

# THE STORY OF THE FESTIVAL

*A declaration of love to short film, imagination and dialogue across cultures*

**2010**

FOUNDED

**36**

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

**5**

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## Two friends, one shared passion

After gaining experience at the Cannes Film Festival, Bénédicte Beaugeois discovered how a festival could become a place for encounters, wonder and the circulation of ideas. Together with her childhood friend Maureen Gerby, she imagined an event dedicated to wonder, fantasy and science fiction, with animation at the heart of the selection.

In December 2009, the two co-founders organised a test screening at L'Archipel cinema. Its success led to the official launch of Festival du Film Merveilleux in March 2010. Supported by the Défi Jeunes - Envie d'Agir grant, the first edition unfolded across several Paris venues - L'Archipel, E-dune, Péniche Cinéma and Café de la Mer à Boire - bringing together film, digital and creative communities.

## Educational and inclusive from the very first edition

From 2010 onward, the Festival combined screenings with education and accessibility. In partnership with the Anne-Marie Raillon association and IME Cours Hervé, it welcomed twenty children, teenagers and young adults aged 6 to 20 for ecological storytelling and a programme of short films. Actress Anne Arovas performed the readings, with support from specialist educators.

That same year, E-dune hosted a special presentation devoted to machinima, organised with Movies.fr, David Vannier and Richard Gennevois around The Movies software. This connection between cinema, emerging technologies and audience participation became one of the Festival's defining features.

*"Wonder is a universal language: it allows us to cross borders, share emotions and see the world differently."*

**Bénédicte Beaugeois & Maureen Gerby - Co-founders**

# SIXTEEN EDITIONS OF CULTURAL BRIDGES

## A Paris festival looking out to the world

After its first itinerant editions, the Festival was based at Théâtre Douze from 2011 to 2019, before moving to the Christine Cinéma Club in the heart of Paris for a new decade. It was held under the patronage of the French National Commission for UNESCO from 2014 to 2019, and again for its 16th edition in 2026.

Since 2010, its programmes have featured films from 36 countries across five continents. Screenings organised with French Institutes, Alliance Française branches, foreign cultural institutes and partner festivals turn films into platforms for intercultural dialogue. Festival programmes have travelled to Lebanon, Egypt, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia, among other destinations.

### PROGRAMMES

**Long Story Short** - the official short-film competition devoted to wonder, fantasy and science fiction.

**Movies Around the World** - international screenings that enable films and stories to travel.

**Cannes Digital** - encounters exploring new forms of storytelling, digital culture and immersive technologies.

**Kaleidoscope** - activities connecting cinema, science, the environment and film education.

### A LASTING MISSION

The Festival sees short film as a creative laboratory: a space where filmmakers can experiment, test new forms and take their first steps in the industry. Its deliberately selective programme makes it possible to continue supporting filmmakers after the screenings through introductions, guidance and the promotion of their work.

The Festival also places its work within a broader commitment to cultural diversity, international cooperation and sustainable development, in dialogue with the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

## Milestones

| 2009                         | 2010                                          | 2011-2019              | 2014-2019                                              | 2026                                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Test screening at L'Archipel | Official launch and first multi-venue edition | Based at Théâtre Douze | Patronage of the French National Commission for UNESCO | 16th edition at Christine Cinéma Club, under patronage |

## 36 countries, one shared invitation to wonder

Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Benin, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Morocco, North Macedonia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Senegal, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

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