

Happy Valley Animation Festival 2026

The Happy Valley Animation Festival (HVAF) will return for its sixth year and is being held March 26 – 28. Additional information below and at: <https://www.happyvalleyanimationfestival.org>

Event: HVAF 2026 Showcase (Award Winners Screening)

Location: HUB Flex Theatre, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802

Date: Friday, March 27, 2026

Time: 6:30pm – 8:30pm EST

Details: Public screenings of HVAF 2026 award winners and official selections in the international open and international student animation categories. This event is free and open to the public.

Showcase (Program A)

Project Title	Directors	Country	Recognition
Turbulence <i>[3:52m]</i>	Christopher Rutledge, Magnus Igland Møller	Denmark, United States	Winner Animated Short Films Under 4 min
On Hold <i>[7:11m]</i>	Delia Hess	Switzerland	Finalist Experimental Animation
Grip <i>[3:26m]</i>	Mathis Raoul, Yanis Harraca, Alan Lopez-Raulin, Leonard Mugnier-Bajat	France	Finalist Student Animated Short Films Under 4 Minutes
Glimmer <i>[4:10m]</i>	Natalia Ryss	Israel, United Kingdom	Finalist Animated Media & Motion Design
Romina <i>[5:36m]</i>	Paola Mendoza	United States	Winner Animated Documentaries
Don't Look <i>[2:45m]</i>	Bárbara González, Yanis Pizarro	Chile	Winner Student Animated Short Films Under 4 Minutes
Signal <i>[16:44m]</i>	Emma Carré, Mathilde Parquet	Belgium, France	Winner Animated Short Films
Fried! <i>[9:54m]</i>	Lizzie Watts	United Kingdom	Finalist Student Animated Short Films
Mother Tongue <i>[3:00m]</i>	Duncan Senkumba	United Kingdom	Winner Animated Media & Motion Design
A Paper Coffee Cup Story <i>[3:47m]</i>	Igor Gusev	Russian Federation	Finalist Animated Short Films Under 4 Minutes
23 Kilograms <i>[6:35m]</i>	Mobina Habibi	Islamic Republic of Iran	Finalist Animated Documentaries
Contradiction of Emptiness <i>[3:06]</i>	Irina Rubina	Germany	Winner Experimental Animation
1981 <i>[7:47m]</i>	Carolyn London, Andy London	United States	Finalist Animated Short Films
Jungle Race <i>[9:36m]</i>	Nathan Stufen, Thomas Marsaudon, Tristan Forcheron, Justine Perrin, Loïc Noailhat, Charles Lardenois, Cyprien Cotton, Ezvin Manhes, Quentin Steinhilber, Camille Tessier	France	Winner Student Animated Short Films

Directors' Statements

Turbulence

First flight. No parents. Total panic. A terrified boy just wants to survive takeoff, but the plane—and its deranged passengers—have other plans. One guy treats turbulence like a free massage, another is way too at peace with crashing, and sanity is nowhere to be found. As the plane bucks and twists, so does reality—faces stretch, limbs flail, and gravity calls it quits. Trapped at 30,000 feet in an airborne freak show, the boy must hold on for dear life... or completely lose it.

On Hold

A young woman is stuck in the waiting line of a telephone hotline... a surreal episodic shortfilm about the absurdities of urban life and the feeling of paralysing stagnation.

Grip

Ollie, a passionate young skateboarder, trains alone in an abandoned shopping mall, confronting her failures and doubts. But as she begins to land her tricks, her skateboard breathes color into this drab environment, transforming her world into a unique visual and spiritual experience.

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Romina

Romina tells the true story of a 14-year-old girl facing an unplanned pregnancy in a state in the USA where abortion is banned. Despite the legal barriers, a community rallies around her, ensuring she can access the abortion she desired.

Don't Look

Nicolas argues with his mother due to the illness that keeps her bedridden, pushing him to the brink of wanting to escape. But fate has other plans. Upon leaving the room, a creature with sinister intentions reveals itself before him. Prisoner of paranoia, he decides to return, encountering a revelation that will take him to the depths of his emotions...

Signal

Claudie is absolutely passionate about her rather unusual job: scanning the cosmos for signs of extraterrestrial life, hoping to make contact.

Completely absorbed in her mission, she gradually loses touch with those around her. To the point that reality itself could fade away from her...

Fried!

As Dev drives home from a mysterious, ageing nuclear facility, he becomes stranded at an isolated emu farm run by old mystic lesbians. Suspicious of their intentions, Dev fears they will sacrifice him at the local stone circle.

Mother Tongue

A loving portrait of Uganda, Duncan Senkumba's Mother Tongue leads the viewer on an animated journey through city streets and wild landscapes to explore the fine balance between urban life and the natural world, from the bustle of Kampala's markets to the rolling hills of the country's national parks.

A Paper Coffee Cup Story

This is a story about creative and sensitive people. Their feelings get hurt (unrequited love, misunderstanding and loneliness) and they all end up in a metaphorical place (hospital ward) where they meet each other, talk and recover. The boy finds the girl he once felt in love with, the poet is now understood and admired and the girl is not lonely anymore. There is also a fourth character, he is a smoking silhouette, he has no feelings and he can only feel physical pain, it seems like he's living in a completely different world, he has no spirituality in him.

23 Kilograms

This is a 2D animated documentary created using the real voices of people who have experienced loss in different ways. The story takes place in Tehran, following a girl who listens to a podcast from the very beginning of her journey.

Contradiction of Emptiness

The language in which lullabies were sung to me kills. And I am with it. And the lullabies fall silent.

An inner monologue between two languages and identities. Between the black and white of the pinscreen 'L'Alpine'.

1981

It's 1981 in suburban Long Island, New York. The mullets are long, the metal is heavy and 14-year old Douglas gets a birthday surprise that will change life forever. "1981" is a psychedelic coming-of-age story that captures the beauty and terror of teenage desire.

Jungle Race

In a world where humans have disappeared, monkeys compete in a bloody and merciless car race on an island for the sole purpose of entertainment.