

American Film Market 2025 Roars Back with Innovation - New Deal Structures & AI Reshaping Production

"AFM is Indispensable in the filmmaking process. After several fractured years the atmosphere feels cohesive again", to paraphrase Colin Costello, Reel 360

CENTURY CITY, CA, UNITED STATES, December 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the bubbles of Moët & Chandon fizzled at Focus Entertainment's closing AFM reception on November 15; the irrefutable consensus was this 46th edition American Film Market was a resounding watershed year. Unspooling in the reimagined Fairmont Century Plaza the business of 'film came to life' in an ever-evolving media landscape. The specter of AI technology continued its assent (or dissent) with 'Doomers' insisting AI is on a fast track to human obsolescence and 'Pacifiers' stating humans will persevere with a firm grasp on the remote. Either way 'AI' was AFM25's most bandied about buzzword.



Dan, official AFM photographer say's "Gen Alpha kids are taking back movie going as cool (skibidi) . This digital detox from a 'dopamine diet' is gaining popularity. Humans are hungry for more face time and less Facebook.

"Vision and dedication have historically been the linchpin in shaping both the Independent Film & Television Alliance (IFTA) and the American Film Market (AFM) into the global powerhouse it is today," asserts Jean M. Prewitt, IFTA, President & CEO. Championing the organization for two and a half decades, Prewitt has steered a steady course through years of venue roulette, industry unpredictability and global expansion with the prescience to accommodate the ebb and flow of the motion picture marketplace.

Hosting 6,132 creatives with 285 exhibitors and 500 distributors converging from 83 countries

AFM25 boasted a multi-faceted, seamlessly executed program. Embracing established and emerging companies with 'Disrupt Entertainment', 'the Future of Film is Female', indie streamer 'Yow.tv', TMW Media ,an educational provider, represented by Leslie Collins were among the acquisition & distribution personnel parsing a tsunami of content targeting specific audiences.

The Location Pavilion provided a spin around the globe. Enticing production incentives and exotic locals had producers exploring roads less traveled on the path to the glimmering green light. "The planet is a global back lot," insists Andrei Zinca, having helmed award-winning films in Peru, Rumania and South Africa with 'So What's Freedom' winning awards.

Engaging panels served to reveal trends and provide first person testaments, according to Beverly Braybon, post production supervisor. Richa Rudola of Goa took center stage at the Pitch Session presenting 'One Rose' an emotionally charged mother-daughter drama and the short 'Cow Heavy and Floral'.

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From bottom-up to top-down AFM 2025 level's the playing field. The common bond among AFM attendees is "everyone has a story to tell' secretly harboring a passion project."

*Douglas Scott May, trice gifted
Writer-Actor- Musician*

For decades AFM unfurled in Santa Monica's Loews Hotel set against a swoon-worthy Pacific backdrop and a soundtrack of baying seals. The AFM's rebound from Las Vegas was met with high fives and fist bumps. AFM's legacy propels that 'je ne sais quoi' Hollywood mystic and is the natural preemptor to the Cannes Film Festival slated for May 12-23 '26. According to Colin Costello's musings in 'Reel 360', "The AFM has rediscovered its swagger... humming with many relieved to be doing business in a space that actually fits the scale and ambition of the American version of Cannes".

The Automaton®
by Alain Bismut

Grand prix du meilleur scénario, France

Les Prix du Scénario

ALAIN BISMUT

ANDREA GUARDINO

CRISTIANE ROGET - PIERRE RICHARD MULLER

RÉPONDEZ S'IL VOUS PLAÎT

BARON WOLFGANG VON KEMPELEN
MASTER-MINDED
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'Turc' Automaton (working title) awarded the Grand prix du meilleur scénariste to Alain Bismut, a gripping re-telling of the visionary inventor, Baron Wolfgang Von Kempelen who foresaw the Era of Artificial Intelligence.

Lauded as, "a perfect venue" the Fairmont on the Avenue of the Stars is a beating heart for 'the

Industry'. Glass towers scrape the sky where talent agencies CAA, Initiative Talent Group and Engage Artists Agency, law firms, and production services crunch numbers in pursuit of the deal, says Mike of Baboon-Animation. A scripts throw from the AMC Century City 15 Megaplex served-up a defacto Festival of Film.

This was an especially good week for those who prize Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité! From emerging to legacy film and media makers, AFM serves as an exercise in true democracy," says trice-gifted, writer, musician and actor Douglas Scott May, who literally and figuratively "Reached for the Sun' his award winning screenplay's title.

For the price of a color-coded lanyard guests could easily identify Buyers – Sellers – Panelists & Press with many badges sporting headshots from year's past, "Once in the system always in the system," says Media Coordinator extraordinaire Jennifer Garnick, VP, Communications and the gracious host of the AFM Press Corp with Katherine Landry assisting.

Aspiring actors, scriptwriters and production royalty met and mingled. Elevating the state of 'high vibration' saw Pierre Richard Mueller of Artedis exploring pre-production packages including 'the Turc – working title 'Automaton'. Screenwriter, Alain Bismut, the recipient of the Grand Prix du Meilleur Scénariste in the early ott's was awarded by Canal + a \$500K prize provided matching funds could be secured. 'The Automaton' brought the prospect of Artificial Intelligence to life in the 17th centuries' Age of Enlightenment predicting a future we are now living. "Here is a pre-production project whose time has come," confirms Shah Mathias, CEO of GMTX.exchange. His company is weighing in on investing easily convertible, digital token toward development.

No silo here, real events impact the AFM landscape. Political turmoil, a cease fire in Gaza, the election of an avowed socialist, Zohran Manami as mayor of Gotham City and the passing of Prop 50 were parsed. Even the predictive Presidential Candidate (and in spite of Halle Berry's perhaps justifiable take down) weighs in. Governor Gavin Newsom describes the film industry as



Surviving several fragmented years, AFM returns buoyant and cohesive! Reflecting on Marshall McLuhan's 'the medium IS the message' & with film, retro video, social media & AI in play, "Today's content creators have tremendous power to impact human affairs

a cornerstone of California's economy. The signing into law of the Film & TV Jobs Act (AB1138) by District 51 Assembly Member Rick Chavez Zbur significantly expanded California's tax credit program, "crucial to retaining meaningful jobs and ensuring California remains entertainment capital of the world."

Several buzzy projects inspired by real events drew heat. The Billionaire Businessman – The Legacy of Frank Stronach by Gordon Vettters, the King of Cashmere 'Brunello' by Guiseppe 'Cinema Paradiso' Tornatore, Patrick Kilpatrick of Uncommon Dialogue, shopped a story on an Ace Pilot from WW2 who defied stereotypes and Mendel's Messiah by Wendy & Jeremiah Ginsberg.

In pre-production 'Two Guys and a Spy' grounded in espionage by buddies Todd Gaster and Brett Gillilan were joined Laslo Film's "The Devil Returns to Monolith" with co-producer William Stancik describing the completed film, "as if Frank Capra and David Lynch films were put in a blender". In pre-production is Gabriel 'Gmoney' Ricardez – writing, directing and leading with Robert La Sardo in 'Trucha'.

"It's a brave new world for the harbingers of content. Only the undaunted survive," says May. Combine a 'return to human', next gen production gizmos, gadgets and a P.O.V. that resonates on a local to global scale, "the business of film races toward an uncharted future with the AFM leading the way (from behind)!"

Cristiane Roget - Douglas Scott May

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