

50,000 Londoners Engage with Buddhist Film Festival as Sand Mandala Ritual Brings South Bank to a Standstill

Pure Land Foundation establishes a new fixture on London's cultural calendar with major public activation at Oxo Gallery for the Buddhist Film Festival

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, July 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A major public Buddhist ritual on London's South Bank has helped establish the Buddhist Film Festival as a new cultural fixture in the capital, after more than 50,000 people engaged with a live sand mandala installation at Oxo Gallery, Oxo Tower Wharf.

Presented by Pure Land Foundation, the installation formed part of the 2026 Buddhist Film Festival, which has historically been centred in the United States and is now building a significant presence in London.



Three senior visiting Tibetan monks leave Oxo Gallery following the ceremonial dissolution of the sand mandala, ahead of the sand's release into the Thames.

Across five days, from 17–21 June 2026, three senior visiting Tibetan monks created an intricate sand mandala by hand, using finely coloured sand placed grain by grain in a centuries-old Buddhist practice. The free public installation drew approximately 15,000 visitors into the gallery, while more than 35,000 people stopped outside to watch through the gallery's prominent glass frontage on one of the South Bank's busiest riverside walkways.

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The response transformed the festival from a film

programme into a highly visible London cultural moment. Passers-by, families, tourists,

commuters and visitors paused to watch the mandala take shape, turning the gallery into a place of stillness and reflection within one of the city's most active public spaces.

The mandala acted as a living expression of the ideas explored across the Buddhist Film Festival's wider programme, including impermanence, compassion, mindfulness, identity, belonging and the search for meaning in contemporary life. The 2026 programme includes ten films, five features and five shorts, that explore Buddhism not only as philosophy, but as lived experience across families, monasteries, landscapes, exile communities and everyday choices.

The activation reached its most symbolic moment on Sunday 21 June, when the completed mandala was ceremonially dissolved on the summer solstice. The monks then processed from Oxo Gallery to the Thames, where the sand was released into the river. The destruction of the work, after five days of careful creation, formed an essential part of the practice and offered a public reminder of impermanence in the heart of London.

[Bruno Wang, founder of Pure Land Foundation](#) and Chairman and Co-curator of the Buddhist Film Festival, said:

"The response to the sand mandala installation shows that London audiences are deeply open to experiences that invite stillness, reflection and connection. The Buddhist Film Festival is not only about cinema. It is about creating pathways into ideas that help us think more deeply about impermanence, compassion and the human condition."

Pure Land Foundation supports initiatives that promote social, spiritual and emotional wellness. Founded by philanthropist, cultural patron and producer [Bruno Wang](#), the foundation reflects his long-standing interest in how art, spirituality and storytelling can help people find stillness, compassion and connection in contemporary life. Through Pure Land Foundation and Bruno Wang Productions, Wang's work spans film, digital platforms, live experiences and cross-cultural exchange, championing projects that cultivate awareness, resilience and shared human values.

About the Buddhist Film Festival

The Buddhist Film Festival is presented by Tricycle: The Buddhist Review in collaboration with the Pure Land Foundation. Founded in 1991, Tricycle: The Buddhist Review is a leading independent Buddhist publication dedicated to making Buddhist teachings and practices broadly available. Through its quarterly magazine, online platform and events, Tricycle fosters dialogue across Buddhist traditions and engages contemporary issues through a Buddhist lens.

About Pure Land Foundation

Pure Land Foundation supports initiatives that promote social, spiritual and emotional wellness. Founded by philanthropist and [cultural patron Bruno Wang](#), the foundation reflects a wider commitment to compassion, contemplative practice and the role of culture in helping people

connect more deeply with themselves and others. Its work spans film, digital platforms, live experiences and cross-cultural exchange, championing projects that cultivate awareness, resilience and shared human values.

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