Mi Vida, International Festival of Animation, Visual Effects and Video Games, **the only one of its kind in Spain designated as a qualifying festival for the Oscar® Awards in two categories and for the Annie® Awards, announces the name of the president of its**

International Jury: Tony Bancroft (Tennessee, United States), coming to Spain for the first time with this festival.

An iconic director, producer and animator, **considered one of the architects of the Walt Disney Feature Animation Renaissance** in the nineties: award-winning co-director of *Mulan*, as well as creator of emblematic characters such as Pumbaa from *The Lion King* and Iago from *Aladdin*, Cogsworth from *Beauty and the Beast*, among others. Bancroft is also linked to more titles such as *Mary Poppins Returns* (Walt Disney Pictures), *Disenchanted*, *The Rescuers Down Under*, *The Prince and the Pauper* or Disney's 2023 short film for its 100th anniversary *Once Upon a Studio*. Likewise, beyond Disney, in his various professional facets, he has also left his mark on animated television series and other titles such as *Mosley*, *Stuart Little 2* or *Space Jam: A New Legacy*. [Further information: <https://www.animayo.com/?accion=news3&id=257y256>].

Alongside this announcement, the festival also reveals the **full composition of the juries corresponding to its 4 Official Competition Sections**. They, the invited star guests of the new edition, will designate the full group of winners of the Animayo Gran Canaria 2026 International Palmarès. It also provides a detailed account of the **selection process** for short films in this annual competition, including **techniques, origin, themes** and the full list of its awards.

Additionally, Animayo Gran Canaria-La Isla de Mi Vida 2026, today a **“consolidated international platform capable of connecting talent, industry and market”**, reports on **up to 34 premieres and special screenings** with the sponsorship and collaboration of Cabildo de Gran Canaria- La Isla de Mi Vida; Las Palmas de Gran Canaria City Council; the Government of the Canary Islands; Turismo de Gran Canaria, and Fundación La Caja de Canarias; as well as production companies, studios, schools, universities and other private companies.

PREMIERES • SPECIAL SCREENINGS

10 world, 3 European, 10 Spanish and 11 Canarian

From the **Live Guest Presentation Gala** itself, which, with free admission until full capacity is reached, will take place on Wednesday the 6th, from 18:00 to 20:00, at Espacio CICC in the capital of Gran Canaria, the 21st edition of Animayo Gran Canaria-La Isla de Mi Vida will offer a succession of premieres of enormous artistic quality.

The gala will begin with the **world premiere of *An Epic Yarn*, presented by its director Andrew Gordon, animator, director and executive producer** at Pixar Animation Studios (*Finding Nemo*, *The Incredibles*, *Ratatouille* and *Toy Story*). And in recent years, other projects such as *Ron's Gone Wrong*, *Paws of Fury: The Legend of Hank*, *Hitpig!* and the feature film *Out of the Nest*.

Synopsis *An Epic Yarn*: A young queen and her little brother spend their days playing with their pink sheep, unaware that their games have crossed the line from affection into abuse. Tired of the mistreatment, the sheep decides to run away. The siblings set out to find her. Along the way, they heal their relationship and learn how to truly care. A family adventure about the power of love and reconciliation.

Next, it will be the turn of the **Canary Islands premiere of *The Piano*, presented** by the already mentioned **Tony Bancroft**, who serves as executive producer, and by its **independent writer and director Avery Kroll**, whose other notable projects include *The Legend of Bill* and *Knock Knock*. Its **synopsis** tells of how, one night, a little girl slips out of bed to discover her father leaning over the piano, pouring his soul into the keys. The powerful bond they form by playing music together lasts a lifetime. After his death, she honours his memory by playing his song and teaching it to her son, passing the musical bond on to the next generation.

And, as a final point, also as a **Canary Islands premiere**, the short film *Cap Al Cel* (Shoji Films) will be screened, presented by its director **Nicolás Solé**, also a 2D animator and illustrator (Spain), with other notable projects such as *Good Night Mr. Ted*, *Apollo 10 ½: A Space Age Childhood* and *Black Butterflies*. Linked to studios such as kiru Films, Inspidea and 3bohemians. Sharing the presentation will be **its producer Rubén Seca**, also director and screenwriter, CEO of Shoji Films, with notable projects such as *The Crabs*, *Sculpting in Memory*, *Reminiscence*, *Mortis causa*, *Finca Règia* and *Solicitud*.

