

03 / 2026

Twelve short films in competition for the ZF Short Film Award 2026



12–16
März 26
 Kiesel im k42

14. März
Wettbewerb
ZF-Kurzfilmpreis:
15.000 €

The 17th *Filmtage Friedrichshafen*, organized by the Cultural Office of Friedrichshafen, will once again present numerous award-winning and remarkable short and documentary films by emerging filmmakers. The highlight of the festival is the competition for the ZF Short Film Award 2026.

Filmmakers from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland submitted more than 300 short films for the ZF Short Film Award 2026. Twelve films made it into the final selection and will be screened on Saturday afternoon and evening at the Kiesel. Once again, the full spectrum of the short film genre is represented — from brief animated films to compelling short documentaries and thirty-minute dramas. An exciting evening of cinema awaits, giving the audience an opportunity to engage in conversation with the attending filmmakers, cast their vote for the Audience Award, and cheer along. The grand finale of the evening is the award ceremony for the ZF Short Film Award 2026 and the Audience Award of the ZF Art Foundation.

Thursday, 12 March 2026, 6:30 p.m.: Festival opening with a live performance by Jörg Mandernach, ZF Art Foundation Artist in Residence 2001

Film and music have always been closely linked. To open the film festival, artist Jörg Mandernach breathes new life into this fusion. Starting at 6:30 p.m., he will present a performance consisting of his own short films combined with electric-guitar improvisation, followed by an artist talk in which he gladly answers questions from the audience.

Born in Saarbrücken in 1963, the visual artist explores, among other things, how to translate his graphic works into short films. Created in a kind of “stream of unconsciousness,” the drawings flow into each other like animated chains of associations, creating a metamorphosis of forms and content.

Jörg Mandernach, Artist in Residence of the ZF Art Foundation in 2001, is the recipient of several contemporary cultural awards. He studied at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart, where he also held a substitute professorship for painting from 2020 to 2021.

Friday, 13 March 2026, 6:30 p.m.: Paul Ploberger, winner of the ZF Short Film Award 2023, presents his new short film *One Way Ticket to Tbilisi*

With his comedy *Nackte Männer im Wald* [*Naked Men in the Woods*], Paul Ploberger won the ZF Short Film Award 2023. The prize money of EUR 15,000 motivated the young filmmaker to create a new short film: *One Way Ticket to Tbilisi*. At the Filmtage 2024, he presented an unfinished version as a test screening — a very special and rare format that gave the audience insight into the creative process.

Now, the filmmaker returns to the festival with the final version of his sensitive story about friendship and coping with grief. In *One Way Ticket to Tbilisi*, Lena learns that her friend Joni has died in an accident during a backpacking trip in Georgia. She travels to the country on short notice and is confronted with the police's assumption of suicide. Unwilling to accept this, she begins reconstructing Joni's final days together with Nana, his last confidante.

After the screening, there will be a Q&A with director Paul Ploberger and producer Kathrin Kaisinger.

**Saturday, 14 March 2026, from 4:15 p.m.:
*Kurz und Gut – The Competition for the ZF Short Film Award 2026***

The ZF Art Foundation is intentionally committed to supporting short film as an independent art form. "Short films are not short feature films, just as a poem is not a novel, a drawing is not an oil painting, and a song is not an opera. They have cultural value that deserves the highest level of attention and support," says Frank Becher in SHORT report #6, the magazine of AG Kurzfilm.

As part of the competition for the ZF Short Film Award, the ZF Art Foundation presents two prizes: The ZF Short Film Award, endowed with EUR 15,000 and an Audience Award worth EUR 1,000. For many years, the foundation's longstanding partner has been the film festival *Now or Never – Filmtage Friedrichshafen*, where the short film genre is firmly anchored.

This year, twelve films are competing for the ZF Short Film Award and the Audience Award of the ZF Art Foundation. As in previous years, a five-member expert jury will determine the winner of the ZF Short Film Award. The award is earmarked for a specific purpose: the prize money of 15,000 euros is intended to be used for a new short film production. The Audience Award is decided directly on site by the viewers. The exciting competition concludes with the celebratory award ceremony.

Programme of the 17th Filmtage Friedrichshafen: [Filmtage-Friedrichshafen-2026](#)

Press Images:

1. *One Way Ticket to Tbilisi*, by Paul Ploberger, winner of the ZF Short Film Award 2023



One Way Ticket to Tbilisi © Paul Ploberger, Photo: Lennart Hüper



One Way Ticket to Tbilisi © Paul Ploberger, Photo: Lennart Hüper

2. *Kurz und Gut – The Competition for the ZF Short Film Award 2026*



Film still *Dokhtar'am* © Pedram Sadough



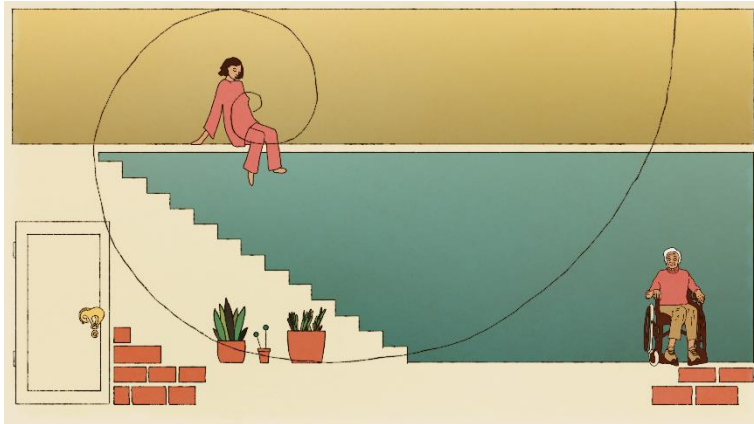
Film still *IN SCHUSS UND KETTE DER NOMADEN* © Samira Alizadehghanad



Film still *The Good Woman* © Masha Mollenhauer



Film still *Night of Passage* © Konstantin Johann



Film still *So ist das Leben und nicht anders* © Lenia Friedrich

Download press release and press images: <https://zf-kunststiftung.com/en/presse/twelve-short-films-in-competition-for-the-zf-short-film-award-2026/>

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