



Ten award-winning student films from Germany offer a window into the future of world cinema at MIFF

'Emerging Voices: Film School Editions' brings fresh global voices to the festival

Mumbai, 19 June 2026

The 19th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) 2026 celebrated the spirit of cinematic innovation with a special screening of ten films from Germany's prestigious Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg GmbH (FABW), one of the world's most acclaimed film schools. Presented under the festival's special section, "Emerging Voices: Film School Editions", the showcase introduced audiences to a diverse range of stories spanning animation, short fiction and documentary, reflecting the creative energy and artistic vision of a new generation of filmmakers.

From poignant tales of grief and belonging to visually stunning animated explorations of memory, ageing and environmental change, the films demonstrated why Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg continues to be a nurturing ground for some of the most exciting voices in contemporary cinema.

Among the standout titles was "A Sparrow's Song", an animated historical drama directed by Tobias Eckerlin. Inspired by true events during World War II, the award-winning film follows an elderly widow who finds solace and hope while nursing an injured sparrow amid the devastation of war. With its delicate storytelling and emotional depth, the Student Academy Award-winning short left a lasting impression on viewers.

A SPARROW'S SONG



2025 | Germany | 9:00 Min | English

Dir: Tobias Eckerlin

Another audience favourite was "Flying Animals", a documentary directed by Anna Niebert. Blending documentary filmmaking with animation, the film enters the imaginative worlds of three children living with serious medical conditions, offering a moving portrait of resilience, creativity and the enduring power of childhood imagination.

The screening also featured "Majini", a short fiction drama directed by Joshua Neubert and Victor Muhagachi. Set against the backdrop of the Tanzanian coast, the film follows two brothers forced to confront fear, responsibility and masculinity when circumstances push them into dangerous waters. Its powerful storytelling and emotional authenticity have already earned recognition at international festivals.

MAJINI



2025 | Germany, Tanzania | 19:00 Min | Swahili

Dir: Joshua Neubert,
Victor Muhagachi

Among the most visually striking films in the package was "Pear Garden", an animated drama directed by Shadab Shayegan. The film tells the story of six-year-old Lily, who embarks on a dreamlike journey after struggling to understand her grandmother's mastectomy. Through poetic imagery and emotional sensitivity, the film explores themes of illness, loss and healing from a child's perspective.

PEAR GARDEN



2024 | Germany | 7:00 Min | Persian

Dir: Shadab Shayegan

Equally touching was "Silver Strings", an animated children's film directed by Paul Kley. The heartwarming story centres on an elderly man whose unlikely friendship with a tiny spider transforms his everyday existence, while simultaneously challenging his daughter's attempts to care for him. The film balances humour, warmth and emotional insight with remarkable finesse.

The other films further highlighted the breadth of talent emerging from the German institution. "Chasing Kites", a short fiction drama directed by Lea Zitzenbacher, explored grief and sibling relationships through the story of two brothers coping with the loss of their mother. "Linie 12", an animated drama-adventure by Christopher Schmier and Sarah Schulz, combined music, machinery and friendship in a visually inventive tale. "Spark (Chispa)", a children's drama directed by Vera Kayh, offered a tender look at a young girl seeking emotional connection with her overworked father. "Rise Age", an experimental animated musical by Tatjana Theuer, used vibrant visuals and humour to address climate change and collective denial. Meanwhile, "This Is Not a Character, This Is Betrayal", a short fiction drama-comedy directed by Romina Küper, examined class, identity and family tensions through the relationship between a hairdresser mother and her aspiring writer son.

Together, the ten films offered the film enthusiasts at MIFF a glimpse into the future of international filmmaking, showcasing storytelling that is bold, emotionally resonant and deeply human.

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PIB Team MIFF | Nikita Joshi/Riyas Babu/Darshana Rane

Great films resonate through passionate voices. Share your love for cinema with #MIFF2026. Tag us @pibmumbai on X, and we'll help spread your passion! For journalists, bloggers, and vloggers wanting to connect with filmmakers for interviews/interactions, reach out to us at miff.mediadesk@pib.gov.in with the subject line: Take One with PIB.

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