



Ningbo to Host International Youth Film Festival Bringing Global Voices to the Screen

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coastal metropolis
建设现代化滨海大都市

The 2026 Yangtze River Delta International Youth Film Festival will take place in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, from October 17 to 23, bringing together young filmmakers, industry professionals and audiences for a week of film screenings, industry forums and cultural activities.

As China's first officially established film festival dedicated to young filmmakers, this year's event will feature two major ceremonies and five key programs: the Young Filmmakers Project Incubator, the China Film New Forces Forum, film screenings, themed events and a series of "Film Plus" activities. The initiative aims to support emerging talent, encourage innovation in filmmaking and promote collaboration across the Yangtze River Delta region and beyond.

Supporting the Next Generation of Filmmakers

A major highlight is the Young Filmmakers Project Incubator, which has received 545 applications spanning a wide range of genres and subjects. Following an initial review by nine experienced industry judges, 50 projects advanced to the next round, with the final 20 set to compete in project pitches.

The program brings together professional, industry and audience judging panels, alongside six strategic partners: Zhejiang Film Industry Fund, Maoyan, Lianrui Pictures, Mate Pictures, Gongfu Pictures, Zhejiang Film Group and Zhejiang Television and Film Group.



The aerial view of the Xiangshan Film and Television City, Ningbo

Selected projects will receive financial awards and industry resources, while outstanding proposals may be considered for investment by the provincial film industry fund, with potential funding reaching tens of millions of yuan per project.

Combining expert evaluation, mentorship, AIGC filmmaking training and a multi-dimensional review process, the initiative seeks to help young filmmakers turn creative ideas into productions.

Bringing Film Culture into the City

Ningbo has deep ties to Chinese cinema. Nearly 50 milestones described as "firsts" in Chinese film history are associated with the city. Its notable filmmakers include Yuan Muzhi, Zhang Shichuan, Run Run Shaw and Stephen Chow, while works such as *The Difficult Couple*, *Song of the Fishermen* and *The Butterfly Lovers* have left their mark on Chinese film history.

The exhibition "Youth Illuminates the Chinese Screen" will feature a special section exploring Ningbo's longstanding relationship with cinema.

Today, the city remains an active filming destination, hosting more than 300 film and television production crews each year. Recent productions, including *Pegasus 3* and *You Are My Hot Spring*, have also drawn attention to Ningbo's locations.

During the film week, immersive film sets will be created on Xiushui Street, a Chinese animation film carnival will take place at Meishan Bay, and a themed event combining Song Dynasty culture and cinema will be held on Hanling Old Street. The program will also feature themed travel routes connecting sites such as the former residence of Yuan Muzhi, Tianyige Museum and Moon Lake, the Ningbobang Museum, Ningbo Port, Xuedou Mountain and the Old Bund.

Opening Up New Conversations

The China Film New Forces Forum will explore topics including realism, animation and the use of emerging technologies in filmmaking through keynote speeches and roundtable discussions.

Other events will facilitate exchanges among filmmakers from the Chinese mainland, China's Hong

Kong, Macao and Taiwan, as well as young filmmakers from Africa. Discussions will also focus on regional industry collaboration and the opportunities artificial intelligence offers for creative production.

Connecting Cinema with Everyday Life

The film week will extend beyond industry events and into the wider community. A selection of 40 outstanding Chinese and international films will be screened in 10 cities across the Yangtze River Delta, with 187 screenings scheduled at 20 cinemas. Ten post-screening discussions will give audiences opportunities to meet filmmakers and cast members.

As one of China's first pilot cities for integrated "Film Plus" consumption, Ningbo will also explore new ways to connect cinema with technology, fashion, food and intangible cultural heritage. A range of promotional activities will encourage residents and visitors to discover the city through film while boosting cultural tourism and local consumption.



The newly-upgraded Ningbo Cinema's Dongmenkou branch

From nurturing emerging filmmakers to bringing cinema into urban life, the 2026 Yangtze River Delta International Youth Film Festival aims to connect creative talent, industry and audiences, giving new voices in filmmaking a platform to be seen and heard.

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Poster of the 2026 Yangtze River Delta International Youth Film Festival