

PRESS RELEASE

Film productions for the future: The winners of the 8th European Work in Progress

Dear Sirs and Madams, dear colleagues,

The **8th edition** of the established industry event **European Work in Progress (EWIP)** culminated in a festive award ceremony on the evening of October 30th at its new location in Hamburg. In cooperation with **FILMFEST HAMBURG** and **MOIN Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein**, **EWIP** took place for the first time as part of **FILMFEST HAMBURG INDUSTRY DAYS**. During the two days of **EWIP**, around 300 high-profile colleagues from the European film industry (world sales, distribution, festivals, production, financing and marketing) met up to look for the most promising film projects of the coming months and to exchange ideas. The independent international jury of renowned and highly experienced experts – **Rémi Bigot** (Semaine de la Critique / Cannes Film Festival), **Maren Schmitt** (producer of *IN DIE SONNE SCHAUEN*), **Simon Ofenloch** (Arte Film Productions), **Beatrice Gulino** (Teodora Film Distribution), **Yuan Sui** (Picture Tree International) and **Aaron Kassaye** (Ethiopian film distributor) – selected the award winner from among the **27** international film projects presented and awarded prizes totalling **140,000 euros**.

The total award sum that was made possible thanks to new and long-standing prize sponsors: **OneGate Media**; **Northern Stars – Hamburg Film Partners**, consisting of **Loft Tonstudios**, **CineGate**, **Zeigermann_Audio**, **Optical Arts** and **Zeitkostüm GmbH**; **The Post Republic**; **D-Facto Motion**; **K13 Studios**; **Gruvi**, **WayFilm** and **mm filmpresse**.

From a record number of more than 240 submissions, 27 film projects were selected that are at an advanced stage of production and have the potential to play a decisive role in the international film industry.

As part of the **FILMFEST HAMBURG INDUSTRY DAYS**, the **EWIP** pitches and meetings, as well as panel discussions and case studies – in collaboration with Creative Europe Desks Germany and the International Film Distribution Summit (IFDS) – for the first time took place at the **new venue CinemaxX Dammtor**.

This year's **EWIP** guests included curators and programmers from Berlinale, Venice, Locarno, Cannes (Quinzaine des Cineastes, Semaine de la Critique), Karlovy Vary, Tribeca, Edinburg and Göteborg. They were joined by some of the most important international and European sales agents, including mk2, Luxbox, Totem, Charades, Heretic, Be for Films, Memento Films, Playtime, Beta Cinema, The Match Factory, The Party Film Sales, Lucky Number, TrustNordisk, Fandango Film Sales and True Colours. High-profile guests from the film distribution sector also came to

Hamburg, namely Imagine Film Distribution, Diaphana, Conic, KMBO, Teodora Films, Arizona Films, I Wonder Pictures, Wanted and Mozinet. The high concentration of influential industry representatives is one of **EWIP's** greatest strengths. It offers creative minds in the fields of directing and production the opportunity to network with financing and distribution partners in a very short time.

All the winners and Jury statements 2025:

European Work in Progress OneGate Media Award

€ 20.000 for the acquisition of television rights licenses in Germany and Austria.

TRUCK DRIVER (Camionero)

Director: Francisco Marise / Creative Documentary / 100 Minutes / Spain, Argentina / September 2026

Production: Ezequiel Seguí, Olmo Figueredo (LA CLAQUETA PC, SL), AMANIA FILMS

Coproduction: AMATEUR CINÉMA

Truck Driver: A road movie without a road

Jury statement: For its rich formal choices, its cinematic flare and tender gaze in documenting intimacy, loneliness and testimonies, for its singular take on the road movie.

European Work in Progress The Post Republic Award

Voucher worth €30,000 for post-production services

ELEPHANTS IN THE FOG

Director: Abinash Bikram Shah / Drama / 110 Minutes / Nepal, Germany, Brazil, France, Norway / 2026

Production: Michael Henrichs (DIE GESELLSCHAFT DGS), Anup Poudel (UNDERGROUND TALKIES NEPAL), Justin Pechberty (LES VALSEURS BORDEAUX)

Coproduction: Prachanda Man Shrestha (JAYANTII CREATIONS), Paul Zischler (ZISCHLERMANN FILMPRODUKTION), Leonardo Mecchi (ENQUADRAMENTO), Tatiana Leite (BUBBLES PROJECT), Verona Meier (STORM FILMS)

In a small Nepalese village nestled in the heart of a forest populated by wild elephants, Pirati is the matriarch of a community of transgender women. She aspires to a « normal » life with Master, the mustachioed man she is in love with. But when one of her « daughters » disappears, she must choose between love and responsibility to her community.

Jury statement: For its masterful and mature directing, the power of its subject-matter and the daring voices it champions, encored by the fierce embodiment of its performers we give the award to a film that we trust will be one of the debut highlights of the year.