Synopsis *Cap Al Cel*: At his grandmother's funeral, a stubborn and sad 4-year-old boy is comforted by his father, who explains that all the dead come back as angels and go to heaven. Immediately afterwards, to the child's astonishment, his grandmother's winged angel rises from the grave and ascends into the sky. Determined to bring her back home, the boy enrolls in an aviation academy to become a pilot and goes in search of her. [Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/814460460>]

Three premiere short films (VOSE) whose own directors will **delve into them on Saturday the 9th** (16:30 to 18:00) in the **panel "Small Great Stories: Building An Epic Yarn, The Piano and Cap al Cel"**. A panel moderated by Ramin Zahed (Los Angeles, USA), renowned journalist, author and editor-in-chief of the acclaimed publication *Animation Magazine*.

More world, European, Spanish and Canarian premieres, up to the 34 pieces mentioned, will take place during the screening sessions of the official competition sections. This is because, in order to maintain the impartiality and objectivity characteristic of Animayo Gran Canaria, neither titles nor any other aspect that could compromise equal opportunities in this competition are disclosed in advance.

As far as **special screenings** are concerned, always in original version with Spanish subtitles and aimed at different types of audiences, these will take place at the Teatro Guinguada in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Thus, **on Wednesday the 6th** at 16:00, with free admission until full capacity is reached, **the French feature film *Little Amélie*, by Liane-Cho Han Jin Kuang and Mailys Vallade**, will be screened, and they will welcome attendees through a video message. *Little Amélie*, according to its **synopsis**, tells how, until the age of two and a half, Amélie described herself as an inert and vegetative digestive tube. Then comes the founding event that makes her fall into the world of childhood. Over the following six months come **the discovery of language, of parents and siblings, the garden of paradise, passions (Japan and water), dislikes (carp), the seasons, time...** Everything that from the age of three onwards makes up the human being forever.

On the other hand, on Saturday the 9th, from 12:00 to 13:15, for the youngest members of the family - from five years old onwards- and family audiences, also with free admission until full capacity is reached, for the first time and with the collaboration of the Finnish animation studio Giggiebug Entertainment, "a cinema screening of Giggiebug's animated family comedies, including Emmy-winning works". A unique session featuring the following screenings: Giggiebug, 2016 (2.5 min) - Space Rock. 101 Dalmatian Street (Short), 2019 (2.5 min) - Diva Pups. Best & Bester, 2022 (11 min) - Funny Money. 101 Dalmatian Street (Short), 2019 (2.5 min) - Jurassic (Dino) Pups. Super Duper Bunny League, 2025 (11 min) - Lizard Lips!. Bat-Fam, 2025 (22 min) - All in a Bat Day's Work. 101 Dalmatian Street (Short), 2019 (2.5 min) - Space Pups. The Unstoppable Yellow Yeti, 2022 (11 min) - Rug Burn. Moominvalley Christmas, 2022 (7 min).

SELECTED SHORT FILMS • PROCESS AND TECHNIQUES

Animayo Gran Canaria, a leading curatorial platform

Once again, confirming the global reach of its call for entries and the ability of Animayo Gran Canaria-La Isla de Mi Vida to attract talent from all over the world, for this 21st edition the organisation reviewed **nearly 2,000 works in 2D animation, 3D animation, visual effects, experimental film, advertising pieces, animated spots, music videos, video game cinematics and virtual reality, from 78 countries around the**

world, such as the United States, Iran, France, Germany, Australia, Poland, Spain, Argentina, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Belgium, India, the Czech Republic, the Philippines, Peru, Cuba, the Netherlands and Canada.

A new annual competition in which **the strong presence of the main audiovisual production hubs at an international level stands out**, combining territories with a long tradition in animation, such as France or the United States, with growing markets and strong creative projection such as Spain or Mexico.

And as a **reflection of the creative richness of the international landscape, the techniques** present in the preselected works include: 424 works in 2D animation; 151 in 3D; 132 in mixed and experimental techniques; 92 in Stop Motion, and 6 in Rotoscopy. Without a doubt, the clear predominance of **2D** confirms its validity as the main language within contemporary short filmmaking, especially in the auteur sphere, while **3D** is gaining strength in productions with greater technical development. And *Stop Motion* maintains its link to artisanal and conceptual proposals. Finally, the significant presence of **hybrid techniques** highlights a growing trend towards experimentation and the combination of languages, marking a constant evolution in the ways of narrating through animation.

