

# San Luis Obispo International Film Festival Announces 2026 Dates

*The Festival is adding a new Episodic category and a special award for the Best Genre/Horror Film*

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA, UNITED STATES, September 23, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- [San Luis Obispo International Film Festival](#) (SLOIFF) is pleased to announce the dates for the 32nd edition of the festival. The festival will run from April 23 through April 28, 2026.

The Opening Night Reception at the historic Fremont Theater will kick off the Festival on Thursday, April 23. It presents an opportunity to meet special guests, filmmakers, and major contributors.



Alongside its signature categories and competitions, the festival is launching two additions this year – an Episodic category and a special award recognizing the Best Genre/Horror Film.

“

We're really excited to introduce a new Episodic program to the festival. We are also adding an award for 'Best Genre/Horror' as we believe this is a trailblazing space in independent film.”

*San Luis Obispo Film Festival  
Executive Director Skye  
McLennan*

Submissions are currently open in all categories including narrative features, short films, documentary features, and doc shorts, as well as episodic and horror. SLOIFF is an Academy Award® Qualifying Festival for Documentary Shorts.

“We're really excited to introduce our new Episodic program to the festival. Over the last 10 years, the way we tell stories has changed, and we believe that in addition to traditional film formats, episodics have a place in our

festival too. Adding this category creates a new opportunity for indie storytellers to showcase their work," said [San Luis Obispo](#) International Film Festival Executive Director Skye McLennan. "We are also adding an award for 'Best Genre/Horror.' We have been testing the appetite for this category with our Red Eye Cinema programming over the last five years, and each year the demand for and the quality of the films has increased. We believe this is a trailblazing space in independent film - we want to encourage it and bring new works to our audiences."

Highlights of the festival are the much-anticipated Surf Nite, as well as the Music Video Showcase. Central Coast Filmmaker Showcase, Cal Poly Short Cuts, and Filmmakers of Tomorrow put a spotlight on local talent from California's Central Coast and emerging youth filmmakers from around the world.

Submissions are open through the end of November, please visit

<https://filmfreeway.com/slofilmfest> for more details. More information on the

San Luis Obispo International Film Festival can be found at <https://slofilmfest.org>.

Editor's Note: For the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival, an Episodic Series is defined as a fiction or non-fiction work designed for serialized, online, or broadcast storytelling. Creators may submit multiple episodes, provided the total runtime does not exceed 40 minutes, or a single episode up to 30 minutes in length. Both web-based series and traditional television episodes are eligible. Selected works will be featured as part of an episodic showcase, with final selections and episode choices determined by the festival's programming team. Episodic submissions must be subtitled in English.

#### ABOUT SAN LUIS OBISPO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Celebrating its 32nd edition in 2026, the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival is a six-day



Exterior of vintage Fremont Theater in San Luis Obispo, California



Audience at San Luis Obispo International Film Festival

annual event. It showcases creative, diverse, and impactful works from around the world in a wide variety of venues, from the city's classic art deco Fremont Theater to the [SLO Film Center](#) at the Palm Theatre. Named to MovieMaker Magazine's "25 Coolest Film Festivals" list, and USA TODAY's 10Best Readers Choice Awards, the 2026 festival runs from April 23-28. SLOIFF is an Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Qualifying Festival in the category of "Best Documentary Short".

Ideally situated halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, with its laid-back vibe and serene natural beauty, is a picture-perfect setting for this highly regarded Central Coast film celebration. Filmmakers rave about the warmth and engagement that is so much a part of the SLO Int'l Film Festival experience, as do the industry pros and film critics who are fast discovering the fest's thoughtful audiences and unique programming sensibility.

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