

3 / 2026

## Jonathan Brunner wins the ZF Short Film Award 2026 with *From Ecuador With Love*

For his nine-minute documentary *From Ecuador With Love*, Jonathan Brunner receives the ZF Short Film Award, endowed with 15,000 euros. The Audience Award of the ZF Art Foundation, worth 1,000 euros, goes to Masha Mollenhauer for the short film *The Good Woman*.

Last weekend, the 17th *Filmtage Friedrichshafen – Jetzt oder Nie* took place, organized by the Kulturbüro Friedrichshafen. The highlight of the film festival was the competition for the ZF Short Film Award and the Audience Award of the ZF Art Foundation. Twelve very different short films by young directors competed in the festival: from animated films and documentaries to 30-minute dramas, offering once again a broad range of themes and cinematic styles. On Saturday, the audience enjoyed the diverse competition program late into the night, immersed in the special atmosphere of the Kiesel, eagerly awaiting the jury's decision and the counting of the audience award votes. The short film *The Good Woman* by Masha Mollenhauer and her team, addressing restrictive abortion laws in Poland and the accompanying societal and familial pressures, was the clear audience favorite and received the Audience Award of the ZF Art Foundation worth 1,000 euros.

The winner of the 2026 ZF Short Film Award, endowed with 15,000 euros, is German director Jonathan Brunner. His short documentary *From Ecuador With Love* observes the production process on a rose farm in Ecuador from the perspective of the plants. Tightly packed and sorted for perfection, the roses are prepared for transport to the Global North. According to the synopsis, not only the roses but also the workers are part of a larger system.

With his outstandingly photographed short film *From Ecuador With Love*, Jonathan Brunner deeply impressed the jury: "The protagonist of this short film is plucked, beaten, skinned, and loaded. While her beauty is used to express love, we are offered a new view of a symbol that is used in countless ways. As simple as it is ingenious, this beautifully photographed short film follows the path of the rose as a consumer good. The observational documentary form deliberately forgoes a voice-over, opening a space for reflection: after all, it is women who tend to the roses, prepare them, and ultimately send them off in gift boxes. So who is truly giving what to whom? Preserved declarations of love for those performing the invisible labor behind them, as the roses travel FROM ECUADOR WITH LOVE to the Western world. With its documentary clarity and unpretentious approach to labor processes, what stands out most is the finely crafted montage of image and sound, where every cut made to the stems becomes palpable. Each decision regarding framing seems to consciously shift between the visible and the invisible. Despite its social and political relevance, this nine-minute film is above all one thing: a declaration of love to the art form of cinema. A cinema that can shift perspectives and make things visible," the jury stated.

The jury members this year were Vivien Buchhorn, curator, film historian and director of the Flensburg Short Film Days; Alina Cyranek, author, director and producer; Dieter Krauß, founder of 'guckloch' Villingen-Schwenningen and board member of the AG Film Festival; Lukas März, author and director; as well as Regina Michel, Executive Manager and Curator of the ZF Art Foundation.

An Honorable Mention was awarded to Lenia Friedrich for *So ist das Leben und nicht anders*: “Faces melt, snails move through the divided windows of possibility that shape our biographies. At a time when we urgently need connection and community across generations, this film is a discovery. It creates a total work of art through animation and documentary form, remaining rhythmically and audiovisually sharp. As we follow Mrs. Miko, we brush against questions of impermanence and watch memories at the moment of their dissolution. A life-affirming melody resonates throughout, opening a space for empathy that stays with us and envelops us like a mink coat, reminding us: So ist das Leben und nicht anders.”

The ZF Short Film Award not only honors filmmakers but also supports the short film genre: “The prize money is earmarked and must be used for the production of a new short film,” said Regina Michel. Jonathan Brunner appreciates this, expressing gratitude for the recognition of his work: “Such awards give crucial energy to keep going in the world of filmmaking—especially when the funding for the next film is already partially covered. Receiving support of this scale is a great privilege!”

Jonathan Brunner (born 1996) is a director of documentary and commercial films. After completing a bachelor’s degree in media design at Mainz University of Applied Sciences, Jonathan has been studying directing at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg since 2020. His film “Border Conversations” received awards at DOK Leipzig and Dok.fest Munich, among others, and was shortlisted for the German Short Film Award. Jonathan is currently working on his first feature-length documentary film. At the 17th Friedrichshafen Filmtage, he won the ZF Short Film Award 2026 with his short documentary *From Ecuador With Love*.

**Press contact**

ZF ART FOUNDATION  
Regina Michel  
Löwentaler Straße 20  
D-88046 Friedrichshafen  
T +49 7541 77-7114  
[regina.michel@zf.com](mailto:regina.michel@zf.com)  
[www.zf-kunststiftung.com](http://www.zf-kunststiftung.com)

Press images:

Winner of the ZF Short Film Award 2026: *From Ecuador With Love*, by Jonathan Brunner



Jonathan Brunner, Winner of the ZF Short Film Award 2026 © Anjuna Hartmann



Film still *From Ecuador With Love*, Jonathan Brunner © Incine Universitario, Hanno Mertin

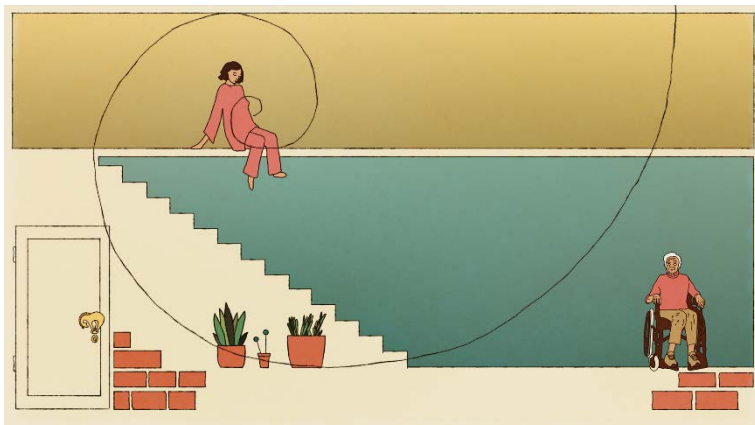


Film still *From Ecuador With Love*, Jonathan Brunner © Incine Universitario, Hanno Mertin



Film still *From Ecuador With Love*, Jonathan Brunner © Incine Universitario, Hanno Mertin

Honorable Mention, Jury 2026: *So ist das Leben und nicht anders*, by Lenia Friedrich



Filmstill *So ist das Leben und nicht anders*, Lenia Friedrich © Lenia Friedrich

Audience Award 2026: *The Good Woman*, by Masha Mollenhauer



Film still *The Good Woman*, Masha Mollenhauer © hamburgmediaschool