



When Technology Becomes a Storyteller: AI Films at MIFF Open New Horizons of Storytelling

Beyond Machines, Into Imagination: MIFF's AI Films Depict the Human Heart of Future Cinema

Mumbai, 20 June 2026

The 19th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) 2026 celebrated the spirit of cinematic innovation with titles under the section, "The AI Films." Exploring a bold convergence of storytelling, technology, and imagination, the curated films demonstrated how artificial intelligence acts as a powerful new creative tool, enabling filmmakers from across the globe to explore complex narratives spanning history, mythology, personal memory, and meta-cinematic boundaries.

Whether depicting stories about historical fights, using unique animation styles or looking deep into how a creator's mind works, these films showed that AI is not replacing human creativity. Instead, it simply gives filmmakers a powerful new tool to tell stories that would be difficult to make using traditional methods.

In the standout film "Legends – The Eternal Flame of Mewar", directed by Deepak Vijay, a lone bard sings across the Aravalli hills, charting successive historical eras from Bappa Rawal to Maharana Pratap to portray a kingdom defined by honor.



"The Screenwriter" by Laurent Cliquet, is a tense chamber piece that dives into the pressurized mind of a writer, using a confined perspective to examine the psychological struggles of the creative process.



Xuan Li's "The Star Shepherd" is a tactile, felt-animation music video inspired by a UNICEF visit to Malawi that beautifully illustrates how love connects strangers under the same sky.



For mythology lovers, "Kishkindha: Van Katha" by Aksht Verma draws on research across multiple Puranas to recreate the grand conflicts, politics, and tragic journeys within the ancient Vanara kingdom.

Rounding out the highlights, Talya Lotan's "Stonewall, The Making of" tracks the creation of an unmade feature about a Civil War general, blending interviews and on-set footage until the line between behind-the-scenes recording and staged history completely dissolves.

The other films included "The Act of Killing Dreams", a short directed by Karsh Jhaveri, examined artistic tradition and technological collision through a surreal, painterly landscape where legendary purist directors challenge emerging AI creators. Germany's "The Cinema That Never Was", directed by Mark Wachholz, functioned as a meditation on absence, utilizing generative workflows to conjure the ghosts of scripts, reels, and film histories lost to time or decay. "The Echo Monastery", directed by Rajesh Bhatia and Bharat Arora, followed a grieving Ladakhi woman's journey into the deep mountains to confront memory and silence. Meanwhile, "The Legend of Birsa Munda", an AI-assisted biographical animation directed by Samresh Shrivastav, paid a powerful tribute to the resilience of indigenous voices by revisiting the historic Ulgulan resistance against colonial rule.

Together, the films offered film enthusiasts at MIFF a remarkable glimpse into the future of international filmmaking, proving that when artificial intelligence in films is developing by the day the result obtained can depict deeply human stories to life.

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