25. innsbruck nature film festival
Award Winner with Jury Statements

Green Fiction Feature

Sponsor: innsbruck nature film festival

The Garden We Dreamed (El jardín que soñamos) by Joaquín del Paso
Mexico 2026
This powerful migrant drama unfolds as an urgent yet poetic meditation on displacement, resilience, and the political forces that shape both human and ecological vulnerability. Against a backdrop of hostility, exploitation, and illegal logging, the film exposes the violence inflicted on communities and ecosystems alike, revealing how the struggle for survival is inseparable from the fight to protect the natural world.
Nature is never merely a setting, but a living presence caught in the same structures of power and dispossession that threaten the characters' lives.
Through its immersive sound design and luminous imagery, the film intertwines human migration with the journey of monarch butterflies, creating a poignant reflection on borders, belonging, and the fragile interconnectedness of all life on Earth.

Nature Documentary

Sponsor Innsbruck Tourism

How Deep Is Your Love by Eleanor Mortimer
United Kingdom 2025
Barbie Pig, Headless Chicken Monster, Psychedelic Elvis Worm: these are playful nicknames marine biologists give to creatures from a world we have barely begun to know. Five thousand meters beneath the ocean surface, new species are being discovered, while plans for industrial exploitation are already taking shape.
The film follows scientists racing to describe these species before deep-sea mining changes their habitat forever. Through extraordinary footage and poetic, unconventional narration, it brings their research to life. Their affection for these creatures becomes infectious.
The documentary also reveals the contradictions of their work. Research and industrial exploitation are closely entangled. To study some species, scientists must collect them, knowing they will not survive the journey to the surface.
Rather than offering easy answers, the director trusts her audience to engage with these contradictions. Its emotional impact stays with us because it inspires respect for life—not for what we know about it, or for what use it may have for us, but simply for its existence. With this award, the jury honors a film that combines cinematic originality, science and emotional depth, bringing much-needed attention to this issue and what is at stake.

Environmental Documentary

Sponsor City of Innsbruck

Nuisance Bear by Gabriela Osio Vanden and Jack Weisman
Canada, United States 2026

With its outstanding cinematography, immersive sound design and sensitive direction, the film creates a visually stunning and deeply engaging cinematic experience.

Through its poetic imagery and compelling narrative, it offers a thoughtful exploration of our relationship with the environment and the urgent need to preserve the delicate balance between humans and the natural world. Beautifully crafted and emotionally resonant, the film combines exceptional cinematic artistry with a powerful environmental message that lingers long after the screening.

Wildlife Award

Sponsor Schlossquadrat

Pangolin – Journey to Freedom by Wayne de Lange

Austria 2025
A truly beautiful documentary, with stunning footage of this peaceful and endearing animal. This film delivers real discoveries about a species even science knows little about. We follow, with a mixture of anticipation and concern, the fate of the little survivor, in a story of resilience that highlights the practical work of those who protect nature. Excellent storytelling, full of hope.
The closeness between the carers, the animal and us as the audience is why, we chose this film for the Wildlife Award.

Biodiversity Award

Sponsor Primavera

Derek vs Derek by James Damer Dawson

United Kingdom 2026
The film makes the effects of biodiversity loss tangible while showing how life can gradually return to a landscape.
From the return of birds and butterflies to the wider changes across the land, it reveals the impact of different farming practices through vivid, accessible storytelling by using humour and two compelling, contrasting characters.

Christian Berger Cinematography Award

Sponsor Swarovski Optik

To the West, in Zapata (Al Oeste, En Zapata) by David Bim

Cuba, Spain 2025
A film that teaches us empathy.
A camera that shows us the struggle to survive and what poverty does to bodies and faces… and that dignity, love, and hope nevertheless remain.
A debut film that, with clear images and a determined gaze, takes us back to the origins of cinematography: the moment is recorded.

I'd like to conclude with a quote from the British sailor Tristan Jones:
"You have to be a poet to face reality ."

With all my respect, congratulations.

