



MARCHÉ DU FILM
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

PRESS REVIEW
CINEUROPA

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Author: Vassilis Economou

Japan to be the Country of Honour at Cannes' 2026 Marché du Film

***The Asian nation's rich cinematic history and vibrant contemporary industry
will be highlighted during the 79th Cannes Film Festival***

Japan will be the Country of Honour at the next [Marché du Film](#), which will take place from 12-20 May 2026, during the 79th [Cannes Film Festival](#). The designation recognises Japan's significant contribution to global cinema and its active role in fostering international partnerships.

As part of its participation, Japan will co-host the Marché du Film's Opening Night and will take part in the market's key programmes. These include industry panels, networking sessions and project showcases, with a focus on Japanese animation and genre cinema. Additional initiatives will feature a summit on Japan's film industry and a dedicated screening day to highlight films from the nation. The activities aim to strengthen professional networks and promote Japan's film and content sectors in global markets.

Japan's filmmaking history spans more than 120 years, with directors such as **Akira Kurosawa**, **Yasujiro Ozu** and **Kenji Mizoguchi** leaving a lasting influence on cinema worldwide. Contemporary Japanese films continue to gain international recognition, including frequent representation in Cannes' Official Selection. The country produces approximately 1,200 movies annually, attracting more than 150 million viewers and generating over ¥200 billion (€1.128 billion) in box-office revenue. Japanese animation has become a major global cultural export, and live-action films across multiple genres continue to find success and inspire adaptations abroad.

Japan maintains a strong presence at the Marché du Film. Its sales companies are among the most well-established at the Palais des Festivals, and the Japan Pavilion, coordinated by UniJapan, has been a longstanding hub for industry activities. With broad participation expected across market events, Japan's role as Country of Honour will provide opportunities for increased collaboration and industry visibility.

The announcement was made during a press conference at the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) by **Junichi Sakomoto**, chair of the Executive Committee for Japan, Country of Honour 2026, and **Guillaume Esmiol**, executive director of the Marché du Film.

Sakomoto stated: "We are truly delighted and proud that Japan has been selected as the Country of Honour. It presents a wonderful opportunity to showcase the appeal of Japanese cinema on a global stage. We look forward to seeing Japan's rich film culture, along with its emerging talents and technologies, shine even brighter internationally and contribute to the advancement of cinema both in Japan and around the world."

Meanwhile, Esmiol added: "We are thrilled to welcome Japan as our 2026 Country of Honour. Japan holds a unique place in international cinema, and its creative legacy continues to inspire generations of filmmakers. It also holds a unique place at the Marché du Film, as one of the best represented and dynamic countries, with highly active sales companies and producers. On a more personal note: as someone with Japanese roots, it's a beautiful opportunity to pay tribute to my cultural heritage."

The programme will be organised by the Executive Committee for Japan, Country of Honour 2026, together with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO). Detailed programme information will be released in early 2026.



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Japan follows Brazil (2025), Switzerland (2024), Spain (2023) and India (2022) as the fifth nation to be recognised as Country of Honour, an initiative established by the Marché du Film to acknowledge countries that make notable contributions to the global film industry and encourage international collaboration.

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