

The background of the poster is an abstract composition of blurred, diagonal light streaks in shades of teal, blue, and yellow, creating a sense of motion and depth. The text is centered and reads:

SHORT FOCUS FILM FESTIVAL 2026

www.framelight.org



It's that time of year again! **Short Focus Film Festival** returns for its 9th edition, bringing you another round of bold, imaginative and thought-provoking short films from around the globe.

Over the years, this festival has grown to become a celebration of the incredible creativity found within short form filmmaking. We're continually inspired by the artists who trust us with their work, and by the audiences who turn up with open minds and a genuine appetite for something different.

This year's programme is a vibrant mix of stories that will entertain, challenge, surprise and, occasionally, leave you wondering what you've just witnessed. So settle in, explore the programmes, and enjoy another week of remarkable independent short films.

For their continued contributions and support, **Short Focus Film Festival** would like to thank: Giulia Carbonaro, Red Lens, Film London, Cinema For All, TECKNET, Moonrise, A&N Associates, FilmFreeway, Close-Up Cinema, and all of the filmmakers, producers, and distributors who submitted their work to the festival.

From **19-27 September 2026**, you will have access to 19 incredible short films across three programmes, all available from the **FRAME LIGHT** website and **Eventbrite**. Each live cinema screening is £10 and each online programme is £5. You can also purchase a Full Access ticket for £20, which will provide entry to both live events and every online programme. We recommend screen casting from your device to TV for optimum viewing, although any device with WiFi and video capabilities will be suitable.

Voting and feedback forms can be accessed by scanning the QR Codes at the beginning of each programme chapter.

Festival Directors

Aya Ishizuka, Dean Archibald-Smith

Festival Jury

Giulia Carbonaro, Diana Cordova, Vir Datta, Monica Di Fiore,
Catarina Gonçalves, Corey Mandelzys, Maryam Raz

Programme Design

Dean Archibald-Smith

**Close-Up Cinema is wheelchair accessible.*

***The films in this festival are intended for adult viewing and many contain themes that some viewers may find distressing. Please read the film programme carefully.*

FILMS

PROGRAMME ONE c+o

- pg 7.* Outrun the Clouds (11:55)
pg 8. Voicenoting (5:49)
pg 9. The Decisive Moment (14:32)
pg 10. Why You Shouldn't Date in Bristol (17:27)
pg 11. In Turn (16:10)
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PROGRAMME TWO c+o

- pg 15.* Pairing Mode (7:30)
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PROGRAMME THREE o

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c = cinema | o = online

Digital Brochure



TICKETS

PROGRAMME ONE

Cinema - £10

Online - £5

PROGRAMME TWO

Cinema - £10

Online - £5

PROGRAMME THREE

Online - £5

FULL ACCESS

All cinema and online programmes - £20

*Cinema programmes run from 2:00 - 4:00 pm at Close-Up Cinema.
Ticket prices exclude booking fees.*

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PROGRAMME ONE

Vote



Cinema | 19 September
Online | 19-27 September



At the centre of *Outrun the Clouds* is a young woman among a group of squatters, caught in old patterns while trying to escape an abusive situation. Her sense of confinement mirrors the physical limits of the location. The fluid, semi-improvised form reflects her instability and uncertainty. Ultimately, the film is about entrapment and agency – both in life and in the act of filmmaking itself.

A close-up shot of a young man with curly brown hair, wearing a dark jacket over a white t-shirt. He is looking slightly to the left with a focused expression. The background is a blurred forest with green foliage.

VOICENOTING

[TOM MILLIGAN, UNITED KINGDOM, 2026]

Programme One | 5 mins 49 secs

After a disastrous night out ends a friendship, a hungover thirty-something wanders through the woods where he grew up, desperately trying to record the perfect voice note response. Each attempt fails until he stumbles upon their old primary school and finally finds the words, though they might not be the ones that save anything.

THE DECISIVE MOMENT
[DIDEM ARSLAN, TURKEY, 2025]

Programme One | 14 mins 32 secs

Set in Istanbul, this docufictional story intertwines past and present, questioning the meaning of capturing a single frame. As a child, Didem was introduced to photography through her father's camera. Her first photograph captures the final moments of her sick cat, Fiko – an image that shapes her perspective on photography.