Continuing with the selection process and **following a highly competitive procedure, the second phase concluded with 75 short films** chosen for their outstanding artistic, narrative and technical quality. This is such that several of them will compete in more than one category due to their versatility and ability to adapt to different narrative contexts. In addition, they show a **remarkable plurality of visual languages**: 45 works in 2D animation; 23 in 3D; 10 in Stop Motion, and 10 in mixed and experimental techniques, used not in isolation but combined and executed simultaneously, creating a unique and unrepeatably language in the finally selected works, which allows up to four combined techniques to be counted within a single piece.

On the other hand, the final selection features a high representation of international schools, universities and training centres, underlining the role of the festival as a **platform for visibility for emerging talent and a bridge between the academic sphere and the professional industry**. Thus, among the **institutions represented, the following stand out**: Gobelins (France); ESMA (France); Supinfocom/Rubika (France); Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg (Germany); National Film and Television School (United Kingdom); iACADEMY (Philippines); Universidad de Artes Digitales (Mexico); Escena, Escuela de Animación y Arte Digital (Spain); Dr. Shariati National University of Skill (Iran).

Taken together, these are figures that place Animayo Gran Canaria - La Isla de Mi Vida in an outstanding position within the international circuit. And not only as an exhibition space, but **as a leading curatorial platform, where the selection of works competing in the Official Competition Sections for the Official Animayo 2026 Awards responds to criteria** of quality, diversity and artistic relevance, giving visibility both to young independent artists and to major schools.

QUALIFYING FOR THE OSCAR® AWARDS AND THE ANNIE® AWARDS

4 OFFICIAL COMPETITION SECTIONS • AWARDS

Animayo Gran Canaria-La Isla de Mi Vida is the only animation festival in Spain designated as a **“qualifying festival” for the Oscar® Awards in two categories**. The winning works of the International Jury Grand Prize (qualifying since 2018) and Best Animation with Ñ for Spanish-speaking productions (qualifying since 2022) receive **direct access** to the preselection for these awards. Distinctions through which **Animayo currently counts** 5 nominations, 7 shortlists and 1 Oscar® for Best Animated Short Film for works awarded in its Official International Palmarès. In addition, recently and together with six other prestigious festivals around the world, Animayo has been designated by ASIFA-Hollywood to qualify for the **Annie® Awards, known as “the Oscar® of animation”, meaning that its winners in various categories will be eligible to be considered** for these awards.

The Animayo Gran Canaria 2026 International Palmarès will be made up of the winners of its **4 Official Competition Sections: International, Animation with Ñ, Cinematics, videogames and commissioned films**, aimed at adult audiences -from 16 years of age onwards-, and the children and youth section '**My First Festival**', which grants the Children's Audience Award. Always in original version with subtitles, **the 75 selected short films will be screened in different sessions at Teatro Guinguada in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria** during the four days of the festival.

Awards. With two fixed distinctions -International Jury Grand Prize and Best Animated Short Film with Ñ-, **up to 17 awarded categories** will make up the Animayo Gran Canaria 2026 International Palmarès. A number subject to change should the Jury deem it appropriate, as it may grant new categories, modify or eliminate an existing one in order to adapt it to the outcome of the voting.

In addition to the two already mentioned, **the planned awards are for the best short films in the following categories:** 2D Technique; 3D Technique; Stop Motion; Screenplay; Humour for all audiences; Humour for adults; Art Direction; Student short film; Visual Effects; Audience Award; Special Jury Mentions. Likewise, the Jury may grant additional recognitions such as: Social Awareness; Special Jury Mention for Creativity and Humour; independent short film; emerging talent.

ANIMAYO GRAN CANARIA 2026 JURIES

The 4 official competition sections mentioned above will be **voted on by the public and, especially, by the International Jury**, which will decide the awards and mentions, with the exception of the Children's Audience Award - "My First Festival" - for which schoolchildren from across the island of Gran Canaria will also be able to vote, reaffirming Animayo's connection with education and new generations.

The Animayo Gran Canaria 2026 International Jury will be made up of invited stars; outstanding professionals from animation, visual effects and video games, bringing an expert and diverse perspective to the deliberation process, selecting the most relevant works of this 21st edition.