European Work in Progress K13 Studios Award

Voucher worth €10,000 for Dolby Atmos mixing

KILL ME LIKE A DOG

Director: Robiul Alam Robi / Drama / 62 Minutes / Bangladesh, Norway / Q1 2026

Production: Robiul Alam Robi (MADE IN BANIALULU)

Coproduction: Samuel Kirby, Nic Osborne (SUNDAY FILM AS)

The unexplained arrest of a banker in contemporary Bangladesh spirals into a surreal world of performative justice, voyeuristic control, and bureaucratic cruelty — where guilt is presumed and truth is irrelevant.

Jury statement: For its boldness in tackling political repression, its inventiveness in its play with points of views to convey the paranoia of a society mirroring a Kafka novel.

European Work in Progress K13 Studios Award

Voucher worth €5,000 for dubbing

HEYSEL 85

Director: Teodora Ana Mihai / Drama / 90 Minutes / Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany / 2026

Production: Hans Everaert (MENUETTO FILM)

Coproduction: Anette Unger (LEITWOLF FILMPRODUKTION), LES FILMS DU FLEUVE. TOPKAPI FILMS

When 39 people are killed at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels before the start of the 1985 European Cup final between Juventus and Liverpool, the daughter of the Brussels mayor and a journalist with Italian roots are torn between their professional obligations, their family concerns and human nature itself.

Jury statement: For its fluid and immersive narration that plunges us into the backstage of a catastrophe, a film we strongly believe has the potential to reach a wide audience.

European Work in Progress D-Facto Studios Award

Voucher worth € 10.000 for image/sound postproduction services

DOWN BY THE RIVER (A Margem do Rio)

Director: Enock Carvalho, Matheus Farias / Drama / 90 Minutes / Brazil, Germany, France / First half 2026

Production: Enock Carvalho, Matheus Farias (GATOPARDO FILMES)

Coproduction: Flavia Oertwig (TAMA FILMPRODUKTION), Christoph Lafont (POETIK FILMS)

Amid rising conservative violence terrorizing his riverside town, Izaquiel's search for desire turns into a fight for survival and self-determination.

Jury statement: For its dark, mysterious and sensual atmosphere, its acute mise en scene taking us down a river on a journey of love, death and otherworldly beings.

European Work in Progress D-Facto Studios Award

Voucher worth € 5.000 for accessibility version

I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE (Ameisen fressen kein Halva)

Director: Alisa Kolosova / Drama / 95 Minutes / Georgia, Germany / 2026

Production: Tristan Bähre, Philipp Maron (MAVERICK FILM GMBH)

After their best friend's suicide, Yalda and Lou are left with grief – and with the child she left behind. As they empty their friend's apartment, memories from their shared youth resurface, forcing them to confront old conflicts and navigate the question of who will raise the child.

Jury statement: For the ability of the director and her screenwriter to transform a deeply personal story into a universal, dynamic invitation to reshape family.

European Work in Progress Loft Tonstudios Award

Voucher worth € 10.000 for sound post-production services

RUNNER (Corredora)

Director: Laura García Alonso / Drama / 100 Minutes / Spain / March 2026

Production: Miriam Porté Solano (DISTINTO FILMS)

Coproduction: María Zamora (ELASTICA FILMS), Àngels Masclans (DOS SOLES MEDIA)

Cris, an elite runner, suffers a psychotic break that forces her to step away from high-level competition. Not everyone around her will be able—or know how—to help, but Natàlia, her sister, will become her shelter as she learns to accept her condition and redefine the pace of her life.

Jury statement: For its timely exploration of addiction, performance and the toll it takes on mental health, its mainstream appeal and energetic mise en scene.

European Work in Progress CineGate Award

Voucher worth € 10,000 for studio and equipment location

HIDDEN HILLS

Director: Virgil Vernier / Drama / 90 Minutes / France, USA / Q4 2026 - Q1 2027

Production: Jean des Forêts, Amélie Jaquis (PETIT FILM), Miléna Henochsberg (OPENING NIGHTS FILMS)

Coproduction: BLOSSOM STREET FILMS

Pest control, bachelorette weekend and thanatopraxy: Los Angeles, Beneath the Surface.

Jury statement: For its clever play on voice-over, its love for the myths in the underbelly of the American Dream and the rich depiction of a reality stranger than fiction.

European Work in Progress Optical Arts Award

Voucher worth € 10.000 for color grading.

BELÉN (La Otra Orilla)

Director: Francesca Canepa / Coming-of-Age-Drama / 110 Minutes / Peru, Mexico, France / May 2026

Production: Enid Campos León, Jimena Hospina (SPLIT FILMS)

Coproduction: Mónica Moreno, Rubén Expósito (PIANO), Delphine Schmit (TRIPODE PRODUCTIONS)

Through the murky canals of a floating neighborhood in the Peruvian Amazon, Belén, a twelve-year-old mother, struggles to belong to the world that has been taken from her.