- Christian Berger -

Women Award

Sponsor ORF Universum

Daughters of the Forest (Hijas del bosque) by Otilia Portillo Padua

Mexico 2026
Here, women set the narrative: personal, investigative, in conversation. The film makes clear that there can be no self-versus-nature, only symbiosis.
A film in which spirits feature prominently, blending poetry, transmission and ancestry, while giving power to the science that sheds light on the web of life. It gives fungi, their community, as well as Indigenous knowledge a voice. The result feels almost mystical, and scientific at the same time, enhanced by an original and well-structured narrative. Sisterhood lies at the heart of this compassionate film, which reflects a deep attachment to its community and its history.

Stories of the Alps Award

Sponsor Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention

Tian – Generation Farmfluencer by Meike Hollnaicher and Tom Schäfer

Italy 2024
The film celebrates a young generation of farmers who, with courage, joy and their own ideas, are taking new paths and becoming part of a change that starts small but can grow into something bigger. Their different stories come together in a harmonious rhythm, while the film does not shy away from the difficult moments. In the spirit of “small action, big impact,” the film shows how individual ideas and everyday choices can make a meaningful difference for the better in the European Alps. It reminds us that sometimes the most important step is simply to do.

Respecting Mountains Award

Sponsor Österreichischer Alpenverein

Oases – Islands of Life: Peru’s Colca Canyon by Daniela Pulverer

Germany, Peru 2026
The film weaves together a breathtaking landscape, its wildlife, and the lives of the people in a way that flows together naturally and leaves the viewer in awe. The terraces and oases are not merely a backdrop; the respectful, at times humorous portrayal of the people brings their relationship with this landscape to life - in a particularly vivid and unique way. The protagonists’ almost symbiotic relationship with “Pachamama”—Mother Nature—is not only an example of treating the mountain environment with care—it can also inspire us to rethink our own approach.

Soil Award

Sponsoren Land Tirol, Fröschl, Universität Innsbruck

2258 – A Story about Earth’s Regeneration by Nikos Pantermarakis

Greece 2025
The film offers a fresh and distinctive perspective on organic and regenerative agriculture.

At its heart is the soil – its degradation through intensive farming, its connection to rural life, and the possibility of restoring its fertility through regenerative agriculture based on native crops.
The combination of farmers' experiences, scientific perspectives and practical examples creates a compelling and insightful picture of both the challenges and possible solutions.
Beautiful cinematography and references to agricultural history, local culture and Greek mythology add further layers to the story.
Most importantly, the film shows how the commitment of a small number of farmers can inspire meaningful change – offering a hopeful perspective on how caring for the soil can also help preserve rural communities and their future.

Short Green Fiction

Sponsor Innsbrucker Kommunalbetriebe

I Rooted But I Flow by Xinge Li

China 2026
We were struck by the film's ability to bring together scientific inquiry, childhood memory, rural ritual, and Chinese symbolism into a rich and deeply evocative portrait of our relationship with nature.
Its fragmented structure and haptic imagery invite the viewers to become researchers theirselves, piecing together the whole while moving between sensation and analysis, intuition and knowledge.
Ultimately, the film's poetic and sensorial language transforms a deeply local story into a universal meditation on our fragile, mysterious, and enduring connection with the natural world.

Animation Short

Sponsor Innsbrucker Verkehrsbetriebe

9 Million Colors by Bára Anna

Germany, Norway 2025
Beautifully crafted and enthralling, this underwater musical parable unfolds with remarkable emotional clarity, tracing the inner evolution of its characters while offering a tender yet layered portrait of friendship, acceptance, and the diverse ways of perceiving the natural world..
The director demonstrates an exceptional ability to create a richly orchestrated and inventive visual world, in which image and sound work in perfect harmony to deepen the storytelling.
Particularly striking is the film's evocation of the marine world:
not merely a backdrop, but a living, expressive presence that breathes alongside the characters, shaping their emotions, reflecting their journey, and lending the story a sense of wonder and intimacy.

Best Shortfilm for Kids

Sponsor Tiroler Tageszeitung

Fox of the North by Sophia Dimke

Germany 2025
Voted by the kids audience.

Full Film Descriptions: https://www.inff.eu/festival/film-guide/

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