



MARCHÉ DU FILM
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

PRESS REVIEW
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Author: Michael Rosser

Japan outlines Cannes Marche 2026 country of honour plans

Japan is to showcase its film industry and push for more international co-productions as the country of honour at Cannes' Marche du Film in 2026.

After being announced during the [opening ceremony of Tokyo International Film Festival](#) on Monday, Japanese executives and Marche executive director Guillaume Esmiol revealed further details during a press conference in Tokyo today (October 28).

During the Marche, which takes place from May 12-20, 2026, a dedicated conference will explore the strengths of Japanese cinema through a series of seminars while screenings of the latest films from the country will be shown.

The Marche's Producer's Network will organise meetings with leading international producers in a bid to forge connections with Japan and further networking between Japanese and French producers will take place on Co-Production Day.

Animation Day will see anime-related discussions, including a collaboration with Annecy International Animation Film Festival, and a work-in-progress event will explore financing and co-production opportunities.

Japan will also co-host the opening night party, which draws more than 1,200 people from the international film industry, and will include an increased delegation of Japanese participants.

The programme is being overseen by the Executive Committee for Japan, Country of Honour 2026; the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI); and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

Tsuchiya Takashi, director of JETRO's digital marketing department, said the activities would sit under the banner Beyond Boundaries: Tradition, Innovation and the Future of Japanese Cinema.

"We want to contrast the past and present of Japanese cinema," he said. "Anime will be at the centre but there are a wide range of diverse expressions. We want to remind cinephiles that Japanese cinema is always a presence worth paying attention to."

Esmiol said discussions began three years ago and that Japan was a natural choice as country of honour, especially after featuring a record level of 10 films from the country in this year's Official Selection.

"Japan holds a unique place in international cinema, and its creative legacy continues to inspire generations of filmmakers," he said. "It also holds a unique place at the Marché du Film, as one of the most represented and dynamic countries, with highly active sales companies and producers."



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“On a more personal note: as someone with Japanese roots, it’s a beautiful opportunity to pay tribute to my cultural heritage.” Esimol pointed out his Japanese mother, who was sat in the front row of the assembled press at the conference.

Japan has been exploring an increasing number of international co-productions in recent years and Junichi Sakomoto, chair of the country of honour executive committee, said more could be on the way.

“In the past, it’s true there haven’t been a lot of international co-productions [involving Japan] but we are building momentum,” he said. “Global international co-production is going to be a key stream going into the future and this is a significant chance to promote more deals.”

Yasushi Shiina, who is TIFFCOM CEO, vice president of Unijapan and vice chair of the country of honour committee, added that it would also provide a chance to demystify Japan’s production committee style of filmmaking.

“When talking about co-producing with Japan, there is this production committee approach that isn’t easy to understand,” he said. “The first step in growing co-production will be educational efforts around this.”

Japan’s film industry is robust, producing around 1,200 films annually and drawing more than 150 million cinemagoers each year. Its box office generates around \$1.3bn (¥200bn) in annual revenue. Japanese anime has also become a global cultural phenomenon, while live-action films continue to find success and inspire adaptations.

Satoru Hayasaka, deputy director for culture and creative industries at METI, said the initiative aligns with Japan’s goal to generate \$131.5bn (¥20tn) in overseas content revenue by 2033.

“Cannes will bring together one of the world’s top three film festivals with one of the top three markets,” he said. “In 10 years, when we look back, I want it to mark a turning point for the expansion of our film industry.”

Japan follows Brazil (2025), Switzerland (2024), Spain (2023) and India (2022) as the fifth country of honour, an initiative launched to recognise nations for their outstanding contributions to the global film industry and to foster international exchange and collaboration.

Source : <https://www.screendaily.com/news/japan-outlines-cannes-marche-2026-country-of-honour-plans/5210291.article>