INTERNATIONAL JURY. Chaired by **Tony Bancroft**, director, producer and animator (**Tennessee, USA**). *Walt Disney Animation Studios; Sony Pictures; Warner Brothers Animation Group.* Featured projects: *Mulan, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, The Lion King, Pocahontas, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, The Emperor's New Groove, Atlantis: The Lost Empire.* Joining him is **Alan Bodner**, Art Director and Production Designer (**Los Angeles, USA**). *Walt Disney Television Animation, Warner Bros., DreamWorks, Cartoon Network.* Featured projects: *The Iron Giant, Tangled: The Series, Kim Possible, Looney Tunes and Phineas and Ferb.* **Brooke Keesling**, Animation Development & Talent Development (**Los Angeles, USA**). Vice President of ASIFA-Hollywood, *Bento Box Entertainment, Cartoon Network, Disney Television Animation and Warner Bros.* Featured projects: *Pirates of the Caribbean, Origin or The Invention of Hugo.* **Arslan Elver**, Animation Supervisor at *Framestore (United Kingdom).* *Industrial Light & Magic, MPC, Prime Focus.* Featured projects: *The Golden Compass, Project Hail Mary, Guardians of the Galaxy, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, Maleficent, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.* **Sarah McDonald**, Character Supervisor (**Spain**). *Skydance Animation Studios.* Featured projects: *Spellbound, The Dark Knight, Fantastic Beasts, Mission: Impossible, Thor, Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children.*

'ANIMATION WITH Ñ' JURY. Made up of **Elena Najar**, Animation Director and Animation Supervisor at *Gigglebug Entertainment (Finland).* Featured projects: *101 Dalmatian Street, Chico and Rita or Nocturna.* **Nicolás Solé**, mentioned above, **Mario Serrano**, 2D animator, *Character Designer*, animation director (**Spain**). *Araoye Studios, Nonemore, Tonic DNA, The Thinklab Media, Moondog Animation Studio.* Featured projects: *The Illusionist, The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse, Fixed, Chico and Rita, Disenchanted.* **Elena Velasco**, 2D Animator, storyboard artist, visual development and *layout* artist (**Spain**). *Yolao Entertainment, U-tad, TMS Entertainment, Shoji Films, Hampa Studio.* Featured projects: *Space Jam: A New Legacy, Klaus, Vlemon, Girl and Wolf, Central Park.* **Santiago Vélez Alfonso**, Assistant Director, *Storyboard*

Artist, 2D Layout Supervisor (Spain). Able&Baker, Lightbox Animation Studios, El tesoro de Barracuda AIE, Premise Entertainment, Bardel Entertainment. Featured projects: Disenchanted, Momias, Inspector Sun and the Curse of the Black Widow, El tesoro de Barracuda, Blue & Malone: Impossible Cases.

CINEMATICS, VFX AND VIDEOCLIPS JURY. Made up of the aforementioned **Arslan Elver, Brooke Keesling, Sarah McDonald, Avery Kroll and Andrew Gordon.**

With all of this, and without a doubt, a 21st edition that, in full maturity, unfolds an exquisite programme on the island of Gran Canaria, the destination where creativity and inspiration naturally coexist, and placing it, together with Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, not in vain, as a finalist to become **European Capital of Culture 2031** in Spain.

An **unwavering artistic quality that, through more than 40 star guests,** will also bring to life 13 **master classes**; 12 educational talks; 6 workshops; the World Premiere exhibition **“The Visual World of Alan Bodner”**, around twenty stands from artists, schools and universities; more than 20 hours of **recruitment sessions**, portfolio reviews and signings, and 3 panels and talks. Because, **in the words of the also award-winning filmmaker Damián Perea, creator, director and producer of Animayo,** «there are festivals where stories are screened, and there are festivals where they begin. And that is Animayo, a project made by and for people where talent is not only shown; it connects».

PRESS RESOURCES

- Resources An Epic Yarn, Cap Al Cel, Little Amelie, The Piano: <https://we.tl/t-Pa3WPn98DS97wAJ1>

- Photos: Jury mosaics:

<https://animayo.wetransfer.com/downloads/777feb385281e8c8ec709c4ed043472920260429191158/7cb541bf4180513543bbfd4137afa6cb20260429191207/a8b8de>

- Video invitation from Tony Bancroft for Animayo: <https://we.tl/t-7iwhaBvAiNs0qKrA>

Access our press kit:

URL: <https://www.animayo.com/prensa/>

Username: Prensa_Animayo

Password: animayofest_animayo

Included here:

- 2026 dossier and poster artwork.

- Animayo 2025 highlights video

- PR. Tony Bancroft, Disney animation icon, arrives in Spain for the first time with Animayo Gran Canaria.

- PR. World Premiere Exhibition “The Visual World of Alan Bodner”.

- PR. The 21st edition of Animayo Gran Canaria will connect talent with the global elite of the sector.