WHY YOU SHOULDN'T DATE IN BRISTOL
[MYLES KAMWENDO, UNITED KINGDOM, 2026]

Programme One | 17 mins 27 secs

Why You Shouldn't Date in Bristol is a story we can all relate to. It may not mirror the events of this story, but we've all been there: creating the perfect person in our minds. We've stepped into someone else's world and seen them for who they truly are, and that moment can go one of two ways. The perfect partner doesn't exist, and that's okay. We shouldn't judge someone for their flaws, because that's where the real beauty lies.



IN TURN

[SAHRA ASADOLLAHI, IRAN, 2026]

Programme One | 16 mins 10 secs

In Turn originated from a playful reflection on death. Although the film was developed around the theme of death, each character, in their own way, becomes a voice in praise of life. They all articulate the dreams and aspirations they long to realize during their lifetime. The film reminds us to embrace and savour life while the opportunity still exists. Death does not wait for us; it can arrive at any given moment.



HELL

[PARKER CROFT, USA, 2026]

Programme One | 5 mins 25 secs

Hell is a surreal, sci-fi meditation on despair. Set on a dying farm in a fictional place called Ash Harbor, it unfolds in a landscape ravaged by man-made ecological collapse. It carries echoes of the 1930s Dust Bowl, but darker still. Towering engines roam barren fields, shedding toxic debris as they go. Known as the Bathers, these enigmatic machines are the remnants of a great lie, the promised cure for a meager life that ultimately cost us everything.

MY BROTHER LYOSHA AND I
[LENA TRONINA, KAZAKHSTAN, 2025]

Programme One | 15 mins 21 secs

Rudny, North Kazakhstan. Mid-90s. It's just another day in the lives of a brother and sister - until it's not. In a home where violence comes in cycles, the two navigate the silence, the chaos, and each other. Can they break free from the patterns they've inherited, or is it already too late?

PROGRAMME TWO

Vote



Cinema | 20 September
Online | 19-27 September

A woman with dark curly hair is looking down at a red smartphone. The background is dark and out of focus.

PAIRING MODE

[NURI MOSEINCO, UNITED KINGDOM, 2026]

Programme One | 7 mins 30 secs

When an ad interrupts a quiet night in, Hannah and Oliver compete to be first to seduce an AI chatbot - only to bring the cracks in their own relationship to the light. *Pairing Mode* is a reflection on how technology and social media have become a staple within modern life and relationships. Nuri Moseinco is an award-winning filmmaker from Luxembourg. Born to Belgian and Argentinian parents, he's called London home for the past decade, where he's established himself as a writer and director in both fiction and documentary films.



PARADISE
[ISO ATTRILL, UNITED KINGDOM, 2025]
Programme Two | 4 mins 59 secs

Paradise is a very personal film that explores trans and non-binary identities through the eyes of artist-gardener, Mol Benge. The short places queerness within an ecological context, showing that to be trans or non-binary is not an exception to nature, but a true expression of it. This film is Attrill's way of standing against erasure, a work made with urgency, tenderness, and conviction.



NATURE AND POETRY

[JASNA SAFIĆ, CROATIA, 2025]

Programme Two | 17 mins 06 secs

Selma and her nephew, Dino, go on a hiking trip, discovering that, while in nature, true borders don't just come from their surroundings, but also from deep within themselves. Jasna Safić was born in Tuzla and grew up in Bosanski Novi and Zagreb. She studied Pharmacy and has been working in film for the past ten years. She has directed several short films and is a member of Kinoklub Zagreb, Blanka, and the Croatian Film Directors' Association.

TALLER THE HAT, CLOSER TO HEAVEN
[JAMES PEARSON-HOWES, UNITED KINGDOM/USA, 2025]
Programme Two | 9 mins 07 secs

Taller the Hat, Closer to Heaven is a story about love found through dance. Shot predominately on Valentine's Day 2024, this short film follows three friends, three dancers, as they get ready for a night at Pico in East LA. It's a coming-of-age portrait set to the beat of Banda and Norteño, a celebration of friendship, romance, and ritual.