In a canoe drifting down the Amazon river, carrying her son in her arms, the rain will awaken in her an irresistible desire for freedom.

Jury statement: For its unique setting, its empathetic and gentle gaze on stolen youth, for allowing us to witness the birth of a fierce director and true cinematic heroine alike.

European Work in Progress Zeigermann_Audio Award

Voucher worth € 10.000 for sound on set or audio post-production

HEIRLOOM

Director: Upamanyu Bhattacharyya / Animation, Drama / 90 Minutes / India, Germany / First half 2027

Production: Arya Menon, Shubham Karna (ODD & EVEN), Upamanyu Bhattacharyya (OTTER)
Coproduction: Fabian Driehorst (FABIAN&FRED), Jeremy Chua (POTOCOL), NFDC, POM POM ANIMATION

Sonal, terminally ill, struggles to build a lucrative textiles business. When she discovers that her husband, Kirti, has vanished after driving their family into debt, she must choose between escaping into the comforting memories illustrated in a tapestry woven by Kirti's grandmother, or confronting her limited time to secure her daughter's future.

Jury statement: For its endearing characters, engaging narration and unique blend of techniques, weaving together ancestral craftwomanship and contemporary animation.

European Work in Progress mm filmpresse Award

Voucher worth € 7,500 for international festival public relations

DOUGLAS GORDON BY DOUGLAS GORDON

Director: Finlay Pretsell / Documentary / 90 Minutes / Great Britain, France / May 2026

Production: Sonja Henrici (PARCEL OF ROGUES LTD)

Coproduction: Estelle Robin (GRAND OURSE FILMS)

When Turner Prize-winning artist Douglas Gordon opens his Berlin studio to filmmaker Finlay Pretsell, the question becomes: who's really directing whom – revealing the cost of artistic obsession.

Jury statement: For its playful take on an artist portrait, its cleverness in depicting power dynamics in between two directors and championing one's life as an art project, we believe this film will benefit from a PR strategy to reach audiences.

European Work in Progress Gruvi Award

Voucher worth € 5,000 to be spent on marketing ad technology, including audience analysis, landing page design, and a GDS report

GUARDIAN OF THE ISLAND (ደሴቷ ጠባቂ)

Director: Sewmehon Yismaw Sendekie / Drama, Romance / 117 Minutes / Ethiopia / March 2026

Production: Tamirat Mekonen Teklu (TAMIRAT MEKONEN FILM PRODUCTION)

In 1988 Ethiopia, a Muslim man and a Christian girl risk everything for a forbidden love that defies family, faith, and the turmoil of war, leading them to a mythical island where lovers dream of freedom.

Jury statement: For its generous take on tragic love dilemmas, its formal beauty and the complexity of its historical and religious dynamics.

European Work in Progress Way Film Translation Award

Voucher worth € 5,000 for subtitling.

I'LL BE GONE IN JUNE

Director: Katharina Rivilis / Drama / 135 Minutes / Germany, Swiss / 2026

Production: Léa Germain (ROAD MOVIES GMBH)

Coproduction: Katharina Rivilis (WOLFSKIND FILMS), 8HORSES

An exploration of post-9/11 suburban America through the eyes of 16-year-old Franny, a German exchange student stranded in Las Cruces, a small town in the desert of New Mexico.

Jury statement: For its clever use of a historical turning point to convey the emotional journey of a teenager far from home, with a playful mix of archives, fiction and personal diary.

European Work in Progress Zeitkostüm Award

Voucher worth € 2.500 for costumes

VERDANDI

Director: Dagmar Knöpfel / Drama / 100 Minutes / Germany, Faroer Islands / 2026/2027

Production: Natalie Hölzel, Sandra Hölzel (ELFENHOLZ FILM GMBH)

Coproduction: Dagmar Knöpfel, Annegret Weitkämpfer-Krug (GRETCHENFILM GMBH)

Inspired by a true faroese family story. LIV travels back to her childhood home on the remote Faroe Islands for her grandmother SEMONA's 80th birthday, and uncovers a family secret – a trauma that Semona suffered during the war at a young age but never spoke about. Slowly, LIV manages to break the silence that weighs so heavily on her mother BARBARA and her aunt POULA.

Jury statement: For its unique setting, ambitious layers of narration and desire to give voices to intergenerational traumas and bonds through a period drama.

If you have any requests for materials, are interested in conducting an interview, or have any questions, please contact the press agency responsible press agency mm filmpresse, Sylvia Müller, tel. 030 – 41 71 57 22, mueller@mm-filmpresse.de and Claudia Hegner, tel. 03741 – 55 03 414, hegner@mm-filmpresse.de.

With kind regards,

Sylvia Müller