I HEAR A CITY

[CIRO ARAUJO, BRAZIL, 2025]

Programme Two | 14 mins 58 secs

A traveler and a narrator in the post-apocalypse; they narrate an abandoned city as we arrive at a destroyed landscape and understand what happened to this small village. *I Hear A City* explores the genesis of a countryside city in Brazil. *Ciro Araujo* is a director, editor, producer, film club organizer, and researcher. His audiovisual practice investigates the intersections between image, memory, and urban landscapes.



1 IN 5 SHEEP

[JAMES BUTTON, UNITED KINGDOM, 2025]

Programme Two | 4 mins 32 secs

An artist in sheep's clothing. Following a dream in which he was a sheep, James Button decided to interpret it into this strange and wonderfully comic short film. Shot on 16mm with a small team of three in beautiful Welsh and Scottish locations, *1 in 5 Sheep* is resolutely lighthearted in its experimentation.



DANCING PIGEONS

[CHRISTOFER NILSSON, SWEDEN, 2025]

Programme Two | 23 mins 29 secs

A psychic medium has his grand seance interrupted as an audience member refuses to let him end the show without getting to speak to her deceased ex-husband. Christofer Nilsson is a writer-director based in Malmö, Sweden, drawn to portraying problematic characters through themes of loneliness, class and broken dreams in rural settings. His film, *The Ballad*, won Best Screenplay and Best Performance at Short Focus Film Festival 2025.

PROGRAMME THREE

Vote



Online | 19-27 September



BODY

[HUSAIN QAIZAR/SAAD ZUBERI, PAKISTAN, 2025]

Programme Three | 12 mins 58 secs

In Pakistan, a group of aspiring male models step before the camera and quietly push against the boundaries of gender, masculinity, and taboo. As they pursue visibility in an industry that both celebrates and stigmatizes them, their photo shoots become acts of negotiation with a society that would rather keep them unseen. The film opens a rare window into a hidden world where performance, ambition, and survival collide.



A MOTHER'S LOVE

[HARALD SCHWARZENBACHER, AUSTRIA, 2026]

Programme Three | 21 mins 10 secs

A Mother's Love is, at its core, a family drama about the most intimate and least questioned bond we know: the love between a mother and her child. The film follows Beate, a woman torn between grief for her deceased daughter and her conflicted feelings toward her young son—who bears partial responsibility for the tragic accident that tore their family apart. How unconditional is a mother's love? And what happens when the unthinkable challenges a bond we are taught to believe is absolute?



EASY SELL

[KEN ABALOS/ASH MESHKATI, UNITED KINGDOM, 2025]

Programme Three | 7 mins 10 sec

A frugal Baz gets more than he bargains for at a charity shop when he is cornered by Phil, an odd charity shop worker, who insists he buy a dusty old wedding dress or face explosive consequences. *Easy Sell* is a comedy that explores the cost of charity, and what limits people will go to for a good deed.



GAME OVER

[CLEO SAMOLES-LITTLE, UNITED KINGDOM, 2026]

Programme Three | 13 mins 23 secs

When Cleo and Jade's date turns sour, they're left questioning, 'is the problem the male gaze or the way they've been conditioned to react?' *Game Over* looks at how it feels to be a lesbian couple constantly sexualised and threatened by men. Cleo Samoles-Little is a writer and director based in London, who's specialism lies in directing and film development.



IUS OF TIME

[ROBERTO F. CANUTO/XIAOXI XU, SPAIN, 2025]

Programme Three | 25 mins 48 secs

In an Asturian village, a stormy past and an uncertain future intertwine in an encounter between two lost and lonely souls. Luca, a young photographer, arrives in the village in search of inspiration and his roots. He stays at the home of Xuan, a cheesemaker and former teacher, a reclusive man living in isolation. Despite the initial tension between them, distrust gives way to an unexpected connection; Luca's camera focuses on Xuan's work, and Xuan begins to rekindle a lost enthusiasm for life.

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